



China

(also see separate Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan entries)



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Introduction

China

[Top of Page](#)**Background:**  

For centuries China stood as a leading civilization, outpacing the rest of the world in the arts and sciences, but in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the country was beset by civil unrest, major famines, military defeats, and foreign occupation. After World War II, the Communists under MAO Zedong established an autocratic socialist system that, while ensuring China's sovereignty, imposed strict controls over everyday life and cost the lives of tens of millions of people. After 1978, his successor DENG Xiaoping and other leaders focused on market-oriented economic development and by 2000 output had quadrupled. For much of the population, living standards have improved dramatically and the room for personal choice has expanded, yet political controls remain tight.

Geography

China

[Top of Page](#)**Location:**  

Eastern Asia, bordering the East China Sea, Korea Bay, Yellow Sea, and South China Sea, between North Korea and Vietnam

Geographic coordinates:  

35 00 N, 105 00 E

Map references:  

[Asia](#)

Area:   

total: 9,596,960 sq km

land: 9,326,410 sq km

water: 270,550 sq km

Area - comparative:  

slightly smaller than the US

Land boundaries:  

total: 22,117 km

border countries: Afghanistan 76 km, Bhutan 470 km, Burma 2,185 km, India 3,380 km, Kazakhstan 1,533 km, North Korea 1,416 km, Kyrgyzstan 858 km, Laos 423 km, Mongolia 4,677 km, Nepal 1,236 km, Pakistan 523 km, Russia (northeast) 3,605 km, Russia (northwest) 40 km, Tajikistan 414 km, Vietnam 1,281 km

regional borders: Hong Kong 30 km, Macau 0.34 km

Coastline:  

14,500 km

Maritime claims:  

territorial sea: 12 nm

contiguous zone: 24 nm

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

continental shelf: 200 nm or to the edge of the continental margin

Climate:  

extremely diverse; tropical in south to subarctic in north

Terrain:  

mostly mountains, high plateaus, deserts in west; plains, deltas, and hills in east

Elevation extremes:  *lowest point:* Turpan Pendi -154 m*highest point:* Mount Everest 8,850 m**Natural resources:**  

coal, iron ore, petroleum, natural gas, mercury, tin, tungsten, antimony, manganese, molybdenum, vanadium, magnetite, aluminum, lead, zinc, uranium, hydropower potential (world's largest)

Land use:  *arable land:* 14.86%*permanent crops:* 1.27%*other:* 83.87% (2005)**Irrigated land:**  



545,960 sq km (2003)

Natural hazards:  

frequent typhoons (about five per year along southern and eastern coasts); damaging floods; tsunamis; earthquakes; droughts; land subsidence

Environment - current issues:  

air pollution (greenhouse gases, sulfur dioxide particulates) from reliance on coal produces acid rain; water shortages, particularly in the north; water pollution from untreated wastes; deforestation; estimated loss of one-fifth of agricultural land since 1949 to soil erosion and economic development; desertification; trade in endangered species

Environment - international agreements:  *party to:* Antarctic-Environmental Protocol, Antarctic Treaty, Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Tropical Timber 83, Tropical Timber 94, Wetlands, Whaling*signed, but not ratified:* none of the selected agreements**Geography - note:**  

world's fourth largest country (after Russia, Canada, and US); Mount Everest on the border with Nepal is the world's tallest peak

People**China**[Top of Page](#)**Population:**   

1,313,973,713 (July 2006 est.)

Age structure:  *0-14 years:* 20.8% (male 145,461,833/female 128,445,739)*15-64 years:* 71.4% (male 482,439,115/female 455,960,489)*65 years and over:* 7.7% (male 48,562,635/female 53,103,902) (2006 est.)**Median age:**  *total:* 32.7 years*male:* 32.3 years*female:* 33.2 years (2006 est.)**Population growth rate:**  

0.59% (2006 est.)

Birth rate:   

13.25 births/1,000 population (2006 est.)

