

CULTURAL INFORMATION



ENTERING CHINA

When your flight nears its destination, you will be given a landing card to complete. On this, you must fill in your name, passport details, the address you will be staying at and the dates of your trip. Please ensure you take note of the address and carry it in your hand luggage, as you will not be able to access your hold luggage before having to hand the landing card over.

You will also be given a departure card that you should keep safe during your stay, as you will need to fill this in and hand it in at passport control on your way home.

MONEY

Chinese currency is called Renminbi (people's money), often abbreviated as RMB. It is issued by The Bank of China and is the sole legal tender within the People's Republic of China. The symbol for RMB is ¥. The unit of Renminbi is a yuan and smaller denominations are called jiao and fen. The conversion among the three is:

$$1 \text{ yuan} = 10 \text{ jiao} = 100 \text{ fen}$$

RMB consists of both notes and coins. The denominations of paper notes include 100, 50, 20, 10,

5, 2 and 1 yuan; 5, 2 and 1 jiao; and 5, 2 and 1 fen. The denominations of coins are 1 yuan; 5, 2 and 1 jiao; and 5, 2 and 1 fen.

Note: in spoken Chinese, yuan is often called as kuai and the jiao as mao.



CHEQUES

Foreigners' cheques provide a fairly secure way of carrying your money. Always remember to keep the record of cheque numbers separate from the cheques for reference in the event of loss.

For the convenience of foreigners, the Bank of China can cash foreigners' cheques sold by international commercial banks and foreigners' cheque companies in the United States, Canada, Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, Britain, France, Switzerland, Germany as well as many other countries. Also, the Bank of China sells foreigners' cheques for other banking institutions such as American Express, Citibank, Tongjilong Travelers' Cheque Co., the Sumitomo Bank of Japan, the Swiss Banking Corporation, to name a few.

CURRENCY CONVERTER

Money exchange facilities for both currency and foreigners' cheques are available at major airports, hotels, and department stores. Please note that hotels may only exchange money for their guests.

The US dollar, British pound, French franc, German mark, Japanese yen, Australian dollar, Austrian schilling, Belgian franc, Canadian dollar, HK dollar, Swiss franc, Danish Krone, Singapore dollar, Malaysian ringgit, Italian lira, Macao dollar, Finnish markka, and Taiwan dollar are all exchangeable.

Exchange rates fluctuate in line with international financial market condition and are published daily by the State Exchange Control Administration.

Keep your currency exchange receipts because you will need to show them when you change RMB back to your own currency at the end of visit to the Republic. You should not plan to use credit cards in remote areas, as cash is all that will be accepted there and you should ensure that you carry sufficient RMB and travelers' cheques to cover your stay.

CREDIT CARDS AND ATMS

At present, the following credit cards are accepted in China: Master Card, Federal Card, Visa, American Express, JCB, and Diners Card. Cardholders can withdraw cash from the Bank of China and pay for purchases at exchange centers of the Bank of China, appointed shops, hotels, and restaurants.

However, this applies only in major cities and they are not always accepted in remote areas. Credit cards are not always accepted for the purchase of rail and air tickets.

ATMs that accept foreign cards are few and far between. Do not rely on them as a way of obtaining cash in Mainland China.

Consult with your bank before departing to make sure that your brand of cheque or credit card will be accepted.

CURRENCY REGULATIONS

There is no limit on the amount of foreign currency and foreign exchange bills that can be brought into China by tourists, but it must be declared to the customs. RMB should be converted back into foreign currency with the personal valid "foreign exchange certificate" before leaving China. Unused foreign exchange and RMB traveler's cheques can be taken out of the country. Each tourist is permitted to take with them less than 6000 RMB.

FOOD AND DRINK

A typical meal in China starts with some cold dishes, like boiled peanuts and smashed cucumber with garlic. These are followed by the main courses, hot meat and vegetable dishes. Finally, soup is brought out, which is followed by the starchy "staple" food, which is usually rice or noodles or sometimes dumplings. Many Chinese eat rice (or noodles or whatever) last, but if you like to have your rice together with other dishes, you should say so early on.



MAIN DIFFERENCES

Unlike in the West, in China the dishes are placed on the table and everybody shares. If you are being treated by a Chinese host, be prepared for a lot of food; the Chinese are very proud of their food culture and will do their best to give you a taste of many different types of cuisine.

Note: The Chinese commonly eat all parts of an animal, as they believe it is nutritious and not worth wasting.

