

Swiss Hospitality for Chinese Guests



Imprint

Published by

hotelleriesuisse, Bern and
Switzerland Tourism, Zurich

Published

First edition 2004; second edition 2012
(German-language reprint 2014);
new edition 2017

Layout

xamt franziska liechti, Berne

Translation

Gary Willis, Winkel

Printed by

Läderach Ltd., Bern

Cover photograph

Switzerland Tourism/Giglio Pasqua

Photographs

National Tourism Administration of the
People's Republic of China, MCH Swiss
Exhibition Ltd., Switzerland Tourism,
hotelleriesuisse, iStockphoto.com

Languages

German, French, English

Bern, january 2017



Table of contents

Preface	4
General information about the People's Republic of China	6
Characteristics of Chinese culture	8
A language with no shortage of characters	11
Business ethics	13
On tour with the Chinese	16
Swiss hospitality for Chinese guests	20
Leisure activities	22
Chinese eating and drinking habits	24
Contacts	26



*When a friend comes from afar,
is it not delightful?*

(Confucius)

Preface

For you as a hotelier, hospitality for guests from both near and far goes without saying. When guests come from places which have a different culture, then knowledge of the respective culture helps you to avoid misunderstandings and make the guests' stay as smooth as possible. This brochure, "Swiss Hospitality for Chinese Guests" addresses these matters. Between 2005 and 2015, the number of overnight stays by Chinese persons in Switzerland increased by some 702 percent. We can also expect to see a continuous increase in the number of overnight stays by the Chinese in the future. The Chinese middle class which enjoys travel-

ling is growing and state restrictions have become much more relaxed, which makes it easier for Chinese citizens to obtain a passport and export currency. In addition, flexible holiday times are being introduced since 2013 in order to avoid the problem of the whole country going on holiday at the same time. These are scheduled to be implemented nationwide by 2020. This is likely to give further impetus to foreign tourism. True, the Chinese still mainly travel in big groups, quickly from one place to the next. However, individual tourism is gaining in importance. The classic quick trip around Europe will be complemented by an extended and

deeper look into a tourist destination. Likewise, a younger, more open generation has also discovered travelling. These travellers show more interest in local peculiarities and in the culture of the country being toured.

The brochure "Swiss Hospitality for Chinese Guests" (First edition 2004) which has been revised by hotelleriesuisse and Switzerland Tourism together, gives you important background information to China and prepares you optimally for Chinese guests and their needs. In addition to interesting information as to the culture and mentality of your clients from the Far East, it

contains practical suggestions as to how to give your Chinese guests the best welcome possible. We wish you good reading and exciting encounters with guests from both near and far.

Jürg Schmid
Director Switzerland Tourism

Claude Meier
Director hotelleriesuisse





General information about the People's Republic of China

Historical abstract

China is home to the longest continuous and still existing cultures in the world, which can be shown to go back to around 2000 BC. The Chinese are especially proud of their long-standing history and the four great inventions of ancient China: the compass, paper, gunpowder and the first printing process.

After many economic and cultural highlights in ancient history, China has suffered a large decline since the Opium War in the middle of the 19th century. The People's Republic of China (PRC) was founded on the 1st of October 1949 by the leadership of the Communist Party. In 1978, Deng Xiaoping initiated profound economic

reforms which led to China becoming one of the most important economies in the world and which unleashed unprecedented dynamics in the country.

Knowledge of Chinese history and their four great inventions impresses the Chinese.

Economy

With the gradual introduction of necessary structural reforms, China has undergone radical economic changes in recent decades. For the past 30 years, the country has enjoyed persistently strong economic growth which, although slowing in recent years, is still higher than that of western states.

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 the third largest in area behind Russia and Canada (Switzerland 41 290 km²).

Cities: The largest cities are Beijing (Peking; capital) with 21 million inhabitants, Chongqing with 30 million, Shanghai with 24 million and Tianjin (Tientsin) with 15 million. There are some 140 other cities with a respective population in excess of 1 million.

Languages: China's official language is Mandarin; in addition, there are many Chinese dialects and about 50 languages spoken by national minorities.



China overtook Japan in 2010 and it has become the second-largest economy in the world. Today, the People's Republic has positioned itself at the center of international economic interests.

