INTRODUCTION
(from the student who started it all)

First things first: there’s a lot that’s not in here, and a lot that may have changed or will be just plain wrong by the time you arrive in Beijing. This book is intended to be a guide to some of the things that can help you as a Dartmouth student on the FSP, and unfortunately can’t be a guide to the whole of Beijing or of China. There are a bunch of books already available doing that job, and doing it a lot better than I certainly could.

More importantly, though, you’re going to Beijing in order to see for yourself what China is like. That’s the point of the FSP—to allow a better understanding of Chinese society and culture, and of what it means to be Chinese right now. It’s not an LSA, or you would have gone instead of taking Chinese 3. Hopefully, you’ll come back with not only a greatly improved set of language skills, but also more of a sense of what’s happening on the other side of the world.

That said, you should also go to Beijing to have a good time. It’s a big roller coaster of a changing place right now, and there’s a sort of exhilaration in just being somewhere where that’s happening. Having been on one Beijing FSP as a student and another as a DA, I can say that the changes over the three-year gap between the two were staggering, if not a little bit frightening. Hang on and enjoy the ride.

I hope this guide provides you with some useful information on your own trip to China, and that it’s a productive and enlightening one. ! Zhù nǐ yì lì shùnìng! 祝你一路顺风!

Brad Evans ’98
September 1998
Urumqi, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China

BEFORE YOU GO

Getting to Beijing

Generally speaking, students are responsible for making their own travel arrangements, though your Program Director and the DAMELL Chinese professors are certainly available for consultation if you’ve got any questions. The Dartmouth FSP has had a long relationship with FETI Travel (telephone 617-451-0606), of Boston, MA. Usually Shirley Yang, Dartmouth’s contact at FETI, does a good job of setting up everyone’s travel, often making it possible for FSP participants to arrive in Beijing in one or two major groups (which simplifies a number of things), and getting good rates. If this option is available, your Program Director will notify you.

When planning your travel, keep in mind both costs and what you want to do after the FSP ends. There are a number of programs available in both China and Taiwan for continuing Chinese language classes after the FSP, as well as options for travel and other activities (see “After the FSP”, p. 11). If you haven’t decided what you want to do yet, you may consider purchasing an open-ended ticket good for 3 or 6 months. Though slightly costlier, it will give you more flexibility in your travel plans. Alternatively, a cheap way of traveling a bit after the program is to arrive in China via Beijing, but leave by way of Hong Kong, taking the train south to catch your flight after the conclusion of the FSP. Keep in mind when booking a flight that most tickets can be changed for a $50 or $75 fee, so you are not necessarily wedded to any one plan. Unfortunately, for those with a fear of flying, there aren’t many convenient alternative ways to get to China.

By now you should have applied for and received your passport if you didn’t have one already—double check all personal information, and make sure it does not expire within 6 months of departure. If for some reason you haven’t applied for a passport yet, head down to the Hanover Post Office or one of the major passport issuing centers in Boston or New York and get this done as soon as possible. You’ll need two photos for the passport, and another two for your Chinese visa. The Hanover Camera Shop on Main Street will do these for the exorbitant price of $7 or $8 per pair, but CVS will give you six photos for about $9. Be sure to sign your passport once you get it; it’s not valid until you do so.

With regard to visas, your Program Director will keep you informed as to what you need to do. Generally, these are taken care of at an FSP group meeting in winter or spring term. It’s incredibly important that you show up to this meeting—with your passport—so your visa can be processed in time for the FSP.
Before you leave, do not forget to give your family and friends the Director’s telephone number: 011-86-10-58807753 and the Chinese/English address found in Appendix I “Important Addresses and Phone Numbers” p. 13. The Director can be contacted most readily by Dartmouth email. Remind your family that there is a 12-hour time difference (Eastern Daylight Time) during the summer and a 13 hour difference (Eastern Standard Time) in the fall after Daylight Savings Time ends.

What to Bring

The key is to pack light. You will almost certainly be coming back to the US with more than you took to China, so leave room for the extra stuff you buy. If you don’t have something on this list, don’t go out and buy it. Unless it says otherwise, you can get it in Beijing, and probably for cheaper.

What should I pack my things in? It depends. Regardless of what you use, you will want to bring a backpack that you can easily put a weekend or a week’s worth of clothes in, as you will need it if you travel anywhere within China. There are some rather functional imitation North Face bags (though sometimes of dubious quality) available at various markets, so keep that in mind if you don’t own such an item.

For the rest of your stuff, a large suitcase (wheels are essential!) and/or a quality backpack that will allow you to carry three months’ belongings comfortably will probably work just fine. The backpack method will come in handy if you plan to travel a lot during or after the program. If you find you need a second suitcase on the way back, you can get very serviceable ones at the Silk Market; a decent quality large suitcase should cost you 300-350 yuan.

Most international flights originating in the US allow you two pieces of checked baggage, each weighing a maximum of 50 lbs (23 kg), plus a carry-on, weighing a maximum of 40 lbs (18 kg). Check with your carrier about regulations. Of course, you probably won’t be carrying this much stuff when you depart, but again, do leave room for the things you collect in China. Label your bags inside and out with the program address in both Chinese and English (see p.10).

As for Health and hygiene items, even though brand name items for toothpaste, shampoo, etc. are widespread in Beijing, the actual products themselves might be different from those you are used to. For instance, the shampoo is without question designed for Chinese hair types. If you have strong product preferences, you might want to bring those products with you from home. See Appendix II “What to Bring and What Not to Bring” pp. 14-15 for details.

Health/Immunizations

What shots do I need? As soon as you know you are going to China, it is probably a good idea to start on your immunizations. The Off-Campus Programs office and/or Dick’s House will have health meetings in the spring that will discuss what immunizations you need as well as some other health concerns. It’s very important that you attend this meeting. Also, schedule a travel consultation with Dick’s House to individually go over the necessary medications and vaccinations, as well as other health conditions that may impact you on the FSP. It is important that you attend as the College often has important information to present. However, it is in your best interest to have your doctor or a Dick’s House practitioner look into what immunizations and medications you need before you go to China early on in the process. Do not wait till the last minute as travel consultations at Dick’s House are filled up very quickly. See the detailed list in Appendix III “Health and Immunizations” p. 15.

Be sure to talk to your family doctor, as this list may change and the various shots may have some side effects. If you can’t make it home, you can get the shots you need at Dick’s House and for some vaccinations like the one against typhoid, it is easiest to get it at Dartmouth as it may not be stocked by all doctors. Bring your immunization history with you. Be aware that Dick’s House will only administer 3 shots per week. Japanese Encephalitis B takes 4 weeks to finish the cycle: day 1, week 1, week 4. It can be abbreviated, but it is not recommended because it won’t be as effective. And students who plan to travel in China should have some idea about where they are going in case they need to take malaria pills (required for FSP trips to Yunnan); Dick’s House can advise you on the type of malaria pill you will need.

Ultimately, you must decide which immunizations you will have. Also, if you have a condition that you’re taking medication for, or a previous condition that could reoccur (e.g., asthma), be sure to bring enough with you to China. Replacing medicines via mail or at the clinics in Beijing can be quite expensive.

Additionally, make sure to stay hydrated. The program will provide a number of water bubblers. Bring a water bottle and fill it up before going on program outings. This is especially important during the summer. In past programs, multiple students became dehydrated and suffered from severe headaches. Make sure you drink enough water, especially during the hot summer months and tell your DA if you experience dehydration symptoms. Do not drink tap water unless it is boiled/filtered. When in doubt, ask! (如有疑问，请问！)

If you are asthmatic or otherwise sensitive to smoke, keep in mind that smoking is prevalent in China. Smoking is prohibited in public indoor areas like hotels and restaurants, and on public transportation (buses, taxis, commercial flights, and intercity trains, for example), but some of the most popular places to smoke are under No Smoking signs. Effective May 2011, stricter rules will prohibit smoking in more public places throughout China, but this follows previously tightened rules that proved difficult to enforce.
Money

How much money should I bring? China has recently switched to a semi-floating currency exchange rate, so a moderate amount of fluctuation can be expected, but the rough rate is ¥6.50 (RMB) to $1 US (and subject to change). One can easily eat a lot of food for US $9-10 a day. If you have a small appetite, you can get by on as little as $5. For the entire term, $700 will certainly cover food expenses with room for going out every now and then and then to a nice western restaurant (e.g., Hard Rock Cafe and the like). Students on recent FSPs have spent anywhere from $800 to several thousand dollars over the summer, depending on how much they enjoy Beijing nightlife and/or shopping. For the typical FSP participant, $1000-1500 seems to be a solid amount that covers everything comfortably. Fortunately, Beijing is pretty darn cheap, even though you will be living at a comfort level significantly higher than most of the population. Dartmouth will bill you for tuition and rent for the term, so that will already be taken care of. You will be responsible for your food, transportation, and other living expenses in China.

What’s the best way to get money to Beijing? You cannot exchange for Chinese currency (rénmínbì) at US banks, so you will need to take US dollars or other major currencies to change upon arrival in Beijing.

ATM cards are your best option if you don’t have ATM machine qualms and ATM machines that accept western cards are pretty common. However, there is a flat fee for each time a withdrawal is made. Check on your bank’s rate for ATM withdrawals in China. There is one exception: Bank of America account holders can withdraw money from China Construction Bank (CCB) ATMs without charge; there’s a CCB left out of the East Gate on the far side of the road. The closest ATM is right inside the east gate; another one is available at the Bank of China. Don’t forget to tell your card company you’ll be traveling.

Credit cards (xìnyòngkǎ) are becoming more commonly used and accepted at malls, but are not entirely ubiquitous (see Appendix VI “Shopping” p. 18-19). You can also use your credit card to receive a cash advance at some banks if all other options fail (i.e., when none of the ATMs are accepting your card), but they carry a hefty surcharge when used in China. A credit card could be very useful in an emergency (e.g., to pay for medical treatment at a clinic in Beijing).

