**People's Republic of China**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **中华人民共和国 中華人民共和國 *Zhōnghuá Rénmín Gònghéguó***  **People's Republic of China** | | |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | [Flag](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag_of_People%27s_Republic_of_China) | [National Emblem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Emblem_of_People%27s_Republic_of_China) | | | |
| [**Anthem**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_anthem) [*Yìyǒngjūn Jìnxíngqǔ*   (义勇军进行曲/義勇軍進行曲)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/March_of_the_Volunteers) *March of the Volunteers* | | |
|  | | |
| [**Capital**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capital) | | [Beijing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beijing) [39°55′N, 116°23′E](http://tools.wikimedia.de/~magnus/geo/geohack.php?params=39_55_N_116_23_E_type:country(%7b%7b%7barea%7d%7d%7d)) |
| [**Largest city**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_People%27s_Republic_of_China) | | [Shanghai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanghai) |
| [**Official languages**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Official_language) | | [Mandarin Chinese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standard_Mandarin)1 |
| [**Government**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government) | | [Socialist republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialist_republic)2 |
| - | [President](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_of_the_People%27s_Republic_of_China) | [Hu Jintao](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hu_Jintao) |
| - | [Premier](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Premier_of_the_People%27s_Republic_of_China) | [Wen Jiabao](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wen_Jiabao) |
| [**Establishment**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_Civil_War) | | |
| - | [People's Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Republic) declared | [October 1](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/October_1), [1949](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1949) |
| - | [Water](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water) ([%](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Percent)) | 2.83 |
| [**Population**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Population) | | |
| - | 2007 estimate | 1,317,000,0003 ([1st](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_population)) |
| - | 2000 census | 1,242,612,226 |
| - | [Density](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Population_density) | 140 /km² ([72nd3](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_population_density)) 3633 /sq mi |
| [**GDP**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gross_domestic_product) ([PPP](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purchasing_power_parity)) | | 2006 estimate |
| - | Total | $10 trillion ([2nd](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_%28PPP%29)) |
| - | [Per capita](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Per_capita) | $7,600 ([84th](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_%28PPP%29_per_capita)) |
| [**GDP**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gross_domestic_product) (nominal) | | 2006 estimate |
| - | Total | $2.68 trillion ([4th](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_%28nominal%29)) |
| - | [Per capita](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Per_capita) | $2,040 ([110th](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_%28nominal%29_per_capita)) |
| [**Gini**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gini_coefficient)? (2002) | | 44 (medium) |
| [**HDI**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_Development_Index) (2004) | | 0.768 (medium) ([81st](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_Human_Development_Index)) |
| [**Currency**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Currency) | | [Renminbi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Renminbi) (RMB¥)3 ([CNY](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISO_4217)) |
| [**Time zone**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Time_zone) | | ([UTC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coordinated_Universal_Time)+8) |
| - | Summer ([DST](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daylight_saving_time)) | not observed ([UTC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coordinated_Universal_Time)+8) |
| [**Internet TLD**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Country_code_top-level_domain) | | [.cn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/.cn)3 |
| [**Calling code**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_country_calling_codes) | | +863 |
| 1 | [General Information of the People's Republic of China](http://www.chinatoday.com/general/a.htm), China Today. Retrieved [21 February](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/February_21) [2007](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2007). In addition to [Standard Mandarin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standard_Mandarin), [Cantonese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cantonese_%28linguistics%29) is co-official in both [Hong Kong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hong_Kong) and [Macau](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macau). [English](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_language) is co-official in [Hong Kong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hong_Kong) (SAR); correspondingly, [Portuguese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portuguese_language) in [Macau](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macau) (SAR). Similarly, several minority languages are also co-official with Standard Mandarin in minority areas, viz. [Uyghur](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uyghur_language) in [Xinjiang](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xinjiang_Uyghur_Autonomous_Region), [Mongolian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mongolian_language) in the classical alphabet in [Inner Mongolia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inner_Mongolia_Autonomous_Region), [Tibetan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tibetan_language) in [Tibet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tibet_Autonomous_Region), and [Korean](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_language) in [Yanbian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yanbian_Prefecture), [Jilin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jilin). | |
| 2 | [The role of the government, China](http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-71005/China), Encyclopaedia Britannica. Retrieved on 21-02-2007. | |
| 3 | Information for mainland China only. The [Special Administrative Regions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special_Administrative_Regions) of the PRC: [Hong Kong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hong_Kong), [Macau](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macau) are excluded. In addition, the territories controlled by the [Republic of China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_of_China), which includes the islands of ([Taiwan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taiwan), [Kinmen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kinmen), and [Matsu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matsu_Islands)) are also excluded. | |
| 4 | Area rank is [*disputed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_and_outlying_territories_by_area) with the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) and is sometimes ranked third or fourth (see [#Geography and climate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People's_Republic_of_China#Geography_and_climate#Geography_and_climate)). | |

*For the Chinese civilization, see [China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China" \o "China).*

*“PRC” redirects here. For other uses, see [PRC (disambiguation)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PRC_%28disambiguation%29" \o "PRC (disambiguation)).*

*Not to be confused with the*[*Republic of China (Taiwan)*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_of_China)



The **People's Republic of China** (**PRC**; [Simplified Chinese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simplified_Chinese): [中](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/%E4%B8%AD)[华](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/%E5%8D%8E)[人](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/%E4%BA%BA)[民](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/%E6%B0%91)[共](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/%E5%85%B1)[和](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/%E5%92%8C)[国](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/%E5%9B%BD); [Traditional Chinese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Traditional_Chinese): [中](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/%E4%B8%AD)[華](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/%E8%8F%AF)[人](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/%E4%BA%BA)[民](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/%E6%B0%91)[共](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/%E5%85%B1)[和](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/%E5%92%8C)[國](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/%E5%9C%8B); [Pinyin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pinyin): [Zhōnghuá](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China) Rénmín Gònghéguó [listen](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e7/Zh-Zhonghua_renmin_gongheguo.ogg) ([help](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Media_help)·[info](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Zh-Zhonghua_renmin_gongheguo.ogg" \o "Image:Zh-Zhonghua renmin gongheguo.ogg))), commonly known as **China**, is the largest [country](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Country" \o "Country) in [East Asia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Asia" \o "East Asia). With over 1.31 [billion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1000000000_%28number%29" \o "1000000000 (number)) people, it is the world's [most populous](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_population" \o "List of countries by population) country. At 9,640,821 km² (actual administered territory) or 9,676,801 km² (including claimed territory of Taiwan), it is the world's [third or fourth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_and_outlying_territories_by_area" \o "List of countries and outlying territories by area) largest country in terms of total area. Its [capital](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capital" \o "Capital) is [Beijing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beijing" \o "Beijing).

The [Communist Party of China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communist_Party_of_China" \o "Communist Party of China) (CPC) has led the PRC under a [single-party system](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Single-party_system" \o "Single-party system) since the state's establishment in [1949](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1949" \o "1949). The PRC is involved in a long-running dispute over the [political status of Taiwan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_status_of_Taiwan" \o "Political status of Taiwan). The CPC's rival during [the Chinese Civil War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Chinese_Civil_War" \o "The Chinese Civil War), the [Kuomintang](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuomintang" \o "Kuomintang) (KMT), retreated to [Taiwan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taiwan" \o "Taiwan) and [surrounding islands](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_islands_of_the_Republic_of_China" \o "List of islands of the Republic of China) after [its civil war defeat in 1949](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_Civil_War" \o "Chinese Civil War), and traditionally has claimed legitimacy over [China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China" \o "China) and [Mongolia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mongolia" \o "Mongolia) while it is the ruling power of the [Republic of China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_of_China" \o "Republic of China) (ROC). The PRC regards the ROC claims as illegitimate. The term "[Mainland China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mainland_China" \o "Mainland China)" is sometimes used to denote the areas under PRC rule, but usually excludes its two [Special Administrative Regions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special_Administrative_Region_of_the_People%27s_Republic_of_China" \o "Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China): [Hong Kong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hong_Kong) and [Macau](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macau" \o "Macau).

