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Tourist industry professionals are all in agreement: the potential of the Chinese market, which represents a total of 1.3 billion inhabitants, is enormous.

Forecasts show that 800,000 overnight stays would be made by tourists from the Celestial Empire in 10 years.

This figure is impressive but not unrealistic: growth is developing at a breathtaking speed. For over 20 years, the Chinese economy has been growing by 8% annually and there is no indication that this situation is likely to change in the years ahead. Increasing numbers of Chinese people have sufficient income to be able to afford a trip to Europe and Switzerland. But our Far Eastern guests have high hopes and expectations of Switzerland, their holiday destination; we must therefore adopt the correct form of tact and diplomacy, and show ourselves to be most welcoming in our hospitality. In terms of succeeding in our business affairs with Chinese tourists, cultural sensitivity with regard to their needs and


expectations plays a key role. Aside from having brochures, menus and leaflets translated into Chinese, we must also take into consideration the customs in the Far East, in organising the holiday or leisure activities, as well as in accommodating preferences in meals and in room decoration. It should be underlined that China in many ways is very different from the Americas or even Europe and that the Chinese way of thinking must be taken into account when doing business with the People's Republic of China.

The aim of publishing this brochure, which has been produced in cooperation with Switzerland Tourism and the China expert Gérald Bérout, is to give you the best possible preparation for receiving your new guests. The brochure not only contains basic information on the Chinese culture and way of thinking, but also practical ideas and suggestions with regard to accommodating your new customers.

Dr Christian Rey
President hotelleriesuisse

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General information on the People's Republic of China

Short history

The People's Republic of China (PRC) was founded on 1 October 1949. Its first president was MAO Zedong, who ruled the country according to socialist principles (planned economy, collectivisation of agriculture and political campaigns). Following MAO's death in 1976, DENG Xiaoping came into power. He introduced extensive economic reforms in 1978, which enabled China to advance to one of the most important economies in the world, and brought about unprecedented dynamism throughout the country.

On 1 July, 1997, Hong Kong was handed back to China and on 20 December 1999, Macao became part of the People's Republic. Both special administrative regions still have their own currencies, and their economic independence has been contractually established up until the middle of this century.

Politics and society

Despite the tremendous economic dynamism coupled with fast social development, China enjoys high political stability. In 2003 this was demonstrated

in an impressive manner by the smooth change in leadership of the ruling party and government to a younger team of decision makers, most of them born in the PRC.

A prosperous middle class has developed over the past years, primarily along China's east coast, which is not only fast growing but also exhibits high spending activity. It is this – often highly educated – social group that will take the opportunity to travel abroad in the coming years.



KEY DATA

Population and area: The People's Republic of China is the world's most highly populated country with 1.3 billion inhabitants. It stretches across 9,600,000 km² and is third largest in area behind Russia and Canada (Switzerland: 41,290 km²).



Ethnology and languages: 92% of the Chinese population belong to the Han nationality. 55 national minorities, mainly living in the north, west and southwest of the country make up the remaining 8%. China's official language is Mandarin; in addition, there are many Chinese dialects and about 53 languages spoken by national minorities.

Administrative units and cities: China is divided into 32 administrative units (provinces and autonomous regions and town districts). The largest cities are Beijing (capital) with approx. 11 million inhabitants, Chongqing with 15 million, Shanghai with 13 million and Tianjin with 9 million. There are some 40 other cities, each with a population in excess of 1 million.

Political leaders: HU Jintao (president), WEN Jiabao (prime minister)

Economy

Through its continuing pursuit of much-needed structural reforms, particularly in relation to its WTO entry in 2001, China has changed the face of its economic environment over the past decade. Furthermore, with its remarkable strong economic growth averaging an annual GDP (gross domestic product) growth of

8% during the past 20 years, the country has positioned itself at the centre of international economic interests.

The 10th five-year plan (for the period 2001–2005) lends particular focus to the development of the country's western and central regions, and to environmental protection, private sector promotion and economic restructuring.

