

China ready fact sheet



Status and face

Status and the concept of 'face' are crucial influencers in Chinese relationships, both personal and professional.

It is important not to let your Chinese guests or business partners 'lose face', by helping them to avoid an embarrassing situation or loss of prestige and to help them to 'gain face' (respect).

Some tips for maintaining good relationships and 'saving face' are:

When addressing Chinese travellers, address the person of highest rank first. This is likely to be the eldest person in the party and usually male. It is not likely to be the tour guide, who is a paid employee. If you are unsure, ask the group, to avoid embarrassment. While others may speak on behalf of the leader due to language barriers, it is important to acknowledge the leader through body language, such as directing conversation to them through eye contact, even if working through a translator.

When an important guest or group is arriving or leaving, get the most senior person in your organisation, perhaps with a delegation of your staff, to greet them or see them off.

Other cultural considerations

Superstition is a part of everyday life and decision making for Chinese people. One in three Chinese people believe in fortune telling.


Numbers

Numbers have meaning. Keep this in mind when pricing and doing room allocations.

- 8 is the best and luckiest number, signifying prosperity and wealth
- 4 is the worst number, signifying death. Don't book your guests on level 4, in a room with 4 in the number or at table 4
- 6 signifies things will go smoothly
- 9 is a good number that represents things lasting for a long time.

Colours

Colours have different meaning to what they might in the West.

-  Red is the best colour, signifying good luck, happiness and prosperity.
-  Yellow/gold signifies wealth.
-  Black signifies strength and power, but it also relates to death.
-  White is the worst colour, signifying death.

Feng shui

Feng shui is a system of harmonising environments for favourable flow of energy. Feng shui is important, with bad feng shui being bad for business. Avoid cluttered entrances and exposed mirrors, particularly opposite beds.

Chinese Zodiac

The Chinese Zodiac is based on a twelve year cycle with each year in the cycle related to an animal sign and an element (metal, wood, water, fire or earth). Each animal has symbolic meaning and different attributes. Both the zodiac and the element shape the astrology for the year. For example, it might be deemed a lucky year and a good time for adventure, or a year to avoid risks and outdoor activities.

Safety

Safety, security and friendliness are critical for Chinese visitors when they're choosing a destination and to make them feel comfortable during their stay.

Consider what safety information is required for your business and how best to deliver it to ensure it is understood. For example, being croc safe and keeping heads down when entering/exiting helicopters.

Translated information sheets, in both simplified Chinese and English, and using international symbols can help here.

Shopping

Shopping is one of the most popular activities for Chinese visitors to Australia.

Chinese visitors will particularly shop for gifts, which are customary to share back at home.

Local Australian products are often revered. If you have a gift shop, you could create an easy-to-find area for local products to showcase your offering.

Chinese visitors will often buy authentic Australian-made products (not products made in China) and products that represent their experience. Artwork and other souvenirs that can demonstrate their knowledge from their travels are popular, such as crocodile and camel products.

In addition to gifts, Chinese visitors may seek luxury goods for themselves, including international brands, to avoid the 30% luxury tax paid on such goods in China.

Need more help?

Complete the China-ready checklist