

CHINA OVERVIEW



BASIC STATISTICS

- **Total population:** 1,338,612,968 (2009 est.) (Ranked 1st in the world by the US Census Bureau).
- **National GDP:** US \$4.402 trillion.
- **GDP per capita:** US \$6,000.
- **Median Age:** 34.1 years.
- **Infant Mortality:** 20.25 per 1000 live births.
- **GEOGRAPHY**
- **Location:** Covers most of mainland East Asia.
- **Borders:** Mongolia, Russia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, North Korea.
- **Area:** 3,705,400 square miles.
- **Capital:** Beijing.
- **Major cities and population:** Shanghai 12,887,000, Beijing 10,839,000, Tianjin 9,156,000, Chongqing 5,312,000, Shenyang 4,828,000, and Guangzhou

- 3,893,000.
- **23 provinces** (sheng, singular and plural): Anhui, Fujian, Gansu, Guangdong, Guizhou, Hainan, Hebei, Heilongjiang, Henan, Hong Kong, Hubei, Hunan, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Jilin, Liaoning, Qinghai, Shaanxi, Shandong, Shanxi, Sichuan, Yunnan, Zhejiang.
 - **5 autonomous regions** (zizhiqu, singular and plural): Guangxi, Nei Mongol, Ningxia, Xinjiang, Xizang (Tibet).
 - **4 municipalities** (shi, singular and plural): Beijing, Chongqing, Shanghai, Tianjin.

DEMOGRAPHY

- **Population density:** 135 per square kilometer.
- **Children 0-14:** 19.8% (male 140,877,745/female 124,290,090)
- **15-64 years:** 72.1% (male 495,724,889/female 469,182,087)
- **Seniors Over 65:** 8.1% (male 51,774,115/female 56,764,042) (2009 est.)
- **Male to female ratio:** 106 males per 100 females.
- **Birth rate:** 14 per 1,000 people.
- **Life expectancy at birth:** 71.61 for males and 75.52 for females.
- **Infant mortality rate:** 20.25 per 1,000 live births.
- **Official language:** Mandarin.
- **Other principal languages:** Yue, Wu, Hakka, Xiang, Gan, Minbei, Minnan.
- **Principal Ethnic groups:** Han Chinese 91.5%, Zhuang, Uygur, Hui, Yi, Tibetan, Miao, Manchu, Mongol, Buyi, Korean.
- **Religious affiliations:** 32.63% Nonreligious

- (423,171,608), 32.18% Chinese folk-religion (417,282,934), 13.55% Buddhist (175,740,415), 7.6% Atheist (98,528,711), 7.76 % Christian (100,561,557), 4.3% Ethnoreligionist (55,583,113), and 1.57% Muslim (20,304,332). Less than 1% Taoist, New-religionist, Hindu, Baha'i, Spiritist, Jew, Sikh, Zoroastrian, Confucianist, and other.
- **Education:** Compulsory from 7-17 years of age.
 - **Literacy rate:** 90.9%.

ECONOMY

- **Currency:** Renminbi (Yuan).
- **GDP per capita:** US \$6,000.
- **National GDP:** US \$7.973 trillion (2008 est.)
- **Major Industries:** Iron and steel, textiles and apparel, machine building, armaments, cement.
- **Chief crops:** Grain, rice, cotton, potatoes, tea.
- **Electricity production:** (1998) 1.16 trillion kWh.
- **TV Sets:** 247 per 1,000 people.
- **Radios:** 178 per 1,000 people.
- **Telephones:** 108,807,000 main lines.
- **Daily newspaper circulation:** 23 per 1,000 people.

POLITICS

- **Government type:** Communist Party-led state.
- **Head of state:** President Hu Jintao.
- **Head of government:** Premier Wen Jianao.
- **International organization memberships:** United Nations (UN) and Asia-Pacific Economic Corporation Group (APEC).
- **Historical Background:** Archeology has found

evidence of existing Neolithic culture, dating back 5000 years. More sophisticated culture developed under the Shang Dynasty from 1500 BC—1000 BC. For the next 3,000 years China was ruled by a succession of Dynasties and Kingdoms. As the 20th century began, China was weakened by famine, civil unrest, military defeats, and foreign occupation. After World War II, China became a communist nation and aligned itself with the Soviet Union.

TRENDS AND SOCIAL ISSUES

Understandings of the trends and social issues of a particular country should always take into consideration the opinions of persons within the country. The Center for Youth Studies is looking for contributors from each country to add to our appreciation and understanding of China's culture, potential, trends and critical issues. China is often covered in the world news. Frequently, its political maneuverings make international headlines, as well as its economic practices and world leadership. China is the largest country in the world and thus enjoys massive global influence. The world press has identified China with numerous human rights violations, especially towards women and religion. Due to the size of China, however, one can assume that the Chinese approach to such issues is not as uniform and simple as it may seem. We hope to provide a variety of perspectives on such issues, as we further develop our relationships with our Chinese contacts.

SOURCES

TEXT

Barrett, D. Kurian, G., & Johnson, T. (2001). World Christian Encyclopedia 2nd Edition: A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World. Oxford: University Press.

Turner, B. (2000). The World Today: Essential Facts

in an Ever Changing World 2000. New York, NY: St. Marten's Press.

McGeveran, Jr., W. (Ed.). (2001). The World Almanac and Book of Facts. Mahwah, NJ: World Almanac Books.

WEB

"China," Microsoft® Encarta® Online Encyclopedia 2001 © 1997-2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

US Census Bureau, International Database.

United Nation Statistics Division.

US Central Intelligence Agency. World Factbook.

World Christian Database.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. How important do you see China's role in Asia and in the world?
2. What most impresses you about the above information?
3. Do you take issue with any of the above? If so, how would you express it differently?
4. What strikes you most about the population of China and the birthrate? Why?
5. What do you see as the historical and cultural contributions of China to the world?
6. How has China handled its part in the hunger crises?
7. What can we learn from China and the Chinese people?

Tammy Smith cCYS, Chris Lloyd cCYS