Depending on what you are drinking, the drinking rules change. different beverages have different etiquette.

Alcohol

Beer is served everywhere. Don't be surprised when you find minors are drinking. Because it's not prohibited in China.

If you want cold beer, be sure you mentioned it to the waiter or waitress.

"Bai jiu" (白酒) is made from fermented rice and tastes pungent and is very strong. Cold drinks are not usually served at restaurants in China. 98% of the time you will have a cup of steaming hot tea. Wine is not as popular in China as it is in the west. According to an old Chinese saying:

"A thousand cups of wine is not too much when bosom friends meet (酒逢知己千杯少)"

In fact, drinking together is an essential part of socializing and camaraderie. Thus, as any code of social conduct, it adheres to strict rules:

- You should never refuse to participate in a toast, as that could be interpreted as being Impolite. All people sitting at the same table must stand up, upon the initiative of one of the guests, and toast in succession;
- Unlike Europeans and Americans, in China, looking someone in the eye when you toast is not imperative and very rarely happens. Don't be offended or wait for them to look you in the eye.
- Elderly people and superiors should be served first. One should pay attention not to raise his/her glass higher than those of the respected elders.
- If "gan bei"(干杯) is called, don't worry, "gan bei" does not mean you have to finish your drink (despite the literal translation of "dry cup"). Just take a sip and put your cup down.



- If you are at a bar, don't be shy about saying that you don't want to drink anymore, the Chinese can usually drink quite a lot, so don't feel the need to keep up.

WATER

Fresh, clean, bottled water is everywhere in China. It costs between 1-2 RMB per 12 oz bottle. You should not drink the tap water.

TEA

- Below are some tips on tea drinking etiquette:
- Tea should be consumed slowly
- You should not ask for ice or sugar for your tea
- If you ever pour tea for someone else, fill the cup 3/4 full
- When someone hands you a cup of tea, take it with two hands
- When you give someone a cup of tea, use two hands. (One hand on the bottom, on hand on the side).
- When drinking tea, it is polite to use two hands.
- When someone pours you more tea, it's polite to touch the side of the teacup as they pour it, and be sure to say "Xie xie" (谢谢), or thank you



TABLE MANNERS

Of course, the main difference on the Chinese dinner table is chopsticks instead of knife and fork, but that's only superficial. Besides, in most restaurants, you can always ask for a pair of knife and fork, if you can't eat with chopsticks. The main difference between dining in the West and in China is the way in which food is ordered; in the West people have their own plate of food, while in China the dishes are placed on the table for everyone to share. If you are being treated to a formal dinner and particularly if the host thinks you're in the country for the first time, he will do the best to give you a taste of many different types of dishes.

The meal usually begins with a set of at least four cold dishes, which are followed by the main courses of hot meat and vegetable dishes. Soup then will be served (unless in Guangdong style restaurants) and is followed by staple food ranging from rice, noodles to dumplings. If you wish to have your rice to go with other dishes, you should say so in good time, for most of the Chinese choose to have the staple food at last or have none of them at all.

Perhaps one of the things that surprises a Western visitor most is that some of the Chinese hosts like to put food onto the plates of their guests. In formal dinners, there are always "public" chopsticks and spoons for this purpose, but some hosts may use their own chopsticks. This is a sign of genuine friendship and politeness. It is always polite to eat the food. If you do not eat it, just leave the food in the plate.

People in China tend to over-order food, for they will find it embarrassing if all the food is consumed. When you have had enough, just say so. Or you will always overeat!

RULES WHEN USING CHOPSTICKS

Don't place chopsticks down unevenly; Chinese people regard it as inauspicious to place a pair of chopsticks unevenly on the table before, during or after a meal. They call it "son thong liang duan", or "three long and two short", which indicates death.

Don't point at others with your chopsticks; You should never perch your chopsticks between the thumb, middle, ring and little fingers, while sticking out your index finger, as it implies abuse. In most cases, Chinese people point at others with their index fingers to scold them. Therefore, such a movement is unacceptable. It is also considered bad manners to point at others with your chopsticks while chatting during a meal.

Don't 'suck' your chopsticks or make loud noises when using them; if someone sucks their chopsticks and makes loud noises, they are considered to have been raised badly. This also applies to drinking soup, which should also be done quietly.

Don't tap your chopsticks on plates or cups; Chinese people believe it is impolite to strike one's plates, cups or bowls with chopsticks, because, in the past, only beggars struck their bowls while begging.

