



G-MEO STUDY & INTERN ABROAD

STUDENT PRE-DEPARTURE GUIDE

Chengdu American Center for
Study Abroad



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I. KEY CONTACTS

New York Team	Chengdu Team
24/7 Emergency Tel: +1 (347) 344-7788	24/7 Emergency Tel: +86 158 8214 0846
Tel: +1 (347) 344-7788	Tel (电话): +86 185 8392 2212
5 West 37th Street, Suite 210 New York, NY 10018	707-8, No. 99, Mengzuiwan Cross Street, Chenghua District, Chengdu, China
All G-MEO Staff E-mail: info@g-meo.com Chris Wang , Program Coordinator E-mail: chris.wang@g-meo.com	Ms. Sara Luo , Director, Chengdu American Center for Study Abroad E-mail: Sara.Luo@g-meo.com Mobile: +86 158-8214-0846 WeChat: xiaoluo415267 Solomon Li , Marketing and Business Development Director E-mail: Solomon.Li@g-meo.com

II. BEFORE LEAVING CAMPUS

Since you will be off campus, you must ensure all necessary arrangements are made for your return prior to your departure such as course or registration or dormitory registration, etc. Check with your home institution's Study Abroad and/or Registrar Office to see if you need to take special steps to secure housing or classes for the semester you return to the U.S.



III. PASSPORT & VISA

Please make sure you have a valid passport with at least 6 months validity remaining from the date of your departure from China. It can take up to 6 weeks for a passport application to be processed, so make sure you obtain a new or renewed passport as soon as possible to avoid extra fees for expedited processing. If you do not have a passport or if it is expired, you can obtain a passport application through your post office.

For first time applicants, you must apply in person. Please be sure to bring a completed passport application (Form DS-11), an accepted form of photo ID plus a photocopy of the ID, proof of your US citizenship (your original birth certificate is fine), two 2x2" passport photos, and a check or money order. No cash or credit cards will be accepted.

Check the US Department of State website for more information on passports:

http://travel.state.gov/passport/forms/ds11/ds11_842.html

APPLYING FOR A CHINESE STUDENT VISA

G-MEO does not process visas. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain a visa, either by applying in person at the Consulate of their region or using a visa agency. Check with your local Consulate on how to submit your application.

Upon admission to a G-MEO program, students will receive a instruction on how to obtain a visa and all necessary documents. Contact a G-MEO staff member if you have not received an email regarding visa at least one month before the start of your program.

Students applying for a visa must do so through the Chinese Consulate serving their state. For more information on which Consulate is responsible for processing your visa, please see the following link: <http://us.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/lsw/zj/qz2021/>

Students may apply for their visa on their own accord or if you find applying for a visa difficult, G-MEO recommends use of a visa agency. An agency will charge a nominal fee for this service but the extra cost is well worth it. G-MEO does not gain any benefit from the students' use of any agencies.

*For the Chengdu American Center for Study Abroad program, G-MEO only provides invitation letters for single-entry visas. This means that students are not allowed to leave China once they arrive or else their visas will thereafter be invalid.

IV. FLIGHT ARRANGEMENTS

Please ensure that you arrive in Chengdu before the orientation date (recommended arrival time between 7:00 am – 23:00 pm) and that your departure date is after the program ends.

You can either seek the assistance of a travel agency to book a flight or use search engines such as Kayak, skyscanner.com, or Studentuniverse.com, etc. Just be sure that your final destination is Chengdu Shuangliu International Airport or Chengdu Tianfu International Airport. Once you have booked your flight, please be sure to fill in **all legs of your flight** on the Travel Arrangements on the pre-departure portal of your G-MEO application (<http://sapms.gmeochina.com>). The Travel Arrangements must be completed at the latest no later than two weeks before the program start date. The information on this form will enable our staff in China to schedule your airport pick up upon arrival in Chengdu. Therefore, it is very important that you complete the form accurately.