Key economic indicators

	2000	2001	2002	2003 (e)	2004 (f)
GDP (in billion USD)	1,081	1,176	1,266	1,372	1,551
GDP per inhabitant (in USD)	853	921	986	1,062	1,118
Growth rate (in % of GDP)	8.0	7.5	8.0	7.5	7.5
Inflation rate (in %)	0.4	0.7	– 0.8	0.8	1.5

Sources: seco – State Secretariat for Economic Affairs 2004, Fischer World Almanac 2004 (e) = estimate (f) = forecast

Characteristics of Chinese culture

A deep historical foundation

One of the most pronounced traits of Chinese culture, which can in some instances be traced back to around 2000 BC, is its deep foundation in history. Despite various ruptures and discontinuities, which explain why present-day China is far removed from its origins, the Chinese see themselves as guardians of a heritage and guarantors of filiation. Whether appearing in the form of legendary figures, epic tales or recognised fact, history serves as a reference for many practices, traditions and customs.



From empire to communist rule

The formation of the empire in 221 BC brings an extra dimension: China perceives itself as a whole, its culture serving to bind together this unity. The all-powerful emperor exercises his power by way of a centralised and hierarchical administration, which extends his control over the entire territory. The imperial period, which continues until 1911, is a succession of dynasties, some of which are particularly flourishing. Following the opium wars of the mid-19th century, China, for the first time in its history, is forced to open up to the western world. Hence begins a period of deep instability and decay which resulted in the communist revolution and the advent of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Other tragic vicissitudes hit the country. It is only at the end of the 1970s, after the death of MAO Zedong, that China regained some level of stability and opted in favour of the path to "openness and reforms", thus entering a period of strong economic growth which has sustained up until the present day.

Complexity of the modern Chinese society

The awareness of a common destiny of a nation regaining its place, as much on an economic level as on the international scene, is today forged in a will to overcome traumatism, some of which are still painful. Present-day China is a society of great complexity. It is characterised by deep upheavals on economic, political and social levels, which have meant that modern – often imported and then adapted – forms of Chinese society coexist or even conflict with its more traditional foundations.



Philosophy and religion

In China, like in other East Asian countries, society is the key: rights belong to society and obligations belong to the individual. The family prevails over the individual, the clan over the family, and society over clans. Everyone is part of a relationship of dependence with others.

Society is perceived as a structured and hierarchical whole, which is modelled on nature, where heaven dominates the earth. Another remarkable characteristic of Chinese culture is its ability to absorb thoughts and practices that are introduced from the outside world. Note that the majority of invaders thus became sinicised upon contact with the Celestial Empire.



CONFUCIANISM

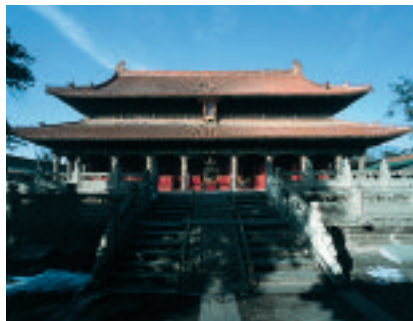
Confucius formulated his notions some 500 years BC. Subsequently firmed up to the point of becoming State ideology, Confucianism constitutes more of a philosophy than a religion. Man must conform to tradition and to social order. He seeks to be a "man of good faith", practising rituals and exercising the virtue of humanity. Filial piety, which extends to all relationships, is demonstrated in the affection of a son for his father, of a disciple for his master, a minister for his king. As an extension of this, women obey men, and the young obey their elders. Any idea of equality is rejected, and reciprocity of responsibilities has primacy. The emperor must be seen to lead by example, as politics and morality are inseparable. The good conduct of each individual is vital for society to function harmoniously: respect the rules according to the status of each individual.

TAOISM

Taoism, founded by Laozi, means following the "dao", or "the way", which is the principle of the universe. Contrary to morality and ritual, it is by complete detachment, where calm and indifference preside, that a full and complete life is accomplished. Taoism strives towards avoiding contradictions, and finding compromise in the resolution of conflicts. In order to repress desire and to keep to the path, an ascetic life is recommended: bodily cleanliness, gymnastic exercise (including the "taijiquan"), meditation, seeking the elixir of long life.

