

GLOBAL EDUCATION OFFICE  
REVES CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES  
THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM & MARY



BEIJING SUMMER HANDBOOK

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# WILLIAM & MARY

## BEIJING 2019

This handbook offers guidelines that we hope you will find useful in making your preparations and while studying in Beijing. Please read the handbook carefully before your departure and **bring it with you** to China, either as a paper or email copy. The program policies are included, along with lists of important items to bring with you, tips for handling your money, and precautions for safeguarding your health and belongings. In an effort to serve you best, the material in this handbook is edited each year and contains the latest information available to assist you in preparing for your trip. While we do our best to provide you with the most accurate information, inevitably some changes may take place and we will need to make adjustments. Your program director and the Global Education Office Advisor at the Reves Center will keep you informed of any changes.

# HANDY INFORMATION

SUMMER HOLIDAYS AND EVENTS IN CHINA		
Date	Holiday	Description
beginning of June 5 <sup>th</sup> day of the 5 <sup>th</sup> lunar month	Tueng Ng Festival (Dragon Boat Festival)	Dragon boat races, commemorating ancient poet Qu Yuan
July 18Mid July 6 <sup>th</sup> day of the 6 <sup>th</sup> lunar month	Xi Shai Jie (Bathing and Basking Festival)	Place books, sheets, and cloth under the sun
Mid-August 7 <sup>th</sup> day of the 7 <sup>th</sup> lunar month	The Night of Sevens / Magpie Festival	The goddess Zhi Nü fell in love with farmer boy Niu Lang, but was disapproved by her mother. As punishment, they can only meet once a year on this night.
Late August 15 <sup>th</sup> day of the 7 <sup>th</sup> lunar month	Spirit Festival (Ghost Festival)	Burn fake paper money and make offerings to the dead so they will not visit the living.

AVERAGE MIN/MAX TEMPERATURES IN BEIJING (°F)					
January	February	March	April	May	June
15/35	20/39	31/52	45/68	56/80	65/87
July	August	September	October	November	December
71/87	69/85	58/78	45/66	31/50	20/38

TIME ZONE COMPARISON: BEIJING IS 12 HOURS AHEAD OF VIRGINIA DURING SUMMER				
Pacific (US)	Mountain (US)	Central (US)	Eastern (US)	Beijing, CHINA
5:00am	6:00am	7:00am	8:00am	8:00 pm
1:00pm	2:00pm	3:00pm	4:00pm	4:00 am (next day)
9:00pm	10:00pm	11:00pm	Midnight	Noon (next day)

# OVERVIEW, DATES, AND MONEY

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- **Fees:** \$6255
- **Program Director:** Chun-yu Lu
- **Accommodations:** Students will live in BNU Student Dormitory. Students have Double rooms. Students will receive a stipend to cover most meals at the campus cafeterias. During the program, the Director will lead several weekend trips to historic and cultural sites in and around Beijing and across China.

## PROGRAM DATES

- Arrive June 16- Depart August 7, 2019

## PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION

Students will be automatically enrolled in a one credit pre-course after the spring break. Dates and times are to be determined by the Program Director and the participants. The professor also provides information about pre-trip preparation.

## MONEY

*A note on currency: Regardless of the level of financial resources you may have available for your period of study abroad, all students share the same need to have quick access to their funds and, at the same time, to have their money protected against loss. can check the current exchange rates on the web at <http://www.xe.com/ucc> or in the financial section of a large city newspaper.*

# VISA INFORMATION AND BUDGETING

## TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

- **Visa**
  - The visa is an adhesive stamp that will be placed in your passport and is necessary for entry into China. The Global Education Office (GEO) will use an outside organization to batch process your visa. You **MUST** have your passport, which is good at least 6 months beyond the completion of the summer program, **BEFORE** completing the paperwork for your visa. If you do not have your passport or do not complete the necessary paperwork by the designated deadline, you will have to get your visa yourself by going to the nearest Chinese Embassy. The Program Director will hand out the necessary paperwork for you to complete during a meeting or spring course.
  - Please note that the visa fee is not included in the cost of the programming.

