

Other frequently asked questions about Chinese visa

Updated: August 4, 2020 15:05 english.www.gov.cn

1. Why do Chinese visas have different types and categories?

A visa is the basis for the activities the holder may engage in while in China. In light of China's laws and regulations, consular officers make the decision on what type of visa to issue to an applicant based on the applicant's personal status and purpose for visiting China.

2. What is the relationship between the duration of stay and period of validity of a visa?

Duration of stay refers to the longest period the visa holder is allowed to stay in China from the date of entry into China on each visit.

The holder of a visa is eligible to enter China at any time prior to the expiry of visa validity (allowed to enter China even in the last hour of the last date of the period of validity) provided that the granted entries on the visa have not been used up. Duration of stay is no longer useful once the period of validity expires.

3. Does the number of entries have anything to do with period of validity of a visa?

The validity of a visa refers to a period starting from the date of issuance to the date of expiration. The holder of a visa is eligible to enter China at any time prior to the expiry of visa validity (allowed to enter China even in the last hour of the last date of the period of validity) provided that the granted entries on the visa have not been used up.

4. How do I extend the duration of stay of a Chinese visa?

Some types of visas may be extended. You may apply for extension of the duration of stay of your visa at a local public security authority at the county level and above before the expiration of your stay. Overstay will violate the law of China and will result in punishment.

5. What would be the best time for me to apply for a Chinese visa?

It is advisable that you apply for a visa one month in advance of your intended date of entry into China, and do not apply three months earlier than your intended date of entry. Your visa might expire before your intended departure date for China if you apply too early; but if you apply too late, you might not be able to obtain a visa in time for your scheduled departure. For instance, if you plan to enter China on July 1, the best time for you to

submit your visa application is the early June. If you need express service or rush service, you will be required to pay an extra visa fee plus express service fee or rush service fee.

6. Where do I apply for a Chinese visa?

If you are ordinary passport holders of your own country, please submit your application to the Chinese Visa Application Service Center. However, holders of diplomatic and service (official) passports or applicants eligible for applying for China's diplomatic, courtesy, and service visas, and applicants applying for a visa/entry permit to the Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Region of China should still apply directly to the Chinese Embassy.

7. Where can I apply for a visa?

You can apply for a visa at a Chinese Embassy or the Chinese Consulate General, or the Chinese Visa Application Center. You can apply for an ordinary visa at the Chinese Visa Application Service Center.

8. Can someone submit my application to the Center on my behalf?

Generally speaking, you are encouraged to submit your application and collect your passport in person. If it is impossible for you to do so, you may entrust someone else

to do it for you (no need for a power of attorney) providing that you have prepared all the documents required.

9. Can I apply for a visa online?

For the time being, you cannot apply for a visa through the internet, however you can complete your application form online.

10. Can I apply for a visa via a travel agent?

Yes, you can apply for a visa via a travel agent.

11. I want to tour China by driving my own vehicle; what type of visa should I apply for?

You should apply for a L-visa for a special tour. A special tour includes: mountain climbing, self-driving, hiking, cycling, horse-riding, hot air balloon, or other expeditions. You need to provide a visa notification issued by China National Tourism Administration or the tourism administration of related province, autonomous region or municipality directly under the central government.

12. Do I need to apply for a visa beforehand if I plan to go to the Chinese mainland?

Normally you will need a visa to go to the Chinese mainland as a foreign citizen unless you are visa exempt based on relevant agreements or regulations.

13. What type of visa should I apply for?

It depends on the purpose of your visit. Please see the section "A Brief Introduction to Chinese Visa". It is up to the consular officer to decide on the type of visa to be issued.

14. What kind of documents should I provide for a visa application at a Chinese embassy or consulate? And is there anything particular I should pay special attention to?

You need to prepare required documents according to the purpose of visiting China. For details please see the requirements for visa applications.

15. How long in advance should I apply for a visa?

It is advised that you submit the application one month in advance of your planned date of entry. Application made too early may cause the expiry of the visa and you won't be able to use it in the end, but if you submit an application too late, there might not be enough time for the application to be processed.

16. When can I get the visa after I submit my application?

If the documents are well prepared, it will normally take four working days for the application to be processed, but the time may vary on a case by case basis.