Due to its vast [population](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Population" \o "Population), its rapidly growing [economy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy" \o "Economy), its large [research and development](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Research_and_development" \o "Research and development) investments and [military spending](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_spending" \o "Military spending), its status as a [declared nuclear weapons state](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_with_nuclear_weapons" \o "List of countries with nuclear weapons), and other capabilities, the PRC is often considered by commentators as an [emerging superpower](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emerging_superpower" \o "Emerging superpower). It is the world's [fourth largest economy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_%28nominal%29" \o "List of countries by GDP (nominal)) and [second largest](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_%28PPP%29" \o "List of countries by GDP (PPP)) at [purchasing power parity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purchasing_power_parity" \o "Purchasing power parity), and [represents China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China_and_the_United_Nations" \o "China and the United Nations) as a permanent member of the [United Nations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations" \o "United Nations) [Security Council](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council) and [Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asia-Pacific_Economic_Cooperation). Market-based [economic reforms](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_economic_reform" \o "Chinese economic reform) since 1978 have helped lift 400 million people out of poverty, bringing the poverty rate down from 53% of population in 1981 to 8% by 2001. However, the PRC is now faced with a number of other economic problems, including a rapidly aging population and an increasing rural-urban [income gap](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Income_gap" \o "Income gap).

China plays a major role in [international trade](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_trade" \o "International trade). The country is the world's largest consumer of [steel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steel" \o "Steel) and [concrete](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Concrete" \o "Concrete), using, respectively, a third and over a half of the world's supply of each, and it is also the second largest importer of [petroleum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petroleum" \o "Petroleum). Globally it is the third largest [importer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Importer" \o "Importer) in the world, and the second largest [exporter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exporter" \o "Exporter) counting all products.

**History**

*For China's history before 1949, see* [*History of China*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_China)*.*



[Mao Zedong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mao_Zedong) proclaiming the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949

The [Chinese Civil War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_Civil_War" \o "Chinese Civil War) ended in 1949 with the Communist Party of China in control of the mainland, and the [Kuomintang](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuomintang" \o "Kuomintang) (KMT) retreating to [Taiwan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taiwan" \o "Taiwan) and some outlying islands of [Fujian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fujian" \o "Fujian). On [October 1](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/October_1" \o "October 1), [1949](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1949) [Mao Zedong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mao_Zedong) proclaimed the People's Republic of China, declaring "the Chinese people have stood up" **Red China** was a [frequent appelation for the PRC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_People%27s_Republic_of_China_%281976%E2%80%931989%29" \l "Reform_and_opening_up" \o "History of the People's Republic of China (1976–1989)) (generally within the [capitalist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capitalist" \o "Capitalist)/[Western bloc](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_bloc)) used from the time of Communist ascendance until the mid-late [1970s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1970s" \o "1970s) with the [improvement of relations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_People%27s_Republic_of_China_%281976%E2%80%931989%29" \l "Economic_Reform_and_Opening_up" \o "History of the People's Republic of China (1976–1989)) between China and the West.

Following a series of dramatic economic failures (coinciding with the [Great Leap Forward](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Leap_Forward" \o "Great Leap Forward)), Mao stepped down from his position as chairman in 1959, with [Liu Shaoqi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liu_Shaoqi" \o "Liu Shaoqi) as successor. Mao still had much influence over the Party, but was removed from day-to-day management of economic affairs, which came under the control of Liu Shaoqi and [Deng Xiaoping](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deng_Xiaoping" \o "Deng Xiaoping).

In 1966, Mao and his allies launched the [Cultural Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_Revolution" \o "Cultural Revolution), which would last until Mao's death a decade later. The Cultural Revolution, motivated by power struggles within the Party and a fear of the [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union" \o "Soviet Union), led to a major upheaval in Chinese society. In 1972, at the peak of the [Sino-Soviet split](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Soviet_split" \o "Sino-Soviet split), Mao and [Zhou Enlai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhou_Enlai" \o "Zhou Enlai) met [Richard Nixon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Nixon" \o "Richard Nixon) in Beijing to establish relations with the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States" \o "United States). In the same year, the PRC joined the [United Nations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations" \o "United Nations), replacing the Republic of China or Taiwan for the Chinese permanent Security Council seat.

After Mao's death in 1976 and the arrest of the [Gang of Four](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gang_of_Four" \o "Gang of Four) blamed for the excesses of the Cultural Revolution, Deng Xiaoping quickly wrestled power from Mao's anointed successor [Hua Guofeng](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hua_Guofeng" \o "Hua Guofeng). Although Deng never became the head of the Party or State himself, his influence within the Party led the country to economic reforms of significant magnitude. The Communist Party subsequently loosened governmental control over citizens' personal lives and the [communes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Commune" \o "People's Commune) were disbanded with many peasants receiving multiple land leases, which greatly increased incentives and agricultural production. This turn of events marked China's transition from a planned economy to a [mixed economy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mixed_economy" \o "Mixed economy) with an increasingly open market environment, a system termed by many "[market socialism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Market_socialism" \o "Market socialism)". The PRC adopted its current [constitution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution_of_the_People%27s_Republic_of_China" \o "Constitution of the People's Republic of China) on [December 4](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/December_4" \o "December 4), [1982](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1982).



Students at the [1989 Tiananmen Square protests](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiananmen_Square_protests_of_1989" \o "Tiananmen Square protests of 1989).

In 1989, the death of pro-reform official, [Hu Yaobang](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hu_Yaobang" \o "Hu Yaobang), helped to spark the [Tiananmen Square protests of 1989](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiananmen_Square_protests_of_1989" \o "Tiananmen Square protests of 1989), during which students and others campaigned for several months for more rights and freedom of expression. However, after the demonstrations grew increasingly directed against Party corruption, they were eventually put down on [June 4](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/June_4" \o "June 4) when [PLA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Liberation_Army" \o "People's Liberation Army) troops and vehicles entered and forcibly cleared the square by opening fire on protestors with automatic weapons, resulting in numerous casualties. This event was widely reported and [famously videotaped](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tank_man" \o "Tank man), which brought worldwide condemnation and sanctions against the government.



Flag of the People's Republic before a modernizing [Shanghai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanghai" \o "Shanghai).

President [Jiang Zemin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jiang_Zemin" \o "Jiang Zemin) and Premier [Zhu Rongji](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhu_Rongji" \o "Zhu Rongji), both former mayors of [Shanghai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanghai" \o "Shanghai), led post-Tiananmen China in the 1990s. Under Jiang Zemin's ten years of administration, China's economic performance pulled an estimated 150 million peasants out of poverty and sustained an average annual GDP growth rate of 11.2%. The country formally joined the [WTO](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WTO) in 2001.

Although China needs economic growth to spur its development, the government has begun to worry that rapid economic growth could negatively impact the country's resources and environment. Another concern is that many sectors of society are not sufficiently benefiting from China's economic development. As a result, under current President [Hu Jintao](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hu_Jintao" \o "Hu Jintao) and Premier [Wen Jiabao](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wen_Jiabao" \o "Wen Jiabao), the PRC have initiated policies to address these issues of equitable distribution of resources, but the outcome remains to be seen. For much of China's population, living standards have seen extremely large improvements, and freedom continues to expand, but political controls remain tight.

**Politics**



The [Great Hall of the People](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Hall_of_the_People" \o "Great Hall of the People), on the west side of [Tiananmen Square](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiananmen_Square" \o "Tiananmen Square), is China's congress building. There are 2,979 representatives in the annual [congress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_People%27s_Congress" \o "National People's Congress).

While the PRC is regarded as a [communist state](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communist_state" \o "Communist state) by many [political scientists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_science" \o "Political science), simple characterizations of China's political [structure](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Structure) are controversial. The PRC government has been variously described as [authoritarian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Authoritarianism" \o "Authoritarianism), [communist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communism), and [socialist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialism" \o "Socialism), with heavy restrictions remaining in many areas, most notably in [the Internet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_censorship_in_the_People%27s_Republic_of_China" \o "Internet censorship in the People's Republic of China) and in [the press](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_the_press" \o "Freedom of the press), freedom of assembly, freedom of movement, freedom of reproductive rights, and freedom of religion. The country is ruled under the [Constitution of the People's Republic of China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution_of_the_People%27s_Republic_of_China" \o "Constitution of the People's Republic of China). Its incumbent [Paramount Leader](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paramount_Leader" \o "Paramount Leader) is President [Hu Jintao](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hu_Jintao" \o "Hu Jintao) and [premier](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Premier" \o "Premier) is [Wen Jiabao](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wen_Jiabao" \o "Wen Jiabao) with people's congress and [Communist Party of China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communist_Party_of_China" \o "Communist Party of China).