In the event that your flight is delayed or you miss a connecting flight, it is imperative that you contact the 24/7 emergency number in China or New York to inform us of your delay.

Tip: When planning your itinerary, we recommend booking a flight directly from a US city to Chengdu rather than having a layover in China to avoid facing any complications, delays, etc. in China.



V. IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

You should have at least two copies of all important documents:

- passport
- visa
- plane ticket
- credit cards & ATM cards
- health insurance card

In addition to photocopies, it is wise to also save digital copies (scanned PDFs or clear photos) of your documents on a secure cloud service (such as Google Drive, iCloud, or Dropbox) and/or an encrypted USB drive. This provides an extra backup in case of loss or theft.

We strongly recommend leaving one full set of copies with a family member or trusted friend at home. Keep the second set of copies with you in China, stored separately from the originals—for example, keep your passport in a secure money belt or locked suitcase, and the copies in another bag.

Being well-prepared with your documents will save you significant time and stress in case of an emergency while abroad.



VI. SAFETY, HEALTH, AND HEALTH INSURANCE

SAFETY

The 24/7 emergency number in the United States is +1 (347) 344-7788

The 24/7 Emergency number in China is +86 158 8214 0846.

G-MEO's top priority is the health and safety of all our students. It is extremely important for all students to keep lines of communication open with both your family, and the G-MEO staff. Highly qualified G-MEO staff are available for students 24/7. Our staff in China all speak fluent English and Mandarin and can easily converse with students and locals. Our New York City Office also has a 24/7 number which students or families can call. G-MEO's China and New York City Headquarters are there to help in case of any emergency. We are in constant communication with each other and with your home university.

American and non-Chinese students are automatically enrolled in G-MEO's major medical insurance plan provided by recommended International Insurance, which covers among other things, "political uprising and natural disaster evacuation" insurance. This means that the insurance company is responsible for evacuating our students back to their home country in the rare case that an issue might arise that requires evacuation. Once enrolled in insurance, you will receive login information to the website exclusively for students. Please print out the International Insurance card, determine things like availability of certain prescriptions you are currently taking, information on doctors and hospitals you can visit while in China, etc. We require that you to carry the card with you daily.

All US citizen students should enroll with the U.S. State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). STEP allows the Department of State to better assist travelers in the event of an emergency.

Enroll here: <https://step.state.gov/step/>

In order for G-MEO to ensure your safety, you will need to provide the G-MEO staff with all your contact information at all times. G-MEO will require that you provide the G-MEO personnel in China with your Chinese cell phone number. In addition, if you ever plan on sleeping outside of the dorm overnight, you will be required to complete a form providing information on where you are staying and how we can reach you.

IMPORTANT: Remember, contact a G-MEO staff member immediately for any emergency situations that arise either with you or a friend. We are always here to help!

HEALTH

All non-Chinese students are required to make an appointment with their physician before leaving for China. You are not required to have any vaccinations for entry to China but for your own safety, your routine vaccinations must be up to date. Doctors must check your immunization record and health history to make sure your vaccinations are up to date. You will have to upload both the “Immunization Record” and “Health History Form” to the pre-departure section of your application. Your doctor will also need to complete the “Health Clearance Form” downloadable in the pre-departure portal on the Student Information System (<http://sapms.gmeochina.com/user.php>). You can visit the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website to learn what immunizations are recommended for China. In addition, your physician may also recommend certain vaccinations. Some of these immunizations require numerous shots to be taken over a period of time so, please be sure that you contact your physician for an appointment as soon as possible.

If you are currently taking any prescription drugs, check the International Insurance Company website to determine if the medicine you take is available in China and if so, what the Chinese name of the medication is. G-MEO highly recommends you obtain enough of the prescription for the duration of your stay in China.

When traveling, prescriptions must be packaged in their original bottle and must be accompanied by an official letter from your physician authorizing you to travel with the prescription and indicating it was prescribed by him/her for your personal use. Medication should be placed in your carry-on bag NOT your checked luggage.

