

must declare any currency with a value over US\$2,000. You can exchange foreign currency or traveller's cheques for RMB at the main offices of Chinese banks, airports, and major hotels. You will be expected to spend at least 50 percent of the RMB that you convert. You will be given official receipts for these transactions, which you must save if you wish to reconvert RMB to hard currency (maximum of 50 percent) when you leave the country.

Major credit cards are not widely accepted in China. Some Chinese banks will provide cash advances using these accounts, but they may charge for the service. Some stores and restaurants accept credit card purchases, but they may apply surcharges. The only places that can be counted on to accept credit cards are five-star hotels.

It is now possible to use bank cards to draw on your Canadian bank account at ATMs in several places. These international ATMs taking Cirrus, PLUS or Maestro are restricted to a few sites in larger cities and most international airports. Limited amounts can be withdrawn, reflecting the cardholder's daily limits, but often the exchange rate is more favourable than can be obtained when changing money at banks in the interior, where surcharges may be added.

Food and Drink

Visitors to China may suffer from traveller's diarrhea. To avoid this and other discomforts, it is advisable to drink bottled water. Eating food prepared on the street is part of the local culture, but avoid stalls that do not use disposable utensils.

Protocol Tips

Eating

Chopsticks are used at all meals. The food is placed in the centre of the table in serving dishes, and it is polite to taste every type of food prepared. Food should be served with serving spoons or serving chopsticks. Your chopsticks should be placed neatly on the right of your bowl or plate when not in use. It is considered impolite to drink alone, and toasts are frequent. Non-drinkers may toast with soft drinks.

Health Care

Some major hotels in China maintain clinics or resident doctors who can assist you with minor medical problems. Several hospitals in the larger cities have special services, designed for foreigners, with English-speaking staff. Nevertheless, you should be prepared to take an interpreter with you if you must visit a local hospital. You will be asked to deposit funds with the