[Hu Jintao](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hu_Jintao), current [President of the PRC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_of_the_People%27s_Republic_of_China" \o "President of the People's Republic of China).

The country is run by the [Communist Party of China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communist_Party_of_China" \o "Communist Party of China) (CPC). Its monopoly on power is guaranteed by the Constitution. There are other political parties in the PRC, referred to in China as "democratic parties", which participate in the [People's Political Consultative Conference](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Political_Consultative_Conference" \o "People's Political Consultative Conference) and the [National People's Congress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_People%27s_Congress" \o "National People's Congress), though they serve mainly to endorse CPC policies. There have been some moves toward political liberalisation, in that open contested elections are now held at the village and town levels, and that legislatures have shown some assertiveness from time to time; however, the Party retains effective control over governmental appointments. This is because, in the absence of meaningful opposition, with the presence of censorship and limits on assembly and speech, the CPC wins by default in most elections. The CPC has been enforcing its rule by clamping down on political dissidents while simultaneously attempting to reduce dissent by improving the economy and allowing public expression of personal grievances so long as they are not organized. Current political concerns in China include lessening the growing gap between rich and poor and fighting corruption within the government leadership. The support that the Communist Party of China has among the Chinese population in general is unclear because strong criticism of the CPC is outlawed and there are no consistently contested national elections. Also, private conversations and anecdotal information often reveal conflicting views. However, according to a survey conducted in Hong Kong, where a relatively high level of freedom is enjoyed, the current CPC leaders have received substantial votes of support when residents were asked to rank their favourite leaders from the PRC and Taiwan.

For much of China's history, the state had been ruled by some form of [centralized imperial monarchy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_Empire" \o "Chinese Empire), which was followed by a chaotic succession of largely [authoritarian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Authoritarianism" \o "Authoritarianism) [Chinese Nationalist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuomintang) governments as well as [warlord](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warlord" \o "Warlord)-[held](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_occupation" \o "Military occupation) administrations since the last few years of the [Qing Dynasty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qing_Dynasty" \o "Qing Dynasty) in 1912.

*See also: [Government of the People's Republic of China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government_of_the_People%27s_Republic_of_China" \o "Government of the People's Republic of China),* [*Chinese nationalism*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_nationalism)*,* [*Propaganda in the People's Republic of China*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Propaganda_in_the_People%27s_Republic_of_China)*,* [*Chinese law*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_law)*,* [*Politics of the Republic of China*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_the_Republic_of_China)*,* [*Neoconservatism in China*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neoconservatism_in_China)*,* [*Politics of Hong Kong*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_Hong_Kong)*, and [Politics of Macau](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_Macau" \o "Politics of Macau)*

**Foreign relations**



[Hu Jintao](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hu_Jintao) with [George W. Bush](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_W._Bush" \o "George W. Bush). [Sino-American relations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-American_relations) are closely monitored by international observers.

The People's Republic of China maintains diplomatic relations with most major countries in the world. In 1971, the PRC replaced the [Republic of China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_of_China" \o "Republic of China) as the sole representative of [China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China" \o "China) in the [United Nations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations" \o "United Nations) and as one of the five permanent members of the [United Nations Security Council](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council" \o "United Nations Security Council). It is considered a founding member of the UN, though the PRC was not in control of China at the time. The PRC was also a former member and leader of the [Non-Aligned Movement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-Aligned_Movement" \o "Non-Aligned Movement).

Under the [One-China policy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One-China_policy" \o "One-China policy), the PRC has made it a precondition to establishing diplomatic relations that the other country acknowledges its claim to [Taiwan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taiwan" \o "Taiwan) and sever any official ties with the [Republic of China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_of_China" \o "Republic of China) (ROC) government. The government actively opposes foreign travels by former and present Taiwanese officials, such as [Lee Teng-hui](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lee_Teng-hui" \o "Lee Teng-hui) and [Chen Shui-bian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chen_Shui-bian" \o "Chen Shui-bian), and other politically controversial figures, such as [Tenzin Gyatso](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tenzin_Gyatso" \o "Tenzin Gyatso), the current [Dalai Lama](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dalai_Lama" \o "Dalai Lama) of [Tibet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tibet" \o "Tibet), in an official context.

China has been playing an increasing role in calling for [free trade areas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_trade_area" \o "Free trade area) and security pacts amongst its Asia-Pacific neighbors. In 2004, China proposed an entirely new [East Asia Summit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Asia_Summit" \o "East Asia Summit) (EAS) framework as a forum for regional security issues that pointedly excluded the United States. The EAS, which includes [ASEAN Plus Three](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ASEAN_Plus_Three" \o "ASEAN Plus Three), [India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India), [Australia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australia) and [New Zealand](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Zealand" \o "New Zealand), held its inaugural summit in 2005. China is also a founding member of the [Shanghai Cooperation Organization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanghai_Cooperation_Organization" \o "Shanghai Cooperation Organization) (SCO), with [Russia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia" \o "Russia) and the [Central Asian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Asia" \o "Central Asia) republics.

Much of the current foreign policy is based on the concept of [China's peaceful rise](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China%27s_peaceful_rise" \o "China's peaceful rise). However, conflicts with foreign countries have occurred at various times in its recent history, particularly with the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States" \o "United States); e.g., the [U.S. bombing of the Chinese embassy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NATO_Bombing_of_the_Chinese_embassy_in_Belgrade" \o "NATO Bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade) in [Belgrade](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belgrade" \o "Belgrade) during the [Kosovo conflict](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kosovo_War" \o "Kosovo War) in May 1999 and the [U.S.-China spy plane incident](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S.-China_spy_plane_incident" \o "U.S.-China spy plane incident) in April 2001. Also, its foreign relations with many other Western nations suffered for a time following the Tiananmen Square Incident in 1989, sometimes referred to as the Tiananmen Square Massacre or June 4 Incident. The relationship between [China and Japan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Japanese_relations" \o "Sino-Japanese relations) has been strained at times by Japan's refusal to acknowledge its war-time past to the satisfaction of the PRC, e.g. [revisionist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_revisionism" \o "Historical revisionism) comments made by prominent Japanese officials, and insufficient attention paid to the [Nanjing Massacre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nanking_Massacre" \o "Nanking Massacre) and other [atrocities](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_war_crimes" \o "Japanese war crimes) committed during [World War II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II" \o "World War II) in some [Japanese history textbooks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_history_textbook_controversies" \o "Japanese history textbook controversies). Another point of conflict between the two countries is the frequent visits by Japanese government officials to the [Yasukuni Shrine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yasukuni_Shrine" \o "Yasukuni Shrine), which enshrines thousands of World War II war criminals, including 14 Class A convicts. Relations with China and Japan also have been strained by the [Anti-Japanese Riots](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-Japanese_Riots" \o "Anti-Japanese Riots) that occurred in spring of 2005. However, Sino-Japanese relations have warmed considerably since [Shinzo Abe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shinzo_Abe" \o "Shinzo Abe) became the new Japanese Prime Minister in September 2006. A joint historical study to be completed by 2008 of WWII atrocities is currently being conducted by China and Japan.

Bordering the most countries in the world, the PRC is in a number of [international territorial disputes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_relations_of_the_People%27s_Republic_of_China" \l "International_territorial_disputes" \o "Foreign relations of the People's Republic of China). China's territorial disputes have led to several localized wars in the last 50 years, including the [Sino-Indian War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian_War" \o "Sino-Indian War) in 1962, the [Sino-Soviet border conflict](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Soviet_border_conflict" \o "Sino-Soviet border conflict) in 1969 and the [Sino-Vietnam War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Vietnam_War" \o "Sino-Vietnam War) in 1979. In 2001, the PRC and Russia signed the [Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Good-Neighborliness_and_Friendly_Cooperation_Between_the_People%27s_Republic_of_China_and_the_Russian_Federation" \o "Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation Between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation), which paved the way in 2004 for Russia to transfer Yinlong Island as well as one half of Heixiazi Island to China, ending a long-standing [Sino-Russian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Russian_relations" \o "Sino-Russian relations) border dispute. Other territorial disputes include islands in the [East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_China_Sea" \o "East China Sea) and [South China Seas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_China_Sea" \o "South China Sea), and undefined or disputed borders with [India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India" \o "India), [Tajikstan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tajikstan) and [North Korea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Korea" \o "North Korea).

