China: Web Sources

General Facts:  
http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0107411.html

Stories of possible interest:

Leaders Propose Strict Limits on Media
Perhaps in reaction to popular uprisings going on around the world, leaders in China proposed new limits on Internet use and media in October 2011. The proposal included some of the strictest measures in years. For example, the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television limited 34 major television stations to two 90-minute entertainment shows per week. The same TV stations were also limited to two hours of news every evening. The two hours of news must be approved by the state. Audience ratings were ordered to be ignored.

Leaders said the new limits would go into effect January 1, 2012. The media crackdown coincides with an upcoming switch in leadership within the government and ruling party, a shift that will take place over the next year.


Protests over Newspaper Censorship Grows
Protest began in early January 2013 over censorship of Southern Weekend, a newspaper. Journalists at the paper said local propaganda officials were interfering with their reporting and called for the ouster of Tuo Zhen, a propaganda official in the Guangdong Province. The journalists at Southern Weekend said he was responsible for a change in a recent editorial that called for more respect for constitutional rights. By the time the piece was published it praised the current political system.

On January 7, 2013, hundreds of people gathered outside of the Southern Weekend headquarters to protest against the censorship. Meanwhile celebrities responded with a show of support via the internet. Actress Yao Chen quoted Russian dissident Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn online: One word of truth outweighs the whole world. Hung Huang, an entrepreneur, stated online that Tuo “destroyed, overnight, all the credibility the country's top leadership had labored to re-establish since the 18th Party Congress.”

Facts & Figures:

President: Xi Jinping (2013)  (President Xi “shee”) and his 30 year friendship with Muscatine resident Sarah Lande is THE reason MCC and MHS are included in this program!


Land area: 3,600,927 sq mi (9,326,411 sq km); total area: 3,705,407 sq mi (9,596,960 sq km)¹

Population (2011 est.): 1,336,718,015 (growth rate: 0.493%); birth rate: 12.29/1000; infant mortality rate: 16.06/1000; life expectancy: 74.68

Capital (2009 est.): Beijing, 12.214 million

Largest cities: Shanghai, 16.575 million; Chungking (Chongqing) 9.401 million; Shenzhen 9.005 million; Guangzhou 8.884 million (2009)

Monetary unit: Yuan/Renminbi
Introduction to China

Identifying the "best of China" becomes a more and more difficult task. As this once isolated giant awakens, forces are being unleashed that impact tourism. Devastating pollution, widespread corruption, and the sheer volume of tourists have transformed many of China's best-known sights into filthy, overpriced circuses. To find the very best that China has to offer, it is sadly becoming more important to know what to avoid, rather than what to see.

Perhaps the best advice that we can give is to focus on nature. After suffering through the devastating Cultural Revolution, what little remains of the country's much-vaunted 5,000 years of culture is being lost in the rush to get rich -- even small cities have become heavily polluted sweatshops. Fortunately, China still has some of the most spectacular natural scenery on the planet. Many places within the People's Republic have only recently been opened to visitors, so we have only had a few decades to unlock some of this enormous realm's secrets. While we certainly do not claim to have uncovered everything, we have been truly inspired by this huge treasure house, and have included here what we have discovered so far.

Sightseeing

Wake up gracefully to tai chi on The Bund in Shanghai, facing the crystalline skyscrapers of Pudong. Beijing's Tiananmen Square, with its huge portrait of Mao Zedong, is the world's largest public square -- it's dwarfed, however, by the 9,999 rooms of the nearby Forbidden City, the gateway to Ming and Qing dynasty mysteries. The Terracotta Army stands to attention in Xi'an, the start of the fabled Silk Road. Slow down in Chengdu's incense-perfumed temples and tea gardens.

Shopping

From crowded markets to ultra-modern malls, shopping is a national pastime. In Beijing, browse for pearls and silk in Hongqiao Market or antiques and name chops in Liliuchang Xi Jie's Qing-style courtyard houses. Hagglng is de rigueur for the tailor-made suits at Shanghai's South Bund Fabric Market. Hong Kong's neon-lit Temple Street night market is best for high-tech gadgets and designer fakes. Green tea from Chengdu, floor-length yak coats from Yunnan and jade from Xinjiang all make unique souvenirs.

Eating and Drinking

With chopstick skills and a Mandarin phrasebook, you're ready for China's mixing pot of cuisines. Go local eating hairy crab and "jeweled" duck in Shanghai's Old City and splurge on haute cuisine on The Bund. Beijing dishes up Peking duck dripping in plum sauce and spicy hotpots on magical, lantern-lit Ghost Street. Snack, Cantonese-style, on seafood and dim sum at Hong Kong's Causeway Bay. Food stalls in Sichuan make eyes water with chili-laced pork dishes and peppery bean curd.