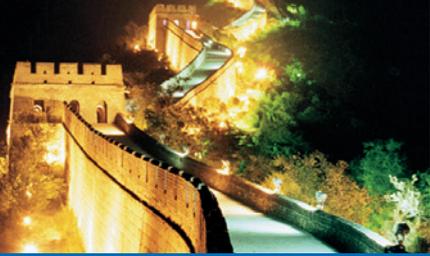
Knowledge of the fast-growing Chinese economy and its importance in the world impresses the Chinese.

Key economic figures

	2013	2014	2015	2016 (S)	2017 (P)
GDP (in billion USD)	9519	10 431	10 983	11 383	12 263
GDP per inhabitant (in USD)	6995	7626	7990	8240	8833
Growth rate (in % of GDP)	12,4	9,6	5,3	3,6	7,7
Inflation rate (in %)	2,5	1,5	1,6	1,8	2

Sources: International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, April 2016

(E) = Estimate, (F) = Forecast



Characteristics of Chinese culture

Philosophy

Among other things, the two most important teachings which have greatly influenced Chinese culture are Confucianism and Taoism.

Confucianism

The teaching of Confucius stems from around the year 500 BC and was later established as the State ideology. It is more of a moral philosophy than a religion. It says that in each society there are five basic relationships; the emperor vis-à-vis the subject, the husband vis-à-vis the wife, parents vis-à-vis the children, older siblings vis-à-vis younger siblings and older friends vis-à-vis younger friends. Seniors have obligations of goodwill and care vis-à-vis the young, and in turn, the young show them their gratitude with

their respect. All manner of equality is rejected because mutual obligations take precedence. Through the influence of Confucianism, Chinese society today is very hierarchical.

Famous Quote:

有朋自远方来，不亦悦乎？

When a friend comes from afar, is it not delightful?

Taoism

Laozi is regarded as being the founder of this doctrine. It says that a full life is achieved through complete detachment, where calm and indifference preside. According to Chinese tradition, two opposing forces govern the order of the universe and are a central element of

Taoism: "Yin" and "Yang". However, the truth, as a fruit of antagonistic but progressive elements, is not absolute, but is rather always relative and dependent upon the circumstances of the individual case. The influence of these holistic thoughts are to be found in many areas of Chinese culture; for example, in nutrition, in martial arts or in traditional Chinese medicine.

Famous Quote:

千里之行始于足下

A journey of a thousand miles starts with the first step.

Knowledge of the two philosophers and their quotes impresses the Chinese.

Relationships

Of utmost importance, whether it be in the family circle or in one's entourage, is the avoidance of conflicts and the forging and cultivation of relationships. Should one person do a good turn to another, then they have the right to expect similar treatment in return, for reciprocity is a vital obligation. These interpersonal relationships can only be established by showing strict regard for social hierarchy and the respect that goes hand in hand with it. High esteem is held for parents, through the practice of rituals linked to filial devotion, as well as toward to those in authority and one's superiors and elders.

Building up relationships with the Chinese is rewarding!





Seeking good fortune, Warding off bad fortune

What would China be without its abundance of practices and popular beliefs, which support the Chinese in their search for a harmonious universe and a happy life?

The variety of the good signs and omens is endless:

Animals: the dragon as a brilliant imperial symbol; also considered to be lucky charms are the phoenix, the tortoise, the crane and the fish.

Lucky objects: Happy New Year messages on paper, as well as signs of good fortune and longevity on different objects.

Colours: red means good fortune; yellow is for imperial; white and black for mourning (although a white wedding today is no longer taboo).

Numbers: the number 8, which sounds like the word for "fortune", is favoured, in contrast to number 4, which sounds similar to the word for "death".

Harmony

In order to avoid confrontation, the Chinese speak in a reserved and modest fashion. Scandalous behaviour and outbursts of anger are perceived in an extremely unfavourable light. Chinese culture favours the indirect style. This is in contrast to the direct and "straight to the point" Western way of doing things, which is often not understood. The Chinese way is more of a careful approach which facilitates getting to know one another and the laying of a foundation for the ensuing conversation. A rejection is never expressed directly, and neither will any admission of ignorance be, for the Chinese are always careful to avoid insulting or hurting others and seek to provide the possibility of an honourable exit at all times. The same applies likewise to accusations and criticism. What may appear to be a "lie" to us, is often considered to be a form of courtesy in China. No one is allowed to feel hurt or lose face and certainly no one expects to be brutally confronted with the truth.

