

**From:** Kirk Triplett kirktriplett@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Fwd: General trip info be careful, most of this is from Google searches, summarized by AI. Then edited by chatgpt.  
**Date:** July 14, 2025 at 4:38 PM  
**To:** Conor Triplett conortriplett@gmail.com, Kobe kobetriplett@gmail.com, Dad Triplett kirktriplett@gmail.com, Sam Triplett samtriplett18@gmail.com, Monica Toren monicator7@gmail.com, Cathi Triplett cathitriplett62@gmail.com

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Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Kirk Triplett <kirktriplett@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** General trip info be careful, most of this is from Google searches, summarized by AI. Then edited by chatgpt.  
**Date:** July 14, 2025 at 4:31:20 PM MST  
**To:** Dad Triplett <kirktriplett@gmail.com>

Here is a polished and organized version of your travel briefing, edited for clarity, consistency, and flow:

## Customs and Basic Information

### Phones

Verizon charges \$12 per day per phone for unlimited talk, text, and data abroad—roughly \$250 for the full trip to use your phone just as you would at home. Alternatively, Verizon offers a monthly travel plan for \$100, which includes a slightly smaller data cap.

I've already enrolled Kobe, Sam, Mom, and myself in the monthly plan.

### Money

#### China:

- Mobile payments (especially Alipay) are preferred—even by taxis, restaurants, and many shops.
- Alipay is more accessible for foreigners. I have it set up on my phone, but I'm not 100% confident it works everywhere.
- In major areas (like parks and shopping centers), credit cards should work fine. For smaller, off-the-beaten-path spots, Alipay or cash may be necessary.
- We've pre-ordered around \$1,500 worth of Chinese yuan to start (approx. 10,700 RMB). 100 RMB ≈ \$14.

#### Japan:

- Most places accept credit cards.
- We're also carrying about \$2,500 worth of Japanese yen. 1,000 yen ≈ \$7.
- Most expenses are prepaid, and tipping is not customary.
- Everyone should enable the **Suica** card in the **Apple Wallet**. This functions as a metro pass and can also be used for taxis and convenience stores. You can load funds directly from a U.S. credit card. Just tap your phone at the gates to ride.

### Tipping

#### China:

Tipping is not expected and can even be considered rude in many contexts. Exceptions include:

- **Tour Guides:** If they provide excellent service, a small tip in yuan (preferably in an envelope) is appreciated.
- **Upscale Restaurants:** Some may add a service charge. If not, a modest tip is occasionally welcomed.

#### No tipping needed for:

- Taxis
- Standard restaurants
- Hotel staff
- Bars or food stalls

#### Alternatives to tipping:

- A polite “谢谢” (xièxiè – thank you)
- Positive online reviews

## Japan:

Tipping is generally not practiced and may be declined politely. If tipping:

- **Private guides:** 2,000–3,000 yen/day
  - **Drivers:** 1,000 yen
  - **Free walking tours:** 1,000–2,000 yen/person
  - **Tip discreetly in a small envelope (kokoro-zuke)**
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## Transportation

### China

#### Beijing:

- Taxis: cash only
- Didi (China's Uber): works through Alipay
- Subway: pay cash for single tickets

#### Shanghai:

##### Metro options for tourists:

1. **Mobile payment apps (recommended):**
  - Use Alipay or WeChat Pay (both support international cards).
  - Use the "Transport" feature to get a QR code to scan at metro gates.
2. **Metro apps:**
  - The official **Shanghai Metro DADUHUI app** supports Visa/MasterCard and offers English.
  - You can also buy physical tickets or a **Shanghai Public Transportation Card**.
  - **1-Day Pass:** ¥18; **3-Day Pass:** ¥45

##### Notes:

- As of April 2024, metro ticket machines support Visa, Mastercard, Discover, AmEx, and more.
- Passport info may be needed to activate certain apps.
- Expect security checks at subway entrances.

