

Synopsis

For every fan of kung fu, steamed dumplings, Confucius and giant skyscrapers, *A Geek in China* is a hip, smart and concise guide to the Middle Kingdom. Packed with photographs and short articles on all aspects of Chinese culture, past and present, *A Geek in China* introduces readers to everything from Taoism and Confucianism to pop music and China's new middle class. A mix of traditional culture, such as highlights of Chinese history, great historical and mythological figures, traditional medicine, how the Chinese language works, real Chinese food, martial arts, and how the Chinese Communist Party works, is complimented with information on what makes China unique today. Chapters discuss why China is so crowded, what it's like to work in an office, internet and cell phone culture, dating and marriage practices, top popular movies and movie stars, the contemporary art scene, China's amazing new architecture and infrastructure, and popular holidays. It also contains chapters on what makes the Chinese tick, such as the importance of harmony in society, the practice of humility, and the importance of hierarchy. For visitors to the country, the author includes sections on what to see, both common cultural sites and off-the-beaten-track sites, and how to get around in China. Sections on visiting Hong Kong and Taiwan are also included. This China travel guide is a unique guide to the world's most populous and longest continuous culture. Readers will learn essential information about China's past and present to be able to understand the many references to history, politics, and pop culture that come up in everyday conversation and in the media.

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Customer Reviews

"It's readable and interesting even if you're not ready to board a plane for Asia immediately: it finds a nice balance between researched pieces on history, culture, and the arts, and fun, funky personal recollections of Christensen's time in China." [Cosmos Mariners Blog](#)"A Geek in China is the perfect book for anyone who wants to be culturally savvy about China, fast. In 150 pages that make for terrific reading, you can quickly transcend the usual travel guide stuff on China and really delve into the intricacies of the country. It should be required reading for anyone who wants to be more knowledgeable about China, especially when it comes to basic cultural literacy."

[Speaking of China blog](#)"Packed with photographs and short articles on all aspects of Chinese culture, past and present, A Geek in China is a smart, concise and accurate guide to the world's most populous and longest continuous culture." [Shanghai Daily](#)"A Geek in China is a precious and all-encompassing guide through the intricate maze of practices, manners and patterns that shape the Chinese lifestyle. By all means read it whether you are moving to China or even only planning a business trip. You will be traveling with the right baggage of information to embark on a productive journey and learn the values of patience, community, modesty and humility."

[Chasing the Unexpected blog](#)

Dr. Matthew B. Christensen holds degrees in Chinese, international relations, and Chinese linguistics. He is Professor of Chinese in the Department of Asian & Near Eastern Languages at Brigham Young University where he has been teaching for the past twenty years. His research interests include Chinese language and culture, Chinese poetry, Chinese culinary culture, and teaching Chinese as a foreign language. He blogs about his adventures exploring China at intothemiddlekingdom.com.

I lived in Hong Kong for a year and a half in the 80's, but a lot has changed in China since then. Before a recent trip to China I wanted a quick refresher on Chinese history and the classic Chinese literary works that are reflected in a lot of Chinese media and art. This book provided both as well as a lot of practical information on traveling, eating, and understanding modern Chinese culture. It's written in an easy-to-read style that is informative and not boring.

Being back and forth to China for 10 years, this book is very entertaining. Personally I'm a rebel, I don't let cultures dictate me how to run my life, I am the master....I can live with that but this book is good as getting an idea how societies function (usually that is, don't take this as a dogma) it's good to help you fit in and understand and also respect other people there.

Bought this after reading "A Geek's Guide to Japan" (which is excellent!). In comparison to the Japan book, this one reads like a dry collection of Wikipedia articles.

Excellent book that provides a solid understanding of the current status of China, with historic narratives, pictures, accounts, etc. that help bring someone traveling to China quickly up to speed across a wide array of topics! Highly recommend.

Great book with lots of information.

Written in a format similar to DK travel books or the National Geographic magazine (with a plethora of photos), this is a colorful, informative, and lively introduction to 21st Century China. Matthew Christensen and Michael Paul pack a lot of useful information into an affordable volume that is suitable for (college or high school) students or travelers who are new to things Chinese. Most "introduction to China" books either focus on a particular academic discipline or treat important topics too simplistically. This book finds an agreeable middle ground. History, geography, politics, language, food, society, culture, and travel are all covered in an accessible and accurate way. There is an excellent chapter on "The Face of Urban China," which is the part of China most new visitors have a chance to see. While China is rapidly urbanizing, many Chinese still live in the countryside; it would have been nice to see a little more space dedicated to the lives of China's still-agrarian rural dwellers. That small quibble aside, this is an excellent primer on Greater China. Quite frankly, it made me yearn for some boiled pork dumplings and another trip to the "Middle Kingdom!"

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