## BUDGET

- Your budget for incidental expenses will depend on your personal taste and the amount of independent travel you intend to do before or after the program. For basic expenditures in Beijing, such as lunch and dinner, we recommend that you budget approximately \$125-\$175 per week, plus extra money for shopping and traveling. It is probably possible to live for considerably less than this, but there is lots to do in Beijing and you should allow yourself funds to take advantage of the city's offerings. Naturally, if you plan to do a significant amount of shopping and/or traveling, you should budget accordingly. In 2012, students reported spending \$500-\$1,500 throughout their time in Beijing depending on personal taste and the amount of extra travel. The average budget for students was \$1,000.
- The Chinese visa costs \$130 for American citizens, plus a processing fee. Please note that you are responsible for covering this expense.
- Water is not potable in China, and it is advised that students purchase bottles of water for both drinking and for brushing teeth. Water is readily available in dormitories and in the cafeteria.
- Students will need to purchase tissues for use in the bathrooms Outside of the university. Most of the academic building have western toilets.
- Students are able to purchase meals for relatively little money in the student cafeteria.
- The subway has a flat fare of 2 Yuan for a single ride. Taxis are also readily available, and quicker – but more expensive.

### Study Abroad Program Worksheet for Beijing (\$1 = 6.62¥)

Expenses:	Amount:	When due:	Paid to W&M?	Paid out of pocket?
Program Fee	6255	Deposit March 1 <sup>st</sup> , Balance April 1 <sup>st</sup>	Yes	

Airfare	\$1500			Yes
Meals	600			Yes
Study Abroad Application fee	\$75		Yes	
Visa, passport, photos	\$150	Prior to beginning of program		Yes
Books & supplies	\$150			Yes
Misc./Personal Items	\$800			Yes
Total	9430			
Eating	Items		Average Price	Price Range
	Meal, Inexpensive Restaurant		\$4.00	\$3.00 - \$6.00
	Combo Meal at McDonalds or Similar		\$4.42	\$3.70 - \$5.20
	Coke/Pepsi (0.33 liter can)		\$0.40	Restaurants: \$0.96
	Water(1.5 liter bottle)		\$0.72	\$0.48 - \$1.32
	Milk (regular), 1 liter		\$2.21	\$1.61 - \$2.41
Living	Cappuccino (regular)		\$4.50	\$3.21 - \$5.47
	Cinema, International Release, 1 Seat		\$16.88	
	Dry cleaning		\$9.72	
Traveling	Transportation Methods		Average Price	
	One-way Ticket (bus)		\$0.16	(¥1.00)
	Student Card Bus Ticket		\$0.03	(¥0.20)
	Beijing Citizen Card Ticket		\$0.06	(¥0.40)
	One way Ticket (subway)		\$0.32	(¥2.00)
	Taxi Rates		Taxi Start: \$1.77 Taxi 1km: \$0.32 Taxi 1hour Waiting: \$5.16	

How will you be funded?

Funding Sources:	Amount:	When Available:
Scholarship(s)		Varies by deadline, Reeves scholarships will reduce your total balance due. You will find out if you've been

		awarded a Reves scholarship by the end of February.
Financial Aid (Loans, grants, through W&M)		First day of classes on campus or the first day of the summer program, whichever is LATER.
Savings		
Parental/Guardian support		
Other		
Total		

