



# **Families of China**

## **Teacher's Guide**

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## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction to Guide</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Script to Families of the China</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Glossary</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Discussion</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Questions</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Answers</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>True and False Quiz</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Introduction to China</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>The Land</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>The Climate</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Plant and Animal Life</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>The People</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>History</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Map</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Flag</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Fact book on China</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Websites related China</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Recipes from China</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Activities</b>	<b>33</b>

## **Introduction**

**Families of China** can be used as an introduction to a broader study of China, providing a context to help children understand and remember additional information.

For instance the Yu Quinbo's silk worms can introduce the study of China's trade. Children can look at a map to trace the overland route ("silk route") China used to trade with the west. Then they can find Ningbo on the map and discuss trade by sea, locating some of China's other major harbors, and discussing what makes a good harbor and why cities grow up around harbors.

## **Families of China----Zhu Kun 9 Years Old**

Everything's quiet when I get up to go to school. My name is Zhu Kun and I live with my Mom and Dad in a village called Xiku Town, near Ningbo, China.

I get up about 5:15, sometimes even before my Mom and Dad! That's because my friends and I like to get to school about an hour before classes start. Sometimes I buy my breakfast at a little shop on the way to school, but today Mother's making me breakfast. I'm having soup made with rice, vegetables and eggs. We use our chopsticks to pick up pieces of food and scoop rice from our bowl into our mouth. It's OK to make noise when we eat.

We walk about a half an hour to school, which is in the next village. On the way we see people starting their day, washing clothes, washing vegetables, picking tea. Many different kinds of tea are grown in China and traded with other countries. Farmers pick tea three times a year. The tea leaves are brought back to the village before they wilt, so they can be dried in a large heated pan called a wok. Most people in our area drink green tea. But if they want black tea, they let the leaves ferment before they're dried.

The first thing I do when we get to school, is wash the rice I've brought for lunch. I put water with the rice so it will soften and puff up when it cooks. The cook piles our boxes high on the stove. We put our names on our lunch boxes, because they all look so much alike. The wooden sides keep the pile from falling, and keep the heat and steam inside when she puts on the lid. Then she builds a fire in the stove. The rice cooks while we're in class.

Before class we like to play ping-pong, which is popular all over China. Then we go to our classroom and practice reading before our teacher comes. We're all reading something different, so it's very noisy. When our teacher comes in, we show our respect by bowing. Our teacher is holding up new characters for us to learn. Characters are like letters that stand for a whole idea or a thing. This character means, "feed the chickens". This one means, "wide-eyed".

Mandarin is the official language that's taught in all schools, but many other languages are spoken in various parts of the country, because China has 56 nationalities.

The rice is ready by the time we have lunch at noon. We eat in our classroom.

After I have left for school in the morning, and Mom and Dad have eaten breakfast, Mom goes to the village market to buy food. Sellers come to the village at about 6 each morning, so people can buy fresh food every day. It's a good place to visit with friends. The market has several kinds of meat and fish, fruit and vegetables for sale. People can also buy clothes and shoes there.

When Mom gets home, she washes clothes. Our washing machine is in a room under our house. She hangs the clothes to dry.

Dad reads the paper in the morning.

My parents and grand parents farm together. They grow bonsai, which are miniature trees. It's late in the spring and they've finished most of the spring work.

Dad is going to check on bonsai they're growing in the mountains. On his way, Dad walks through a bamboo grove. Early every spring, Dad trims each of his bonsai plants. When the plants are about 2 years old, Dad takes the plants from the fields and puts them in pots to begin training.

A bonsai is supposed to remind you of a full-grown tree, so when you look at it, you can think about nature. Dad wraps the branches with wires to train the tree to grow in a way that looks like a full-grown tree. Every year he has to change the wires so the trees can keep growing.

Our neighbors are tying their bonsai so the plants won't fall out of their pots when they're shipped to market.

It usually takes about an hour for Mom to make lunch for her and Dad. She chops a vegetable, adds it to pork she has fried, and then adds rice noodles and eggs.

At about 3 o'clock Dad gives me a ride home from school. In my schoolbag I've brought home lots of small bamboo shoots I've gathered. This time of

year, bamboo trees send up new growth. People cut the young shoots to use in cooking. If they have more than they can use now, they cut up the bamboo and dry it in the sun. In the winter they can soak the bamboo in water and it will be ready to cook. Mom and Dad peel off the tough outer leaves so she can cook the bamboo for dinner tonight.

Mom will make a special dinner, because my grandparents are coming to eat with us.

She washes the bamboo I found, cuts it up, and cooks it. Then she peels taro root, which grows in our area and is ready this time of year. It's a special treat that we look forward to all year.

Mom fries pork, then she adds eggplant. Mom heats water in the morning and puts it in the thermos to stay hot, so it's ready for cooking and for making tea anytime during the day. She cooks most food in the wok, or frying pan, but she also uses a pressure cooker. Mom puts oil in the pan, and it's ready for cooking, fries pork in the oil, and adds green peppers. Later she cooks shrimp. Our stove has a big fan at the back to carry cooking smoke outside.