Accordingly, we can understand why the Chinese appreciate being received with the same degree of care and attention when they visit a foreign country.

Absolutely avoid direct confrontations!

A language with no shortage of characters

Chinese language

The Chinese language is one of the oldest languages which is still being spoken today. The official spoken form of Chinese is Mandarin (High Chinese). In addition, there are numerous dialects such as Cantonese, for example. Chinese writing is a unique example of a graphic language, consisting of many thousands of characters.

Chinese love to teach their language to others.

Proper names

In China, the surname is placed before the first name. If, for "technical" reasons, the surname and the first name 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. A person is called by his name and title, rather than by his forename, which is reserved for close personal friends. Chinese persons who have a lot of contact with foreign countries or who have had education there, sometimes have German, English or French forenames, which might be shown on their visiting cards.

In cases of doubt, inquire as to which is the first name and which is the surname.

Greetings in Chinese

Good day	Nǐ hǎo	你好
Welcome	Huān yíng	欢迎
Thanks	Xiè xiè	谢谢
Have a pleasant trip	Lǚ tú yú kuài	旅途愉快
Goodbye	Zài jiàn	再见

Simple words of greeting in Chinese impress the Chinese.

Adapting to the language

When making contact with the Chinese, it is recommended that documents be made available in the Chinese language. Top-class 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 essential in order to correctly identify what is meant: Tielishishan (Titlis), Caiermate (Zermatt), Yintelaken (Interlaken), Lusaian (Luzern), Shaonüfeng (Jungfrauoch), Boerni (Bern), Dawosi (Davos).



Finger Counting System

1 yī 一	2 èr 二	3 sān 三	4 sì 四	5 wǔ 五
				
6 liù 六	7 qī 七	8 bā 八	9 jiǔ 九	10 shí 十
				

Please note the subtle differences in the finger signs.

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. Therefore, the following is to be taken into consideration:

- Understand that the negotiation process calls for deep personal involvement. Progress is made cautiously, step by step.
- Emphasize a long-term partnership as opposed to short-term objectives.
- Favour an amicable and peaceful atmosphere, as this is required for mutual understanding.
- There will be no business deals without trust, a good relationship and compromise.

First comes the trust, then comes the business!

Personal bearing is a crucial factor

For the Chinese, it is the impression that a person gives which is much more important than the reputation of a company or the prestige of an institution. This is because it is the person himself who serves as a guarantee for successful business dealings. 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 always 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.

Be reserved, attentive and modest!

Negotiations

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

- Pay close attention to the seating arrangements, as the highest-ranking persons sit opposite each other at the center of a long table, furthest from the door.





- At dinner, the best seating place is to the right of the host, the next best place to his left. The places of honour are opposite the door, but are far from it, and face south where possible.
- The lowest-ranking person is seated with their 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.
- Realise 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 during the discussions, ensure that both sides have a good grasp of the information being exchanged.

Hierarchy is very important.



Gifts

Gifts are a very important mark of respect and friendship. The giving of gifts is an indispensable practice:

- Typical Swiss presents are greatly appreciated: watches (no wall-clocks as these signify that someone will soon die), 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 chocolates and sweets, do not give food!
- Gifts are given wrapped (avoid white and black paper) and are not usually opened in front of you.
- Gifts should be offered with both hands, as should business cards, passports, credit cards, hotel bills and any other important personal documents.
- The value of the gift ought to be appropriate and consistent with the 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.

Gifts strengthen ties with the Chinese.

China in transition

Since the gradual economic opening at the end of the eighties, China has found itself in a state of progressive change. Economic expansion abroad also plays an increasingly important role here. Thus the country has also extended its influence in Europe and has invested in numerous companies, including ones based in Switzerland.

International practices are increasingly making visible inroads into everyday life in China. The Chinese themselves strive hard to learn Western codes of practice. Therefore, approach your Chinese counterpart with openness and do not be surprised if you find that the Chinese business partners are far more westernised than you may have perhaps expected.

In brief

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

It must be stressed just how much the Chinese appreciate it 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. The Chinese are perfectly aware that you are not totally familiar with every nuance in the Chinese world.