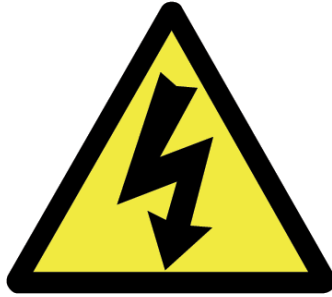


# PACKING

## PACKING TIPS

- **General**
  - Many items you need can be purchased once you've arrived at your destination. For example, bring travel-sized toiletries to keep your bags light, and purchase full-sized items once you've arrived.
  - Do not bring any items of sentimental value that you couldn't bear to lose.
- **Luggage**
  - **Pack only what you can carry by yourself up 2-3 flights of stairs, or walk with for relatively long distances.** A wheeled duffel bag or suitcase plus a generous tote or backpack for weekend travel should suffice. Returning students recommend that your carry-on be a backpack rather than a handheld bag if you plan to do any extra traveling.
  - Do not pack valuables in your checked luggage.
  - Put address labels and contact information inside and outside each piece of luggage.
  - Pack medications in your carry-on luggage.
  - For China, you are strongly encouraged to pack a high quality face mask as pollution in Beijing is a consistent issue.
  - Pack all sharp objects securely in your checked baggage.
  - Pack all liquids in plastic bags to avoid leakage during travel.
  - Place your camera and laptop (if bringing it with you) in your carry-on.
  - Put TSA-approved locks on all of your luggage so that it can be opened without the lock or bag being destroyed.
- **Clothes**
  - Bring easy care clothing items that are lightweight, drip dry, and wrinkle-proof, such as knits, permanent press, and cotton clothes. Dark colors are more practical than light, as they do not show dirt as easily.
  - Pack clothes you can mix and match so as to give your wardrobe as much variety without having to pack as much.
  - Only bring clothes you can imagine wearing often.
  - Bring clothes that you can layer for various temperatures.
  - Do not bring clothes that immediately mark you as 'foreign' – avoid items with obvious phrases in English, or other symbols that will immediately mark your outsider status.
  - Roll clothes instead of folding them; you will fit more in the bag, and have fewer wrinkles upon arrival.
- **Gifts**
  - Students often find that there are people they want to give gifts to at the end of their stay. Try to think of things that are unlikely to be available in China: items made in your home region, calendars or books with photos of America's outstanding features (wildlife, national parks, plantations, cities, and so on), William & Mary paraphernalia, and the like.

*For more tips, please consult the Summer Study Abroad Manual, as well as the "Know Before You Go" section of this handbook.*



### **AN IMPORTANT NOTE ON ELECTRICITY IN BEIJING**

Electrical appliances require a 220/240V converter in China. You will need to purchase a converter that will convert from the United States standard of 110/120V to 220/240V. Converters and adaptors are available in Beijing as well, but it is recommended you purchase yours prior to leaving; Chinese converters tend to be less expensive, but of lower quality. Most modern appliances such as laptop and camera chargers are dual voltage, in which case you will not need a converter; however, check the label on your power device.

The plugs and outlets are interesting. You may encounter up to three types of plugs (with the third being the UK/Ireland large three prong plug), but the most common are the American plug (without the ground prong and without holes in the end of the blades) and the Australasian plug. Receptacles may fit multiple prong types. However, despite the prong type, ALL RECEPTACLES PRODUCE 220v!



# TRAVELING TO BEIJING

NOTE: You are responsible for your own travel arrangements to and from Beijing

## **AIRPORT PICK-UP**

You are responsible for your flight arrangements to and from Beijing. Beijing Normal University will make arrangements to pick up students if they arrive on the first day of the program. The program faculty member will provide more details in meetings or on Blackboard. Students must leave the U.S. on June 15 to arrive on June 16<sup>th</sup>.

It is advised that students travel in pairs, if not larger groups. Use the Blackboard site and share flight information, or plan travel arrangements during the one-credit course.

As soon as possible following your arrival, remember to call your family to let them know you have arrived safely. This will not only save them from worry, but also help the Global Education Office and Beijing Normal University from receiving panicked phone calls regarding your whereabouts.

# COURSEWORK

During your stay in Beijing, you will study at:

## Beijing Normal University (BNU)

Beijing Normal University, a key university under the administration of the Ministry of Education, is a renowned institution of higher education known for teacher education, education science and basic learning in both the arts and the sciences. The university's predecessor, the Normal College of the Imperial University of Peking, was founded in 1902. Over the years, the school has been home to a large group of renowned intellectuals and scholars, who have promoted culture and stimulated education, to name a few: Li Dazhao, Lu Xun, Liang Qichao, Qian Xuantong, Wu Chengshi, Li Jinxi, Chen Yuan, Fan Wenlan, Hou Wailu, Bai Shouyi, Zhong Jingwen, Qi Gong, Hu Xiansu, Wang Kunren and Zhou Tingru.

Among the national key universities built during the time of China's Seventh and Eighth Five-Year Plans, Beijing Normal University is acknowledged as one of the nation's first ten key universities.

