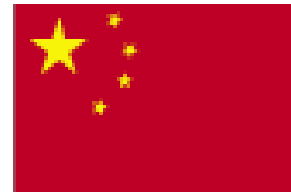


OFFICIAL NAME:

People's Republic of China

**Geography**

Total area: 9,596,960 sq. km. (about 3.7 million sq. mi.).

Cities: *Capital*--Beijing. *Other major cities*--Shanghai, Tianjin, Shenyang, Wuhan, Guangzhou, Chongqing, Harbin, Chengdu.

Terrain: Plains, deltas, and hills in east; mountains, high plateaus, deserts in west.

Climate: Tropical in south to subarctic in north.

People

Nationality: *Noun and adjective*--Chinese (singular and plural).

Population (July 2007 est.): 1,321,851,888.

Population growth rate (2007 est.): 0.606%.

Health (2007 est.): *Infant mortality rate*--22.12/1,000. *Life expectancy*--72.88 years (overall); 71.13 years for males, 74.82 years for females.

Ethnic groups: Han Chinese--91.9%; Zhuang, Manchu, Hui, Miao, Uygur, Yi, Mongolian, Tibetan, Buyi, Korean, and other--8.1%.

Religions: Officially atheist; Taoism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam.

Language: Mandarin (Putonghua), plus many local dialects.

Education: *Years compulsory*--9. *Literacy*--90.9%.

Work force (2006 est., 798 million): *Agriculture and forestry*--45%; *industry*--24%; *services*--31%.



Section of the Great Wall in Beijing, China, April 19, 2005. [© AP Images]

Government

Type: Communist party-led state.

Constitution: December 4, 1982.

Independence: Unification under the Qin (Ch'in) Dynasty 221 BC; Qing (Ch'ing or Manchu) Dynasty replaced by a republic on February 12, 1912; People's Republic established October 1, 1949.

Branches: *Executive*--president, vice president, State Council, premier. *Legislative*--unicameral National People's Congress. *Judicial*--Supreme People's Court.

Administrative divisions: 23 provinces (the P.R.C. considers Taiwan to be its 23rd province); 5 autonomous regions, including Tibet; 4 municipalities directly under the State Council.

Political parties: Chinese Communist Party, 70.8 million members; 8 minor parties under Communist Party supervision.

Suffrage: Universal at 18.



Economy

GDP (2007): \$3.249 trillion (exchange rate-based).

Per capita GDP (2007): \$2,458 (exchange rate-based).

GDP real growth rate (2007): 11.4%.

Natural resources: Coal, iron ore, crude oil, mercury, tin, tungsten, antimony, manganese, molybdenum, vanadium, magnetite, aluminum, lead, zinc, uranium, hydropower potential (world's largest).

Agriculture: *Products*--Among the world's largest producers of rice, wheat, potatoes, corn, peanuts, tea, millet, barley; commercial crops include cotton, other fibers, apples, oilseeds, pork and fish; produces variety of livestock products.

Industry: *Types*--mining and ore processing; iron; steel; aluminum; coal, machinery; textiles and apparel; armaments; petroleum; cement; chemicals; fertilizers; consumer products including footwear, toys, and electronics; automobiles and other transportation equipment including rail cars and locomotives, ships, and aircraft; and telecommunications.

Trade (2007): *Exports*--\$1.221 trillion: electronics; machinery; apparel; optical, photographic, and medical equipment; and furniture. *Main partners*--United States, Hong Kong, Japan, EU, South Korea, Singapore. *Imports*--\$917.4 billion: electronics, machinery, mineral fuel and oil, chemicals, plastic. *Main partners*--Japan, EU, Taiwan, South Korea, United States, Malaysia, Australia.

PEOPLE

Ethnic Groups

The largest ethnic group is the Han Chinese, who constitute about 91.9% of the total population. The remaining 8.1% are Zhuang (16 million), Manchu (10 million), Hui (9 million), Miao (8 million), Uyghur (7 million), Yi (7 million), Mongolian (5 million), Tibetan (5 million), Buyi (3 million), Korean (2 million), and other ethnic minorities.

Language

There are seven major Chinese dialects and many subdialects. Mandarin (or Putonghua), the predominant dialect, is spoken by over 70% of the population. It is taught in all schools and is the medium of government. About two-thirds of the Han ethnic group are native speakers of Mandarin; the rest, concentrated in southwest and southeast China, speak one of the six other major Chinese dialects. Non-Chinese languages spoken widely by ethnic minorities include Mongolian, Tibetan, Uyghur and other Turkic languages (in Xinjiang), and Korean (in the northeast).