Death rate:   

6.97 deaths/1,000 population (2006 est.)

Net migration rate:  

-0.39 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2006 est.)

Sex ratio:  

at birth: 1.12 male(s)/female
under 15 years: 1.13 male(s)/female
15-64 years: 1.06 male(s)/female
65 years and over: 0.91 male(s)/female
total population: 1.06 male(s)/female (2006 est.)

Infant mortality rate:   

total: 23.12 deaths/1,000 live births
male: 20.6 deaths/1,000 live births
female: 25.94 deaths/1,000 live births (2006 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:   

total population: 72.58 years
male: 70.89 years
female: 74.46 years (2006 est.)

Total fertility rate:   

1.73 children born/woman (2006 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:   

0.1% (2003 est.)

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:   

840,000 (2003 est.)

HIV/AIDS - deaths:   

44,000 (2003 est.)

Nationality:  

noun: Chinese (singular and plural)
adjective: Chinese

Ethnic groups:  

Han Chinese 91.9%, Zhuang, Uygur, Hui, Yi, Tibetan, Miao, Manchu, Mongol, Buyi, Korean, and other nationalities 8.1%

Religions:  

Daoist (Taoist), Buddhist, Christian 3%-4%, Muslim 1%-2%
note: officially atheist (2002 est.)

Languages:  

Standard Chinese or Mandarin (Putonghua, based on the Beijing dialect), Yue (Cantonese), Wu (Shanghaiese), Minbei (Fuzhou), Minnan (Hokkien-Taiwanese), Xiang, Gan, Hakka dialects, minority languages (see Ethnic groups entry)

Literacy:  

definition: age 15 and over can read and write
total population: 90.9%
male: 95.1%
female: 86.5% (2002)

Government

China

[Top of Page](#)**Country name:**  *conventional long form:* People's Republic of China*conventional short form:* China*local long form:* Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo*local short form:* Zhongguo*abbreviation:* PRC**Government type:**  

Communist state

Capital:  

Beijing

Administrative divisions:  

23 provinces (sheng, singular and plural), 5 autonomous regions (zizhiqu, singular and plural), and 4 municipalities (shi, singular and plural)

provinces: Anhui, Fujian, Gansu, Guangdong, Guizhou, Hainan, Hebei, Heilongjiang, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Jilin, Liaoning, Qinghai, Shaanxi, Shandong, Shanxi, Sichuan, Yunnan, Zhejiang; (see note on Taiwan)*autonomous regions:* Guangxi, Nei Mongol, Ningxia, Xinjiang, Xizang (Tibet)*municipalities:* Beijing, Chongqing, Shanghai, Tianjin*note:* China considers Taiwan its 23rd province; see separate entries for the special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau**Independence:**  

221 BC (unification under the Qin or Ch'in Dynasty); 1 January 1912 (Manchu Dynasty replaced by a Republic); 1 October 1949 (People's Republic established)

National holiday:  

Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China, 1 October (1949)

Constitution:  

most recent promulgation 4 December 1982

Legal system:  

based on civil law system; derived from Soviet and continental civil code legal principles; legislature retains power to interpret statutes; constitution ambiguous on judicial review of legislation; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

Suffrage:  

18 years of age; universal

Executive branch:  *chief of state:* President HU Jintao (since 15 March 2003) and Vice President ZENG Qinghong (since 15 March 2003)*head of government:* Premier WEN Jiabao (since 16 March 2003); Executive Vice Premier HUANG Ju (since 17 March 2003), Vice Premiers WU Yi (17 March 2003), ZENG Peiyan (since 17 March 2003), and HUI Liangyu (since 17 March 2003)*cabinet:* State Council appointed by the National People's Congress (NPC)*elections:* president and vice president elected by the National People's Congress for a five-year term (eligible for a second term); elections last held 15-17 March 2003 (next to be held mid-March 2008); premier nominated by the president, confirmed by the National People's Congress*election results:* HU Jintao elected president by the 10th National People's Congress with a total of 2,937 votes (four delegates voted against him, four abstained, and 38 did not vote); ZENG Qinghong elected vice president by the 10th National People's Congress with a total of 2,578 votes (177 delegates voted against him, 190 abstained, and 38 did not vote); two