Don't use your chopsticks the wrong way around; This is seen as impolite and symbolic of hungry beggars.

Don't cross chopsticks over; This point is often neglected by people, who place their chopsticks carelessly in a crisscross while having a meal. This is unacceptable because it implies you are not enjoying your meal and it shows disrespect to the host.



Don't drop your chopsticks; It is considered a serious breach of etiquette when one drops his/her chopstick(s) on the ground, as Chinese people believe it disturbs their buried ancestors. If a Chinese person makes this mistake, they would rectify it by making crosses with the fallen chopsticks from east to west, and then from north to south. While picking up the chopsticks, they would murmur "I am a damn fool," to express their regret.

You should always take great care not to break the above-mentioned taboos.

CHINESE MOBILE PHONE AND INTERNET

MOBILE PHONE

You will need a Chinese SIM card to make your phone work in China. These can be purchased very easily and you will be assisted in doing so. If you wish to use your mobile from home, please ensure it is unlocked, otherwise it will not function with a Chinese SIM card. Alternatively, it is possible to buy mobile phones in China for cheap, but please be aware that these cannot always make international calls.

Some cards work only in one province, so if you plan to travel around it is worth considering a SIM card that can be used all over the country.

Some services require you to activate the national roaming service (漫游) before you can use it outside of the city or province. Be sure to turn off the service when you return to your home city as there is a daily surcharge for using it (this does not apply to SIMs that are already capable of roaming at purchase time).

Avoid the cheaper wireless phones called PHS (小灵通 xiǎo líng tōng, see "Area Codes"), because they won't work if you go to another city.

Prepaid cell phone service is common although there are also monthly plans. You can just go to a shop and purchase a charge card, which has a number and password that must be used to call the telephone company to recharge the money in your account. You will be calling a computer and the default language is Chinese, but this can be changed to English.

The typical expat spends ¥100 (US\$14) a month on phone usage, but tourists might spend less. Charge cards are sold in denominations of ¥100 or ¥50, it is also possible to walk into any of the neighborhood offices of your mobile service provider, give the staff your number and pay in cash recharge your account (this is the only way to do a ¥30 recharge).

China mainly uses the GSM standard, though there are some CDMA phones. For GSM, you need the GSM 900 and 1800 frequencies, just the same as most places except the Americas. If this is true then you can roam on a local China network but expect to pay US\$2-5/minute.



Since China uses R-UIM (SIM card equivalent) on its CDMA service there is no easy way to bring in a CDMA phone and use prepaid service. However, by asking around you may find shops that will program in a prepaid number for you (generally for a fee of ¥100-¥400).

Make sure that you can return your home number to your phone afterward to avoid problems upon return. This is not advisable for short-term trips because of the difficulty involved, but for those on CDMA that have a reason to keep their current phones it is probably the only way.

China Mobile cell phones will not normally make international calls. To get that service, you need to go to the local office of China Mobile and ask them to enable the "12593" international dialing service. You will have to prefix all your numbers with "12593" but calls to North America and other parts of Asia are only ¥0.4/minute (calls to Europe and Australia will be somewhat more expensive).

China Unicom allows international calls on all prepaid SIMs but the prefix is "17911" and their rates are significantly higher (about 8x more when calling the US; the difference is less when it is for Europe).

You can use prepaid cards for international calling with a cell phone, however, just dial the number on the card as with a regular landline phone. The charges will go to the prepaid calling card.

The Chinese GSM system uses 900 MHz and 1800 MHz, and most phones are sold with only those frequencies. Those phones will work in Europe, South East Asia, and Australia, but not in the US, Canada or South America (1900 or 850 MHz). Consider buying a "world phone" with more frequencies.

INTERNET

The host family provides you the internet.

BARGAINING IN CHINA

Bargaining is acceptable in most shops and can be more enjoyable than the purchase itself. See below for some top bargaining tips:

- Check the price of what you want to buy in various shops
- Start low and allow yourself room to increase your offer
- Use any flaws on the article as a reason you should get it cheaper
- Be stubborn and persistent, but remain friendly and smile
- Walk away if you aren't getting anywhere – sometimes this encourages the seller to reduce to the price, but if not, you can always find the item elsewhere!
- If the seller accepts your price, don't try to haggle further – this is rude
- Ensure you walk away with the item you asked for – sometimes sellers will try to swap it for a faulty version
- Learn some basic numbers – if you try to use some Chinese, the seller will likely warm to you. They will also have a calculator which can help overcome the language barrier

CLOTHING

China's climate ranges from year-round tropical heat in Hainan, to Siberian conditions in the far north and typical desert weather in the far west. What clothes you should pack will very much depend on which region you are going to and if you plan to travel.

