
Shammah English Teacher Training Manual



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Introduction

Hello and welcome to this little guide for English teachers in China. I hope to have compiled most of the information you will need to answer most of the common questions and give you a picture of daily life in China. I have been living in China since 2009 so most of this guide comes from personal experience as well as the experiences of other teachers that I know. I hope that you enjoy your time in China and I hope to see you here!

Joshua Patterson



The Culture of China:

History:

The first empire of China, the Qi Dynasty, rose out of seven individual warring states. The Qin emperor was able to conquer these states and form most of what is modern China. This was 221 B.C., after the death of the Qin emperor, the Han dynasty assumed control. The Han dynasty ruled for over 400 years, till 220 A.D. This dynasty created a lasting cultural identity that is still recognized in modern China. 92% of all Chinese people would identify themselves as Han Chinese. The Han dynasty also adopted Confucianism as the official state ideology. The Han dynasty expanded China's borders and created the largest economy and bureaucracy of the Ancient World. After the end of the Han dynasty China fell back into a warring states period. What is now called the 3 Kingdoms period, and has been immortalized as a popular Card Strategy Game.

Dynastic control was reasserted quickly and the dynastic system remained in use until 1912. During this period, China faced invasions from the Mongols and Western powers, but it wasn't until the May Day Revolution of 1912 that China experienced a fundamental change. The Republic of China was established by Dr. Sun Yat-sen and it lasted beyond his death to 1949. The Republic was a period of unrest and warlords, until Chang Kai-shek was able to unify the country under his rule. And the rule of his party the Kuomintang (KMT). The KMT clashed with the Communist Party of China (CPC) and its leader Mao Zedong. The Chinese Civil War was interrupted by WWII, and the Japanese invasion of mainland China. After the defeat of the Japanese, The KMT was financially, physically, and mentally drained. Unable to continue to fight the CPC, they fled to Taiwan.



In 1949 Mao Zedong, now known as Chairman Mao, declared the People's Republic of China (PRC). Chairman Mao presided over China until his death in 1976. After his death, Deng Xiaoping took power and instituted a series of economic reforms aimed at creating a mixed economy in China. President Nixon visited China, and China gradually began to open up to rest of the world. Since that time, China has

been growing at an almost breakneck speed. The recent years have finally begun to show a slow down as China begins to settle into a position of prominence on the international stage.

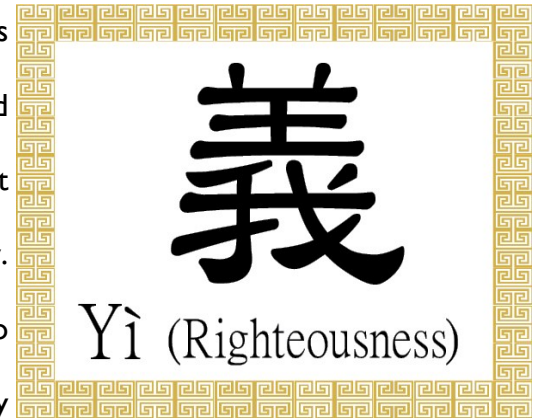
Religion:

The three main recognized religions in China are Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism. Officially the CPC has declared itself and the PRC to be atheist. The Chinese constitution of 1982 does give the citizens the right to religious freedom. The Religious Board oversees all religious activities in China. China has a a very diverse religious culture. Beyond the big three: Catholicism, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, and traditional Chinese religions are all practiced. Daoism and Buddhism are the most popular Chinese religions internationally as, these religious groups are often associated with Chinese Martial Arts, known as “gungfu” or “wushu” in Chinese.



Language

The official language spoken by all Chinese citizens is Mandarin (Pu Tong Hua). While this is the official language and the overwhelming majority of Chinese citizens will understand this, there are many different Chinese dialects and accents. If you are in Southern provinces there is a good chance that you will hear Cantonese (Guang Dong Hua, Ye Yv) used frequently. Most cities will usually have a unique dialect, that will be similar to Mandarin, but with some changes. Accents also affect the way



Chinese citizens speak. The most famous accent is the “Beijing” accent where a hard “r” sound is added to most words. If you want to learn to communicate learning Mandarin will serve you well. In most large cities i.e. Beijing, Shanghai, and Hong Kong, English will be readily spoken. Most public areas will have bilingual signs, menus, and guides. However once you move away from these international cities the English language level declines sharply. It is very hard to communicate in English and finding bilingual information is very rare.



