

Visitors Survival Guide for China

Benelux Chamber of Commerce
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1. Introduction

Welcome to the "Survival Guide for China: Shanghai Edition". This guide will be your essential companion for preparing your stay in the vibrant city of Shanghai. Whether you're visiting for a short business trip or planning an extended stay, our guide offers all our practical tips you need to enjoy Shanghai.

This guide will walk you through what to do before arrival, which apps to download, how to navigate the airport efficiently, and what you should know about local regulations.

Additionally, we provide safety tips, emergency contacts, and insights into local transportation options. Prepare your stay in the best way and experience the rich culture and rapid pace of Shanghai **with zero stress!**



2. To do before your arrival

Download the essential apps: Alipay (payments), WeChat (communication), Apple Maps, Maps.me, Baidu (navigation), Smart Shanghai.

When you're planning a trip to China, your phone will be your best friend. Download all the key apps to make your stay as easy as possible. Alipay is essential for nearly all your purchases, from small shops to restaurants and even public transport.

Cash is accepted, but it is highly recommended to pay with Alipay. WeChat goes beyond just payments; it's a great way to connect with locals, and share your experiences on its social feed. For getting around, use Apple Maps and Baidu. These will help you by providing directions and help you understand the language. Having

these apps on your phone is like holding a toolkit that helps you manage everyday interactions and truly enjoy your time in China.



IMPORTANT

Many Chinese apps allow you to sign up accounts using an overseas phone number. It is also recommended to get a Chinese SIM card upon arrival in Shanghai. These can be bought at the International Traveler Corner in Pudong Airport

3. Alipay

The most important app you will need is Alipay. Alipay is a digital payment platform and mobile wallet app developed by Ant Group, a subsidiary of the Chinese company Alibaba. It allows users to make secure online and in-store payments, transfer money, and manage various financial services from their mobile devices.

Through this app all your transactions will take place. It is not only your wallet, but it is also your public transport card and your taxi app. Once you've installed the app, you can register a new account. We suggest you to register with your overseas phone number, as you can only obtain a SIM card while being in Mainland China. Registering will allow you to connect your Alipay account to your credit card or bank. Make sure to put your credit card on global payments, or contact your bank that you will make payments in China to avoid your bank blocking your payments due to suspicious behavior.

Linking a bank card in Alipay is easy. Just follow these steps:

1. Open Alipay
2. Click the **ME** icon on the bottom right of the screen
3. Click **BANK CARDS**
4. Click the **+** icon on the top right of the screen
5. Enter your bank card number, or scan your bank card. You will see the list of bank cards that can be linked with Alipay.

These currently include Visa, Mastercard, Unionpay, and Diners Club. Then, it is important to verify your Alipay account with your passport. Since Alipay is the local banking app and they want to make sure that all transactions remain secure, they need passport verification, just like a standard bank.

To verify your Alipay account just follow these steps:

1. Login to the Alipay app, and click "Me" to go to the User Center.
2. Click the "Settings" icon in the upper right corner.
3. Select "Account and Security", the first option of the drop-down menu.
4. Click "Identity Information", here it states to "Verify now".
5. Tap "Region" in the upper right corner, and select your country/region (your nationality)
6. Next, scan your passport to automatically fill in your full name on the passport, passport number, date of birth, and passport expiration date. Or fill in manually. Then click "Submit".
7. Click "Basic Identity Information" to fill in other information, including your gender, occupation type, and address.
8. Continue to complete identity verification by "Verify face".
9. On the face recognition page, click "Verify" to scan your face.
10. Wait for your Alipay personal account to be verified.

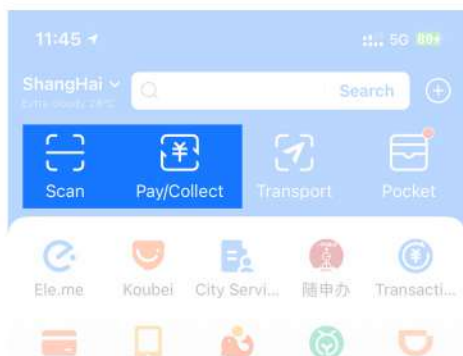
Congratulations! You have successfully installed Alipay and you can enjoy all the various functions they provide.