In winter, most parts of China are cold, particularly in the northern part. During winter, it's advisable to wear lots of layers and a thick coat. Winter coats can be bought cheaply in China and are suitable to the local weather conditions.

For travel during spring or summer, your clothing should be casual and comfortable, but not too revealing. Women are forbidden from entering many temples with skirts on, so be sure to take some trousers if you plan to visit temples. Between May and August, it's a good idea to take a raincoat.

SHOPPING IN CHINA

There are many exotic and unusual things you can buy in China, which make wonderful souvenirs and gifts for relatives and friends back home. Below is a list of some of the most cultural gifts:

Silk: Chinese silk is famous all over the world for its magnificent quality, color and variety. Silk products from Hangzhou, Sichuan, Suzhou and Dandong are particularly good.

Tea: There are hundreds of varieties of Chinese tea. They can be classified into five categories - green tea, black tea, brick tea, scented tea, and oolong tea.

The top ten teas in China are as follows;

- Longjing produced near West Lake, Hangzhou, Zhejiang
- Biluochun from Wu County in Jiangsu
- Huangshan Maofeng from Mt. Huangshan in Anhui
- Junshan Silver Needle from Qingluo Island on Dongting Lake
- Qimen Black Tea from Qimen County in Anhui
- Liuan Guapian from Liuan County in Anhui
- Xinyang Maojian from Xinyang in Henan
- Duyun Maojian from Duyun Mountain in Guizhou
- Wuyi Rock Tea from Wuyi Mountain in Fujian
- Tieguanyin from Anxi County in Fujian

Wines and Spirits: Alcoholic drinks, in ancient China, were regarded as sacred and were used only in sacrifices. Today, however, wines and spirits are becoming popular as accompaniments to Chinese food. The following wines and spirits have won many international awards:

- Yanghe Daqu and Shuanggou Daqu from Jiangsu
- Gujing Tribute Liquor from Anhui
- Maotai and Dong Liquor from Guizhou
- Wuliangye, Jiannanchun and Luzhou Laojiao from Sichuan
- Fenjiu Liquor from Shanxi

Antiques: If you're an antique enthusiast, China is the place for you! Fascinating antique and curio shops and market stalls are to be found in most cities and country towns. Care is needed, however, when buying expensive items to ensure, for example, that the item carries the official red seal of the shop and the sale documents are in order. Chinese law forbids the export of antiques dated earlier than 1795.

Arts and Crafts: Arts and crafts products make ideal souvenirs and gifts. These include bronze ware, cloisonne, folk toys, jade, kites, lacquer wares, paper-cutting, porcelain, pottery, seal, prints and scrolls, silk, embroidery and printed and dyed fabrics. Cloisonné made in Beijing, porcelain made in Jingdezhen in Jiangxi, embroidery from Suzhou, Hunan, Guangdong and Sichuan, Tang tri-color pottery horses and camels, and batik from Guizhou and Yunnan are all highly recommended. The "four treasures of study" - namely writing brush, ink stick, ink slab, paper - play an important part in Chinese culture. The best writing materials are said to be Xuan paper and Hui ink stick from Anhui, Duan ink slab from Guangdong and Hu writing brush from Zhejiang.

TIPPING

Today, attitudes towards tipping are changing. Although the practice is not officially recognised, tips are now frequently offered to and accepted by travel guides, tour bus drivers, porters and waiters in top-class hotels and restaurants.

However, tipping is still not expected in most restaurants and hotels. So, ask the guide whether a tip is necessary and how much when you are uncertain. Sometimes, small gifts such as paperbacks, cassette tapes and western cigarettes appear to be preferred. Note that it is part of the polite ritual that any gift or tip initially will be firmly rejected.

Consumer taxes are included in price tags on goods but big hotels and fine restaurants may include a service charge of 10% or more.

ACCOMMODATION IN CHINA

Most large Chinese cities offer a range of accommodation and no matter your budget or preference, you will be able to find something suitable. Most staff in hotels, hostels and guesthouses that accept foreign guests can speak some English.