China's relationship with its two important neighbors, India and Japan have also been marred by China's subtle, if not overt opposition to their bid to become permanent members of the [United Nations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations" \o "United Nations) [Security Council](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Security_Council).

While accompanying a rapid economic rise, the PRC seeks to maintain a policy of quiet diplomacy with its neighbors. Steady, economic growth, while participating in regional organizations and cultivating bi-lateral relations will ease suspicion over China's burgeoning military capabilities.

**Population policy**

With a population of over 1.3 billion, the PRC is very concerned about its population growth and has attempted with mixed results to implement a strict family planning policy. The government's goal is [one child per family](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One-child_policy" \o "One-child policy), with exceptions for ethnic minorities and flexibility in rural areas, where a family can have a second child if the first is a girl or physically disabled. The government's goal is to stabilize population growth early in the twenty-first century, though some current projections estimate a population of anywhere ranging from 1.4 billion to 1.6 billion by 2025.

The policy is resisted, particularly in rural areas, because of the need for [agricultural](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agricultural" \o "Agricultural) labour and a traditional preference for boys. Families who breach the policy often lie during the census. Official government policy opposes forced abortion or sterilization, but allegations of coercion continue as local officials, who are faced with penalties for failing to curb population growth, may resort to forced abortion or sterilization, or manipulation of census figures.

The decreasing reliability of PRC population statistics since family planning began in the late 1970s has made evaluating the effectiveness of the policy difficult. Estimates by Chinese demographers of the [average number of children for a Chinese woman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Total_fertility_rate" \o "Total fertility rate) vary from 1.5 to 2.0. The government is particularly concerned with the large imbalance in the [sex ratio](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sex_ratio" \o "Sex ratio) at birth, apparently the result of a combination of traditional preference for boys, family planning pressure, and the wide availability of [ultrasound](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ultrasound" \o "Ultrasound), which led to its ban for the purpose of [sex-selective abortion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sex-selective_abortion" \o "Sex-selective abortion).

**Human rights**

The [Constitution of the People's Republic of China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution_of_the_People%27s_Republic_of_China" \o "Constitution of the People's Republic of China) states that the "fundamental rights" of citizens include [freedom of speech](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_speech" \o "Freedom of speech), [freedom of the press](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_the_press), the [right to a fair trial](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Right_to_a_fair_trial" \o "Right to a fair trial), [freedom of religion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_religion), [universal suffrage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_suffrage), and [property rights](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Property" \o "Property). However, [censorship](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Censorship_in_the_People%27s_Republic_of_China" \o "Censorship in the People's Republic of China) of political speech and information is openly and routinely used to protect what the government considers national security interests. In particular, press control is notoriously tight: Reporters Without Borders considers the PRC one of the least free countries in the world for the press. The government has a policy of limiting some protests and organizations that it considers a threat to social stability and national unity, as was the case with the [Tiananmen Square protests of 1989](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiananmen_Square_protests_of_1989" \o "Tiananmen Square protests of 1989). The Communist Party has had mixed success at controlling information: a very strong media control system faces very strong market forces, an increasingly educated citizenry and cultural change that are making China more open. In some cases, especially on environmental issues, China's leaders see expressions of public dissatisfaction as a catalyst for positive change.

At times, the PRC is faced with criticism from foreign governments and [NGOs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NGO" \o "NGO) concerning allegations of gross human rights violations. These criticisms allege that there existed a widespread practice of lengthy detentions without trial, forced confessions, torture, mistreatment of prisoners, as well as allegations of restrictions on freedoms of [speech](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_speech" \o "Freedom of speech), [assembly](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_assembly), [association](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_association), [religion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_religion), [the press](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_the_press), and [workers' rights](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Workers%27_rights). Furthermore, China leads the world in [capital punishment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capital_punishment" \o "Capital punishment), accounting for roughly 90% of total death-penalty executions in 2004. These issues remain one of the driving forces behind independence movements in [Tibet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tibet" \o "Tibet) and [Xinjiang](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xinjiang" \o "Xinjiang). The PRC government responds to these criticisms by arguing that the notion of human rights should factor in standards-of-living. It views the rise in China's standard-of-living as an indicator of improvement in the human rights issue.

In [Reporters Without Borders](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reporters_Without_Borders" \o "Reporters Without Borders)' Annual World Press Freedom Index of 2005, the PRC ranked 159 out of 167 places. PRC journalist [He Qinglian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/He_Qinglian" \o "He Qinglian) in her 2004 book Media Control in China documents government controls on the Internet and other media in China.

**Political divisions**

The People's Republic of China has administrative control over twenty-two provinces (省) and considers [Táiwān](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taiwan_Province_%28People%27s_Republic_of_China%29" \o "Taiwan Province (People's Republic of China)) (台湾) to be its twenty-third province. Apart from provinces, there are five [autonomous regions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Autonomous_regions_of_China" \o "Autonomous regions of China) (自治区), each with a designated minority group; four [municipalities](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Municipality" \o "Municipality) (直辖市); and two [Special Administrative Regions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special_Administrative_Region_of_the_People%27s_Republic_of_China" \o "Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China) (特别行政区) that enjoy considerable autonomy. The twenty-two provinces, five autonomous regions and four municipalities can be collectively referred to as "[mainland China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mainland_China" \o "Mainland China)", a term which usually excludes Hong Kong and Macau. The following are a list of administrative divisions of areas under the control of the People's Republic of China.



Province-level divisions of the People's Republic of China.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Provinces** （省）   * [Ānhuī](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anhui) (安徽) * [Fújiàn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fujian) (福建) * [Gānsù](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gansu) (甘肃) * [Guǎngdōng](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guangdong) (广东) * [Guìzhōu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guizhou) (贵州) * [Hǎinán](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hainan) (海南) * [Héběi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebei) (河北) * [Hēilóngjiāng](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heilongjiang) (黑龙江) * [Hénán](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henan) (河南) * [Húběi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hubei) (湖北) * [Húnán](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hunan) (湖南) * [Jiāngsū](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jiangsu) (江苏) * [Jiāngxī](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jiangxi) (江西) * [Jílín](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jilin) (吉林) * [Liáoníng](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liaoning) (辽宁) * [Qīnghǎi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qinghai) (青海) * [Shaanxi (Shǎnxī)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shaanxi) (陕西) * [Shāndōng](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shandong) (山东) * [Shānxī](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanxi) (山西) |  | * [Sìchuān](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sichuan) (四川) * [Táiwān](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taiwan_Province_%28People%27s_Republic_of_China%29) (台湾, claimed but not administered) * [Yúnnán](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yunnan) (云南) * [Zhèjiāng](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhejiang) (浙江)   **Autonomous regions** （自治区）   * [Guǎngxī](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guangxi) (广西壮族自治区) * [Inner Mongolia (Nèi Měnggǔ)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inner_Mongolia) (内蒙古自治区) * [Níngxià](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ningxia) (宁夏回族自治区) * [Xīnjiāng](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xinjiang) (新疆维吾尔自治区) * [Tibet (Xīzàng)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tibet_Autonomous_Region) (西藏自治区)   **Municipalities** （直辖市）   * [Běijīng](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beijing) (北京市) * [Chóngqìng](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chongqing) (重庆市) * [Shànghǎi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanghai) (上海市) * [Tiānjīn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tianjin) (天津市)   **Special Administrative Regions** （特别行政区）   * [Hong Kong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hong_Kong) (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region) (香港特別行政區)  * [Macau](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macau) (Macau Special Administrative Region) (澳門特別行政區) |  |

*See also: [List of cities in the People's Republic of China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_cities_in_the_People%27s_Republic_of_China" \o "List of cities in the People's Republic of China)*

*See also: [Names of the territories of the PRC in Simplified and Traditional Chinese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Names_of_the_territories_of_the_PRC_in_Simplified_and_Traditional_Chinese" \o "Names of the territories of the PRC in Simplified and Traditional Chinese)*

**Geography and climate**



Grasslands of [Chengde](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chengde" \o "Chengde), [Hebei Province](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebei_Province), [North China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_China).



