



Researched Information on China that may be helpful if you have Chinese participants in your programs

Formal Name:	People's Republic of China
Short Form:	China
Term for Nationals:	Chinese
Capital:	Beijing
Population:	1,355,692,576 (July 2014 est.)
Age structure: (2014 est.)	
0-14 years:	17.1% (male 124,340,516; female 107,287,324)
15-24 years:	14.7% (male 105,763,058; female 93,903,845)
24-54 years:	47.2% (male 327,130,324; female 313,029,536)
54-65 years:	11.3% (male 77,751,100; female 75,737,968)
65 years and over:	9.6% (male 62,646,075; female 68,102,830)
Population growth rate:	0.44% (2014 est.)
Birth rate:	12.17 births/1,000 population (2014 est.)
Death rate:	7.44 deaths/1,000 population (2014 est.)
Net migration rate:	-0.32 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2014 est.)
Sex ratio: (2014 est.)	
At birth:	1.11 male(s)/female
15-24 years:	1.16 male(s)/female
24-54 years:	1.13 male(s)/female
54-65 years:	1.06 male(s)/female
65 years and over:	0.92 male(s)/female
Total population:	1.06 male(s)/female
Infant mortality rate:	14.79 deaths/1,000 live births (2014 est.)
Life expectancy at birth:	Total population: 75.15 years Male: 73.09 years Female: 77.43 years (2014 est.)
Literacy (age 15 and over can read and write)	Total population: 95.1% Male: 97.5% Female: 92.7% (2014 est.)
Ethnic groups:	Han Chinese: 91.6% Zhuang: 1.3% Other (Hui, Manchu, Uighur, Miao, Yi, Tujia, Tibetan, Mongol, Dong, Buyei, Yao, Bai, Korean, Hani, li, Kazakh, Dai and other nationalities): 7.1%

<p>Religions: Note: officially atheist</p>	<p>Buddhist: 18.2% Christian: 5.1% Muslim: 1.8% Folk Religion: 21.9% Hindu: <0.1% Jewish: <0.1% Other (includes Daoist (Taoist)): 0.7% Unaffiliated: 52.2%</p>
<p>Languages:</p>	<p>Standard Chinese or Mandarin (Putonghua, based on the Beijing dialect), Yue (Cantonese), Wu (Shanghainese), Minbei (Fuzhou), Minnan (Hokkien-Taiwanese), Xiang, Gan, Hakka dialects, minority languages (see Ethnic groups entry)</p>

Major Holidays and Festivals

JANUARY 1

New Year's Day (China)

Founding Day of the Republic of China (Taiwan)

THE LAST DAY OF THE 12TH LUNAR MONTH

Lunar New Year's Eve (both Taiwan and China)

The Chinese New Year is a time when families come together and celebrate their ancestry. Most families feast on traditional foods such as dumplings, and stay awake for many hours after the feast spending quality time together.

THE FIRST 3 DAYS OF THE 1ST LUNAR MONTH

Spring Festival (Chinese New Year) (both Taiwan and China)

"Each year, between the end of winter and the beginning of spring, people throughout China enthusiastically celebrate the first traditional festival of the year, the Spring Festival or Lunar New Year. During the Spring Festival, every household will display Spring Festival couplets and pictures, and decorate the home. Spring Festival Eve is an important time for family reunions. Usually, in the evening of the last day of the twelfth month by the lunar calendar each year, the entire family gets together for a New Year's Eve dinner. After dinner, all family members sit together to chat or play games, staying up till early the next morning. In the morning people pay New Year calls on relatives to extend congratulations. During the festival, many people also attend traditional recreational activities, such as the lion dance, dragon-lantern dance and stilt-walking."

THE 15TH DAY OF THE 1ST LUNAR MONTH

Lantern Festival

"The first full moon after the Spring Festival, is the occasion for the Lantern Festival. It is customary to eat special sweet dumplings called yuanxiao and enjoy displayed lanterns during this festival. Yuanxiao, round balls made of glutinous rice flour stuffed with sugar fillings, symbolize reunion. The custom of enjoying lanterns at this time of the year dates back to the first century, and has continued to be popular throughout China up to the present day. On this festive night many cities hold lantern fairs to display many exotic and sometimes weirdly shaped multi-coloured lanterns. In rural areas the local people gather together and enjoy themselves as spectators and participants setting off fireworks, walking on stilts, performing with dragon lanterns, dancing the yangge and other folk dances and playing on swings."