seats were vacant

Legislative branch:  

unicameral National People's Congress or Quanguo Renmin Daibiao Dahui (2,985 seats; members elected by municipal, regional, and provincial people's congresses to serve five-year terms)

elections: last held December 2002-February 2003 (next to be held late 2007-February 2008)

election results: percent of vote - NA; seats - NA

Judicial branch:  



Supreme People's Court (judges appointed by the National People's Congress); Local Peoples Courts (comprise higher, intermediate, and local courts); Special Peoples Courts (primarily military, maritime, and railway transport courts)

Political parties and leaders:  

Chinese Communist Party or CCP [HU Jintao]; eight registered small parties controlled by CCP

Political pressure groups and leaders:  

no substantial political opposition groups exist, although the government has identified the Falungong spiritual movement and the China Democracy Party as subversive groups

International organization participation:  

AfDB, APEC, APT, ARF, AsDB, ASEAN (dialogue partner), BCIE, BIS, CDB, EAS, FAO, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC, ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRCs, IHO, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, IOM (observer), IPU, ISO, ITU, LAIA (observer), MIGA, MINURSO, MONUC, NAM (observer), NSG, OAS (observer), ONUB, OPCW, PCA, PIF (partner), SAARC (observer), SCO, UN, UN Security Council, UNAMSIL, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNIDO, UNITAR, UNMEE, UNMIL, UNMIS, UNMOVIC, UNOCI, UNTSO, UPU, WCO, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO, ZC

Diplomatic representation in the US:  

chief of mission: Ambassador ZHOU Wenzhong



chancery: 2300 Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008

telephone: [1] (202) 328-2500

FAX: [1] (202) 328-2582

consulate(s) general: Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco

consulate(s): Los Angeles

Diplomatic representation from the US:  

chief of mission: Ambassador Clark T. RANDT, Jr.

embassy: Xiu Shui Bei Jie 3, 100600 Beijing

mailing address: PSC 461, Box 50, FPO AP 96521-0002

telephone: [86] (10) 6532-3831

FAX: [86] (10) 6532-3178




consulate(s) general: Chengdu, Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Macau, Shanghai, Shenyang

Flag description:  




red with a large yellow five-pointed star and four smaller yellow five-pointed stars (arranged in a vertical arc toward the middle of the flag) in the upper hoist-side corner

Economy - overview:

China's economy during the last quarter century has changed from a centrally planned system that was largely closed to international trade to a more market-oriented economy that has a rapidly growing private sector and is a major player in the global economy. Reforms started in the late 1970s with the phasing out of collectivized agriculture, and expanded to include the gradual liberalization of prices, fiscal decentralization, increased autonomy for state enterprises, the foundation of a diversified banking system, the development of stock markets, the rapid growth of the non-state sector, and the opening to foreign trade and investment. China has generally implemented reforms in a gradualist or piecemeal fashion. The process continues with key moves in 2005 including the sale of equity in China's largest state banks to foreign investors and refinements in foreign exchange and bond markets. The restructuring of the economy and resulting efficiency gains have contributed to a more than tenfold increase in GDP since 1978. Measured on a purchasing power parity (PPP) basis, China in 2005 stood as the second-largest economy in the world after the US, although in per capita terms the country is still lower middle-income and 150 million Chinese fall below international poverty lines. Economic development has generally been more rapid in coastal provinces than in the interior, and there are large disparities in per capita income between regions. The government has struggled to: (a) sustain adequate job growth for tens of millions of workers laid off from state-owned enterprises, migrants, and new entrants to the work force; (b) reduce corruption and other economic crimes; and (c) contain environmental damage and social strife related to the economy's rapid transformation. From 100 to 150 million surplus rural workers are adrift between the villages and the cities, many subsisting through part-time, low-paying jobs. One demographic consequence of the "one child" policy is that China is now one of the most rapidly aging countries in the world. Another long-term threat to growth is the deterioration in the environment - notably air pollution, soil erosion, and the steady fall of the water table, especially in the north. China continues to lose arable land because of erosion and economic development. China has benefited from a huge expansion in computer Internet use, with more than 100 million users at the end of 2005. Foreign investment remains a strong element in China's remarkable expansion in world trade and has been an important factor in the growth of urban jobs. In July 2005, China revalued its currency by 2.1% against the US dollar and moved to an exchange rate system that references a basket of currencies. Reports of shortages of electric power in the summer of 2005 in southern China receded by September-October and did not have a substantial impact on China's economy. More power generating capacity is scheduled to come on line in 2006 as large scale investments are completed. Thirteen years in construction at a cost of \$24 billion, the immense Three Gorges Dam across the Yangtze River will be essentially completed in 2006 and will revolutionize electrification and flood control in the area. The Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in October 2005 approved the draft 11th Five-Year Plan and the National People's Congress is expected to give final approval in March 2006. The plan calls for a 20% reduction in energy consumption per unit of GDP by 2010 and an estimated 45% increase in GDP by 2010. The plan states that conserving resources and protecting the environment are basic goals, but it lacks details on the policies and reforms necessary to achieve these goals.

GDP (purchasing power parity):   
\$8.859 trillion (2005 est.)

GDP (official exchange rate):  
\$2.225 trillion (2005 est.)

GDP - real growth rate:   
9.9% (official data) (2005 est.)

GDP - per capita (PPP):   
\$6,800 (2005 est.)

GDP - composition by sector:



agriculture: 12.5%
industry: 47.3%
services: 40.3%
note: industry includes construction (2005 est.)

Labor force:



791.4 million (2005 est.)

Labor force - by occupation:



agriculture: 49%
industry: 22%
services: 29% (2003 est.)

Unemployment rate:



9% official registered unemployment in urban areas in 2004; substantial unemployment and underemployment in rural areas; an official Chinese journal estimated overall unemployment (including rural areas) for 2003 at 20% (2005 est.)

Population below poverty line:



10% (2001 est.)

Household income or consumption by percentage share:



lowest 10%: 2.4%
highest 10%: 30.4% (1998)

Distribution of family income - Gini index:



44 (2002)

Inflation rate (consumer prices):



1.8% (2005 est.)

Investment (gross fixed):



44.4% of GDP (2005 est.)

Budget:



revenues: \$392.1 billion
expenditures: \$424.3 billion; including capital expenditures of \$NA (2005 est.)

Public debt:



24.4% of GDP (2005 est.)

Agriculture - products:



rice, wheat, potatoes, corn, peanuts, tea, millet, barley, apples, cotton, oilseed; pork; fish

Industries:



mining and ore processing, iron, steel, aluminum, and other metals, coal; machine building; armaments; textiles and apparel; petroleum; cement; chemicals; fertilizers; consumer products, including footwear, toys, and electronics; food processing; transportation equipment, including automobiles, rail cars and locomotives, ships, and aircraft; telecommunications equipment, commercial space launch vehicles, satellites

Industrial production growth rate:








29.5% (2005 est.)


Electricity - production:







2.19 trillion kWh (2004)

Electricity - consumption:   
2.17 trillion kWh (2004)

Electricity - exports:  
10.6 billion kWh (2003)

Electricity - imports:  
1.546 billion kWh (2003)

Oil - production:   
3.504 million bbl/day (2004)

Oil - consumption:   
6.391 million bbl/day (2004)




Oil - exports:   
340,300 bbl/day (2004)




Oil - imports:   
3.226 million bbl/day (2004)




Oil - proved reserves:   
18.26 billion bbl (2004)




Natural gas - production:   
35.02 billion cu m (2003)

Natural gas - consumption:   
33.44 billion cu m (2003 est.)