BUDDHISM

As regards Buddhism, which arrived from India at the beginning of the Christian era, it has introduced the notion of retribution of actions and the ideas of reincarnation, as well as the virtues of benevolence and of compassion. Its influence has been particularly noticeable in the sphere of arts. Conversely, Buddhism was greatly modified upon contact with the Chinese culture and in particular with Confucianism.



Forms of thought

Here and now

Chinese thought is fundamentally pragmatic: that which works is true. Orientated towards the concerns of a nation rooted in agrarian society, it seeks to harness the workings of the universe in which man evolves. The how is of more interest than the why. According to Chinese tradition, two opposing but complementary forces govern the order of the universe: yin and yang. Man must understand the movement and the constant changes of these two opposites.

The fruit of antagonistic and yet evolutionary elements, truth is not absolute, but rather is relative, and is dependent on circumstance. Learning to compromise with opposites in order to favour harmony means that a "yes" and a "no" are by no means exclusive. By controlling passions, reason prevails. In order to avoid faux-pas and indiscretions, long reflection is required before arriving at a decision. In this respect, knowledge is inseparable from action.



Relationships

In order to survive in such a densely populated society, the Chinese must seek alliance and support, whilst avoiding confrontation. Forging relationships and cultivating them is of the utmost importance, whether within the family unit or one's entourage. Should one person pay another a good turn, they can expect to be treated likewise, as reciprocity is a vital obligation. These interpersonal relations – or "guanxi" – can only be established by showing strict regard for social hierarchy and the respect that goes hand in hand with it. Each has a duty to demonstrate through his behaviour that he has scrupulous respect for social norms.

Failing this, he exposes himself to the risk of breaking the harmony that prevails over social relationships and, consequently, of losing face, a notion that assumes fundamental importance in China.

High esteem is held for parents, by fulfilling the rituals linked to filial devotion, as well as by analogy to those in authority, and one's superiors and elders.

The family model

Imperial China clearly demonstrates the influence of the family model in the representation of power. Guardian of



the Celestial Mandate, conferred upon him by virtue of his wisdom and his power, the emperor is the Son of Heaven, and the father of his subjects. In return for the respect of his people, he owes them paternal protection. Moreover, respect for ancestors, expression of filial devotion, is necessary for law and order. Confucian tradition implies that every man must start a family and provide a male descendant who shall perpetuate the worship of ancestors.

This patriarchal model controls all aspects of Chinese society, be it the family, the village or the business, and blurs the distinction between private, public and professional spheres.

Chinese civilisation is among those who have the highest degree of rank and place within the family unit (age, sex, generation). Children are generally referred to by their position among their siblings rather than by their first name.



The fact that foreign visitors who are accommodated by a host family find themselves almost automatically called "uncle" or "aunt" is one other example of this familial style. This process is a manner of including into the group people who would otherwise be excluded. Thus, people fairly soon become "friends", although this term does not correspond to its general usage in western society.



SEEKING GOOD FORTUNE, WARDING OFF BAD FORTUNE

An abundance of practices and beliefs pervade Chinese society in its quest for a harmonious universe and a happy life. Auspicious signs are multiplied endlessly:

- **Favourable words:** proverbs, maxims.
- **Animals:** dragon, the imperial symbol, both lucky and prestigious; phoenix, unicorn, tortoise, crane, fish, all considered as symbols of good omen.
- **Certain trees and flowers.**
 - Chinese new year, characters for good fortune and for longevity, placed on all sorts of objects.
- **Colours:** red for good fortune; yellow for imperial; white is associated with mourning (although it is no longer considered taboo in current times to be married in white).
- **Numbers:** the number "8", which sounds like the word for fortune, is favoured, contrary to the number "4", which has a similar pronunciation to the word for death.

Divination is customary. The date of a marriage, or the opening of a shop, or the choice of a first name are often only decided after consulting a fortune-teller, who will refer to the Book of changes (Yi king).

Chinese geomancy, "**fengshui**" (wind and water), is used to help determine the site of a construction, the placing of objects around a room, the position of a grave. Fengshui, by controlling the flow of energy ("qi"), preserves harmony, the necessary basis for increasing one's opportunities in life.