The main campus (North Taipingzhuang Campus) of Beijing Normal University covers 172.64 acres that serve as an important place for the university to carry out educational activities. The school has 22,000 full-time students, including 8,900 undergraduates, 11,300 graduates and 1,800 long-term international students. The campus has 1 education faculty, 22 schools and colleges, 2 departments and 36 research institutes (centers). The library boasts over 4.1 million volumes and some 17,300 GB of digital resources, with 1,400 GB e-books.

## CLASSES AT BEIJING NORMAL UNIVERSITY

Courses taught on the summer program receive letter grades, meet William and Mary degree requirements and appear on the transcripts of William and Mary students just as they would if taught on campus. Students will take the courses listed below. Students should select their level of Chinese studies (200, 300, or 400) based on their Chinese language background.

Courses
CHIN 200/300/400: Intermediate/ Advanced Intermediate Chinese; Speaking Listening, Reading, & Writing (8 credits)
CHIN 303: : Beijing: Past, Present, Future (3 credits)
KINE 106: TBD (1 credit)

# EXCURSIONS & ACTIVITIES

## OFFICIAL AND PERSONAL TRAVEL OPTIONS

There will be group excursions as part of the program. Details will be provided prior to departure by the professor leading the program.

It is NOT recommended to travel outside of China since your visa will not allow for re-entry. Program director's approval is needed if student must travel for the purpose of research after submission of detailed travel plan.

## GUIDEBOOKS

Consider purchasing a travel guidebook prior to leaving the United States to help you make personal travel plans. These can be purchased at bookstores like Barnes & Noble, or online. Some guidebook publishers include:

- *Eyewitness Travel Guide* (<http://www.dk.com/us/china/>)
- *Fodor's* (<http://www.fodors.com>)
- *Let's Go* (<http://www.letsgo.com>)
- *Lonely Planet* (<http://www.lonelyplanet.com>)
- *Rick Steves' Books*  
([http://www.ricksteves.com/books/update/update\\_menu.htm](http://www.ricksteves.com/books/update/update_menu.htm))

Often these websites include forums for travelers with the most current, up-to-date information available.

# HOUSING AND MEALS

## **HOUSING**

Students live in the Student Dormitory at BNU for the summer. The students will be in double rooms with a shared bathroom. There is a public kitchen for students to use. Students will also have access to the library. In keeping with the policy of the W&M Office of Residence Life, the Reeves Center does not offer housing for the family of any students participating in W&M-sponsored study abroad programs. Also, family members or friends may not participate in any program activities or excursions. If you have family or friends who want to visit you while abroad it is recommended they do so after the completion of the program.

## **MEALS**

Students are provided with a meal stipend so students can eat on campus in the student cafeterias or off campus in nearby restaurant.

# COMMUNICATION

## ONLINE

Once online, there are a variety of ways to get in touch with family and friends back home via the internet, including email. Keep in mind, though, that Facebook, Myspace, and many blogging websites are banned by the Chinese government. Some students access these sites through proxy servers or certain programs, but keep in mind that these might not be legal; do your research on what is allowed, before you go! Go to [blogs.wm.edu](http://blogs.wm.edu) to set up a free blog through William & Mary's IT department, or search for other free online services such as Blogger and Live Journal.

## CELL PHONES

The Global Education Office provides cell phones for all students on this program.

### PLACING INTERNATIONAL PHONE CALLS

See the "Handy Information" section for a time zone conversion chart before you call!

**Calling Beijing from the United States:** Dial 011-86+10+ phone number.

**Calling the United States from Beijing:** Dial 001+ phone number.

### Emergency Numbers

General Emergency / Police: 110

# HEALTH & SAFETY

## IMMUNIZATION

You are encouraged to consult the Center for Disease Control to verify which vaccinations are recommended for prolonged stay in China:

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/china.htm>. Remember to consider any travels you might want to undertake while abroad for the semester or the year. If you prefer to talk to someone in person about the currently recommended immunizations, you can call Travel Health of Williamsburg at (757) 220-9008 (located at 287 McLaws Circle), or consult with a physician in your area who has some expertise concerning immunizations for international travel.