FEBRUARY 28 Memorial Day (Taiwan)

Commemoration of the February 28 incident that took place in 1947

MARCH 8

International Working Women's Day (China); Women's Day (Taiwan)

MARCH 12

Arbor Day (China)

MARCH 29

Youth Day / Martyrs' Day (Taiwan)

"A date of tremendous import to the people of China as a time when the young are reminded of the heroic accomplishments and sacrifices of the nation's martyrs and when all citizens take a moment to think and reflect on the past. "

APRIL 4

Children's Day (Taiwan)

"The occasion is marked by the Children's Day Celebration honoring model students from around Taiwan and by numerous parent-children activities sponsored by government and civic organizations."

AROUND APRIL 5

Pure Brightness Day or Tombs Sweeping Day (both Taiwan and China)

"This was originally a day set aside for people to offer sacrifices to their ancestors, but nowadays it is more customary to visit the tombs of the martyrs or the revolution to pay respects. By the time of the festival, the weather has turned warmer and the earth is covered in green. Friends like to go together to the outskirts of the city to walk in the green grass, fly kites and appreciate the beauty of spring. That is why Pure Brightness Day is sometimes also called the 'Stepping on Greenery Festival'."

MAY 1

Labour Day (both Taiwan and China)

MAY 4

Chinese Youth Day (China)

JUNE 1

International Children's Day (China)

THE 5TH DAY OF THE 5TH LUNAR MONTH

Dragon Boat Festival (both Taiwan and China)

"It is generally believed that the festival originated to celebrate the memory of the ancient patriotic poet Qu Yuan. Qu Yuan, a native of the State of Chu during the Warring States Period, repeatedly offered his king proposals aimed at forestalling political corruption. Subsequently, slandered by treacherous court officials, he was sent into exile by the same king he had tried to help. In 278 B.C., the capital of the State of Chu was lost to its enemy the State of Qin and Qu Yuan drowned himself in despair on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month. Aware of the tragedy, the local people living beside the river went out in their boats to try to find his corpse. Every year thereafter on this day people continued to row dragon boats on their local rivers in memory of Qu Yuan's life and death, throwing sections of bamboo filled with rice into the river as an offering. Legend has it that someone once met Qu Yuan's spirit on the bank of the river and was told: 'The food you have given me has all been taken away by the dragon. Hereafter, you should wrap the rice in bamboo leaves tied with five-colored thread. These are the two things that the dragon is most afraid of.' Thus, people began to make zongzi, glutinous rice wrapped in a pyramid shape using bamboo or reed leaves. Today, zongzi is the traditional food for the Dragon Boat Festival still eaten in memory of Qu Yuan."

AUGUST 1

Army Day (China)

THE 15TH DAY OF THE 7TH LUNAR MONTH

Ghost Festival (both Taiwan and China)

"Historically, families offer sacrifices of the newly harvested grain to departed ancestors on this day, which also coincides with the Buddhist Ullambana (Deliverance) Festival and the Taoist Ghost Festival. Since each of these traditions in some way honors the spirits of the departed the seventh lunar month has come to be known as Ghost Month, celebrated as a time when the 'Good Brethren' (ghosts from the underworld) come back to earth to feast on the victuals offered by the living. Over time the Ullambana Festival and Ghost Festival have melded together to become the present day Chung Yuan Putu or 'Mid-origen Passage to Universal Salvation'."

THE 15TH DAY OF THE 8TH LUNAR MONTH

Mid-Autumn Festival (both China and Taiwan)

"In ancient times, people used to offer elaborately made cakes to the moon spirit on this day. After making this symbolic offering, a family would enjoy eating the cakes together. The festival eventually came to carry the idea of a happy family reunion and the custom has been passed

down to this day. On this mid-autumn night, the full moon is especially bright. The whole family may sit together beneath the clear moonlight eating tasty moon cakes and appreciating the beauty of the fully rounded moon. Of course, those who are far away from their homes that night are only too easily reminded of their families when they look up at the luminous moon. The words of the great Tang Dynasty poet Li Bai are often recited on such evenings, even today: 'I raise my head to gaze at the bright moon, and I drop my head to think of my old home'."

SEPTEMBER 3

Armed Forces Day (Taiwan)

"Celebrated in memory of the valor and sacrifice of all branches of the military during the eight-year war that ended in victory for China on September 3, 1955."

SEPTEMBER 10

Teachers' Day (China)

SEPTEMBER 28

Confucius' Birthday/Teachers' Day (Taiwan)

"Every year during Teachers' Day, the Confucius Memorial Service is solemnly held at the Confucius Temple to show respect and honor for the Sage. At the 'Teachers Day Celebration' held by the Ministry of Education and the various local governments, teachers with the highest seniority and best quality are recognized for their contribution to society."

OCTOBER 1-2

National Day (China)

OCTOBER 10

Double Ten Day (Taiwan)

Commemoration of the 1911 Wuch'ang Uprising.

OCTOBER 25

Taiwan's Retrocession Day (Taiwan)

Commemoration of the official ending of Japanese rule on October 25, 1945.

THE 9TH DAY OF THE 9TH LUNAR MONTH

Double Ninth Day (Taiwan)

"According to Chinese custom, 'nine' is a number belonging to the positive principle 'yang,'... In Chinese, the word 'nine' is homophonous with the word for 'long time,' and accordingly this number has come to represent longevity. Thus, in 1966, the Ministry of Interior designated Double Ninth Day as Senior Citizen's Day in the ROC, and the week beginning on this holiday is observed as Senior Citizen's Week."

NOVEMBER 12

Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Birthday (Taiwan)

DECEMBER 25

Constitution Day (Taiwan)

Foods

From: <http://chinesefood.miningco.com/library/weekly/aa122199.htm>

Is there any major holiday that isn't celebrated with a special festive food? From hunting for chocolate eggs at Easter, to preparing the traditional English pudding at Christmas, there are many foods associated with special occasions. (The exchange of eggs in springtime is a custom that predates the birth of Christ, while the English have been enjoying plum pudding with their Christmas dinner since the late 1700's.)

Given the important role food plays in Chinese culture, it is not surprising that many foods have symbolic meaning. Here are a few examples:

Eggs: Eggs hold a special symbolic significance in many cultures, and China is no exception. The Chinese believe eggs symbolize fertility. After a baby is born, parents may hold a "red egg and ginger party," where they pass out hard boiled eggs to announce the birth. (In some regions of China the number of eggs presented depends on the sex of the child: an even number for a girl, and an odd number if a boy has been born).

Egg rolls or spring rolls resemble the shape of a gold bar, and thus are often served on New Years as a symbol of wealth and prosperity in the coming year.

Noodles: Noodles are a symbol of longevity in Chinese culture. They are as much a part of a Chinese birthday celebration as a birthday cake with lit candles is in many countries. Since noodles do symbolize long life, it is considered very unlucky to cut up a strand.

Fish: Although westerners sometimes balk at the sight of an entire fish lying on a plate, in China a fish served whole is a symbol of prosperity. In fact, at a banquet it is customary to serve the whole fish last, pointed toward the guest of honor. Part of the symbolism of fish comes from the fact that the Chinese word for fish, *yu*, sounds like the word for riches or abundance, and it is believed that eating fish will help your wishes come true in the year to come.

Duck: If you are ever invited to a Chinese wedding banquet, don't be surprised to spot a mouthwatering platter of Peking duck on the banquet table. Ducks represent fidelity in Chinese culture. Also, red dishes are featured at weddings as red is the color of happiness. (You'll find them served at New Year's banquets for the same reason.)

Chicken: In Chinese culture, chicken forms part of the symbolism of the dragon and phoenix. At a Chinese wedding, chicken's feet (sometimes referred to as phoenix feet) are often served with dragon foods such as lobster. Chicken is also popular at Chinese New Year, symbolizing a good marriage and the coming together of families (serving the bird whole emphasizes family unity).

Seeds (lotus seeds, watermelon seeds, etc): Visit an Asian bakery during the Chinese New Year, and you're likely to find a wide assortment of snacks with different types of seeds in them. The seed-filled treats represent bearing many children in Chinese culture.