

Customs

Foreign visitors complete a Passenger's Luggage Declaration before proceeding through the customs area at the Chinese port of entry. You are allowed to bring in personal belongings duty-free, including a camera, a portable tape recorder, a movie or video camera and a portable computer. You are also entitled to bring in 400 cigarettes and two 0.75-litre bottles of alcoholic beverages if your stay will be less than six months. For longer stays, the limits are 600 cigarettes and four bottles. Gold and silver jewellery and other objects made of precious metals are duty-free up to a weight of 50 grams.

There are absolute prohibitions against arms, drugs, and plant or animal products considered infested with disease or pests. There are also restrictions on the entry of printed matter, film, photos, videotapes and CDs considered detrimental to the interests of China. These regulations are unlikely to affect tourists carrying small quantities of printed or electronic media for personal use, but be careful to avoid items that might be considered political or pornographic by Chinese authorities.

Children

Immigration authorities in most countries, including Canada and China, are becoming more vigilant about documentation for children crossing international borders. Unless the child has a valid Canadian passport or is accompanied by both natural parents, a Canadian child needs special documentation in addition to proof of citizenship. This is a general requirement for all international travel.

If you are the only parent escorting the child, carry notarized, written consent from the absent parent in addition to a copy of any separation or divorce decree. This consent is required even if the separation or divorce documents award you custody of the child. Consent is not required if you are the only parent shown on the child's birth certificate.

Parents should also be aware of the problem of international child abduction in cases where children may be considered citizens of other countries, including China. If a child enters China with a parent who does not declare Canadian citizenship on arrival, Canadian officials may not be in a position to intervene on behalf of the other