“Chinglish” will be easier to find than English. “Chinglish” is the direct translation of Chinese into English, which will usually lead to some interesting combinations.

Climate

China is basically on the same latitude as the U.S. So the weather patterns are very similar to the U.S. If you go north to places like Inner Mongolia or Harbin (famous for it's Ice Festival) you will have long cold winters, with considerable snow fall. If you go down south to Guang Dong or Guilin you will have long hot and humid summers, with considerable



rain fall during the monsoon seasons. Especially in the west, Yun Nan, you will experience heavy rainfall during monsoon season. The middle of China is temperate, similar to Midwest states in the U.S. This means, that depending on the year you can have a very cold, snowy winter and a hot, humid summer, the climate is going to shift year to year and based on pollution

levels. Pollution can be a large factor in the weather patterns where you live. Big industrial cities, Beijing, Chongqing, or Baotou, have a high pollution rate that causes some strange weather patterns. The pollution can also cause some unnaturally dry weather, so be prepared to buy a humidifier in winter.



Transportation

International:

There are of course the 3 main American carriers: United, American, and Delta. I would rank them Delta, American, and then United. This is based on my experience of having taken all these carriers to China. There are some other carriers: Air China, Cathay Pacific, China Southern, and Air Canada. Cathay Pacific is a very nice airline, but usually very expensive. The Chinese airlines can be very cheap, but not necessarily a great flight. I have no experience with Air Canada. Hold onto all tickets and receipts for your airfare, so you can submit it for reimbursement. I would suggest submitting for reimbursement as soon as possible.

Domestic:

Travel in China can be easy and fun. If you can master ctrip.com, a very good online website and mobile app you can make all your travel arrangements yourself, quickly and easily. Hostels and hotels are widely available in most cities and major tourist destinations. Just be aware that you need to register at the local police station within 48 hours of traveling to any new city. Not all hotels or hostels can perform this function so they will ask you to leave. Check that the hotel can receive foreigners before you book a room. Most travel in China is accomplished through train travel. China has the world's largest infrastructure of high speed trains (gao tie). These trains can reach speeds of 350 kph (220mph). They are very clean, very fast, and very convenient. They are usually cheap as well, depending on the length of the trip. China also con-



tinues to use older sleeper style trains. These trains are slow, not very clean, and quite an adventure. If you haven't spent at least 24 hours on one of these trains then you haven't really experienced China. Air travel is quite good in China as well. It is decidedly more expensive than train travel so it is not used as often. Flights can be easily booked online, and e-tickets can be picked up at the check-in counter with your ID (passport).

Local Transportation:

Walking is your number way of getting around. Be prepared to do a moderate amount of walking on most days. City Buses are usually cheap and very convenient. You can purchase an RFID card, and charge it with some money to use instead of cash when you take the bus. Most buses cost somewhere between 1-2 RMB.

Usually using a bus card will give you a discount on your bus fare. Taxis are typically easy to find and convenient. However when using a taxi make sure you follow some

rules: 1. always use the meter, never negotiate the cost with the driver 2. always take marked taxis, there are unmarked taxi's (colloquially called black taxis) take these at your own risk 3. if you can't say where you are going and want to show the taxi driver a card, make sure the writing is in characters 4. make sure you check the taxi for your belongings after you get out and finally 5. ask for a receipt



(qing gei wo fapiao) before you pay. You can purchase a bike, and electric bike or even a car. For a car you will need to get a license, which can be difficult even if you take the English version of the written exam. Just be aware that traffic rules in China are mainly a suggestion, unless you are in a major city i.e. Beijing, so be careful!



Travel Documents

Passports:

A passport is fairly easy to obtain. There are many companies that offer passport services. However the U.S. postal service also provides passport services. You can get an application and pay your fees at a local USPS office. In most cases they also offer the opportunity to take your passport picture at the office. You should allow 3-4 weeks turnaround time on a passport application. The average cost of a passport is \$165 You can also pay expedited fees to have a passport issued in 24 hours.



Visa:

Once you have your passport you need to get a visa. The majority of documents will be provided for you by your employer in China. You will need to provide a medical form that can be found [here](#). Using a third party service like vi-saexpress.net, is helpful in gathering your documents and actually getting your visa. Once again you should expect a 3-4 week turnaround on a visa, unless of course you pay an expedited fee and opt for overnight mail. The base cost of a Z visa, work visa, is \$165.



Residential Permit:

You will notice your Z visa will have no expiration date listed.