You can also open a bank account in China, in which case you can safely deposit your RMB and use the debit card issued by the bank at accepted locations.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE

At the Airport

It’s really not as scary as you think when you get to Beijing Capital Airport. You will receive an arrival card on the plane to be filled out by the time you land. Present this card with your passport to pass through immigration and keep the departure card that you will need when leaving China. Afterwards, wait for your baggage to show up on the carousel and scope out the customs check. The security guards will most likely be hanging around the x-ray machine looking bored and will not bother to x-ray your belongings, so just proceed on to the “Green Lane”. Regardless of whether or not they decide to do their job and make you x-ray your baggage, you don’t have anything to declare and should proceed through the “Green Lane”.

It is best if you bring some RMB with you from the United States, especially if you arrive on late-night flights, but if you haven’t, be sure to change some money before leaving the airport. Changing US $100 will give you enough cash to get to BNU if you need to take a taxi, pay for your key deposit, and buy food and stuff for the first few days. A ride from the airport should cost around ¥100.

When planning your flights, it really is a good idea to come in with a bunch of your classmates. In addition to having companions for the trip, it makes things easier and increases the chances that your DA and BNU will have a bus waiting there so you won’t have to mess with a taxi or other ways to get into the city. If you will be picked up by your DA and BNU, you will be notified a few days before departure where and when to meet. If you do have to head to a different terminal to be picked up, someone, most likely your DA, will meet you or you may take the free airport shuttle bus.

If you do have to get a taxi (you will know at least a few days before departure), find the official taxi line, which is very clearly marked. Warning: Do Not Follow Anyone Else Offering Rides. A simple “bú yào bàn xiàng” 不要 她 or two should work. You do not need their services and in the past, students have been charged exorbitant amounts to get to BNU by these unscrupulous drivers. At the taxi stand, wait in line, and an official airport worker will direct you to a taxi. The rate is ¥2/km. Most drivers know where BNU is, so telling them “běijīng shìfān dàxué 北京师范大学, 东门” should do you just fine. It is important that you say this correctly and that the taxi driver repeats it, because there are two other schools: shòu dū shìfān dàxué 首都师范大学 or Běijīng Dàxué 北京大学 that get a number of foreign students and are about 20 minutes away from BNU. If the driver’s still unsure, tell him/her that BNU dōngmén 东门 is between the Third and Second Ring Roads (sān huán lù 三环路 and èr huán lù 二环路) on Xīnjièkòu Wāi 新街口外 near Xuéyuán Nán Lù 学院南路.

Make sure the driver restarts his meter before you get going and ask for a fápiào 发票 (receipt). The meter should display the basic fare (¥10, or ¥11 late night). The trip to BNU should cost around ¥100 to ¥120, including the ¥10 toll for the airport highway. Don’t pay a price that is considerably higher than that, as the occasional driver may try and rip you off. Another thing to watch out for is the occasional person who decides to take advantage of a foreigner and give them all their change in fēn or
NOTE: there is no tipping in China, although taxi drivers will certainly appreciate a tip if you ask them to help with luggage.

**Arriving at BNU**

If you’re coming on your own, the dorm you want is called Xīnsòng Gōngyù 新松公寓. It’ll be easiest if you have the driver take you there, unless you like hauling your luggage around an unfamiliar college campus. Tell him to ask the guard at the BNU gate how to get there. Do note, however, that recent BNU policy changes have sometimes prevented taxis from driving into the campus. The guards have been known, however, to make exceptions in some cases (i.e. the taxi is carrying a senior citizen, or if you have a lot of luggage). If you do get stopped at the gate, try to explain to the guard that you are a foreign student that just arrived, and have a lot of luggage to unload. If, however, you’re not allowed to take the taxi in, walk into campus from the East Gate and turn left at the first small road, just past a long string of bikes and right before an outdoor ATM. Keep walking past the small parking lot at Friendship Restaurant and Xīnsòng Gōngyù is the first driveway on the left after that. Once you arrive, tell the desk that you’re with Dartmouth (Dàmùsì Dàxué 达慕思大学 or just Dù Dà 达大). If you know who your roommate is and they’ve already arrived, point at the list of names and identify your roommate, otherwise just point out your name. You’ll need to give them a ¥200 key deposit and fill out an arrival card, and after that you’re all set. **Hold onto the deposit receipt** to make checking out easier at the end of the FSP. The rooms each have two safes (Bàoxiānxiāng 保安箱), so be sure to ask for the combinations (mímǎ 密码).

**Other Arrival Information**

Something you should do reasonably shortly after your arrival in Beijing is to make a trip to US Embassy (or your respective country’s embassy) and register as a US or other foreign citizen living in Beijing. In the unlikely event something major happens (i.e., a natural disaster or the like), registering will ensure that the embassy knows you are in Beijing and will be able to evacuate you if necessary. You also have the option of registering online at the US Embassy homepage, but this is a chance to get out and explore a little bit of Beijing. Ask your DA for directions to get to the US Embassy. Once there, you’ll see a fenced compound with a guard out front and an American flag. Show the guard your passport and go inside the little checkpoint station, and tell the clerk that you want to register as an American citizen living in Beijing. For non-US citizens, it may be worthwhile to call your embassy in the US before leaving and get the address for their embassy in Beijing. Additionally, shortly after arriving you **will need to give your DA two passport-size pictures for use in making your student ID and other materials.** You might have extras when you obtained your passport/visa photos, but if you do not, there is a place on campus that will photograph you and print the pictures in minutes. The place is next to a small grocery store; to get there from Xīnsòng, walk past the Friendship Restaurant and make a left (you usually would make a right for Dōngmén) and turn at the second right. Ask your DA if you need help finding it. Ask the employees for Xuēshēng zhèng xiàngpìan 学生证相片 (student ID photos). The DA will hand out student IDs. **Keep these passport-style IDs safe** as you can use them to get into the library and get discounts throughout China during the term.

**CAMPUS LIFE**

**Academics**

*What Classes Will I Be Taking?* The FSP course load is three credits: Chinese 22/23 and 31/32 and AMEL 11. The Chinese courses taught by BNU professors are under the supervision of the FSP Director while the Director teaches the AMEL 11 course. The distributives for each of the courses have varied in recent years, so you will need to ask the DAMELL office or the registrar at Dartmouth for that information.

*Chinese 22/31 and 23/32:* These courses typically take place each weekday morning from 8:00 to 11:30. Usually, you will see two professors each day, each for half the time. There is generally a break between the two halves as well as two smaller breaks halfway through each professor’s time, dividing the morning classes neatly into four 50-minute periods. Get ready to dive headfirst into real Chinese lessons: 20/30 characters a day is the norm, with a mandatory 听写 quiz on these every day and a test at the end of the week. While this sounds daunting at first, you will soon get into rhythm and learning these will take you no more than one or two hours a day. For those who started with Chinese 1, 2 and 3 at Dartmouth, this class will be really helpful in bringing your skills up to a conversational level.

Beyond vocabulary, classes often feature a wide range of activities, from basic discussion and practice with grammar patterns to debates and role-playing exercises in Chinese. It’s important to keep in mind as well that the FSP curriculum is somewhat flexible, and depends hugely on student involvement. If you’ve got a new idea for a learning exercise in class, suggest it to the professor or to your director. If you intend to be a passive ‘rider’ on the FSP, one can fairly say that you won’t get as much out of the program. To keep on top of events taking place in China and Beijing before, during and after the FSP, students have suggested some websites and blogs they found particularly helpful that are listed in Appendix IV “China and Beijing-related Websites” p. 15.
It is extremely important to understand the cultural difference between taking classes in a Western setting and taking classes in Beijing. During your classes in Beijing, it is expected that the students will arrive to class a few minutes before class begins and never late, that the board should be erased for the professor before and after class, and that students will refrain from eating anything during class. Beverages are permissible as long as your drinking them won't get in the way of you paying attention, answering questions, etc. Give your professors their due respect. Be ready to answer questions and comments at all times, as classes are very hands-on and it is unlikely that you will be quiet for longer than five minutes at a time.

**AMEL II:** Since the individual Program Directors teach this class, the syllabus changes each year to reflect the current director's expertise and academic interests. Topics in recent years have ranged from 'The Languages of China' to 'Old Beijing, New Beijing' to The Anthropology of Beijing to Economic and Social Change in post-Mao China.' Generally, however, the class is held in what would be a 2A time slot, Tues. and Thurs. from 2-4pm. Class requirements also vary from year to year, but usually involve final projects/papers and a few shorter assignments during the term.

**Cultural Activities:** The FSP will also feature weekly cultural activities. They are usually divided in two sections: Wednesday "shows," ranging from Beijing opera, Chinese acrobatics (do NOT miss this one), and a visit to Lao She's teahouse. The Saturday trips usually span the entire day and will help remind you that you are truly in one of the world's biggest tourist destinations. Trips to the Forbidden City, the Great Wall of China and mind-blowing Buddhist temples will enable you to visit tourist destinations that some people wait a lifetime to enjoy.

**Additional Classes:** If there is sufficient interest, informal classes can often be arranged in Calligraphy, Cooking, Chinese Dance, and T'ai Chi (Tai Chi) among others. However, be aware that starting a class and then dropping out after two sessions often leaves a very bad impression so try to realistically assess your time demands. One way to avoid this might be to ask if a demonstration for the group is possible, after which people can decide whether or not they want to take the class. Talk to your Program Director or Chinese professors if you're interested. During the Fall FSP, you can join a number of student organizations (like the BNU choir) for the duration of the trip. Talk to your DA or one of your professors about how to join.

