

A GUIDE TO YOUR SUMMER INTERNSHIP



WRITTEN BY FORMER TEACHERS FOR FUTURE TEACHERS

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VISA, FLIGHTS AND INSURANCE



VISA

To be able to enter China and take part in the Summer Internship legally, you will need to apply for a business visa (F or M). Once you have been assigned a school, they will send you the invitation letter which is needed to apply for this. The cost of a Business Visa is £175 (March 2017).

FLIGHTS

Although you may be eager to get your flights booked as soon as possible, please wait to do this until you have got your visa. There can sometimes be delays with the visa process, so it is better to wait until you have it, rather than risking missing the flight and wasting money.

Around the end of May, you will be given an ideal arrival date and time for the airport pick up. It is important to try and stick to these given times, to avoid having to wait for a long time before being driven to their accommodation. You will find out at this time who is going to the same location as you and will be given their e-mail addresses.

Sites like Skyscanner can be helpful in finding the best deal available, especially if you need to book your flight at short notice.

INSURANCE

It is extremely important that you get insurance for your time away. We work with an insurer that offers affordable packages, details here:

<http://teach-english-in-china.co.uk/long-stay-travel-insurance/>

Please note that it is your responsibility to arrange insurance. We recommend that you get a package that includes repatriation and hospitalisation.

PRE-DEPARTURE PREPARATION



FINANCE

How far your money will go in China depends entirely on your style of living. There are lots of articles online comparing the price of living in China compared to big Western cities such as London, showing how 20p is standard for a bottle of water, and meals can cost between £1 and £3.

It is possible to limit your spending during the placement, as accommodation is provided, so you'll only need to pay for food, the odd bottle of water, snacks and trips at the weekend. To be on the safe side we recommend that you budget for £200-£250 per month during your teaching period.

If you plan to travel after your placement, we recommend allowing for approximately £15/20 a day. This does of course depend on the type of accommodation you wish to stay in.

CURRENCY

The national currency in China is Renminbi (RMB), or Yuan and is denoted by this symbol ¥. Exchange rates vary of course, but £1 is roughly worth just over ¥10. Chinese currency can be bought in the UK in the same way that you might obtain any other foreign currency on the high street. However, make sure you go and buy your currency in advance of leaving, as some places need to order it in, which can take up to a week.

A second easy option is to take currency out of a UK bank account using a cash point once in China. We advise you inform your bank of your intention to do so to avoid any problems. ATMs are widespread in Chinese cities, especially in metro/bus stations and airports, and will usually offer the option to translate their language into English at the beginning of the transaction. However, you should be aware that when using your UK card, Chinese ATMs will charge around £2.50, depending on which bank you are with.

MOBILE PHONE

UK mobile phone networks are not suitable for use in China as you will be charged an extortionate amount for texts and data. Your school will help you set up a new SIM card, normally with either China Unicom or China Telecom. In order to use a Chinese SIM card, an unlocked phone is a must-have.

We recommend downloading 'WeChat,' an app similar to 'WhatsApp', as most of the teachers in your school and people you meet will use it.

VPN

It may come as a shock to some, but internet sites such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Google (including Gmail) are blocked all over China. If you want to have access to such sites you will need to purchase a VPN connection, a programme which directs your internet server through that of another country, enabling you to access blocked websites. It is much easier to get a VPN while in a Western country, so it's preferable to arrange this before you leave home. There are many options ranging in cost from free upwards. The most reliable one from our experience is Astrill, priced around £27 for 6 months. It is a matter of personal choice whether or not you choose to buy a VPN, but many of our teachers do so in order to maintain familiar internet services and contact friends and family at home.

MEDICAL

We advise that you check with your GP well in advance which vaccinations you will need for your time in China and anywhere else you may visit. We can't advise you which ones you should get, however we can say that some are provided free on the NHS, so do your research!

Keep in mind that if you plan to travel after your placement, you may need additional vaccinations. We advise you get any vaccinations or medication in advance of your trip, as they are very difficult to find in China.

ORIENTATION DAY

Included in the cost of the package is an orientation day, normally held in London sometime in June. We cannot stress enough the importance of this day; it is a chance for you to meet everyone who will be travelling out to China with you, to get more information on lesson planning and day to day life and to learn some basic phrases in a Mandarin taster session.

Former teachers from the programme will be there to discuss their experience and offer advice, so it is an ideal opportunity to put your mind at ease over any last-minute queries which may not have been answered elsewhere. Our teachers have been through the same process and are familiar with how you may be feeling, so feel free to bring along a list of things that you are still unsure about!

For most teachers going for the first time, working in China represents the beginning of a challenging but hugely rewarding adventure, so it is good to be as fully informed as possible before departure.