This is done because once you arrive in China you will need to

apply for a Temporary Residential Permit. This is a two-step

process: first you will register at the local police precinct where

your house is, second you will then need to go the PSB entry-exit bureau for the city you live in. In the ma-

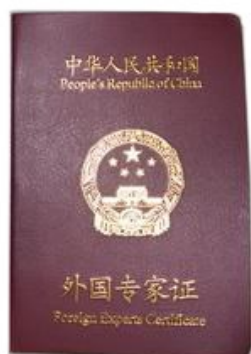
majority of cases your employer will provide a Foreign Affairs Officer, FAO or Waiban in Chinese, to go with

you and to pay for you. Your Temporary Residential Permit will usually be valid for 1 year, and will act as a

multiple entry visa allowing you to leave and enter the country as often as you want within that year.



Foreign Experts Card, Alien Employment License:



Either of these will be issued to you when you arrive. Typically the employer will hold these for you, since

legally speaking it belongs to the employer and they are required to return it to the government when you

leave their employee. You only really need this to get your residential permit. You shouldn't actually need it

for any other reason.

Currency and Banking

Currency:

Chinese currency is known as RMB (ren min bi) or Yuan. Often the slang term kuai is used. Kuai literally means “to cost”, so someone might say 6 kuai, instead of 6 RMB or 6 Yuan. Currently the exchange rate is 6.35 RMB to 1 USD. This changes constantly so generally we just figure 6 to 1 to make it easier.

Banking:

China has a series of large banks: Bank of China (BOC), Industrial Commerce Bank of China(ICBC), Agricultural Bank of China(ABC), or Commercial Bank of China(CBC). The BOC and ICBC are the two largest banks and will allow you to do most domestic and international transactions at their branches. In some situations, you may need to go to the central branch of the city to do international transactions. You may open an account at any bank and receive a Union Pay debit card for your account. All Chinese accounts use a 6 digit pin for their cards, which double as debit and ATM cards. Most ATMs will offer the option to select English or Chinese at the beginning of the transaction make sure you choose English in the beginning or you will have to start over.

Transferring money internationally can be done, usually fairly easily once you have trained the staff at your bank branch to do it. The fee for international transfers is around 200 RMB (35 USD). Legally speaking you are allowed to convert and transfer up to 70% of your salary, no more. International transfers require specific paperwork and I would be happy to walk you through it.



Cost of Living:

The Cost of Living in China can be very inexpensive. Typically a single person can spend around \$500 a month at the high end. I have seen some singles that spend \$600 - \$700 a month. The average would be around \$350 a month per person. In most cases your only monthly cost will be food, toiletries, personal hygiene products, and any other personal items you want to buy. Housing and Utilities will be provided for you. Food will be the main expenses. The cost of food can be kept very low depending on your personal taste. In Western restaurants



like: McDonalds, KFC, or Burger King you will be paying Western prices. A typical meal can range from 20RMB — 45RMB. Whereas Chinese meals can range from 5RMB — 50RMB, once again depending your tastes.



Cuisine:

Chinese food is delicious and varies greatly depending on the region of the country you live in. They do use an excessive amount of oil and other preservatives (MSG, chicken bouillon, etc.) to cook it. So I would suggest half and half (half dining out and half eating at home) until you get used to the food. Traveler's diarrhea and food poisoning can be common in the first few months.

As for Western food, KFC and McDonalds are very popular in China. You should be able to find at least one in most cities, especially KFC. Major cities will have Pizza Hut's, Burger King, and Baskin Robbins to name a few. Also many cities have Western style cafes, which serve steak and pizza, with picture menus to make it easy to order. Also it is easy to order Western cooking ingredients from the internet, be aware you will be paying full western price for these items.



Grocery shopping is of course a great option. Just be careful when you go shopping, culturally Chinese people buy the food one day at a time. The supermarkets will be packed at 11 and 5. A small Chinese city is about 1



million people, so a busy supermarket has a different meaning than it does in the U.S. Produce is very cheap in China. China uses the metric system and they sell produce by the jin (half a kg) which is roughly 1.1 pounds. A jin of potatoes or onions can be as cheap as .99 RMB. Meat can be a little more

expensive, especially beef. Chicken and pork the staples of the Chinese diet are around 7-12 RMB per jin.

Beef however can go as high as 40 -45 RMB per jin.