Natural gas - exports:   
2.79 billion cu m (2004)



Natural gas - imports:   
0 cu m (2004)

Natural gas - proved reserves:   
2.53 trillion cu m (2004)



Current account balance:   
\$160.8 billion (2005 est.)



Exports:   
\$752.2 billion f.o.b. (2005 est.)




Exports - commodities:  
machinery and equipment, plastics, optical and medical equipment, iron and steel

Exports - partners:  
US 21.4%, Hong Kong 16.3%, Japan 11%, South Korea 4.6%, Germany 4.3% (2005)

Imports:   
\$631.8 billion f.o.b. (2005 est.)



Imports - commodities:  
machinery and equipment, oil and mineral fuels, plastics, optical and medical equipment, organic chemicals, iron and steel



Imports - partners:  
Japan 15.2%, South Korea 11.6%, Taiwan 11.2%, US 7.4%, Germany 4.6% (2005)



Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:   
\$825.6 billion (2005 est.)

Debt - external:   
\$252.8 billion (2005 est.)

Economic aid - recipient:  
\$NA

Currency (code):  
yuan (CNY); note - also referred to as the Renminbi (RMB)




Exchange rates:  
yuan per US dollar - 8.1943 (2005), 8.2768 (2004), 8.277 (2003), 8.277 (2002), 8.2771 (2001)



Fiscal year:  
calendar year

Communications China



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Telephones - main lines in use:   
311.756 million (2004)

Telephones - mobile cellular:   
334.824 million (2004)




Telephone system:  
general assessment: domestic and international services are increasingly available for private use; unevenly distributed domestic system serves principal cities, industrial centers, and many towns
domestic: interprovincial fiber-optic trunk lines and cellular telephone systems have been installed; a domestic satellite system with 55 earth stations is in place
international: country code - 86; satellite earth stations - 5 Intelsat (4 Pacific Ocean and 1 Indian Ocean), 1 Intersputnik (Indian Ocean region) and 1 Inmarsat (Pacific and Indian Ocean regions); several international fiber-optic links to Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Russia, and Germany (2000)

Radio broadcast stations:  
AM 369, FM 259, shortwave 45 (1998)

Television broadcast stations:  
3,240 (of which 209 are operated by China Central Television, 31 are provincial TV stations, and nearly 3,000 are local city stations) (1997)

Internet country code:  
.cn

Internet hosts:   
187,508 (2005)

Internet users:   
111 million (2005)

Transportation China

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Airports:   
489 (2005)

Airports - with paved runways:  

total: 389
over 3,047 m: 54
2,438 to 3,047 m: 120
1,524 to 2,437 m: 139
914 to 1,523 m: 23
under 914 m: 53 (2005)

Airports - with unpaved runways:  

total: 89
over 3,047 m: 4
2,438 to 3,047 m: 5
1,524 to 2,437 m: 15
914 to 1,523 m: 29
under 914 m: 36 (2005)

Heliports:  

30 (2005)

Pipelines:  

gas 15,890 km; oil 14,478 km; refined products 3,280 km (2004)

Railways:   

total: 74,408 km
standard gauge: 74,408 km 1.435-m gauge (19,303 km electrified) (2004)

Roadways:   

total: 1,809,829 km
paved: 1,447,682 km (with at least 29,745 km of expressways)
unpaved: 362,147 km (2003)

Waterways:   

123,964 km (2003)

Merchant marine:   

total: 1,700 ships (1000 GRT or over) 20,441,123 GRT/30,808,417 DWT
by type: barge carrier 2, bulk carrier 367, cargo 709, chemical tanker 37, combination ore/oil 1, container 146, liquefied gas 29, passenger 8, passenger/cargo 84, petroleum tanker 255, refrigerated cargo 32, roll on/roll off 9, specialized tanker 8, vehicle carrier 13
foreign-owned: 14 (Hong Kong 7, Japan 2, South Korea 3, UK 1, US 1)
registered in other countries: 1,018 (The Bahamas 5, Bangladesh 1, Belize 71, Cambodia 75, Cyprus 10, Honduras 3, Hong Kong 259, India 1, Liberia 35, Malaysia 1, Malta 15, Mongolia 1, Norway 3, Panama 370, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines 106, Singapore 20, Tuvalu 13, unknown 29) (2005)