You may also wish to set up such classes outside BNU, through friends or other contacts. If you walk around campus or any local parks at around 6am, you will find people engaged in all sorts of activities (Tai Chi and other martial arts, singing, dancing, etc.). You may find classes here that you can join for a small fee.

**Xǐnsōng Gōngyuè — Home Sweet Home**

*Xǐnsōng Gōngyuè* is one of four foreign-student dorms on campus. The rooms are all one-room doubles with private bathrooms, air conditioning, as well as room service. You will have daily cleaning services to sweep the floor, change the towels, and, if you're really nice, make your bed. However, the messier your room, the less likely the fūwùyuán (cleaning attendant) is going to be willing to do anything at all to your room, much less make the bed. It is your call. The attendants, who are young women ages 18-21, come from the countryside and are from all over China. It is important to get to know them and treat them with respect. Learn their names. Most live in underground dorms near the McDonald's on campus. They are technically not allowed to accept any gifts from the tenants and are only allowed to interact with students on a professional level. However, you can still foster valuable relationships by showing a genuine interest in them and their backgrounds. If you have a friendly relationship with your floor's attendant they will actively help you should your room develop any problems.

NOTE: the toilets in the room have very weak flush. So as to minimize the number of times you may clog your toilet, put used toilet paper in the trash instead of flushing it in the toilet and flush twice after going #2.

The rooms also have phones, TVs, and cable. It's free to call anywhere within the city of Beijing, and you could purchase international calling cards to phone your family/friends or call outside the city. Additionally, there are card phones in the lobby (see "Telephone/Fax" p. 11). If you're looking for some place to study besides your dorm room, there's a nice spot on the 5th floor by the stairs, and a bunch of classrooms in a small wing on the second floor. On the second floor, there is a small store with snacks and drinks (open until about 11:30pm), as well as a lounge area and a few computers for Internet access (ask the person working the snack store). The snack store has a phone for international calls priced at about ¥1 to 2/minute, which is very cheap.

There are laundry machines on the first floor. To use them, you need to buy a xūyīkù (literally, 'wash clothes card') from the front desk. They cost ¥50 each and are good for 10 washes. You'll also get a ¥20 refund if you return the card to the desk when it's used up. Once the wash is done, you'll have to hang your clothes in your room to dry, as there is only one rather feeble dryer. You can find dryers in Lıyún dormitory (Dormitory #2) right next to the East Gate, which would be less than five minutes walking from your dorm. Each floor of this dormitory will have several washers and one very tiny dryer. To use these dryers you will have to buy another ¥50 card at the dorm's counter. Each wash with this card will deduct ¥5 from the card's balance, and each use of the dryer will deduct ¥10. However, beware that the dryers are rather weak and you may need to feed your clothes thru several cycles. If you'd rather not deal with drying your clothes, the program has hundreds of hangers you can get from the DA. If the program runs out, nearby stores sell them quite cheaply.

The front desk can do photocopying (fùyìn) for a small fee (varies depending on the paper size) as well as send and receive faxes (see "Telephone/Fax" p. 11). Generally speaking, it's a good idea to make friends with the staff, as they're pretty nice folks and will do a lot to help you if you keep good relations. Again, it is important to learn their names and learn about their backgrounds.
The program has a number of items that supplement dorm life including: a DVD player, a microwave, a teapot, and a wireless router.

The Campus

The city of Beijing is organized with square ‘rings’ of expressways. BNU is located in the northwest part of city, just south of the Third Ring Road (San hún lù 三环路). The campus is actually rather conveniently located, as there are numerous restaurants, markets, and small shops nearby. The two entrances with which you will become most familiar are the East and South Gates. You most likely entered through the East Gate when you first arrived on campus; it’s north of the dorm and opens onto wūdiànjiē. Xīnjīèkǒu runs straight into downtown Beijing if you follow it south, and to the Third Ring Road if you follow it north. The South Gate opens onto Xīudàn NánLù; useful if you want to go west into the Haidian area or south on Xīnjīèkǒu.

On campus, Xīnsōng is located just across from the new library. Right by Xīnsōng is the Zhuǎnjīà lòu 专家楼, or Foreign Experts Building, where your director lives on the fourth floor. You’ll pass by the building whenever you leave campus through the east gate; this is where the Internet cafe is (wàidàjie) 网吧. In the same building are a western café and a Japanese restaurant.

If you head east after exiting the dorm, after a while you’ll reach the school’s athletic facilities, with basketball and tennis courts, two tracks, and an indoor gym. There’s always a pickup game of basketball going on in the afternoons. The outdoor track and basketball courts can be used for free, but are sometimes closed for events in the summer and are closed during the day for PE classes in the fall. They are always bustling with locals in the mornings and evenings, so plan your workouts accordingly. You may also find basketball courts at the Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications located across the street from the West Gate or BNU.

FSP TRIPS AWAY FROM CAMPUS—Weekend, Fall Mid-Term and Summer Term—End

Throughout your FSP experience, you will be traveling outside of Beijing on longer weekend trips, and a nearly 12-day term end trip during the summer or mid-term trip during the fall. The fall travels mid-way through the term because it is very cold by the end of the term. Although the Director and your DA will guide you as chaperones, you should read the detailed Appendix V “FSP Trips Outside of Beijing” p. 16-17 to familiarize yourself with traveling by plane and train within China. Train travel in China is an experience no one should miss. It is the mode of transportation for the majority of the Chinese population, and as a result, you will see an interesting, uncensored, and relatively complete cross section of the Chinese society at the train stations.

LIFE IN BEIJING

Changing and Dealing With Money

Before you’ve been in Beijing too long, you’re going to need to withdraw money from your bank account or exchange some money (huàn qián). The Bank of America has a partnership with the China Construction Bank (Zhōngguó jiānshè yínháng) so you can withdraw cash without an ATM fee. The closest China Construction Bank is across the street from dōngmén. Cross the skybridge (tiānmáo) and make a left towards Lenscrafters. If you’re exchanging money, what you’ve got is probably in US dollars (měi yuán) and what you want is rénmínbi. There are actually quite a few places to do this in Beijing. Wherever you go, you’ll need your passport (húzhào) and whatever form of money you’re going to change. The easiest place to get things done is at the China Construction Bank, at the Agricultural Bank of China directly across the street from East Gate or the Bank of China right next to Lígùn, south of dōngmén (if you don’t know your directions in Beijing, remember that East Gate faces east). At many banks, you should take a number. Wait until your number is called/shows up on the display above the bank tellers. Don’t wait too long, they will only call your number twice before moving onto the next customer. Make your way to the counter and tell the teller you want to huàn měi yuán. Give the teller your passport when he or she asks for it; you’ll get it back along with a form to fill out. You’ll have to write your name, passport number, and address in Beijing (which would be Xīnsōng Gōngyǔ, Bēijīng Shīfān Dàxué), as well as the amount of money you are exchanging.

After a short wait, the teller will hand you a stack of different colored bills of varying size. What does it all mean? Starting with the biggest, the red ones that say 100 and have a picture of Mao are worth ¥100. Then there are the ¥50 bills, also with a picture of Mao. The next denomination down is ¥20, then ¥10, ¥5, and ¥1 ones, all with pictures of Mao. The next denomination down are máo (or jiào in written form), small notes or coins that come in denominations of ¥.50, ¥.20, and ¥.10. Note, however, máo are units of ten each, so that when you buy stuff, ¥.50 is 5 máo.

You’ll get a copy of the form you filled out back with your money; keep the forms. If you have RMB left at the end of the trip and wish to change it back into dollars, you need to prove (using the form) that you changed at least that much RMB from dollars at some earlier point. You definitely want to change your money back to US dollars before you leave. It’s not illegal to export RMB anymore, but its value plummeted once you leave China, and it’s difficult to change in the states.

There are also China Construction Bank locations and other ATMs in most of the major shopping areas in Beijing, like...
Getting Around

There are multiple options for getting around Beijing, each with a unique set of advantages. In general, though, even taking taxis all the time is not that expensive by American terms, so there's really no good excuse not to get out and explore the city.

Walking: Be very careful when walking in Beijing. Pedestrians have few rights and must watch for cars, bikes, and other vehicles at all times. Even on the pedestrian signal, one lane of traffic can turn so be on the constant lookout for cars and do not use cell phones when crossing. Remember your mother's advice when you were young: Look both ways before crossing and use skybridges (tiāngqiáo) and underground walkways whenever possible. And if a section is fenced off like near Tiānánmén, it's done so for good reason.

Bus: Relatively convenient. The 22 route runs directly in front of the East Gate, and goes down to Qiānmián (the south end of Tiantanmen Square) via Xīdān (see 'Shopping,' p. 9). There are other good routes, but the 22 and 88 will take care of a lot of your needs. Fares are usually ¥1 (¥0.40 with a subway card (dǐtiě kǎ), available at any dǐtiě zhàn), but will be ¥2 plus if you get on a longer-distance bus if you pay by cash. Theft in the form of pickpocketing and bag-slashings has been on the rise, so keep a close eye on your things. If you are using a dǐtiě kǎ, you have to swipe your card again on distance-priced buses (e.g. 690 between the Summer Palace-Yīhélúyuán and Qiānmián). Be aware that in November 2010 some bus routes were renumbered, especially three-digit lines that started with an 8 (e.g. 826 is now 626), so directions in guidebooks may be outdated. You can easily find bus routes online at www.bjbus.com.