Before dinner, I do my homework. Then I play with my friends.

At about 6 o'clock Grandma and Grandpa come for dinner. Mom changes seats with me so I can watch TV. Everyone uses their chopsticks to take food from the dishes at the center of the table. Mom has made several kinds of meat, fish, and vegetables for dinner. Every meal ends with rice and tea.

Before bed, Mom helps me wash my feet. Then I wash my face and brush my teeth in the kitchen. It's about 9 o'clock when I climb into my bed, next to Mom and Dad's. Goodnight!

### **Families of China----Yu Qinbo 9 Years Old**

Long before I wake up in the morning, people are gathering in the park along the river to exercise and do tai chi. Tai chi is a kind of exercise for the mind and body, developed in ancient China. Although it looks like a dance, it's really the defense movements a warrior might have used, but done very slowly and thoughtfully.

I'm still sleeping when my Dad starts making breakfast. It's 6 o'clock when my alarm wakes me for school.

My name is Yu Qinbo and I'm 9 years old. I live with my mother and father in Ningbo, a city of about a million people on the eastern coast of China.

Last night Mom and I put out the clothes I'm going to wear today. It's still quite chilly on this spring morning, so I wear several layers of clothes.

For breakfast, we're having rice, scrambled eggs, sausage, dried pork, pickled vegetables and milk. After breakfast, mom helps me with my hair.

Then Dad and I give my silkworms fresh mulberry leaves. When each worm, or caterpillar, is big enough, it will spin a puffy, white cocoon around itself. For thousands of years people in China have grown silkworms for the long, strong thread that forms their cocoon. After about 10 days the cocoons are ready to be unwound, but I'll let mine grow into moths.

Silk has been important to Chinese people because we traded silk to the traders who traveled here from Europe. The silk business isn't as important as it used to be, because China now makes so many things to trade with other countries. My father says China is one of the largest manufacturers and traders in the world.

When I leave for school at about 7, my mother and father also go to work. Mother works at the Ningbo Education Commission. Chinese people have great respect for education, and parents try to make sure their children get as much education as they can.

Dad teaches people how to inspect everything that's shipped through Ningbo harbor. Most of the goods on the big ships and barges are carried in big boxes called containers. The containers can be picked up by cranes to be loaded or unloaded onto trucks or railroad cars.

My friend, Ma Ting Ting, and I ride a city bus to school. Most people either ride bicycles, use buses, or walk.

To show our respect to each other and to the school, we salute as we enter the schoolyard. At 7:30 everyone gathers in the courtyard. Our school has

about 1500 students in grades 1-6. We have announcements, raise the flag, and sing the national anthem.

China is a socialist country where people work to make things better for everyone. We think of the government as being ourselves, the people. We're trying to make sure everyone has an education, health care, and a good place to live.

This is a big job, because China has so many people...more than a billion! So in order for the government to be able to take care of everyone, each couple is allowed to give birth to only one child. Even so, our class, like most, has about 58 students.

Today we have exercise class. At noon students from each room go to the school kitchen to pick up lunch for their class. Today we're having rice, chicken, and soup. After lunch, each of us washes our own dishes. Twice each day we also do exercises to rest and strengthen our eyes.

During recess I like to play a string game that's a little like jump rope.

After school we can choose from lots of activities. I have English club once a week. Because most business and science is done in English, our teacher says it's important for us to learn.

Even though our school building was just built in 1996, the school is over 100 years old. The government feels education is very important for China's future, but this hasn't always been true. For many years people were taught that music, art, religion, cultural traditions, learning and even beauty were bad, and so they were forbidden.

But in recent years the government wants people to learn and practice all kinds of art, traditions and culture, so education is now very important.

Other things are changing, too. Everything in China used to belong to everyone. No one owned their own business or home. Children didn't even have their own toys. Now people can run their own businesses and buy homes, and it's OK to have things like games, TV and money.

Mother picks me up from school at about 5 o'clock. After she drops me at home, she walks to the grocery store, where she's buying shrimp and crabs



for dinner. After the clerk weighs the vegetables, mom pays for them with money called yuan.

We only live a few blocks from the market. My parents bought our apartment 2 years ago when the building was new. My Mom says our government has built lots of apartments in Ningbo and all over China in recent years. We live on the 4th floor of our building.

My homework usually takes me about an hour. Then I like to watch TV.

Dad uses a wok to cook almost everything but rice, which he washes and cooks in an electric steamer. Most people in southern China eat rice at every meal. In northern China, people eat more foods made with wheat, like noodles and steamed bread. Dad says our country is known for its large variety of foods and interesting cooking. We usually eat dinner at about 6 o'clock.

Then Mom checks my homework.