Ports and terminals:  



Dalian, Guangzhou, Nanjing, Ningbo, Qingdao, Qinhuangdao, Shanghai



Military**China**


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Military branches:  




People's Liberation Army (PLA): Ground Forces, Navy (includes marines and naval aviation), Air Force (includes Airborne Forces), and II Artillery Corps (strategic missile force); People's Armed Police (PAP); Reserve and Militia Forces (2006)

Military service age and obligation:   18-22 years of age for compulsory military service, with 24-month service obligation; no minimum age for voluntary service (all officers are volunteers); 17 years of age for women who meet requirements for specific military jobs (2004)

Manpower available for military service:  
males age 18-49: 342,956,265
females age 18-49: 324,701,244 (2005 est.)

Manpower fit for military service:  
males age 18-49: 281,240,272
females age 18-49: 269,025,517 (2005 est.)

Manpower reaching military service age annually:  
males age 18-49: 13,186,433
females age 18-49: 12,298,149 (2005 est.)

Military expenditures - dollar figure:   
 \$81.48 billion (2005 est.)

Military expenditures - percent of GDP:   
 4.3% (2005 est.)

Transnational Issues

China

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Disputes - international:   in 2005, China and India began drafting principles to resolve all aspects of their extensive boundary and territorial disputes together with a security and foreign policy dialogue to consolidate discussions related to the boundary, regional nuclear proliferation, and other matters; recent talks and confidence-building measures have begun to defuse tensions over Kashmir, site of the world's largest and most militarized territorial dispute with portions under the de facto administration of China (Aksai Chin), India (Jammu and Kashmir), and Pakistan (Azad Kashmir and Northern Areas); India does not recognize Pakistan's ceding historic Kashmir lands to China in 1964; about 90,000 ethnic Tibetan exiles reside primarily in India as well as Nepal and Bhutan; China asserts sovereignty over the Spratly Islands together with Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, and possibly Brunei; the 2002 "Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea" has eased tensions in the Spratlys but is not the legally binding "code of conduct" sought by some parties; Vietnam and China continue to expand construction of facilities in the Spratlys and in March 2005, the national oil companies of China, the Philippines, and Vietnam signed a joint accord on marine seismic activities in the Spratly Islands; China occupies some of the Paracel Islands also claimed by Vietnam and Taiwan; China and Taiwan have become more vocal in rejecting both Japan's claims to the uninhabited islands of Senkaku-shoto (Diaoyu Tai) and Japan's unilaterally declared equidistance line in the East China Sea, the site of intensive hydrocarbon prospecting; certain islands in the Yalu and Tumen rivers are in an uncontested dispute with North Korea and a section of boundary around Mount Paektu is considered indefinite; China seeks to stem illegal migration of tens of thousands of North Koreans; China and Russia prepare to demarcate the boundary agreed to in October 2004 between the long-disputed islands at the Amur and Ussuri; demarcation of the China-Vietnam boundary proceeds slowly and although the maritime boundary delimitation and fisheries agreements were ratified in June 2004, implementation has been delayed; environmentalists in Burma and Thailand remain concerned about China's construction of hydroelectric dams upstream on the Nujiang/Salween River in Yunnan Province

Refugees and internally displaced persons:



refugees (country of origin): 299,287 (Vietnam) estimated 30,000-50,000 (North Korea) (2005)

Illicit drugs:



major transshipment point for heroin produced in the Golden Triangle; growing domestic drug abuse problem; source country for chemical precursors and methamphetamine

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