Subway: The dǐtiě is fast, cool, and usually less crowded than buses during rush hour. The subway makes Beijing very accessible with eight lines and more, to come. Almost everywhere you might want to go in the heart of Beijing is serviced, and a ride only costs ¥2. The closest station is Jīshūhuántiān for Line 2 of the dǐtiě, at the intersection of Xinjiekou and the Second Ring Road. It’s 15-20 minutes from campus on foot (cross the tiāngqiáo and walk south until just before the Second Ring Road), but you can take the 22, 88, 626, or another bus down there. On the bus, get off at the first stop after you cross the Second Ring Road at Jīshūhuántiān. Useful stops include Jīnghuántiān (near the US embassy, transfer station for Line 1), Chóngwénmén (north of Hóngqíáo Market), Dāngzhàn (Airport Express transfer station), Qiānmián, and BēiJīngzhàn (the Beijing Railway Station). Also nearby is Mùdányuànzào to the north (cross the tiāngqiáo and take 22, 38, 47 88, 626, or several other lines to Mùdányuànzào) along Line 10 especially for points north, including Zhīchānlù and Sānyáwángqiáo for the Airport Express (and Wāndàokōu, Zhōngyángguāncuǐ, and Yīhélúyuán after transferring). Additionally, try Píngǎnlǐ along Line 4 for points south, including faster transfers to Line 1 at Xīdān and Beijing South Railway Station (BēiJīng Nánzhàn). For Píngǎnlǐ, take 22, 38, 88, or other south to Hāgūosī. You have to tap your dǐtiě kǎ or insert a single-journey ticket to get in and again to get out, but the fare is the same regardless of distance. If you’re carrying large bags, they will be x-rayed upon entering stations.

Taxis: Despite being the most expensive option in Beijing, chūzā xīchē are affordable. The starting price for any ride is ¥10 during the day and ¥11 at night, and ¥2.00 per kilometer thereafter. It’s common for the passenger to sit up front with the driver, but buckle up whether you’re in the front or back.

At any rate, to get a taxi just head to the street and stick out your arm. If you can’t get anyone to stop, make sure you’re not standing in a no-stopping zone (indicated by the character tíng with a big red line through it). Though your driver’s Chinese may be difficult to comprehend, talking to drivers is one of the better ways to practice your Chinese. Just be sure they actually use the meter (a rare problem in Beijing, but more common at night and in some other cities, like Tiānjīn) and ask for a receipt. Also, it’s best to find a running taxi as those that are stopped will often want to give you a price quote that is higher than if they used the meter (most common at hotels and outside Beijing, but still beware). Other one thing: make sure when coming home that the driver knows you want BNU, not Shòuduō Shīfān Dàxué or BēiJīng Dàxué. Neither of them is close to BNU. If your driver is still unsure, tell him/her that BNU’s dōngmén is between Sānhuánlù and Ėrhuánlù on Xīnjiěkǒu wáii, near the intersection with Xuéyān Nán Lāi.

According to Off-Campus Program regulations, you are not to engage in any dangerous activities such as riding motorcycles or bungee jumping, etc. You are advised not to ride on the tricycles or small-motored cars that can be found in Beijing and other cities. Biking or getting around on mopeds is also dangerous and is highly discouraged.

It is very helpful to get to know Beijing’s layout before arriving. You can do this just by studying a map of Beijing aboard your flight or during a layover. It’s much better than staring at the seatback in front of you or browsing those glitzy duty free shops at the airport! Besides a map, you should also look over the list in Appendix VII “50 Things for a Dartmouth Student To Do in Beijing” p. 20 that has been compiled and updated in the spirit of Dartmouth by previous FSP students. Check off items as you complete them and update the list with your suggestions.
Illness and Emergencies

Everyone will feel the effects of adjusting to a different environment, thus illness is fairly common for FSP students, program directors, and DAs alike. One very common sickness is diarrhea (lǎ duìzi) resulting from your system adjusting to the local food and water. This should only last a few weeks at most and is usually nothing more than an inconvenience at first. Taking Imodium or Pepto-Bismol will help with symptoms. Street food is very tasty, but when you first arrive, you should limit the amount you consume until your system gets more fully adjusted to the environment.

Constipation is another problem you may encounter while in China. In the US, people generally drink a lot more while eating than they do in China. The lack of water during meals may cause constipation even if adequate fiber is in you diet. Make sure to drink enough water, but don’t drink any tap water, as it’s not sanitary. Boil it first. (开井)

Other illnesses like colds or the flu are not uncommon, and are easily spread since students live in close proximity with each other. The program has some generic medication in stock, so check with your DA for available products. If you start to feel really sick, notify your DA and program director immediately and they can accompany you to the nearby hospital or to the ISOS Clinic. The hospital serves the 2nd Artillery Unit of the Chinese Army (èrpào yīyuàn) and is staffed with a few physicians fluent in English as well as other languages.

In case of an emergency requiring you to be evacuated back to the US. ISOS and Off-Campus Activities have arranged for an emergency evacuation service via air ambulance. Be aware, however, that this does not replace international travel insurance—you still need to have your own coverage. You can refer to the ISOS Letter you received via blitz enclosure for all the details; also, your DA should have a copy of the letter handy in Beijing in case you want to review the information.

Safety Issues

Though petty crime like theft is not uncommon in Beijing, being smart about your belongings and looking alert go a long way in deterring a pickpocket. China actually has one of the lowest crime rates in the world, but it’s still good to be careful and prudent. The Chinese probably do not appreciate disruptive antics as much as you might hope, but as long as you behave reasonably it is highly unlikely that you will encounter much trouble. Remember: respect the culture, but don’t let yourself get stepped on.

You should always carry a list of emergency numbers with you, including the director and DA’s cell phone numbers, the International SOS medical center’s number and the US (or your own) embassy’s emergency number (see Appendix I “Important Addresses and Phone Numbers” p. 13).

When you leave your dormitory, bear in mind the cultural norms of Beijing and consider possible misperceptions people might have about Americans. For example, the combination of looking foreign and showing a lot of skin will attract attention, some of which may not be welcomed. In general, if you feel uncomfortable going somewhere by yourself, get some friends (or the DA) to accompany you, and avoid sketchy places altogether. Always travel with friends late at night. If you are going out with new acquaintances, then leave names, contact details, and your planned time of return with a classmate, the DA, or director. If you are receiving harassment or unwanted attention from someone you know, then talk to the director; you can also contact one of the Dartmouth services listed below.

Remember that the director and DA will help in any way they can if you have safety problems of any kind, so do not hesitate to talk to them. Also, remember that, although you will be far away from Dartmouth, you can still email or call any of the Dartmouth advice centers: Counseling and Human Development 603-650-1442; Dean of the College 603-646-2243; Dick’s House 603-650-1400; Coordinator, Sexual Abuse Awareness Program 603-650-1439.

DINING

Dining on Campus

BNU has three large campus cafeterias as well as several other smaller cafeterias, although this is subject to change. You can use your student ID much like your Dartmouth ID to buy food. When you get your ID card, ask your DA for directions to the card office; you can put as much money as you want on the card and use it at the student stores and cafeterias. Bear in mind, food is very cheap and about 200 yuan should last you for a week. For students who are uncomfortable about eating outside the campus due to sanitation issues, dining on campus is the safest way to go. There are three different cafeterias at BNU. All of them have multiple layers selling different type of food. They are the cheapest meal you can possibly get in Beijing so please take advantage of it. You should ask your DA or the Chinese professors about the locations of these dining halls. Much like Dartmouth, try avoiding the after-class rush by going 20 or 30 minutes after your class gets out — your schedule is closely linked to the other students’. Furthermore, ask your DA for specific instructions on how to add money to your card, as the card office changes location constantly and opens at very strange hours.

What do I eat? How do I order? Rule no. 1 about going to restaurants: Chill Out. You’ll be much more understandable if you’re not stressing out about what you want to order. Roll with it and be adventurous. If you get really desperate, either point at what other diners are having or pick random dishes from the menu and have the waitress pronounce them clearly for you so you can remember the names if you like them.
Your best bet for non-Chinese food in Beijing at reasonable prices will be the various Asian ethnic cuisines. At the risk of sounding like a broken record: be adventurous! In Appendix VIII: “Ordering Food and Eating” pp. 21-22 we list common dishes and good places to eat around campus and in Beijing. Also, note that the default meaning for rōu in Chinese is pork, so if you want some other kind of meat you need to specify.

Three things you will need to know how to say and recognize regardless of what you order are:

“jǐ wèǐ?”
“qǐng zài lài _____.”
“qǐng suànzhāng

The first is what the waitress will ask you when you walk in, and the answer is how many people are in your group. The second is ‘Please bring me/us another ____.’ If it’s something that you don’t already have, get rid of the zài. And the last is the equivalent of ‘Check, please.’

Tips are rare in Beijing and usually more common in more upscale, western restaurants. Avoid doing so in restaurants where you see that mainly locals eat. For the westerners amongst you, get used to “family style” eating, as you will be sharing meals for a long ten weeks. Ordering specific plates for each person on the table is very rare and considered rude if you are eating with locals. Also, forget about soy sauce in your fried rice (chǎofàn), that is a very western custom that many restaurants will find very strange. It is the equivalent to ordering more salt for your meal in the US – it gives the idea that it is badly cooked.

As far as trying all the exciting stuff you see being cooked on the side of the road, feel free to be adventurous and check it out. However, you might want to go a little gingerly at first to make sure your system has adapted to being in China. If eating in normal restaurants is giving you trouble, it’s probably best to hold off on the street food for a while. Otherwise, go for it. If it looks reasonably clean and hasn’t been sitting out getting cold all day, it’s probably fine, but be your own judge. The same goes for fruit as well as vegetables. You might be a little cautious at first, but don’t forget to be adventurous sometimes too. Note: always wash and peel your fruit (including grapes) before eating.

