Small Customs and Manners to Follow While Abroad in China by Dean Orbell

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Your bags are packed. Your visa and passport are set. All you have to do is board the plane and arrive at your destination. Westerners traveling to China bring with them a wealth of mannerisms, customs and traditions. Chinese culture values different manners and follows different customs. The Chinese people frown upon small gestures like improper bathing suits or playing with chopsticks. Westerners may be completely unaware of certain customs and manners that could leave them being laughed at or stared at by natives.

Proper Attire

During the summer months, China experiences some of the worst heat. Temperatures reach well into the 100s, and these very hot times could mean a day trip to the beach for some travelers. If you decide to take a swim at the pool or even travel to the beach, wear proper attire. Never do you want to wear a traditional bathing suit found in western culture that reveals a majority of your body.

The Chinese are very conservative when it comes to bathing suits. If you wear a skimpy bathing suit, chances are you will be gawked at by the men or even asked to leave the beach altogether. If you visit a US Passport renewal service website, you might read about proper dress attire, including proper attire for the Spring Festival where most men wear suits and women wear particular color dresses. Wearing inappropriate attire could leave you singled out and being stared at by crowds of people.

Photographs

Everyone who visits China will bring with them a camera of some kind. If you plan on shooting video or taking photographs, be appropriate about it. Do not take photographs of sensitive sights, especially in certain museums, holy shrines or tourist destinations. Many places you travel to will allow you to take photos, but some places forbid it. Other locations will charge you a price for a picture, so just be sure to come ready to pay.

Dining Room Manners

In the States, most individuals know not to put their elbows on the table or burp during a meal. In China, proper etiquette includes not smoking while at dinner, avoiding playing with chopsticks, using a spoon to stir soup and not sticking a chopstick into rice. These manners are simple to follow, but others are lesser known, and include serving tea, beer or water to people in order from oldest to youngest. If you have your China visas for US citizens ready and bags packed, prepare yourself for the small mannerisms and proper greetings to avoid any awkward situations.

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