Later Ma Ting Ting comes over and we all do karaoke. Our karaoke set plays the music and words to songs, and records us as we sing along. It's 9 o'clock. Time to get ready for bed. Goodnight!

## Glossary

**character:**

A graphic symbol used in writing or printing.

**chopsticks:**

A pair of slender wooden, ivory, or plastic sticks used as eating utensils in Asian countries and restaurants.

**ferment:**

A chemical change brought about by yeasts, bacteria or molds.

**Mandarin:**

The most widely-used language in China

**ping-pong:**

Also called table tennis. Two or four players use paddles to hit a ball over a net on a rectangular table.

**pressure cooker:**

An airtight pot which cooks food quickly using steam under pressure

**pickled vegetables:**

Preserved or marinated in a salt or vinegar solution

**socialism:**

Ownership by the community rather than an individual, where all members of society share the work and the benefits.

**tai chi:**

A series of slow, relaxed movements developed in China as a system of self-defense and an aid to meditation.

**wok:**

A large rounded pot primarily used for frying foods.

**yuan:** Official unit of Chinese currency

## **Discussion After Viewing**

- Ask each child to list some of the similarities and differences between their family and school and those in the video.
- If children have friends or relatives from China, ask the children to interview them and bring in items, photos, and stories about them.
- Invite someone from China to talk with the class about their life in China (what was school like?), play a traditional instrument, or tell a Chinese story.
- China has changed greatly in the last few years. For instance as of 2009 there were 700 million mobile phone subscribers. 13 million vehicles were sold in 2009. (Ask your Chinese visitor to view “Families of China” ahead of time so he or she can compare and contrast the lives of these families with their own when they were growing up in China.
- Ask the children to describe the weather in Ningbo. Pick other cities in China on a map and talk about what their weather might be like, based on being farther north or south of Ningbo, or being in the mountains, etc. Then check an atlas or Internet to see how accurate the guesses are.
- Ask children to name or draw various ways people travel from one place to another here and in China. Ask them to think of advantages and disadvantages of each of the methods.
- The people of the rural village in the video are considered “rich” in China. Discuss why many Chinese may feel this is true. (The family has leisure time, they dress well, have plentiful food and beautiful surroundings).

## Questions

1. What is the relationship between a diet of rice and the size of China's population?
2. How many characters does one need to learn to become literate?
3. Has China always had a billion people?
4. Are all the people in China the same?
5. Why did Marco Polo go to China?
6. What would it be like if nobody had any brothers or sisters or aunts and uncles?

## Answers to Questions

1. What is the relationship between rice and the size of China's population?

Rice produces the most amount of food per unit of land. It also requires the most labor of any cereal crop. So rice allows China to have a large population but also requires many people to plant, transplant, weed, prepare the land, and water the rice.

2. How many characters does one need to learn to become literate?

One needs to know about 5,000 characters. Each of the characters can be combined with others to form new words.

3. Has China always had a billion people?

No, at the time of Christ and until the discovery of the Americas, China had a population of between 50 and 100 million. With the discovery of double cropping for rice it doubled, and doubled again with the introduction of food crops from the Americas like corn, potatoes and sweet potatoes. In 1950, China's population was 500 million. Better medicine, fertilizers doubled the population.

4. Are all the people in China the same?

No, while the Han make up 90% of the population, there are Mongols, Turks, Tibetans and tribal people. Even the Han differ between northerners and southerners. Northerners tend to be taller and heavier. Southerners eat rice while Northerners eat wheat.

5. Why did Marco Polo go to China?

Marco Polo went to China, because people in Europe were interested in Chinese silk. No other fabric in the world at the time felt as comfortable.

6. What would it be like if nobody had any brothers or sisters or aunts and uncles?

## Some Things We've Learned About China

(Circle the correct answer)

- 1) T F Mandarin is the only language spoken in China.
- 2) T F Most food in China is baked in large ovens.
- 3) T F The yuan is the official currency of China.
- 4) T F In Zhu Kun's part of China every meal includes rice and tea.
- 5) T F It's bad manners in China to make noise when you eat..
- 6) T F A wok is a tub for washing feet.
- 7) T F Ningbo is in a tropical part of China that has no seasons.
- 8) Yu Qinbo is an only child. Is this typical in China? YES NO
- 9) A Chinese person uses \_\_\_\_\_ to scoop food from a bowl into his or her mouth.
- 10) How can you tell that Zhu Kun's parents (the rural family) know how to read?
- 11) Why do the people in the agricultural village grow bonsai?
- 12) Why does Yu Qinbo's teacher think Chinese children should learn English?
- 13) How do you know that Zhu Kun's family has electricity?

**Draw a series of pictures telling Yu Qinbo or Zhu Kun's story. Try to include as much detail as you can remember from each part of the story.**

## **Introduction**

China is famous for having the most people of any nation in the world, the longest continuous civilization, and a world famous cuisine. She is also the home of the Great Wall, the giant panda bear, and the picturesque hills of Guilin.