CHINESE ETIQUETTE

Chinese people have strong family values and it's important to take this into account when living in a Chinese family home. Below are some important rules:

- Do not go home with strangers, unless your family have agreed to you doing so
- Unless agreed to by the host family, do not throw a party, or other social activities in the host family's home
- Gain an understanding of the concept of 'face'

MIANZI (FACE)

The idea of shame, usually expressed as 'face' could be loosely defined as the 'status' or 'self-respect' in Chinese and by no means alien to foreigners. The Chinese do not like to lose face. Never insult, embarrass, shame, yell at or otherwise demean a person. Since all these actions would risk putting a Chinese in a situation that he might lose face. Neither should you try to prove someone wrong nor shout at them in public. If you have a problem with your host family, you should speak to them in private in a tactful manner.

GUANXI (RELATIONSHIPS)

Throughout much of Chinese history, the fundamental glue that has held society together is the concept of guanxi; relationships between people. It is very important for the Chinese to have good relationships. They often regard good social relations as a symbol of personal ability and influence. Someone who has no connections would be despised and is only half-Chinese.

KEQI

Keqi not only means considerate, polite, and well mannered, but also represents humbleness and modesty. It is impolite to be arrogant and brag about oneself or one's inner circle. The expression is most often used in the negative, as in buyao keqi, meaning "you shouldn't be so kind and polite to me," or "you're welcome."

The Chinese seldom express what they think directly, they communicate in a more roundabout way. They do not show their emotions and feelings in public and they rarely greet people with a handshake and especially not with a hug or a kiss. It's important to be aware of this, so as not to make your hosts or yourself feel awkward. You should also avoid getting involved in political discussions.

You should try to respect these general rules throughout your stay, but the Chinese culture is very profound and your hosts will understand that it is hard for you to understand all Chinese customs, so they will forgive mistakes.

HOW SHOULD I GREET CHINESE PEOPLE?

Most ordinary people living in large cities can speak a little bit of English. So, a "hello" or "how do you do?" will be understood by most people. That said, it is better if you can greet them in Chinese. The typical Chinese greetings include nihao (hello) and jiandao ni hen gaoxing (nice to meet you). Of course, as a kind of universal language that needs no translation, a smile or a wave will also elicit a friendly response.

On some occasions, shaking hands is a good means to greet Chinese people. However, when shaking hands with a Chinese woman, do not hold it too tightly - a light shake of the fingers will do the job.

In China, embrace is not a usual way to greet each other, except between family members and good friends. Kissing, whether on the cheeks or on hands, is unacceptable to the Chinese.

UNDERSTANDING WHEN THE CHINESE SAY NO

Chinese people attach great importance to their "face". They neither like to lose face, nor risk letting others lose face, therefore they seldom say "no" or make negative comments directly. Instead of saying no, they often express their disagreement by means of a graceful excuse or a suggestion. For example, if a Chinese person wishes to refuse your invitation to dinner, they would say: "sorry, I have something to do". If a Chinese person doesn't agree with your ideas, they would say: "I have another idea!".

COMPLIMENTING A CHINESE PERSON

Chinese people are very modest and not accustomed to showing their feelings in public, so when they are praised or complimented, a common response is "no, no!". For example, if you praise a Chinese for his excellent achievement in the work, he would say: "no, no, my work is just so-so", or if you compliment their cooking skills, they would likely say; "no, no, it is only suitable for filling the stomach."

"No, no" here does not mean that the Chinese think your compliments are wrong or improper, it is just an unpretentious reaction to your commendations. So, if you get such a response when praising a Chinese person, do not be discouraged since your compliments will be appreciated.

DEALING WITH EMERGENCIES

Hopefully no emergencies will occur during your visit to China but, just in case, here are some tips on how to deal with them.

In China, the Public Security Bureau (Police) is responsible for public safety and order. In addition to traditional police responsibilities, the Bureau is in charge of issuing visa extensions. If you lose something of value, please immediately notify your host family, Teach English In China, the transportation authorities and/or the police. If your credit cards or traveler's cheques have been lost or stolen, call the issuer as soon as possible. If you find yourself in a serious situation, you might also contact your embassy and/or consulate.

If you lose your passport, you should report the matter as soon as possible to the nearest Public Security Bureau (Police) and to your embassy or consulate in China. In order to get a new visa from the Chinese authorities, a Police report about the loss/theft will be needed.

For any other emergency, you should contact your hotel staff for assistance or dial: 110 for the police, 119 in case of fire or 120 for an ambulance.