## STAYING WELL/GETTING SICK

You will most likely find that some meals do not settle well with your stomach. During the first few weeks of acclimatization you can expect to suffer from diarrhea or constipation. A former participant recommends that taking Pepto Bismol before eating an iffy meal can help prevent stomach trouble (but warns that too much can turn your tongue black!) Be wary about eating at the food stalls that blossom in the summer and in areas of doubtful cleanliness. The warm temperatures and unsanitary practices of some cooks provide excellent breeding grounds for a host of bacteria.

You might also keep in mind that Chinese people are not susceptible to waterborne *giardia*, an intestinal parasite which can cause severe discomfort and is difficult to treat. Western travelers **do** pick up *giardia* in China. Therefore, you should take particular care about eating at small food stalls. Drinking clean water is a must. You can purchase safe, bottled water at a reasonable cost throughout China.

Clinic: If you get sick, the first thing you should do is to contact the Program Director who will be able to direct you to the right place. There are numerous Western-style clinics and hospitals, and Western medicine and Western-trained doctors can also be found in Beijing and other major cities. You may want to bring a copy of your insurance claim form with you to China in order to make sure you gather all pertinent information, but you should expect to pay for medical services when they are rendered and file for reimbursement upon your return home.

THINK CLEAN: Here are some things to keep in mind as you prepare to visit China:

1. Some people feel that it is better to bring one's own chopsticks when eating out or traveling, if it is convenient. Plastic ones are relatively easy to keep clean.
2. Although restaurants in China generally sanitize the glassware, in general, you may feel better about drinking directly from the beverage bottles or cans.
3. Wash your hands before meals. The leading cause of food poisoning is staph, a skin bacterium. It is also vital that you protect against hepatitis. Be sure your hands, chopsticks and bowls are clean.
4. A few additional precautions:
  - Footwear: It is suggested that upon arriving in Beijing you buy rubber shower shoes or sandals to wear in the shower at the dormitory; do not go barefoot anywhere. Some parasitic diseases which are significant public health problems in China are transmitted through tiny wounds in the feet.



Others are airborne and absorbed by inhalation. While these are usually picked up by those who work out of doors, it is best to be careful.

- Disinfectants: Since tap water in Asia is not chlorinated or sterilized, you should not drink the tap water. Ask your director if brushing your teeth with tap water is safe.
- You will find that cuts and abrasions get infected more easily than they do at home and are harder to keep clean. Take any cut or scrape seriously and apply antiseptic ointment regularly until the injury is healed.

A NOTE ON POLLUTION: In recent years, students have also strongly suggested that you should pack a good quality mask to battle against the present pollution in Beijing. It is very likely that at some point during your stay in Beijing that will come down with some respiratory cold/cough. Having a mask can help with this. In addition, if you have asthma or a weak respiratory system, it is important to talk with your physician and bring necessary medications/inhalers with you to China.

For the duration of the program, the Director is always available to assist students in obtaining medical care.. Useful information on preparing for medical emergencies before you go abroad is provided at <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/go/health.html>.

# TRAVEL & COUNTRY INFORMATION

We encourage all students to research their study abroad destination. Be sure to read up on Chinese history, culture, and current events before your arrival. Knowing as much as possible about where you are going will not only make you more comfortable during your time in the country, but will also allow you to talk more knowledgeably with your teachers and new friends.

# BEIJING



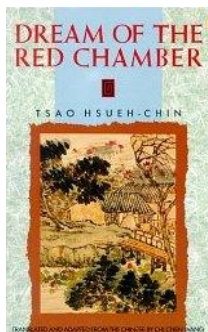
Few cities in the world besides Beijing have served as the political and cultural center of an area as immense as China for so long. The Encyclopedia Britannica describes it as “one of the world's great cities,” and declares that the city has been an integral part of China’s history for centuries; there is scarcely a major building of any age in Beijing that doesn't have at least some national historical significance. Beijing is renowned for its opulent palaces, temples, and huge stone walls and gates. Its art treasures and universities have long made the city a center of culture and art in China.

Beijing, a municipality directly under the Central Government, is the capital of China and the country’s political, economic, and cultural center, as well as a famous historic city. Located on the edge of the North China Plain, Beijing is the second largest city in the country with a population of more than 12 million. The establishment of Beijing as the capital by four feudal dynasties makes the city the most concentrated place of China’s scenic spots and historical sites. As a cultural center, Beijing has many top research institutions and universities, in addition to numerous museums and libraries, and has the greatest number of professionals. With no doubt, Beijing is one of the best places to study and visit in China.