## **The Land**

China is about the size of the United States, lying approximately in the same latitude. The land is very mountainous. The highest part is in the southwest, where the Himalayas and the Tibetan plateau lie, next comes a belt of plateaus and basins, and finally by the sea lies low level plains. There are mountains in all the provinces even the coastal ones. Two great rivers arise from the Tibetan plateau and run eastward to the sea. One is the Huang or Yellow River, and the other is the Chang or Long River. On its lower course it is known as the Yangtze. Sweeping across China, there is in the northwest great sand or rocky deserts. In the northeast, there are large stretches of virgin forests and the largest plains lie in the north central area. The east coast has some of the best-watered lands in China. The southeast is hilly with many good harbors. The south has jungles and sunny warm beaches in the winter.

## **The Climate**

China's climate is very varied, ranging from tropical in the south to sub arctic in the extreme north. In the winter the mean temperature range from 72 degrees Fahrenheit (22 degrees Centigrade) in the extreme south to -18 Fahrenheit (-27 degrees Centigrade) in the extreme north, while in summer the range of temperature between North and South China is quite small. Rainfall in China generally decreases from the southeast to the northwest. Most of the rain falls in the summer. The southeastern coast is subjected to strong storms called typhoons during summer and fall.

## **Plant and Animal Life**

The great extent of mountains in China helps sustain the diverse animal and plant life. There are still wild elephants, giant pandas, alligators and dolphins



in China. The establishment of nature preserves is helping to prevent human encroachment on the delicate habitats of the animals.

## **The People**

Most Chinese still live in the rural villages and as many as 50% still work in agriculture. In the north, the villages are fairly evenly distributed and are connected with one another by footpaths and cart tracks. Houses are built close together and are mostly made of sun-dried brick or pounded earth. Walls surround many of the market towns or even large villages.

Rice fields dominate rural landscapes of central and southern China. Villages tend to be larger; many have a few shops that serve not only the villagers but also the dispersed residents nearby. In the center of dozens of such villages is a market town, which collects rural produce and distributes manufactured goods. Communication among the villages is often by boat, along the dense net of waterways. People still find it hard to leave their place of birth. Without a residence permit, children cannot find a place in school. Thus many migrant workers go by themselves to the cities to find work. Many farmers also start up small businesses to increase their income.

As China has modernized, the percentage of her population who live in town and cities has increased dramatically to 36%. Much of this increase has come as large villages are merged together into towns. New towns and cities are being created every year. As her economy becomes more integrated into the world economy, the lands around the eastern seaboard have seen a surge of investment, economic growth and urbanization. . In the great cities of Beijing, Nanjing, Tianjin, Shanghai and Guangzhou people from all parts of China who can get residence permits come to live and mix.

Over ninety percent of Chinese are of the Han ethnic group. Some 55 minority groups also live in China, the most numerous being the Tibetans, the Uighurs, the Mongols, the Koreans, the Chuang and the Miao. The Han themselves trace their heritage to the many non-Chinese peoples who lived in what is today China, to the many invaders from the north as well as to the multiple groups whose contributions created the Chinese culture. Most people in China speak Mandarin Chinese or Putonghua. Those in the southeastern provinces speak many older forms of Chinese that are mutually

unintelligible. They do share the same written language. Education is in Mandarin Chinese, so most educated people can speak Mandarin.

## **The Arts**

The traditional Chinese arts include painting, calligraphy, music and poetry. Other crafts include architecture, sculpture, bronze and jade work and pottery. Popular arts include paper-cuts and flower arranging. Today, Western art, Chinese art and modern art exists side by side. There is greater freedom of expression, as long as one does not criticize the ruling Communist Party.

## **Cultural Life**

Life still revolves around the traditional celebrations: The Lunar New Year, Dragon Boat Festival, Mid Autumn Festival, Ching-Ming (or tomb cleaning) Festival. The family is still the most important social organization. As the country has modernized its transportation and communication facilities, there has been a lessening of speech differences, more travel in search of work or for pleasure. The great majority of households now own a television set. People watch movies, go to watch the professional soccer and basketball leagues. Many people practice tai chi, a martial art form, to exercise and settle the mind. Children enjoy kite flying.

## **History**

People have lived in China for tens of thousands of years. As long ago as eight thousand years ago, there is evidence of the cultivation of rice. Villages appear in many places in China. Different cultures emerge in North China, in the east by the sea, in the southwest in the mountains and in the northwest. By four thousand years ago, large states have arisen capable of monumental architecture, and city walls made of rammed earth over 4 miles in length with a base of over 100 feet wide. The first dynasties, or royal lines, knew how to work bronze, had a written language whose basic structure has come down to the present. They expanded their frontiers in all directions. China's history is characterized by periods of unity and strong central power alternating with periods of where multiple smaller states existed together. It was during one of these periods without strong central authority about twenty five hundred years ago, that a number of philosophies

arose. The most important of them was Confucianism and Taoism. Confucianism was a philosophy that sought to create a social order through the cultivation of oneself. He felt that the cultivation of virtue, both as a personal quality and as a requirement for leadership, was essential for individual dignity, communal solidarity, political stability and universal peace. Taoism appealed to the mystical side of human nature, it was against all forms of structures, and organizations. It finds the ideal in nature, as man and nature are part of the same.

