10-Minute China Entry Pre-Flight Checklist

Quick Reference Guide

Item	Details
Suitable for	Travelers entering China under the 240-hour visa-free transit policy, unilateral visa-free entry policies, or mutual visa exemption agreements
Policy version	2026 official rules
Key principle	Keep printed copies of essential travel documents. Do not rely solely on phone screenshots. Final entry decisions are made by Chinese border inspection authorities.

⏱ 24 Hours Before Departure

1. Check Your Travel Documents

- Verify your passport's remaining validity. Requirements vary by entry policy; 6 months of validity is a prudent precaution.
- Confirm you hold an eligible **ordinary passport**. Temporary, damaged or altered travel documents may not qualify for visa-free entry.
- Make 1 copy of your passport bio page and store it separately from the original.

2. Check Your Itinerary

[240-Hour Visa-Free Transit Only]

- Meet the **A ≠ C requirement**: the country/region you arrive from must differ from your destination after leaving mainland China. Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan may qualify as separate destinations under applicable rules.
- Confirm both your entry and exit ports meet official designated-port requirements.
- Ensure your stay does not exceed 240 hours (10 days). Under standard calculation, the period begins at **00:00 on the day after arrival**.

All Travelers

- Obtain any special permits required for Tibet or restricted border areas.

3. Print Essential Documents

- Hotel booking confirmation with guest name matching passport. At minimum, prepare your first night's booking.
- **[240-Hour Visa-Free Transit Only]** Print your confirmed onward flight itinerary, including the ticket number and full departure details.

4. Prepare Your Phone and Payment Methods

- Link an international bank card to Alipay (where supported), and carry a backup international payment card.
- Download Amap / Baidu Maps and an offline translation app.
- Activate a compatible eSIM or international roaming package.

⏱ At Your Departure Airport

- Inform the airline check-in agent which visa-free policy you intend to use to enter China.
- **[240-Hour Visa-Free Transit Only]** Present your printed onward flight itinerary.
- Confirm your baggage arrangements. Baggage direct-check rules are determined by airline and route, not by visa-free eligibility.
- If the agent is unfamiliar with the policy, show official English-language guidance from China's National Immigration Administration.

⏱ Upon Arrival in China: Immigration Checks

1. Go to the Appropriate Channel

- **240-Hour Visa-Free Transit**: Follow signs for *"240-Hour Visa-Free Transit"* and follow staff instructions.
- **Unilateral / Mutual Visa Exemption**: Use the designated immigration channel for visa-exempt foreign travelers.

2. Complete Checks and Data Collection

- Fill out any required arrival/entry forms, and cooperate with fingerprinting and facial-image collection if requested.
- Prepare to present: your passport, completed entry information, hotel details — and for 240-hour transit travelers, your confirmed onward flight itinerary.

3. Confirm Your Authorized Stay

- Verify your permitted stay period and departure deadline with the immigration officer **before leaving the counter**.

📋 Quick Self-Check Table

Check Item	Done?	Key Requirement
Passport validity	☐	Meets policy requirements; sufficient blank pages for endorsements
Itinerary eligibility	☐	A ≠ C rule applies for 240-hour visa-free transit
Entry and exit ports	☐	Meet designated-port requirements for 240-hour transit
Printed documents	☐	Hotel confirmation; onward flight itinerary for transit travelers
Permitted travel area	☐	Remain within authorized areas under the applicable policy
Length of stay	☐	Do not exceed the maximum permitted stay period

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⚠ 5 Common Mistakes to Avoid

1. ✕ *"Transit passengers can only travel within the province where they enter."*
   ✓ Eligible travelers may visit permitted areas across 24 provincial-level regions, subject to current policy geographical restrictions.
2. ✕ *"Flights must be nonstop to qualify for visa-free transit."*
   ✓ Connecting flights may be permitted. The key requirement is that your arrival origin and departure destination are different countries/regions.
3. ✕ *"Every visa-free traveler needs an onward ticket to a third country."*
   ✓ A qualifying onward itinerary is required only for 240-hour visa-free transit. Other visa-free arrangements generally do not impose this requirement.

4. ✗ *“Visa-free entry allows travel anywhere in China.”*
   ✓ Restricted areas including Tibet and certain border regions may require separate permits or authorization.
5. ✗ *“The 240-hour stay starts when the plane lands.”*
   ✓ Under standard calculation, the stay begins at **00:00 on the day after arrival**. Always confirm your authorized departure deadline with immigration authorities.

Official Information

- National Immigration Administration (NIA): China National Immigration Administration
- Immigration service hotline: 12367 (within mainland China)

Visa-free policies and entry procedures are subject to change. Verify the latest official requirements before departure. Final admission decisions rest with Chinese border inspection authorities.
