

Advice on Flying to China in 2018

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December 1, 2017

I have flown to China 27 times during the past 20 years. Here is my personal advice.

1. Book your flights from the US to Beijing (PEK) at least 30 days prior to the program. Sometimes I book my flights many months in advance.
2. In recent years, I have paid anywhere between \$1400 and \$2000. I think of a fare that is around \$1500 as a good deal. Sometimes students have saved money by flying east through Istanbul rather than west over the Pacific. Search for flights aggressively on travelocity.com, orbitz.com, expedia.com, kayak.com, booking.com, and other websites. Share information about the good deals that you find with other students and faculty via We Chat.
3. Book your flights on airlines that are code-share partners. For example, United is part of the Star Alliance, which includes Air China, Turkish Airlines, Singapore Airlines, and more than a dozen others. Delta is part of a Sky Team Alliance which includes Air France, KLM, China Eastern, and many more. American is part of the One World Alliance. The advantage of flying on airlines that are partners is that if your flights are delayed or your luggage is lost, they are likely to take responsibility for sorting things out. One student tried to cobble together flights that included Southwest Airlines to the US west coast, then other airlines to Asia. The Southwest flights got cancelled, his itinerary fell apart, and he never made it to Beijing.
4. The simplest route from San Antonio to Beijing are flights that make only one connection. For example, you can probably find a one-connection flight that flies through Detroit (Delta), Dallas (American), Houston (Air China), Chicago (United and American), San Francisco (United), Los Angeles (United and American), Washington DC (United), or Newark (United).
5. Plan your itinerary so that you have plenty of time to catch the flight in the city where you depart from the US. Otherwise, you may miss the main international flight (which boards an hour before departure) or your luggage may not show up in China until days later. I recommend a comfortable three or four hour connection time in your US departure city. You can use that time to read assignments for your courses.
6. Beijing Capital International Airport (PEK) is a world class facility. It is easy to get Chinese money (yuan) from an ATM in the arrivals hall or to change dollars to yuan at a bank window.
7. An ordinary size taxi from PEK to Beihang University can accommodate no more than two persons with luggage. Make sure the driver turns on the meter. The cost will probably be less than 150 yuan (c \$25), and will take about an hour. If you are traveling in a group, do not take a large van, unless you know the price in advance. Do not take an unlicensed taxi. The directions

to the official taxi stand are clearly marked. (We will provide directions to the campus hotel in Chinese so that you can show to the taxi driver.)

8. For the summer 2018 program, you should arrive at Beihang University on Saturday May 26 or Sunday May 27. Exams end on Saturday June 30, so you can leave on Sunday July 1.