Please use the below emergency line in the case of arrest, severe, injury/illness or death (of family member or other related person). To reach the emergency line, dial 86-18910365986/86-13552358741.

China is considered one of the safest countries in the world for personal security, however petty crime (pick-pocketing, muggings) has increased in recent years, especially in crowded places in and around major cities. You should have your wits about you in such places and be conscious of your surroundings.

We recommend carrying only enough money for your immediate needs when you are out and leaving the rest at your family's home and you should be careful to carry your bag on the shoulder furthest from the road, as occasionally people on motorbikes snatch bags. As a precaution, you should remove any jewelry that may draw a thief's attention before you go out to busy places.

You should familiarize yourself with the currency to avoid being deceived when paying for things on the markets. Some of the notes look very similar to the untrained eye and although the Chinese are generally very honest, there are occasionally people who will take the opportunity to take what you are offering.

Always let your host family know where you are when you go out on your own.

TAKING CARE OF YOUR HEALTH

Hygiene standards across China can vary dramatically, as does the climate. Therefore, before your trip we recommend visiting a travel clinic to find out what vaccinations you need for the destination you are going to.

When you go, you should take a copy of your medical record and details of any medication you are taking, medical treatments you have received or are receiving, allergies or hypersensitivities, immunization history and insurance details.

If you do require prescribed medication, please ensure you have enough to last you the duration of your trip, as this may be hard/impossible to find in China. Such medication should be carried in your hand luggage and kept in their original containers to identify them as legally obtained drugs.

TRANSPORT IN CHINA

Since the founding of the PRC in 1949, great efforts have been made by the Chinese government to establish a comprehensive transport system comprising civil aviation, railways, highways, and water transport. By the end of 1999, there were in total over 3.55 million km transportation lines throughout China. Due to the size of China, air travel is the most popular form of transport, closely followed by trains.

Most cities in China operate extensive bus networks and several major cities have metro lines. Taxi is another convenient way to travel and it is relatively cheap. You should always be careful to take a city licensed taxi and should never get in an unmarked car with someone claiming to be a taxi driver.

If you intend to travel to other cities in China, bullet train is a great option. These trains cover astounding distances in incredibly short amounts of time and tickets are very reasonable. You can get a train to almost anywhere in China from almost any city. Trains are broken down into different categories, with letters indicating the speed of the train. Sleeper trains are also available, which are cheaper, but take far longer. Tickets can be bought online, or at the train station and can be booked several days in advance.

WEATHER IN CHINA

China has a continental and seasonal climate. Most parts are in the temperate zone but southern areas are in the tropical or subtropical zone while northern areas are in the frigid zone. Climates in different areas are complicated. For instance, northern Heilongjiang Province has a winter climate the year round without summer, while Hainan Island has a summer climate the year round without winter. The following is a reference table for you to prepare clothing on your trip.

Spring:10-22°C, suits, jackets, sports coats, woolen jackets, long sleeve shirts and travel shoes.

Summer:22°C and above, T-shirts, short sleeve shirts, skirts, sandals, caps, rain wear.

Autumn:10-22°C, suits, jackets, sports coats, light woolen sweaters, rain wear and travel shoes

Winter:10°C or lower, overcoat, cotton clothes, lined coats. In very cold areas a cap, gloves and cotton-padded shoes are required.

GIVING GIFTS

Gifts are a major part of the Chinese culture and you will be expected to give your host family a gift of some sort to show your respect.

Chinese appreciate gifts that are not readily available to them. For example, items that are hand-made from your country, or that are highly valued (sentimentally rather than financially). Don't be offended if your host doesn't open a gift when you give it to them – this is usually done in private. This works the other way around too; you should only open a gift given to you if they insist.

Some Chinese people will decline a gift two or three times (sometimes even more) before accepting. Do not give up on the first try, but be sensitive to genuine refusals.

A proper way to show appreciation for a gift is another gift in return, as opposed to thank you cards.

TABOOS

You should not give the following items as gifts:

- Knives
- Clocks
- Half of a sliced pear

CHINESE PLUG SOCKETS

You will need to take a travel adapter with you if you intend to use any foreign electrical goods. Chinese plug sockets look like the below picture and you will need either a two or three-pronged adapter suitable for an electrical current of 220V and 50Hz AC. It is a good idea to take a surge protector in order to safeguard sensitive and expensive items such as laptops against power surges.