In the event you cannot travel with an adequate supply of the medication, please ensure that the medication is available in China and that your physician has approved refilling your prescription in China specifically. If this is the case, please inform G-MEO prior to departure.





VII. FINANCES

How much money you will spend depends on your eating habits and lifestyle. Please see the estimated budget below for your time in China. Keep in mind that exchange rates change daily.

Expense	Amount All estimates are in US dollars (USD).
Living Expenses	\$300 per month
Books	\$200 to \$300
Airfare	\$700 to \$1500 roundtrip
New Passport	\$110 to \$190
Visa	\$140 to \$200
Local Transportation	About \$0.3 per trip by metro / bus
Wi-Fi Internet	*Free in the residence and center
Cell Phone	\$60 to \$180 for device \$15/month for service
Accommodation	About \$1000 per month
International Insurance	\$100 per month
Student Activities	\$200

ACCESSING MONEY WHILE ABROAD

*Once you have booked your airplane ticket, please call your banking institutions (for checking and credit accounts) to inform them that you will be studying abroad for the semester. They will need your dates of departure and return to the U.S. Also inform them if you'll be traveling to other countries prior to your return to the U.S.

It is extremely important to set a budget and stick to it throughout your stay. You don't want to find yourself short of money with time still left in your program. It's important to familiarize yourself with the local currency and exchange rates. Exchange rates change regularly, please check the **US Federal Reserve** website for the current rates:

<https://www.federalreserve.gov/releases/h10/current/>. The symbol for the Chinese Yuan is ¥, and the abbreviation for Renminbi is RMB.

ATMs are widely available, and you can continue to use your U.S. bank account to withdraw money. Before departure, speak with your bank representative about withdrawal fees, daily limits, overseas usage, and online banking access. Some banks waive international fees, so compare options if charges seem high. It's also a good idea to ensure your parent or guardian has access to your U.S. bank account so they can deposit additional funds or assist with banking issues if needed.

While Visa and MasterCard are accepted at many international hotels and larger establishments, **everyday life in China now relies heavily on mobile payments**. Apps like WeChat Pay and Alipay are widely used for everything from buying street food to shopping in major malls. It is highly recommended that you download WeChat and Alipay before departure and link its payment function to your credit card or bank account. This will make daily transactions much smoother and more convenient once you arrive.



VIII. CELL PHONES & INTERNET

Students can bring their iPhones/smart phones with them to China. If your phone is unlocked, you can use it regularly in China with a local SIM card. If you have a locked smart phone, you can only use messaging in areas with Wi-Fi. Check with your phone provider. Alternatively, you may want to purchase a cheap phone for about \$60 USD once you arrive in Chengdu and buy a SIM card to make phone calls and send text messages. Cell phones purchased abroad might not work in the United States.

Various plans allow you to make local calls at 10 cents per minute & send texts at 2 cents per text.

There is free Wi-Fi internet access available in the residence, G-MEO office and classroom.

Note that websites such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTube cannot be accessed in China. If you want to keep using those, please download or purchase a VPN before you arrive in China.

Check with your home institution to see if you can obtain a VPN (virtual private network) for free so that you may access various social media sites. Please do a search online to check which websites may be accessed before arriving to China.

*Note: VPN can slow down your computer.



Keeping in touch with family is critical for you and for them. But keep in mind that there is a 12 hour time difference between China and Eastern Standard Time. Getting in touch with family will take some planning.

You can download WeChat (a Chinese version of WhatsApp): <http://www.wechat.com/en/download.html> to communicate daily with your family and friends in the U.S. as well as the Chengdu team. It is also used for payment, order food delivery, taking public transportation and many other functions.

*Once you arrive, remember to call home and let your family know you're safe. They'll be worried about you!