Relationships and interaction

The Chinese sense of welcome is point of excellence for the Chinese culture. By taking care of all instances and details, every effort is made to ensure that the visitor is made to feel at home. On the one hand, the Chinese hosts strive to portray their family, their society and their homeland in a favourable light. On the other, they endeavour to establish harmony and consensus. By giving greater

importance to their interlocutor, they "give him face", whilst saving theirs. They will always show that every possible effort has been made to oblige the visitor, but, at the same time, they will excuse themselves for only being able to offer inadequate service. The prestige of the visitor is always accentuated, and the host will voluntary understate theirs.

RULES OF CONDUCT

During exchanges with the Chinese, it is essential to remember that Chinese culture, traditionally, is based on inequality of status, which is utterly dependent on rules of conduct:

- Establishing the rank of the negotiator is a vital factor. This involves, for example, handing a business card with both hands at the beginning of a meeting. Much more than just a piece of paper, the business card provides vital information for knowing what behaviour is appropriate. The card should be studied at length, and should not just disappear hurriedly and negligently into a pocket.
- Personal image, which encompasses social standing and moral integrity, is used to establish trust and to check that a person is worthy of trust. Without this highly personal touch from the outset, it will not be possible to build on the relationship.
- Protocol assumes great importance, as it must ensure that people are treated strictly according to their rank.
- The order of precedence must closely follow the hierarchy of status, and then comes the respect afforded to elders. Rules of gallantry generally do not apply.

A harmonious approach prevails

In order to avoid confrontation, the Chinese speak in a reserved and modest fashion. Outbursts and anger are perceived extremely unfavourably.

The indirect style that the Chinese culture favours is often contrary to Western practice, which, in its manner of going straight to the point, is often misconstrued. Further, it is a more prudent approach that will lay the groundwork and enable you to set out gradually what is to be discussed.

A negative response will never be expressed directly, and neither will any admission of ignorance. The Chinese will always endeavour to avoid insulting or offending others and, at all times, to maintain an honourable exit.

Furthermore, blame and criticism will never be expressed directly. That which, in our eyes, is perceived to be dishonesty is actually politeness, in order not to cause offence or lose face. No one

expects to be brutally confronted with the truth.

Accordingly, we can understand why the Chinese expect to be received with a similar degree of care and attention when they visit a foreign country.





A language with no shortage of characters...

Writing

Chinese writing represents a unique example of a graphic language, made up of thousands of characters (up to 50,000, of which 10,000 are in common use). Composed of strokes that are traced according to a precise ordering, each character has a monosyllabic pronunciation and a general meaning, which can cover numerous senses. There is, therefore, no alphabet.

In order to transpose these characters into the Roman alphabet, the People's Republic of China has adopted an official system of alphabetic and phonetic transcription known as "pinyin", which is widely used to transcribe proper names

(for example LAO She), places (such as "Tiananmen"), practices (such as "qigong"), etc.

On the mainland, the simplified Chinese character set is in current use, whilst the traditional characters are used in Hong Kong, Taiwan and within the diaspora.

Language

Graphic writing constitutes both the denominator and the cement for a multitude of different languages and dialects that are spoken in China, the main ones being Mandarin (official language), Cantonese, Minnanhua, etc. These languages belong to the Sino-Tibetan family, which have notably tonal features. The

number of tones can vary from one language or dialect to another.

Proper names

The family name, composed of one or two characters, precedes the forename, which is also one or two characters long: LU Xun, SIMA Qian, SUN Zhongshan. If, for "technical" reasons, the surname and forename are reversed, it is strongly recommended that the family name be written in capital letters, in order to be sure of recognising it later, and of not confusing it with the forename. Where the forename is composed of two characters, it is also advisable to write its transcription in one word and without hyphenation, according to current official practice. Note that in Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, a more random form of transcription is used.

A person is called by his name and title, rather than by his forename, which is reserved for close personal relationships. Chinese people in contact with foreign countries or who have completed their training abroad sometimes have German, English or French forenames, which might be shown on their business card.



ADAPTING TO THE LANGUAGE

When making contact with the Chinese, it is recommended that documents be made available in the Chinese language. High-level translators must be involved in the preparation of such documents, and the final version of the translated texts must be approved by a native Chinese speaker.

Furthermore, it is strongly recommended that a Chinese name be given to any person or company wishing to interrelate with China. The Chinese do actually rename all proper names into Mandarin. Specialist advice is called for in choosing this name.

