



Welcome, we have created this document as a brief guide on the general etiquette and some of the situations you may come across whilst on your exclusive VC tour in China. Please take a moment to read through it and do not hesitate to contact us on info@dragongateway.com should you have any questions or queries and one of our friendly team members will be happy to assist. Please note we have provided this as guidance and therefore it is highly advisable that you seek out further open sourced information as well as keeping abreast of regional news before travelling.

Do greet others by using a handshake or a nod.

Do address seniority by an honorific title (family relationship or, e.g. 'teacher': laoshi) or by the family name plus Mr. (xiansheng), Ms. (nvshi).

Do address the eldest or most senior person first. This is done as a sign of respect to those in a more senior position.

Do join in on toasts. It's considered polite to join in on each toast and even to stand up during formal gatherings.

Do sample all dishes at banquets or formal occasions. It's considered polite, and at the end of the meal, be sure to leave a little on the plate to honour your host's generosity.

Do tap the table when someone refills your tea. The gesture of using two fingers to tap the dining table is used to show thanks toward whoever refilled your tea.

Do present and receive things with both hands. This is considered polite in Chinese culture.

Do refuse a gift several times before accepting it. Politely refusing a gift before taking it is the norm in Chinese culture, so don't be discouraged when someone initially refuses your gift.

Do gift small items like books, music CDs, perfumes, cigarettes and candies from your home country (or a well-known Chinese brand). These are always appreciated and are always well received.

Do take off your hat when entering temples. This is done as a sign of respect.

If you try to speak a few Chinese words during your encounters, it will be recognized and appreciated.

At a banquet, it is polite to sample all dishes offered to you and to leave a little food on your plate at the end of the meal to thank the host for their generosity.



What not to do in China

Don't offer too firm of a handshake. A firm handshake could be construed as a sign of aggression.

Don't go straight for a hug — especially when meeting someone for the first time. Anybody contact, apart from a simple handshake, may make your new Chinese friends **feel uncomfortable**.

Don't put bones, seeds or other inedibles into in your rice bowl. Use a tissue or your hand to place them in the small plate provided — or observe how others deal with them.

Don't tap your chopsticks. Tapping your bowl or the table with your chopsticks is considered rude and impolite.

Don't be too eager to unwrap your gift unless the person offering the gift insists. It's considered polite in Chinese culture to open presents after you or your guests leave.

Don't wrap gifts using black or white wrapping paper. Choose festive colours, such as red, instead.

Don't gift clocks or other symbolic items. Clocks and things related to the number four are associated with death in China, and sharp objects symbolize the severing of relationships.

Don't use your chopsticks to pick food from the central dishes. This is typically considered unhygienic. Use the serving spoons or serving chopsticks provided.

Don't photograph older people without permission. It's often assumed that a request to photograph them is an offer to pay – the same in some places on the Silk Road.

Don't dip your fingers in the yak butter lamps in temples. You may be tempted to taste the butter, but this is highly offensive, not to mention unhygienic and a health risk.

Don't ask sensitive questions. Sensitive topics such as relations between the various ethnic groups and the governments should be avoided.

Don't assume that alcohol and cigarettes are permitted. This is usually not the case. It's best to ask first if you're unsure.

Do not tap your bowl with your chopsticks. People will tap their bowls in a restaurant if the food is taking too long. If you do this in someone's home, you are insulting the cook.



General Etiquette in China

Do not overreact when a local asks personal questions.

Avoid discussing politics and religion, speaking about the government or openly commenting about the Media.

Raising your voice or showing anger or frustration may result in you being completely ignored.

When pouring and drinking tea, avoid setting the teapot down with the spout facing someone, as it is believed to give that person bad luck.

Keep calm when dealing with government officials and avoid making situations unnecessarily tense.

Never write in red ink. Red ink is a symbol of protest or criticism, and best saved for teachers correcting students' homework.

Punctuality is considered a virtue in China.

Avoid public displays of affection. Even though public displays of affection in China are not as taboo as they used to be, it's still wise to avoid them.

Business Etiquette in China

Entrance: Enter the room in order of seniority. You should actively demonstrate great respect to the leader of the Chinese delegation. The person with the highest rank of your team should introduce the rest of the group.

Business Cards: Make sure you have both a Mandarin and an English side on your business card. When the time comes, present your card with two hands, with the Chinese side up and facing the other person.

Receive a card with two hands, study it briefly and place it into a business card holder — never your wallet or pocket. In China, business cards are treated as extensions of the person, so you'll want to handle any business card you receive with great respect.

Don't Point: It's considered rude in China to point with your finger. Instead, point with an open hand or, if possible, make eye contact and get someone's attention without using your hands at all.

Dress to Impress: Appearances and first impressions are important in Chinese business culture. Dressing conservatively and wearing high-quality clothing will help to indicate both status and modesty.

Be Prepared for Long Meetings: The Chinese often prefer frequent and lengthy meetings to build trust before signing contracts. When it comes down to it, most business in China isn't even done in the boardroom. Expect to be invited to long dinners featuring courses you may not be familiar with.

Face: Losing or gaining "face" is an important Chinese concept. It can be loosely understood as your honour, your community's honour and the honour of those you are with. Avoid self-deprecation or sarcasm.

Accepting Business gifts: When you receive a gift, as when you receive a business card, accept it with two hands. Don't open the gift immediately unless the person who gives it to you requests that you open it right away.



Nights out or events in China

Don't make a public scene with an outburst: When on a night out never make a public scene, the Chinese are extremely sensitive to the public outburst, for example, any argument with a vendor or service provider.

Never take the first "no" literally: Chinese people refuse food/drink/gift several times—before they accept it.

Don't address people by their first names: On a night out if you meet someone you don't know then refer to them by their last name, Sam Arora in Canada is Arora Sam in China.

Don't let someone else pay the bill: without fighting for it.

Don't show up empty-handed to a party or an event: and gift exchange is widespread among the Chinese even when visiting a friend for dinner or business prospective business partner.

Don't drink alcohol without first offering a toast.

Laws for foreigners and tourists in China

Renminbi (RMB): The limit of Renminbi for inbound and outbound passengers is 6,000 yuan. Inbound and outbound passengers with more than 6,000 yuan will not be allowed to enter or leave the territory.

The official currency of China is the yuan, otherwise known as RMB; it is illegal to deal or trade in foreign currency.

It is not illegal to take photos in China; however, particular government building and religious sites will prohibit tourists from taking pictures.

It is illegal to buy and move various weapons, imitation weapons, ammunition, and fireworks; counterfeit money and forged securities.

Printed matter, negatives, records, films, audio and video recordings, laser optical video-discs, computer storage media and other articles containing materials must be declared when moving it around China as it may be deemed harmful to China politically, economically, culturally, or ethically.

The following objects may not be brought into China:

- 1) Animal and plant pathogens (including bacterial and venomous vaccines), pests and other injurious organisms;
- 2) animals and plants, their products, and other quarantinable objects from countries and regions infested by infectious diseases;
- 3) animal carcasses;
- 4) soil.

It is illegal to bring animals and plants into china.

A permit or licence needs to be obtained before someone can spread or preach any form of religion in mainland China.

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide - the Dragon Gateway team are sure you will have a great trip to China, and we would like to wish you the very best of luck for your pitches.