MAC REPAIR

If your computer happens to break down in Beijing, you have a few options (if you happen to have a Mac). Apple’s authorized reseller is located in Zhōngguǎncūn 中关村 in the basement level of the Dìnhào 顶好 building, B1825. The phone numbers are 8269-6282 and 8269-6001. There is also a Mac store in Dōngfāng Guāngchǎng 东方广场 (Oriental Plaza) by Wānfǎngjǐng 王府井, although they might not do repairs. A shiny, spanking new Mac store just opened in The Village in Sānlìtún 三里屯 as well.

If you have a PC or run into other problems, contact your friendly DA for help.

SHOPPING

Of course, you want to know where the good places are to buy stuff. Beijing is in an interesting state right now; you’ve got, as one past FSP student put it, “a brand-new luxury shopping mall opening up right next to the old man selling plastic hair clips laid out on a blanket.” The basic rule is that you shouldn’t let appearances deceive you, in either direction. There’s some really great stuff in places you wouldn’t believe, and some absolute junk marketed as the real thing.

Where do I get basic, everyday stuff? A couple of easy options here. If you need stationery and other random ‘school supplies,’ try “Topside” on the second floor of Xīnsāng 新兴 (not the cheapest, but definitely convenient); for bigger stuff like coat-hangers, water bottles, shampoo, and what-not, go to the on-campus student store (take the second right off of the main road when you head west into campus through the East Gate).

For the real deal—and an experience you might not miss—the cheapest and best place to go for anything is probably the Jinwuxing Department City (Jīnwùxīng bōhuòchéng 货物城). It’s an indoor maze of stalls, and it’s probably safe to say you can find practically anything you need here—clothes, hangers, detergent, electronics, adapters/voltage-converters, speakers, gifts, bicycles, etc.; think of it as the normal Beijingers’ version of K-Mart. There are also tailors and Chinese doctors here. Don’t forget to bargain! This is also where you can pick up cheap phone cards for making calls to the U.S. (see “Telephone/Fax” p. 11). To get there, take the 123 bus from the Beitaipíngzhuang bus stop (make a left when you leave the east gate and walk up Xīnjīēkòu, cross over to the side where KFC is and turn left), or take a right out the south gate and keep walking until you come to a railroad crossing, and turn right. You’ll see a huge sign with the name of the place even before you make the turn.

One other thing: it’s usually a good idea to avoid buying things at official gift shops on tours, at tourist attractions, and in hotels. In most of these official shops you’ll find stuff that you could usually get elsewhere for much cheaper, sold by folks who are pretty slick and have a decent command of English, which for some reason seems to make people spend more than they would at other places. You should probably use these places for research and little else. For more details see Appendix VI “Shopping” pp. 18-19.
ENTERTAINMENT

So what's there to do in Beijing, anyway? For museums, palaces, and the like, you should definitely check out a decent guidebook, as there's too much to cover otherwise. One word of advice: if you bring your camera along, be sure to ask people before taking their picture and observe signs that forbid cameras.

Special tourist sites that you may not see with the trip include the Lama Temple, the Forbidden City, 798 art district (qījūshāi 七九八), nanlugouxiang alley and basically anything in your guide book. Getting to these places will usually cost you the grand total of a subway fare there and back, so do not waste your time in China by not seeing as much as you can see.

Some of the best experiences come from just setting out on your own into unknown territories. Take a walk down an alley and you'll probably find old people playing mahjong, people hanging their birds out for some air, or just groups of people talking. Despite the inquiring stares you may even make some new friends. The most important thing is to get out into the city, explore as much as possible, and meet lots of people. For some suggested destinations see Appendix IX “Beijing by Foot (Mostly)” p. 22.

Sometimes students need to get a taste of home at restaurants, “watering holes” and clubs with a western or international flavor. Fear not, Beijing has everything. Students have provided their top suggestions in Appendix X “Excellent Restaurants, 'Watering Holes' and Dance Joints” p. 24-25.

As far as nightlife goes, FSP students have found nightclubs to be the venue of choice. (View their suggestions in Appendix XI “Night Life” p.25). Obviously, a growing portion of the Chinese population is doing this on the weekend, but try to keep it under control. Going to China and doing nothing but going to clubs and discos is something like living in New York and never going to see a Broadway show. Also, always go to clubs with a group of people. Some places can be sketchy, and having a few tall American boys around will always help. This cannot be stressed upon further – you never know when you can’t understand your taxi driver's accent and you get lost in Beijing at night. Although the city is pretty safe, you are very far away from the US and taking any unnecessary risks is precisely that – unnecessary.

THE OUTSIDE WORLD

Mail

Postal mail from the US usually takes 7 to 10 days to get to China, though in rare cases letters have arrived as quickly as 4 days after being sent, usually from the West Coast. Though each room at Xinsong has its own mailbox in the rack by the elevator and laundry room, Dartmouth mail is delivered daily to the DA. If the staff can’t figure out the address, which is somewhat common in the early parts of the program, individual letters may end up tacked on the bulletin board by the first-floor elevator.

English-addressed mail seems to have little trouble getting to BNU, but as mentioned above, there are occasionally problems in getting it to the Dartmouth box once it arrives on campus. Photocopying the Chinese address in this book, or writing it out to be photocopied for the folks at home, will help and will often speed things up.

The English address for the FSP is:

Student’s Name)
Dartmouth College Foreign Study Program Foreign Students Building
Beijing Normal University
Beijing 100875
CHINA

The Chinese address is:

100875 中国北京市
新街口外大街19号
北京外国语大学
达慕思大学
(Student’s Name)

Sending letters is pretty straightforward, though mail takes longer to leave the country than it does to get there. Stamps (yuōpiào) and envelopes (xīnfang) can be purchased at the store in Xinsong or at the foreign student building next door (that’s also where the campus Internet cafe is; see ‘Blitzmail’, below). The rates for international postage are pretty comparable to those in the US; ask the people selling you stamps what they are as they change every year or two. Also, there are different rates for letters as opposed to postcards (mínghénfèn), so specifying can save you some money. There is a mailbox for outgoing mail conveniently located at the front desk. For more details see Appendix XII “Mail and Phone”, p.26.
Telephone/Fax

Below are the major telephone numbers for the FSP (011 = international call, 86 = China, 10 = Beijing):

BNM International Office, phone: 011-86-10-5880-7986, 011-86-10-5880-8364, or 011-86-10-5880-0325

BNM International Office, Fax: 011-86-10-5880-0823

BNM Xinsong Dormitory (Dartmouth FSP dorm): 011-86-10-5880-0275
-5880-0280
-5880-7890
*Note* Individual telephone numbers will be posted on the program website. Make sure to get the address from the DA before departure.

BNM Xinsong Dormitory Fax Line: 011-86-10-5880-0276

Room phone numbers will be given in China. These room phones get free calls to the city by dialing 5 and then the number. For international calls, the phone by the snack bar is recommended. (For more calling details see Appendix II, p. 15).

In general, it’s best if family can manage to call Beijing, rather than students calling home. For most carriers, this is significantly cheaper, and many have international calling plans, which have good discounts. Remember, **Beijing is 12 hours ahead of the East Coast and 15 hours ahead of the West Coast during the summer and 13 and 16 hours after daylight savings time expires in October.** Four in the afternoon in the US is wee hours in the morning for China.

Faxing is available at the front desk at Xinsong, both sending and receiving. The fax number is 86-10-5880-0276, and faxes cost ¥2 (25¢) per page to receive. Recipients’ names should be written clearly in block letters, so the front desk can call you when faxes arrive.

Blitzmail

A few years ago, the Beijing government started cracking down on Internet use, and they closed down all the Internet cafes in the city. Now, they’ve reopened, but with stricter laws regulating who can use them—and Internet traffic is monitored closer than ever. Despite this, you won’t have any major problems using the Internet, though certain sites are occasionally blocked.

There’s an Internet cafe on campus on the second floor of the Wàishílóu, adjacent to Xinsong (you’ll pass it whenever you walk to/from campus via the east gate). It charges around ¥4 an hour. You can download the Blitzmail program directly onto the computers there, or, alternatively, you can sign-on to Blitzmail at: [https://basement.dartmouth.edu/blitz](https://basement.dartmouth.edu/blitz)

Another option is to bring a laptop and connect from your room. High speed Internet is available for ¥100 a month per line, up to two lines per room. Ethernet cables wángfúxiàn (identical to US types) are on sale for ¥20 at the front desk. If you bring your laptop, you can access sites normally blocked in China by logging onto the Dartmouth VPN. **This is important! Download VPN before you go to China. It’s very easy just go to Dartmouth website and it will have instructions. This will enable you to go any website that has been blocked by the Chinese government.**

In case you can’t bring a laptop to Beijing and do not want to go to the Internet café, the DA will have Internet in his/her room, and the program computer can be accessed at your polite request.

AFTER THE FSP

Continuing your Chinese

Hopefully after being in Beijing for a term you’ll have decided that Chinese is just about the coolest thing you’ve ever studied and that you want to keep going with it. Of course, if you don’t feel that way, it’s fine too. (This author certainly has a love-hate relationship with the language.) But, it does make sense to at least maintain your Chinese skills after you’ve done all the work to get them where they are. If you do want to keep going with Chinese, it’s definitely advisable to do so somewhere in Asia immediately after the FSP, as the additional 3 to 4 months of language immersion can have a huge impact on your Chinese abilities. Many students have become drill instructors after their return from their extended stay in China. As tired as you may be from the language, taking the next Chinese class from what you took in the FSP (ie, the 303 or 408) is a great idea as you will probably crush the class and expand your Chinese even more.