On tour with the Chinese

Strong growth of outbound travel

As statistics show, the number of overnight stays by Chinese tourists rose by almost 33 per cent in 2015 compared with a year earlier. This trend is set to continue through the next two decades as the country's middle class steadily grows. The government is also easing restrictions on its citizens obtaining passports, as well as the amount of money they can take abroad. In addition, flexible holidays are being introduced since 2013 in order to move away from the current practise where the entire country goes on vacation at the same time. Two measures that will give outbound travel an additional boost.

Switzerland as a destination

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 that Chinese citizens may travel to Switzerland. It only applies to groups (minimum five persons), who are managed by Chinese tour operators (starting from departure in China through to the return there), limits the outflow of hard currency and provides for measures in case of illegal stays by Chinese tourists. Under the ADS Agreement, Swiss incoming agents, as well as 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 obligation to have a visa for entry into Switzerland remains unchanged.

Not covered by the ADS Agreement is the disproportionately growing group of individual tourists which are increasingly seen to have at their disposal both the necessary financial means as well as the requirements necessary for a Schengen visa, permitting a trip to Europe and/or Switzerland respectively. Individual travel is especially benefitting from the growing number of international and Chinese online travel agents with an increasingly in-depth product portfolio.

Overnight stays in Switzerland by Chinese travellers (without Hongkong)

Year	Arrivals	Overnight stays (OS)	%-change OS
2009	187 138	271 717	27
2010	286 420	404 218	49
2011	452 724	595 264	47
2012	575 326	743 656	25
2013	704 945	894 316	20
2014	823 713	1 034 275	16
2015	1 122 852	1 378 434	33

Source: Accommodation statistics HESTA, Swiss Federal Statistical Office, octobre 2016



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 for the Chinese.
- 40 percent of the visitors from China will travel in the winter months and 60 percent during the summer.



Dos and Don'ts for Swiss Service Providers

- 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 about 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.
- Although ever more young Chinese people speak much better English than the older generation, most Chinese understand only little English, German or French: information boards in Chinese at the most popular destination tourist spots as well as important places (i.e. restaurant menus, at airports, train stations, in cable cars, museums, at entrances and exits, bathrooms, etc.) in Chinese writing or on illustrated information panels are also a must.
- Well-trained, Chinese-speaking guides must accompany travellers from China throughout their visit to Switzerland.
- Provide complete and concise information in Chinese as to the main sights and attractions in Switzerland and/or the destination: one booklet or leaflet including a map in Chinese is sufficient.
- The 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 a speedy response and service.
- Clearly indicate to the relevant tour operator exact details concerning your capacity for receiving groups into your hotel or restaurant.
- Display the correct flag of the People's Republic of China!



- Only few Chinese have visited Europe or Switzerland before. Therefore, the expectations toward the "faraway" west are high.
- Most of the Chinese travelling to Europe are young professionals in their 30's or 40's coming from the big cities on the east coast and belonging to the fastgrowing middle class. Other important groups are wealthy people of all ages who have already travelled extensively through Asia, as well as government officials and entrepreneurs who are involved in international negotiations.
- Where the trend a few years ago was for multi-destination trips to between six and ten countries within Europe, today the trend has changed to "deeper tours": the leading product is presently a trip to the three countries of Italy, France and Switzerland. At the same time, it is not uncommon to see one-off trips to single countries too. In the core markets of Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Hong Kong, it is hard to find a tour operator these days who does not offer at least one, single-destination trip to Switzerland.
- Long-distance travel is also no longer the privilege of the four core markets we have just mentioned. Clients for European trips are even found in up-and-coming "second-tier cities".
- China is also on the move with regard to the kind of travel engaged in; next to classic "passive sightseeing", the trend toward active holidays must not be underestimated. Golf trips, Arctic expeditions, as well as outdoor sports ranging from hiking to mountain climbing and skiing are all experiencing increased participation in China. It is foreseeable that these activities will also find their place in the overseas travel product.
- The possibility of terrorist attacks in Europe may affect the travel behaviour of the Chinese. They are likely to be more hesitant in booking trips to Europe. But among those Chinese tourists wishing to travel to Europe, Switzerland continues to be seen as safe compared to other European countries.

Chinese tourists come mainly from the middle class of China's large cities.