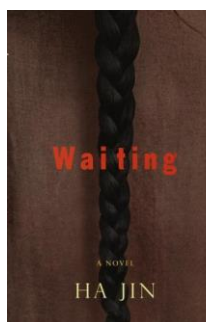
# FOR FUN: LIGHT READING AND MOVIES

Following are a few novels by Chinese authors, with stories set in China. Check them out, or consider looking for other books to put you in a China mood prior to – or during – your time abroad. Don't worry; you won't be tested on them!

## BOOKS

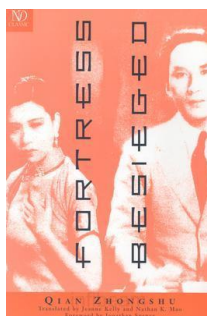


**DREAM OF THE  
RED CHAMBER**  
By Tsao Hsueh-  
Chin



**WAITING**  
By Ha Jin

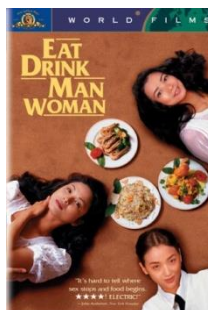
**FORTRESS  
BESIEGED**  
By Qian Zhongshu



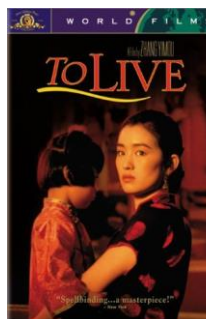
**“Socialism is  
Great!”: A  
Worker’s  
Memoir of the  
New China**  
By Lijia Zhang



## MOVIES



**EAT DRINK  
MAN WOMAN**  
(1994)



**Huo Zhe (To  
Live)**  
(1994)

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **Will I need a visa?**

Yes, you will need a visa. The Global Education Office will assist you with the necessary paperwork. But, it is very IMPORTANT that you have your Passport and submit all documents to the Program Director by the deadline. Otherwise you will have to apply for the visa on your own, which can be complicated process.

## **What airport will I fly into? Do all W&M students travel together on the same flights?**

Please refer to the section in this handbook on “Traveling to Beijing” for specific information. W&M students do not necessarily take the same flight. However if you wish to travel with other students you can arrange communicate through Blackboard or Facebook.

## **Can I arrive earlier or stay longer than the program dates?**

Yes, you may but you will be responsible for making your own accommodation arrangements. You will **NOT** be able to stay in the housing provided during the program.

## **If my family or friends visit, may they stay with me?**

No, they will need to make their own arrangements for accommodations. Please advise your program director if you expect family or friends to visit you during the program. Family members or friends are not allowed to participate in any programs activities or excursions. It is best to arrange to meet family/friends after the completion of the program.

## **Am I required to participate in all excursions provided by the program?**

Yes, unless your program director says otherwise. The excursions supplement the coursework and expand cultural learning.

## **Will I need to seek post approval for the courses I take?**

No, all of the courses offered in the W&M faculty-led summer programs have already been approved.

## **Will my grades be posted on my transcript?**

Yes, the grades you receive will be posted on your W&M transcript and will be calculated into your GPA.

## **Can I take class pass/fail?**

No, this is not an option.

## **Do I need to take my own sheets and towels?**

Students will live in Beijing International Student Dormitory. Sheets and blankets are provided. Towels may be provided, but they are small. Bring a bigger towel or you can buy one after you arrive (although fairly expensive for good ones).

## **Will my study-abroad facility have a fitness center/gym for student use?**

There is a small gym in the International Student Dormitory that students can use.

# KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

## ADDITIONAL TIPS FROM PAST STUDENTS

### *PLACES TO SEE IN AND NEAR BEIJING*

- “The Summer Palace, Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City and things that everyone should see.”
- “If you like tea, Maliandao (the tea street) has a ton of vendors who will let you taste many different teas for free.”
- “The Beijing Zoo can be fun, and the Beijing Aquarium (which is located is the zoo) is a lot of fun (treatment of animals is a bit better here).”
- “If you're looking for places to shop, you might want to go once or twice to the Silk Market, but generally things are much more expensive here because it attracts so many foreigners. There is another shopping area near the zoo which has much more reasonable prices. However, I would do more shopping during travel excursions, as things tend to be much cheaper outside of Beijing (and other major cities such as Shanghai).”
- “Be prepared to bargain while shopping - pretty much any price is negotiable unless you're in a shopping mall. Bargaining can be stressful, because Chinese vendors know you're foreign and not used to it, so they will try to charge a much higher price. I would recommend learning some techniques or bringing along someone familiar with the practice.”
- “Lots of students like Wudaokou which has clubs and pizza places, and Sanlitun. Pyro's was a favorite.”

### *MEETING PEOPLE*

- “Be courageous and energetic – you can meet locals anywhere.”
- “It was more up to the individual to venture into the community. Not necessarily hard, however, and the language partner program was a good chance to get into the city with a Chinese friend.”
- “We had easy access to local Chinese. We could easily leave campus and we had language partners, Chinese students we met with to help us improve our Chinese.”
- Note that people working in a particular city aren't always born and raised in that city. A good topic of conversation for a first meeting would be “What part of China are you from?” The “hometown” is often a topic of pride and it's also an important way for a non-local to understand the diversity and interests of people from China.

# KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

## ADDITIONAL TIPS FROM PAST STUDENTS

### TRAVEL

- “You can also organize your own travels – there are fast trains which can take you to some interesting nearby places (Qingdao and Jinan, for instance). You can also ask someone in the Peking office to help you get a flight somewhere a bit further – plane tickets are fairly reasonably priced. I would recommend Nanjing, Shanghai, Guilin, or Inner Mongolia if you’re very adventurous!”
- “Public transportation is the best way to get around in China’s major cities. In Beijing, the bus costs around 15 cents per ride, the subway around 30 cents. Taxis are very cheap when you carpool. Get a City transportation card, a Yikatong.”
- “Traffic can be dangerous. **Pedestrians do NOT have the right of way.** If you don’t feel comfortable, just wait until a large group walks across the street.”
- You’ll find that the best places to eat in Beijing aren’t in any guide book or internet site. Ask the locals or your language partner for suggestions.”

### COMMUNICATION

- “Bring your laptop – you can get internet service in your room, and Skype is a great way to stay in touch with people back home. You can use internet cafes (although they can seem a bit strange), and many restaurants have wireless. I would definitely recommend getting a cell phone to communicate with other people in Beijing.”
- “Buy money for your phone as you go, usually \$15 at a time, and lasts 1-1.5 months. Money stations are available everywhere.”
- “It is easier to stay in touch with people in the program using a prepaid cell phone, and gives you a sense of security in the city. Also, things on campus tend to be more expensive than things off campus.”
- “Make sure you have a few contact numbers before you leave for China.”
- You can buy phone cards from the front desk, but Skype is usually cheaper.
- The dorms have wifi.

# KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

## ADDITIONAL TIPS FROM PAST STUDENTS

### ***MONEY***

- Discuss with your bank the fees associated with international transactions and withdrawals. The bank may be able to inform you of a partner bank in China that you can use to withdraw cash and avoid fees.
- “I would definitely recommend using your debit card. There are plenty of ATM machines in Beijing that you can use. Check with your bank beforehand to see if there is one they are affiliated with and will therefore charge fewer fees. Also, make you sure you warn your bank before going to China so they will not block your card.”
- “I personally prefer to use an American debit card and withdraw maximum amounts of Chinese cash every time I use the ATM. This is usually 2500 Yuan (or about \$400). I then store the paper money in a safe place and carry around small amounts with me. I find this method minimizes ATM fees, which are often \$5 per transaction regardless of your bank, while also keeping things simple.”
- Basic cost of things is much cheaper than in the US. You can get a good meal for 15 Yuan, which is about \$2.50 The cafeteria food is even cheaper. You can get a fancy meal for 100 Yuan, which is about \$15.”
- “Food is very cheap relative to food in America. School cafeterias provide meals for far less than \$1.”