Nature

China is a country of poetic landscapes, reaching from the seemingly infinite Great Wall, snaking over mist-enshrouded mountains, to Guilin's limestone pinnacles rising above emerald rice paddies. Giant pandas peep through bamboo at UNESCO-listed Wolong.
Nature Preserve near Chengdu. China’s longest river, the Yangtze, carves its way through enigmatic mountainscapes to the Three Gorges Dam, one of the world's largest hydroelectric dams, and Yunnan's staggeringly sheer Tiger Leaping Gorge.

http://www.frommers.com/destinations/china/3330010001.html#ixzz2QY5nzb3d

Introduction to Shanghai

Dynamic by nature and necessity, Shanghai is proof that the world's most populous city can be livable and loveable. Merchants and tycoons once sought their fortune here and it still has a whiff of opportunism and decadence. Pudong's cloud-piercing skyscrapers and the flashy malls of Nanjing Lu show where China is swiftly headed in the 21st century. But while Shanghai's sights are certainly fixed on the future, you'll still find the glamour of the past along the Art Deco Bund and French Concession's colonial boulevards.

Things to Do

Locals greet the day with tai chi as the first rays illuminate the The Bund's Art Deco facades and Pudong's gleaming skyscrapers across the Huangpu River. Rise to the 88th floor of the Jin Mao Tower for morning views of the skyline. Shanghai's green heart is People's Square, where the cavernous Shanghai Museum showcases exquisite Chinese bronzes, ceramics and silk scroll paintings. Seek respite from the hubbub strolling French Concession's elegant avenues and sitting beside koi-filled ponds in serene Yu Yuan Garden.

Shopping

Shopping in Shanghai wouldn't be the same without neon-lit Nanjing Lu's three-mile strip of street entertainers, glitzy malls, and traditional stores selling silk, jade and porcelain. The ambience is more leisurely in the French Concession, where leafy streets shade luxury boutiques, antiques shops and Paris-worthy cafes. Join Shanghai's early risers for the freshest fish and vegetables at the Old City’s wet markets. For custom-made suits at a bargain price, South Bund Fabric Market has the cutting edge.

Nightlife and Entertainment

Shanghai is a festive, party-loving city, which really comes alive when Pudong's futuristic skyline lights up -- best admired from a sleek lounge or jazz bar on the Bund. Big-name DJs and live music keep dance floors crowded in nightlife hub Xintiandi, which gravitates between Zen-style chic and kitschy bars pumping out Canto-pop. Mingle with stylishly dressed locals and expats over decadent cocktails in the French Concession's 1920s villas, before enjoying Chinese Opera at the nearby Kun Opera House.

Restaurants and Dining

For an authentic Shanghainese experience, tackle hairy crabs by their pincers and suck out the roe in the Old City's family-run restaurants. Flaming woks and market banter lure
locals to **Yunnan Lu** night market, dishing up noodles, duck and -- for adventurous palates -- deep-fried scorpion. Choose between pan-Asian cuisine and fresh seafood in the **French Concession**'s elegant bistros. Socialites splurge on a table at **M on the Bund** for Art Deco splendor and views of Pudong's illuminated skyscrapers.

**Hangzhou**

**Brief Introduction**

About Hangzhou:  [http://eng.hangzhou.gov.cn/](http://eng.hangzhou.gov.cn/)

**Hangzhou is the capital of Zhejiang Province** and one of the seven ancient capitals of China. It was described by Italian traveler Marco Polo as the finest and most luxurious city in the world. The West Lake scenic area contains over 60 cultural relic sites and several attractions of natural beauty, and a cruise on the lake is a good option to view several sites. Hangzhou is also a good place to visit a tea plantation.

[http://www.tripadvisor.com/Travel-g298559-s410/Hangzhou:China:Museums_And_Attractions.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/Travel-g298559-s410/Hangzhou:China:Museums_And_Attractions.html)

[http://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g298559-Activities-Hangzhou_Zhejiang.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g298559-Activities-Hangzhou_Zhejiang.html)


Hangzhou is at the southern end of the grand canal and and one of China's seven ancient national capitals. When Marco Polo came to Hangzhou in the 13th century he declared that "it is the most beautiful and elegant city in the world". There is a popular saying: "Above there is heaven, Below there are Hangzhou and Suzhou". Hangzhou's "heavenly" beauty attracts hundreds of thousands of tourists to its exquisite [the West Lake](http://www.tripadvisor.com/Travel-g298559-s410/Hangzhou:China:Museums_And_Attractions.html) area each year to enjoy the placid lake, beautiful gardens, reflecting pools, lavish temples and friendly lakeside teahouses.

