

**Practical Information and Travel Tips for your
CHINA TRIP
W/EVA & YING
March 23-28, 2018**

Visa Application:

In order to travel to China you will need a visa from the Chinese Consulate in San Francisco, CA. Cost \$140.

Here is the link to the Visa Application Form:

<http://visaagency.org/images/P020130828366275572026.pdf>

which you fill out on-line, and print out. It must be typed, no handwriting, other than your signature.

You need a type “L” visa, which is for tourists.

Tips for filling out the Visa Application:

Under 1.15 Current occupation use “retired” if that can apply.

If you fill in with any occupation, including “self-employed” you need to fill out the address information, even if it is the same as your home address.

Under part 2 Mark “Tourism” as your purpose for the visit.

Under part 2.2 You can mark the bottom one “Other” and write “Multiple entries valid for 10 years.”

Since it’s the same price for the visa, you might as well use this option.

Under part 2.6 Itinerary for your visit, write “Beijing Airport Hotel, Beijing” for the first and last day of your stay, and for March 23-28 write “Hotel, Xixinan Village, Huizhou District, Huangshan City, China”

If you are traveling before or after our workshop, fill in with appropriate locations and dates.

Under part 2.7 Who will pay for your visit in China write “I will pay for my expenses myself.”

As for the visa photo make sure it has a plain light background, no hat or glasses, ears visible, don’t show teeth (you can smile with your mouth closed.)

You need to include copy of your round-trip ticket to China.

Make sure to also include a copy of your current Driver’s License along with your passport!

Here is the link to the English version of the guidelines from the Chinese Consulate:
<http://www.chinaconsulatesf.org/eng/laszj/zgqz/>

1. The Visa Office is open 9:00a.m.-2:30p.m. (No lunch break), Monday--
Friday, and closed on weekends and holidays.

2. Main office: 1450 Laguna Street, San Francisco, CA 94115

3. Visa office: Mailing address is the same as above; however, the entrance to the
Visa office is on the Geary Blvd.

(From the main office, walk up north to the first traffic light, turn right and walk
1/2 block.)

*Note: Camera, video camera and video/audio recorder and the like are not allowed in
the visa office.*

I used a service to take care of my visa application, so I didn't have to drive to San
Francisco and stand in line at the Chinese Consulate.

JetPhoto China Visa Agency

408-257-9750

10525 South De Anza Blvd. #205

Cupertino, CA 95014

www.visaagency.org

Email: visaagency@gmail.com

I went to the agency in person, but you don't need to, you can send them your
application, etc. and they will handle it for you.

I got my passport back with my visa in about 10 days from the day they got my
application.

JetPhoto charged me \$60 for the service + \$30 FedEx fee to mail back my visa.

(I figured it would cost me more in gas to drive to San Francisco twice. Once to
drop off application, and once to pick it up, since the Consulate does not offer
online application or mailing back your visa.)

Flights & Airfare

There are daily flights to Beijing from both San Francisco (SFO) and San Jose (SJC).
You will be able to find connecting flights out of Reno. Flying time from SFO or SJC
to Beijing is around 10.5 hours.

Airfares to Beijing are very competitive, and you should be able to find flights for \$450-\$700 depending where you fly out from. (I got my round-trip from Reno to Beijing for under \$700 this Fall.)

Mobile Phone & Internet Tips

Beijing Airport & the hotels we will be staying at have free Wi-Fi service. However, if you would like to be able to use your phone most carriers have “Travel Packages” available for shorter trips abroad, so check with your mobile phone company. If you want to be able to use Facebook, Google, Instagram, Blogger, or Gmail accounts, etc. you need a VPN since China does not allow access to these sites. I used this VPN successfully: [VyprVPN](#)

Weather & Clothing

Expect changing spring weather in March, so be prepared to dress in layers and bring rain gear. For our excursion to Huangshan Yellow Mountain you should bring warmer clothing, since it's usually about 10-15 F cooler than in Xixinan Village. Bring comfortable shoes, since we will be doing quite a bit of walking during our excursions.

Bathrooms & Water

China like most countries in Asia use “squat” toilets. However, I found that most of the places we visited had a few “western” style toilets available as well. All the public toilets I came across were in good shape, water flush (no pits!) and reasonably clean.

Our hotels all have western style toilets.

Most public toilets do NOT have toilet paper available, so be prepared, and pack some zip-lock bags with toilet paper and have them in your purse or backpack. I also like to carry some baby wipes and hand sanitizer with me at all times.

I find it wisest NOT to drink tap water when traveling even if it is potable. The hotels have free bottled water in the rooms, as well as electric kettles to boil water for tea.

Money

The currency in China is called Yuan and equals about 0.15 US dollar currently. (\pm 6.50 Yuan = \$1.00)

I exchanged \$300 before leaving for China, just so I had some cash available upon arrival, and there are ATMs available both in the airport, when you arrive, as well as in Beijing and other cities. Make sure you have a 4-digit passcode to your credit card in order to use the ATM's.

What To Bring For the Workshop

I will provide watercolor materials for our studio painting sessions, but I would suggest you bring your own spiral bound sketchbook. (Strathmore 140 Lbs. watercolor paper, or something similar), pencil, kneaded eraser and a couple of pens for our excursions.

Miscellaneous

Chargers for your digital equipment.

Chinese outlets accept US plugs in most places, but for three-prong plugs you need a converter.

I brought this universal converter for less than \$8 on Amazon. It will work for most places in the world:

Insten Universal World Wide Travel Charger Adapter Plug

Don't forget to bring your camera/smartphone.

I like to bring my binoculars for bird watching. Reading materials, and some snacks such as Energy bars, crackers, string cheese, nuts & dried fruit.

If you are on medication, make sure to bring it in your hand luggage, just in case your luggage gets delayed.

Most importantly bring a positive attitude and an open mind!