



Quest Program CHINA



Situated in eastern Asia on the western shore of the Pacific Ocean,

China spans an area of more than 3.7 million square miles, a continental coastline extending for about 11,000 miles,

with more than 5,000

islands. China is one of the world's largest countries, housing a fifth of the world population in a land mass about the size of the US.

As one of the oldest civilizations around, China offers an extraordinary culture rich with traditions and monuments. The Great Wall is probably the first that comes to mind, but there are many other spectacular sights in this country such as the Forbidden City, Summer Palace and Terracotta Warriors. Some of the more modern attractions include Bird's Nest

Stadium, the Water Cube pool and the Olympic Green Park. China gained many of its more modern attractions from hosting the Olympic Games in 2008. The opening ceremony of 2008 Olympic Games presented Chinese culture through calligraphy, the Peking Opera, shadow play, kung fu, inscribed Oracle Bones, the Four Great Inventions of ancient China, paper cutting art, and more.

China is rich in natural resources, with the largest amount of certain mineral deposits in the world. China also has bountiful wildlife and hosts many important species like the giant panda, the snub-nosed golden monkey, and the Chinese alligator. In the past, China was home to ancient plants such as China's Dawn Redwood and Cathaya Argyrophylla which have been recently found in fossils.

China is a unified country that contains 56 different nationalities. The Han people account for 92% of all the population and the main minorities are the Hui, Uyгур, Zang and Korean people. The majority of the 56 ethnic groups have their own language. A multinational population comes with a diversity of religions as well. The main religions include Buddhism, Taoism, Islam and Christianity. Most people belonging to ethnic minorities in China actively practice their religion. Freedom of religion is a governmental policy, and common religious activities are protected by the constitution.

China Statistics

Area: 9,326,410 square kilometers
Population: 1.32 Billion
Capital: Beijing (12 million)
Language: Mandarin (about 850 million), Wu (90 million)
Cantonese (Yue) (70 million), Min (50 million)
Currency: Yuan
Religion: Chinese folk religion, Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism

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A nonprofit corporation committed to advancing intercultural educational student exchange.

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The two main spoken dialects in China are Mandarin and Cantonese, however written Chinese is consistent across both dialects. In fact, written Chinese characters have been around for 5,000 years. Although different provinces have different dialects, most people can at least understand Mandarin and this is the language that exchange students learn during their stay in China.

China is developing, changing and expanding rapidly. China has been adopting many Western habits, for example, drinking coffee. Ten years ago many Chinese had not even tasted coffee before; today you can buy coffee in major cities from a multitude of different cafes. China has also been influenced by the English language. More and more Chinese can speak English fluently, especially in Beijing and Shanghai.

Beijing is the capital of China and has been so for more than 800 years. It is the nation's political, cultural, scientific and educational center, as well as a major transportation hub. The city has many places of historic interest and scenic beauty that students are sure to enjoy.

School Life

There are both public and private high schools in China. However, most Chinese students study in public schools. The Chinese high school year begins in September and ends in July and is broken up into two semesters each year. Summer vacation runs from July to September and winter vacation runs from the end of January to the beginning of March. High school consists of grades 10-12. A typical school day includes four class periods in the morning and two in the afternoon. Each session is normally about 45 minutes. Chinese, English, and math are all mandatory in Chinese schools. Some elective classes offered include history, geography, chemistry, biology,

computer science, and physics. Chinese students work very hard at school in order to prepare for their entrance exam, which determines whether they go to a university.

Exchange students can choose to apply for a short-term program for half a semester, or a full academic year. Classes are more flexible for exchange students because, unlike the Chinese students, they are not preparing for the entrance exam. Exchange students have classes together with Chinese students during the four morning class periods and then participate in Chinese courses in the afternoon. Generally speaking, exchange students take an intensive language course, along with calligraphy, painting or maybe even kung fu. Possible extra curricular activities include basketball, soccer, tennis, ping pong and more. Sports and other extracurricular activities are a great opportunity for exchange students to make new friends. Students will find both teachers and students to be very friendly. Almost all schools have their own uniforms. Sometimes students do not need to wear the uniform every day but in some schools uniform is mandatory. A neat appearance and punctuality is expected at all times. Students can choose to eat lunch at school or at home.

