Find your everyday

FREE GUIDE

CHINA

Essential apps for China.

The 14 apps that make everyday life work: paying, eating, getting around and translating.



findyoureveryday.com

Free city-fit quiz →



WELCOME

Welcome to China.

Mainland China runs on its own ecosystem of apps. The ones you use at home, like Google, WhatsApp and Uber, won't get you far here. The local versions make everyday life incredibly convenient once you know which ones to download.

This guide covers the essentials for paying, eating, getting around and translating, whether you're visiting for a week or moving here.

INSIDE

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01 · DAILY LIFE

The must-haves.



WeChat

微信 · Wēixìn

China's all-in-one “life app” for messaging, group chats, voice and video calls, and mini-programs. If you live in China, it's an absolute must.



Alipay

支付宝 · Zhīfùbǎo

The most common way to pay in China, plus a hub for utilities, transport and services. You'll use it every day. Travelers can now link a foreign bank card.



Taobao

淘宝 · Táobǎo

China's biggest online marketplace, for everything from clothes to home basics. Learn it once and you can build your whole life from your phone.



Meituan

美团 · Měituán

The go-to app for food and grocery delivery. It's everyday convenience on autopilot. Traveling? Ask your host or hotel to add the address for you.

Getting around.



DiDi

滴滴出行 · Dīdī chūxíng

China's main ride-hailing app for quick, reliable trips. Great when you're new or in a hurry.



Trip.com

携程旅行 · Xiéchéng Lǚxíng

Book flights, trains, hotels and attractions with English support and easy mobile payment. The easiest way to book high-speed trains between cities.



MetroMan

地铁通 · Dìtiětōng

Simple metro maps and routes that work even with weak data. Perfect for learning a new subway system fast.



HelloBike

哈啰 · Hāluō

Shared bikes for quick trips around dense cities, often faster than walking. My pick over the other bike-share apps if you're a foreigner.

NOTE HelloBike is the blue bikes, not the yellow or teal ones.

03 · MAPS & FOOD

Find your way, and good food.



Apple Maps IPHONE

苹果地图 · Píngguǒ dìtú

Built in and English-friendly. You can usually search by English place names or pinyin. The easiest option if you don't read Chinese.



Amap ANDROID

高德地图 · Gāodé dìtú

Super accurate in China, but the app is mostly in Chinese, so searching is harder if you don't read characters. Pinyin helps.



Dianping

大众点评 · Dàzhòng Diǎnpíng

China's main app for restaurant and service reviews, with photos, menus, ratings and deals. Basically the local Yelp people actually use. The best way to find good food and avoid tourist traps.

NOTE Amap works on iPhone too. Download it if Apple Maps can't find the English name of a place.

04 · TRANSLATION

Read anything.



Translate IPHONE

Apple Translate

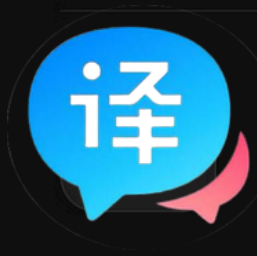
Clean, fast translation with handy offline packs. Great for quick phrases and signs.



Google Translate ANDROID

Google 翻译

The best default translator for Android. Download the Simplified Chinese pack before you arrive.



Baidu Translate

百度翻译 · Bǎidù Fānyì

A China-native translator that handles Chinese ↔ English well. Useful for screenshots, menus and everyday text.

NOTE Baidu Translate works without a VPN.

05 · MUST KNOW

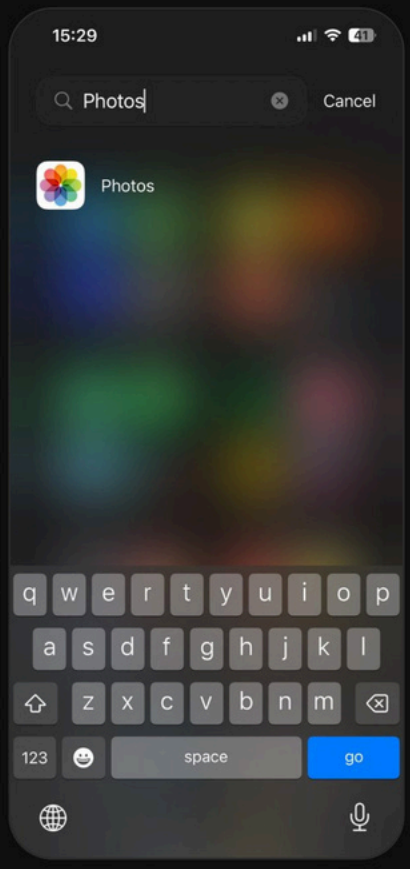
Screenshot & translate.

The trick that makes every Chinese app usable. Here's how it works on iPhone.