If you intend to travel urgently, you may apply for the express service and collect the visa on the third working day, in which case you will need to pay an extra fee.

Express service is not guaranteed in the Chinese Embassy or the Chinese Consulate General, and the eligibility for express service is judged on a case by case basis.

It is important that the applicant comes to collect the visa on time. The visa may be collected after the collection date, but if the visa has not been collected within 90 days after issuing date it will be disposed of as unclaimed.

17. What is the number of entries? What should I do if I have used up all the entries?

A visa's number of entries refers to the number of times the visa holder can make entry to China within the validity period of the visa. A visa is normally issued with single entry, double entries or multiple entries. Single entry or double entry visa will expire after the times are used up. If you go to China again you will need a new visa. If the entries have not been used up but the visa has expired because the visa has reached the end of its validity period, you will need to apply for a new Chinese visa. Anyone holding an expired visa that goes to China will be refused

entry at the border. It is essential that you check carefully the number of entries and make sure your visa is valid.

18. I am planning to go to Beijing with a British passport and then go to Hong Kong to travel for 7 days, and afterward, back to Guangzhou, how many entries do I need to apply for?

You need to apply for a double entry visa because you need your first entry when you visit Beijing from the UK, and your second entry to Guangzhou from Hong Kong.

Suppose you have obtained a single entry visa, you will need to apply for a new visa at the Commissioner's Office of China's Foreign Ministry in Hong Kong SAR while visiting Hong Kong.

Holders of a British passport are exempt from a visa to visit Hong Kong.

19. When will my visa start to take effect? And when will it expire?

Unless otherwise specified, a visa is valid from the date of issue.

A visa expires if one of the following situations occurs:

(1) The visa has passed 24:00 (Beijing Time) on the date of entry, namely the 'Enter Before' date given on the visa page;

(2) The number of entries has been used up;

(3) The visa has been revoked or canceled by the authorities of the Chinese government;

(4) Other circumstances governed by the Chinese laws.

20. Can I change my itinerary after I've got my visa?

Unless otherwise specified on the visa, you may change your itinerary but must make your entry to China before the visa expires. The Chinese Embassy or the Chinese Consulate General does not take the responsibility for the expiry of your visa due to the change of your travel plan.

21. What does "Duration of Each Stay" mean? What should I do if I need a longer duration for my stay?

The Duration of Each Stay refers to the maximum number of days a visa holder is permitted to stay in China after each entry, namely, the maximum number of days a visa holder can stay in China from the day of entry. If you hold an ordinary visa and need to extend your stay after arrival in China, you will have to apply for an extension at the public security authorities (however approval is not guaranteed) before your duration of stay runs out.

Holders of a D visa, J1 visa, Q1 visa, S1 visa, X1 visa, and Z visa must register with the public security authorities for residential formalities within 30 days of entry. It will lead to illegal overstay if a permitted stay runs out but no required formalities have been processed accordingly.

It is a breach of Chinese laws and regulations if someone stays longer than the visa permits while visiting China. As a result, he or she may face fines or other means of penalties. Therefore, you are advised to make sure your stay is within the permitted duration of stay.

22. After I get the visa, can the validity period, duration of stay and number of entries be altered?

No. They cannot be changed. Therefore, it is essential that before you apply for a visa you make proper arrangement. While filling out the application form, you must complete all relevant items truthfully. While collecting your visa, you must check all the contents of the visa. If an alteration must be made, then you will have to submit a new visa application with supporting documents and pay for the application again.

23. What are the things foreign citizens should pay attention to while in China?

Foreign citizens must abide by the laws and regulations of the People's Republic of China after they enter China, and

must not conduct any activities other than covered by the purpose of the visit as stated in application, or activities not approved by the authorities of the Chinese government. If foreign citizens are seeking employment in China, they need to apply for work permits from relevant authorities. They would face penalties if they breach relevant laws and regulations.

24. Can I enter China as soon as I get a visa?

After you obtain a visa, you should be able to enter China through a port open to foreign citizens. However, it is up to the border control staff members to make decisions on whether or not to allow the visa holder to enter China according to individual cases.