

China



China is the world's most populous country, with a continuous culture stretching back nearly 4,000 years. Many of the elements that make up the foundation of the modern world originated in China, including paper, gunpowder, credit banking, the compass and paper money.

CHINA FACTS

Population: 1.3 billion (UN, 2003)

Capital: Beijing

Major language: Mandarin Chinese

Major religions: Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Taoism

Life expectancy: 69 years (men), 73 years (women) (UN)

Monetary unit: 1 Renminbi (yuan) (Y) = 10 jiao = 100 fen;

Main exports: Manufactured goods, including textiles, garments, electronics, arms

Average annual income: US \$890 (World Bank, 2001)

Internet domain: .cn

International dialling code: +86

In late 1978 the Chinese leadership began moving the economy from a sluggish, Soviet-style centrally planned economy to a more market-oriented system. Accession to the World Trade Organization helps strengthen China's ability to maintain strong growth rates but at the same time puts additional pressure on the hybrid system of strong political controls and growing market influences. Beijing has claimed 7%-8% annual growth in recent years, and while many observers believe the official figures over the past two decades overstated China's real economic growth by 2 to 3 percentage points, China's official national growth rates of the past two years are fairly close to actual GDP growth.



Flag Description: red with a large yellow five-pointed star and four smaller yellow five-pointed stars (arranged in a vertical arc toward the middle of the flag) in the upper hoist-side corner. A timeline of key events is available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/country_profiles/1288392.stm To listen to the Chinese national anthem, go to: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/country_profiles/1287798.stm