### Japan

- We'll mostly use **Uber**, which summons taxis and allows cashless payment via the app.
  - **Public transportation** will be our primary method, especially subways using the **Suica card** in Apple Wallet.
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## Internet

Download a **VPN** to access Google and other U.S. apps in China. I'm using **Surfshark**—you're welcome to use my account:

- **User ID:** [kirktriplett@gmail.com](mailto:kirktriplett@gmail.com)
  - **Password:** )Barney1989(
- 

## Food and Water

### China:

- **Bottled water only**, including for brushing teeth.
- Avoid raw vegetables, salads, and unpeeled fruit.

### Japan:

- Tap water is safe to drink, but we'll likely stick to bottled out of habit.
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## Etiquette

### China

#### Greetings:

- Greet elders and those of higher rank first.
- Avoid hugs or overly firm handshakes.
- Use surnames with "Mr./Mrs."—avoid first names.

#### **Dining:**

- Wait for elders to sit and eat first.
- Keep both hands on the table.
- Avoid sticking chopsticks upright in food.
- Toasts are important—finish your drink after a "干杯" (gānbēi).
- Never cut noodles (they symbolize long life).

#### **Gifts:**

- Politely refuse a gift once or twice before accepting.
- Avoid giving:
  - Clocks or watches (symbolize death)
  - White flowers (used for funerals)
  - Green hats (imply infidelity)
- Red is lucky; avoid black and white unless for mourning.

#### **Social Etiquette:**

- Be punctual.
  - Avoid political discussions.
  - Don't point at people.
  - Avoid criticizing China or comparing it to other countries.
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### **Japan**

#### **1. Shoes:**

- Remove shoes when entering homes and some restaurants.
- Use provided slippers; remove them on raised/tatami floors.

#### **2. Greetings:**

- Bowing is customary. Return bows politely.
- Avoid physical contact like hugs and handshakes.

#### **3. Punctuality & Order:**

- Be on time or early.
- Respect queues and personal space.

#### **4. Quiet Spaces:**

- Keep voices down, especially on trains and in restaurants.
- Avoid phone calls in public spaces.

#### **5. Dining:**

- Slurping noodles is acceptable.
- Don't stick chopsticks into rice or pass food with chopsticks.
- Use chopstick rests when not eating.
- Never pour soy sauce directly on rice.

#### **6. Tipping:**

- Not expected and may be declined.
- A sincere thank you is sufficient.

#### **7. Trash:**

- Carry your trash until you find a bin.
- Sort recyclables when possible.

#### 8. General Etiquette:

- Don't eat or drink while walking.
- Avoid blowing your nose in public.
- Be respectful at religious or cultural sites.

## Language

### China

#### Basic Mandarin Phrases

English	Chinese (Pinyin)	Pronunciation
Hello, hi	你好 (nǐ hǎo)	nee how
How are you?	你好吗? (nǐ hǎo ma)	nee how ma
Good morning	早 (zǎo)	dzow
Hello (on phone)	喂 (wèi)	way
Good	好 (hǎo)	how
Very good	很好 (hěn hǎo)	hen how
Thank you	谢谢 (xièxie)	shyeah shyeah
You're welcome	不客气 (bú kèqi)	boo kuh chee
No problem	没事 (méi shì)	may shrr
Sorry / Excuse me	对不起 (duìbuqǐ)	dway boo chee
Goodbye	再见 (zàijiàn)	dzeye jee-en
1, 2, 3	一 二 三 (yī èr sān)	ee, are, san
How much?	多少钱? (duōshao qián)	doo-ah shaow chee-en
Money / Cost	钱 (qián)	chee-en
Bottle of water	瓶水 (píng shuǐ)	ping shway
Cola	可乐 (kělè)	kuh-luh
Waiter / Attendant	服务员 (fúwùyuán)	foo woo yoo-an
Please give me...	请你给我... (qǐng nǐ gěi wǒ)	ching nee gay wuh
Bathroom	卫生间 (wèishēngjiān)	way shung jee-en
America	美国 (Měiguó)	may gwah
China	中国 (Zhōngguó)	joong gwah
Person	人 (rén)	ren
Yes / No	对 / 不 (duì / bù)	dway / boo
Beijing	北京 (Běijīng)	bay-jing
Shanghai	上海 (Shànghǎi)	shahng high