View the step-by-step process!

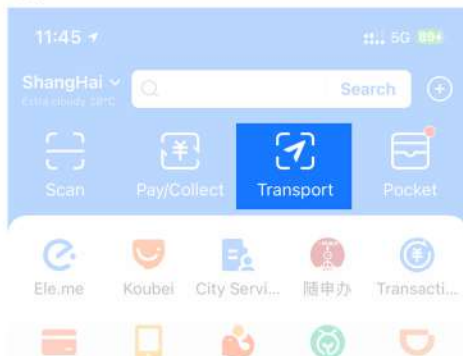
4. Pay with Alipay

When you are in a restaurant or shop there are usually two options **to pay**. If there is an Alipay QR code, just use the 'scan' button. Either you show your Alipay QR code and they scan your phone.



5. Transport with Alipay

To use public transport in China you simply click on the **transport** button in the Alipay app.



After this, a page will appear where you can choose between bus, metro, or taxi. A QR code will then be displayed. It is important to verify your passport with the public transport function. You need to verify your passport again because public transport is a different app within Alipay. When you

enter the metro, you need to scan the transport QR code at the fare gates. Additionally, an internet connection is required to check in and out of the metro. Furthermore, it is required to go through a security check before you enter the metro. When using the bus, you don't need to check out. Besides public transport, you can also use DiDi, a Chinese ride-hailing app similar to Uber. DiDi offers services such as private car rides, taxi hailing, and carpooling, providing a convenient way to get around cities in China with options for immediate or scheduled rides. To order a DiDi, follow these steps:

- 1. Open Alipay:** Open Alipay on your device.
- 2. Locate Didi within Alipay:** Search for Didi within Alipay if it's not directly visible from the main menu.
- 3. Set Pickup and Destination:** Use the map to set your pickup location and enter the destination address.
- 4. Confirm Ride Type and Fare:** Select your desired ride type and confirm the fare. There are different types of DiDi ride types from Express being the cheapest option to Premier the most luxurious and expensive option. If you are in hurry you can request multiple ride types so that the nearest car can confirm. If needed, you can also request a physical receipt.
- 5. Payment Method:** For first-time DiDi users through Alipay, activate Alipay Wallet to link it with DiDi and update your preferred payment method. All payment options in your Alipay account will be available for DiDi payments.
- 6. Booking and Communication:** After booking, you will be able to see the driver's plate number, car model, and their distance from your pickup location. You can communicate with the driver using pre-set messages translated into Chinese, helping to overcome any language barriers.



The DiDi-miniprogramme can usually be found on the homepage in AliPay.



DiDi can also be found in AliPay.



Tapping the logo will bring you to the miniprogramme.

Important! Sometimes the Didi driver wants to confirm that the right person boarded their taxi. They do this by verifying the last four digits of your phone number. The taxi driver will ask you for the last two/four numbers of your phone number in Chinese and you can confirm if they are correct. (A simple OK or hao 好 will often be enough!).

6. Rent a bike with Alipay

Biking in Shanghai is very convenient. There are safe bike lanes everywhere and traffic lights specifically designed for bikers. Shanghai features three prominent bike-sharing platforms: **Hellobike, Meituan, and Qingju.**

To rent Hellobike bikes, you can use the Hellobike app or Alipay. Meituan bikes are available through the Meituan app, while Qingju bikes can be rented via the Didi Qingju app or the Didi app. Using Hellobike as an example, the steps to rent a bike are as follows:

1. Open the Hellobike mini program in Alipay, or download the standalone Hellobike app. Enter your details, link a payment method, and pay the deposit.
2. On the homepage of the mini program or app, select "Bike" to view available bikes nearby on a map, then use the navigation feature to locate the bike you choose.
3. Confirm that you have found the correct bike, then scan the QR code on the bike to rent it.