In 2005, Dartmouth began offering its Fall term Beijing FSP that is identical to the Summer term in academics and extracurricular activities. Both second and third year courses are taught. Thus, students taking second year Chinese at BNU in the summer may continue with third-year Chinese courses in the fall. Before Dartmouth’s Fall FSP was launched, the most popular Fall program among Dartmouth students in the last few years was the CET program. This involves daily courses in advanced Chinese as well as the chance to see what Chinese life is like in an environment different from Beijing. For
information about this and other language programs, ask in the DAMELL office, or talk to your Dartmouth Chinese professors. Additionally, it's almost assured that among your drill instructors or the other advanced Chinese students you know, there's someone who went on a non-FSP study program. CET also usually sends a representative to campus to talk about their programs. Keep in mind that if you plan to get transfer credit for the classes you take on non-Dartmouth programs, you need to talk to the DAMELL office and the registrar before you leave campus. Otherwise you'll end up in a long petition fight with the registrar from the other side of the world.

CEI (China Education Initiative) is the Chinese version of Teach for America, and although a long, 2-year commitment, it may just be the last step in becoming fluent. Mao Laoshi has a lot of info on this.

Other Opportunities

Dartmouth students tend to be industrious and imaginative types, and as a result many have found other interesting things to do in China and East Asia after the FSP. The most common of these is probably teaching English in either mainland China or Taiwan, with the latter having some fame as a place where one can (quasi-legally) make good money as a private English teacher. Mainland China, especially in the bigger cities, is also catching up in this regard, with private English schools growing rapidly in number. Some students have also taught at Chinese public schools, seeking a more ‘authentic’ experience, but also receiving a smaller number of ‘creature comforts’.

Outside of teaching English, there are also internships and jobs to be found in the region for which Chinese language abilities can be a benefit. Keep in mind that beyond the PRC, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore all have significant—and growing, in the case of Hong Kong—Mandarin-speaking populations and industries that may need native English speakers with Chinese abilities. Talk to your Dartmouth Chinese professors to see if they know of things offhand, and talk to your drill instructors and other students who have done this sort of thing. Take a look in Career Services or in the online listings before you leave Hanover, or get the Dartmouth Club contact information for the cities you might possibly live in and use alumni contacts as a resource.

There’s also a nonprofit environmental organization (ICET) with offices located in Sanlitun looking for interns to volunteer with translating and potentially research.

Traveling in China

Once you've already spent the money to get over to the other side of the world, it makes sense to take the opportunity and see a bit more of the country before heading back to the familiar environs of home or the Hanover Plain. If you plan on doing this, you may want to a guidebook with you to China. Also, your Program Director, BNU Chinese professors, and DA can be good sources of information about possible destinations and how to make arrangements.

As you may discover before the term in Beijing ends, traveling through China is pretty definitely cheap if you A) take the trains and B) get out of the major cities of the east (Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, etc.). You can buy train tickets in advance at the travel agency near the Purple Beads restaurant; have your DA help you if you need. NOTE if you plan on traveling to popular destination like Shanghai, you should check with the ticket store at least 2 weeks before your departure date to see when tickets start selling for that day, because good tickets sell out within half an hour after they start selling! ALSO be sure to check whether you’re leaving from Beijing Station or Beijing South Station. You can easily get to the train stations by subway (line 2 for Beijing Station and line 4 for Beijing South) or by taxi.

If you plan on flying, beware that your one suitcase is no more than 20 kgs or 44 lbs. On Air China, you cannot even pay an overweight charge, so pack accordingly. You can weigh your luggage at the Xinsong front desk to make sure. This said great destinations close by include Qingdao and Tianjin. Farther destinations of interest include Shanghai, Suzhou, Hangzhou, and Datong. Enjoy your adventures!

Back at Dartmouth

Obviously, once you are back in Hanover the most readily available options for continuing with Chinese are the upper-level Chinese courses offered through DAMELL, generally taught by the visiting professor from BNU. However, another commonly and hugely overlooked opportunity is living at the Chinese Language House— where you may have had Noodle Hour, a Chinese New Year party, or other events. The rooms are large, the house has a huge backyard, and you get regular dinners of generally delicious food. Additionally, since the visiting BNU professor at Dartmouth lives in the house, you get a good amount of Chinese speaking and listening practice as well as ready access to your professor if you’re taking more Chinese classes. The house does have one or two disadvantages, among them the the sauna-like heat on the third floor in the summer. On the whole, however, most residents are pleased with their experience. As with other options, talk to your Chinese professors or ask in the DAMELL office.

Make sure you stay in touch with all your FSP friends. The DA will definitely organize reunion dinners and maybe even pong tournaments. And as women and men of Dartmouth, you need to know that at least three couples in the history of the Beijing FSP have even gotten married.
## APPENDIX I: Important Addresses and Phone Numbers

Here is your address x 3 in Beijing to facilitate copying and pasting on materials you bring into China and for family and friends sending you mail:

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<thead>
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<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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<tr>
<td>International SOS (medical center)</td>
<td>6462-9100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinic Appointments</td>
<td>6462-9112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Embassy Emergency Number</td>
<td>6532-1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-hour Emergency Center</td>
<td>6462-9100</td>
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<tr>
<td>6462-9112</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinic Appointments</td>
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<tr>
<td>US Embassy Emergency Number</td>
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<td>Domino’s</td>
<td>6216-4995; 6216-4996/7/8 Tube Station</td>
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<td><strong>Food</strong></td>
<td><strong>Fed-Ex</strong></td>
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<td>Delivery</td>
<td><strong>8518-2963; or 800-810-2338</strong></td>
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<td>United Airlines</td>
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### BNU Internat’l Office

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<td>FSP Director</td>
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### Student Dorm

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax</td>
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APPENDIX II: What to Bring and Not to Bring

**Essentials**

• Passport (Make several copies of the first and visa pages of your passport and keep them separate from your passport; if you lose your passport, it will be easier to replace it if you have these.)
• Plane ticket
• Medical insurance card and medical insurance claim form (SOS card and materials)
• Money (see below)

**Clothing** (Be practical! Beijing is hot, muggy, and rainy in the summer but will get chilly in late fall.)

• 10-14 T-shirts
• 3-5 pairs of shorts
• 1-3 pairs of jeans
• 1-3 nice outfits (this really depends on how often you dress up)
• Underwear & socks, of course
• Shoes (It's important that these be comfortable for walking and hiking, because you'll be doing a lot of that. Clogs aren't the best plan, though sandals and slip-on sneakers work well. Rainboots can also be handy as when it rains, it pours.)
• Sweatshirts and a warm jacket/winter coat for the chilly days
• Bathing suit

**Extra Passport Pictures**

**Hygiene**

• Immodium A/D, Tylenol, Advil, Pepto-Bismol, allergy medication
• Favorite cold/flu medicine
• Deodorant (This is very hard to buy in China)
• Toothbrush
• Sanitary napkins/tampons (The jury is still out on these. I've seen Kotex, O.B., and Tampax in Beijing—the grocery store just outside campus has the last two; see 'Shopping,' p. 9—but some women have reported problems finding their preferred brands. You can make the call.)
• Any medications you take regularly, or need for a condition that may reoccur (e.g., asthma; see 'Health/Immunizations' below)
• Contact lens solution (not all brands are available in Beijing) – bring your own: some local brands were recently found to be contaminated
• Sufficient supply of contact lenses for the term and/or glasses (also, bring a prescription – glasses are cheap in Beijing)
• Sunscreen (useful at clear-skied high altitude locations like Tibet)
• Insect repellent with DEET (to ward against Japanese Encephalitis, and Malaria for travelers to south China)
• Personal first-aid kit

**Other Items**

• Textbooks
• Money Belt (Or something not unlike a money belt, for safeguarding your money, passport, etc.)
• iPod/CD player for music
• Voltage converter (China runs on 220-240 volts while the US runs on 110 volts. You will need a voltage converter for any appliances you bring that only run on 110 volts. Laptops can usually run on both; check yours if you plan to bring one. You can get a voltage converter (220-240 volts to 110 volts) in the US or in Beijing.)
• Battery Alarm Clock
• Camera (Kodak and Fuji film are everywhere) • 1-2 novels (a good break from studying)
• Umbrella
• Sunglasses
• Journal
• Photos of family and friends to show Chinese friends, or just to remind you of home
• Something familiar to cheer you up if you get homesick (e.g., a favorite book, CD, game, photos, etc.)
• Laptop (for writing papers, conducting research online, or checking blitz; see p. 15 for connecting from your room). Please remember that some laptops, including Macs, should not be left plugged in for longer than a few weeks because excessive charging may seriously kill your computer's battery life. Unplug your laptop every few days, use up some of the battery and then recharge it.
• Guidebook (You can get these in Wangfujing if you don’t want to pack a heavy book; I particularly like China: The Silk Routes, by Peter Neville-Hadley. Its focus is mostly on western China and Central Asia, but it has a spectacular chapter on ‘Anticipating China’ and isn’t nearly as cynical as Lonely Planet can be. Ask at a travel bookstore or try Amazon.com.)

• Lonely Planet also makes a nice phrasebook that can be much handier to use than a dictionary.
If you need anything else, you can probably get it in Beijing. As for money, you can have your first major adventure in China by changing money at the airport. See p. 3 for instructions on doing that.

**What Not to Bring**

- Towels and sheets
- Sleeping bag (unless you plan to travel or camp) • Toilet paper (though public bathrooms in China almost never have any, wait until you arrive in Beijing to buy some)
- Prepaid phone cards and cell phones (see p. 13) – unless your cells are compatible for overseas use. The program will give you a cell-phone to use while you’re at BNU (you’re responsible for buying minutes).
- Pets, plants, and other living things

**APPENDIX III: Health and Immunizations**

In recent years Dartmouth health professionals have recommended immunizations for the following:

- Tetanus
- Polio
- Typhoid (oral or injection) – stocked by Dick’s House, may not be stocked by your own doctor
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Influenza vaccine if available.
- Tetanus (booster within past 10 years)
- MMR (measles, mumps, rubella)
- Varicella (if not immune by history of illness)
- Japanese Encephalitis and Rabies, especially if you will be going on adventurous side trips (Dick’s House)
- Malaria pills – trips to Yunnan
- High altitude sickness medication – Tibet
- Cipro antibiotic in the event of diarrhea

For more detailed information on health risks, see the Centers for Disease Control’s ‘Health Information for Travelers to China’ at: http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/china.aspx.