IX. PACKING LIST

Please remember to only pack what you can carry and to monitor the weight of your luggage to avoid extra airline fees. Make sure to check your chosen airline's website for specific luggage weight requirements. Don't forget to leave room for souvenirs on your return trip! You are advised to research the weather for the semester you will be spending in China, to give you a better idea of what to pack. It will likely be hot at the beginning and become milder later.

The most important items you will need to take with you are your passport/visa, a list of names, phone numbers, postal and email addresses of home campus personnel, G-MEO personnel, G-MEO 24/7 emergency lines both in the US and in China, family and other persons that you might need to contact during your time in China. Keep this list in a safe place and do not pack it in your luggage just in case you need to contact us while en route to China.

What to Bring:

- Passport with valid visa
- Credit Card, ATM Card (check with bank & set travel flag to your card)
- Prescription medicine (put this in your carry-on)
- Electric adapter and converter (China's voltage is 220V)
- Chinese phrase book
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Laptop/tablet
- Camera
- Formal outfit for special occasions
- Small gifts from home for future local friends
- Clothes for mild and hot weather, may be cooler during the winter *

***Large sizes of shoes & and clothing might be difficult to buy in China, please prepare accordingly.**



X. IN CHENGDU

G-MEO Chengdu Center staff will arrange for your airport pick up.

Arrival

Look for a person holding a sign which says “G-MEO” at the exit for greeting passengers. If you can’t find anyone, call Sara Luo at +86 158 8214 0846. It takes approximately 50 minutes to 1.5 hours to drive to the residence from the airport, depending on which airport you land.

Tip: You will be jetlagged, tired and hungry so pack some snacks and water in case you need them. Be prepared for unfamiliar surroundings and try to stay calm and focused while you settle in!

Chengdu Airport



Chengdu Tianfu International Airport is located at Lujia Town, Jianyang, 51 km (32 mi) southeast of Downtown Chengdu.



Chengdu Shuangliu International Airport is located about 16 kilometers (10 mi) southwest of downtown Chengdu to the north of Shuangliu District.

Registering for Courses

By now, you have chosen a list of pre-approved courses that fit with your academic plan. Please remember that final registration will not be completed until onsite in China. Having all your courses pre-approved by your home university does not guarantee your courses will transfer for you. In order for courses to transfer, you will need to meet the transfer credit requirement set by your home university. Most institutions in the US require a student to receive a “C” grade or better to finalize their transfer credit.

However, this grade is different however infor some honors and specialized programs. This means that you are not in China only to have fun! You will be required to attend class and obtain the proper grade for the courses to transfer back to your home university.

Textbooks and school materials are not included in the G-MEO program fee, so be sure to include them into your budget according to the table provided previously in this guide.

Internship Arrangement

For students participating in the G-MEO Internship Program, our staff will accompany you to your host company on your first day. During this visit, you will be introduced to your supervisor and guided on how to navigate transportation to and from the workplace.

Your working schedule will be determined through direct discussion and agreement between you and the host company. Once your schedule is confirmed, it is required that you promptly inform G-MEO staff for our records and support purposes.

As an internship program participant, you will have full access to the facilities at the Chengdu Center, including the self-study room and the university cafeteria. In addition, you may register for on-site activities through WeChat.



Housing and Meals

G-MEO arranges students to stay in a hotel close to our campus and internship placement sites, ensuring convenience and comfort during their stay.

Student meals are not included in G-MEO's program fee, so students will be responsible for their own meals. Cafeteria cards are available for students but must be filled with money.

Even though on campus dining is available, most students do enjoy eating out at various restaurants and cafes, or ordering food delivery online.



Laws and Regulations

While in China, it is important to remember that the local laws are different from US laws. Although you're non-Chinese, you must abide by Chinese laws. It is important to be aware of the various laws in China and keep informed of current events. Always remember that you are a guest in China, so please behave in a respectful manner and be aware of the rights and wellbeing of others. It is unlawful for students to participate in demonstrations. Freedom of speech exists within the walls of the university but even there, Please be mindful that not everyone around will share your viewsof local laws and regulations. During the on-site orientation, you will be introduced in more detail to the laws and school regulations that you must observe.