Kuerdening Valley in [Northwest China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northwest_China" \o "Northwest China).



[South China Sea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_China_Sea) at [Hainan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hainan" \o "Hainan).

China is the second largest [country](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Country" \o "Country) of [East Asia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Asia" \o "East Asia) by [area](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Area" \o "Area) after Russia, and the [third or fourth largest](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_and_outlying_territories_by_total_area" \o "List of countries and outlying territories by total area) in the world by land-and-sea area. The dispute over size is due to both the validity of claims by the PRC on territories such as [Aksai Chin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aksai_Chin" \o "Aksai Chin) and [Trans-Karakoram Tract](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trans-Karakoram_Tract" \o "Trans-Karakoram Tract) (both territories also claimed by India), and a recent change in the method used by the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States" \o "United States) to calculate its surface area. It borders 14 nations (counted clockwise from south): [Vietnam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnam" \o "Vietnam), [Laos](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laos), [Myanmar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myanmar) (Burma), [India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India" \o "India), [Bhutan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhutan), [Nepal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nepal), [Pakistan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan), [Afghanistan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghanistan), [Tajikistan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tajikistan), [Kyrgyzstan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kyrgyzstan), [Kazakhstan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kazakhstan), [Russia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia), [Mongolia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mongolia) and [North Korea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Korea" \o "North Korea).

The territory of the PRC contains a large variety of landscapes. In the east, along the shores of the [Yellow Sea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yellow_Sea" \o "Yellow Sea) and the [East China Sea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_China_Sea" \o "East China Sea), there are extensive and densely populated [alluvial plains](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alluvium" \o "Alluvium), while on the edges of the Inner Mongolian plateau in the north, grasslands can be seen. Southern China is dominated by hill country and low [mountain ranges](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_range" \o "Mountain range). In the central-east are the [deltas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River_delta" \o "River delta) of China's two major rivers, the [Huang He](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huang_He" \o "Huang He) and [Yangtze River](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yangtze_River" \o "Yangtze River) (Chang Jiang). Other major rivers include the [Xijiang River](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xijiang_River" \o "Xijiang River), [Mekong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mekong), [Brahmaputra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brahmaputra) and [Amur](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amur" \o "Amur).

To the west, major mountain ranges, notably the [Himalayas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Himalaya" \o "Himalaya) with China's highest point [Mount Everest](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Everest" \o "Mount Everest), and high [plateaus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plateau" \o "Plateau) feature among the more arid landscapes such as the [Taklamakan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taklamakan" \o "Taklamakan) and the [Gobi Desert](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gobi_Desert" \o "Gobi Desert).

A major issue is the continued expansion of deserts, particularly the [Gobi Desert](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gobi_Desert). Although barrier tree lines planted since the 1970s have reduced the frequency of [sandstorms](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sandstorm" \o "Sandstorm), prolonged [drought](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drought" \o "Drought) and poor agricultural practices result in [dust storms](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dust_storm" \o "Dust storm) plaguing northern China each spring, which then spread to other parts of East Asia, including [Korea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korea" \o "Korea) and [Japan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japan" \o "Japan). Water, [erosion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erosion" \o "Erosion), and pollution control have become important issues in China's relations with other countries.

China has some relevant environmental regulations: the 1979 Environmental Protection Law, which was largely modelled on U.S. legislation. But the environment continues to deteriorate. While the regulations are fairly stringent, the are frequently disregarded by local communities while seeking economic development. Twelve years after the law, only one Chinese city was making an effort to clean up its water discharges. This indicates that China is about twenty years behind the U.S. schedule of environmental regulation and twenty to thirty years behind Europe.

[Water pollution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_pollution) has increased as an issue along with industrial production. The Chinese government has chosen a discharge standard measuring the concentration of a pollutant rather than the total pollutant load (as is done in the U.S. and many Western countries). As a result many industrial dischargers in China simply dilute the effluent with river water taken from the same source as the receiving waters. Consequently the outcome has been to create considerable water pollution in many of the country's rivers.

With regard to carbon emissions, China was exempted from the [Kyoto Protocol](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kyoto_Protocol" \o "Kyoto Protocol). Since the treaty was signed, China has become one of the world's top emitters of carbon gases and possibly a major contributor to [global warming](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_warming" \o "Global warming).

Part of the price China is paying for increased prosperity is damage to the environment. Leading Chinese environmental campaigner [Ma Jun](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ma_Jun" \o "Ma Jun) has warned that [water pollution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_pollution" \o "Water pollution) is one of the most serious threats facing China. According to Ma the drinking water of 300 million peasants is unsafe and water quality in one fifth of the cities is not up to standard. This makes the crisis of water shortages more pressing, with 400 out of 600 cities short of water.

**Military**



[PLA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Liberation_Army) recruit training. The PLA has been rapidly modernizing, but reducing the size of its military force.

With 2.25 million active troops, the [People's Liberation Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Liberation_Army" \o "People's Liberation Army) (PLA) is currently the largest military in the world. The PLA consists of an [army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Liberation_Army_Ground_Force" \o "People's Liberation Army Ground Force), [navy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Liberation_Army_Navy), [air force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Liberation_Army_Air_Force), and strategic [nuclear](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Liberation_Army" \l "Nuclear_weapons" \o "People's Liberation Army) force. The official announced [budget](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_budget_of_the_People%27s_Republic_of_China" \o "Military budget of the People's Republic of China) of the PLA for 2007 was $48 billion.

The PRC, despite possession of [nuclear weapons](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_weapon" \o "Nuclear weapon) and delivery systems, is widely seen by military researchers both within and outside of China as having only limited [power projection](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Power_projection" \o "Power projection) capability; this is, among other things, due to the limited effectiveness of its navy. It is considered a major [regional power](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regional_power" \o "Regional power) and possibly an [emerging superpower](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emerging_superpower).

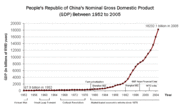
Much progress has been made in the last decade and the PRC continues to make efforts to modernize its military. It has purchased state-of-the-art fighter jets from Russia, such as the [Su-30s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Su-30" \o "Su-30), and has also produced its own modern fighters, specifically the Chinese [J-10s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chengdu_J-10" \o "Chengdu J-10) and the [J-11s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shenyang_J-11" \o "Shenyang J-11). It has also acquired and improved upon the Russian [S-300](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SA-10_Grumble" \o "SA-10 Grumble) [surface-to-air missile](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surface-to-air_missile) systems, which are considered to be among the best aircraft-intercepting systems in the world. The PRC's armoured and rapid-reaction forces have been updated with enhanced electronics and targeting capabilities. In recent years, much attention has been focused on building a [navy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Liberation_Army_Navy" \o "People's Liberation Army Navy) with [blue-water](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blue-water_navy) capability.

**Economy**



In 1978, the late [Deng Xiaoping](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deng_Xiaoping" \o "Deng Xiaoping) initiated China's market-oriented reforms.

Beginning in late 1978, the Chinese leadership has been [reforming the economy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_economic_reform" \o "Chinese economic reform) from a [Soviet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union" \o "Soviet Union)-style centrally planned economy to a more [market](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Market" \o "Market)-oriented economy that is still within a rigid political framework under Party control. The reforms replaced [collectivization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collectivization" \o "Collectivization) with privatization of farmlands, increased the responsibility of local authorities and industry managers, allowed a wide variety of small-scale enterprises to flourish, and promoted foreign investment. Price controls were also relaxed. These changes resulted in mainland China's shift from a [planned economy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Planned_economy" \o "Planned economy) to a [mixed economy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mixed_economy" \o "Mixed economy).



Nominal [GDP](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gross_Domestic_Product" \o "Gross Domestic Product), from 1952 to 2005.



The [Shanghai Stock Exchange](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanghai_Stock_Exchange" \o "Shanghai Stock Exchange). China's [SSEC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SSEC" \o "SSEC) index surged 130 percent in 2006.