Medical Services:

Medical services in China are subsidized by the government and can be very inexpensive for foreigners. The government pays the doctors, so you just need to pay for tests and medicines. As an example a CT-Scan can cost 400 yuan (75 USD), this is the total cost. Medical insurance is a very new industry in China and not widely used by Chinese citizens. Some International hospitals can except foreign health insurance. Check with your insurance provider, to see what they cover internationally.



Most people use the clinic at hospitals; private medicine covers maybe 10% or less of the industry. So do not expect a lot of privacy when meeting the doctor. The doctors see literally hundreds of patients a day and are overworked and underpaid. In most cases the doctors are just trying to get people through, do not be afraid to insist that the doctor takes a few extra minutes to understand your symptoms. You will also be in charge of getting exams and keeping the records of those exams. I suggest you make a file folder to keep all of your medical records from your time in China.

I would also suggest that you have some familiarity with drugs. In the US we know most drugs by their brand (trade) name (Advil) not the generic name (ibuprofen). All medicines will be sold based on their generic name. I would suggest a pocket pharmaceutical reference to check on drugs usage and interactions after you have been prescribed them. Always keep any medicine boxes you take and show them to doctors to help them. If you are taking a prescription from the US find the translation for the medicine, there are many helpful online medical dictionaries with translations. In most cases the medicine will be transliterated, meaning the translation tries to preserve the sound not the meaning, for example ibuprofen is translated as bu luo fen.

It is very common for a Chinese doctor to prescribe an IV injection. Standard injections are not very common in China. Almost everyone gets an IV at some point, so do not be surprised if you get one. Many Chinese doctors also like to prescribe TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine). If you don't feel comfortable taking TCM, don't feel afraid to ask your doctor for Western Medicine. Usually the doctor will ask you if you feel comfortable taking TCM before they prescribe it to you.



Communications Services:

Cellphones:

China has three main cell phone carriers: China Mobile, China Unicom, and China Telecom. All 3 carriers support CDMA and GSM phones. If you have an international unlocked cell phone you should be able to use a Chinese SIM card in your phone, with little difficulty. If your phone is not unlocked you should be able to ask your carrier for an unlock code, they usually provide these free of charge for customers of 60 days or more. You may choose to use your North America carrier, Sprint and T-Mobile have the greatest success, but it can also be extremely expensive.



Chinese cell service is pay as you go and extremely inexpensive. If you only call and text you can expect to spend about 20 yuan per month (3 USD) If you use 3G or 4G you can up that to about 40 or 50 yuan per month (8USD). Of course this depends on your personal usage patterns. There are subscription services, but I recommend to pay as you go it is cheap and easy. There are ATM style machines where you can recharge your phone in seconds as well as stores and online as well.

Buying a cell phone in China is a simple process. Just be aware you may or may not be getting what you are paying for. iPhone's are copied and sold as a very lucrative business. The range of phone prices are 200 yuan to 6000 yuan (35USD to 1000USD)

WeChat and QQ:

The two main chatting apps in China are WeChat and QQ. WeChat is extremely popular and very convenient and useful. WeChat allows text, voice, and video chatting, as well as sharing pictures, videos, and files. QQ is a slightly older version of the app that was originally PC based. QQ is used on the PC typically while WeChat is used on mobile phones. Your students will want to use these apps to chat with you. Both of these apps are free.



Skype or Magic Jack:



If you want to communicate in real time with your family Skype and Magic Jack are 2 great services. Skype for a fee will allow you to call a phone, as well as calling computers or skype app equipped phones for free. Magic Jack will give you your own phone number so people in the U.S. can call you and you can call any phone in the U.S. There is a fee based on the Magic Jack service you use.



Shopping:

Online:

Online shopping has really taken off in China. Taobao.com, Tmall.com, and JD.com are the three largest and

most popular websites. You can purchase literally

anything from these websites. However be careful

and realize that some items sold on these websites

are fake. Also these websites are all in Chinese.

While taobao offers an free English shopper service,

I would suggest having a trusted Chinese friend help

you make purchases. Taobao is similar to eBay in

that all the sellers are independent, however there

is no auction function. Tmall and JD are similar to Amazon, they are a store that sells products. Taobao will

usually yield the cheapest price, but at the risk of buying fake, cheap products. You may even have to com-

municate with the seller to negotiate shipping cost or if you need to make a return. As I said it's a good idea

to have a Chinese friend help you to do all of this. Delivery is made by a kuaidi, basically a guy on a motorcy-

cle that will drive to your shipping address and call you. Once again it's good to have a Chinese friend and use

their phone number so they can communicate with the kuaidi. There is a joke in China, that even Xi jingping

(the president) must do what the kuaidi says. These guys get paid by delivery so they are usually impatient

and rude if you slow them down. So save yourself the hassle and let you friends help you.



