

Comparing Economies

US **United States** vs. CN **China** — 2026

us United States GDP

\$32.6T

#1 nominal GDP

cn China GDP

\$21.5T

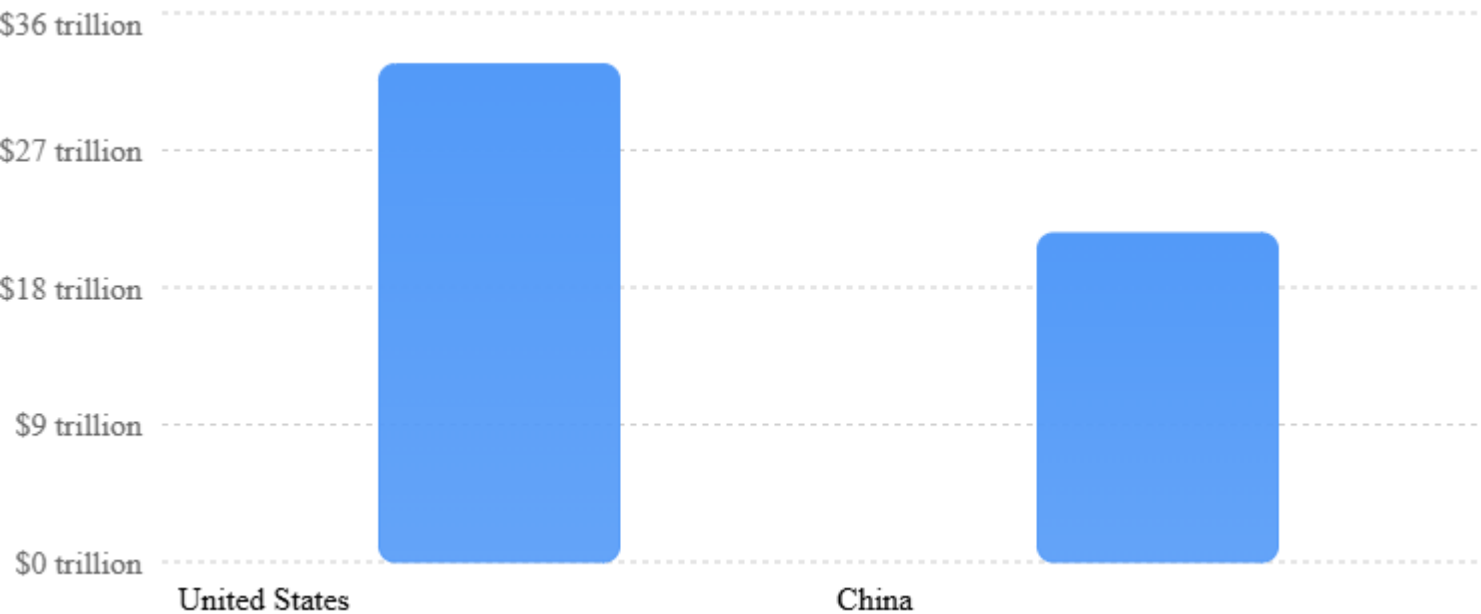
#2 nominal GDP

2026 IMF October projections, rounded.

IMF Data+1

Nominal GDP comparison

2026 projected GDP, trillions of U.S. dollars



Source: IMF October 2026 projections.

Economic comparison

Indicator	US United States	CN China
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Nominal GDP, 2026	\$32.6 trillion	\$21.5 trillion
GDP per person, 2025	\$90,027	\$13,862
GDP growth, 2025	2.2%	5.0%
Manufacturing output	Smaller	Larger
Consumer purchasing power per person	Higher	Lower
GDP adjusted for PPP, 2026	\$32.6 trillion	\$44.6 trillion

Sources: World Bank 2025 actuals and IMF October 2026 projections.
Data+1

What does this mean for American manufacturing?

China's economic strength is closely connected to its extensive manufacturing capacity, including electronics, clothing, machinery, batteries, and industrial components.

The United States has a more service-oriented economy, with major strengths in technology, finance, professional services, aerospace, and advanced manufacturing.

There are three important distinctions:

- Economic size: The United States produces approximately \$11.1 trillion more annually when measured using nominal GDP.
- Manufacturing capacity: China has greater manufacturing output, which matters for industrial supply chains and the ability to produce physical goods at scale.
- Living standards: American GDP per person is approximately 6.5 times China's in nominal dollar terms, although that is not the same as average household income.

Is China catching up with the United States?

China is growing faster in percentage terms, but faster growth does not automatically mean it will overtake the United States in nominal GDP. Exchange rates, demographics, productivity, investment, and trade policy all affect the outcome.

For the national security concerns we were discussing, manufacturing capacity may matter more than total GDP in particular industries. A country can have the world's largest economy and still depend on foreign factories for essential components.

Sources: [World Bank economic comparison](#) and [IMF World Economic Outlook, October 2026](#).