CLOTHING

Summer schools have a 'business casual' dress code for their teachers. For boys, this means shorts and polos/t shirts and for girls it can mean the same or dresses and skirts. Please ensure such clothing is of an appropriate length; you'll be reaching up to write on the board and bending down to look at student's work, so make sure everything is comfortable and won't need adjusting.

The Chinese summer is extremely hot, so avoid heavy or thick fabrics. Some schools do allow flip flops or shoes that show your toes, while some do not. Feel free to bring them, but do also bring an alternative pair in case.

PACKING

Below are some items we recommend taking:

- Scan and photocopy of passport, visa and National Insurance card
- Insurance details
- Passport photos
- Paracetamol, cold and flu tablets etc. (difficult to find in China)
- Spray deodorant and for girl's tampons (neither are available in China)
- Blank set of Christmas cards/English gifts

Every year our summer teachers come back and tell us they wish they'd packed lighter. Remember, most things can be bought cheaply and easily in China. You may well pick things up as you go along, and you'll need space in your case!

If you plan to travel before or after your placement, many of our teachers advise a 70 or 80 litre back pack rather than a suit case. Of course, this is down to personal preference, but most find backpacks easier to carry over long distances and getting on and off transport.

Whether you pack your laptop or not is completely up to you. Every year some teachers take their computers and some don't, and no one is at a disadvantage in lessons. Laptops can be useful for showing film clips or PowerPoints, but they are by no means necessary.

ARRIVING IN CHINA



CULTURE SHOCK

Culture shock is something everyone is likely to experience in one way or another when moving abroad. Adjusting to a foreign culture is a very personal process, so there are no hard and fast rules about how long it will take you to settle in and to feel comfortable in your surroundings. There will of course be highs and lows of your experience, so it's important that you have people to speak to on those days where the cultural differences are getting on top of you.

There are several aspects of Chinese culture that in Western cultures are commonly seen as wrong. For example, children are frequently seen urinating in the street, public spitting is widespread and queuing is not a social norm.

These things are likely to seem bad mannered, baffling and downright frustrating at times but, it's important to remember that in China such behaviour is normal and is not done to cause offence.

HOMESICKNESS

As the initial stages of the culture shock wear off and you are familiar with your new city, China will most likely become a home away from home. However, this won't prevent the feeling of homesickness, which can creep up on you when you least expect it.

Again, this is a very personal thing which everyone deals with differently, however here are some tips from former teachers on how to deal with it:

- Be proactive; make plans, accept invitations and take all the opportunities you can. This will keep you looking forward to things and take your mind off what's happening at home
- Take your hobbies with you; acoustic guitars, ukuleles, sketch books & water colours. This will provide you with something familiar to do if ever you feel down
- Regular contact with home; Skype can make it seem as though your friends and family are just around the corner
- Establish a routine; this will help you feel in control of your new life, keep you busy and enable you to enjoy what your city has to offer
- Hangout with other foreigners; they are likely to have a good understanding of how you are feeling and are the best people to vent to! Some of our teachers have

attended concerts by big Western names such as Ed Sheeran. Such activities can be a great taste of home

The goodbyes on the way out will be hard, but so too will they on the way home. You'll be surprised by how emotionally attached you'll become to your school and local area!

SAFETY

Generally, China is a very safe place in which to live and travel. However, as in most busy tourist cities around the world, foreigners can be targeted by pick-pockets and scams so it is important to take care of belongings and beware of suspicious people.

One common scam in big cities is the 'tea scam.' This will normally involve a young Chinese person approaching you, claiming they want to practice their English with you and offering to take you to a nearby tea house or 'tea ceremony'. Once the tea is finished the bill will be presented and it will be astronomically high! If you refuse to pay things can get nasty. There is a similar scam involving art galleries and the "Chinese Picasso". If such a person approaches you kindly decline their offer to go to the tea house/visit their art gallery.

When getting a taxi, always go for a marked, city licensed cab. These can be found in taxi ranks outside any train or subway station, or can be flagged down in the main street if they have a green light on the top. Avoid any individual approaching you offering you a taxi, no matter how good the price may sound. You should never have to barter for a taxi – they should run on a meter.

FOOD AND DRINK

You should not drink water straight from the tap in China, however if you boil it first it is perfectly safe to drink. If you would prefer not to do that, bottled water can be found all over and is very cheap to buy.

When in restaurants it's best to use the phrase "búyàobīng" (no ice), as this is often made using tap water and is unsafe to drink.

Food plays an important role in Chinese culture and you will never be far from a restaurant. There is a huge street food culture in China; pavements across the country are lined with sellers preparing all kinds of different delicacies.

We advise being careful about what you eat from such stalls, especially when you first arrive, as the meat can be left to stand uncovered for hours. Just use your common sense when it comes to things like this; if it doesn't look safe, don't eat it.