7. Translate within Alipay

Usually when you enter a restaurant there is a QR code on the corner of the table. When you scan this QR code with Alipay, there is a small translating button on the page. This feature is not available on WeChat, and therefore it is often more convenient to order through Alipay.



8. WeChat

WeChat is a the Chinese social media app. The app is developed by Tencent and widely used for communication, social networking, and financial transactions. It integrates features such as text messaging, voice and video calls, Moments (a social feed), and services like WeChat Pay for seamless in-app payments and transfers.

Type in WeChat in the play store or Apple Store and the logo on the right should show up. Open the WeChat app and tap **Sign Up > Sign up with mobile > choose your region code**, enter your mobile, and set a password. If your phone number is registered outside of China, you will need another WeChat user (who is registered for longer than three months) to verify your account. You may want to ask your contact person in China to do this. WeChat also offers a payment service, however, we recommend using Alipay since it is more reliable when it comes to foreign bank accounts.

9. Navigation

Navigating a new area in China can sometimes seem a bit overwhelming, especially for those who cannot read Chinese characters. Thankfully, there are some map apps available to ease this challenge. For those who don't read Chinese, **Apple Maps** is a good choice. It's available in English and it isn't blocked like Google Maps. However, keep in mind that due to China's rapidly evolving urban environments, the app is not always 100% accurate.

Maps.Me is another option for English speakers. It is a versatile mapping solution that works both offline and online. Leveraging OpenStreetMap and crowd sourced data, it lets users download maps



for specific countries, providing details on traffic conditions, popular spots, and more. It is accessible to both iOS and Android users.

Alternatively, you could opt for a local app like **GaoDe DiTu 高德地图**, which provides the most detailed and current mapping information but is only available in Chinese. It does, however, recognize some English and Pinyin inputs, translating them into their Chinese counterparts. Whichever map app you choose, it's essential to have your destination's address in clear Chinese script. This will be invaluable if you need to hail a taxi or navigate more complex routes. Also, ensure that you have Alipay set up on your device to handle any payments or bookings easily.

10. Baidu Translate (百度翻译)

Baidu Translate acts as the Chinese equivalent to Google Translate and is a reliable option for stable translation services. Although the primary interface is in Chinese, the language options are displayed in English, making the layout easy to understand for those familiar with Google Translate. The app is quite straightforward and is able to translate images and text passages to multiple languages.



11. Arrival in Shanghai

You've landed at Pudong Airport—what's next? During your flight, you likely received a **Customs & Immigration Form**. To complete it, you'll need your passport, along with your flight and destination details.

Upon landing, the process is straightforward: join the flow of passengers heading towards Customs. You'll find signs in both Chinese and English to guide you. At Customs, you'll be asked to provide your fingerprints through a machine that communicates in the language indicated by your passport.

You may also be questioned about the purpose of your visit, whether it's for tourism, business, or study. After you clear customs and have retrieved your luggage, go to Arrival Hall Terminal 1.

Here you will find several SIM card vendors. We strongly recommend purchasing a Chinese SIM card designed specifically for foreigners from China Telecom. The 7-day card costs 85 yuan (US\$11.82) with 20 GB of domestic data and 100 minutes of voice calls, with the

15-day card at 125 yuan and the 30-day card for 195 yuan. With this “foreigner SIM card”, you might be able to access the internet as you're used to, including Google, WhatsApp, and more.

However, for an even smoother stay, consider downloading some essential Chinese apps. After collecting your luggage, simply follow the signs to the official taxi stand. It's important to have your destination address written **in Chinese**, as often your taxi-driver won't be able to speak English. Show the address to the driver, and you'll be on your way!



12. Registration for Non-Hotel Residents

If you're staying at a hotel, the hotel staff will handle your registration with the local police station, so you won't need to do anything on your part. However, if you're staying at the home of a friend, family member, or acquaintance, you are required to register at the local police station within the first 24 hours of your arrival. Don't worry, you can complete this process online through the following website: <https://gaj.sh.gov.cn/crj/24hr>. Here's how to do it:

1. Start by signing up on the website.
2. Next, fill in your information. Upload an image of the photo ID page of your passport. The website will automatically extract the details, but you can manually

adjust or correct any information if necessary.