***Be smart! If something feels wrong, most likely it is wrong.**



Culture Shock

Culture shock is very common when it comes to studying or traveling abroad. Most students experience it in different ways and at various times. Symptoms include but are not limited to: missing home, under eating or over eating, depression, withdrawal, worrying excessively and developing obsessive behavior. Students sometimes romanticize their home country and develop overly simplistic stereotypes of unfamiliar people and places around them. It is important to keep track of your emotions (perhaps through keeping a journal) and if you find yourself experiencing symptoms of culture shock, do speak to one of the on-site G-MEO staff. Students are usually able to keep such symptoms at bay by developing friendships, eating Western foods, or reading a good book. Never allow yourself to emotionally withdraw! Always feel free to express your feelings to the people who are there to listen. Being trained professionals, the G-MEO staff will be able to determine your level of anxiety and determine your need for help.

Likewise, you should keep in mind that Chinese culture, both traditional and modern, are very different from the US. For example, Chinese people tend to stare at or even want to take pictures with foreigners when walking down the street; do not be nervous as they are simply curious to see a foreigner first-hand. Also, although both porcelain-seated toilets and squatter toilets are in China, the latter is much more prevalent and toilet paper is in limited supply. Things like this, among others, are what you should prepare yourself for, and doing a bit of research before coming to China is encouraged in order to limit your culture shock.



Outside the Classroom

There are plenty of things to do outside of class! Besides G-MEO activities, there may be voluntary additional activities that students will need to pay for if they are interested in participating.

While in China, try to learn as much Mandarin as you can and make friends with local people. You might be surprised how much you can learn from a different culture or a new friend. Dare yourself to try new foods and discover new interests. While focusing on a new culture it is important to be respectful of others' political views and customs. We also recommend you keep a journal, and hold on to ticket stubs, receipts and other such items, as memorabilia.

Travel and Transportation

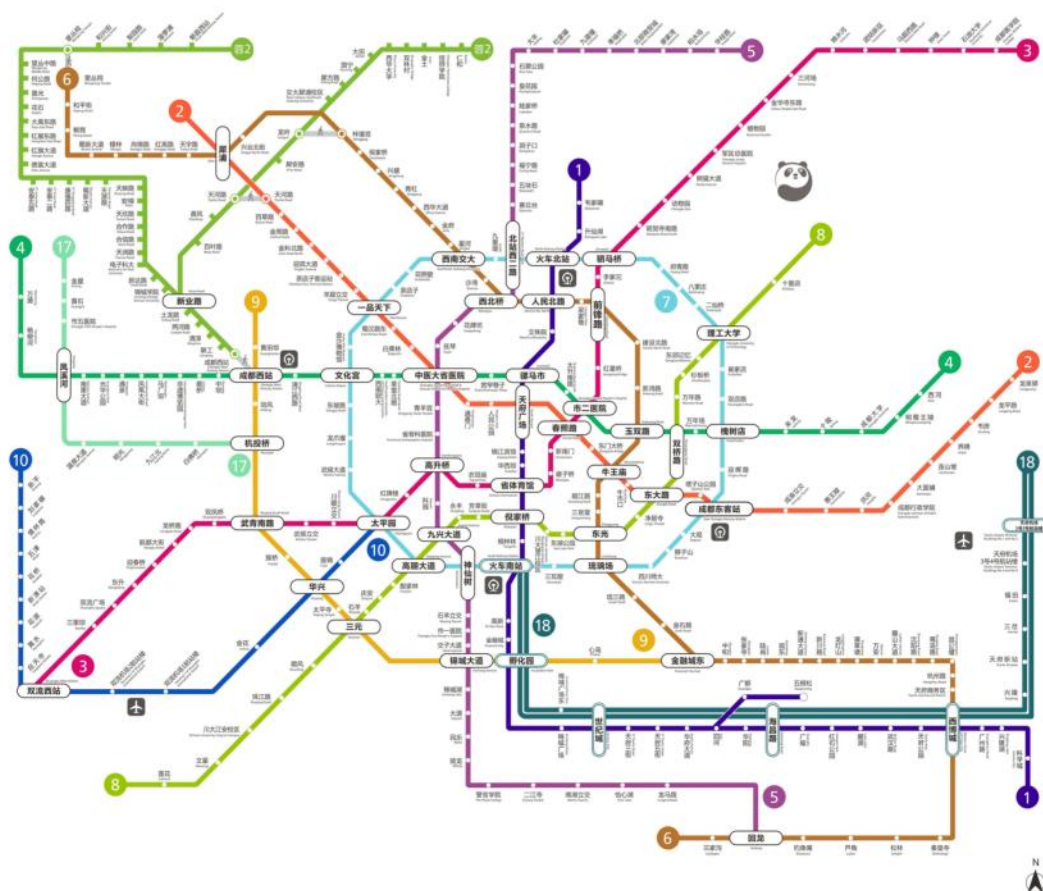
Traveling and seeing all the sights are some of the best things you can do while studying abroad. Don't forget, besides local activities, an excursion is included in the G-MEO program fee. However, most students will want to do some traveling outside of the pre-planned G-MEO trips. If you plan on traveling, we recommend that you travel with at least one other person, and that all students notify the G-MEO China staff as well as family members of your travel arrangements and plans.