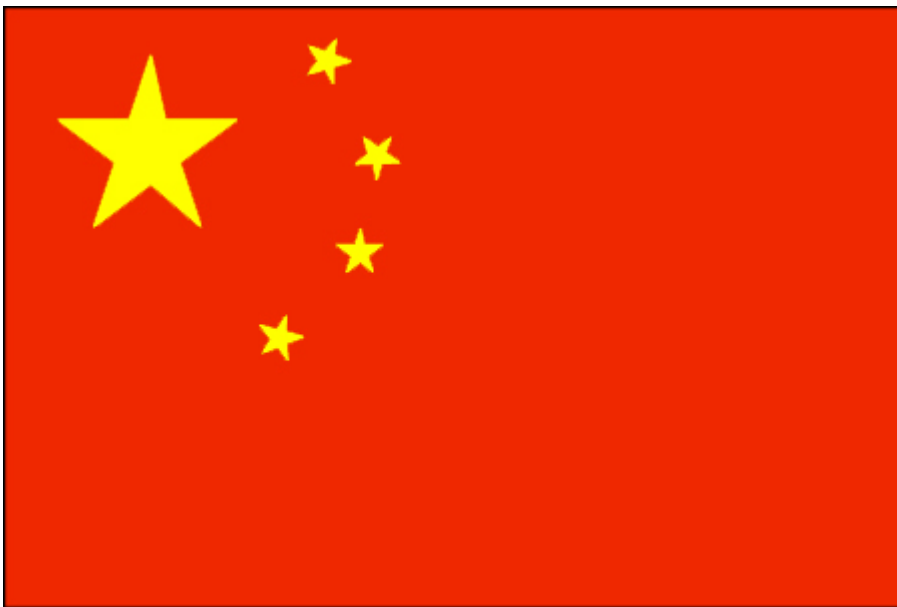
Twenty two hundred years ago, during the Han dynasty, the discovery of cast iron soon produced better plows and weapons. The frontiers were pushed all the way to sea in the east and to the north toward Korea. Trade developed along the Silk Road as Romans were fascinated with silk. When the centralized state declined, a new religion came to China, Buddhism. With its fundamental concepts such as the nonexistence of the individual ego and the illusory nature of the physical world, it made a deep impression on the Chinese. Assisted by the discovery of paper and block printing, the religion spread widely across East Asia. By the time the centralized state arose again in the 600s, in the Tang dynasty, Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism were all well established in China. The conquest of the south was completed and the borders of China proper have remained the same till today.

From the 400s, nomad tribes had invaded, ruled, and mixed with the Chinese. Turkish-Chinese families formed the ruling Tang Dynasty. In the 900s, northern nomads ruled northern China. In the 1300s the Mongols ruled all of China, bringing into the Chinese sphere much of southwest China, Tibet and the Chinese Turkestan. When Marco Polo visited China, he commented on the use of coal, paper money, and watertight compartments on ships. In the 1700s, semi-nomads, the Manchus from the northeastern part of China conquered and ruled all of China till 1911.

Starting in the 1600s, Western Europeans started to arrive in China. Trade developed in porcelain and tea. By the 1850s, the European superiority in the sciences, organization and military power allowed them carve out territories and privileges. The period also saw growing economic pressures that led to a great civil war in China that resulted in the death of over 60 million. As Manchu power declined, sentiment began to grow for change in China to counteract its weakness. The overthrow of the Manchu in 1911 was followed by a break up of central authority as various warlords disputed for

power. A nationalist government arose in the late 1920s to consolidate power over the country. It soon faced a growing threat from an expansionist Japan. An eight-year war soon ensued that only ended with the end of the Second World War. A civil war then broke out between the Communists and the Nationalists, which was soon won by the Communists. The communist government made much progress as well as many mistakes in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Slowly the country began to turn away from Communism toward a market and rule based economy. The economy has grown quickly since 1980 and many have been lifted from poverty. Private enterprise has been allowed, people are encouraged to buy their own homes, there is a greater personal freedom, and more tolerance of dissent. Today, China's economy is one of the largest in world, and its global trade also rank as one the largest in the world.