Lastly, note that knowing how to pronounce the company name or place name in Mandarin is often essential in order to correctly identify what is meant: Tielishishan (Titlis), Caiermate (Zermatt), Yintelaken (Interlaken).



In order to illustrate the difference between traditional and simplified characters of the English word conference, convention, meeting.





Business ethics

Long-term vision

For Westerners, the signing of a contract is the conclusion of a process; for the Chinese, it is the starting point. This formula highlights the following points:

- Understand that the negotiation process calls for deep personal involvement. Progress is made cautiously, step by step.
- Emphasise a long-term partnership, as opposed to short-term objectives.
- Favour an amicable and peaceful atmosphere, which is key to ensuring harmony.
- Without trust, without good relations and without compromise, there will be no business deals.



Personal attitude is a crucial factor

It is the person himself who is assessed, and who serves as a guarantee, much more so than the reputation of the company or the prestige of the institution. Initial exchanges rarely focus on business. The purpose of such discussions is to allow the negotiators to become acquainted, and to get in tune with each other. Questions about one's personal life (family, relationship with parents) and living conditions (price levels, salaries) are customary. For the Chinese, the listener is the centre of attention. A reserved, attentive and modest attitude is therefore expected. Sartorial extravagance is to be avoided: a sober appearance with dark-coloured clothing and shoes is perfect business attire.

Negotiations

In China negotiations are conducted in a more formal manner than in Western countries. It is, therefore, recommended to take into consideration the following suggestions:

- Pay close attention to seating arrangements, as the highest-ranking persons

- sit opposite each other at the centre of a long table, furthest from the door.
- At dinner, the best seating place is to the right of the host, the next best to his left. The place of honour is opposite the door, but is far from it, and, if possible, faces south. The lowest-ranking person occupies the most vulnerable place, with the back to the door.
- Respect the speaking order. Express yourself slowly and in an intelligible manner, without interrupting the other party.
- Set aside ample time, as haste is ill-advised.
- Understand that the Chinese do not expect to have any important information revealed early on in negotiations, but rather towards the end.
- Do not continue negotiations during the meal that follows; however, this convivial time is indeed essential to the success of the overall process.
- Use interpreters who possess an excellent level of language skill and who are trained in the relevant area; provide them with all details concerning the procedures, and ensure during the discussions that both sides have a good grasp of the information being exchanged.

Gifts

Marks of respect and symbols of friendship, the giving of gifts is an indispensable practice:

- Typically Swiss presents are greatly appreciated: watches and clocks, music boxes, writing implements, calendars, "ethno" items, etc. Remember that Swiss Army knives must be packed in hold luggage for airline security reasons. With the exception of chocolate and sweets, do not give food.

- Gifts are given wrapped (avoid white and black paper) and are not usually opened in front of you.
- They should be offered with both hands, as should business cards, passports, credit cards, hotel bills, any personal or important papers.
- The value of the gift, neither too high nor too low, is consistent with hierarchy. The highest-ranking person receives a more prestigious gift. The item given to him can be presented without gift-wrapping, in order to show its value, or to explain how it works or what it signifies.



IN BRIEF

Generally speaking, it is advisable to prepare yourself for this intercultural task, if necessary by seeking specialist advice.

We must stress how much the Chinese do appreciate and feel flattered when Westerners make the effort to try and understand and respect Chinese culture, and attempt to speak their language. Lastly, do not be afraid of making mistakes, as the Chinese are perfectly aware that you are not totally familiar with the Chinese world.



On tour with the Chinese

Strong growth of outbound travel

The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) estimates that in the year 2020 about 100 million Chinese will be travelling abroad. In 2003 the number of Chinese tourists reached 20.2 million, a growth of 21.7% compared to 2002. The number of Chinese travelling abroad quadrupled during the 1990s and that trend is set to continue through the next two decades as the country's middle class grows steadily.



The government is also easing restrictions on its citizens obtaining passports as well as the amount of money they can take abroad. It is furthermore expected that flexible holidays will be introduced soon in order to move away from the current practise of the entire country going on vacation at the same time. Two measures that will give outbound travel an additional boost.

