

# Travelling to China 101 – post Covid -edition

During the past three Covid -years, organizing a trip to China was next to impossible or at least required lengthy and sometimes complicated procedures not to mention the locally imposed health measures that were in force until early 2023. Since then, travelling to China has recovered, more flights to China are available and companies are sending more personnel to look after their businesses here.

In this short article we are providing a few instructions and survival tips for the business and leisure travellers reflecting the current situation in travelling to China.

## Preparing for your travel to China

### 1. Visa to China

**Visa is required** for travelling to China. For the business travellers, M-type business visa should be applied. You will have to apply through the Embassy in Helsinki. Instructions under this [link](#)

Those travellers who intend to spend less than **144 hours** in China in certain areas (for example Shanghai), and are travelling to a third country, may enjoy **visa-free** transit. [Read more](#)

### 2. Digital travelling

There are a few things that you need to be prepared when travelling to China – Internet usage, Mobile phone data and Apps on your device.

**In China, your lifeline is your smartphone.** Chinese consumers pride their advanced technologies and rarely use credit cards or cash, but the mobile device loaded with necessary apps to acquire services. This has an effect to foreign travellers too as even if **you may use cash to pay for the services, the vendor does not necessarily have change for you.** Foreign credit cards may not be accepted by all vendors as they may not have suitable gateways for foreign services (and Visa works often better than MC). For this reason and many others, it may be a good idea to stock your mobile phone with a few necessary things. You will also need apps to get a taxi; forget the Uber here.

Platforms and apps (installation instructions at the end of this article)

- China is restricting international data transfers. If you are planning to use Chinese SIM and want to access your foreign platforms (google, X, etc), install a proper **VPN**. Astrill works well on all devices and goes around many issues here. You should do this before you enter China. Foreign data roaming is not restricted for international traffic but maybe restricted to access some data sources in China
- Install **WeChat** to communicate with anyone in China
- Get someone to invite you to “Shanghai Tiedottaa” or “Suomalaiset Kiinassa” -group or any group relevant to your ecosystem
- Install **Alipay** before travelling – it will be your key to all payments

## On the road – Flight to China

### 1. Customs Health Declaration

All Covid -measures have been abandoned and there are no restrictions, testing nor certificates required to enter the country... After August 30<sup>th</sup> there are no longer any Covid-19 -related restrictions for travellers to China – period.



However, there is still a requirement to register the **Customs Health Declaration Form** before entry. Travelers must scan the QR code for the Customs Health Declaration Form and register electronically before immigration at Chinese airports. After registering information, a code is generated which must be presented and read via scanner and checked by Chinese airport staff.

This QR -code will also be available at the airport (ask Finnair or Juneyao ground staff if you can't find it) or upon arrival in Chinese airports before entering the immigration.

Fill in the information, submit your declaration and save **the customs health declaration code** on your phone gallery

2. You need to present an **arrival card** at the China border control. Whilst available before the immigration desks at the airport, it may be more convenient to fill it already on flight. Ask the cabin attendant for one – sometimes they have them available

### At the airport upon arrival, tips

1. Get your **Customs health declaration code** ready as this is the first thing you need at the airport
2. Proceed to the **foreigner fingerprint scanning machines** that are available after the customs declaration in Pudong airport and get the **fingerprint code slip**. They also have the scanners them by the immigration desks but often require you to scan them before. Just do it...
3. Fill the **arrival card** if you didn't get one at the flight and proceed to the **immigration desks**
4. Fetch your luggage from the belt and proceed through the customs control

**Congratulations you have safely arrived in China**

# In China

## Paying in China

Chinese consumers pride their advanced technologies and rarely use credit cards or cash, but the mobile device loaded with **necessary apps to acquire services**. For this reason, since majority of transactions are done on the payment platforms, vendors often do not have change or they are at least reluctant to provide change for your purchase. This may end up in unpleasant situations to say the least. Taxis take cash and are willing to use it. Credit cards can be used in larger facilities, restaurants and hotels and you can pay for online purchases (such as tickets at trip.com etc.) with credit cards.

## Cash and ATMs

You may bring Chinese currency (RMB) with you or you can withdraw if from the ATM's of the biggest banks. Visa and Mastercard is usually accepted

## Credit Cards

While larger venues, western inclined services and hotels often accept foreign credit cards, the use of them is limited. Taxis and other transportation, do not accept credit cards.

## Alipay/Wechat pay

Now it is possible to link the foreign credit card to your Alipay account.

- Install and Register Alipay. You should download the app before you arrive in China and register when you arrive
- Verified account and add your foreign credit card
- Here is a video on how to activate you Alipay . This is Youtube so you will need VPN if you are in China and using a local SIM. [How to set up Alipay to use foreign card](#)
- You can also find step by step instructions [here](#)

## Moving around in China; Ideas for the apps you would need

DiDi - Ride haling app. Either Wechat miniprogram or stand-alone app

Trip.com - International version of Ctrip. You can book and pay train tickets, flights and hotels

## Mobile Phone/ Local SIM -card

- If you are not inclined to acquire a **local SIM card**, get a good data roaming plan from your provider before your travel. Data roaming charges are typically high, but foreign operators usually provide 1-2 -week plans for a reasonable cost.
- Alternatively you may purchase a local SIM card, for example China Unicom that you may purchase at the airport
- or use [Nihao Mobile](#).
- If you have a foreign mobile device, you may use **eSIM (Airalo)** that works on some recent models but not in the phones sold in the mainland China including Apple. Phones for the Chinese market have two physical SIM slots