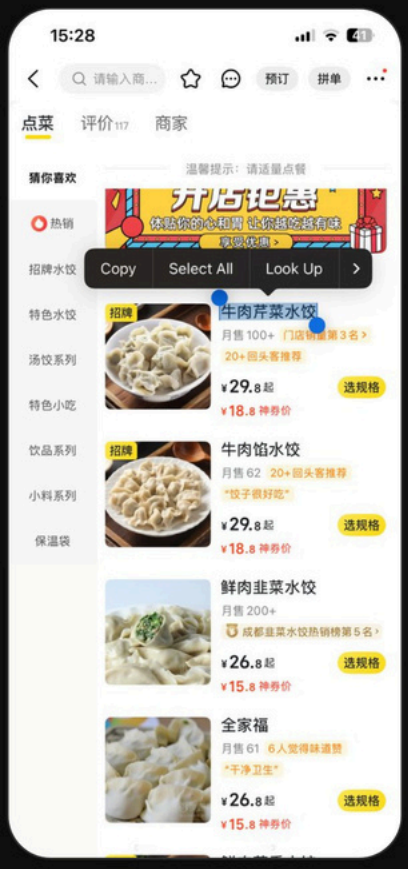
1 Screenshot

In any app, if you can't read the Chinese, take a screenshot first.



2 Open Photos

Search for your Photos app, or just open it.

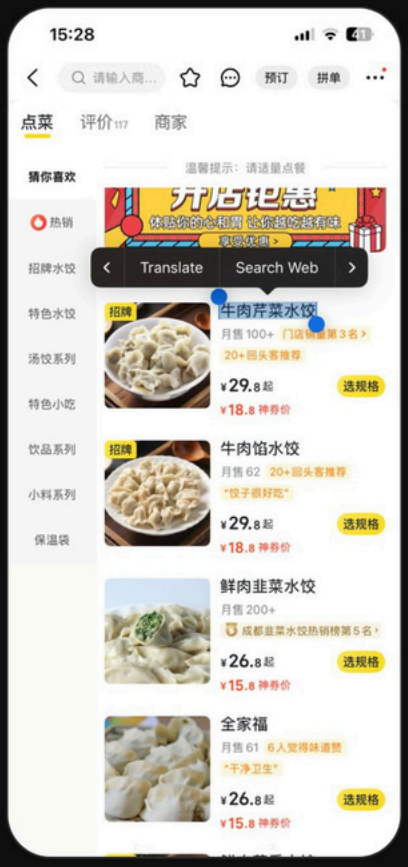


3 Hold & highlight

Press and hold the text, drag the blue handles around the phrase, then tap the arrow.

05 · MUST KNOW

Screenshot & translate.



4 Tap Translate

Tap Translate in the menu that pops up.



5 Translated!

That's it. Copy it, save it, or tap play to hear it out loud.

ON ANDROID?

Open the screenshot in Google Translate or Baidu Translate and use image translation. Same idea, a couple of extra taps.

06 · TRAVEL TIPS

When to go, how to get around.

BEST TIME TO VISIT

MAR – MAY

Shanghai

Mild spring weather and comfy sightseeing.

SEP – OCT

Beijing

Cool, dry weather. The best time for the Great Wall.

MAR – MAY

Chengdu

Pleasant, mild temperatures.

SEP – NOV

Chongqing

More comfortable, with lower humidity than summer.

OCT – DEC

Shenzhen

Warm, sunny and much less humid.

NOT SURE?

Find the city that fits you →

findyoureveryday.com/quiz

GETTING AROUND

In big cities like Shanghai, Beijing, Chongqing or downtown Chengdu, the metro, a shared bike or just walking is usually fastest and cheapest, and often quicker than sitting in traffic.

For longer trips across town or outside the center, DiDi is convenient and reliable but costs more. Popular tourist spots usually have plenty of public buses, and sometimes shuttles, for much less than a car.

WHO'S BEHIND THIS

Hi, I'm Jager.

I've lived in mainland China for over five years, across Shenzhen, Shanghai and Chengdu. I've moved apartments five times, sometimes on last-minute notice, shipped things abroad, dealt with real estate agents, and even flown my cat to another city.

One of the best things about life here is the convenience. Things that take months back home can get done in days. But it's hard as a newcomer, because of the language barrier and an app ecosystem that's completely its own.

5+
years in China

3
cities lived in

5
apartments, one cat

Loving a city on holiday isn't the same as loving everyday life there.

That's why I started **Find Your Everyday**. I help people figure out which city in Asia actually fits their lifestyle, career and budget, before they move.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Find your city.

Thinking about living in China, or anywhere in Asia, for a month, a semester or longer? Start with the free city-fit quiz.

Find my city →

14 quick questions. Free. findyoureveryday.com/quiz

WANT A SECOND OPINION?

Book a 1:1 call with me.

An honest take on your options, jobs and what everyday life is really like, before you commit.

findyoureveryday.com →

FOR TEACHERS

Thinking about teaching in China?

How to land a good teaching job without getting screwed over. Includes an offer calculator.

findyoureveryday.com/teach-in-china →

DISCLAIMER

Info changes fast in China, so always double-check official sources. This is practical relocation guidance based on real experience, not legal advice.