Switzerland as a destination for Chinese tourists

In November 2003 during an official meeting of Swiss and Chinese Government Representatives the Approved Destination Status (ADS) for Switzerland was announced. An agreement regulates the way Chinese citizens may travel to Switzerland. It only applies to groups (minimum five persons), limits the outflow of hard currency and provides for measures in case of illegal stays of Chinese travellers. Under the ADS Agreement Swiss incoming agents and/or tour operators must guarantee that all members of a group will leave from and return to China together. Furthermore, hotlines

with Chinese-speaking staff must be provided for emergency cases and certified guides and drivers must be used during the tour. The agreement does not regulate individual travel. The obligation of a visa to enter Switzerland remains unchanged.

Profile of Chinese travellers to Switzerland

In general, Chinese travellers will book a package of 10–14 days and visit several countries. The aim of the journey will be to see the main attractions and only very limited time is spent in one particular place. Switzerland is among the three favourite European destinations.

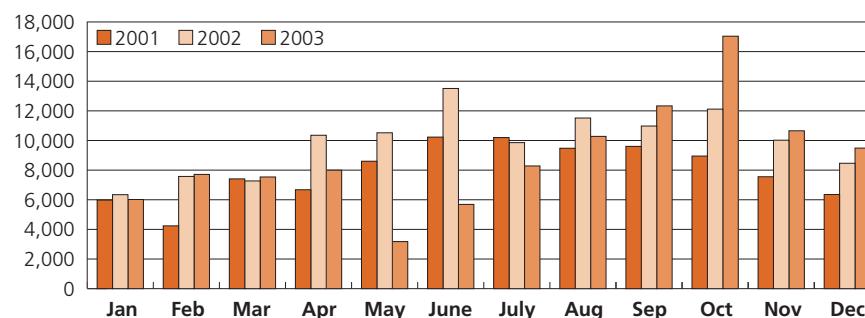
Chinese visitors will, in principle, travel as follow: 50% business travellers and 50% leisure makers; 40% will travel in the winter months and 60% during the summer.

Only few Chinese have visited Europe or Switzerland before. The expectations towards the "faraway" west are, therefore, high.

Statistics show that most of the Chinese travelling to Europe are young professionals in their 30s or 40s, coming from the big cities on the east coast and belonging to the fast growing middle class. Other important groups are wealthy people of all ages, who have already extensively travelled through Asia, as well as government officials and entrepreneurs, who are involved in international negotiations.

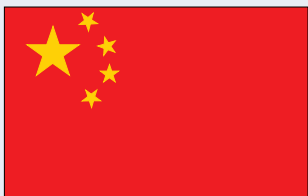


Overnight stays in Switzerland by Chinese travellers (2001–2003)



Source: Swiss Federal Statistical Office

- Treat your Chinese guests respectfully. They are proud to be citizens of the People's Republic of China as well as of the economic and political success of their home country. Discussions on politically sensitive matters like human rights, regional independence movements, Taiwan, etc. should be conducted with great care and diplomacy – your Chinese counterpart often does not feel at ease discussing controversial matters.
- Display the correct flag of the People's Republic of China.



- Many Chinese understand only little English, German or French: Chinese signalling at the most popular tourist spots of the destination as well as for generally important information (airports, train stations, cable cars, museums, entrance, exit, bathrooms, etc.) is a must.
- Chinese-speaking guides are a must to accompany travellers from the PRC during their stay in Switzerland. They should, therefore, be trained thoroughly.
- Provide complete and concise information in Chinese on the main sights and attractions of Switzerland and/or the destination: One booklet or leaflet including a map in Chinese is enough.
- Chinese are "last minute travellers", they don't really plan their trip, and they don't like to wait: Show flexibility with regard to the suggestions of your Chinese guests and provide fast response and service.
- Clearly indicate the capacities for receiving groups of your hotel or restaurant to the relevant tour operator.



Swiss hospitality for Chinese guests

A central element of Chinese culture

Hospitality is an extremely important part of Chinese culture. It has been developed and refined through the many centuries of Chinese history, by adapting it to the changing needs and by continuously adding new elements. The Chinese art of receiving guests focuses on two main objectives: Taking care of the visitor during the whole period of his or her stay and placing his or her presumed preferences in the centre of the host's activities.

