

5 Culture Traditions to Know Before Traveling to China

Traveling to a new country or a country that is very different from your home country can be unnerving. Especially if you do not know much about their culture and what you should do so you do not offend anyone. Here are five tips on culture traditions in China that will help you when you visit:

1. Tipping can be considered offensive

While in other countries, it may be common and respectful to leave a tip at a restaurant, hotel, to a taxi driver, etc., it is not in China and some surrounding Southeast Asian countries. In China, it is uncommon to leave a tip and sometimes seen as rude. In some parts of China, it is illegal to accept a tip. However, if you are at a high-end establishment, it is okay to tip. It is not expected, but it will be less offensive at a high-end establishment.

2. Full-face masks are sometimes worn at the beach

It may be considered beautiful in the United States to be sun-kissed or tan, but in China pale skin is the beauty trend. Having a pale complexion has been a very common desire for China and the surrounding Southeast Asian countries. Having tan skin is not considered beautiful. It will be common to see many locals carrying and using umbrellas during a sunny day, but many Europeans used to do this as well. It was called the parasol. The most shocking fairly new trend is called the Face-Kini. It is a full-face mask that many Chinese people will wear at the beach to protect the skin on their face.

3. Compliments should not be taken graciously

You may be used to accepting compliments by saying "Thank you!" with gusto. But in China, compliments should be refused or denied a few times before accepting them. It is considered rude and a sign of vanity if the compliment is accepted on the first time. In the United States and other countries, it may be considered rude and hurtful to the person giving the compliment if you refuse a compliment. Especially if someone is making the effort to be nice to you. Refuse a compliment a couple times before accepting it.

4. Locals may admire your hair and eye color

In some parts of China, many locals do not see people who look much different from themselves. So, to see someone with blond hair and blue eyes, it may come as a shock or spectacle for them. They will want to know more about your hair by touching it or staring at you to see your eye color. They may even try to touch your hair and feel it. They may also say that it is very pretty, but in their dialect, as the places that do not see people with blond hair and blue eyes are places that are more rural than urban.

5. Chopsticks are never placed upright in a rice bowl

Fork users are accustomed to leaving their fork in their bowls to take a break while eating. Leaving chopsticks upright in a bowl is symbolic towards a ritual that is made as an offering for the dead. You wouldn't want to offer your bowl of rice to the dead during a dinner that you are supposed to eat! It is also rude to use your hand to gesture while holding chopsticks. Make sure to place the chopsticks down on the table in their little chopstick rest, if there is one.