Swiss hospitality for Chinese guests

A central element of Chinese culture

In Chinese culture, receiving a guest embodies Chinese hospitality par excellence. The Chinese art of receiving visitors focuses on two main objectives:

Taking care of the guest during the whole period of his or her stay and placing his or her presumed preferences as the center of the host's attention. By paying attention to each and every detail, 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 the very best 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 guest is assigned every honour and the host "gives face" to him, thus preserving his own. Further, he lets the guest feel that he has done his best for him, to spoil him as it were, whilst at the same time apologizing for only being able to offer an imperfect performance. He will always stress the esteem of the guest whilst playing down his own.

Hospitality has a far greater significance in China than it does in Switzerland.

What do the Chinese expect?

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

Chinese expectations: everything will be undertaken in order to fulfil their desires.



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.
- When dealing with Chinese guests and partners, always remain calm, friendly and patient. Never show negative feelings (displeasure, impatience, vexation). This leads to unnecessary situations and can even end up breaking-out in a hopeless disagreement in which both parties are the losers.
- If possible, do not assign Chinese guests to rooms on the 4th floor or to rooms which contain the number 4 (4, 14, 24, 34, etc.), because this number is associated with being unlucky – or even with death. However, room numbers containing 6, 8 or 9, as well as rooms located on the 6th, 8th and 9th floors are considered to be lucky rooms.
- A Chinese leaflet or an electronic concierge (with a Chinese language option) offering information about the hotel and the services provided should be made available in all the rooms.
- Provide clear operational instruction in Chinese as to how the Pay-TV works and clearly indicate that the fee is not included in the room rate or the package.
- Assign your Chinese guests rooms with two beds: Generally speaking, the members of the group travelling together will not have known each other before starting the trip.
- Ensure a 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.



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 6.30 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 Chinese customers at once.
- Inform your Chinese clients about the possibility of receiving a VAT refund for goods purchased in Switzerland and exported to the People's Republic of China.

Leisure activities

A widely unknown concept

The notion of leisure is still rather new to 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 human existence. It ought to 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 are top of the hit parade

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

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

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

Chinese love chatting together loudly – even in public.



Shopping around the world

Chinese tourists also like to undertake leisure activities as a group. Entertainment such as shows and concerts are greatly appreciated.

In China, the concept of “saving money at home and spending it abroad” is quite widespread. Chinese love to shop when they are travelling. Generally they will bring home presents and gifts for the whole family and their friends. Branded products with local characteristics such as Swiss-made watches, jewellery and clothing are especially popular.

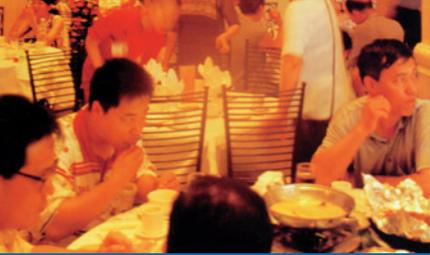
Give the Chinese the opportunity to purchase something – even in the hotel.

With an average per capita expenditure of approximately USD 2500 per trip, Chinese tourists are among the biggest spenders in Switzerland.

Average daily expenditure (CHF) by overnight tourists in Switzerland (not including arrival and departure)

Country	2013
Gulf States	340
China	310
India	230
Korea	240
Russia	220
USA	210
Japan	190
Switzerland	150
Germany	135

Source: Tourism Monitor Switzerland 2013/Switzerland Tourism



Chinese eating and drinking habits

The long tradition of Chinese cuisine

Much of Chinese daily life revolves around food and just about every Chinese person considers himself to be 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 culinary delights 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 about food, as well as about its history and its preparation.

Eating is also an important social event for the Chinese: They love to come together for meals around a large table with family and friends. Finding oneself alone at a table is considered to be one of the worst fates possible.

For the Chinese, eating is not just a sensual pleasure. Other aspects such as health and balance, based upon the principles of traditional Chinese medicine, are always taken into account when preparing the menu.

*Chinese do not like to eat alone.
Make sure they have company.*

Culinary experiences are holiday highlights

It is not really surprising that food becomes one of the most important – if not the most important part – of a Chinese trip. In fact, most Chinese will not recommend to their friends or family to see specific sights such as monuments or museums, but rather, will tell them not to miss the best spring rolls in town at Wang's restaurant, or that exquisite roasted duck. In fact, it would be unthinkable for the Chinese to enjoy something other than Chinese food when on a trip abroad.