By taking care of all instances and details, every effort is made to ensure that the visitor will feel at home. On the one hand, Chinese hosts strive to portray their homeland and environment in a favourable light. On the other hand, they endeavour to establish harmony and consensus. They will always show that every possible effort has been made to live up to the expectations of the visitor. The prestige of the guest is always accentuated. The satisfaction of the guest is thus very closely linked to the behaviour and activities of the host.

Expectations of Chinese guests

Given the aforementioned it will not come as a surprise that the expectations of Chinese guests towards their Swiss hosts are very high. They will, in principle, take it for granted that their Swiss counterparts know exactly about and are well prepared for the preferences and habits of their visitors. They will also expect that everything possible will be undertaken by their hosts in order to make them happy.



DOS AND DON'TS FOR SWISS SERVICE PROVIDERS

- Chinese visitors have high expectations: Show as much flexibility as possible and take into account their requests.
- If possible do not assign rooms on the 4th floor or containing a "4" (4, 14, 24, 34, etc.) in the room number to Chinese travellers as this number is associated with death. In particular room numbers containing "6", "8" or "9" or being located on the 6th, 8th, and the 9th floor are considered to be lucky rooms.
- A Chinese leaflet containing information on the hotel and the services provided should be available in all rooms.
- Provide clear operational instruction in Chinese about Pay-TV and indicate that the fee is not included in the room rate or the package.
- Assign your Chinese guests rooms with twin beds: The members of the group travelling together will, in general, not have known each other before starting the trip.
- Ensure fast check-in and check-out service: Chinese get rather impatient if they have to wait.
- The hotel room should be equipped with an adapter for electrical appliances made in China.



- Chinese love to drink hot tea or hot water at almost any time of the day (or night): Provide an electrical water cooker or a thermos containing hot water as well as free tea and coffee in the rooms. Hot water or hot tea is usually served at lunch and dinner as well.
- Chinese travel with little luggage: Provide a basic selection of accessories for daily use, such as shampoo, tooth brush and tooth paste, in their room.



Leisure activities

Widely unknown concept

The notion of leisure is still rather new to the Chinese society. In fact, no clear distinction is made between the time spent at work and the time dedicated to the family, friends or a hobby. Working life and more private moments are not considered to be two completely separate spheres of the human existence. It should also be noted in this context that Chinese employees and entrepreneurs have quite a bit less time off work than their European colleagues.

Socialising and shopping

Chinese love places, which are "renao" – literally hot ("re") and noisy ("nao") – in the sense of bustling activity. "renao" is part of the Chinese life style in the same way as cosiness ("Gemütlichkeit") is for the Swiss, Germans and Austrians.

Chatting with the family or friends at home is, therefore, among the favourite activities of the Chinese. Walking around downtown in a crowd after dinner or on weekends is considered to be fun, too. Another popular activity is shopping, in

particular together with family or friends.

Sports as a leisure activity are not as widely spread as in Europe or North America.



Shopping around the world

Undertaking leisure activities in the group will also be the preference of Chinese tourists. Entertainment such as shows and concerts will, therefore, be appreciated.

In China the concept of “saving money at home and spending it abroad” is quite widely spread. Chinese love to shop when travelling. Generally, they will bring home presents and gifts for the whole family and their friends. Branded products with local characteristics, i.e. Swiss-made watches, jewellery and clothes, are particularly popular. Chinese tourists are, in fact, among the biggest spenders in Switzerland, with an average per capita expenditure of approximately USD 2,500.– per travel.

Expenditure per capita and per day of tourists in Switzerland (CHF)

Country	2003
China	450
Hong Kong	350
Japan	500
USA	450
Europe	250

Sources: Market Mirrors Switzerland Tourism 2004

DOS AND DON'TS FOR SWISS SERVICE PROVIDERS

- Chinese prefer to spend their free time in a group: Take this fact into account, when proposing leisure activities during their trip.
- Chinese dine early (at about 7 p.m.) and go to sleep rather late: Let them know what kind of evening entertainment the destination offers (shows, movies, bars, etc.)
- Chinese-speaking personnel in your shop is a must if you want to do business with Chinese tourists.
- Display the prices of your products in a clear manner.
- Chinese are evening and weekend shoppers: Make sure your shop is open when they come and adapt the opening hours.
- Shopping is also a social event: Be prepared to deal with a whole group of customers at once and entertain them with some small talk.
- Inform your Chinese clients on the possibility of receiving a VAT refund for goods purchased in Switzerland and exported to the PRC: A leaflet in Chinese containing a to do list will be appreciated.