First built over 2,200 years ago, Hangzhou is one of the cradles of China's civilization. Hangzhou used to the capital of Wu and Yue states in the 10th century during the five dynasties period. the city began to prosper and flourish in the Tang Dynasty. The city had its political heyday in the southern Song Dynasty when it served as the capital. Hangzhou witnessed rapid commercial boom in the Ming and Qing dynasty.

In and around Hangzhou, tourists find the well-known west lake which is surrounded by forested mountains and many more historical sites. Hangzhou is also well-known for silk and tea. A trip to Hangzhou is easily combined with a visit to a tea plantation in the hills near the West Lake.

**Transportation**

Being a major tourist city in china, Hangzhou has a good transportation and it can be easily accessible via flights, train travel and highway. Public transportation within the city is also very convenient, with plentiful taxis and hundreds of public bus routes reaching each corner of the city proper.
By Bus

The city has four long distance bus stations, east, west, south and north bus stations. Buses to the neighboring areas including Nanjing and Shanghai are plentiful.

Local Transportation

Extensive bus routes reach almost each corner of the city proper. Each bus route has designated stops which is well marked for being easily found. Fares are very cheap: 1 yuan if the bus is not air-conditioned and 2 yuan if it is. prices for special bus lines and buses running to the neighboring rural areas vary according to the bus condition and distance.

Taxi

Taxis are also widely available and allow for convenient and quick trips around the city. Look for cabs in a green color, marked with 'Taxi'. Meters in the cabs are required by law, and few, if any, of the drivers speak English. Best to be able to point out your destination on a map or have the addresses written in Chinese in order to avoid confusion. A subway system is also being planned for the city, with the first line scheduled for completion in 2012.

Boat

Of course a city with a waterfront like Hangzhou comes equipped with waterbuses and ferries. Take a ferry down the Grand Canal while passing along the Canal Culture Square and check out the new Xiaohe Street, which is sure to make you feel like you have stepped back into historical China.

Bike Round

Even with 1.7 million residents, as well as numerous tourists, the city is well known to be bike friendly. The city's massive public bike system allows for tourists to see the city on the cheap. It is a convenient and fun way to take in the sights around West Lake. If the bikes seem more like your thing, then purchase a stored value card at various places around the city, such as 20 Longxiang Qiao. Each bike station will supply you with a free tourist map of the city that points out all the bike stations in the area, as well as the important tourist sights. Make sure to bring along a photo ID, such as a passport, which is needed to rent a bike, and check to make sure the tires and seat are in good form. Bikes are free for the first hour and accumulate small fees in the following hours rented.

Top Attractions

Hailed for centuries" the paradise on earth", Hangzhou offers visitors some sights either of the superlative natural beauty or rich cultural, historical significance or a combination of both. in and around Hangzhou, travelers can find the west lake, symbol of the city for years, some historical heritages sites such as the lingyin temple, the largest and most resplendent Buddhism temple in that region, tomb of general Yuefei and other important architecture landmarks as the six harmonies pagoda and the leifeng pagoda. Many other sights in the city are also well worth a trip.

Shopping

Whether you've come to Hangzhou for the scenic views, hiking, or just to relax, there is no way you'll want to leave the city without visiting some of the beautiful markets the town has to offer. The Hangzhou
China Silk Town, located on Tiyuchang Road, is made up of several hundred meters of booths and vendors selling silk and everything. From ties to pajamas, handcrafts to robes, there is something for everyone in The Silk Town. But for something truly unique, the Night Market, right near Wushan, is a market that springs to life every evening. Within its rows of artisans and vendor booths, you can find Mao memorabilia, jewelry, fans, pipes, and handicrafts. If bargaining is your thing, then this is the place to be. Hangzhou also offers more tradition malls and clothing stores. A brand new high-end mall, called the MIXC, located in the new Central Business District, boasts designer brands, imported foods, IMAX theaters and even an indoor ice skating rink!

And for a more traditional shopping experience, why not check out the Qinghefang Old Street. It showcases a variety of Chinese crafts, candy, hand-made figurines, century old shops, as well as a wide variety of local snacks and delicacies. The street is packed with teahouses, bonsai shops, caricaturists and artists, and makes for a lively and vibrant walk into the past.

**Currency Exchange:** [http://www.xe.com/currency/?currency=](http://www.xe.com/currency/?currency=)

(In mid-April the rate was approximately $1 per .6 yuan/renminbi) Check the above site for current rates. Do NOT exchange money in the airport—way too big of a service charge. Your host will give you a good place. If you have a debit card, just use that; many credit cards are accepted (esp. Visa and Mastercard), but check with your particular company to see if yours charges a foreign exchange fee. (Good Visa banks do not.)

**Learning some Mandarin**—practice key phrases over and over—intoning exactly like the speaker does!

[http://www.travlang.com/languages/cgi-bin/langchoice.cgi](http://www.travlang.com/languages/cgi-bin/langchoice.cgi)