Department Stores and Supermarkets:

China has a variety of stores ranging from International stores, Wal-Mart and Carre-Four, as well as Chinese stores, RT-Mart. Shopping at stores can be considered safe, in that the products you purchase are usually



legitimate and the majority of stores have a return policy and warranties for electronics. So make sure if you can't speak Chinese that you have a friend with you who can talk to the sales people.

China also has night markets and open air markets.

The open air marketplaces will usually contain stalls with independent sellers, that will sell a variety of products. Shopping at these places also allow you to

practice your bargaining skills. Let me give you a few tips: 1. just because they tell you a price doesn't mean it is worth that much 2. set your own price and if you can't get that price just walk away 3. Don't be afraid to walk away and check another stall 4. If you really want it don't haggle over a few RMB just buy it. Here a few phrases to get you started: dou xiao qian = How much does it cost? tai guile = It's too expensive! Keyi gei wo hen pianyiye = Give me a cheaper price. Have fun bargaining!

Clothing:

Clothing can be easily purchased in China, just be aware that the sizes are drastically different. A Chinese xxl would be equal to a US l or xl, the sizes generally run smaller across the board. If you purchase online you can have access to many foreign brands of clothes.

Professional and appropriate dress in China is very similar to the American ideals. Khakis and a button down shirt will serve men well in most every occasion. A dress, a skirt, dress slacks will work well for ladies in most situations. Low cut tops are usually frowned upon in Chinese culture, for ladies. I think in most cases dressing business casual will work for you in most occasions.

Holidays and Leisure Travel:

As a teacher in China you will get the benefit of many public holidays. October 1st—8th is National Week, the celebration of the formation of the PRC. This is a week long vacation, where many people travel. I would caution traveling during this time. This week is also known as “golden week” and is the largest leisure travel holiday in China. Golden Week has been compared to a week long “Black Friday”. If you are going to travel I suggest going to some place close and make sure you have secured your train or plane tickets well in advance as well as your hotel reservations.

Spring Festival or “Chinese New Year” is a lunar holiday which changes from year to year. It is typically late January or early February. The Spring Festival officially ends on the Lantern Festival which is 15 days after the New Year. The government holiday is only a week long, but for most teachers you can have anywhere from 2-8 weeks of vacation. Most schools have exam weeks before the break, which English teachers are usually absented from. Most schools mix in a winter break with this holiday, which is why your vacation can stretch up to 8 weeks. This is a great time to travel, with the caveat that you don’t actually travel a few days before the actual New Year Day. The days leading up to the New Year will see somewhere between 500 million and 750 million Chinese people trying to get home for the holiday. These two holidays are the best times to do some travel in China and around Southeast Asia. The two websites that I



suggest you use for your travel are Ctrip.com and TravelChinaGuide.com, both provide information and reservation services for travel tickets and hotels.

During the Spring Semester there are three 2 day holidays. However Chinese school’s have a non-traditional holiday policy. If you have a two day holiday on say Wednesday and Thursday, school will be canceled for those days. Then the school will schedule makeup classes on Saturday and Sunday. So it seems that you get a holiday, but you will only get 2 days off during the week instead of 4 days. So there is not much time to travel during the Spring Semester, so plan your big trips for Spring Festival and Winter break.

Safety:

China is a very safe for foreigners. Americans are usually afforded an unnatural amount of respect and deference. The police would like to avoid any incidents of foreigners being robbed or hurt. That being said there is crime and crime targeted at foreigners specifically. Wisdom will keep you from most of these situations. Especially in tourist heavy areas there are many people waiting to take advantage of foreigners. If you follow basic travel safety procedures you should not face any problems. In most cases the Chinese police are trustworthy, but do not be afraid to use your phone to take pictures and videos of any incidents.

There is an “industry” building up around cheating foreigners. People pretend they get hurt or that you have destroyed something and ask for large amounts of money to cover the cost of repair or medical expenses. Once again do not be afraid to involve the police and take lots of photos and videos. In China currently people will try to yell and intimidate you, even if they know they are wrong they will try to intimidate you into accepting guilt. Just keep your cool, insist on calling the police, and don't be afraid to take pictures or videos.