***Students must notify G-MEO staff of their travel arrangements.** Traveling is a great part of the experience but please remember that safety comes first!

Below is a map of the subway lines that service Chengdu.

You can also download the metro map here:

<https://www.chinadiscovery.com/sichuan/chengdu/metro.html>



XI. RETURNING HOME



It is important for students to make sure they're registered for courses and housing at their home institution for the semester following their semester time abroad. Several weeks after partner University will be sent to your home institution.



Some students experience reverse culture shock upon returning from their experience abroad. This is completely normal. It is a time for readjustment and is similar to the culture shock experienced during your semester abroad. It is important to keep in contact with your friends from China and we recommend getting involved with your international department on campus! Spread the word about how great it is to study abroad and share your amazing, life altering experience! We hope you have an amazing time in China.

XII. SOME THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- What are your goals for studying abroad?
- How do plan to achieve these goals?
- Where do you most want to visit while in China?
- Are you interested in more program opportunity? If so, please contact the G-MEO New York Office for information.
- Are you ready to make some local Chinese friends, sample Chinese food, and learn Mandarin?



XIII. USEFUL RESOURCES

General Information

- <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/china/sichuan/chengdu>
- <http://www.gochengdu.com/cn>

Vaccines &

Immunizations

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destination/s/traveler/none/china>

Time Zone

Converter

<http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html>

Visa Information

<http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/visas/>

Passport

<http://www.travel.state.gov/passport/forms/ds11/ds11842/html>

Travel Advisories

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP): <https://step.state.gov/step/>

Currency Conversion

<https://www.federalreserve.gov/release/s/h10/current/>

Suggested Phone Apps/Software to download PRIOR to arrival in China

- [Pleco Chinese-English Dictionary](#)
- [WeChat](#)
- [Alipay](#)
- Virtual private network (VPN) (any type – both for computer and phone – [ExpressVPN](#) or [AstrillVPN](#) are good)

Suggested Websites to Visit PRIOR to arrival in China

- [Travel China Guide](#)
- [Chengdu Places](#)
- [GoChengdu](#)
- [Kayak](#)
- [Expedia](#)
- [Priceline](#)



ALWAYS REMEMBER: YOUR SAFETY COMES FIRST!

Greetings from our local staff in
Chengdu!



Ms. Sara Luo

Director, Chengdu
American Center



Sheryl Wang

Program Assistant,
Chengdu



Solomon Li

Marketing and Business
Development Director

Have a great time!