In general, you should consult with your health insurance provider before going to China to find out how your policy works in Beijing. If you have Dartmouth Student Group Health Plan (DSGHP) insurance, retain all receipts from medical expenses (which you must first pay for out of your own pocket), fill out a claims form (download: http://www.dartmouth.edu/~health/depts/insurance/) and mail the form along with the receipt to Klais and Company, whose address is listed on your insurance card. The policy will reimburse 80 percent of all medical fees. Note that claims for prescription medicines have a separate claims form.

**APPENDIX IV: China and Beijing-related Websites**

The following are fantastic ways to keep up with events in China before, during, and after the FSP. There’s a lot more out there, so check out the blog rolls of these pages if what’s discussed in these isn’t quite in your line of interest.

1) The China Beat: http://www.thechinabeat.org/ (Of a scholarly bent; includes reviews of literature on China; features weekly summaries of key issues in News About China)

2) Wall Street Journal China Real Time Report: http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/ (It’s the WSJ, so has a more economic focus with some attention to current events and culture)

3) Letter from China, Evan Osnos for The New Yorker: http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/evanosnos/ (Covers politics, current events, and culture; one of my favorites)

4) Six: http://www.thinksix.net/ (Oxford grad Alec Ash talks about life at Tsinghua University and for college-age Chinese in general)

5) China Digital Times: http://chinadigitaltimes.net/ (Collects noteworthy stories on China in a variety of areas; includes many translated Chinese-language materials with links to the original articles; stellar)

6) China Geeks: http://chinageeks.org/ (Stories in translation; a more grass-roots version of CDT, sometimes with more obscure content)
APPENDIX V: FSP Trips Outside of Beijing

For the trips you will take outside of Beijing with the FSP group, you will arrive at the train station on a bus provided by BNU. On the bus, your DA will distribute the tickets to you. Do not lose this ticket until you have left the train station of your destination. They will be sleeper-car assignments. Each cell has 4 to 6 beds, 2 to 3 to each side (think military barracks). They are divided to upper, middle, and lower bunks. Each position has its benefits, so I recommend you trying out each option on your many chances to ride the train.

Once at the station, you will wait with everyone else in one of the boarding rooms until your train number is called. This will begin a push towards the entrance, so keep a lookout for your belongings and stay in a group. At the entrance, an attendant will hole-punch your ticket and let you off to the platforms. You will find the correct platform and a train will be waiting for you. Find the correct train cart and board it. Another attendant will take your ticket and give you a boarding card (to make sure the right people get on and off at the right stops). You will keep this card, and before your destination stop, an attendant will return your ticket for the card. You will have to show the ticket when you leave the train station at your destination, so don’t lose it. It is a complicated but rather smooth process, provided you don’t lose anything during the many transfers.

Once you get to your bunk, you will find plenty of storage places around for your suitcase/backpack. Feel free to socialize and relax as you please, but please watch the noise you make, as most Chinese passengers go to bed once lights are turned off at 11pm or earlier on the train.

You will arrive at your destination the next morning. After packing up your things and the attendant returns your ticket, you will follow the group off the train and out of the station. At the exit, the final attendant will put a small tear in your ticket to complete your journey on the train.

If you travel during the day, the process is similar except you will have seats instead of bunks. If you have the chance to travel on your own and want to socialize with common Chinese people, purchase hard-seat tickets (jǐngzū). They’re the cheapest (a ticket from Beijing to a neighboring city can cost as little as ¥20), but a long journey can leave parts of your body hurting.

Plane travel is much easier and much more similar to that of plane travel in the US. The only addition is the airport tax, which your director will organize. Luggage has a weight limit of 16kg (35 lbs). The security is much less tedious than at US airports, but the wait can be just as painfully frustrating.

Weekend Trips

The two weekend trips arranged by your Program Director are chances to visit notable Chinese cities and give you a taste of other parts of the country. You will probably want to pack lightly in a duffel bag or a backpack, and leave some of the bulkier things you own behind. Different bags aren’t difficult to find around Beijing; they even sell them in the student store in the BNU campus. The key here is to be flexible and adaptable to different situations: bus rides, overnight train rides, hotels, etc. Be sure to bring a camera but leave your laptop at Xinsong.

Summer End-term Trip

The summer trip along the Silk Road or to Yunnan is usually about twelve days long, which calls for a larger, wheeled suitcase in addition to a duffel bag. Keep in mind that you probably will not be able to wash your clothes for the duration of the trip, so pack accordingly. Review the itinerary for your FSP group’s trip carefully to help you decide what to bring. If you find that you need to purchase something in Beijing before the trip starts, why not get other students who are also going on the trip together so that you can brainstorm and go Silk Road shopping together?

Some suggested Summer Trip items:

- Light clothing including shorts (much of your time will be spent in some sort of desert conditions)
- Jeans | Sunscreen | Hat | Sunglasses | Umbrella/rain jacket | Comfortable walking/hiking shoes
- Hygiene items/toiletries | Imodium A/D /Pepto-Bismol | Toilet paper | Camera!!
- Do keep in mind that you will be in and out of hotels almost daily, with early morning departures, so don’t stay up too late during the nights because you will definitely need your energy the next day. It is recommended that you not unpack everything out of your suitcase as soon as you get to another hotel as you will just have to pack it all up again when you head out the next morning.

Fall Midterm Trip

Read this section if you are going on the 2-week trip to Tibet and Sichuan in the middle of the Fall FSP. Like the Summer Trip, the midterm trip calls for a larger suitcase and possibly a backpack.

Due to the variety of climates and the number of hiking days on the trip, review the itinerary and pack strategically. If you need to purchase items before the trip, it is wise to coordinate with your fellow trippees, as things like sunscreen can be
As the Fall FSP will go to Tibet or some other place with high altitude, it is a good idea to invest in High Altitude Sickness medication. You can speak to your family doctor or to someone from the Travel Clinic at Dick’s House about taking the medication; both Dick’s House and your doctor can prescribe the appropriate meds.

Suggested Midterm Trip Items:

- Light, hiking clothing (include long underwear – Tibet gets cold!)
- Sweater and/or light jacket
- Travel size umbrella
- Hiking shoes/sneakers
- Sunscreen
- Toilet Paper (Chinese bathrooms have none)
- Camera
- Money (600 RMB for incidentals; there are banks in Lhasa and Chengdu)
- Backpack for hiking
- Hygiene items (toothbrush, etc.)
- Altitude medicine (optional for 4000m)

The Midterm Trip takes place after the Oct 1 Golden Week holiday in China. If you are taking part in the trip, take advantage of the variety of experiences. Your DA may give you a packet with background on the places you’ll visit; reading it will make your expeditions more meaningful. Pay attention to the tour guide and signs; even if the information isn’t riveting, there’s a lot to be gleaned about national presentation from it. The last chapter of Matthew Kaptstein’s *The Tibetans* (the program has three or four copies) discusses Tibet’s modern history; get this from your DA and read it before you go.

Logistically, you will be staying in hotels on a daily basis and have early departure times (8am). Therefore, unpacking your entire bag and staying up late are not great options. In addition, you should leave your computer in Beijing because it will hinder your travels and keep you from meeting new people and fully experiencing what the trip has to offer.

Lastly, since your FSP director and a professor from BNU will be traveling with you, please be courteous to them. Chinese culture expects students to carry professors’ luggage and help them whenever possible. If you are unsure of the etiquette, ask your all-knowing DA.

Whatever your choice of travel, have a sense of adventure, and don’t forget to converse with the people you meet—it’s the best way to improve your Chinese abilities! Be safe and have fun!
APPENDIX VI: Shopping

If it’s something Western you need and you can’t find it anywhere else, you’ve got plenty of options. The easiest one to reach is Parkson’s, at făngxiǎngmén; just take the subway to the Fuxingmen stop. For over-the-counter drugs (including antibiotics), toiletries, and most notably, deodorant, head to any of the Watsons outlets (be prepared to pay American prices or more for whatever you get there). Just take the subway to Cháoyuāngmén or the Beijing Railway Station and head for Full Link Plaza or the Henderson Center respectively. For food items, there are supermarkets in the basement of Oriental Plaza at Wángfùjǐng, the Henderson Center and Full Link, and the Lufthansa Center (take a bus from Beítāipíngzhuāng to Liàngmǎqíngqiao to get there). Further out but sometimes worth the trip is the Holiday Inn, a sort of American colony in Beijing – you can get great food and nice commercial items here. If you can’t find what you’re looking for at any of the larger supermarkets, try Jenny Lou’s, a little convenience store in the Sanlíhùn area on Góngrán Tíyùguǎn Běnlǐ (Worker’s Stadium North Road, Góngtí Běnlǐ for short).

That’s nice, but what about clothes and other useful stuff? You’ll have a wide range of stuff to choose from: everything from designer apparel to imitation designer to just normal, everyday stuff is available. Keep in mind, though, that what you may view as regular, casual clothing is often viewed as high-class, so it might be a bit harder to find than you think. T-shirts are a prime example here. Additionally, if you’re taller than about 5’9” for men or 5’5” for women, you might have a harder time finding things that fit. In general, the average Beijinger’s body type may be extremely different from the average FSP student’s, and it is not uncommon for an FSP student wearing shirts size L in the US to buy shirts size XL or even size XXL in Beijing. Pants are even more problematic as tailoring purchased pants can be a hassle. The moral is, try and bring enough clothing if you’re worried that stuff won’t fit you in Beijing.