Farmlands in [Hebei province](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebei" \o "Hebei). Over 800 million Chinese still depend on the [agricultural](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agriculture" \o "Agriculture) sector for their livelihood.

China became a member of the [World Trade Organization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Trade_Organization" \o "World Trade Organization) in 2001. China’s accession into the World Trade Organization (WTO) was a goal achieved after nearly fifteen years of exhausting negotiations carrying many legal, political and social implications for all parties. China was finally able to convince WTO members that without China, the WTO is only partially a worldwide trade organization. The road to the signature of the final agreement of accession was long, but these difficulties pale in comparison to the problems that have not yet been tackled in terms of achieving real implementation of its provisions throughout the territory of the People’s Republic of China (PRC). China’s accession surely presents the world trading system with opportunities, but also poses the challenge of integrating a market with strong structural, behavioural and cultural constraints.

The government emphasizes personal income and consumption by introducing new management systems to help increase productivity. The government also focuses on foreign trade as a major vehicle for economic growth, which led to 5 [Special Economic Zones](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special_Economic_Zone" \o "Special Economic Zone) (SEZ: [Shenzhen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shenzhen" \o "Shenzhen), [Zhuhai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhuhai), [Shantou](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shantou), [Xiamen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xiamen), [Hainan Province](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hainan_Province)) where investment laws are relaxed so as to attract foreign capital. Since the 1990s, SEZs and similar concepts have been expanded to major Chinese cities, including Shanghai and Beijing. The result has been a 6-fold increase of [GDP](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gross_Domestic_Product" \o "Gross Domestic Product) since 1978. Chinese economic development is among the fastest in the world, and has been growing at an average annual GDP rate of 9.4% for the past 25 years. At the end of 2005, the PRC became the fourth largest economy in the world by exchange rate, and the second largest in the world after the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States" \o "United States) by [purchasing power parity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purchasing_power_parity" \o "Purchasing power parity) at US$8,158 trillion. But with its large population this still gives an average GDP per person of only an estimated US$8,000 (2006), about 1/5th that of the United States.

Mainland China has a reputation as being a low-cost manufacturer, which caused notable disputes in global markets. This is largely because Chinese corporations can produce many products far more cheaply than other parts of Asia or Latin America, and because expensive products produced in [developed countries](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Developed_countries" \o "Developed countries) like the United States are in large part uncompetitive compared to European or Asian goods. Another factor is the unfavorable [exchange rate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exchange_rate" \o "Exchange rate) between the [Chinese yuan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Renminbi" \o "Renminbi) and the [United States dollar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_dollar" \o "United States dollar) to which it was [pegged](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fixed_exchange_rate" \o "Fixed exchange rate).

On [July 21](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/July_21" \o "July 21), [2005](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2005) the [People's Bank of China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Bank_of_China" \o "People's Bank of China) announced that it would move to a [floating peg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Managed_float" \o "Managed float), allowing its currency to move against the [United States dollar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_dollar" \o "United States dollar) by 0.5% (effective 18-May-2007, which was earlier 0.3%) a day, while 3% a day against other currencies. Many high-tech American companies have difficulty exporting to China due to US federal government restrictions, which exacerbated the trade gap between the PRC and the US, widespread [software piracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Software_piracy" \o "Software piracy) and illegal copying of [intellectual property](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intellectual_property" \o "Intellectual property) (a major US export), and perceived low quality of US goods. On the other hand, China runs a trade deficit with Taiwan and South Korea, importing more from those nations than exports. China runs a large but diminishing trade surplus with Japan (slight deficit if Hong Kong is included).

There has been a significant rise in the Chinese standard of living in recent years. Today, a rapidly declining 10 percent of the Chinese population is below the poverty line. 98.9% of the youth population is literate, compared to 69.9% in the 1980s. The life expectancy in China is the third highest in East Asia, after Japan and South Korea. There is a large wealth disparity between the coastal regions and the remainder of the country. To counter this potentially destabilizing problem, the government has initiated the [China Western Development](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China_Western_Development" \o "China Western Development) strategy (2000), the [Revitalize Northeast China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revitalize_Northeast_China" \o "Revitalize Northeast China) initiative (2003), and the [Rise of Central China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rise_of_Central_China" \o "Rise of Central China) policy (2004), which are all aimed at helping the [interior](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interior" \o "Interior) of China to catch up.

China is currently undergoing major reforms in its financial sector, which has been plagued by nonperforming loans made in the 1980s and early 1990s to inefficient [state-owned enterprises](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State-owned_enterprises" \o "State-owned enterprises). The government has spent five years and more than US$400 billion cleaning bad loans off the books of the big four state-owned banks, helping prepare them to become shareholder corporations. By the end of 2006, China had restructured three of its four largest banks and listed them publicly. China's largest bank, the [Industrial and Commercial Bank of China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Industrial_and_Commercial_Bank_of_China" \o "Industrial and Commercial Bank of China) (ICBC) in October 2006 raised US$21.6 billion in the world's largest [initial public offering](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Initial_public_offering" \o "Initial public offering) (IPO) in history. ICBC is now the world's second largest bank in market value, after only [Citibank](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Citibank" \o "Citibank). These highly successful IPOs have helped ease the government's burden and spur further structural reforms in China's nascent banking industry.

**Science and technology**



[Windmill generators](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wind_power) in [Xinjiang](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xinjiang" \o "Xinjiang). The Dabancheng project is Asia's largest wind power plant.

After the [Sino-Soviet split](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Soviet_split" \o "Sino-Soviet split), China started to develop its own indigenous [nuclear deterrent](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_deterrent" \o "Nuclear deterrent) and delivery systems, successfully detonating its first surface nuclear test in 1964 at [Lop Nor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lop_Nor" \o "Lop Nor). A natural outgrowth of this was a satellite launching program, which culminated in 1970 with the launching of [Dongfang Hong I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dong_Fang_Hong_I" \o "Dong Fang Hong I), the first Chinese satellite. This made the PRC the fifth nation to independently launch a satellite. In 1992, the [Shenzhou](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shenzhou" \o "Shenzhou) manned spaceflight program was authorized. After four tests, *[Shenzhou 5](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shenzhou_5" \o "Shenzhou 5)* was launched on [October 15](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/October_15" \o "October 15), [2003](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2003), using a [Long March 2F rocket](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Long_March_rocket" \o "Long March rocket) and carrying Chinese astronaut [Yang Liwei](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yang_Liwei" \o "Yang Liwei), making the PRC the third country to put a human being into [space](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Outer_space" \o "Outer space) through its own endeavors. With the successful completion of the second manned mission, *[Shenzhou 6](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shenzhou_6" \o "Shenzhou 6)* in October 2005, the country plans to build a [Chinese Space Station](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_921-2" \o "Project 921-2) in the near future and achieve a lunar landing in the next decade.

China has the world's second largest [research and development](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Research_and_development" \o "Research and development) budget, and is expected to invest over $136 billion this year after growing more than 20% in the past year. The Chinese government continues to place heavy emphasis on research and development by creating greater public awareness of innovation, and reforming financial and tax systems to promote growth in cutting-edge industries. President Hu Jintao in January 2006 called for China to make the transition from a manufacturing-based economy to an innovation-based one, and this year's National People's Congress has approved large increases in research funding. [Stem-cell research](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stem-cell_research" \o "Stem-cell research) and [gene therapy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gene_therapy" \o "Gene therapy), which some in the [Western world](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_world" \o "Western world) see as controversial, face minimal regulation in China. China has an estimated 926,000 researchers, second in number only to the 1.3 million in the United States.

China is also actively developing its [software](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Software" \o "Software), [semiconductor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semiconductor) and [energy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Energy_industry" \o "Energy industry) industries, including [renewable energies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Renewable_energy" \o "Renewable energy) such as hydro, wind and solar power. In an effort to reduce pollution from coal-burning power plants, China has been pioneering the deployment of [pebble bed nuclear reactors](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pebble_bed_reactor" \o "Pebble bed reactor), which run cooler and safer, and have potential applications for the [hydrogen economy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hydrogen_economy).

**Transportation**



G030 northbound in [Hebei province](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebei" \o "Hebei). There are currently 45,000 km (28,000 mi) of expressways in China. This is the second-longest total in the world, and half that of the United States.