# Map of China



**The red of the flag is the traditional color of revolution; the large gold star represents "the Common Program of the Communist Party"; and the smaller gold stars represent the four classes united by the common program: the workers, the peasants, the petty bourgeois, and capitalists sympathetic to the Party**

## Fact book on China

### Geography

**Location:** Eastern Asia, bordering the East China Sea, Korea Bay, Yellow Sea, and South China Sea, between North Korea and Vietnam

**Geographic coordinates:** 35 00 N, 105 00 E

**Map references:** Asia

**Area:**

*total:* 9,596,960 sq km

*land:* 9,326,410 sq km

*water:* 270,550 sq km

**Area - comparative:** slightly smaller than the US

**Land boundaries:**

*total:* 22,143.34 km

*border countries:* Afghanistan 76 km, Bhutan 470 km, Burma 2,185 km, Hong Kong 30 km, India 3,380 km, Kazakhstan 1,533 km, North Korea 1,416 km, Kyrgyzstan 858 km, Laos 423 km, Macau 0.34 km, Mongolia 4,673 km, Nepal 1,236 km, Pakistan 523 km, Russia (northeast) 3,605 km, Russia (northwest) 40 km, Tajikistan 414 km, Vietnam 1,281 km

**Coastline:** 14,500 km

**Maritime claims:**

*contiguous zone:* 24 nm

*continental shelf:* 200 nm or to the edge of the continental margin

*territorial sea:* 12 nm

**Climate:** extremely diverse; tropical in south to sub arctic in north

**Terrain:** mostly mountains, high plateaus, deserts in west; plains, deltas, and hills in east

**Elevation extremes:**

*lowest point:* Turpan Pendi -154 m

*highest point:* Mount Everest 8,850 m (1999 est.)

**Natural resources:** coal, iron ore, petroleum, natural gas, mercury, tin, tungsten, antimony, manganese, molybdenum, vanadium, magnetite, aluminum, lead, zinc, uranium, hydropower potential (world's largest)

**Land use:**

*arable land:* 10%

*permanent crops:* 0%

*permanent pastures:* 43%

*forests and woodland:* 14%

*other:* 33% (1993 est.)

**Irrigated land:** 498,720 sq km (1993 est.)

**Natural hazards:** frequent typhoons (about five per year along southern and eastern coasts); damaging floods; tsunamis; earthquakes; droughts

**Environment - current issues:** air pollution (greenhouse gases, sulfur dioxide particulates) from reliance on coal, produces acid rain; water shortages, particularly in the north; water pollution from untreated wastes; deforestation; estimated loss of one-fifth of agricultural land since 1949 to soil erosion and economic development; desertification; trade in endangered species

**Environment - international agreements:**

*party to:* Antarctic-Environmental Protocol, Antarctic Treaty, Biodiversity, Climate Change, Desertification, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Tropical Timber 83, Tropical Timber 94, Wetlands, Whaling

*signed, but not ratified:* Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Nuclear Test Ban

**Geography - note:** world's fourth-largest country (after Russia, Canada, and US)

## People

**Population:** 1,338,832,482 (July 2009 est.)

**Age structure:**

*0-14 years:* 20%

*15-64 years:* 71%

*65 years and over:* 8% ( (2008est.)



**Population growth rate:** 0.63% (2008 est.)

**Birth rate:** 13.72 births/1,000 population (2008 est.)

**Death rate:** 7.03 deaths/1,000 population (2008 est.)

**Net migration rate:** -0.4 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2008 est.)

**Sex ratio:**

*at birth:* 1.15 male(s)/female

*under 15 years:* 1.1 male(s)/female

*15-64 years:* 1.06 male(s)/female

*65 years and over:* 0.88 male(s)/female

*total population:* 1.06 male(s)/female (2008 est.)

**Infant mortality rate:** 21.16 deaths/1,000 live births (2008 est.)

**Life expectancy at birth:**

*total population:* 73 years

*male:* 71 years

*female:* 75 years (2008 est.)

**Total fertility rate:** 1.77 children born/woman (2008 est.)

**Nationality:**

*noun:* Chinese (singular and plural)

*adjective:* Chinese

**Ethnic groups:** Han Chinese 91.9%, Zhuang, Uygur, Hui, Yi, Tibetan, Miao, Manchu, Mongol, Buyi, Korean, and other nationalities 8.1%

**Religions:** Daoist (Taoist), Buddhist, Muslim 2%-3%, Christian 1% (est.)

*note:* officially atheist

**Languages:** Standard Chinese or Mandarin (Putonghua, based on the Beijing dialect), Yue (Cantonese), Wu (Shanghainese), Minbei (Fuzhou), Minnan (Hokkien-Taiwanese), Xiang, Gan, Hakka dialects, minority languages (see Ethnic groups entry)

**Literacy:**

*definition:* age 15 and over can read and write

*total population: 91.5%*  
*male: 94 %*  
*female: 89% (2004 est.)*

## **Government**

### **Country name:**

*conventional long form: People's Republic of China*

*conventional short form: China*

*local long form: Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo*

*local short form: Zhong Guo*

*abbreviation: PRC*

**Government type:** Communist state

**Capital:** Beijing

**Administrative divisions:** 23 provinces (sheng, singular and plural), 5 autonomous regions\* (zizhiqu, singular and plural), and 4 municipalities\*\* (shi, singular and plural); Anhui, Beijing\*\*, Chongqing\*\*, Fujian, Gansu, Guangdong, Guangxi\*, Guizhou, Hainan, Hebei, Heilongjiang, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Jilin, Liaoning, Nei Mongol\*, Ningxia\*, Qinghai, Shaanxi, Shandong, Shanghai\*\*, Shanxi, Sichuan, Tianjin\*\*, Xinjiang\*, Xizang\* (Tibet), Yunnan, Zhejiang

