

China



Introduction

China is believed to have the oldest continuous civilization. China has over 4,000 years of verifiable history. Beijing is the capital of China and is the focal point for the country. The official language is standard Chinese, which is derived from the Mandarin dialect. Most business people speak English. There are many dialects in China however there is only one written language.

A Communist form of government rules China. The Chinese government promotes atheism although the constitution guarantees freedom of religion. The Chinese practice a variety of religions, however, Confucianism; despite not being a formal religion is practiced widely throughout the country.

China is the most densely populated county in the world with approximately 1.17 billion people as of 1992. Almost 100 percent of the population are ethnic or Han Chinese. There are strict rules regarding childbirth and each couple is limited to only one child.

Fun Fact

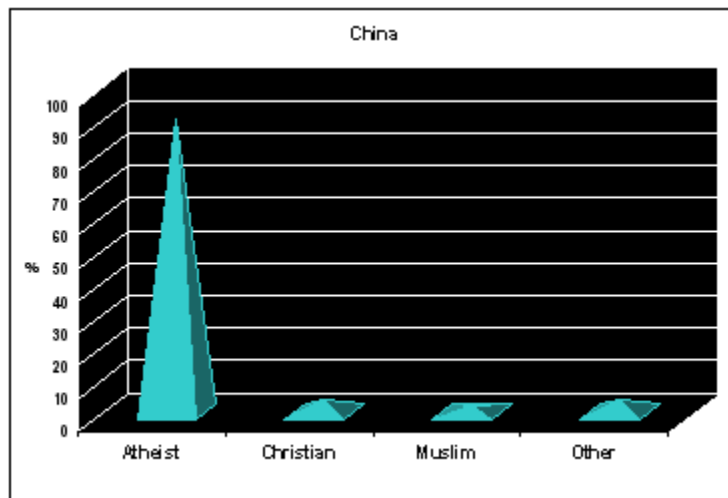
The tradition of digging up "dragon bones" (tortoise and cattle bones) has long been a part of Chinese culture. These bones are often used to predict the future. The bones were inscribed with questions then heated to reveal the answers. The tradition dates back as far as the Bronze Age.

Geert Hofstede Analysis China

[Click Here for Geert Hofstede country scores](#)

The Geert Hofstede analysis for China is similar to that of Hong Kong where Long-term Orientation is the highest-ranking factor. However, the Chinese rank lower than any other Asian country in the Individualism factor. This can be attributed primarily to the Communist rule and its emphasis on a collectivist culture. [More Details](#)

Religion in China



* WORLD FACTBOOK 2002

Appearance

- Conservative suits for men with subtle colors are the norm.
- Women should avoid high heels and short sleeved blouses. The Chinese frown on women who display too much.
- Subtle, neutral colors should be worn by both men and women.
- Casual dress should be conservative as well.
- Men and women can wear jeans. However, jeans are not acceptable for business meetings.
- Revealing clothing for women is considered offensive to Chinese businessmen.

Behavior

- Do not use large hand movements. The Chinese do not speak with their hands. Your movements may be distracting to your host.
- Personal contact must be avoided at all cost. It is highly inappropriate for a man to touch a woman in public.
- Do not point when speaking.
- To point do not use your index finger, use an open palm.
- It is considered improper to put your hand in your mouth.
- Avoid acts that involve the mouth.
- Gift giving is a very delicate issue in China.
- It is illegal to give gifts to government official however; it has become more commonplace in the business world.
- It is more acceptable to give gifts either in private or to a group as a whole to avoid embarrassment.

- The most acceptable gift is a banquet.
- Quality writing pens as considered favored gifts.
- The following gifts and/or colors are associated with death and should not be given:
 - Clocks
 - Straw sandals
 - A stork or crane
 - Handkerchiefs
 - Anything white, blue or black
- Always arrive on time or early if you are the guest.
- Do not discuss business at meals.
- Do not start to eat or drink prior to the host.
- As a cultural courtesy, you should taste all the dishes you are offered.
- Sample meals only, there may be several courses.
- Never place your chopsticks straight up in your bowl. By placing your sticks upright in your bowl you will remind your host of joss sticks which connotes death.
- Do not drop the chopsticks it is considered bad luck.
- Do not eat all of your meal. If you eat all of your meal, the Chinese will assume you did not receive enough food and are still hungry.
- Women do not usually drink at meals.
- Tipping is considered insulting, however the practice is becoming more common.

Communications

- Bowing or nodding is the common greeting; however, you may be offered a handshake. Wait for the Chinese to offer their hand first.
- Applause is common when greeting a crowd; the same is expected in return.

- Introductions are formal. Use formal titles.
- Often times Chinese will use a nickname to assist Westerners.
- Being on time is vital in China.
- Appointments are a must for business.
- Contacts should be made prior to your trip.
- Bring several copies of all written documents for your meetings.
- The decision making process is slow. You should not expect to conclude your business swiftly.
- Many Chinese will want to consult with the stars or wait for a lucky day before they make a decision.
- Present and receive cards with both hands.
- Never write on a business card or put it in your wallet or pocket. Carry a small card case.
- The most important member of your company or group should lead important meetings. Chinese value rank and status.
- Develop a working knowledge of Chinese culture.
- Allow the Chinese to leave a meeting first.