Transportation in the mainland of the People's Republic of China has improved remarkably since the late 1990s as part of a government effort to link the entire nation through a series of [expressways](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expressways_of_China" \o "Expressways of China) known as the [National Trunk Highway System](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Trunk_Highway_System" \o "National Trunk Highway System) (NTHS). The total length of expressway is 45,000 km at the end of 2006, second only to the United States.

Private car ownership is increasing at an annual rate of 15%, though it is still uncommon due to government policies that make car ownership expensive, such as taxes and toll roads.

Air travel has increased, but remains too expensive for most. Long distance transportation is still dominated by [railways](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Railways" \o "Railways) and charter bus systems. The railways are still the vital carrier in China, and until this year steam locomotives were still a common sight. It is thought that some are still in use, especially on industrial networks.

Cities such as [Beijing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beijing" \o "Beijing) and [Shanghai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanghai" \o "Shanghai) are building [subways](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subway_%28rail%29" \o "Subway (rail)) or [light rail](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Light_rail" \o "Light rail) systems. [Hong Kong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transportation_in_Hong_Kong" \o "Transportation in Hong Kong) has one of the most developed transport systems in the world. Shanghai already has a [Maglev](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maglev_train" \o "Maglev train) system connecting downtown Shanghai to [Pudong International Airport](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pudong_International_Airport" \o "Pudong International Airport)

**Demographics**



Window cleaner on one of thousands of skyscrapers in [Shanghai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanghai" \o "Shanghai). Chinese society has been rapidly modernizing in the last two decades, spawning the largest [urban migration](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urbanization" \o "Urbanization) within a generation in human history.



[Shanghai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanghai)



[Beijing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beijing)



[Hong Kong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hong_Kong)

[As of](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:As_of) July 2006, there are 1,313,973,713 people in the PRC. About 20.8% (male 145,461,833; female 128,445,739) are 14 years old or younger, 71.4% (male 482,439,115; female 455,960,489) are between 15 and 64 years old, and 7.7% (male 48,562,635; female 53,103,902) are over 65 years old. The population growth rate for 2006 is 0.59%. The PRC officially recognizes 56 distinct ethnic groups, the largest of which are the [Han Chinese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Han_Chinese" \o "Han Chinese), who constitute about 91.9% of the total population. Large ethnic minorities include the [Zhuang](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhuang" \o "Zhuang) (16 million), [Manchu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manchu" \o "Manchu) (10 million), [Hui](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hui_people" \o "Hui people) (9 million), [Miao](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hmong_people" \o "Hmong people) (8 million), [Uyghur](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uyghur" \o "Uyghur) (7 million), [Yi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yi_people" \o "Yi people) (7 million), [Tujia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tujia" \o "Tujia) (5.75 million), [Mongolians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mongols" \o "Mongols) (5 million), [Tibetans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tibetan_people" \o "Tibetan people) (5 million), [Buyi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buyi" \o "Buyi) (3 million), and [Koreans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_people) (2 million).

In the past decade, China's cities expanded at an average rate of 10% annually. The country's urbanization rate increased from 17.4% to 41.8% between 1978 and 2005, a scale unprecedented in human history. 80 to 120 million [migrant workers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Migrant_workers) work part-time in the major cities and return home to the countryside periodically with their earnings.

Today, the People's Republic of China has dozens of major cities with one million or more long-term residents, including the three [global cities](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_cities" \o "Global cities) of [Beijing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beijing" \o "Beijing), [Hong Kong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hong_Kong), and [Shanghai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanghai" \o "Shanghai). Major cities in China play key roles in national and regional identity, culture and economics.

**Largest cities**

The figures below are the 2001 estimates for the ten largest urban populations within administrative city limits; a different ranking exists when considering the total municipal populations (which includes suburban and rural populations). The large floating populations of migrant workers make conducting censuses in urban areas difficult; the figures below do not include the floating population, only long-term residents.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Rank** | **City urban area** | **Type/location** | **Population (2001 est)  millions** | **Density (2001 est)  per km²** | **Municipality limits (2000 census)** | | **Region** |
| **millions** | **density (/km²)** |
| 1 | [Shanghai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanghai) | municipality | **9.838** | 34,700 | 16.74 | 2,640 | [East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_China) |
| 2 | [Beijing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beijing) | municipality | **7.441** | 29,800 | 13.82 | 822 | [North](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_China) |
| 3 | [Hong Kong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hong_Kong) | SAR | **6.112** | 76,200 | 7.01 | 6,294 | [South Central](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Central_China) |
| 4 | [Tianjin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tianjin) | municipality | **5.095** | 10,500 | 10.01 | 803 | [North](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_China) |
| 5 | [Wuhan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wuhan) | [Hubei province](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hubei) | **4.489** | 12,950 | 8.31 | 947 | [South Central](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Central_China) |
| 6 | [Guangzhou](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guangzhou) | [Guangdong province](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guangdong_province) | **4.155** | 11,600 | 10.15 | 1,337 | [South Central](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Central_China) |
| 7 | [Shenyang](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shenyang) | [Liaoning province](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liaoning_province) | **3.981** | 9,250 | 7.20 | 557 | [Northeast](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northeast_China) |
| 8 | [Chongqing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chongqing) | municipality | **3.934** | 23,500 | 30.90 | 378 | [Southwest](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southwest_China) |
| 9 | [Nanjing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nanjing) | [Jiangsu province](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jiangsu) | **2.822** | 13,250 | 6.40 | 970 | [East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_China) |
| 10 | [Harbin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harbin) | [Heilongjiang province](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heilongjiang) | **2.672** | 11,350 | 9.35 | 174 | [Northeast](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northeast_China) |

**Education**



A public school classroom in the western region of [Xinjiang](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xinjiang" \o "Xinjiang).

In 1986, China set the long-term goal of providing compulsory nine-year basic education to every child. As of 1997, there were 628,840 primary schools, 78,642 secondary schools and 1,020 higher education institutions in the PRC. In February 2006, the government advanced its basic education goal by pledging to provide completely free nine-year education, including textbooks and fees, in the poorer western provinces. As of 2002, 90.9% (male: 95.1%; female: 86.5%) of the population over age 15 are literate. China's youth (age 15 to 24) literacy rate is 98.9% (99.2% for males and 98.5% for females) in 2000. In March 2007, China announced the decision of making education a national "strategic priority", the central budget of the national scholarships will be tripled in two years and 223.5 billion Yuan (28.65 billion US dollars) extra funding will be allocated from the central government in the next 5 years to improve the compulsory education in rural areas.

The quality of [Chinese colleges and universities](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_universities_in_mainland_China" \o "List of universities in mainland China) varies considerably across the country. The consistently top-ranked universities in mainland China include [Tsinghua](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tsinghua_University" \o "Tsinghua University) and [Peking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peking_University" \o "Peking University) in Beijing, [Fudan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fudan_University" \o "Fudan University) and [Shanghai Jiaotong University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanghai_Jiaotong_University" \o "Shanghai Jiaotong University) in [Shanghai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanghai" \o "Shanghai), [Nanjing University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nanjing_University) in [Nanjing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nanjing" \o "Nanjing), the [University of Science and Technology of China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Science_and_Technology_of_China" \o "University of Science and Technology of China) in [Hefei](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hefei" \o "Hefei), [Wuhan University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wuhan_University) in [Wuhan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wuhan" \o "Wuhan),and [Zhejiang University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhejiang_University" \o "Zhejiang University) in [Hangzhou](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hangzhou" \o "Hangzhou).

Many parents are highly committed to their children's education, often investing large portions of the family's income on education. Private lessons and recreational activities, such as in foreign languages or music, are popular among the middle-class families who can afford them.

**Public health**

The [Ministry of Health](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ministry_of_Health_%28China%29" \o "Ministry of Health (China)), together with its counterparts in the provincial health bureaus, oversees the health needs of the Chinese population. An emphasis on [public health](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_health" \o "Public health) and [preventative treatment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Preventative_treatment" \o "Preventative treatment) characterized health policy since the early 1950s. At that time, the [party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communist_Party_of_China) started the [Patriotic Health Campaign](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriotic_Health_Campaign" \o "Patriotic Health Campaign), which was aimed at improving [sanitation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanitation" \o "Sanitation) and [hygiene](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hygiene" \o "Hygiene), as well as attacking several [diseases](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diseases" \o "Diseases). This has shown major results as diseases like cholera, typhoid, and scarlet fever were nearly eradicated.