Chinese eating and drinking habits

The long tradition of Chinese cuisine

Much of Chinese daily life revolves around food and just about every Chinese considers himself an expert in that field. Sophisticated cosmopolitans and simple employees alike are happy to discuss food in detail and with great enthusiasm with just about anyone. The importance of the delights of the table goes back many centuries in Chinese history. Through the ages poets, emperors and other important persons were expected to be connoisseurs of fine dining and to be able to discourse knowledgeably on food as well as on its history and preparation.

Eating is also an important social event: Chinese love to eat together with their family or friends at large tables – to find oneself alone at a table is considered to be one of the worst fates.

Any culinary sights available?

It, therefore, does not come as a big surprise that food is also one of the most important – if not the most important – part of a Chinese trip: In fact, most Chinese will not recommend their friends or family to visit specific sights such as

monuments or museums when travelling, they will rather tell them not to miss the best spring rolls in town, namely at Wang's restaurant, or that typical roasted duck. In fact, Chinese are almost addicted to Chinese food. Even when travelling abroad they still need to eat Chinese food.

Drinking habits

Chinese drinking habits do not differ significantly from those in Europe. Except for the consumption of wine and coffee, which is not very common in the PRC. The usual European selection of water, soft drinks, beers as well as hot tea or hot water will perfectly suit Chinese clients, too.



DOS AND DON'TS FOR SWISS SERVICE PROVIDERS

- A basic selection of Chinese food, such as rice, stewed or fried vegetables and sliced meat (chicken, beef, veal, pork) or fish should be available at all meals.
- For breakfast porridge, fried rice and vegetables will be appreciated as an addition to the traditional European food.
- A menu in Chinese should be available for your guests.
- Reserve a big, if possible round, table for your Chinese guests: The group travelling together will, in principle, prefer to eat together.
- Chinese like to combine different dishes and tastes: It is appreciated if all courses are served together. The soup will, in principle, be served at the end of the meal.
- Together with the classical European cutlery, chop sticks – placed on the right side of the bowl or dish – should be provided for each person. Chop sticks should never be stuck into the food – this will be associated with bad luck or even death. Otherwise the usual European tableware and decoration will be appreciated by your Chinese guests.
- Chinese eat early: Breakfast at 7.00 a.m., lunch at 12.00 noon and dinner at 7.00 p.m. are quite standard eating hours for Chinese tourists.
- Chinese eat fast and leave the table immediately once the final course is consumed: A speedy and efficient service will, therefore, be appreciated.



Contacts

Should you need any further information, advice and/or training on how to best receive Chinese visitors or on how to work with the Chinese market, please do not hesitate to contact hotelleriesuisse or Switzerland Tourism at the following addresses:

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The Beijing Office of Switzerland Tourism offers a special Chinese language service for its partners.

USEFUL WEBSITES

www.swisshotels.ch (hotelleriesuisse)

www.myswitzerland.com
(Switzerland Tourism in English)

www.myswitzerland.com.cn
(Switzerland Tourism in Chinese)

www.sinoptic.ch (information on China and its culture)

www.chinadaily.com.cn
(daily newspaper in English)

www.cnta.com (Chinese National Tourism Administration)

www.sccc.ch (Swiss Chinese Chamber of Commerce, in English)

www.eda.admin.ch/china_beishan/e
(Swiss Presence in China, Swiss Embassy and Consulates, in English)

www.switzerland.com.cn (Switzerland in China, in Chinese and in English)

www.swissinfo.org/scn
(Switzerland's news platform in Chinese)

www.osec.ch/marketplaces/china
(Osec Business Network Switzerland, economic information in English)

www.globalrefund.com (information on TVA refund worldwide, in English)

www.global-translations.ch
(translations from and into Chinese)