It's not unusual for the stomach to struggle to get used to new foods and new bacteria at first, but being wary will go some way towards preventing illness.

LEARNING MANDARIN

Although you will not be expected to speak or understand any Mandarin when arriving in China, we do encourage you to try and learn the basics. We work with an experienced Mandarin teacher who will give a short introductory lesson at the orientation day. With patience and a willingness to learn it's not as difficult as it seems!

People in shops, on public transport and at your school will be eager to help you learn their language, so use these opportunities and don't be afraid to ask for help.

The free app 'Pleco' can be a life saver when out and about, allowing you to take a photo and get the definition of a character. It can even say the word for you!

Several people suggest focussing on spoken Mandarin rather than reading and writing to speed up your learning, but you are likely to be familiar with a handful of characters you see frequently.

See our Mandarin Lesson document for a brief introduction to some basic words and phrases you are likely to need.

TEACHING



PLANNING

It is impossible to make concrete lesson plans before beginning your placement as it's likely you will not know the age of your students until you get there. However, ideas for topics and games that can be altered to student's age and ability will save you a lot of time and stress on arrival, so we always advise that you do some research. Don't forget you have access to our lesson plan library, which is a useful place to begin.

Free resource sharing sites like tes.co.uk or waygook.org are also packed with useful material. You can find effective warm up and cool down activities on Maple Leaf Learning website and Super Simple Learning YouTube videos.

It is worth noting that because of the high amount of online traffic from all the foreign teachers trying to plan their lessons, the internet in the hotel or school staff room may be slower than usual. Therefore, making sure you have some topics in mind, with accompanying game ideas, could save you a lot of time further down the line - especially if you do not plan on bringing your lap top.

The more lessons you plan, the easier and quicker it becomes; you will soon build up a bank of ideas that you can apply to various topics and ages groups. Your students too will quickly learn how you structure things –the games you play often will not need explaining, and they will learn to understand your gestures and key words. Lesson planning is much more about quality than quantity and it's important to prepare engaging activities and have a lively and enthusiastic attitude that engages the students.

DISCIPLINE

Summer teachers are expected to be enthusiastic, positive and patient. Walking into the class room with a smile on your face even if it's too hot will go a long way!

Disciplining the students will mostly be left to the Chinese teachers. However, it is important to establish ground rules and silencing techniques with your students from the outset. Chinese students are generally very well behaved, but they can be loud and distract one another. If you do not lead the class, they will.

Introduce your own systems of dealing with this that the students can familiarise themselves with. Effective methods are;

- Knocking points off during team games for poor behaviour
- Writing names of loud students on the board for their class teacher to see
- Using 'repeat after me' clapping or counting systems to quieten the group

You should have a Chinese teacher in the room with you, but that may not always be the case, so you still need to be able to manage your class well without them.

REWARD SYSTEMS

Each teacher uses their own reward systems within their classes, but often stickers and stamps are very effective, particularly those with English words on.

It is unlikely that your students will be tested on what they have learnt with you, therefore it is important to push short term goals, using sticker charts or team points. Competition is a great tool to use for all ages.

TEACH ENGLISH IN CHINA RESOURCES

- Instagram: teachenglishinchina
- Youtube: 'Teach English in China' channel * Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Teach-English-in-China/8861318597>
- Website: teach-english-in-china.co.uk. Our website is packed with information, articles and photographs from former teachers
- Lesson plan library: <http://www.teiccorner.co.uk/Login.aspx>

AFTER YOUR PLACEMENT



TRAVELLING

As a summer intern, you will not only have the opportunity to live as a local, but also to visit other parts of this vast country. More and more of our teachers decide to travel either before or after their placement, due to the affordability and accessibility of travel in and around China. Previous teachers have visited places such as the Terracotta Warriors in Xi'an and the Avatar mountains in Zhangjiajie National Forest Park. Others have gone further afield, to places such as Hong Kong, Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines and Bali.

China has a great train system that allows you to get almost anywhere in the country at an affordable price. It is cheaper to buy tickets at the station, but www.travelchinaguide.com is a reliable site to check timetables, information and book through. Please note that you will need to use your passport whenever you book a train.

HELPING TEACH ENGLISH IN CHINA

We encourage our foreign teachers to stay involved with Teach English In China after their placements have finished. You can do this in many ways – from helping at careers fairs and lectures, sending on your photos or writing articles about your experiences in China. If you have an idea for an article or would like to work for Teach English In China in any other way, email Arnold Vis at arnold@teach-english-in-china.co.uk

You can find possible part-time opportunities and pay rates by following this link: <http://www.teiccorner.co.uk/JobList.aspx>