(Chinese) food is one of the most important things to the Chinese.

Drinking habits

The usual European selection – mineral water, soft drinks, beer, tea, coffee or hot water – will perfectly suit Chinese clients. In recent years, the interest in wine and coffee has also grown strongly.

Green tea is the preferred kind of tea for the Chinese.

Dos and Don'ts for Swiss Service Providers

Don't try and cook Chinese food (it will never be any better than average). Rather, try and base your menu planning on the basic principles of Chinese cuisine:

- The Chinese love variety: therefore, offer to your Chinese guests several small dishes rather than just one big dish. Put emphasis upon using different kinds of food stuffs (meat, vegetables, eggs, etc.).
- Chinese eat quickly: try and serve the food all at the same time and please don't take it as a mark of disrespect when the Chinese leave the table immediately – as soon as they have put down their cutlery or chopsticks.
- Avoid using too many milk products (cream, cheese, butter) and be moderate in the use of salt.
- The Chinese like foods which are liquid and soft. However, baked goods are not very common in China.
- Swiss cuisine also contains dishes which time and again find new fans amongst the Chinese: sausages, pasta, sauerkraut – even fondue and raclette served as mini-portions may arouse the exotic interest of Chinese tourists.
- For breakfast, porridge and fried vegetables provide a welcome extension to the classic European breakfast. Soft-boiled eggs are not so much appreciated. So please boil them longer.
- Hot drinks (and often simply hot water) are preferred to cold drinks. Chinese guests are also used to receiving free refills of hot water when ordering a tea.
- A menu in Chinese should be available for your guests.
- If possible, reserve a big, round table for your Chinese guests: The group travelling together will prefer to eat together.
- Chinese like to combine different dishes and tastes.
- It will be appreciated if all courses are served together, with the exception of the soup – which generally is served at the end of the meal.
- Place chopsticks on the right-hand side of the bowl or plate for each person, along with classical European cutlery. Never stick chopsticks into the food – this would 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 between 7.00 a.m. and 8.00 a.m., lunch at 12.00 noon and dinner between 6.00 p.m. and 7.00 p.m.
- 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 require any further information, advice and/or training as to how best to receive Chinese visitors or as to how best to work the Chinese market, please do not hesitate to contact [hotelleriesuisse](http://www.hotelleriesuisse.ch) or Switzerland Tourism at the following addresses:

hotelleriesuisse

Communication
Monbijoustrasse 130, 3001 Bern
Tel. 031 370 42 81
Fax 031 370 43 26
www.hotelleriesuisse.ch
kommunikation@hotelleriesuisse.ch

Switzerland Tourism

Tödistrasse 7, 8002 Zurich
Tel. 044 288 11 11
Fax 044 288 12 05
www.myswitzerland.com
info@myswitzerland.com

Switzerland Tourism – China

Tel. +86 10 6512 0974
Fax +86 10 6512 0973
www.myswitzerland.com.cn
info.cn@switzerland.com

Switzerland Tourism – Beijing

Prosper Center, Tower 1, Office 609
Guanghua Road 5
100020 Beijing
PR China
info.cn@switzerland.com

Switzerland Tourism – Shanghai

Room 1208, West Gate Tower
1038 Nanjing Xi Lu
200 041 Shanghai
PR China
info.sha@switzerland.com

Switzerland Tourism – Hongkong

Suite 1116, 11/F, Ocean Centre
Harbour City, 5 Canton Rd.
Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon
Hong Kong
info.hk@switzerland.com
Tel. +852 2865 6505

Useful Web sites

www.myswitzerland.com/zh
(Switzerland Tourism, in Chinese)

www.sinoptic.ch
(Information about China, in French and Chinese)

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

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

ch.china-embassy.org
(Chinese embassy)

www.swissinfo.ch/chi
(Swiss information platform, in Chinese)

www.globalblue.com (English)
www.globalblue.cn (Chinese)
(Information about VAT refunds)

hotelleriesuisse – Skillful.

Dynamic. Sincere.

Monbijoustrasse 130

P.O. Box

CH-3001 Bern

Telephone +41 31 370 42 81

Telefax +41 31 370 43 26

kommunikation@hotelleriesuisse.ch

www.hotelleriesuisse.ch