3. The site will request a “photo with your certificate.” For this, upload a selfie where you are holding your passport.

4. When entering your residence address, it's best to use the English translation of the address.

5. Now, wait! The processing typically takes about five to ten minutes, though there have been instances where it has taken considerably longer. You will receive an email confirmation once everything is complete. Be sure to check your spam folder, as it might end up there.

13. Useful Phone Numbers

It's a good idea to have some emergency contacts saved in your phone just in case:

- Police (警察 Jing cha): 110
- Ambulance (救护车 Jiu hu che): 120
- Fire (火警 Huo jing): 119
- Consulate General of the Kingdom of Belgium in Shanghai: +86 21 6437 6579
- Consulate-general of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Shanghai: +86 21 2208 7288
- Consulate General of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg in Shanghai: +86 21 6339 0400

14. Safety & Data

Shanghai is considered a safe city for foreigners. The city has a low crime rate and tourists are unlikely to encounter serious safety issues, but, as in any large city, it's always wise to stay alert. When it comes to privacy worries — In practical terms we have no experience with instances where your laptops and mobile phones are checked when entering the country. So try to not worry too much about

that! Regardless of what several organizations have published recently, customs cannot access your phone or computer without additional approval from higher levels within the Ministry of National Security

If you are employed by a company that operates in a sensitive or high- security industry, follow your company's specific guidelines.

15. Useful Websites

City News Service

City News Service, supported by the Shanghai Municipality Information Office and Shanghai Daily, helps expats adjust to life in Shanghai. It offers updates on local projects, business news, cultural events, city policies, and notable residents. The platform serves residents, employees, employers, and visitors. Access it at www.citynewsservice.cn or on WeChat (City News Service).

SmartShanghai

SmartShanghai.com has been the city's leading English-language online magazine for more than 15 years. They write daily content and editorial on lifestyle news and events. Don't know where to eat and drink or what museums to visit? Take a look at their website and get inspired! They also share handy tips and how-to's. For example: How to use the portable chargers you find everywhere?

Time Out Shanghai / Time Out Beijing

Your guide to Shanghai's or Beijing's best restaurants, bars, films, shopping, fashion, events, activities, things to do, tourist attractions, hotels, music, art, ...

Internet Access in China

It is vital to have Internet access in China.

You need this for communication but also for payments while on the move - so 4G or 5G.

It is possible to buy a local SIM card at Shanghai airport but this does not allow you to access and use Whatsapp and Google.

If you want to use Whatsapp and Google, we recommend you to buy a China data package as an e-sim card for your phone, from one of the many international suppliers.

Like NOMAD or AIRALO. You must do this before you leave your home country, and make sure it will activate the moment you land in Shanghai.

If you stay for a week in China you should take a package of about 10Gb - sufficient for daily use.

About - Benelux Chamber of Commerce in China

The Benelux Chamber of Commerce is the Benelux business organization & platform in China. Its members, leading companies from Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, share an active interest in developing trade and business in China. The Chamber of Commerce is officially recognised and supported by the Embassy of the Kingdom of Belgium, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Embassy of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg in China.

The Benelux Chamber has been growing at a steady pace since it was established in 2001. It currently contains 3 chapters; Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou (Pearl River Delta). It is the prime platform for the Benelux business community to get together. The Benelux Chamber currently has over 200 members (nation wide), aspiring to grow further every day. Its base consists of Large Enterprises, Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs) as well as individuals with an active interest in developing their business in China. As an independent, non-profit organisation, the Benelux Chamber is managed by a full-time secretariat of both Benelux and Chinese staff. All practises are guided by an active Board of Directors. The Benelux Chamber sustains itself through government subsidies, memberships, subscriptions, sponsorships and event fees.

On May 27, 2010, Benelux Chamber received the Accreditation Certificate from the BLCCA (Accreditation Programme for Belgian and Belgian-Luxembourg Chambers of Commerce Abroad).

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