

INTERNATIONAL SUNSHINE HOME



THE LIFE BOOK

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CHINA



CONTENTS

05

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

06

STARTING OUT

Introducing Xiamen

What to Bring

Cultural Differences

Your First Week Here

Initial Training

18

GETTING AROUND

Xiamen Transportation

Local Spots and Fun

Navigating Xiamen

Sunshine Home/Xiamen Maps

Hong Kong Travel Advice

Food and Drink

Learning Chinese

Key Phrases

38

HEALTH & SAFETY

Health Concerns

Hospitals, Clinics and Medicine

Western Medicines in China

Your Health Insurance

Legal Issues

53

BEFORE YOU GO

The Pension Refund

The Chinese Criminal Record Check

The Exit Visa

60

LIFE FAQs

厦 门 Xiamen



Welcome to Xiamen

Thanks for opening up our magazine. I'm Andrew, our editor, and I've tried my best to give you in the following pages all the information I wished I had known before my arrival in China.

I'm also an Academic Coordinator here at Sunshine Home. You'll learn what that means later. I started as a Lead Teacher a couple years ago, but currently focus on training teachers, developing teaching materials and putting together great publications like this magazine!

This magazine is one of three and comes paired with The Work Magazine, which focuses on the classroom and teaching, as well as The Visa Magazine, which will help you through the visa process.

The Life Magazine will give you an idea of what you'll want to bring, what Xiamen is like, what there is to do, how to get around and what to do before you leave. It's a lot of information! You'll probably want to save this file for once you arrive, because it will also help you with your first days and weeks in China.

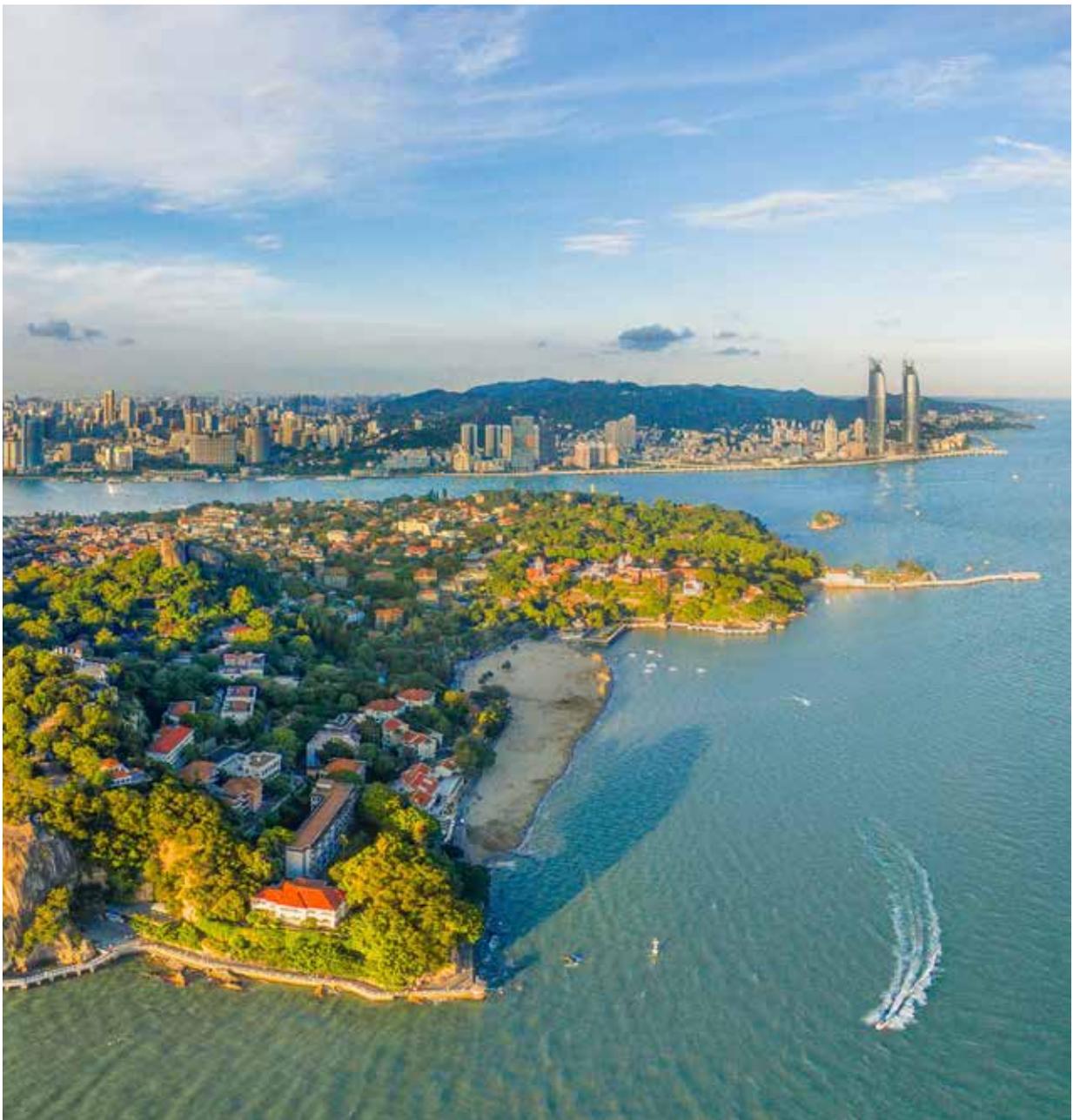
Much of this book is informed by the experiences of teachers like myself. I've made my share of mistakes in the past but the good news is that I can help you learn from my travails.

I hope you find our experience helpful and I look forward to meeting you here in Xiamen!



by Andrew

STARTING OUT



Introducing Xiamen



The city of Xiamen is a small place, about 1,700 square kilometers. It's both an island and a collection of six districts that encompasses two island districts (Huli and Siming) as well as four mainland districts (Haicang, Jimei, Tong'an and Xiang'an). Each district is a little different and you'll certainly want to explore them all.

But your everyday life will be on the main island, where all of Sunshine Home's current campuses are located. Roughly speaking Huli is the island's northern half and Siming is the island's southern half.

The main island contains the most developed areas. This is not the place to look for old China but it is the place to shop at Wal-Mart, grab a coffee at Starbucks or eat lunch at Pizza Hut. At the

same time, this is also the place where you can buy live ducks at a Chinese wet market, drink cheap Chinese beer on the street and grab some stinky tofu from a street vendor. It's still real China, but with plenty of Western stuff for when you're in the mood.

It's a lot like south Florida in many ways, especially the weather. It's not just hot, it's really humid from June through September. Summers are a bit rough but the rest of the year is amazingly pleasant.

Like Florida, it's also famous for tourism. Nearby Gulangyu is a famous historical islet. Xiamen's beaches are quite clean relative to other parts of China and they attract tourists from all over the mainland. Xiamen is a fast-growing city and many of the people who live here typically are migrants from other cities, often

from other parts of Fujian.

In general, people in this part of the country are considered to be a lot more chill and relaxed than the fast-paced types found in bigger cities and up north. Most people here are pretty warm and easygoing.

Each region of China is different. Different traditions, different ways of talking, different flavors and dishes, different natural environments. You'll want to explore China to get to know its amazing nuances but Xiamen is one of the best places to have as your home base. It's a comfortable place – fun but not overwhelming – and it's great for the quality of your daily life and as a place from which to explore greater China.

One thing that will probably surprise you is how green the city is. People often think of Chinese cities as concrete jungles. Xiamen has its share of skyscrapers, but trees, bushes and flowers will also surround you. Every road and pathway is beautifully lined with them. Green mountains rise up out of the land and the sea. It's pretty great!

You may not know much about China yet. Perhaps you've not heard about much more than Shanghai and Beijing. But as you do your research, you'll quickly find that Xiamen has a well-earned reputation for offering a great quality of life!

Understanding and Respecting Cultural Differences

Working with colleagues from different countries and cultures is an important part of why many people choose to work at Sunshine Home. It's an exciting challenge, but a challenge nonetheless.

In the process of communication, both the cultural and language gaps can lead to misunderstandings. It's worthwhile to try and understand some of the differing habits and traditions that everyone brings to the workplace and to life.

It's equally important to remember that each person with whom you engage is a unique and distinct person. Individual personalities and traits can be far more influential than a person's country of origin. Always strive to relate to others as people first rather than as a representative of an entire culture or country.

Let's take a mile-high look at some of the most common differences between Chinese and Western cultures.

1. Relations Between the Individual and the Group

China's cultural history includes a long tradition of collectivism, a way of looking at the world that emphasizes the ties that bind individuals to a group and a corresponding prioritization of the needs of that group over the

individuals that compose it.

In this mindset, both the needs of individuals and the group are considered but, when a conflict arises between the two sets of needs, collective goals tend to outweigh the interests of the individual.

Associated with collectivism is the pursuit of harmony and stability within a given community or group. Members tend to nurture harmonious relationships with the people in their circle or in-group. This translates into a minimization of direct conflict and a reluctance to straightforwardly criticize or disagree.

The definition of an in-group versus an out-group can be vague and can vary by context. An in-group can encompass a range of increasingly wide circles: nuclear family, immediate community, city or nation as well as a particular racial or ethnic group.

In any event, attitudes and means of communication with an in-group tend to be more practiced and familiar, making conversations and relations feel easier or warmer.

While collectivism has a long tradition in China, sustained contact with other cultures and the evolution of China mean that these traditions may play

less of a role than in earlier eras. Additionally, variability between person to person is extensive and should not be under-estimated.

Western cultures have a history that includes a strain of individualism, which prioritizes personal independence and the pursuit of an individual's interests and goals. Community goals and interests have a role to play but are more often seen as secondary when in conflict with the interests of the individual.

In this worldview, people tend to emphasize self-determination when it comes to choices about education, employment or marriage.

Communication between people grounded in a sense of individualism may prioritize the discussion of the individual's feelings and needs over those of the group.

2. Hierarchy and Equality

China likewise has a long history and a continued reputation as a culture in which relationships are grounded in hierarchical structures. While modern times have introduced countering strands of equality, traditional hierarchical concepts continue to play a role, especially in social settings.

It is not uncommon for the old-

est adult son of a multi-sibling extended family to be seen as the head of the larger family unit. And parents often expect children to treat their elders with respect and deference.

Echoes of these relationships exist in the workplace, whether it's the use of honorifics by employees to address their superiors or the use of the *laoshi* (teacher) title for educators and other person in positions of respect and seniority.

Of course, Westerners also grant deference to persons in positions of power. For example, a person at a job interview will treat the interview with respect and will be less direct than the same individual would be when speaking with a friend. Likewise, a college student is likely to speak with a professor in terms that are more deferential than when speaking with a sibling.

Even so, relationships of all kinds in the West tend to feature a more casual and informal conversational style. Politeness and kindness are no less valued than in China but the emphasis is on speaking and relating to other individuals from a position of equality.

3. Symbology

Color words

Colors and the words that label color often carry meanings that can vary from culture to culture.

Broadly speaking, red is associated with happiness, auspicious-

ness and joy in Chinese culture whereas it is a warning color in English (red stop sign, red fire vehicles).

Alternatively, purple is seen as a royal color in many Western cultures whereas red and yellow are more likely to signify royalty in China..

In a Western film, the people in black hats tend to be villains while the heroes wear white hats. In contrast, Peking Opera masks use red to represent loyalty, black to represent integrity and white to represent treachery.

Likewise, the color white can have vastly different symbolic meanings. White in China is associated with death and luck and is the traditional color of mourning, which is opposite to the black traditionally worn for a Western funeral.

Animals

Animals real and mythical can have vastly different symbolic meaning from culture to culture.

While dragons are typically portrayed as dangerous and threatening in Western literature and film, they are often depicted in Chinese culture as harbingers of wealth and success.

Dogs are seen as lovable pets in the West while they've long been viewed more skeptically in China, seen either as a waste of resource or as a meat source. However, perceptions have changed in recent decades and families in

China increasingly keep dogs as pets.

Other examples abound. The wise owl of the West is seen as an unlucky animal in China. A bat that is an auspicious sign of blessings in China is seen as a dangerous animal in Western eyes.

Numbers

Numerology and the association of luck or ill fortune with certain numbers has a long history in multiple cultures. But the specifics of what numbers and number combinations mean vary significantly from place to place and over time.

Because of the wealth of homonyms in oral Chinese, numbers often take on meanings associated with words that sound similar.

The number 4 is pronounced *si*, which sounds like the word for death. Therefore, it's a number often avoided.

The number 6 is pronounced *liu*, which sounds like the word for flow. The connotation is that good things flow well, so six is a lucky number meaning that all goes well.

The number 7 is pronounced *qi*, which sounds like the word for angry. Not a good number!

The number 8 is pronounced *ba* and its homonym means "to make a fortune." It's seen as a very good number indeed.

The number 9 is pronounced *jiu* and it sounds like eternity. Nine is associated with longevity and success over time.

You can even string numbers together to make phrases. The pronunciation of 520 (*wu er ling*) sounds somewhat similar to “I love you” in Chinese and so is a fun number.

Meanwhile, numbers in the West have a different set of connotations, often stemming from nature or from religious origins.

For example, the number 3 can be seen as auspicious because it mirrors the holy trinity in the Christian tradition.

The number 7 is also seen as a lucky number, perhaps because of its echoes in nature: seven days of the week, seven colors of the rainbow and seven notes on a musical scale.

By contrast, 13 is seen as such an unlucky number that hotels will occasionally skip the number entirely for their building floors, with elevators going straight from floor 12 to floor 14. Likewise, a Friday that falls on the thirteenth day of the month is seen as an unlucky day.

4. Language and Terminology

There are topics that spontaneously develop similar taboos around them in multiple cultures. Multiple cultures tend to develop linguistic euphemisms or alternative ways of speaking about death in order to make a

tough subject sound a bit more palatable. For example, both the Chinese and English languages use phrases like “to pass away” instead of “to die” when dealing with the loss of a loved one.

The topic of sex can also be a sensitive one around the world. It can be considered more appropriate to “make love” than “to have sex,” for example.

There are other topics that can be seen as more sensitive or be treated with more sensitivity in the West. The discussion of weight has evolved in Western cultures to a point where how much a person weighs is decoupled linguistically from judgment. For example, it’s considered rude to call someone “fat” or to discuss another person’s weight without being prompted to do so by the person in question.

In contrast, it’s not unusual for someone in China to look at a friend and casually remark: “You’ve gained weight.” This is starting to change in China in recent years but is still common.

Age can also be a sensitive topic. Westerners typically refrain from directly asking or discussing another person’s age. People may be comfortable being described as “older” but resist being called “old.” This is somewhat less of an issue in China, perhaps because of the positive hierarchical ties between respect and age.

Skin color is another topic that is

often treated quite differently. Most Western societies have engaged in a concerted effort in recent decades to decouple skin color from value judgments. It’s still a major issue culturally but it’s widely considered unacceptable to offer praise or condemnation based on skin tone.

Chinese standards of beauty traditionally regarded fairer skin as more desirable. In China, too, it is becoming increasingly unacceptable to connect skin color and value judgments. Still, these kinds of associations remain more likely to be mentioned in casual conversations than would be considered appropriate in the West.

Ethnicity

When it comes to discussing race or ethnicity, modern practice in many Western countries is to use for a specific group the terminology or language generally viewed as appropriate by a consensus of the individuals who constitute the specific group. This consensus can and does evolve over time. Here’s an alphabetical list of terms generally considered acceptable at the present time:

- African-American;
- American Indian;
- Asian American;
- Black;
- Caucasian;
- Hispanic;
- Latina / Latino;
- Native American, and;
- White.

It's generally considered impolite for a person of one ethnic group to bring up or discuss physical differences with persons of another ethnicity. For example, someone who is African American would likely object to another person asking to touch her hair. A white person may find it uncomfortable if someone comments on how much arm hair he has.

Economic Class

The terminology surrounding economic class likewise continues to change in the West. Here's a list of terms generally considered appropriate:

- Economically disadvantaged;
- Working class;
- Lower-middle class;
- Middle class;
- Upper-middle class, and;
- Upper class.

In general, people are more likely to view themselves as part of the middle. In public polls and surveys, only one in ten Americans are likely to self-define as "lower class" while only one to three percent choose to describe themselves as "upper class."

Gender, Sex and Sexual Orientation

The definition and description of characteristics, preferences and identities surrounding the topics of gender, sex and sexual orientation has evolved rapidly in the past couple of decades in the West. Here's a non-exhaustive list of terms currently considered generally acceptable.

Androgynous	Identifying and/or presenting as neither distinguishably masculine nor feminine.
Asexual	The lack of a sexual attraction or desire for other people.
Bisexual	A person emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to more than one sex, gender or gender identity though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree.
Cisgender	A term used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.
Gay	A person who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to members of the same gender.
Gender dysphoria	Clinically significant distress caused when a person's assigned birth gender is not the same as the one with which they identify.
Gender expression	External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.
Gender-fluid	A person who does not identify with a single fixed gender; of or relating to a person having or expressing a fluid or unfixed gender identity.
Gender identity	One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.
Intersex	An umbrella term used to describe a wide range of natural bodily variations. In some cases, these traits are visible at birth, and in others, they are not apparent until puberty.
Non-conforming	A broad term referring to people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category.
Lesbian	A woman who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to other women.
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer, intersex, asexual and other
Non-binary	An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman.
Pansexual	Describes someone who has the potential for emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to people of any gender though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree.
Queer	A term people often use to express fluid identities and orientations. Often used interchangeably with LGBTQIA+.
Questioning	A term used to describe people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.
Sex assigned at birth	The sex (male or female) given to a child at birth, most often based on the child's external anatomy. This is also referred to as "assigned sex at birth."
Sexual orientation	An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people.
Transgender	An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation.

Disabilities

Western culture has moved toward neutral language when discussing mental and physical features and disabilities. Here’s a list of generally-accepted terms as compiled by the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD).

Condition	Respectful Language
Cognitive Disability	Cognitively / Developmentally disabled Person with a cognitive / developmental disability
Emotional Disability	Emotionally disabled Person with an emotional disability
Health Conditions	Survivor Someone “living with” a specific disability (i.e. cancer, AIDS)
Hearing Impairment	Deaf Hard-of-hearing Person who is deaf or hard of hearing
Height Stature	Someone of short stature Little person
Learning Disability	Learning disability Cognitive disability
Mental Health Disability	Person with a psychiatric disability Person with a mental health disability
Mobility/Physical Disability	Wheelchair user Physically disabled Person with a mobility or physical disability
Speech/Communication Disability	Person with a speech / communication disability
Visually Impaired	Blind/Visually impaired Person who is blind/visually impaired

5. Giving and Receiving Gifts

In Chinese social settings, gift-giving is generally governed by the idea that the exchange of gifts, whether monetary or otherwise, should even out over time when considered in the larger social context.

When children are young, they are the beneficiaries of gifts, often in the form of cash delivered in red envelopes by elder members of the larger family unit. Gifts are often given to commemorate specific moments or events: birthdays, marriages and major holidays.

As children age into adulthood, they transition from being net recipients of gifts to being the givers of gifts. The most senior family members, typically grandparents, also receive gifts from their adult children during holidays.

In the big picture, each generation is supported by prior generations until they come of age and start their own households, at which point they are expected to begin supporting the oldest and youngest

members of the extended family. It’s a conception of gift-giving that is transactional but that also reinforces familial ties and promotes the wellbeing of the extended family over time.

Gift-giving in China does sometimes extend into the business place. Gifts of minor nominal value (e.g., a flower for Teacher’s Day or chocolates for Children’s Day) are seen as gestures of appreciation and respect.

Larger gifts, whether in the form of cash or high-value products, are seen in a more transactional manner. If a person is given and chooses to accept a gift of significant value, the implication is that the recipient has become indebted in some form to the gift-giver. Repayment may be expected in the form of favors, future gifts or preferential treatment.

In Western families, gifts are also given during major holidays such as Christmas. As in China, children tend to be major recipients of birthday or holiday gifts.

As individuals reach adulthood, gifts tend to become smaller and seen more as tokens of affection. Reciprocity and equivalency are important. For example, siblings are often expected to give gifts to each other in quantity and value that are roughly equal. A dinner guest might bring a bottle of wine to a party, with an implied expectation that she or he will in turn throw a dinner party in the future.