#### Additional Mandarin Tourist Phrases

English	Chinese (Pinyin)	Pronunciation
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I don't understand	我不懂 (wǒ bù dǒng)	wuh boo dong
Do you speak English? 你会说英语吗? (nǐ huì shuō yīngyǔ ma?)		nee hway shwaw ying-yoo ma?
I'm lost	我迷路了 (wǒ mílù le)	wuh mee loo luh
Can you help me? 你能帮我吗? (nǐ néng bāng wǒ ma?)		nee nung bahng wuh ma?
Where is the subway? 地铁在哪里? (dìtiě zài nǎlǐ?)		dee-tyeh dzai nah-lee?
I want to go here	我想去这里 (wǒ xiǎng qù zhèlǐ)	wuh shyahng chyoo juh-lee
I'm allergic to ____	我对____过敏 (wǒ duì ____ guòmǐn)	wuh dway ____ gwoh meen
No spicy, please	请不要辣 (qǐng bú yào là)	ching boo yow lah
I'm just looking	我只是看看 (wǒ zhǐshì kànkàn)	wuh jir shir kahn kahn
Can I take a photo? 可以拍照吗? (kěyǐ pāizhào ma?)		kuh yee pie-jow ma?



## Japan

### Basic Japanese Phrases

English	Japanese	Pronunciation
Hello	こんにちは (Konnichiwa)	kohn-nee-chee-wah
Thank you	ありがとうございます (Arigatou gozaimasu)	ah-ree-gah-toh goh-zah-ee-mahs
Please	ください (Kudasai)	koo-dah-sigh
Excuse me / I'm sorry	すみません (Sumimasen)	soo-mee-mah-sen
Yes / No	はい / いいえ (Hai / Ie)	hi / ee-eh
Nice to meet you	はじめまして (Hajimemashite)	hah-jee-meh-mah-shee-teh
Goodbye	さようなら (Sayōnara)	sah-yoh-nah-rah
Beautiful	美しい (Utsukushii)	oo-tsoo-koo-shee
Before eating	いただきます (Itadakimasu)	ee-tah-dah-kee-mahs
Delicious	美味しい (Oishii)	oh-ee-shee
Wine	ワイン (Wain)	wah-een
Beer	ビール (Bīru)	bee-roo
Sake	日本酒 (Nihonshu)	nee-hohn-shoo
Water please	お水をお願いします (O-mizu o onegai shimasu)	oh-mee-zoo oh oh-neh-guy shee-mahs
Check, please	お会計お願いします (Okaikei onegai shimasu)	oh-kai-kay oh-neh-guy shee-mahs
I would like ____, please	__をください (o kudasai)	____ oh koo-dah-sigh
How much is this?	いくらですか? (Ikura desu ka?)	ee-koo-rah deh-soo kah?
I'll take it	それをお願いします (Sore o moraimasu)	soh-reh oh moh-rah-ee-mahs
Help!	助けて! (Tasukete!)	tah-soo-keh-teh!



### Additional Japanese Tourist Phrases

English	Japanese	Pronunciation
I don't understand	わかりません (Wakarimasen)	wah-kah-ree-mah-sen

Do you speak English?	英語を話せますか? (Eigo o hanasemasu ka?)	ay-go oh hah-nah-seh-mas kah?
I'm lost	道に迷いました (Michi ni mayoimashita)	mee-chee nee mah-yoi-mah-shee-tah
Can you help me?	手伝ってもらえますか? (Tetsudatte moraemasu ka?)	teh-tsu-daht-teh moh-rah-eh-mas kah?
Where is the station?	駅はどこですか? (Eki wa doko desu ka?)	eh-kee wah doh-koh dess kah?
I want to go here	ここに行きたいです (Koko ni ikitai desu)	koh-koh nee ee-kee-tie dess
I'm allergic to ____	____にアレルギーがあります	____ ni arerugi ga arimasu
No seafood, please	海鮮はだめです (Kaisen wa dame desu)	kai-sen wah dah-meh dess
I'm just looking	見てだけです (Mite iru dake desu)	mee-teh ee-roo dah-keh dess
Can I take a photo?	写真を撮ってもいいですか? (Shashin o totte mo ii desu ka?)	shah-sheen oh tot-teh moh ee dess kah?