*note: China considers Taiwan its 23rd province; see separate entries for the special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau*

**Independence:** 221 BC (unification under the Qin or Ch'in Dynasty 221 BC; Qing or Ch'ing Dynasty replaced by the Republic on 12 February 1912; People's Republic established 1 October 1949)

**National holiday:** National Day, 1 October (1949)

**Constitution:** most recent promulgation 4 December 1982

**Legal system:** a complex amalgam of custom and statute, largely criminal law; rudimentary civil code in effect since 1 January 1987; new legal codes in effect since 1 January 1980; continuing efforts are being made to improve civil, administrative, criminal, and commercial law

**Suffrage:** 18 years of age; universal

**Executive branch:**

*chief of state:* President HU Jintao (since 15 March 2003) *head of government:* Premier WEN Jiabao (since 16 March 2003) *cabinet:* State Council appointed by the National People's Congress (NPC)  
*elections:* president and vice president elected by the National People's Congress for five-year terms; premier nominated by the president, confirmed by the National People's Congress

**Legislative branch:** unicameral National People's Congress or Quanguo Renmin Daibiao Dahui (2,979 seats; members elected by municipal, regional, and provincial people's congresses to serve five-year terms)

**Judicial branch:** Supreme People's Court, judges appointed by the National People's Congress

**Political parties and leaders:** Chinese Communist Party or CCP [JIANG Zemin, General Secretary of the Central Committee]; eight registered small parties controlled by CCP

**Political pressure groups and leaders:** no substantial political opposition groups exist, although the government has identified the Falungong sect and the China Democracy Party as potential rivals

**Diplomatic representation in the US:**

*chief of mission:* Ambassador  
*chancery:* 2300 Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008  
*telephone:* [1] (202) 328-2500  
*consulate(s) general:* Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco

**Diplomatic representation from the US:**

*chief of mission:* Ambassador  
*embassy:* Xiu Shui Bei Jie 3, 100600 Beijing  
*mailing address:* PSC 461, Box 50, FPO AP 96521-0002  
*telephone:* [86] (10) 6532-3831  
*FAX:* [86] (10) 6532-6422  
*consulate(s) general:* Chengdu, Guangzhou, Shanghai, Shenyang

**Flag description:** red with a large yellow five-pointed star and four smaller yellow five-pointed stars (arranged in a vertical arc toward the middle of the flag) in the upper hoist-side corner

## **Economy**

**Economy - overview:** Beginning in late 1978 the Chinese leadership has been moving the economy from a sluggish Soviet-style centrally planned economy to a more market-oriented economy but still within a rigid political framework of Communist Party control. To this end the authorities have switched to a system of household responsibility in agriculture in place of the old collectivization, increased the authority of local officials and plant managers in industry, permitted a wide variety of small-scale enterprise in services and light manufacturing, and opened the economy to increased foreign trade and investment. The result has been a quadrupling of GDP since 1978. In 2010, with its 1.33 billion people but a GDP of just \$3,600 per capita, China became the second largest economy in the world after the US. Agricultural output doubled in the 1980s, and industry also posted major gains, especially in coastal areas near Hong Kong and opposite Taiwan, where foreign investment helped spur output of both domestic and export goods. On the darker side, the leadership has often experienced in its hybrid system the worst results of socialism (bureaucracy, lassitude, corruption) and of capitalism (windfall gains and stepped-up inflation). Beijing thus has periodically backtracked, retightening central controls at intervals. In late 1993 China's leadership approved additional long-term reforms aimed at giving still more play to market-oriented institutions and at strengthening the center's control over the financial system; state enterprises would continue to dominate many key industries in what was now termed "a socialist market economy". In 1995-99 inflation dropped sharply, reflecting tighter monetary policies and stronger measures to control food prices. At the same time, the government struggled to (a) collect revenues due from provinces, businesses, and individuals; (b) reduce corruption and other economic crimes; and (c) keep afloat the large state-owned enterprises, most of which had not participated in the vigorous expansion of the economy and many of which had been losing the ability to pay full wages and pensions. From 50 to 100 million surplus rural workers are adrift between the villages and the cities, many subsisting through part-time low-paying jobs. Popular resistance, changes in central policy, and loss of authority by rural cadres have weakened China's population control program, which is essential to maintaining growth in living standards. Another long-term threat to

continued rapid economic growth is the deterioration in the environment, notably air pollution, soil erosion, and the steady fall of the water table especially in the north. China continues to lose arable land because of erosion and economic development. The next few years will witness increasing tensions between a highly centralized political system and an increasingly decentralized economic system.