Generally speaking, young teachers can speak English very well. We highly encourage exchange students to communicate in Chinese, which will improve their Chinese proficiency quickly. If exchange students have some difficulties, they can ask for help from the English teachers or their area representatives.

Host Family Life

The host families in China are very accepting of other cultures and some host parents can speak good English. Most of the time, our exchange student will have a host sister or brother who can speak English.

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Some students go to school by bike or by bus, while some students can walk since the host families live near the schools. While living in a Chinese family, the students get the chance to taste the real Chinese food. The students are encouraged to introduce their countries' food culture too. Apart from forks and knives, the students will experience using chopsticks in China. Western influenced restaurants are becoming more and more common these days. Students therefore still have the chance to have Western food when they miss it. During the whole year, students will celebrate the Chinese festivals with the host family, such as the Chinese Lunar New Year (the Spring Festival), Dragon Boat Festival, National Holiday, Mid- Autumn Day etc. The Spring Festival is as important as Christmas in Western countries. It is a time for family reunion, sitting together and making "dumplings," setting off firecrackers and watching the special entertainment programs. China is renowned for valuing ritual and ceremonies ever since ancient times and respect for elders is very important.

Chinese Preparation Course

It will be a big challenge to learn Chinese, a language which is completely different from Western languages. We organize a three to four week "Chinese prep course" for all students at the beginning of the academic year. This preparation course is included in the price. During these three to four weeks the students get to learn the Pinin form, which will be very helpful in their Chinese studies. By knowing some basic Chinese, students can make simple conversations early on in their experience. Besides Chinese courses, the students will cover interesting topics about Chinese culture. Some short excursions will also be arranged on the weekends. These three to four weeks are great fun for the students and

after the prep course the students will be invited to take part in a farewell party. Students then move to the host families, often in another city, to start the exchange experience.

Program Extras

There are many interesting places worth visiting in China. During the exchange year the students will have the opportunity to visit Beijing and Shanghai with other exchange students and area representatives.

Shanghai Trip

Once nothing more than a small village, Shanghai changed forever when the British opened their first concession here in 1842. Already by 1900, Shanghai achieved international status as Asia's foremost center for commerce. Today Shanghai is a vigorous and energetic international metropolis. With its rich heritage of ancient Chinese culture, Shanghai offers much to see and do. The students will have the chance to explore Shanghai during the winter holiday. During the guided tour of Shanghai, we will visit the Old Town and Yuyuan Garden, the local market or antique market in the old street. We will then take a walk along waterfront in Puxi Side, appreciating the international settlement from the old days. We will also take the ferry to Pudong, on the other side of Huangpu River, to see the Lujiazui Financial Center with the tallest building in Asia. We will also visit the Shanghai Museum in People's Square, the nearby Shanghai Art Museum and the Urban City Planning Exhibition Museum. We will explore the French concession area, appreciating the old architecture and then enter into a contemporary art district in Shanghai. There will be time for shopping on Nanjing Road too.

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Beijing Trip

As the capital of China, Beijing is known by people from all over the world. When joining our Beijing Trip at the end of the exchange year, the students will be able to explore this fantastic city and have great fun. The first stop will be the Olympic venues (Bird's Nest and Water Cube etc.) Then we drive to the Great Wall if the weather permits. After returning to Beijing in the late afternoon, we will watch a kung fu performance and taste the traditional "Beijing Roast Duck." There will be a walking tour through the impressive Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City, a monumental palace where the Emperors of China resided for about 600 years. We will begin the next day with a visit to the Temple of Heaven, one of ancient China's most sacred sites, which was once used by the Emperor as a place to mediate affairs between God and Man. Later in the day, the students will spend time at the delightful Summer Palace, a retreat built exclusively for the Empress Dowager Cixi. The students will be shown how to make "dumplings" and have dinner in a nice restaurant. A visit to the Urban Planning Museum will show the evolution of old Beijing and development of new Beijing. Then we will visit the "798 Art Zone." In the late afternoon, we will have a boat ride on the famous Houhai lake area.

About Quest

Quest International was founded in 1999. We are a nonprofit organization committed to international, educational student exchange. Our goal is to promote cultural awareness and international understanding by offering quality, educational and cultural programs for students, host families and schools. Our staff is dedicated to creating a positive exchange experience for all program participants.



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