

READY? CHINA!

China Ready Checklist — 2026 Edition · by Kat

Ten steps, in the right order, so you land in China calm instead of panicking. Print this, tick each box as you finish it, and you'll be more prepared than 95% of first-time visitors.

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| 01 | Check Your Passport | Valid for at least 6 months BEYOND your travel dates. Processing takes 4–6 weeks — start now if it's close to expiring. |
| 02 | Sort Your Visa | Some nationalities enter visa-free (15–30 days), others must apply in advance. Check your exact requirement before booking flights. |
| 03 | Book Flights & Hotel | Not all hotels accept foreign guests — international chains are always a safe bet. Book both before you fly. |
| 04 | Get a SIM or eSIM | You need data from the moment you land. eSIM, Chinese SIM, pocket WiFi, or roaming — sort it BEFORE you board (app stores are blocked inside China). |
| 05 | Set Up Payments | China is almost entirely cashless — street stalls, taxis, supermarkets all run on QR codes. Set up Alipay or WeChat Pay before landing. |
| 06 | Understand the Firewall & VPN | Google, Instagram, WhatsApp and ChatGPT are blocked in China. Install and test your VPN at home — not at the airport. |
| 07 | Download Your Apps | Six key apps make China easy: Alipay, WeChat, Didi, Amap, a translator, and Trip.com. Set them up and verify while still at home. |
| 08 | Get Around Like a Local | Metro, bus, bullet train and bike share cover everything. Book high-speed rail on Trip.com — and never take an unlicensed taxi. |
| 09 | Emergency Numbers & Help | Screenshot these: Police 110 · Fire 119 · Ambulance 120. Save your hotel's address in Chinese before you go out. |
| 10 | Get Travel Insurance | A single hospital visit in China without insurance can cost \$2,000+. Spend 10 minutes on this — it's worth every penny. |

■ Save these in your phone before you fly: **Police 110** · **Fire 119** · **Ambulance 120** · **Lost passport?** Go to the nearest police station and call your embassy.

Kat's tip: do steps 4–7 at home on Wi-Fi. Once you're in China, the apps and verification steps get much harder — the firewall is real.