**GDP:** purchasing power parity - \$8.8 trillion (2009 est.)

**GDP - real growth rate:** 8% (2010 est.)

**GDP - per capita:** purchasing power parity - \$6,500 (2009 est.)

**GDP - composition by sector:**

*agriculture:* 11%

*industry:* 48%

*services:* 40% (2008 est.)

**Population below poverty line:** 2.6% (2006 est.)

**Household income or consumption by percentage share:**

*lowest 10%:* 1.6%

*highest 10%:* 34.9% (2006)

**Inflation rate (consumer prices):** -0.8% (2009 est.)

**Labor force:** 812 million (2009 est.)

**Labor force - by occupation:** agriculture 43%, industry 25%, services 32% (2008)

**Unemployment rate:** urban unemployment roughly 10%; substantial unemployment and underemployment in rural areas (2008 est.)

**Industries:** iron and steel, coal, machine building, armaments, textiles and apparel, petroleum, cement, chemical fertilizers, footwear, toys, food processing, automobiles, consumer electronics, telecommunications

**Industrial production growth rate:** 8.1% (2009 est.)

**Electricity - production by source:**

*fossil fuel:* 80.31%

*hydro:* 18.46%

*nuclear:* 1.23%

*other:* 0% (2008)

**Agriculture - products:** rice, wheat, potatoes, sorghum, peanuts, tea, millet, barley, cotton, oilseed; pork; fish

**Exports:** \$1194 billion (f.o.b., 2009)

**Exports - commodities:** machinery and equipment; textiles and clothing, footwear, toys and sporting goods; mineral fuels, chemicals

**Exports - partners:** US 17%, Hong Kong 13%, Japan 8%, Germany, South Korea, Netherlands, UK, Singapore, Taiwan (2009)

**Imports:** \$921 billion (c.i.f., 2009)

**Imports - commodities:** machinery and equipment, plastics, chemicals, iron and steel, mineral fuels

**Imports - partners:** Japan 13.3%, South Korea 10%, US 7.2%, Taiwan, Germany, Hong Kong, Russia, Singapore (2009)

**Currency:** 1 yuan = 10 jiao

**Exchange rates:** yuan per US\$1 – 6.82 (July 2009), 7.61 (2006), 8.2793 (January 2000), 8.3514 (1995)

*note:* beginning 1 January 1994, the People's Bank of China quotes the midpoint rate against the US dollar based on the previous day's prevailing rate in the interbank foreign exchange market

**Fiscal year:** calendar year

## **Communications**

**Telephones - main lines in use:** 348 million (2009 est.)

**Telephones - mobile cellular:** 700 million (2009)

## Transportation

**Railways:**

*total:* 77,834 km (including 5,400 km of provincial "local" rails)

**Highways:**

*total:* 3.58 million km

*paved:* 3,231,000 km (with at least 53,974 km of expressways)

*unpaved:* 354,000 km (2007 est.)

**Waterways:** 110,000 km navigable (2007)

**Ports and harbors:** Dalian, Fuzhou, Guangzhou, Haikou, Huangpu, Lianyungang, Nanjing, Nantong, Ningbo, Qingdao, Qinhuangdao, Shanghai, Shantou, Tianjin, Xiamen, Xingang, Yantai, Zhanjiang

**Airports:** 482 (2009 est.)

**Airports - with paved runways:** 425

## Websites related to China

[travel.yahoo.com/t/Asia/China/essent.html](http://travel.yahoo.com/t/Asia/China/essent.html)

[www.chinaoninternet.com/coi.htm](http://www.chinaoninternet.com/coi.htm)

## Recipes from China

### Egg-Drop Soup

#### INGREDIENTS

2 eggs, beaten	1/2 tbsp sesame oil
5 tbsp wood ears, soaked	2 cups (500 ml) clear stock
2 oz (50 g) hearts of Chinese cabbages	3/4 tsp salt, or to taste
2 1/2 tbsp vegetable oil or lard	



#### RECIPE

1. Wash and slice the wood ears and cabbage hearts.
2. Heat 2 1/2 tbsp of the vegetable oil or lard in a wok. Add the eggs and fry until browned on both sides. Remove and cut into small pieces. Set aside. Pour the stock into the wok and add the salt, wood ears, cabbage hearts, eggs. Bring to a boil and let boil 1 minute. Sprinkle with the 1/2 tbsp sesame oil, and serve.



## **Activities**

### **Make a Chinese Paper Fan**

#### **What you need**

**Large piece of white paper 11 by 16 is fine**

**Assorted markers**

**Transparent tape**

#### **Steps**

- a. Hold paper so the long side is on the bottom.**
- b. Decorate both sides**
- c. Accordion fold the paper along the short side**
- d. Pinch the pleated paper in the center**
- e. Bring up the two sides and tape together for a fan**