With economic reform after 1978, the health of the Chinese public improved rapidly due to better nutrition despite the disappearance, along with the People's Communes, of much of the free public health services provided in the countryside. Health care in China became largely private fee-for-service. By 2000, when the World Health Organization made a large study of public health systems throughout the world, [The World Health Report 2000 Health Systems: Improving Performance](http://www.who.int/whr/2000/en/) the Chinese public health system ranked 144 of the 191 UN member states ranked.

The country's [life expectancy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life_expectancy" \o "Life expectancy) jumped from about 32 years in 1950 to almost 73 years in 2006, and [infant mortality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infant_mortality) went down from 300 per thousand in the 1950s to about 23 per thousand in 2006. [Malnutrition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malnutrition) as of 2002 stood at 12 percent of the population according to [United Nations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations" \o "United Nations) [FAO](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FAO) sources.

Despite significant improvements in health and the introduction of western style medical facilities, the PRC currently has several emerging [public health](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_health" \o "Public health) problems, which include respiratory problems as a result of [pollution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Environment_of_China" \o "Environment of China) and millions of [cigarette smokers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tobacco_smoking), a possible future [HIV/AIDS epidemic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HIV/AIDS_in_China), and an increase in [obesity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Obesity" \o "Obesity) among urban youths. China's large population and close living quarters has led to some serious disease outbreaks in recent years, such as the 2002 outbreak of [SARS](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Severe_acute_respiratory_syndrome" \o "Severe acute respiratory syndrome) (a pneumonia-like disease) which has since been largely contained.

**Culture**



Museum patrons viewing ancient Chinese scroll paintings at the [Shanghai Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanghai_Museum" \o "Shanghai Museum).



A [Cold Fairyland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold_Fairyland" \o "Cold Fairyland) concert performance. The band combines [traditional Chinese instruments](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Traditional_Chinese_musical_instruments" \o "Traditional Chinese musical instruments) and musical elements with [rock music](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rock_music" \o "Rock music).

For centuries, opportunity for economic and social advancement in China could be provided by high performance on [imperial examinations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperial_examinations" \o "Imperial examinations). The literary emphasis of the exams affected the general perception of cultural refinement in China, such as the view that [calligraphy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_calligraphy" \o "Chinese calligraphy) and literati painting were higher forms of art than dancing or drama. China's traditional values were derived from various versions of [Confucianism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confucianism" \o "Confucianism) and [conservatism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservatism" \o "Conservatism). A number of more [authoritarian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Authoritarianism" \o "Authoritarianism) and [rational](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rationalism" \o "Rationalism) strains of thought have also been influential, such as [Legalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legalism_%28philosophy%29" \o "Legalism (philosophy)). There was often conflict between the philosophies, such as the [individualistic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Individualism" \o "Individualism) [Song Dynasty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Song_Dynasty) [neo-Confucians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neo-Confucianism), who believed [Legalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legalism_%28philosophy%29" \o "Legalism (philosophy)) departed from the original spirit of Confucianism. [Examinations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Examination" \o "Examination) and a [culture of merit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meritocracy" \o "Meritocracy) remain greatly valued in China today. In recent years, a number of [New Confucians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Confucianism" \o "New Confucianism) have advocated that democratic ideals and human rights are quite compatible with traditional Confucian "Asian values."

Today, the PRC government has accepted a great deal of traditional [Chinese culture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_culture" \o "Chinese culture) as an integral part of Chinese society, lauding it as an important achievement of the [Chinese civilization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China" \o "China) and emphasizing it as vital to a [Chinese national identity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_nationalism" \o "Chinese nationalism). Modern Chinese art, literature, music, film, fashion and architecture have become increasingly ready to incorporate various degrees of traditional Chinese culture into their works.

The first leaders of the People's Republic of China were born in the old society but were influenced by the [May Fourth Movement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/May_Fourth_Movement" \o "May Fourth Movement) and reformist ideals. They sought to change some traditional aspects of Chinese culture, such as rural land tenure, sexism, and a Confucian education, while preserving others, such as the family structure and obedience to the state. Many observers believe that the period following 1949 is a continuation of traditional Chinese [dynastic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dynastic" \o "Dynastic) history, while others say that the CPC's rule has damaged the foundations of Chinese culture, especially through political movements such as the [Cultural Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_Revolution" \o "Cultural Revolution), where many aspects of traditional culture were labeled 'regressive and harmful' or 'vestiges of feudalism' by the regime. They further argue that many important aspects of traditional Chinese morals and culture, such as [Confucianism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confucianism" \o "Confucianism), [Chinese art](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_art), literature, and performing arts like [Beijing opera](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beijing_opera" \o "Beijing opera), were altered to conform to government policies and propaganda. One example being [Chinese character simplification](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simplified_Chinese" \o "Simplified Chinese), since [traditional characters](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Traditional_Chinese_character" \o "Traditional Chinese character) were blamed for the country's low literacy rate at the time. However, simplified Chinese characters are not widely used in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau.

**Religion**

Most Chinese — 59% of the population, or about 767 million people — identify themselves as non-religious. However, rituals and religion — especially the traditional beliefs of [Confucianism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confucianism" \o "Confucianism) and [Taoism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taoism" \o "Taoism) — play a significant part in the lives of many. About 33% of the population follow a mixture of beliefs usually referred to by statisticians as "Traditional Beliefs" or just "Other".

About 8% of the Chinese population are avowed [Buddhists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhists" \o "Buddhists), with [Mahayana Buddhism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahayana_Buddhism" \o "Mahayana Buddhism) (大乘, *Dacheng*) and its subsets [Pure Land](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pure_Land) (Amidism), [Tiantai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiantai) and [Zen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zen) being the most widely practiced. With an estimated 100 million adherents, Buddhism is the country's largest organized religion. Other forms of Buddhism, such as [Theravada Buddhism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theravada_Buddhism) and [Tibetan Buddhism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tibetan_Buddhism), are practiced largely by ethnic minorities along the geographic fringes of the Chinese mainland. A government official recently suggested that there are 130 million Christians(See Religion in China article). Estimates of the number of [Muslims](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslims) range from 20 million to 100 million.

**Sports and recreation**



Evening pickup [basketball](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basketball) game in Beijing neighborhood.

China has one of the [oldest sporting cultures](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sports_in_China) in the world, spanning the course of several millennia. There is, in fact, evidence that a form of [football](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Football_%28soccer%29) was first played in [China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China) around 1000 AD, leading many historians to believe that the popular sport originated from China. Besides soccer, some of the most popular sports in the country include [martial arts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_martial_arts), [table tennis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Table_tennis), [badminton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Badminton), [swimming](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swimming), [basketball](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basketball), and more recently, [golf](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golf) and [rugby](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rugby_football). [Board games](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Board_games) such as [Go](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Go_%28board_game%29) (Weiqi), and [Xiangqi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xiangqi) (Chinese chess) and recently [Chess](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chess) are also commonly played and have organised competitions.

[Physical fitness](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Physical_fitness) is widely emphasized in [Chinese culture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_culture). Morning exercises are a common activity and often one can find the elderly practicing [qigong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qigong) and [Tai Chi Chuan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tai_Chi_Chuan) in parks or students doing stretches on school campuses. Young people are especially keen on [basketball](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basketball), especially in urban centres with limited space and grass areas. The [NBA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Basketball_Association) has a huge following among Chinese youths, with [Yao Ming](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yao_Ming) being the idol of many. The [2008 Summer Olympics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2008_Summer_Olympics), officially known as the *Games of the XXIX Olympiad*, will be held in [Beijing, China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beijing%2C_China), and as a result the country has put even more emphasis on sports.

Many traditional sports are also played. The popular Chinese [dragon boat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dragon_boat) [racing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dragon_boat_racing) (龙舟) occurs during the [Duan Wu festival](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duan_Wu_festival). In [Inner Mongolia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inner_Mongolia), sports such as Mongolian-style wrestling and [horse racing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horse_racing) are popular. In [Tibet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tibet), [archery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archery) and [equestrian sports](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Equestrian_sports) are a part of traditional festivals.