

MAKE CHINA WORK **BEFORE YOU LAND.**

The free checklist for your first 72 hours in China — payment, phone, entry, transport. Checked against official sources, with a Plan B for when things fail.

LAST FULL REVIEW: 2026-07-02 · NO ADS · NO AFFILIATE LINKS

01 READY / PAYMENT

PAYMENT

- Install Alipay + WeChat before you fly — not at the airport.
- Link two cards, not one (one Visa/Mastercard + one backup).
- Finish passport verification inside the app while you still have good internet.
- Pack a fallback: some RMB cash + one physical card.

IF PAYMENT FAILS AT THE COUNTER →

Cash first, then try your other app. Hotels and larger stores usually take physical cards.

 VERIFIED 2026-07-02 · [Embassy payment guide](#)

02 READY / CONNECTED

PHONE & INTERNET

- Decide before booking: eSIM vs roaming vs local SIM — they solve different problems.
- A foreign eSIM gives you data, not a Chinese phone number. Some services need SMS verification.
- Install your app stack on one screen: maps, translate, DiDi, rail.
- Download offline: your hotel address in Chinese, offline maps.

IF YOU LAND WITH NO INTERNET →

Airport Wi-Fi may need SMS. Have your first ride planned offline before boarding.

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ENTRY DOCUMENTS

- Know which path you're entering on: visa, 30-day visa-free, or 240-hour transit. They are not the same thing.
- Check the official list the week you fly — not a Reddit thread, not a 2025 blog post.
- Screenshot before boarding: onward ticket, hotel booking, and the official policy page itself.

IF YOUR ROUTE ISN'T CLEARLY ELIGIBLE →

Check official sources before booking, not after. This page gives you the checking path, not an eligibility verdict.

 VERIFIED 2026-07-02 · [NIA \(immigration\)](#) [State Council: Visit China](#)

AIRPORT TO HOTEL

- Save your hotel name + address in Chinese characters, available offline.
- Plan A and Plan B: metro / official taxi rank / DiDi.
- Keep cash for the first ride in case your payment app isn't verified yet.

IF THE DRIVER CAN'T FIND YOU →

Share the pinned pickup point in the app and show the Chinese address. Gates matter more than terminal names.

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05 READY / HOTEL

HOTEL & FIRST NIGHT

Check-in needs your passport — registration of foreign guests is standard, not suspicious.

Small things that break night one: plug adapter, bottled water, hotel Wi-Fi asking for SMS.

IF HOTEL WI-FI WANTS A CHINESE NUMBER →

Use your data plan, or ask the front desk to connect you.

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06 READY / SAFETY

WHEN THINGS BREAK

Save 3 screenshots before landing: hotel address in Chinese, entry documents, emergency contacts.

Payment dead + no internet: your paper fallback is cash + a printed address.

Emergency numbers: police 110 · ambulance 120 · fire 119. Save your embassy's China page too.

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Made by a lifelong traveler and former inbound-China travel operator. I test everything on a real phone, with a real passport.

This is preparation help, not visa or legal advice. Entry rules depend on your passport and route — always check the official pages above before booking. © 2026 CH101