Restaurants serving Chinese cuisine from various parts of the country tend to fall within similar price ranges. Restaurants featuring food from other parts of the world, especially when it comes to fine dining, tend to feature higher price points. Regardless the type of restaurant, chefs and cooks remain more likely to hail from China than from the country represented by the food served at an international restaurant.

In Western countries, food from other countries tends to be quite popular, especially for nights out. For example, some of the most popular restaurants in the U.S. tend to feature food from places like Italy, France, Mexico and China. Oftentimes the menus feature recipes that have been adopted to local tastes and are more appropriately seen as fusion food than authentic recipes with ingredients straight from the country of origin. Price points tend to vary more by the restaurant's local location and quality than by the country of origin.

The consumption of beer and wine during meals tends to be more common among Westerners than among Chinese diners. On the other hand, repeated rounds of toasts featuring beer or liquor tend to be more common during Chinese dinners.

Gift-giving in the Western workplace is now limited to items of token value. Larger gifts are seen as not only inappropriate but also potentially illegally. Token gifts of appreciation and respect tend to be small and almost never come in the form of cash.

6. Lines and Waiting in Turn

Chinese culture is quickly changing on this point. It was once true that lines were seen as suggestions honored more in breach than in substance. Nowadays effective lines where people wait their turn (to board a plane, catch a taxi, see a bank teller) have become the norm. Even so, it would not be particularly unusual to see a person jump the line with no sense of indecorum.

Line order in a Western setting is fairly strictly enforced. Cutting in line at the grocery store or a government office would be seen as offensive and an insult to the rest of the people waiting in line.

7. Food and Drink

China's sheer size means that there is an incredibly wide variety of foods and cooking styles within the country. This range of Chinese cuisines means that someone looking for variety in China may be more eager to sample something different by trying a restaurant or dish from a different part of China than from a different part of the world. This is also changing and restaurants from other cultures and countries have become increasingly popular in China.



What to Bring



Xiamen is not a place of scarcity. It has your typical brick-and-mortar superstores (Wal-Mart, Watsons, Carrefour, etc.) and Taobao, China's version of Amazon, on which you can buy just about everything.

Still, relocating to another country comes with its own unique challenges. Here is a list of things you should have with you when you arrive in Xiamen.

Passport: Really, don't forget this. You would not be the first person to leave for the airport but forget your passport.

Money: Also a good idea. We suggest bringing or having access to between \$1,500 and \$2,000 to cover initial costs until your first paycheck: apartment deposit, bedding, pots and pans, food, etc. You have a daily withdrawal limit on your foreign bank card so it's smart to exchange some foreign currency into Chinese yuan upon arrival at the airport to supplement your daily withdrawals, just in case. It's helpful if you gain an understanding of the exchange rate and a rough idea what things

will cost, or else your modest withdrawal might dry up fast.

Electronics: Make sure you have your essentials such as a smartphone, laptop, tablet, iPod, etc.

Adapters: Make sure you have the necessary adapters for your electronics. If you have a MacBook laptop, don't forget a two-pronged charger.

Weather appropriate clothing: Take note of the weather and season of your arrival. Your suitcase should mainly consist of clothes you will immediately use with a little space for a few items you'll need at other times of the year. You can always buy more later.

Deodorant: If you have a favorite brand, it might be hard to find it in Xiamen. It's best to bring several sticks of deodorant with you. If you don't care about brands, rest assured that you can buy deodorants here.

Medicine: It's a good idea to have some over-the-counter medicine to which you are accustomed for those minor pains and



problems that might come your way. You'll likely be able to find equivalents but it's better to be on the safe side. If you have any prescriptions, discuss with your doctor about bringing enough medicine to China or how to can ship prescriptions to China. For more info, please see the Hospitals and Medicine section of this info packet.

Toiletries and makeup: If you have brands to which you are attached, bring a good stock because it is not guaranteed you will find them in Xiamen. Also, have tissues on hand because local restrooms often run out of toilet paper.

Towel: If you stay in a hotel after you arrive, there is time to buy a towel. However, if you move into an apartment immediately, you'll want one if you shower that day or evening.

Special bedding: If you need a particular item for good sleep, don't forget it.

Ear plugs and sleep mask: Jet lag is irritating! Ear plugs and a sleep mask will help ensure

proper rest after you arrive. Some neighborhoods are noisier than others.

VPN: This is a virtual private network. You may want to purchase and install a VPN onto your devices before leaving your home country.

Tampons: Be aware that tampons can be hard to find in Xiamen, where pads are more popular. Alternatively, you can buy something reusable like a DivaCup and never have to worry about buying tampons ever again.

Shoes: If you have bigger feet, make sure you have plenty of shoes. It could be hard to find your size in stores. However, you should find plenty of options on Taobao. Also, hiking boots are a great investment. Xiamen has plenty of mountains and rainy seasons. Hiking boots are great for exploring and any type of weather.

Mobile offline translator: Download a translator that can be used offline before you depart. Pleco is reliable and popular app.



Your First Week Here

Moving to a new city, let alone a foreign country, can be intimidating. Your first week in Xiamen will be challenging, no doubt. There's the trip itself, followed by the inevitable jet lag and disorientation. And then there's a significant to-do list before you can settle down and once again function normally.

But there is good news! From the time your flight arrives, a friendly member of Sunshine Home and a Foreign Teach Advisor will accompany you and help you navigate this new environment.

From the airport you'll be whisked away to a hotel where you'll probably want to nap before doing anything else. Every hour of time difference equals an additional day of jetlag, so be generous with yourself and allow ample time to recover from your journey.

Over the next few days you'll have a number of rapid-fire projects: apartment hunting, a local bank account, Chinese cell phone service, a health exam and registration for a residence permit. The majority of these tasks require you to be present in body only. A Foreign Teacher Advisor will whisk you sleepily from one place to the next to wait in line, sign your name and smile for the occasional official photo.

Full disclosure: this initial week or two will likely be your hardest in China. You'll have to negotiate a new environment with limited resources. You'll probably feel some culture shock in addition to jet lag. You won't have Google maps to help you navigate this new environment -- you might not even have a working phone right away! It's a new place and you have many things to do before you can begin to feel a semblance of being settled in. But one after another, things will settle into place, and soon you'll be over the hump!

It's a lot to think about so we've written a little section on each of the big life projects you've got ahead of you when you first get here.

YOUR APARTMENT

While your hotel bed will surely be a welcome sight after the flight, you'll quickly want to find a place to call home. As you begin the hunt for an apartment, bear in mind that there is no

need to pick the first place you see. The hotel may not be a five-star resort but it will be quite affordable by international standards. Take your time to see as many places as necessary until you find one with which you are truly happy.

Chinese apartments come in a ridiculously wide range of prices and quality, ranging from Communist-era studios in a six-floor walkup building to marble penthouses on the 70th floor of a skyscraper. With your salary you can afford a variety of options, from a modest place near the sea with a few bedrooms to a family-friendly community filled with green walking paths a few minutes walk from one of our facilities.

As of August 2018, here's a rough price range of what to expect for apartments that a Westerner would typically find acceptable:

Studios
2,000 to 2,500 yuan

One-bedrooms
2,500 to 3,500 yuan

Two-bedrooms
3,000 to 4,500 yuan

Communicate what you're looking to spend on rent to the real estate agent. The agent can then show you places directly within your budget. And keep in mind that it's not only square meters and amenities that determine price, but also location! Some



areas are much more expensive than others. A longer trip to work can translate into an extra bedroom for the same price. It might even be that apartments on one side of a big road are cheaper than those on the other side. Finding a walk-up building can also save you a ton. You may even want to work with multiple real estate agents, as any agency has only a few portions of the overall rental pie. If you're interested in a specific area, find an agency in that area to share some photos of listings and to show you several places. To reemphasize, teachers who are happiest with their living situations are those who are adamant about seeing as many places as possible before making a final choice, which means coming in having a strong idea of what you want. Do not feel guilty about having high standards and taking your time. Agents are used to showing customers dozens of places even if it doesn't result in a contract.

When you do find a place you like, hold on before rushing to sign. There are a few things you're going to want to do, especially if you have any hope of getting your apartment deposit back. Here's a quick list of tips for ensuring that deposit!

1. Choose your landlady as carefully as you choose your apartment. Request to meet the owner before signing an agreement with his or her agent. If they decline, make sure they have a reliable apartment manager about whom you have a positive feeling. If you find a great place with a shady landlord, walk away.
2. Translate the contract. If you sign an agreement that is only in Chinese and you don't read Chinese, it will be impossible to know if your landlord is breaking the contract... or if you are!
3. Write an addendum to cover any furnishings. Be sure everyone agrees on all the items being rented as well as their condition.
4. Photograph and video the apartment before signing an agreement... and then leave it in the exact same condition when you're done! Make sure the landlady knows you are making a video record of the contents of the apartment and its current condition. Share a copy with her. Do it again at the end.
5. If possible, rent from a landlord who has dealt with foreign tenants in the past. Reduce the chances of cultural disconnect by renting from someone who has prior experience with international tenants. This will reassure the landlady that your requests are neither uncommon nor unreasonable.
6. Consider renting from an owner of multiple properties. Landlords with multiple apartments will have more experience and less of a personal investment in the relationship. Renting from someone who understands that it's just business and not personal makes your life easier.
7. Bring a translator with you and ask her or his opinion about the potential agreement. If a landlady knows that you have the weight of a company behind you, they will be less inclined to simply wait you out in the event that something goes wrong.
8. When you leave, find a new tenant. If you're solving a problem for your landlord, he will be more inclined to return your deposit.
9. Don't break the contract! This sounds simple but it extends to leaving early. If you do leave early, you're breaching the contract and it becomes exponentially harder to get your deposit. That may be unfair in a cosmic sense but breach of contract often entails forfeiture of deposit.

Following these tips will be a big help when it's time to move on. But let's take a minute to explain how apartment rentals work here, as renting in China is a little different from back home.

Almost everyone pays rent quarterly rather than monthly. Therefore, the upfront costs of moving in are a little high: three months rent plus an additional month's rent as a deposit. Your second rent payment will be due three months from the date you sign your rental contract, with quarterly payments thereafter. In addition to this, you will have to pay a one-time agent fee which is typically half of the monthly rent. Pro tip: if you take over an apartment from a departing foreign teacher you can escape this fee.

As in most countries, rent does not include utilities such as water, electric, and WiFi. Water and electrical bills are also paid every three months. It takes a while to get used to feeling rich for two months and then giving away a big chunk of cash on the third month!

Still, rent is quite low. A one-year lease is the easiest and cheapest to find. If you're looking for a three-month or six-month, lease, your rent will be higher. Even if you plan on staying in an apartment for less than a year, an annual contract is worth considering. There's a good chance you can find someone to take over your lease when you move. If you can't find someone, the penalty is

only the loss of your deposit (one month of rent).

Utilities are surprisingly cheap and so is WiFi, for which you have a few payment options: monthly, semi-annual or annual payments. We suggest springing for faster service, it's worth it!

The monthly bill that you may find confusing is your apartment's "Management Fee." Basically, every apartment complex hires a company to run the public services in your community. That company hires the security guards, keeps the grounds and your building maintained (hopefully) and generally provides the apartment complex with a range of basic services. That company allocates its costs to the homeowners based on the square meters of property they own.

Because the homeowner is your landlady or landlord, they pass on this "management fee" to the renter. The fee is usually charged to you on a quarterly basis and is typically payable either to the landlady or to the management company.

APARTMENT SEARCH DISCLAIMER

As mentioned above, a Foreign Teacher Advisor will help you in your initial search for an apartment. Please note that the Advisors will let you know if the apartments you consider are managed by an entity that is willing and able to issue a formal invoice for the monthly/quarterly rent payments.

This is important because an invoice is necessary for your employer to claim your housing payment as exempt from personal income tax. In the absence of a rental payment invoice, you will pay tax on all income you receive, including but not limited to your housing allowance.

Please be aware that entities that can issue an invoice control only a small percentage of the overall rental market. Reasons for an unwillingness to issue an invoice can vary:

The apartment may be in a building that lacks fire code approval;

The unit may be subdivided in a way that does not allow for an invoice;

The owner may not have registered the unit with the city;

The property may not be registered as a private residential unit, and/or;

The manager/owner may be unwilling to pay income tax on rental income.

Teachers can rent any type of apartment they prefer, regardless of whether the rental payment is deductible for tax purposes. That said, it's essential that you understand the potential tax impact of your choice before signing an agreement. If you have any questions or doubts whatsoever, ask the Foreign Teacher Advisor.

We hope this overview makes the apartment process a little more clear. It's not hard to find a place to live, but a place to live in happily takes a little planning, knowledge and perseverance.

YOUR CELL PHONE

Another important task will be getting your cell phone in order. You may want to simply buy a SIM card for your current phone. You can also purchase a new Chinese phone, which is relatively inexpensive.

Cell phone service in China is remarkably cheap! Once you have your phone up-and-running, life will become significantly easier. A data plan will let you communicate on-the-go via WeChat, a versatile app that combines the features of Facebook and Whatsapp with in-app maps, translation services and even widely-accepted payment services akin to Venmo.

Once you set up your bank account, apps like Wechat or Alipay are extremely convenient ways to make everyday purchases.

But first you will need that local phone number, which may bring you some troubles. In modern phones, your specific phone number resides on a removable card inside your phone called a GSM chip.

If a phone is "unlocked," you can remove your current chip with a phone number from your home country and replace it with a new chip. That new chip will have a Chinese phone number issued by

a Chinese service provider.

If you purchased your smart phone from your phone service provider at a discount, it may be locked to your current carrier. In return for the discount, you promised to stay with that service provider for a minimum period of time (typically two years).

Your service provider won't al-



low you to unlock your phone until you have completed a minimum amount of your current contract. After that minimum period, you can contact your current service provider to ask them to unlock your phone.

Phones purchased at full value can typically be unlocked immediately. You will still need to contact your current service provider to ask them to unlock your phone.

Once your phone is unlocked, Sunshine Home's Foreign Teacher Advisor will help you get a new

GSM chip, a local phone number and cell phone service.

If your current phone is locked, remember, smartphones in China are inexpensive! The Foreign Teacher Advisor will help you get a new smartphone, a GSM chip, a local phone number and cell phone service.

Once you have phone service set up, adding money to your account is super easy! There are two main payment options. First, you can pay using WeChat or Alipay. However, if you don't have your bank account linked to either of these apps, you can ask the Foreign Teacher Advisor or a friend to help you pay on their phone. It's very simple to "top up" your phone this way.

Your second option is to go to the nearest China Mobile store and pay in person or at a kiosk. One branch of China Mobile is on the basement floor of the Ruijing Shopping Mall. While there might not be an English speaker on duty, if you show them your phone it will be quite simple for them to figure out what service you have and how to pay.

In any event, cell phone service in China is remarkably cheap. You may only need to put 100 yuan on your phone every few months when you run out of data, as WiFi is widely available.

As with many things in China, a cell phone is a hassle to set up initially but is simple and cheap to maintain!

YOUR INTERNET SERVICE

Some apartments will come with internet included, but many landlords will leave internet service up to the tenant. Choosing your own internet does have a perk, though: you can choose fast service! And this service may be cheaper to buy on your own than whatever a landlord might charge you.

Basically, there are three companies from which to choose. Chang Cheng is the local cable television service company. China Mobile and China Telecom also provide wired internet service to the home. Entry-level prices for internet service shared between a few apartments begin at between 600 and 1,000 yuan per year, depending on the service provider.

Higher speeds are available for a marginal extra fee, typically a 300 to 500 yuan annual surcharge. We highly recommend splurging for the faster service!

To order service from any of these companies, work with one of our Foreign Teacher Advisors to order internet service. He or she will contact the company for you, set an appointment for installation and help you purchase a router.

For China Telecom, you'll need to go to the company to purchase the router and make payment first. Afterwards, you can set an appointment for installation. While it may be possible to order service over the phone and purchase a router directly from the

installation service technician, this is not a guarantee.

Once you've ordered internet service, expect to wait two to three workdays for the company to send someone to your apartment to run the physical line to your place. Setting up a router is never easy so make sure that the installation technician has everything up-and-running before he or she departs. We highly recommend having a bilingual person present during the installation.

YOUR BANK ACCOUNT

Applying for an Account

Setting up your bank account is a straightforward but essential task. Once again, your main duties are waiting in line and nodding politely as a Foreign Teacher Advisor does the talking. Be aware that the application process is easy enough but new accounts aren't typically active for as long as a month. It will take between 20 and 30 working days to get your actual debit card. Don't worry, if your account isn't ready when pay day comes around, you'll be paid in cold hard cash. Once ready, your paycheck will be directly deposited into your checking account.

All foreigners who are applying for a Chinese bank account must now submit her or his Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN). For Americans, this means submitting your Social Security Number as your TIN. For Canadians, it's your Canadian Social Insurance Number. This is a new requirement that China has implement-

ed as part of its efforts to comply with the terms of a 2014 international tax treaty. The purpose is to combat tax evasion with an internationally-shared Common Reporting Standard (CRS), not to make foreigners feel more or less comfortable in China. And remember, it's not just China but a great number of countries that collectively agreed to rigid standards for sharing information back in 2014. For some more helpful information please search "Common Reporting Standard" and "Taxpayer Identification Number" on Wikipedia.

While you can make ATM withdrawals from a bank account in your home country (with a daily limit of about 2,500 yuan), the exchange rate is not great and fees add up quickly. Think of your home country account as an emergency backup rather than a daily tool.

Your paycheck will be electronically deposited into your Chinese bank account. Payroll cannot be arranged to a foreign bank account so at some point you'll likely want to transfer money back home, whether via a service like Western Union or through your bank. While most bank branches will have at least one teller on staff who can speak some English, it's better to have someone from Sunshine Home assist you just in case.

Unfortunately, it is almost impossible in practice for a foreigner to qualify in China for a credit card. So much for buying that Ferrari

right away.

If you like to do things yourself, you can head to a nearby Chinese Construction Bank with an English-speaking manager. If the Hongwen BRT station is your starting point, take the stairs that on the California Shopping Mall side of the road (the north side). When you reach the bottom of the stairs, look directly to your right. You'll see a large shop with big, clear windows and a big sign that says Chinese Construction Bank. Once you enter the doors, you will see a string of ATMs on the left and a set of stairs on the right. Climb the stairs to the second-floor lobby and ask for the manager, Mr. Huang, who speaks English.

Sending Money Home

We do not advise taking Chinese yuan out of the country as it is very difficult to exchange yuan to other currencies outside of the China mainland, Hong Kong and Macao. You are able to convert Chinese yuan from your Chinese bank account into foreign currency and then take the foreign currency out of the country.

When leaving the country with cash, it is very important that you abide by the legal limits. The maximum amount that you can carry across a Chinese mainland border without declaration is \$5,000 (or equivalent in foreign currency) and 20,000 yuan.

For larger amounts, please seek guidance from a foreign teacher advisor.



International Bank Transfers

Another option is to transfer money visa an international bank transfer while you are still employed. To complete the process successfully, you need to provide your bank with the following documents:

- Current employment contract;
- Chinese tax certificate (available with assistance from a foreign teacher advisors);
- Stamped pay slip, and;
- Home country bank details (including address and IBAN/SWIFT code).

The cost of an international bank transfer is 110 yuan as of March 2019. The transfer includes a conversion of Chinese yuan into the destination currency at the official exchange rate at the time of the transfer.

The amount of the transfer can be up to but no greater than the post-tax pay deposit from your employer for the most recent month. This restriction assures

the Chinese government that you have properly paid personal income tax on the funds you wish to transfer.

The paperwork process at the bank for international currency transfers is extensive. Expect to be at the bank for up to 90 minutes. The funds typically arrive at the destination bank account in three to five business days but the actual amount of time can vary greatly depending on any number of factors.

Other Methods

While other means exist to conduct cross-border currency transfers, we are unable to provide advice about such methods.

Exchanging Currency

First, let a Foreign Teacher Advisor know the specific amount you'd like to exchange at least 10 days in advance of the date when you'd like to make the transaction.



Next, you'll have to sign a Letter of Authorization allowing the Foreign Teacher Advisor to act as your representative so that he or she can help you obtain the tax paperwork needed to change money.