### ***PACKING SMART***

- “Chinese style is very similar to that in the U.S. Be sure to take comfortable shoes. In Beijing, buses, subways, and walking are the most common forms of transportation.”
- “Bring a backpack suitable for class and also big enough to take on weekend trips. But do not put anything valuable in your backpack, like your passport or money.” One former student suggested bringing a larger backpack for traveling, and a smaller one for everyday use.
- “Bring over-the-counter medications, favorite brands of toiletries, and of course any prescription meds since these are not always available and are more expensive.”
- “Hand sanitizer! Most public bathrooms do not have soap. Any kind of medication you will need. If you wear contacts, the solution can be very difficult to find, so I would stock up on that.”
- “I wish someone had warned me to leave more room in my suitcase! Since there is a weight limit for plane travel, make sure you’re within it or you’ll have to pay an extra (expensive) fee.”



# KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

ADDITIONAL TIPS FROM PAST STUDENTS

## *COURSEWORK*

- “Some days the workload was very heavy and we were thus unable to venture into the city.”
- “It was enough to handle, and having Chinese everyday actually improved my language skills.”
- “The courses were a lot of work, but that is necessary to learn Chinese.”
- “I’m glad W&M professors were with us; I was more comfortable adjusting. Tsinghua professors were also always available to help, and some even met us at the airport with the W&M professors.”
- “The W&M staff was extremely helpful with getting us settled in and taking care of any problems. I’m especially glad they were there to take me to the hospital when I got sick.”
- “Our W&M professors and the staff were always excellent, though the dorm staff seemed a little annoyed by our presence.”

## *LIVING*

- “Learn as many characters for food as you can – menus can be very confusing.”
- “Do not drink anything with ice. The ice isn’t filtered, so it is not a good idea.”
- “One way to have water in the dorm is to order a shuitong, or water dispenser, that is about 19 liters of spring water and can be refilled for less than \$2. Buying bottled water can become a hassle, and the tap water in China is not always filtered.”
- “Be careful where you leave your things in the dorms. Lock your door. There have been a couple of incidents of theft, particularly with laundry. W&M students may be bound by the honor code, but other international students also live in the dorm.”
- “Housing was close to the library.”

# KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

ADDITIONAL TIPS FROM PAST STUDENTS

## *PREPARE YOURSELF*

- “Be aware of culture shock, and understand that there are many things that will be different that you wouldn’t even have expected.”
- “Take time to be by yourself and think about the trip ahead of you. Clear your head and become open-minded.”
- “Practice Chinese with a few Chinese speakers before you go.”
- Be prepared for things to be different, and don’t get too negative about it. The bathrooms and dorm rooms might not be what you are used to, but remember that you are in China to experience a different culture.
- Travel light or pack an extra bag for your souvenirs. You can also always buy an extra bag in China for \$15-\$30.
- Take toilet paper with you as you travel. Chinese toilets are often holes in the ground, and toilet paper is not provided. Public restrooms often do not have Western-style toilets.
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## *CHINESE CULTURE*

- People in China tend to keep a distance when speaking to someone for the first time, but the distance may become closer as a relationship progresses. Eye contact is important, but touching is not expected, especially on a first meeting. In formal social situations, a handshake is sufficient.
- Public displays of emotion aren’t acceptable.
- Forms of address can vary quite a bit in China. In Chinese, the surname comes first, followed by the given name or names, so an English name like “John Williams Smith” would be “Smith John Williams.”
- Social relations tend to be rather hierarchical in China.
- In China, there is no official religion and religion is still viewed by the state as a type of superstition that goes against scientific progress. Beware of being too vocal about your religious beliefs.
- Despite official statements, class hierarchies in China are very pronounced and dependent on factors such as **age**, education, occupation and most importantly, financial status.
- Gift-giving (songli) is an important practice in China.

# CONTACT INFORMATION

## REVES CENTER CONTACTS

You may call the Reves Center and its advisors at the numbers below between 8am and 5pm (Virginia time), Monday through Friday. In case of an emergency that falls outside of these times, please call William & Mary Campus Police at +001 (757) 221-4596. Campus police will then forward your call to the correct person or office.

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\*To call the U.S. from abroad: 001+ (Area Code) + phone number

## IN BEIJING

**Program Director**  
Chun-yu Lu

# NOTES



Pictures from Campus:



