China

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1. Specifically, what kind of linens did you need to bring?
   - A fitted bed sheet! You can buy just the Twin sized bed sheet @ Wal-Mart...DO IT! They don’t sell them in China and I couldn’t stand to sleep on a bare mattress, so I was constantly tucking blankets around my mattress as a make-shift “fitted sheet.”
   - None.

2. What are you glad you packed from home?
   - Digital camera & several memory cards; medicine—pack for getting a cold, allergies, the flu, etc.! Going to a foreign pharmacy is confusing! Hand sanitizer (take several small containers for your purse, backpack, etc.); space bags! (they’re life savers.); candy/snack foods... sometimes you just want a piece of home, and you’ll eat them while you’re in China, so they won’t take up space in your bags on the way home 😊
   - Medicine and large supply of makeup.

3. What do you wish you had left at home?
   - I packed very lightly...enough clothes for 1.5 weeks is all! PACK LIGHTLY! You would rather re-wear clothes & get sick of them than have no room to pack souvenirs later.
   - I brought too many clothes. Bug spray and Sun lotion were also not necessary.

4. Do you have any travel tips to pass on (planning advice, safety considerations, guidebooks, train vs. bus, etc.)?
   - Take buses, not taxis, as much as possible...they’re so much cheaper and take about the same amount of time. 😊
   - BRING DIARRHEAL MEDICINE. Learn the bus routes, especially to the center of town. Always have a written address of the school on hand for taxis. There is a long break in the semester, if you plan to travel during that time get a ticket now (That’s how hard it is).

5. What places would you advise future students to see and why?
   - One of the most influential parts of the trip for me was getting lost and finding ourselves in a very rough/poor neighborhood...it really taught me to be grateful.
   - Shanghai was awesome because of the diversity of cultures; we spent most of our time eating food from around the world. There is an indoor water park somewhere at the edge of Shijiazhuang called something like Sea park, it was pretty fun. There is also a hot springs called White Deer Resort that I wanted to go to but didn’t have the chance, I deeply regret that.
1. How did you meet other students?

- On campus! Talk to anyone...everyone is friendly & wants to help you 😊 let them!
- Some would randomly try and talk to us which I thought was really nice. Not much interaction was made unfortunately because a lot of them are very shy; some other students will ask you to teach them English. The other international students who have been in China for a while would also introduce some Chinese students to you as well.

2. How did you like to spend your free time and why? Is there anything you regret not doing more of in your free time?

- I loved going to the mall (even if it was just to get frozen yogurt) and walking up and down the streets...so much is always going on, so it never gets boring! Also, I liked going to the street vendors on campus in the afternoons/early evenings...they all are really willing to talk to you and it was fun to see the same faces all the time (they’re there almost every day).
- Malls, malls, malls. There is no shortage of malls in the city so even if we didn’t have money we would wonder through the various malls. Because the city is so big, traveling takes a very, very long time so often times we leave to go get lunch and by the time we are done its 9PM and everything is closed so we have to take the last bus home. I wish I played more sports and went to KTV more!

3. What opportunities for social, recreational, and cultural events that the host university or program offered did you like best? Why?

- n/a
- Going on mountain climbs with other international students. It offered great scenery and just a long time to get to know each other. Plus it was pretty much the only thing the host university offered. They also had a huge talent show (like a TV event) at the new campus. If you’re staying at the new campus you’ll definitely know about it. If not, ask. The first few people who came out convinced me it wasn’t a student talent show, it was really professional. During this event, the international students also had opportunities to perform, as the Indonesians and Ukrainians from our campus did.

4. What piece of advice would you give future students regarding their non-academic life while abroad?

- Remember this is a once-in-a-lifetime experience! Don’t pass up a weekend trip over a $100...you may never get the opportunity to do it again! 😊
- Just go out and talk to people! Play sports! The best part of the trip is the friends you make!
1. How did your academic experience abroad differ from your U.S. experiences concerning:

Relations with professors/classroom instruction?
- It was pretty relaxed, and I had very good relationships with my Chinese professors...they are truly there to help you!
- There were only 5 students and we got to know the teachers very well. English isn’t their first language but some of them speak it very well, some may not understand you though making discussion impossible. Overall it was very easy courses and we barely spent any time in class.

Grading?
- A little easier than UNK 😊
- Very little work done (usually a midterm and final paper/exam) but grading was a bit lenient.

Study habits?
- I studied Chinese a LOT and would suggest you do the same...it really paid off for me!
- We had a lot of free time but I only studied when necessary. But in fact I would recommend spending some time studying for Chinese Language class. That’s something I feel like I should have improved more on.

Library?
- The library was horrible, I never used it once.
- Was on a different campus than us, so I never went. But we didn’t need it.

Computer access?
- We had to use an Ethernet cord. This made it difficult to get on the Internet and/or communicate back home and do online classes. We had frequent power outages and also the Ethernet cord only provided the ability of one student to be on. Sometimes the Internet was iffy, but for the most part it was ok, on my laptop. TAKE A LAPTOP! Plus, you can always use Wi-Fi at a coffee shop.
- I didn’t see any public ones, but I wasn’t looking for any either.
1. How much money in U.S. currency would you recommend students have at their disposal for their whole time abroad?
   - I would say $1,000-$1,500…food isn’t much, but you’ll want money for souvenirs…remember, bargain, bargain, bargain! 😊
   - You can get by on $15 a week on food because it is ridiculously cheap, but there is a lot of food to try so I don’t recommend it.

2. How much money did you have in foreign currency when you left for your program? Was it enough?
   - When I left I had 1000 Yuan that I’d exchanged for, and then I just used the ATM with my debit card on campus.
   - We changed our money at the airport in China so we didn’t need any.

3. How did you manage your money (credit cards, traveler’s checks, bank accounts etc.)? How and where did you access your money?
   - I used my debit card (VISA) at the ATM on campus…it had a small fee each time, but it wasn’t a huge ordeal.
   - Bank of China and Bank of Communications are the only banks that you can use foreign cards in, so we had to hunt them down. Very important to make mental notes of these banks for future use. We exclusively used ATMs. But we had a Chinese bank account set up with the help of a friend which we used to shop online.

4. How much money did you spend on:
   - Books?
     - Under $30
     - $20
   - School Supplies?
     - n/a
     - $5
   - Food?
     - n/a
     - $40 per week (we ate EXTRAVAGENTLY)
   - Local transportation?
     - n/a
     - $3 per week (we travelled to and from a lot)
   - Travel?
     - n/a
     - $200 to go to Shanghai (Entire Trip included in price)
   - Personal items (toiletries)?
     - n/a
     - $50 for the whole time
5. How did you communicate with the United States? What would you recommend to future students (e.g. calling card, set up e-mail account and where, etc.)?

- Skype / Blog (thoughts.com) / email (Hotmail & Lopermail)
- Get a VPN, this way you can use Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. We bought a phone card but never used it because we never figured out how. Skype works fine if you buy credit for calls and it will work without a VPN. However, install it in the US before you leave. In China, you won’t know it but a slightly different program will install instead.
Cultural Issues

1. Are women treated differently in your host country than in the United States? If so, what advice would you pass on to women who are thinking of studying in your host country?
   - Women aren’t exactly “equals” in China... there were several times when men on the street would say inappropriate things towards us... I think it’s all a part of the journey/experience. You take it just as though you would any other rude comment, and not let it interfere with your travel. At the same time, many men treated me with a lot of respect and compassion... it all depends!

2. Are minorities – racial, religious, sexual identity – treated differently in your host country than in the United States? If so, what advice would you pass on to members of any minority group that are thinking of studying in your host country?
   - I didn’t notice much... I do know that one of my professors was Christian and she didn’t talk about it publicly. I never noticed any minority being treated differently, although having my bleach blonde hair turned a lot of heads; it was always in a good way!