You will need both your Foreign Work Permit (kept on file by Sunshine Home) and your tax letter in order to change currency above the daily limit.

The Foreign Teacher Advisor will accompany you to the bank to help you change money into your home currency.

At that point, you will also be

able to send money to a foreign account from your Chinese bank.

YOUR HEALTH EXAM

Early on, you'll also take a trip with a Foreign Teacher Advisor to the hospital to complete a health exam. This exam is a prerequisite for your Residence Permit. While some hospitals in Xiamen can be sub-par, the health check facility is in a safe and competent institution. This will likely be your first encounter with the interesting mix of traditional Chinese and Western medicine that lives in Chinese hospitals (for more details about hospitals and health care in Xiamen, see the "Hospitals, Clinics and Medi-

cine" section).

For a normal internal scan you'll need to fast (water only) for 12 hours, so no snacks after 8 p.m. the day before your exam! Most of these tests are routine no matter where you're from (urine and blood tests, chest X-ray, ultrasound), while the medical data obtained from a few are a little more obscure. The biggest challenge is maintaining your fast as you move from floor to floor to complete each test. The experience is somewhat reminiscent of a factory's assembly line. It's not unpleasant, just impersonal.

It's best to do the health check first thing in the morning before the crowds arrive. But don't worry, a Foreign Teacher Advisor will make all the necessary plans and notify you in advance. Afterwards, the results of the health check will be returned to you and to the school in about a week. The check is typically valid for one year. It may or may not be necessary to conduct follow-up checks on an annual basis, depending on the initial results.

Keep in mind, though, that the authorities will deny a Residence Permit to applicants who suffer from highly communicable diseases such as dengue fever, malaria, tuberculosis and yellow fever.

The state-approved health check is the final part of your visa process, hooray! The ordeal is nearly over.

YOUR RESIDENCE PERMIT

Once you've finished your hospi-

tal visit, you'll soon head to the Entry-Exit Office to apply for your residence permit. The residence permit is a replacement for your work (Z) visa. Like a visa, it will be pasted in your passport and will eventually need to be renewed should you desire to stay longer than the time allotted (typically either six or 12 months).

For your Residence Permit, you will need to bring along your health exam paperwork, passport, Sunshine Home's letter of invitation and your Foreign Work Permit card. Most of these documents are kept on file by Sunshine Home so the most important thing to remember is your passport. The Foreign Teacher Advisor will accompany you and will double-check the list of necessary items. As with the hospital exam, there will be a fee for applying for the permit. These fees are paid by Sunshine Home.

Getting a Residence Permit is something that you have to do when you first arrive because your work visa is time-limited to a month. The in-person portion of the application is simple but the Exit-Entry office will hold your passport for between three and six weeks while Public Security Bureau processes your application.

When you hand over your passport, they give you an official receipt that includes your photo as well as your passport and work permit information. This receipt serves as your official identification. You will need to carry a

copy of this document with you at all times until you retrieve your passport.

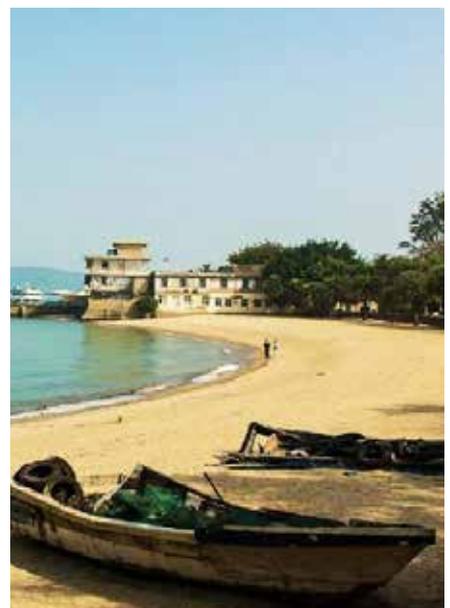
You can travel inside China using this receipt on an airplane or train but not beyond China's borders. When your Residence Permit is ready, your passport will be returned to you and you will be able to travel freely.

A residence permit allows multiple entries into China so you don't have to renew it each time you vacation outside of China. However, you do need to re-register your Xiamen address each time you re-enter China, even though you haven't moved. Please let Sunshine Home know whenever you plan to travel so they can help you re-register.

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

We hope this introduction will make Week One a little less intimidating. We regrettably cannot cure jetlag or help you become instantly fluent in Chinese but we are here to be your friendly guides and helpers.

Remember, the Foreign Teacher Advisors are a great resource, whether you need to go to the hospital or call a plumber. But in a lot of ways, your most important resources will be your fellow teachers. Team members will be eager to show you around and share the ways they've found to have a great time living in Xiamen!



Initial Training

All new teachers at Sunshine Home begin with a two-week training period before beginning their own classes. These two weeks are a nice adjustment period to learn about the school and its practices and to meet and chat with lots of your new coworkers.

On the first day of training you meet with a representative from Human Resources to go over your contract and various school policies. You also receive a training packet and a schedule for the next two weeks. Your schedule covers the topics you will study and the people with whom you will work as well as the places and times for your training.

An important part of the training consists of classroom observations. You sit in on a range of classes to give you a better understanding of how classes unfold here at Sunshine Home. You observe a range of different subjects, teachers and grade levels so to give you the fullest possible sense of our students and classes. You see a bit of everything but your observations are weighted toward the classroom position you will eventually assume.

Another part of the training occurs outside of the classroom in partnership with our Academic Coordinators (AC). These discussions and seminars focus on the theory and pedagogy behind what we do in the classroom. Topics covered include:

- An overview of our Chinese, English and sciences programs;
- The creation of effective lesson plans;
- The incorporation of songs and games into the classroom;
- The use of phonics in the classroom
- Effective classroom management;
- Working with parents and more.

Often a given day includes a mix of class observation and a session or two with an AC. You also have scheduled slots to meet with our principals and our senior teachers. Everyone is here to help you feel welcome and prepared to take on your very own classes!

The second week of training includes a few open timeslots to socialize with teachers, explore school resources and begin to prepare your lesson plans for your first week of classes.

Remember, all of our foreign staff have gone through a similar process of getting used to a new city and a new employer at the same time. We're here to help you be happy in Xiamen and as a teacher at Sunshine Home.

And after the two weeks are over, we continue to be here for support and advice whenever you need it!



GETTING AROUND



Xiamen Transportation

Xiamen offers a variety of transportation options. For public transportation there are tons of different bus routes. No matter where you're going, you'll have multiple buses that can take you there and with short waiting times. Except for a few routes at certain rush hours, they are not typically super-packed like you might imagine. Best of all, a bus ride only costs one yuan!

You can also ride something called the BRT (bus rapid transit). The BRT is a bus system that runs on a raised platform above the road, free from traffic. The BRT routes are fixed and have a minimal number of stops, which is great if you're trying to go quickly to one of the system's destinations. The fare for the BRT depends on distance but only costs between one and two yuan max. Combining the BRT and a regular bus can be a great way to get to a specific place a bit faster than just taking the bus alone.

You can use the BRT with two payment methods: 1) A bus card available with a one-time 50 yuan payment for the card plus whatever amount you add to your initial balance), or; 2) a single-use token that costs one or two yuan, depending on the distance of your destination. The bus card is much more convenient in the long run because it

can also be used on any city bus. For the token, you'll have to wait in line, tell the clerk your destination, and pay the exact amount in cash. There's also a new third option of downloading an in-Wechat app that allows you to pay your fare with Wechat Pay.

Pro Tip

The BRT Card can also be used for regular bus fares, too!

Miraculously, taxis are really cheap here. A trip from one side of the island to the other will only cost about 40-50 yuan. Most trips, like from Ruijing Sunshine Home to Shapowei, costs about 30 yuan. If you're in a rush or just want the convenience, taxis

are a great choice. You also have some Uber-like car apps like Didi that can be a little cheaper but do require a bit of Chinese to be able to tell the driver where you are for pickup.

Xiamen now has a subway line, too. This is a relatively new option. With only one line now finished, it hasn't yet become very useful. However, new stops and lines are being built and in no time it will be another great transportation option.

Xiamen also has two train stations. The Xiamen Train Station is in the middle of the island while the Xiamen North Train Station is off the island in the district of Jimei. More trains are available from the north station





but it's a bit of a trek (about an hour) to get there, so it's best to debark from the island station if you have an option. Trains are a cheap, comfortable and relatively fast way to travel in China. Destinations in Fujian and big cities in nearby provinces like Shenzhen, are super easy to get to by train. There's even a non-stop train that will take you directly to Hong Kong!

Of course, Xiamen also has an airport. It's not huge, but it's not tiny either. International flights often mean transferring at a hub airport like Hong Kong or Shanghai to a connecting flight. XiamenAir does offer some direct international flights to places like Amsterdam and Los Angeles. Other XiamenAir flights may have a brief layover in Fuzhou, like the flight to New York City. It's worth the extra little money, honestly.

Electric scooters are currently permitted in mainland portions

of Xiamen. They cannot be driven over the bridges or through the tunnel connecting mainland Xiamen to the island of Xiamen. Scooters are convenient for getting around the city but there are a few things to keep in mind.

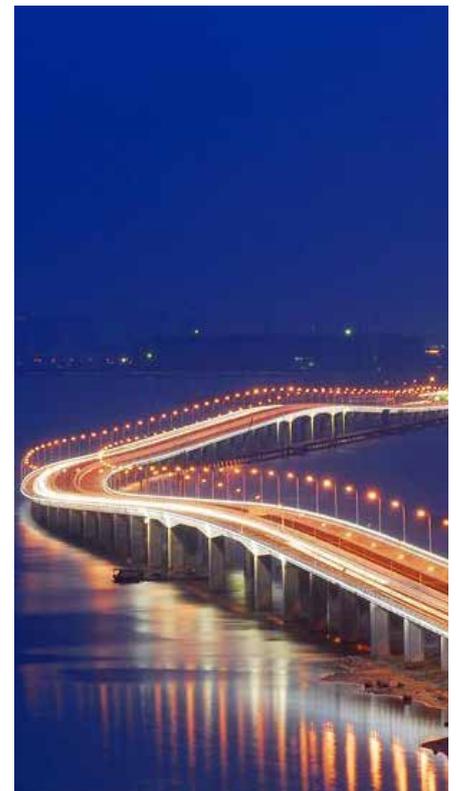
The first and most important rule of riding a scooter is to always always wear a helmet. In the back, a helmet should extend at least to the bottom of your ears so that it does not fly off in the event of a fall. Helmets with visors that extend down to the nose instead of the chin are great on hot days but a disaster in the rain. :) It's a smart idea to store a rain poncho under the seat in case of rain. They look goofy and are incredibly useful.

When you purchase a scooter, make sure to receive a legal receipt and proof of ownership. If you accidentally violate a rule of the road and your vehicle is impounded, you will need the receipt (which must match the VIN

or vehicle identification number) to reclaim your scooter.

Residents who accidentally drive a scooter on the island of Xiamen may be stopped by the traffic police and have their vehicles impounded. At times, traffic authorities may step into a street and physically attempt to stop a scooter and its driver. This may even extend to attempting to knock a moving scooter onto its side. Do not attempt to flee a traffic officer. This is unwise both legally and physically.

Most importantly, life is not a race! Always drive on the correct side of the road, obey traffic signals and don't pass cars on right side of the far-right lane at a traffic light – passengers may unexpectedly open a car door or the car may make a right turn. Follow the rules of the road, take your time and be careful!



Local Spots & Fun

Xiamen isn't big but it offers a fair amount of cool things to see, taste and do. Whatever you're into, you can find it here, though some things are rarer than others. There's a WeChat group for every conceivable hobby or activity. This article will introduce you to some popular local spots in the city, as well as some fun activities you can try.

Shapowei and Xiada

The Shapowei and Xiada area (Xiada is short for Xiamen Daxue, which means Xiamen University) is really popular. The university has a beautiful campus to check out and is one of China's top institutions of higher learning. The buildings are designed by a famous architect, mixing both Chinese and Western styles. At the back of university, there are walkable tunnels filled with graffiti-inspired artwork. This is one of the sites that bring Chinese tourists to Xiamen in droves. As a highly prestigious school, it also brings in tons of international students. It's a great place to make smart and interesting friends.

Shapowei is an arts district close to the university campus. It is a former fishing village that has been revamped into a fun and modern hangout. It has a very artsy feel to it, with colorful graffiti covering the walls and colorfully painted food shops.

There are also awesome craft markets on the weekends in the late afternoon and early evening. Fat Fat Beer Horse is a tremendous, chilled-out brewery owned by a German expat who brews his own beer. It has some great outdoor seating on the top floor. Mojito's is a cheap Mexican restaurant and bar on the fourth floor of the Shapowei Art Zone building. It gets absolutely packed with young expats and university students on the weekends.

Next to Fat Fat Beer Horse and



on the first floor of the Shapowei Art Zone building is RealLive, Xiamen's best live music venue. They have many shows with performers from around the world. There is also an Escape Room that has rooms for English speakers in the same area.

It is also fun to just get lost and explore all of the backstreets in the area. It is a great mix of old and new, with a peek into local

Chinese living. There are a ton of cool people running coffee shops and art galleries. The main street through the area is filled with small boutiques and restaurants.

If you are looking for a good bakery, there is a great bread shop called Juicy, which has homemade breads and treats. If you want to grab a quick snack, there is a German sausage shop located on this road. And there's always new and interesting shops opening up!

In this area surrounding the university you'll also be able to find other amazing sites such as the Wanshi Botanical Garden and Nanputuo, a traditional temple complex that includes religious halls and a pavilion dating back to 1936.

Overall, it's one of the best places on the island to hang out. You'll certainly find yourself there sooner rather than later.

Gulangyu

Right across the water from Shapowei you will find Xiamen's most popular tourist attraction, Gulangyu islet. It's a lovely spot equally noted for what it has and for what it lacks. Historical buildings from the late 19th and early 20th century abound, as do beaches, museums and tourist shops. It's about the only place on the island you can find something from the distant past. Notably absent are cars, bicycles and the



neon-heavy signs that populate so much of China.

A former concession town during the pre-World War II era and the home of an abundance of piano and trade-loving Westerners, the islet was known up through the early 20th century as a haven for well-to-do Xiamen residents.

Nowadays, must-see spots that draw large crowds include Sunlight Rock, which towers above the isle, Gulangyu's Piano Museum and Shuzhuang Garden (a beachside park containing a zig-zagging overwater bridge).

To some degree, the islet was a victim of its success in recent years, with tourist shops and touts threatening to overwhelm the islet's local character. In an effort to preserve Gulangyu's character and to advance China's bid to gain World Heritage site status for the islet, tourism has been reduced by moving access to the isle to Xiamen's Dongdu Ferry Terminal.

Kinmen (Jinmen) Islands

A few kilometers further offshore lay the Kinmen (also know as Jinmen) islands, a rocky outcropping administered by Taiwan. Kinmen's less developed and more tranquil feel is an agreeable counterpoint to the busy life of tourists from highly-developed cities. It's a great place for a weekend trip. It's only a short ferry-ride away, no plane needed! Rent a scooter and explore its lovely beaches and countryside. You can even check out Ever Rich Golden Lake Plaza, Asia's largest duty-free store.

Local Beaches

In addition to the famous beaches of Gulangyu and Kinmen, Xiamen has a number of other beaches that are worth a visit.

Guanyin Mountain Beach

Xiamen's longest beach is the three-kilometer Guanyin Mountain Beach. Much of the area is an artificial beach but the sand is nice and the slope is gentle. The area even plays host to China's annual beach volleyball tournament. There are a few amenities, including a small theme park, but there are no tents and cabanas for rent and food options are not plentiful. Bring your own blankets and food.

At all beaches in China, be aware of trash on the ground both on the beach and on the seafloor. Exercise caution and be aware of your setting. We also suggest wearing footies in the ocean to avoid stepping on rocks or debris.

Baicheng Beach

This beach is just south of Xiamen University and runs from the Yanwu Bridge to Hulishan Fort. The views are lovely. Bus access is plentiful but traffic along the road backs up as sunset approaches. Bikes are available all along the beachfront.

Huangcuo Beach

Huangcuo Beach is located on the southeastern side of Xiamen and can be accessed by the Island Ring Boulevard (环岛路). The beaches are clean and bus access is pretty good. You can walk to the beach from the convention center and from our Seaside branch.

Clubs and gyms

There are many gyms and athletic clubs in the city. Memberships



typically start around 150 yuan per month and go up from there. Some of the larger clubs are chains that allow you to use more than one site so check around and compare your options. Prices are often negotiable but you'll have better luck if you're with a native Chinese speaker to help you get a good deal.

Biking

In 2017 Xiamen privatized its public bike rental system. Hundreds of thousands of bikes are available for rent on every major thoroughfare for very cheap rates, typically two yuan per hour. Bike rentals involve signing up online and using an app to unlock a bike on the streetside.



Many teachers also have their own bikes to commute to school. Biking is best in the cooler months, typically from October through May. Do be sure to lock your own bike securely and store it in a safe place to minimize the risk of theft.

On the streets, always exercise due caution. While China has a long history of bikes for transportation, Chinese drivers are not as bike-aware as in some European cities. However, there is now a bike-only path below the BRT, which is perfect for a safe trip around the city.

Always wear a helmet! Safety first.

Running

Xiamen is a great place for runners. Although city streets are congested, the Island Ring Boulevard that runs along the eastern coast of the island is ideal for running. There are also a large number of park trails that wind through the hills just to the west of the Island Ring Boulevard.

For people who enjoy a bit of beer with their exercise, the Hash House Harriers have a local group that organizes monthly runs with beer stops as well as social events throughout the year.

Hiking and Rock Climbing

Hiking and climbing are popular activities here. Xiamen is full of mountains. You have easier and harder options, walking up a paved road or path or climbing moral rural lines.

There are also a couple rock climbing gyms (small and big). These are lots of fun and a great way to meet people. Some of these climbers will also go out to



the mountains to do some bouldering.

Ocean Sports

There are a number of places along the beach where you can go kite surfing, kayaking or sailing. Although the waters around Xiamen are fairly calm, it's essential to always wear a life preserver. Also, wear a high-quality



sunblock and re-apply frequently. Even in the winter, you can quickly develop a sunburn. If you want to surf, the waves aren't great but other coastal cities in Fujian offer some decent waves.

Conclusion

These are just a few popular spots and activities. Of course, there are many more things to do and discover here but we hope this gives you an idea of what Xiamen offers!

Navigating Xiamen

Useful BRT and Bus Routes

From the Ruijing branch of Sunshine Home you have a number of transportation options. Which is best depends on where you're looking to go! Here are a few useful routes for getting to some key locations from Ruijing.

TO SHAPOWEI AND XIADA

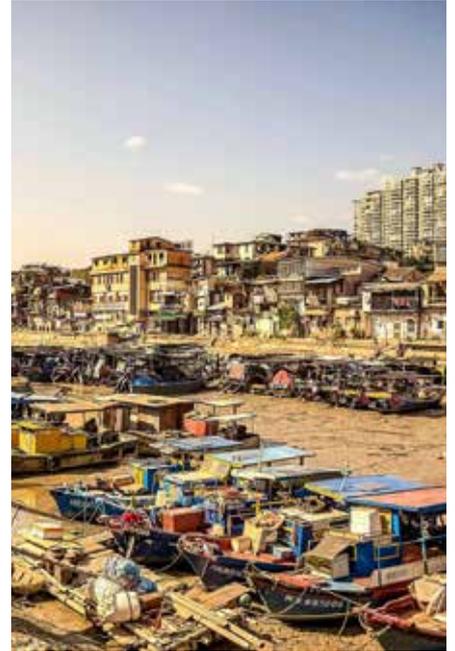
Starting from the front gate of Sunshine Home, take a left and pass through the Ruijing New Village gate (this is the east gate). Walk about 100 meters to Yuding East Road. Turn right and walk for about 100 meters. You will find yourself at the Hongwen Er Lukou Station. This stop only serves one bus, the 47.

The 47 is an important route to remember! If you want to go to the beach or to the Xiamen University and Shapowei area, this route is the fastest way. Shapowei has a cool college scene with lots

of interesting restaurants, coffee shops, bars and music venues. If you want to head there, you will first need to cross to the other side of Yuding East Road and catch the 47 heading south (into the tunnel). It will take about 30 minutes for you to arrive at the Xiada Yiyuan Station, which is right where you want to be.

TO THE TRAIN STATION

If you want the quickest way to the Xiamen Train Station, take the BRT. To get to it, walk 100 meters or so past the Hongwen Er Lukou Station heading north (away from the tunnel) until you run into Lianqian Road. Turn left (west) and head up the hill about 200 meters until you arrive at the Dongfangshan Zhuang bus and BRT stations. Lines One, Two and Three will all take you to your destination – the Huochezhan Station.



The next-closest BRT Station to Ruijing is the Shangye Guangchang Station. That is also on Lianqian Road between the Ruijing Shopping Mall and the California Shopping Mall. This station will also take you to the train station but only one BRT bus goes there (Bus 3). However, your wait will only be 5 minutes, tops.

By the way, please be careful – the area's train system also has a Xiamen North Station, which is off the island in Xiamen's northern Jimei district. Make sure you're headed to the right train station!

Alternatively, the Dongfang Zhuang bus station is a stop for a number of bus routes, including one to the train station. The next two bus stops on Lianqian Road



to the east – Waiguoyu Xuexiao Ruijing Fenxiao Station and Shangye Guangchang Station – include links to many more bus routes.

RUIJING TO SEASIDE

(and vice versa)

The bus system includes a few key routes you will want to remember from the Dongfan, Waiguo, and Shangye bus stops. If you want to go to Seaside, where we have a second branch of Sunshine Home and a great beach, there are several options. The quickest and most direct buses are the 101, the 19A and the 19B. You want to head west on Lianqian Road (toward the ocean and down the hill), so make your way to the south side of Lianqian Road, (the same side of the road as the Ruijing Sunshine Home).

After heading downhill for five to 10 minutes, your bus will make a right turn just in front of the Convention Center. You're now just a few stops from Seaside. When you hear the signal for the "Huizhan Gongjiao Station" bus stop, get off the bus and walk south for about 50 meters. Sunshine Home will be on the right-hand corner of the intersection.

If by accident you make it all the way to the bus route's terminus at the Mingle Hai Jingyuan station, you've gone one stop too far. Don't worry, you can easily make it back to Seaside. Put your back to the convention center and head down the street for about 200 meters and you will see Seaside at the far side of the first in-

tersection on the right-hand side.

To head in the other direction from Seaside to Ruijing, you can take the 101, the 19A or the 19B from the Huizhan Gongjiao Station to the ShangYe Guanchang Station (from which you can also catch the 47) or you can go one more stop to the Waiguo You Xuexiao Station. Please note that the 47 does not stop at the latter station.

RUIJING TO LAKESIDE

(and vice versa)

Aside from a taxi and Didi (China's Uber app), your main transportation option from Ruijing to Lakeside is the number 50 bus. You'll need to walk to the Renwubu stop, which is about 500 meters from Ruijing Sunshine Home. Be careful with timing, as this bus comes once every 20 minutes. Once on the bus you've got 10 stops until you arrive at the last stop, Longqiu San Li. Exit the bus and take a left on Guanri West Rd and you'll see Sunshine Home. The walk is about 250 meters.

To return to Ruijing, you'll follow the same route, only you board the bus at Hubian Huayuan A Qu, a different nearby stop. Start on Guanri West Road, take a right and you'll see a bus stop on the right side of the road.

TO THE AIRPORT

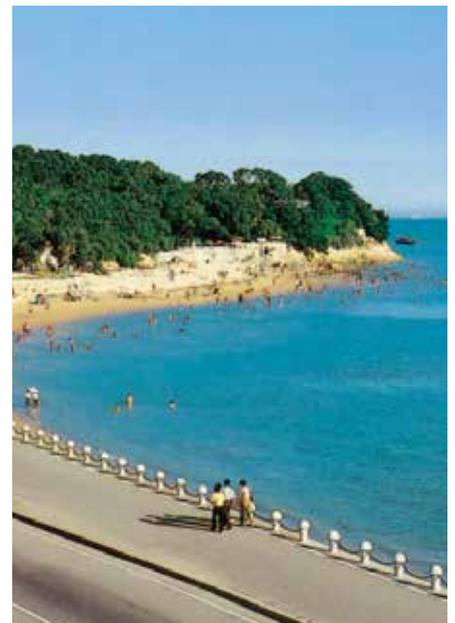
Most international flights depart from Terminal Three (T3). But not all XiamenAir flights use T3, so please check your ticket carefully. Terminal Four (T4) is

reserved for domestic flights and other carriers.

In either case, the best choice is to take a taxi – simple, fast and cheap. From Ruijing it takes about 20 minutes and costs around 20 to 30 yuan, depending on traffic.

If you have plenty of time to spare, there are buses that can take you to the airport. The simplest route is to take the 91 from either Waiguoyu Xuexiao Ruijing Fenxiao or the Dongfangshan Zhuang bus stations. The 91 will take you directly to Xiangyun Sanlu T3 Houjilou. From here it's a five-minute walk to the airport terminal. Follow the signs heading up Xianyuan Fourth Road. There is a free airport shuttle that runs between T3 and T4.

The bus ride will likely take about one hour. But really, travel is always stressful and it's worth the money to spring for a taxi.



Sunshine Home / Xiamen Map

International
Sunshine Home
Arts & Sciences

The map displays the Sunshine Home project area in Xiamen, China, with various transportation routes and landmarks. Key locations include Xiamen Gaoqi International Airport, SM Mall, Decathlon, Wanda, Sunshine Home Lakeside, Sunshine Home Golden Country, Sunshine Home Ruijing, Sunshine Home Seaside, and various residential districts like Huli and Zhongyu. The map also shows major roads like Chengde Rd and Chengong Ave, and nearby islands like Gulangyu and Dalipu Islet. A search bar is visible in the top left corner, and a stylized sun icon is in the bottom right corner.

Address Details

<p>1. Sam's Club 山姆会员商店 shān mǔ huì yuán shāng diàn</p> <p>9 huyu N. Road 福建省厦门市湖里区虎 屿北路9号</p> <p>+86 (0592) 3101818</p>	<p>2. Metro Supermarket 麦德龙超市 Mài dé lóng chāo shì</p> <p>8 Changhao E. Road 长浩东路8号</p> <p>+86 (592) 575 8888</p>	<p>3. Airport (T3) 厦门国际机场 Xiàmén Guójì Jīchǎng</p> <p>Xiangyan First Road 翔云一路121号厦门高崎 国际机场T3航站楼</p> <p>+86 592 96363</p>	<p>4. Jinmen Ferry 金门码头 jīn mén mǎ tóu</p> <p>2500 Huangdao E. Road 环岛东路2500号</p> <p>+86 592 3216666</p>	<p>5. Decathlon 迪卡侬购物中心 dí kǎ nóng gòu wù zhōng xīn</p> <p>Ledu Mall Yuanding E. Road 云顶北路乐都汇购物广 场</p> <p>+86 592 5705808</p>
<p>6. Wuyuan Bay 五缘湾湿地公园</p> <p>Wuyuan bay road</p> <p>湖里区五缘湾道</p>	<p>7. Wanda 万达广场 Wan dá guǎng chǎng</p> <p>4666 Xianyue Road 仙岳路4666号</p> <p>+86 592 2366666</p>	<p>8. SM Mall SM城市广场 SM chéng shì guǎng chǎng</p> <p>468 Jiahe Road ,Huli 湖里区嘉禾路468号</p> <p>+86 592 5517933</p>	<p>9. Marco Polo 马可波罗酒店 mǎ kè bō luó jiǔ diàn</p> <p>8 Jianye Road Hubing E. Road 思明区湖滨北建业路8号</p> <p>+86 (592) 5091333</p>	<p>10. Hilton 希尔顿酒店 xī ěr dùn jiǔ diàn</p> <p>199 Jiahe Road 嘉禾路199号</p> <p>+86(592) 5399999</p>
<p>11. Mingfa Mall 明发商业广场 míng fā shāng yè guǎng chǎng</p> <p>29-101Lianqian W. Road 思明区莲前西路29-101号</p> <p>+86 592 0548888</p>	<p>12. Train Station 火车站 Huó Chē Zhàn</p> <p>900 Xiahe Road 厦禾路900号</p> <p>+86 592 2038888</p>	<p>13. Jiasheng Haoyuan 嘉盛豪园 Jiāshèng háoyuán</p> <p>24 Honglian zhong Road 厦门市思明区洪莲中路24号</p>	<p>14. Sunshine Home (Ruijing) 阳光灿烂 (瑞景) yáng guāng càn làn (rui jǐng)</p> <p>25 Ruijing new vallage 瑞景新村25号</p> <p>+86 592 5995385</p>	<p>15. California Mall 加州商业广场 jiā zhōu shāng yè guǎng chǎng</p> <p>123 Lianqian E. Road 莲前东路123号</p> <p>+86 592 5968871</p>
<p>16. Ruijing Mall 瑞景商业广场 Rui jǐng shāng yè guǎng chǎng</p> <p>288-Lianqian E. Road 厦门市莲前东路288号</p> <p>+86 592 2627833</p>	<p>17. JFC Mall 建发JFC品尚中心 jiàn fā JFC pǐn shàng zhōngxīn</p> <p>1701 Huangdao E. Road 厦门思明区环岛东路1701号</p> <p>+86 592 8267866</p>	<p>18. Convention Center 会展中心 huì zhǎn zhōng xīn</p> <p>198 Huizhan Road 会展路198号</p> <p>+86 592 5959898</p>	<p>19. Sunshine Home (Seaside) 阳光灿烂 (海滨) yáng guāng càn làn (huizhan)</p> <p>85 Huizhan Nansan Road 会展南三路85号之1</p> <p>4008225563</p>	<p>20. Exit-Entry Bureau 出入境管理局 chū rù jìng guǎn lǐ jú</p> <p>64 Zhenhai Road 镇海路64号</p> <p>+86 592 2262203</p>
<p>21. Number One Hospital 第一医院 Dì yī yī yuàn</p> <p>55 Zhenhai Road 厦门市镇海路55号</p> <p>+86 592 2136666</p>	<p>22. Ferry (old wharf) 和平码头 Hé píng mǎ tóu</p> <p>3 Lujiangdao Road 鹭江道三号</p> <p>+86 592 2050939</p>	<p>23. Gulangyu 鼓浪屿 gǔ làng yǔ</p> <p>100 longtou Road 龙头路100号</p> <p>+86 592 5939161</p>	<p>24. Shapowei 沙坡尾 shā pō wěi</p> <p>64 Shapowei 沙坡尾64号</p> <p>+86 592 2082119</p>	<p>25. Xiamen University 厦门大学 xià mén dà xué</p> <p>422siming Nan Road 厦门市思明南路422号</p> <p>+86 592 2182259</p>
<p>26. Zeng Cuo'an 曾厝垵 Zēng cuò àn</p> <p>Huandao Road 环岛路</p> <p>+86 592 2091238</p>	<p>27. Sunshine Home (Lakeside) 阳光灿烂 (湖边) yáng guāng càn làn (hú biān)</p> <p>24 Second West Guanri Road 观日西二里24号</p> <p>+86 592 5523739</p>	<p>28. Sunshine Home (Retail Store) 瑞景体验店 rui jǐng tǐ yàn diàn</p> <p>XMW-002, First Floor, Ruijing Mall 瑞景商业广场一楼 XMW-002</p> <p>+86 592 5750735</p>	<p>29. Sunshine Home (Golden Country) 阳光灿烂 (国金) yáng guāng càn làn (guó jīn)</p> <p>506-508 Qianpu Road 前埔路506-508号</p> <p>+400-822-5563</p>	

Hong Kong Travel Advice

Going to a new city in a foreign country can be daunting. Because one of the most common

reasons that people travel to Hong Kong is for a new vis, there's an added layer of difficulty and stress.

This document provides as much information as possible to make everything straightforward.

While the process is not terribly difficult, you'll inevitably get lost, turned around and confused a

few times. The most important thing to bring with you is patience because you'll need it.

But you'll get everything done successfully and this document is here to help you!

TRAVEL DIRECTIONS

By Train

The high-speed rail line between Xiamen and Hong Kong makes it easier than ever to travel between the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong. Here's a breakdown of everything you'll need to get there by train.

In Xiamen, take a bus or the BRT Line Three to the Xiamen Railway Station on Xiahe Road. A taxi to the station from most parts of the island should cost no more than 30 yuan.

Purchase your train ticket online at least a day before travelling as the seats can fill up quickly. You can book tickets online at Trip.com. Purchase a high-speed train ticket from Xiamen to Hong Kong West Kowloon.

The ticket price as of March 2019 is roughly 259 yuan for a single fare. There are currently three scheduled trains a day – 10:15 a.m., 2:53 p.m. and 5:09 p.m. The journey takes about 4.5 hours. For an up-to-date timetable, please check Trip.com.

Buy a one-way ticket because you won't know exactly how long you'll be in Hong Kong until after you've completed your visa application. The trip for a visa usually includes two nights in Hong Kong but you want to be prepared for unexpected delays.

You can also buy a train ticket departing from Xiamen Bei (Xiamen North) Railway Station but this station is off the island. The station is farther away from the residence of most teachers so we don't recommend using the Xiamen North Railway Station for trips to Hong Kong.

Make sure you arrive at the train station at least one hour in advance to allow time to pick up your ticket at the ticket office in the station. There are regularly long lines so allow plenty of time so you don't need to rush. Anything under an hour and you could potentially miss your train.

When you arrive in Hong Kong, the West Kowloon Station is your final stop. The station feels like an airport and you'll need to follow the normal Customs and Immigration procedures for entering a country.

Everything is in English so that's helpful! First you'll need to show your passport at the Chinese mainland exit border control. Once through this side, you must fill out an arrivals landing slip, which you'll find on the tables in the waiting area. You will then pass through Hong Kong passport control. The whole process is straightforward and takes about 40 minutes depending on the lines. You're now through the border so welcome to Hong Kong!

By Air

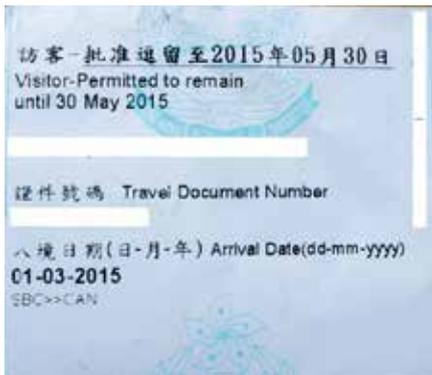
Flights to Hong Kong depart from Xiamen Gaoqi Airport via Terminal Three, which is the airport's international terminal. Hong Kong is treated as an international destination because you have to go through Customs and Immigration.

Taxis to the airport from most parts of the airline typically cost no more than 40 yuan, depending on traffic and your point of departure. From the airport you can take a bus or the MTR into the city.

INITIAL ADVICE

Arrival

Keep the Landing Slip you receive when you enter Hong Kong. This is important because you must submit a photocopy of this document and your passport along with your Z (work) visa application. You may also need to present your Landing Slip when exiting Hong Kong. This little piece of paper is very important so keep it safe.



Getting Around

Before leaving Xiamen, we recommend downloading an offline map of Hong Kong on Google Maps. Your Chinese phone data won't work while in Hong Kong so an offline map will be really helpful to ensure you get to where you need to be without having to rely on free street WiFi! If you do end up needing WiFi, Hong Kong does provide some free hotspots on the street but access is spotty.

If you plan on using a lot of public transport, purchase an Octopus Card, the contactless smart card that offers discounts on multiple journeys. You can get one of these at the train station before entering the subway system.

A card purchase requires a de-

posit of HKD 50 as well as the amount of money you actually put on the card. If you don't use all the money on your card by the time you leave, you can get the unused money refunded. Just go up to a counter in the metro and they will return your remaining balance and HKD 30 from your initial deposit.

Each single journey on the subway costs at least HKD 35. You will make at least four subway trips in Hong Kong so calculate according to the amount of money you want to put on your card.

Taxis in Hong Kong are both more expensive and slower than the subway for most trips.



DIRECTIONS TO THE CHINESE VISA APPLICATION SERVICE CENTER

The service center is less than one kilometer from Exit A1 of the MTR Island Line (dark blue on subway maps).

If you're going directly from the airport to the Visa Center, take the Airport Express Line (pale green) to the Hong Kong Station, which is the last stop on the line. Transfer to the Island Line and take a train headed toward the Chai Wan terminus. Get off the train at the Wan Chai Station.

If you're coming from Kowloon, take the Tsuen Wan Line (red) to Admiralty, then transfer to the MTR Island Line. This is the quickest journey and takes no more than 20 minutes.

For a scenic trip, you can also take the ferry from Tsim Sha Tsui to the Wan Chai ferry pier, which is two blocks from your next destination, the Capital Centre. Use the attached map!

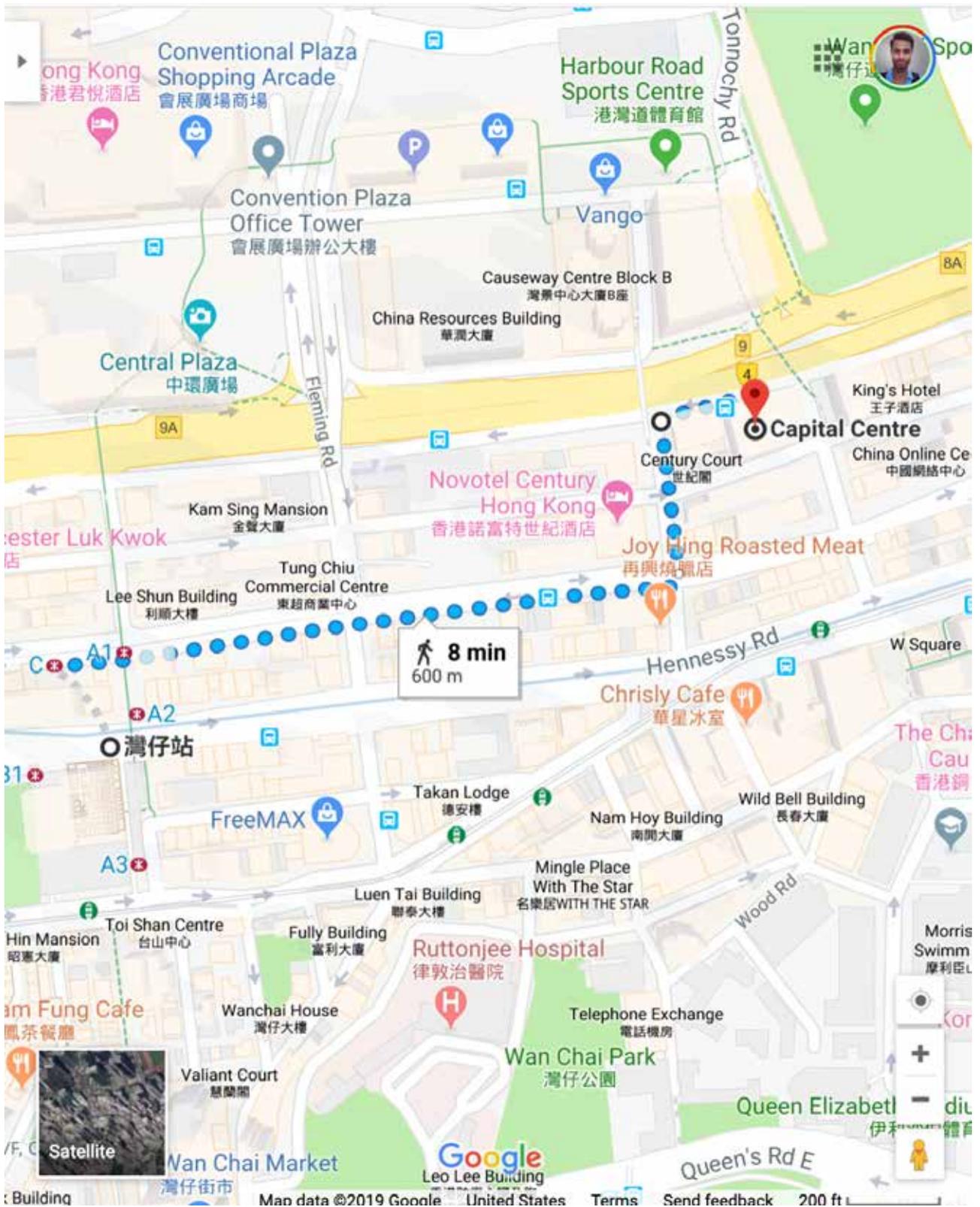
Your next goal is the Capital Centre, which is where you'll find the Chinese Visa Application Center. At Wan Chai Station, exit the station via the Gloucester Road Exit A1. Once you are on street level, you'll need to immediately turn right onto Lockhart Road.

Walk east on Lockhart Road for three blocks (400 meters) then turn left (north) onto Stewart Road. Walk 110 meters to the end of the street until you reach a big main road (Gloucester Road). Turn right (east) onto Gloucester Road and the Capital Centre building is 65 meters ahead on your right.

Address: 20/F, Capital Centre, 151 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong
Tel: + 852 29921999
Email: hongkongcenter@visaforchina.org
Website: www.visaforchina.org

Once you've reached the building, walk into the main reception area and head towards the elevators on the right-hand side. Go up to the 20th floor where you'll find the Chinese Visa Application Centre. You've made it!







APPLYING FOR YOUR VISA

Be early! People start lining up at 8:00 a.m. even though the office opens at 9:00 a.m. There can be 50 people or more by 9:00 a.m. and you must submit by 10:00 a.m. to be eligible for rush next day service.

Keep your receipt! This is the legal document that proves you've submitted your slip and serves as identification until you retrieve your passport. They will not return your passport to you without it.

On the day you pick up your visa, be at least an hour early. The pickup window opens at 2:00 p.m. but people start lining up before 1:00 p.m.

You must pay for your visa in cash in Hong Kong dollars so be sure to go to a bank or currency exchange vendor before you go to avoid hassle and heartbreak.

If you want to use a visa agent, you can use Sunrise International Travel in the China Resources Building on Gloucester Road. The building is on the north side of the street and 300 meters west of the Capital Centre Building. To get to the travel agency's office, take the elevator to the 40th floor and go to Room 4008. Not all elevators go to all floors, so grab the correct one.

<http://www.chinavisa.com.hk>

If you have everything in order before you go, a visa agent is not necessary. Some people feel more comfortable with an agent. Our have successfully navigated the application process both with and without an agent.

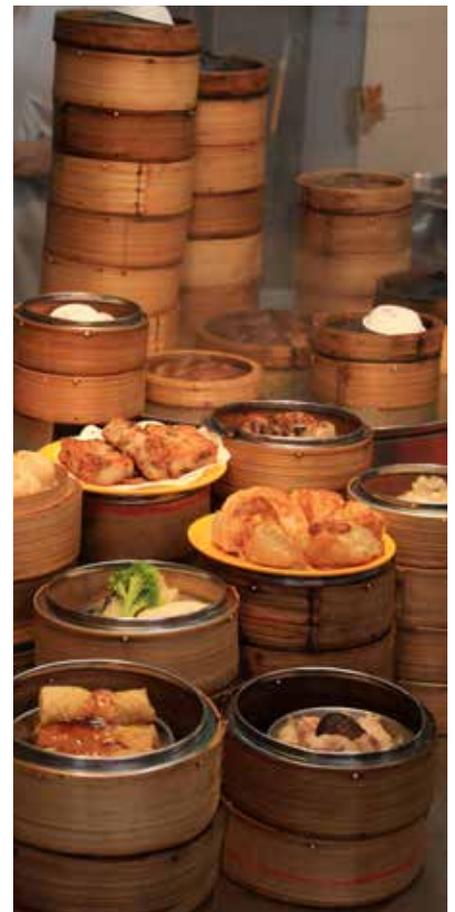
Your actual visa application requires the following documents.

- Approval Letter
Original and photocopy
- Invitation Letter
Original and photocopy
- Two-inch Photo
No jewelry, face and ears fully visible
- Passport
Original and photocopy
- Visa Application
You can pre-fill this form with us before you go. Triple check before you go!
- Landing Slip
Original and photocopy. You must provide a color photocopy of the landing slip and passport on the same piece of paper.

Most visa applicants ask for the fastest possible service, which does cost extra. Next-day service is available for visa applicants from most countries. You can pick up your visa the next day after 2:00 p.m. Different countries have different visa prices so ensure you know what you need to pay in advance. Prices are subject to change so double-checking before your trip. Fast-track service fees as of March 2019 include the following rates:

U.K. citizens HKD 2,150, and;
U.S citizens HKD 1,500.

The visa agents frequently ask applicants to take a new passport photo or re-photocopy their documents while at the Visa Center. Photocopiers and passport photo machines are on site. You will need to pay for these services so



ensure you have extra cash to pay for everything.

A new passport photo costs HKD 50 and the machines only accept 10-, 20- or 50-dollar notes. Carrying extra cash is vital in case you need to use one of these services. Lost time in a hunt for an ATM could jeopardize submitting your application on time. If you miss the 10:00 a.m. deadline, you will have to stay in Hong Kong for an extra day.

Another reason to get there nice and early is that these services can have long lines. Getting stuck at the back of the line could also mean missing the 10 a.m. deadline.

RETURN JOURNEY

By Train

You can book a high-speed train journey to Xiamen on Trip.com once your visa application has been processed. The train to Xiamen departs from West Kowloon Train Station. Departures as of March 2019 includes trains at 8:40 a.m., 2:23 p.m., 3:15 p.m. and 7:47 p.m.

Arrive at the train station at least one hour before your train because you need to get through both Hong Kong and Chinese mainland passport controls. Pick up your ticket at the station's ticket counter. There is a HKD 20 service fee to issue your printed ticket.

By Air

The cheapest and fastest way to get to the airport is by using the subway system's Airport Express Line. The line begins at the subway system's Hong Kong Station and includes a stop at the Kowloon Station. As an added bonus, you can check your bags and check-in to most flight at a series of airline counters next to the Airport Express line entrance.

Arrive at the airport at least one hour before your flight. And be safe!



Food and Drink



Food is a key part of Chinese culture and one of the things that makes life in China so intriguing. If you ask a Chinese person what they'd miss most if they left China, they'd probably say the food.

Chinese food is very different from American-Chinese foods and other Westernized fast-food-y versions. You order “Chinese food” in many Western cities and it will be fairly uniform from city to city.

But in China, Chinese food is ridiculously diverse. Each region and even each city has its own unique dishes and flavors. Go to Sichuan, which is known for its spices, and you'll find that Chongqing is much spicier than Chengdu. Go to the northeast and find giant portions of sweet and sour crispy pork that make you realize there was a giant void in your life until that moment. Come to Xiamen and try some unique specialties like sandworm jelly. Yes, it's really made from sandworms!

Watch the documentary series *A Bite of China* to get an idea of just how diverse food, cooking, and eating is in this immense

country. And the best part is that there are endless restaurants for every regional cuisine and dish no matter where you are in China.

On top of the diversity of Chinese cuisine, you also have a plethora of foreign foods and restaurants. Xiamen contains at least a few of just about every kind of cuisine for which you'd hope. For some cuisines, there may be only a couple of local restaurants (e.g., Mexican, Indian or French fare). But if you're looking for Japanese, Italian, Korean or American – to name a few – there are tons of options all over the island. The streets here are littered with restaurants.

Depending on the cuisine, you'll have options for cheaper or finer dining. If you're looking for the latter, the Marco Polo neighborhood is the place to go. There are a good number of options, from fancy Italian fare at either Unico or Strada 22 to French eats at F Bistro or Mexican food at Coyote Café. Also known as Coffee Street, this area has a lot of fancy coffee shops and bars. It's one of the richer areas of the city and is especially popular with expats.

For interesting but not exactly fancy food and drinks (and fun in general), Shapowei is the place to be. This neighborhood is next to Xiamen University (often called Xiada), and so is filled with Chi-



nese and international students. You can read a little bit more about it in our “Local Spots and Fun” section.

Because Xiamen is an island, seafood is huge here. Everywhere around the city you find strings of open-air restaurants (大排档) that serve fresh seafood. Locals like to come to these to eat and drink at night, no matter the day of the week. And of course there are fancier seafood spots too, like Hai Ding Hui, which has dozens of varieties of live fish and aquatic animals on display, including a live crocodile!

Last but not least is street food. As we duly warn in the “Health Concerns” section, street food is a little risky. It’s also something we strongly associate with authentic cuisine and sometimes you’re going to be hungry on the road after work and want a quick yummy snack. At least taste-wise, there’s some really great street food. However, in recent years the Xiamen government has cracked down on street vendors. When you arrive, especially in certain areas of the city, you may be surprised by the scarcity of street vendors compared to other cities in Asia. Their numbers ebb and flow. However, the same dishes

will also be available in real brick and mortar shops, too, if you’re really craving something.

To quickly speak of drinks in particular, Xiamen has it all. In recent years coffee has really exploded here. Even hand-poured coffee with high-quality beans has become more prevalent. You’ve got tea shops too, of course, though you’ll see that the younger generation often prefers milk tea over standard green or red teas. Fruit juice shops are also really popular. Wine, beer and cocktails too! Craft beer, in particular, has taken hold, with local breweries as well as international brands available.

All in all, China is one of the most exciting places in the world for food. It offers a lot of weird and possibly-yummy stuff, like duck tongue, chicken feet and hairy tofu. It also has just straight-up delicious food. Come and avail yourself of China’s food wonders. And there’s also McDonald’s, Subway and the like, too, if you’re feeling a little nostalgic.



Learning Chinese

Learning Chinese is hard! Newcomers to China are easily tempted to give up after learning a few key phrases – “Nice to meet you,” “I love you” – and how to count. Certainly, you can survive in Xiamen with a basic vocabulary suited for restaurants and taxis.

But the hard work of learning really pays off. Gaining some proficiency in Chinese will make your job easier and your life more interesting. Believe me, it’s really exciting when the indecipherable noise that constantly surrounds you begins to form into words.

Your best shot at learning the language is to start right away and commit to the project. Here are a few suggestions to help you start strong and go hard.

Sunshine Home offers foreign teachers weekly lessons with a Chinese teacher. At no cost, you have two class hours per week. These teachers are great! Typically, you’ll learn according to the official HSK (Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi) standard, which is China’s standardized test of Chinese language proficiency for non-native speakers.

The books that teach the HSK standard are useful but in time you’ll find that they teach a lot of formal speech at the expense of daily Chinese. Because you’re in a small class with your peers, the class can be quite informal if you

want it to be and it’s really up to you and the teacher to decide together what you need to learn and what works best for you.

To become truly conversant in Chinese (or any language), you’ll need to practice for more than two hours per week. While the internet is full of free resources, most of them are boring, difficult or both. For the best of what’s out there, visit the website Hacking



Chinese – www.hackingchinese.com. This site gives suggestions based on level as well as activity type, such as listening practice or reading.

It was through Hacking Chinese that I found Chinese Pod – www.chinesepod.com. Chinese Pod is a great resource even though it’s not free: a basic membership costs \$19 per month. It is the longest-running website for learning Chinese, with thousands of videos and audio recordings for

various skill levels. It covers just about every subject, from discussing a stomachache to Game of Thrones.

It also has a wonderful series of videos called Qing Wen (“may I ask?”), which dives into tricky language points in depth. The vibe of the web site is informal, funny and very current with the trends in spoken Chinese. You can check out a few sample videos on YouTube to get an idea.

The important part about using something like Chinese Pod is getting plenty of listening practice. Most adult students, just like our Chinese counterparts learning English, become strongest in reading and relatively weak in listening and speaking. While you have the advantage of hearing the language everywhere while in China, access to videos that you can watch repeatedly is important. Chinese speakers sound crazy fast to a new learner and cultivating an ear for tonal nuances comes with much practice.

The good news is that most Chinese people are super-supportive of foreigners learning Mandarin. Local speakers will bury you with applause for speaking something very simple, even if they may laugh a bit at your pronunciation.

Learning Chinese is frustrating but by no means impossible. As they love to say in China when encouraging someone, “jia you!”

Key Phrases

Greetings and Farewells

1. See you.
再见
zài jiàn
2. What's new?
有什么新鲜事儿吗?
yǒu shén me xīn xiān shìr ma
3. Long time no see!
好久不见
hǎo jiǔ bú jiàn

Commands

4. Come on.
来吧
lái ba
5. Hold on.
等一等
děng yì děng
6. Be quiet!
安静点儿
ān jìng diǎnr
7. Let go!
放手
fàng shǒu
8. Slow down!
慢点儿
màn diǎnr
9. Be careful!
注意
zhùyì
10. Don't move!
不许动
bù xǔ dòng
11. Be careful!
一定要小心
yí dìng yào xiǎo xīn

12. yourself!
克制一下
kè zhì yí xià
13. Watch out!
当心
dāng xīn
14. Try again.
再试试
zài shì shì
15. Take it easy.
别紧张
bié jǐn zhāng
16. Give me a hand.
帮帮我
bāng bāng wǒ
17. That's all!
就这样
jiù zhè yàng
18. You owe me one.
你欠我一个人情
nǐ qiàn wǒ yí gè rén qíng

Directions

19. I'm lost.
我迷路了
wǒ mí lù le
20. This way.
这边请
zhè biān qǐng
21. Follow me.
跟我来
gēn wǒ lái
22. I'm back.
我回来了
wǒ huí lái le

Polite Phrases

23. It's up to you.
由你决定

- yóu nǐ jué dìng
24. After you.
您先
nín xiān
25. Bless you!
祝福你
zhù fú nǐ
26. Good luck!
祝好运
zhù hǎo yùn
27. Congratulations!
祝贺你
zhù hè nǐ
28. Anytime.
别客气
bié kè qì
29. Allow me.
让我来
ràng wǒ lái
30. Cheer up!
振作起来
zhèn zuò qǐ lái
31. Good job!
做得好
zuò dé hǎo
32. Keep it up!
坚持下去
jiān chí xià qu
33. I love you!
我爱你
wǒ ài nǐ
34. Enjoy yourself!
玩得开心

- wán dé kāi xīn
一切还好吧？
yí qiè hái hǎo ba
35. I'm on your side.
我支持你
wǒ zhī chí nǐ
36. I beg your pardon.
请你原谅
qǐng nǐ yuán liàng
37. My treat.
我请客
wǒ qǐng kè
38. Cheers!
干杯
gān bēi
39. What a pity!
太遗憾了
tài yí hàn le
40. Keep in touch.
保持联络
bǎo chí lián luò
41. You did right.
你做得对
nǐ zuò dé duì
42. You're welcome.
不客气
bú kè qì
43. You can make it!
你能做到
nǐ néng zuò dào
44. Here you are.
给你
gěi nǐ
47. What do you think?
你怎么认为？
nǐ zěnmē rèn wéi
48. Feel better?
好点儿了吗？
hǎo diǎner le ma
49. Is it yours?
这是你的吗？
zhè shì nǐ de ma
50. Are you sure?
你肯定吗？
nǐ kěn dìng ma
51. Do I have to?
非做不可吗？
fēi zuò bù kě ma
52. Anything else?
还要别的吗？
hái yào biéde ma
53. Do me a favor?
帮个忙，好吗？
bāng gè máng hǎo ma
54. What should I do?
我该怎么办？
wǒ gāi zěnmē bàn
55. Can I help you?
我能帮你吗？
wǒ néng bāng nǐ ma
56. Guess what?
猜猜看
cāi cāi kàn
57. Are you kidding?
你在开玩笑吧
nǐ zài kāi wán xiào ba
58. What about you?
- 你呢？
nǐ ne
59. What time is it?
几点了？
jǐ diǎn le
60. How's it going?
怎么样？
zěnmē yàng
- Answers**
61. No problem!
没问题
méi wèn tí
62. Of course!
当然
dāng rán
63. I promise.
我保证
wǒ bǎo zhèng
64. It's going too far.
太离谱了
tài lí pǔ le
65. Me too.
我也是
wǒ yě shì
66. Never mind.
不要紧
bú yào jǐn
67. No way!
不行
bù xíng
68. I agree.
我同意
wǒ tóng yì
69. Not bad.
还不错
hái bú cuò

Questions

45. How much?
多少钱
duō shǎo qián
46. How's everything?

70. Not yet.
还没
hái méi
71. Why not?
好呀
hǎo ya
72. Forget it!
算了
suàn le
73. I decline!
我拒绝
wǒ jù jué
74. You're welcome.
不客气
bú kè qì
75. I think so.
我也这么想
wǒ yě zhè me xiǎng
76. I doubt it.
我怀疑
wǒ huái yí
77. I see.
我明白了
wǒ míng bái le
78. No one knows.
没有人知道
méi yǒu rén zhī dào
79. Anytime.
别客气
bié kè qì
80. I'll try my best.
我尽力而为
wǒ jìn lì ér wéi
81. I have no idea.
我没有头绪
wǒ méi yǒu tóu xù



82. Let me see.
让我想想
ràng wǒ xiǎng xiǎng
83. I'm full.
我饱了
wǒ bǎo le
84. So do I.
我也一样
wǒ yí yàng

Statements of Time

85. It's a long story.
说来话长
shuō lái huà cháng
86. Time is up.
时间到了
shí jiān dào le
87. I'll be right there.
我马上就到
wǒ mǎ shàng jiù dào
88. As soon as possible!
越快越好
yuè kuài yuè hǎo
89. I'll be back soon.
我马上回来

wǒ mǎ shàng huí lái

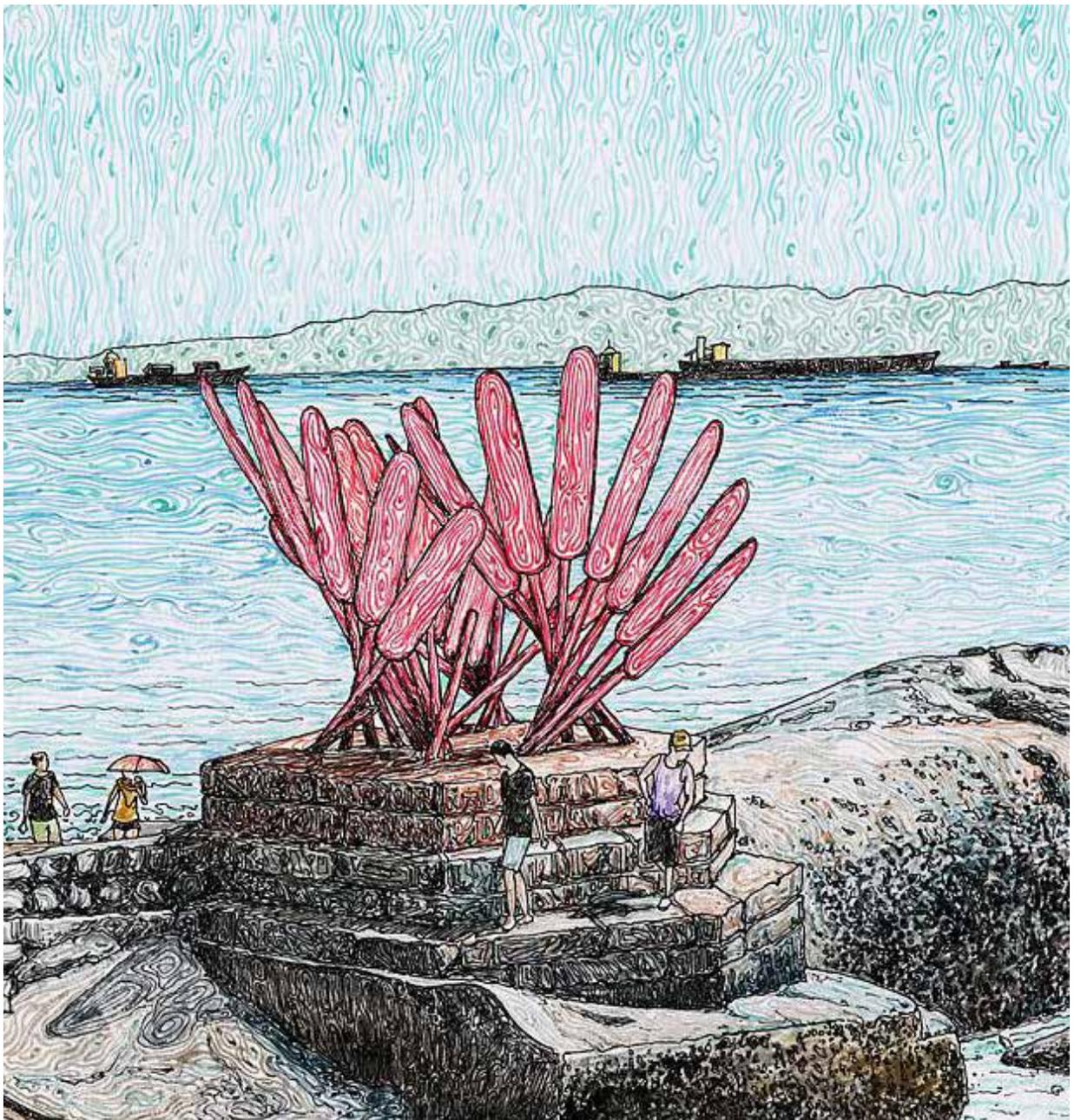
90. I just made it!
我做到了
wǒ zuò dào le
91. day will do.
哪一天都行
nǎ yì tiān dōu xíng
92. Count on me.
算上我
suàn shàng wǒ
93. Don't worry.
别担心
bié dān xīn
94. So far, So good.
目前还不错
mù qián hái bú cuò
95. It sounds great!
听起来不错
tīng qǐ lái bú cuò
96. I'll see to it.
我会留意的
wǒ huì liú yì de
97. Just wonderful!
简直太棒了
jiǎn zhí tài bàng le

Positive Expressions

Negative Expressions

98. I quit!
我不干了
wǒ bú gàn le
99. I'm in a hurry!
我在赶时间
wǒ zài gǎn shí jiān
100. I don't mean it.
我不是故意的
wǒ bú shì gù yì de

HEALTH & SAFETY



Health Concerns

Many Westerners who know little about China imagine it to be a health disaster. They worry about overpopulation and air that is thick with smog. They also worry about food poisoning and wonder about the quality of the local hospital system.

It makes sense to be concerned about health when entering a new environment but once you arrive in Xiamen, you'll find that the reality of China is quite nice. In Xiamen, the skies are blue, the health care is affordable and the food is diverse and delicious.

We want you to be informed and prepared so here's a realistic portrait of health and health care in Xiamen.

AIR QUALITY

As a rapidly developing country that is known as the world's factory, China has its share of air pollution. Xiamen is considered cleaner than most cities in China but less clean than many international cities. People here do not wear masks like in heavy-smog cities like Beijing and Shanghai. Xiamen air quality is typically comparable to places like Los Angeles or London. In the winter the smog can be a little worse but normally skies are blue and you don't really notice anything special about the air. Xiamen actively tries to fight air pollution with measures like banning motorized scooters. Still, air quality is something you may want to track.

The most common indicator of air quality is PM2.5, which re-

fers to Particulate Matter that is less than or equal to 2.5 microns in diameter. These are very fine particulates less than a quarter the width of a human hair. These fine particles are produced by combustion, including motor vehicles, power plants, forest fires, agricultural burning and some industrial processes.

When these particles are in the air in significant amounts, they can travel into the lungs and cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat as well as coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath.

The level of PM2.5 in the air can be tracked at: <http://aqicn.org/city/xiamen/>.

PM2.5 levels between 101 and 150 is considered unhealthy for sensitive groups. Anything above 150 is considered unhealthy.

In our facilities, we turn on the air filters whenever PM2.5 exceeds 100. In general, air pollution should not affect your general quality of life but we do recommend minimizing outside physical activity on days above 150.

WATER QUALITY

As you probably know, tap water in China is not considered safe to drink. You must boil tap water before drinking or using it to cook. If you don't, there's a good chance you will get sick



(analogous to food poisoning). Some prefer drinking bottled water, which is available everywhere, rather than dealing with tap water. After boiling, tap water tastes fine but you may find that you prefer the bottled stuff. If you boil water on a regular basis, make sure to use a quality pot or teakettle to ensure you do not ingest iron or metal contaminants from poorly-tended kitchenware.

It is safe to use tap water to wash your face, hands or clothes. Many people use tap water to brush their teeth, being careful to rinse but not swallow the water. If you want to be extra cautious, it's fine to use bottled water.

Please remember that bottled water doesn't contain fluoride. Since you won't be drinking the tap water, your teeth will be exposed to significantly less fluoride than in the West. Always use toothpaste with fluoride.

In the kitchen, it is generally safe to wash fruits and vegetables with tap water. A cautious person will want to peel the fruit after washing and before eating.

The ocean water around Xiamen is fit for swimming but it is not considered clean. For China, these beaches are considered some of the cleanest. Still, you will find the beaches aren't pristine and may contain a fair degree of litter or debris from fishing. We recommend taking a bath or rinsing off thoroughly after swimming. As with oceans anywhere, don't ingest seawater.



FOOD SAFETY

Food is what makes China amazing but it can also put your tummy at risk. There are some systematic problems regarding food in China. If you're informed and know for what to beware, you'll find that China is a great place for food.

China has unveiled a host of regulations in recent years regarding the farming, processing and sale of food. Compliance with set regulations remains a work in progress. For example, there have been instances in recent years where Chinese vendors have sold mislabeled food products. Please be sure when purchasing items for consumption that you buy from a reputable vendor.

Some shops might not be as careful when it comes to basic best practices for food safety, including food temperature, the prevention of cross-contamination

and the use of fresh ingredients. This is especially true for street food vendors. While the smell of "stinky tofu" can be polarizing – people love it or hate it – on one thing we can agree: there's a chance street food can make you sick. Maybe not the first time or the second time but sooner rather than later you will get food poisoning if you eat street food.

Street vendors all work in the grey economy, which means they have little official regulatory oversight. To keep the food cheap, vendors often skip basic quality control procedures (e.g., refrigeration, clean raw ingredients, washed hands) that minimize the risk of food poisoning. And some might use "gutter oil," which is recycled waste oil collected from restaurant fryers, sewer drains, grease traps and slaughterhouses.

The same concerns go for low-end brick-and-mortar shops.

They are yummy and cheap but they might cut some concerns to offer you that amazing price. Higher-end shops or shops in malls are typically a bit safer but also more expensive.

Of course, Chinese food is often connected with monosodium glutamate (MSG). This ubiquitous flavor enhancer is generally recognized as safe by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Indeed, it's used in many processed foods in the U.S. and elsewhere precisely because it enhances the flavors of the foods to which it is added.

Some people are allergic to MSG and may experience common food allergy reactions: flushed face, tingles and a need to use the bathroom. If so, you can always ask not to have MSG in your food at a restaurant. Be warned, asking is one thing but the chef may or may not hear your request from the server, and may or may not honor the request.

If you have any special diets or food allergies, be aware that it might be a little tricky for you to eat out in China. There aren't many vegetarian restaurants in the city, though their numbers have risen in the past year or so. In regular restaurants, you can ask if something is cooked with or in meat but you still may be surprised.

In terms of gluten-free, you won't find much food intentionally made to be gluten-free like in the West but you have many natu-



rally gluten free options. For any dietary concerns, especially food allergies, we recommend that you learn the relevant Chinese phrases so you can ask for a specially-prepared meal at trustworthy restaurants.

In the end, locals tend to be more resistant to local causes of potential food poisoning compared with their non-Chinese peers. Food poisoning won't be a daily occurrence but a grumbly tummy and a case of diarrhea (拉肚子 or laduzi) can happen. Over time, if you decide the good is worth the risk, you will build up your tummy tolerance. This is not to say that even locals don't get hit

with laduzi from time to time.

COMMON ILLNESSES

You don't need any special shots or vaccinations for coming to China. However, if plan to travel elsewhere in Asia while you are here, talk to a GP early about what shots you might need for where you'd like to go. Currently, the CDC and WHO recommend the following vaccines for China: typhoid, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, rabies, Japanese encephalitis, polio and and influenza.

They recommend the following vaccines for Cambodia: typhoid, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, cholera, rabies, Japanese encephalitis, and influenza. For Laos, they recommend typhoid, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, cholera, rabies, Japanese encephalitis, polio, meningitis and influenza vaccines.

You might find you get colds more frequently, but this isn't a China problem, this is a working-with-kids problem. Little kids, with their weaker immune systems, get sick easily and colds can spread through a class, even an entire facility, somewhat easily. To prevent falling victim, follow good hygiene habits extra carefully. Keep your immune system strong and you should be fine.

CONCLUSION

Remember that you're moving to a new environment. Anytime you do this, no matter where it is you'll need to make some adjustments and give yourself time to acculturate. The same goes for Xiamen!

Hospitals, Clinics and Medicine



The bottom line is that patient outcomes at Chinese hospitals are on par with Western hospitals. While serious illnesses are thankfully rare, we had our own teachers suffer and recover from illness such as pneumonia and appendicitis. Barring an extreme emergency, the Chinese hospital system should be able to accommodate your health needs.

While the outcomes are typically the same, Chinese hospitals do run differently than the ways in which you may be accustomed. Hospitals here run in ways reminiscent of a factory and you may find yourself moving along what feels like an assembly line. First you wait in line to be diagnosed by a general doctor. She or he will assess your condition and likely send you to another floor to take tests. You may be sent to a specialist or be prescribed medicine that you pick up in the hospital. For minor ailments, you may simply receive some advice.

The best news is that your upfront costs will be much cheaper than what you might expect in places such as the United States. Upfront deductibles and out-of-pocket costs are typically quite low. As you'll see later in this section, you have both public and private health insurance (see "Your Health Insurance," pg.) Even for serious procedures, your out-of-pocket costs will likely be minimal as long as you go to an in-network hospital.

If you find yourself sick, whether from accidentally drinking some un-boiled tap water or from having a kid cough in your face, you should know a little about hospitals, clinics, and medicine in Xiamen. It's interesting, it's frustrating, but you'll be okay.

HOSPITALS

Going to the hospital is fun, said no one ever. When you're sick, you're probably also tired, cranky and generally unhappy. Things are worse in a foreign hospital where people don't typically speak your first language.

First things first. If you become sick, speak immediately with one of the Foreign Teacher Advisors, who can accompany you to the hospital and be your translator. Remember, if you feel like you're too sick to go to a hospital, that's when you know you need to go to a hospital! Things like appendicitis are not illnesses that you can

"tough out" and you won't know the cause of your malady until you see a physician. Be careful and smart with your health!

If you're visiting a local hospital, it's very likely that the staff will not speak much English. If the Foreign Teacher Advisors are unavailable, someone else from Sunshine Home will accompany you to help make sure you see the right doctor at the right hospital and to help translate. Just be sure to reach out! Going to the hospital makes everyone a little nervous but it's even worse if you don't understand what's happening or why.

So what about these Chinese hospitals? What should you expect, aside from the language problem? Do they prescribe acupuncture for pneumonia? Do they have legitimate medicine? Is it safe to have serious procedures done there?

There are also private hospitals in Xiamen that have staff who speak English. These hospitals are pretty good but they are not covered by your insurance. If you want a second opinion or prefer to discuss something in English, many people do use these hospitals. They are more expensive than insurance-covered hospital visits but they are still considered fairly cheap by Western standards.

Private hospitals may have a higher standard of care. Some of the staff may have worked or trained overseas. At other times, however, the hospitals are staffed by the same people who work in the public hospitals and are moonlighting as private clinicians.

You can find a list of both in-network and out-of-network hospitals at the end of this article.

CLINICS

If you have a cold or a minor illness, you can visit one of the dozens of clinics that surround wherever you happen to be. These clinics are basically medicine shops. Personnel will discuss your symptoms with you and prescribe and sell you medicine (Chinese and/or Western).

The staff may be helpful but please recognize that they are not licensed physicians. If you just want some over-the-counter cold medicine, clinics are quick and cheap. They also sell health-related items like condoms, shampoo, soap and more (as do regular

supermarkets). You can even use your public insurance card at these clinics.

MEDICINE

Modern China offers an interesting mix of Western and traditional Chinese medicine, whether in a hospital or a neighborhood clinic. While hospitals are more scientific, many Chinese residents think of the body and understand health and illness in the terms of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). Adherents of TCM often think in terms of hot and cold, wet and dry, believing that an excess of any one element leads to illness.

One impact on daily life is that helpful friends often advise drinking hot water if you feel a bit unwell. You may also encounter friendly advice about the ideal temperature of the things you eat and when. And common wisdom often suggest that overuse of cool air during the summer can lead to air conditioner sickness (空调病).

China has a long history of the use of herbs, plants and vegetable extracts for the cure of various ailments. It is entirely possible that some of the chemicals in traditional Chinese medicine have a positive health effect. However, there are two challenges.

One is that the advertised cures have not been scientifically tested in a controlled study against a placebo. Likewise, there are no objective standards for quantities and delivery mechanisms.

The bigger challenge is that there is absolutely no guarantee that the ingredients in a product match the label. China has a serious problem with fake and counterfeit goods, including medicine (both Chinese and Western). Because there is no central oversight of over-the-counter traditional Chinese medical products by a government agency, there are essentially no quality controls whatsoever. What is inside the box may be the labeled ingredient in the wrong dosage, or it may be another product entirely. It's a



roll of the dice.

TCM contains active ingredients, some of which can be toxic in the wrong dosage. For example, wolfsbane is a common herbal medicine often administered as a tea. Processed incorrectly, it can cause acute poisoning and heart attack.

For any serious ailment, we strongly recommend following the Western medicine prescription given by a formally-trained doctor.

For individuals who are actively taking Western medicine, we recommend the cessation of any TCM because the interaction of different drugs and medicine can have unexpected and negative consequences.

There are also a few things to watch out for when it comes to Western medicine. For example, many antibiotics that are prescription-only in the West are over-the-counter here, which doesn't mean you should take

them anytime you feel sick. You can buy them at neighborhood clinics in pill form. However, if you're prescribed antibiotics in the hospital, they will often prescribe that they be administered via an IV drip as opposed to in pill form.

Chinese doctors prefer to prescribe an IV drip in far more situations than is considered normal in the West. The IV drip is used not only for hydration but also to administer whatever medication has been prescribed as the result of your visit. This treatment can be annoying, as you may have to return to the hospital every 12 hours for several days. If a doctor at a hospital tests you and prescribes antibiotics, it can be easier to go to your neighborhood clinic and buy the equivalent medicine in pill form. Hospitals often don't carry antibiotics in pill form, so there's no persuading the doctors.

Note: if you take any special medication, be sure to communicate with your doctor beforehand about whether this medication

is available in China and how/ if you can ship it to China (see the next section below for more details). Also, you may want to bring over-the-counter medicine you like, such as Tylenol, as you won't find it here.

Shipping Prescription Medicine Via International Mail

It is possible to receive prescription medicine via international mail but it is essential to follow the proper protocol so that the medicine clears Customs and you are not suspected of importing illegal drugs.

In order to ensure that your medication arrives safely, we strongly recommend that it be shipped to you via either DHL or FedEx, rather than the public postal service in your country of origin. The package must be addressed to you directly and the name must match the name on your prescription for the medication.

Before sending the package, the person mailing you the medicine should ensure the package contain the following documents:

- Your original prescription,
- A copy of the purchase receipt;
- and
- Directions from the pharmacy.

Once the package arrives in Customs, the shipping company will notify the Foreign Teacher Advisor(s) via email and request some necessary documents.

The Foreign Teacher Advisor(s)



will help you fill out the Instructions for Personal Goods Declaration form and then email it, along with a copy of your passport and residency permit, to the shipping company. You'll also need to include a copy of the prescription, so make sure you have that in advance.

After receiving the documents, the shipping company will pick up the package from Customs and deliver it to the school (or your designated address). You will pay for the shipping upon arrival.

The whole process will take up to 3 days. Also keep in mind that it is very likely that China Customs will inspect the package upon arrival. Therefore, only medicine that is stable at room temperature should be shipped via international mail.

In-network Chinese hospitals

There are several hospitals that take your insurance. Here are the three we recommend.

Zhong Shan Hospital (中山医院) Affiliated with Xiamen University, this is one of Xiamen's premier hospitals. It includes a special clinic for foreigners with English-speaking nurses and doctors. Zhongshan Hospital is in-network and has a special, English-speaking clinic.

Address: 201-206 Hubin Nan Road (湖滨南路 201 之 206 号)

Telephone: (592) 221-2328

Xiamen Chinese Medicine

Hospital (厦门市中医院)

This is right next to a Holiday Inn.

Address: 12 Zhenhai Lu
(镇海路 12 号)
Telephone: (592) 266-5005

Xiamen Number One Hospital (厦门市第一医院)

This is considered Xiamen's main hospital. It provides a wide range of services and includes a 24-hour emergency room.

Address: Zhenhai Road, 10 Gujie
(厦门市镇海路上古街 10 号)
Telephone: (592) 213-7275

Out-of-network English-speaking Physicians and Clinics

The City Medical Consultancy

This clinic will cost you 560 yuan for a one-time consultation fee. The charge does not include the price of medicine and any other expenses.

Address: 123 Xiafei Road, Xinyang Industrial Park, Haicang
(海沧区新阳工业区霞飞路 123 号)

Telephone: (592) 620-3456

Xiamen Changgung Hospital (厦门长庚医院) Most of the English-speaking doctors at this hospital are from Taiwan.

Address: 123 Xidi Villa, Hubin North Road (湖滨北路西堤别墅 1 号之 123)

Telephone: (592) 532-3168



Western Medicines in China

FINDING WESTERN MEDICINE IN CHINA

It is essential to go to the hospital and consult with a qualified doctor before taking any medication with which you are unfamiliar or for which you do not have a prescription. The following list of medicine in China is for reference purposes only.

Please note that all medications have side effects, some quite serious. Always read the labels in full regarding the recommended dosage of each medication. Follow your physician's instructions carefully.

Antibiotics 抗生素

English	Penicillin [penə'sɪlɪn]
Chinese	青霉素
Pinyin	qīng méi sù

English	Amoxicillin [ə,məʊksɪ'sɪlən]
Chinese	阿莫西林
Pinyin	ā mò xī lín



English	Senna glycoside ['senə 'glaike,said]
Chinese	番泻叶
Pinyin	fān xiè yè
Brand	Ex-Lax

Other useful terms

English	Glycerin ['glɪsərɪn]
Chinese	甘油
Pinyin	gān yóu
English	Bisacodyl ['bɪzəkədɪl]
Chinese	比沙可啶
Pinyin	bǐ shā kě dìng

Cough

咳嗽	[ké sòu]
English	Dextromethorphan [dekstroʊmi'thɔ:fn]
Chinese	美沙芬
Pinyin	[měi shā fēn]
Brands	Theraflu, Vicks
English	Guaifenesin [gju:ri:f'nezi:n]
Chinese	愈创甘油醚
Pinyin	yù chuàng gān yóu mí
Brands	Mucinex, Robitussin

Dextromethorphan
[dekstroʊmi'thɔ:fn]
美沙芬
měi shā fēn



English	Throat Lozenges [θrəʊt 'ləʊənzɪz]
Chinese	咳嗽糖
Pinyin	[ké sòu táng]
Brands	Halls, Ricola

Throat Lozenges
[θrəʊt 'ləʊənzɪz]
咳嗽糖
ké sòu táng



Other useful terms

English	Benzocaine [benzəʊ'keɪn]
Chinese	苯佐卡因
Pinyin	běn zuǒ kǎ yīn
English	Menthol ['menθɔ:l]
Chinese	薄荷醇
Pinyin	bò hé chún

Diarrhea

腹泻 (拉肚子)	fù xiè (lā dù zǐ)
English	Attapulgite [ətæ'pʌldʒɪt]
Chinese	凹凸棒石
Pinyin	āo tū bàng shí
Brands	Diatrol, Diocalm
English	Loperamide ['ləʊpərəmɪd]
Chinese	洛哌丁胺
Pinyin	luò pài dīng àn
Brand	Imodium A-D

Loperamide
[ləʊpərəmɪd]
洛哌丁胺
luò pài dīng àn



English	Bismuth subsalicylate ['bɪzmə θ sʌb'sæləsi,leɪt]
Chinese	碱式水杨酸铋
Pinyin	jiǎn shì shuǐ yáng suān bǐ
Brands	Kaopectate, Pepto-Bismol

Head & Sinus Congestion

耳鼻喉炎	ěr bí hóu yán
English	Decongestants: [dɪkən'dʒestənt]

Chinese 减充血剂
Pinyin jiǎn chōng xuè jì

English Pseudoephedrine
[ˈsjuːdɒʊ.ˈfɛdrɪn]

Chinese 假麻黄碱
Pinyin jiǎ má huáng jiǎn
Brand Sudafed

English Oxymetazoline
[ɒksɪmɛtəzəˈlɪn]

Chinese 羟甲唑啉
Pinyin qiǎng jiǎ zuò lín
Brands Sinex, Telnase

Oxymetazoline
[ɒksɪmɛtəzəˈlɪn]
羟甲唑啉
qiǎng jiǎ zuò lín



Nasal Allergy

鼻过敏

bí guò mǐn

English Cromolyn sodium
[kˈrɒməʊlɪn ˈsɒdiəm]

Chinese 色甘酸钠
Pinyin sè gān suān nà
Brand Nasalcrom



Cromolyn sodium
[kˈrɒməʊlɪn ˈsɒdiəm]
色甘酸钠
sè gān suān nà

Pain & Fever

疼痛 & 发烧

téng tòng & fā shāo

English Acetaminophen
[əˈsɪ:təˈmɪnəfən]

Chinese 对乙酰氨基酚
Pinyin duì yǐ xiān ān jī fēn
Brands Panadol, Tylenol

Acetaminophen
[əˈsɪtəˈmɪnəfən]
对乙酰氨基酚
duì yǐ xiān ān jī fēn



Nonsteroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)

非类固醇性消炎药

fēi lèi gù chún xìng xiāo yán yào

English Ibuprofen
[aɪbjuˈprɒʊfən]

Chinese 布洛芬
Pinyin bù luò fēn
Brands Advil, Motrin

English Naproxen
[nəˈprɒksən]

Chinese 萘普生
Pinyin nài pǔ shēng
Brand Aleve

English Aspirin
[ˈæsprɪn]

Chinese 阿司匹林
Pinyin ā sī pǐ lín
Brands Bayer, St. Joseph's

Naproxen
[nəˈprɒksən]
萘普生
nài pǔ shēng



Skin Allergy & Itching

皮肤过敏和瘙痒

pí fū guò mǐn sào yǎng

English Antihistamine
[æntɪˈhɪstə.mɪn]

Chinese 抗组胺药
Pinyin kàng zǔ àn yào

English Diphenhydramine
[dɪfənˈhɪdrəməɪn]

Chinese 苯海拉明
Pinyin běn hǎi lā míng



Sneezing, runny nose, watery eyes

打喷嚏，流鼻涕，流泪
dǎ pēn tì, liú bí tì, liú lèi

English	Antihistamine [æntɪ'hɪstə.mɪn]
Chinese	抗组胺药
Pinyin	kàng zǔ àn yào
Brands	Allegra, Claritin, Zyrtec

Sore Throat, Headache, Earache and Body aches

喉咙痛、头痛，耳痛、浑身疼
hóu lóng tòng, tóu tòng, ěr tòng,
hún shēn téng

English	Acetaminaphen [ə,sɪ:tə'mɪnəfən]
Chinese	对乙酰氨基酚
Pinyin	duì yǐ xiān ān jī fēn
Brands	Cepacol, Strepsils

Upset Stomach

胃不舒服
wèi bù shū fú

English	Bismuth subsalicylate ['bɪzməθ sʌb'sæləsɪ,lɪt]
Chinese	碱式水杨酸铋
Pinyin	jiǎn shì shuǐ yáng suān bì
Brands	Kaopectate, Pepto-Bismol



English	Bicarbonate Tablets [ˌbɑː'kɑːbənət]
Chinese	碳酸氢钠片
Pinyin	tàn suān qīng nà piàn
Brands	Alka Seltzer

English	Simethicone [ˈsɪməθɪkəʊn]
Chinese	西甲硅油
Pinyin	xī jiǎ guī yóu
Brand	Gas-X



English	Antacids [ænt'æsɪd]
Chinese	解酸药
Pinyin	jiě suān yào
Brands	Rolaids, Tums



Health Insurance

Health insurance is quite complicated anywhere and China is no exception. This article will help clear up your health insurance options.

Utilizing your health insurance can be trickier here than in your home country because there's a mix of private and public insurance. Let's take a look at each part.

PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM

Your public benefits are roughly equivalent to what Chinese citizens receive, with some limited exceptions.

Like local residents, you are eligible for a Social Security Card (社会保障卡) – it's somewhat akin to a debit card that is accepted at hospitals and clinics approved by the local authorities for access to the public health system.

Each month, a portion of the taxes collected from your paycheck is converted into a Medical Savings Account (MSA) and your balance grows over time. The MSA covers outpatient and emergency services as well as drug expenses.

Your Social Security Card includes information and access to your MSA. The funds can be used at approved clinics and hospitals. Your MSA is for both outpatient medical treatment and preventive care. A surprising number of items are included under the umbrella of preventive care, including items such as shampoo and toothpaste (when purchased at an approved clinic).

While the balance grows slowly, your MSA is a good way to pay for smaller costs rather than paying out-of-pocket upfront, as you will find is the case with your private insurance. It's always smart to show this card first when purchasing medical goods or services.



Please note that women over the age of 50 and men over the age of 60 are covered by a different system and do not accrue money in their Medical Savings Account.

Foreign staff are also covered by private insurance (see below).

Although the below table is somewhat complex, it will give you a sense of the benefits of your public insurance.

Proportion of Payment	5%	Unit	3%	¥103.82
	173.04	Individual	2%	¥69.22
The amount transferred each month	MSA: ¥107.92		Health account: ¥16.67	
Medical Insurance Benefits				
<p>1. Outpatient medical expenses The expenses should be paid by your MSA initially. When that account is depleted, 70 percent the expenses within health-care coverage and the payment cap of your MSA will be covered by the unified planning fund of the medical insurance, with the remainder paid by the individual.</p> <p>2. Inpatient medical expenses The start standard to pay inpatient medical expenses will be covered by your MSA, personal health account and the fund or cash of family health account. The rest within health-care coverage and the payment cap of your MSA will be covered by the unified planning fund of the medical insurance for 86 percent of the total, with the balance paid by the individual.</p>				
The Start standard to	Item	Level III hospitals	Level II hospitals	Level I hospitals and below
pay inpatient medical expenses	The first hospitalization	¥1000	¥600	¥200
	The second hospitalization and more	¥500	¥300	¥100
The payment cap of the unified planning fund of the medical insurance				
The insured number of years in succession		Outpatient	Outpatient and inpatient	
The insured duration in succession	Within half a year	Payment cap: ¥400	The maximum limit rate 30% ¥30000	
	More than half a year and within two years	Payment cap: ¥800	The maximum limit rate 60% ¥60000	
	More than two years	Payment cap: ¥2000	The maximum limit rate 100% ¥100000	
The average monthly wage		¥5768	The payment cap of the unified planning fund	¥100000

ACTIVATING YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY CARD

To obtain a Social Security Card, provide a one-inch white-background color photo (please wear dark clothes) and a copy of your passport to the Foreign Teacher Advisor. In one month, your card should be ready and will be provided to you by Human Resources.

Every time you visit a hospital or clinic for medical care, you track and pay for your health care costs by using this Social Security Card.

Before using your Social Security Card, you must go online, personalize your password and associate your phone number with your card.

Here's what you need to do:

Step 1: Login online

Visit the following website <https://app.xmhrss.gov.cn/login.xhtml>

You will see the following page.



Step 2: Set Up Your Account

Input your passport number or your social security card number.

Enter the default password: 123456

Input the verification code, which is embedded in a picture just to the right of the box into which you enter the code.

Click on the login button, which is labeled 登录 .

You will be taken to the following web page:



Step 3: Update Your Safety Settings

A green lock icon marks the last of the links on the page. This link takes you to the page where you will update your safety settings. The next page will look like this:

安全设置	
登录密码 :	修改
交易密码 :	修改方式一: 绑定的手机 修改方式二: 银联身份验证
绑定手机 :	1516****32 修改

Step 4: Modify Your Login Password

On this page you can modify your login password. Do not simply leave the default 123456 password. You are also required to assign your telephone number to your account on this page. Congratulations, your card is now activated!

VISITING A PUBLIC HOSPITAL

Your health care expenditures are tracked via your Social Security Card. The first time you use your Social Security Card, you must deposit 100 yuan onto the card. The easiest way to deposit money is to speak with one of the tellers who process payments at the hospital's reception area.

Your card also allows a physician to access your personal medical information and records. A trip to the hospital typically begins by checking in at reception. After hearing your symptoms and swiping your health card, the receptionist will determine who will initiate your health care visit.

After your initial consultation, your general physician may prescribe medicine or refer you to another physician for tests or additional services. At this point, you (or your representative) must go back to Reception to pay for the prescribed medicine or services so that you can pick up your medicine or make your next appointment. You may have to deposit additional money onto your card to make the required payment.

For all medical costs associated with a public hospital visit, you must pay the initial deductible upfront (this means paying out-of-pocket if your MSA account runs out).

Please note that Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and alternative therapies such as acupuncture, cupping and the like are not covered by either your public Medical Savings Account or by private insurance.

Private Insurance to Reimburse Medical Costs

This is a standard insurance program provided by Taikang Life. You are covered for a portion of the cost of various illnesses

and injuries after exceeding your private insurance deductible up to a fixed amount in exchange for annual premium payments, which are paid in full in advance by your employer.

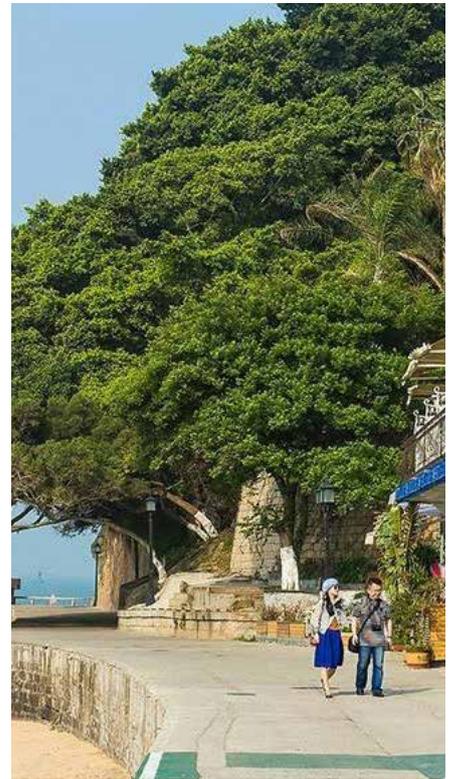
Before visiting a hospital or consenting to medical treatment, please consult the Foreign Teacher Advisor to make sure that the service provider and the medical care are covered by your insurance. You may decide to visit a specific provider or to accept the medical care even if it's not covered but it's always good to know your options and true costs in advance.

If you go to a hospital covered by your insurance and consent to approved medical treatment, the most important thing is to keep your receipts and paperwork. To utilize your private insurance, you must turn in all documents related to your health expenses to Sunshine Home's Foreign Teacher Advisor, who will help you take the necessary steps to apply for (partial) reimbursement of your medical costs.

You can only submit claims for out-of-pocket costs, which means that you can't claim payments made with your MSA card.

It typically takes a few weeks to process an insurance claim. When your claim is resolved, Taikang Life will deposit its payment directly into your bank account.

The exact ratio for reimburse-



ment depends on the medical conditions and the kind of treatments administered. For a fuller explanation, please see the Taikang Life insurance pamphlet.

SUMMARY

You have two options for saving money when you're under the weather: public and private insurance. In general, it's a good idea to use your public benefits first until you have a zero balance. At that point, keep all of your paperwork and receipts so that you can receive reimbursement for your out-of-pocket expenses via your private insurance.

Health care and payment is complicated just about everywhere! Following the above guidelines when in need of medical care will help to minimize the cost and stress during what is always a challenging time.

Legal Issues

As you discuss your plans of moving to China with family and friends, you very well may be told, “Be careful! China is dangerous.” China’s political reality is quite a bit different from most Western nations but what you experience on the ground may not be what you expected.

You’ll almost certainly be pleasantly surprised by how safe life is on a daily basis. Most remark that Xiamen, and China generally, is the safest-feeling place they’ve ever been. It’s rare for residents to be robbed, harassed, fought with or arrested for no reason.

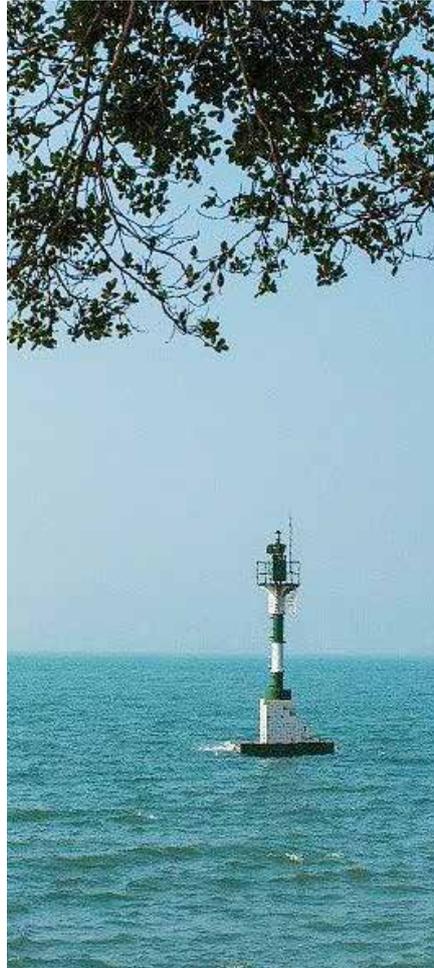
Most of the time, you forget you’re in a place with different laws and politics. However, you’re definitely accountable to Chinese law in the same way that Chinese nationals are. Foreigners are by no means above the system.

Remember and respect that laws and rights that are specific to China. It’s very important that you know and obey the laws and rules in China!

POLICE REGISTRATION

All foreigners are required to register their place of residence with the local police. If you are staying at a hotel, the hotel will do this on your behalf as part of the check-in process, which is why you will be required to present your passport.

As soon as you have an apartment, you are required to register your apartment with the local police station. A staff member from the school will help you to register.



EMBASSY REGISTRATION

The embassies of most countries in China offer their citizens the option of registering with their home country during their stay in China. We highly recommend taking advantage of this service. Embassies will frequently send updates on items that may be of importance to natives of their

own country.

Registering with your embassy is invaluable in the event that you become gravely ill, are arrested or find yourself in an emergency situation.

We also suggest that you store the phone number and contact information for the nearest consulate or embassy in your phone. Most embassies have a hotline for citizens in an emergency.

PASSPORT

Chinese law requires that all foreign citizens carry their passports with them at all times. This is obviously inconvenient at best and risky at worst, given that it’s easy to lose or misplace your passport. However, police do sometimes ask people in public places for identification, either in a targeted search or in a random stop, especially during more sensitive periods of the year.

At the very least, we strongly recommend that you carry on your person a laminated copy of the data and visa pages of your passport, and have photos of these items on your phone as a backup.

BORDER CROSSINGS

Each and every time you return from a trip across the border of the Chinese mainland (including to Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan), you are required to re-register with the police within 24 hours of returning, even if

you return to the same address. Therefore, please inform the staff each time you leave the territory of mainland China so that we can assist you with re-registration.

The police will conduct occasional in-person checks of your registered address. If a police official visits your place of abode, you are legally required to grant access to your apartment and to present your identification at the time of a visit.

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Neither Chinese law nor culture recognizes a difference between marijuana and other forms of drugs in the way that some Western countries do. Smoking marijuana is a crime throughout China.

If you are caught using, possessing, selling or trading any illicit drugs, you will be charged with a crime. Even if you are not convicted of a criminal offense, you will be deported from the country.

Using illegal drugs at any time at any location puts you at grave risk. Local police will occasionally surround the premises of a bar, restaurant or club, close all the doors and require each and every person present to take a urine test. Police can also conduct random drugs searches and compel any individual to take a urine test at any time. This can and does extend to stopping pedestrians on the street and insisting upon a test. There is no such thing as the safe or risk-free use of any illegal

drug!

Alcohol is both popular and legal in China. However, public drunkenness exposes you to possible contact with the police. Likewise, foreign citizens in Xiamen who engage in acts of violence to property or to other persons have in the past been charged with criminal offenses. Even if you are not convicted, your residence permit may be revoked and you may be forced to leave the country.

All the basic rules apply:

- Drink in moderation;
- Do not get in a bar fight;
- Respect private property,
- Conduct yourself appropriately in public spaces.

FIGHTS

China is a lovely country full of wonderful people. Inevitably, you will also encounter people and situations that aggravate you. Always avoid escalating a confrontation – it's both ineffective and potentially dangerous.

Physical fights are uncommon but not unheard of. Never ever engage or threaten to engage another person in a fight. You are endangering yourself and others physically, but you are also putting your residence permit status at risk.

Foreign citizens involved in bar fights have been sentenced to prison terms of up to four years in Fujian in the recent past. The concern is real, not hypothetical

As with other encounters with the law, you do not have to be convicted of a crime in order to be deported. No battle is worth that risk.

MOONLIGHTING

Your work visa is tied to a specific employer. You cannot work for a second company for any reason at any location. Doing so puts everyone at risk: you may be subject to deportation and both companies may be subject to fines. Don't do it!

This extends to teaching online classes. It is not legal for an individual to teach for a company like ABCKids or VIPKids while holding a Chinese work (Z) visa unless that visa is issued to you on behalf of one of those companies. Because China's Public Security Bureau can easily cross-reference visa database photos with photos of online teachers, this is a high-risk activity.

RESPECT

It's very important to respect China's rules and regulations concerning religion, speech and political activity. For example, while you are permitted to attend an official church, it is illegal to create a home-based church.

The country actively monitors political activity both in person and online to ensure a safe and harmonious society. Conduct yourself appropriately and respectfully at all times, being mindful of Chinese law concerning social media and public security.

BEFORE YOU GO



There are a few steps you'll want to take to ensure that you aren't leaving without something you might need! Some of these steps take a little advance planning but don't worry, here's an explanation of what you'll need to do for when the time comes. And as always, the Foreign Teacher Advisor will be there to help you along the way!

The main things you'll want to take care of are applying for a Chinese pension refund, a Chinese record check, and a temporary exit visa (if you leave before the end of your residence permit). Of course, you'll also want to transfer any remaining money in your Chinese account home and receive your apartment deposit, too (for these matters, see "Your First Week").

Let's take a look at each of these items one at a time.

Pension Refund



Every foreigner working in China, just like Chinese citizens, contributes a certain amount of income to the Chinese pension system every month. The more you earn, the more money you contribute. Depending on how long you stay here, this can add up.

But actually benefiting from a China pension requires contrib-

uting for 15 years. What if you don't contribute for so many years or you're leaving China permanently?

Luckily, foreigners can reclaim their contributions but it takes advanced planning and a concerted effort! Here's a guide to what you'll need and how to apply.

The refund process begins with

a declaration by the company to the Local Taxation Bureau stating that insurance payments will be suspended for the person in question. The company can only make this declaration after the final salary payment to the individual. A refund request can begin after the 10th day of the first calendar month subsequent to the declaration.

For example, let's say an employee's last day of work is August 15. In that case, the former employee would be able to begin the refund process on September 10.

In practice, this means that your pension refund will almost certainly not be deposited into a destination bank account until after you have already left China.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

Because of the length of time required, the only practical way to get the refund is by designating Sunshine Home as your legal representative for this process. You and Sunshine Home must submit the following documents to the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (MOHRSS):

1. Termination Notice of Social Insurance Enrollment for Foreigners Working and Participating in Social Insurance in Xiamen (sample included below);
2. A photocopy of your entire passport.
3. Signed and notarized Letter of Authorization designating a Sunshine Home employee to serve as the applicant's representative, and;
4. Letter of Commitment sealed by the company promising to transfer the pension refund to your overseas bank account.

By the way, the Termination No-

tice is entirely in Chinese because it is for use by the Chinese. We'll give you an English translation so you understand what's happening.

TIMING

Approval by MOHRSS and payment to the applicant for any refunded pension payments takes at least seven (7) business days.

PLACE OF REQUEST

The application for the pension refund can be processed in Xiamen at the following sites:

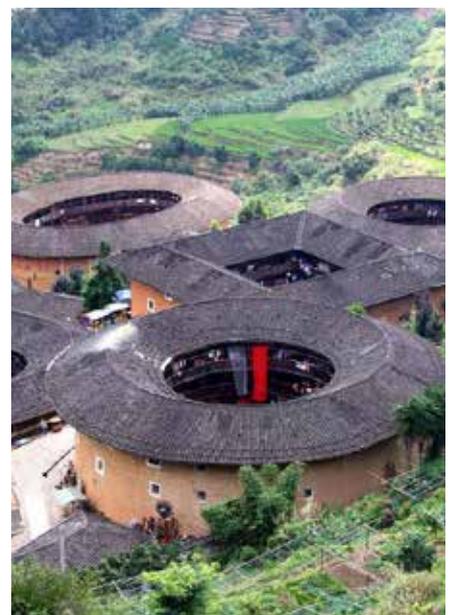
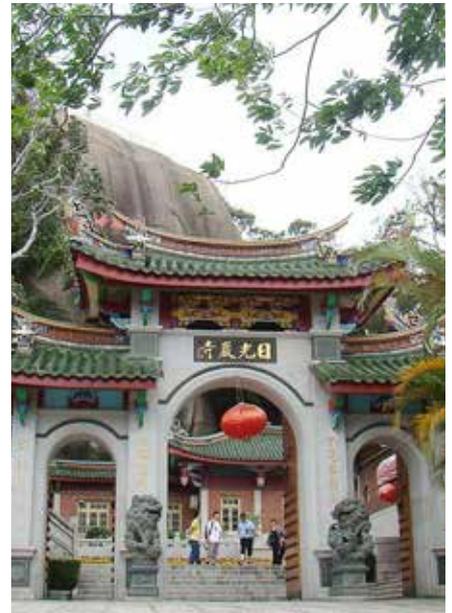
Municipal Social Security Center
Municipal Government Affairs Service Center
Window 13-17, Hall A, Floor 2
842 North Yunding Road, Xiamen, China

Social Security Centers in each district of Xiamen

RECEIPT OF FUNDS

After the pension refund is paid to Sunshine Home's designated account, we are legally obligated by the Letter of Commitment to forward the equivalent amount to your overseas bank account. Please note that we will transfer the amount in Chinese yuan. You and your bank will be responsible for any transfer fees and for the conversion rate into your local currency.

Is it inconvenient? Definitely! But depending on how much you have in your pension account, it might be absolutely worth it. And we'll be here to help you!



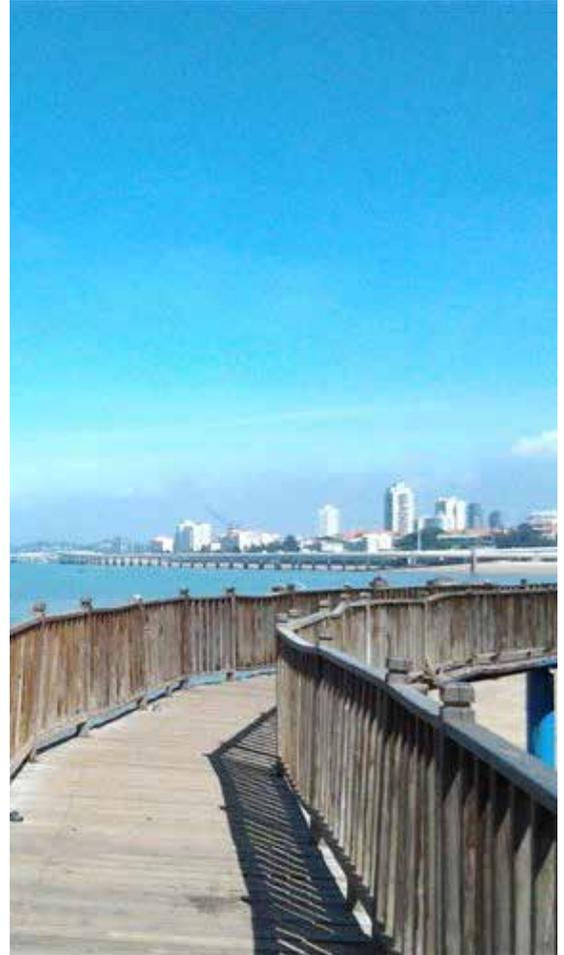
Chinese Criminal Record Check

You needed a criminal record check from your home country when you applied you're your Chinese work visa, but should you go through the hassle to get a Chinese Record Check for your time spent in China before you leave?

Believe us, teachers have learned the hard way the prudence of getting a record check before they left. This is because future employers, whether at home or in another country, very well may ask you for a document ensuring that you have no criminal record in the country where you just taught.

In prior years, China offered record checks via postal mail and third-party service providers. However, China now requires a DNA test instead of fingerprints to issue a record. And that means the applicant must be physically present in order to request a Chinese record check.

This means that if you leave China without getting a Record Check and you later need one, you will have to return to China in person to apply for a Record Check. To potentially save your future self an unwanted trip back to China, see below for how to apply for a Chinese Criminal Record Check before you leave.



For a foreign citizen who wants to obtain a criminal record check covering her or his time of residence in the Chinese mainland, it's necessary to submit several documents to the local police station in addition to a complete set of fingerprints. Here are the required documents:

1. Work permit and letter of introduction from the applicant's school/company

Sample:

Letter of Introduction

We hereby certify that for the employee XXX (name), female (Gender), passport #00000000, America (nationality), no criminal record has been found during the period of employment from Date to Date.

XXX (Company/School name)

Date

2. Accommodation Registration Form from the local police station
3. Passport and a copy of passport
4. Biometric information (fingerprints, DNA sample)

The Letter of Introduction should come from the applicant's current or most recent employer and should include: name, passport number, nationality, position and period of employment.

The Accommodation Registration Form should be obtained from the local police station at which the applicant initially registered when she or he moved to Xiamen.

A set of fingerprints/DNA sample can be obtained by the local police station. A Foreign Teacher Advisor can help you with the process.

When the applicant has all of the above files, she or he must submit everything to the local police station (dependent upon in which district the applicant is legally registered).

The station requires at least five business days to process the request and to issue an official record check.

After you have your record check, it will be valid for future use within mainland China.

If you plan to use a China-issued document for legal, visa or work purposes in a destination country, the document has to be officially notarized, translated and certified by China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and then certified by the Beijing embassy of the destination country. You must be sure that you have enough time to wait for the document to return to Xiamen. The entire process takes around 40 business days. Luckily, it's not necessary that you remain in China for the entire process (more on this below).

The process begins by taking the China-issued document to the official Xiamen Notary Public Office, which is located at the following address:

5/F, Tianlu Building, 2 Tong An Road, Siming, Xiamen, Fujian
(592) 202-5320; (592) 202-5321; (592) 202-5322

厦门市公证处
福建省厦门市思明区同安路2号天鹭大厦5楼

The Notary Public Office will notarize a true and unaltered copy of the original document. This process takes approximately three business days. To notarize the document, you must accompany the Foreign Teacher Advisor in person and present the following documents at the time of submission:

Passport;
Criminal Record Check (original), and;
Accommodation Registration Form.

You will also have to pay a service fee. The fee price depends on the destination country, but should be around 200 yuan.

Once a copy of your Criminal Record Check has been notarized, you will collect your documents as well as a letter from the notary office. Next, you need to visit the Xiamen External Service Office, which is located at the following address:

19 Xingye Building, Hubing North Road, Siming, Xiamen, Fujian

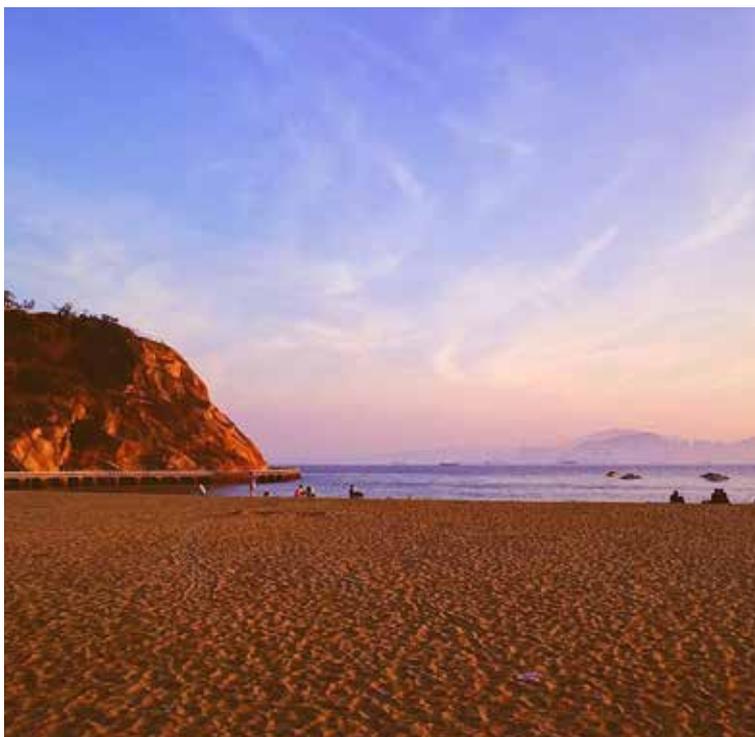
厦门思明区湖滨北路兴业大厦一楼
(592) 514-2959

You must visit the office in person (with the Foreign Teacher Advisor) and present the notarized copy of your criminal record check, the letter from the notary office and your passport.

At the time of submission, the applicant must indicate in which country the document will be used. This is important both because the item will be translated into the official working language of the country of destination and because it must be stamped by the embassy (in Beijing) of the destination country.

You will also need to pay another fee. Again, this depends on the destination country but should be around 800 yuan. Because this document is for your use at your next place of employment, you are responsible for this fee.

The Office will give you a receipt. You must use this receipt to collect your certified Criminal Record Check once the process is completed. If you leave China before the process is over, the school can also use this receipt to collect the document and then have it shipped to you. Please remember to pay in advance for the cost of shipping.



At that point, the Xiamen External Service Office will send the documents and a copy of your passport to the Department of Consular Affairs (DCA) in Beijing, which is part of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The DCA will translate and certify the document, and then forward it to the destination country embassy for authentication.

The documents will then be returned to the Xiamen External Service Office. The office should call us upon arrival but we will also periodically call to check-in, just in case, as the deadline approaches. The entire process from the Xiamen External Service Office to Beijing and back takes about 30 business days. Be aware, though, that the process may take longer if the destination country's embassy delays the schedule. Again, you (or our Foreign Teacher Advisor) need the receipt from the Xiamen External Service Office to pick up the document.

Note that the final document will be legally valid only for the destination country you selected at the beginning of the process.

Also, the embassies of certain countries will not authenticate documents with their national stamp/seal after the document has been translated and certified by the DCA. Important examples include Great Britain. In those cases, the countries typically state that they do not offer this service because the DCA translation and certification are already sufficient to be used as legal documents in their countries.

In all cases, we cannot provide advice as to whether a document that has been notarized, translated and certified using the above process will be accepted by the destination country.

Exit Visa

Many teachers who conclude their contract want to spend some extra time after their last workday in China to wrap up their affairs. You've obtained a Chinese record check, filed for a pension refund, gotten an apartment deposit refund, spent time with friends, changed money ... and now you want to do a bit of sightseeing.

To facilitate that period of time, China offers a "temporary visa" issued by the Xiamen branch of the Exit-Entry Administrative Division (EEAD) of the Public Security Bureau here in Xiamen. This visa is a zero-entry visa that typically lasts from 15-30 days. The specific duration of the visa is at the discretion of the issuing officer. To maximize the length of the visa, it is helpful to tell the EEAD official about the applicant's specific itinerary or list of action items the applicant hopes to complete during the period of the temporary visa.

Departing teachers should apply for a temporary visa approximately seven days before the expiration of the teacher's work visa. To apply, the teacher goes with the Foreign Teacher Advisor to the local branch of the EEAD. The teacher must bring her or his passport and check with the Foreign Teacher Advisor if any other documents are needed.

The EEAD will issue the applicant an official passport receipt and will hold the applicant's passport for at least 10 business days. During that time, the official receipt serves as the official form of identification for the bearer. Immediately make a copy of the receipt and keep the original in a safe place.

The receipt will include a date on which the passport can be picked up from the EEAD with the new temporary visa in place. Upon return of the passport, the new visa will have an exit date for the visa bearer. Once a temporary visa is issued, the date is final and the visa cannot be extended from within the Chinese mainland.

Please note that any employee who chooses early termination of her or his work contract must also cancel her or his residence permit and apply for a temporary visa prior to departure from the Chinese mainland. This cancellation must be done in coordination with the employer.



LIFE FAQs



Common Questions about Xiamen Living



1. How do people find out about activities going on in Xiamen?

WeChat, WeChat, WeChat! This is a Chinese app that is similar to WhatsApp, Messages or Viber. There are so many great groups on WeChat that are specific to Xiamen. The Xiamen VIP group sends out updates daily of events going on in Xiamen. Events range from outdoor activities to live music and drink specials.

Joining a big group like this is helpful because once you find out what you're interested in, you'll then have the QR codes to join groups relating to your specific interests. You have to be invited

to the group but many of the teachers at the school are already members. Just ask one of them to send you an invite!

WhatsOnXiamen.com is another great resource! It has a page which updates every few days. This is a great one because it mentions activities and also Xiamen news. There are also a lot of Xiamen groups for expatriates from specific countries. An example is "XiamenUSA." This also includes invites for sports leagues, restaurant openings, and expat questions.

2. What can I do with WeChat?

A lot! It's a combination of Facebook, a credit card app, text messaging and Venmo all in one. You can make free phone calls, message with friends, transfer money to people, upload pictures and even pay with it like a credit card when you use WeChat wallet.

3. What can I do if I forget something in a taxi?

Your best chance of recovering a lost possession is if you have a taxi receipt. As a habit, always ask your driver for a receipt or (fapiao in Chinese). If you kept your receipt but lost something on the ride, call the taxi company and contact the driver by using the information in the receipt. From there you can make ar-

rangements for getting back your lost item.

If you don't have a receipt, trying to get your lost item back will be trickier. First, try to remember the exact time and location of when and where you left the taxi. You'll have to take a trip to the Transportation Management Station (open weekdays only) to fill out a loss certificate.

At the GPS monitoring center, you can look at GPS records to try to find the number of your taxi – this is where having the time and location of your trip is key. Thankfully, most taxis are now equipped with GPS and cameras. Once you think you found the car, the center's staff will show you camera photos so you can verify that it is the correct taxi.

At that point, they will give you the taxi's license plate number, company name and contact number. Just as you would with a receipt, call the taxi company and explain your situation. Contact the driver and, with a bit of luck, make arrangements for the return of your item.

4. What is it like shopping for clothes in Xiamen?

This was a huge surprise for me! I'm not sure if it's similar for men, but if you're a woman

shopping in a Chinese clothing store, the staff will follow you around the whole time and stand very, very close. I thought they thought I was going to steal!

That was, until they picked out a crazy outfit for me and had me try it on. Then, my Chinese teacher told me that the salespeople are just trying to be helpful. If this makes someone feel uncomfortable (like me), larger chains like H&M at the SM shopping mall, the Western-brand shops at the Wanda mall, or the big stores at the Robinson's Galleria across the street from the train station are all great options. You have more freedom to browse.

5. Should I get a bus card and, if so, how?

Yes! It saves you money because you get a 20 percent discount, it saves you time because you don't have to constantly buy tokens for the BRT and you don't have to always have exact change on the bus. Ask our Foreign Teacher Advisor or a Chinese-speaking friend to help you buy one.

6. Is there somewhere close to the school to hike?

Moxin Mountain is a great option for hiking. It has beautiful views of the ocean and is located right behind the Ruijing branch. It takes 1.5 to two hours for a full hike, depending on the weather and the heat. This is great to do after work during the spring and summer when the sun sets later.

You can also start at Jinbang Park on Xiahe Road next to the Xiamen Train Station and then hike over the hills and to the seaside. Along the way, you'll pass by the Xiamen Bougainvillea Garden, which is lovely. The trek will take a couple of hours, depending on your speed and the heat.

If you want to make a more organized daytrip off the island, places like Fire Island (huǒ shāo yǔ 火烧屿) and the Wild Valley Eco-Park (yě shān gǔ rè dài yǔ lín 野山谷热带雨林) are great options with reasonably-priced tickets.

7. Is it possible to travel outside of Xiamen on the weekends or on long weekends?

Yes! There are so many great places to explore, especially in this province. Wuyishan is a mountain town in the north of Fujian with the most incredible scenery! Imagine green mountains, bamboo boat rides down the river, fresh air and amazing hiking.

The tuluo houses in Yongding county are awesome historical roundhouses made of rammed-earth walls that can hold 200-800 people. It's possible to go on a day trip or stay the night in one of the old houses.

Quanzhou is a quick train ride north of Xiamen. It takes you back in time with its lovely temples and ancient bridge. If you'd like to go with a group, Apple Travel is a great option. You can

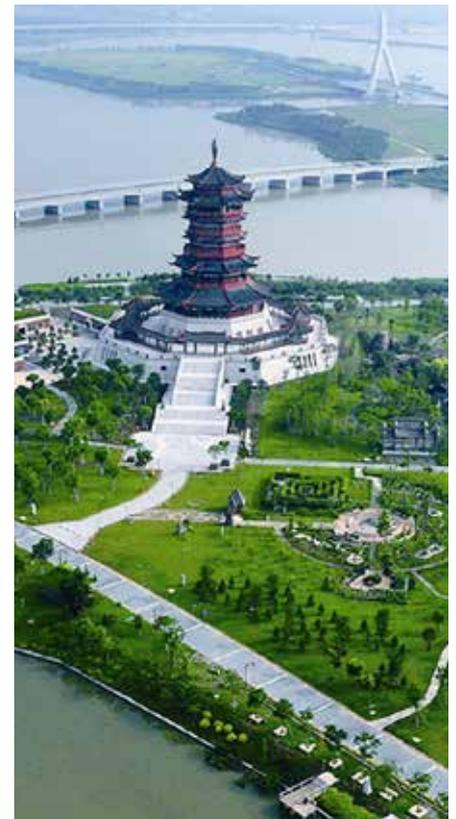
follow them on WeChat and arrange day or weekend trips.

8. Where can I get a Chinese massage?

Xiamen is filled with massage shops. You've got your pick of anything from foot massage shops, blind massage shops, chiropractors and more traditional Chinese medicine clinics (which include massage, acupuncture, cupping, etc.).

For example, there's a shop that many teachers like near the Wen-zao BRT, called Blind Massage Xiamen.

Best thing is to ask your colleagues for recommendations for the kind of massage you're looking for!



Useful Phone Numbers

Here's a list of helpful Chinese phone numbers. While many hotlines may offer services in English, it may be more efficient to make contact with the help of a Chinese speaker.

Emergency Numbers

Fire	119
First-aid Ambulance	120
Police (Voice)	110
Police (SMS)	12110
SOS (in water)	12395
Traffic Accidents	122

Questions and Complaints

Civil Aviation	950137
Complaints about Quality of Goods	12315
Complaints about Prices	12358
Comprehensive Information	12580 / 118114
Phone Directory	114
Post Code Info	184
Railway Info.	12306
Weather Forecast	12121

Major Banks

Agricultural Bank of China	95599
Bank Of China	95566
Bank Of Communications	95559
China Construction Bank	95533
Citibank	(800) 830-1888

HSBC	(800) 820-8828
ICBC	95588
Standard Chartered Bank	(800) 820-8088

Airlines

Air China	95583
American Airlines	(400) 818-7333
China Eastern Airlines	95530
Hainan Airlines	950718
Southern Airlines	(400) 669-5539
XiamenAir	95557

Communication Services

China Mobile	10086
China Unicom	10010
China Telecom	10000

Express Delivery

EMS	11183
FedEx	(400) 886-1888
SF Express	95338
Yuantong Express	95554
Shentong Express	95543
Yunda Express	95546



Weekday Program

(400) 822-5563



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