In the past few years several huge, shimmering malls and plazas have appeared as Beijingers get wealthier and their lifestyles demand designer clothes, cell-phones, cars, and other luxuries. To name a few that just opened in the last 2 to 3 years, there is the largest: Oriental Plaza at Wángfùjǐng; Siètèchá Plaza by Xīdàn and another, better one, by Jiǎnguómén; Shuāngfān Plaza in Hǎidǎn District; Full Link Plaza in Cháoyuāngmén; and the Cofo Plaza by the Beijing Railway Station (all of these are subway stops, except Shuāngfān, which is also probably the closest. Take a bus west from Beítāipíngzhuāng to get there).

For the Chinese department store experience, it’s not a bad idea to take the 22 bus to Xīdàn and just start there. Next is Wángfùjǐng; it’s not as close and conveniently reached as Xīdàn, but it’s Beijing’s largest and most famous shopping street, with the huge indoor malls of Xīn Dōng Án and Oriental Plaza. Also, the Jīngyuán, or Golden Resources Mall (jīngyuán shídài gūwù zhōngxīn), recently opened up inside Beijing inside the West Fourth Ring. It is reportedly the second largest mall in the world, and carries a variety of boutique and luxury brands. Though it can be a bit pricey (especially for the Chinese citizens, one reason why it is often quite empty), it is worth checking out.

For your basic walk and shop (and bargain), just walk south on Xīnjiàikòu road, and once you’ve passed the second ring, there are numerous shops and restaurants on either side of the street. There are a lot of good DVD stores here, and you can get just about anything here. You can literally spend a whole day in this area.

So what’s all this about Silk Alley? Silk Alley WAS the famous market-style, haggle-till-you-drop place. However, it no longer exists. The good news is that it has been replaced with a bigger, better, more crowded ‘indoor silk alley’ or Silk Market. It is located on Jiàngúménwài road (Outer Jiàngúmén Road), and most taxi drivers know of this place. Just mention xiūshuījūe market to them. True to its name, the place has silk in just about any form you could imagine: scarves, boxers shorts, pajamas, underwear, nightgowns, ties, carpets, and so on. If you’re looking to buy good knockoffs of any designer US apparel, footwear, DVDs, electronics, etc this is the place. Many students found it useful to buy “Northfaces” here right before Tibet. It might be worth going to a fabric store or some such in the US before you leave and checking out what different grades of silk feel like, since all of the stall owners will of course insist that their goods are pure silk of the finest quality. In the department stores, bargaining is not looked highly upon, as prices are generally fixed, but on the street, if they agree to the price, it’s yours. Rule of thumb is: if you think you can bargain in a market, you probably could.

Other than silk, the market also has a substantial trade in other apparel of all kinds. Some of them are fake, some of them are pirated from factories in the south, and very rarely, they’re the real thing. You can get ‘North Face’ and ‘Helly Hansen’ jackets, as well as ‘Nike’ and ‘Reebok’ shoes and ‘Teva’ sandals. Also available are Polo, Armani, Lacoste (blatantly fake), Gap, and Timberland clothing, backpacks from North Face and other manufacturers, Beanie Babies, and LOTS of pirated CDs. Be warned: if you want the real thing, either know exactly what to look for or wait until you get home. If you want a reasonable facsimile that looks good for a fraction of the price, go for it. To get there, either take a taxi—the taxi drivers all know the place—or take the fast and cheap route and hop on the subway to the Jiàngúmén stop. Take the northeast exit (if you don’t go up a big escalator, you’re at the wrong exit) and walk east past the Friendship Store until you see a big sign that says ‘Xín Shū Jìe Market’ or something to that effect.

The other major market is the Hóngqíáo Shīchāng (Red Bridge Market), located just outside the east gate of the Temple of Heaven (Tìtiányán). Again, taxi drivers generally know the name of the place, but it’s a long cab ride. Alternately, you can take the subway to Chóngwénmén and take a walk south a little farther than the distance from BNU to the jíshùtàn stop. The bottom floor is a seafood market and the lower floor is a feature stationery, toys, and most notably, electronics. Upper floors have clothing (avoid the endangered animal skins/furs; among other things, they’re hard to get back into the US legally) and Chinese antiques/curios, respectively. The main draw here is the electronics section, where you can get audio equipment with features not available in the US for a good couple of months for a substantial discount. Try before
you buy, but generally the merchants here have been rather good about returns of faulty goods (make sure you get a receipt, of course).

Hóngqiáo is the place to go in Beijing for pearls. They are much cheaper than in the states and decent quality; go to a respectable looking stall. Don’t pay more than ¥100 for a set of earrings and slightly more for a necklace. They make a great gift for mothers.

Also, you might want to check out the Scroll Market (Pánjià Yàìàì) one Sunday morning while you’re in Beijing. It’s just east of the Temple of Heaven (Tiantán); you can take the subway to Guómào and head south by public bus, or take a cab from BNU (the cab driver will know what you’re talking about if you pronounce it with the –er). The artists and calligraphers there will work on commission rather cheaply. Additionally, there are a lot of fun pre-and post-Liberation ‘antiques’ in a lot of the stalls.

Liǔlícháng, just a short walk south from the Hépingmén subway stop, is another famous shopping street, and an expensive place to go for Chinese paintings and custom-made calligraphy; bargain extremely hard there as the shop owners are aware of how much most foreigners can afford and have moved prices up accordingly. This is a good place to get a chop engraved, although you’ll find cheaper places when you travel outside Beijing.

Finally, if you make it over to Qìànmén, just south of Tiananmen Square, it’s definitely worth checking out Dìzáhélán, once famous for its opera houses, but now probably the most authentic Chinese market street. There’s a Tibetan shop here, as well as a shoe shop that’s been making cotton shoes for China’s leaders since Mao. It’s definitely worth checking out because the streets here will lead you into the quieter hútòng of Beijing, where you can get a more genuine sense of daily life of the typical Beijinger. China’s oldest and famous pharmacy for traditional medicine is also here—Tóngrán Yáodiàn.

How do I bargain? This is a skill that will get you a decent amount of mileage in China, though less than it used to. Everything from vegetables to silk to electronics can be bargain for. DO NOT bargain for taxi rides and restaurant bills!! The main rules are not to let the seller know how much you can really afford to pay or how much you really want the item. Also, try and be friendly about the whole thing. No sense in getting in a fight with someone over what amounts to a couple of dollars.

Basically, it works like this: you ask how much (duoshao qián?), they reply with a price, and you say (tái guì le!). Ask if they can lower the price (kěyǐ piányí yìdiǎn ma?); generally they say yes, and then expect you to make an offer. Remember that yìbāi wù and NOT one 105. If you want to say ¥250, it is less embarrassing if you say èrbāwùshí, not èrbāwùwú, which is slang for moron. At street markets, it’s usually good to start with a quarter to a fifth (in some cases a tenth) of the original asking price, and work upwards from there. It’s good to have in mind the maximum you’re willing to pay, so a little research among classmates who’ve already bought what you want is a good idea. Beyond the simple haggling over price, there are a few things that can help: 1) Complain that the item’s not exactly the way you want it. Too big, too small, not quite the right color, you don’t quite like the design, etc. 2) Say that a friend of yours got one for less (this is especially helpful if the price you’re giving is reasonable) 3) We repeat, be friendly. Joke, whine nicely, etc. But stick to your price and stick to Chinese; you get better prices faster. 4) Remember: you’re a poor student (qióng xuésheng). Compared to most of the people buying this stuff, you are. Keep the BNU pin you get upon arrival, and pin it on your bag or show them your student ID. 5) Buying in quantity or with friends always helps. It’s the rare merchant who’s not willing to give a discount for more than one item or a sale to more than one person. 6) The best move is to just walk away. Tell them you’re going to take a look at other stuff, or that it’s just too much money, or whatever. Usually, the price will fall with each step away from the booth. Keep going until you hear what you want, or come back later and restart bargaining with the last price you heard. Don’t shake hands before you’ve agreed for certain on the price, though, and pick out exactly which goods you want before you hand over the money.

Are there any other shopping options? Invariably, one of your Chinese professors will have or know a tailor. If you have something in mind that you want made, bring a picture or a pattern with you, and pick out the fabric when you get to Beijing. Most students are very pleased with the clothes they get, as they’re inexpensive and look pretty nice. Be sure the tailor understands what you want, though, or mishaps can result (such as bathrobes that don’t close in front). Past students have bought custom made suits and traditional Chinese dresses and coats. Be consistent on your stylistic requests, as Western fashion may be different than what the tailors are used to.
APPENDIX VII: 50 Things for a Dartmouth Student to Do in Beijing

A couple things to do around Beijing gathered from a few experiences on the Beijing FSP. If you have a taste for adventure, you might want to skip this as to discover these things for yourself. If you want to make sure you get in at least a few Beijing FSP essential experiences, read on.

1. Go eat at Dayu, an all-you-can-eat, all-you-can-drink restaurant right outside of Gongti.
2. Order bubble tea.
4. Do KTV. Don’t make excuses.
5. Rent a paddleboat at Houhai Lake.
6. Make your own zhongguo pengyou.
7. Play the dice game at Huxley’s in Houhai.
8. Play mafia while other FSPers on long bus rides while traveling.
9. Get pastries at Golden Phoenix and watch them make a cake.
11. Eat the jiabing they sell under the bridge.
12. Try chou doufu (stinky tofu).
14. Get a Beijing transportation card and ride the buses and subways.
15. Learn a Chinese art, such as calligraphy or Chinese painting.
16. See the #1 film at a Chinese movie theater. (Doesn’t count if the film is American.)
18. Watch a Peking Opera show.
19. Order a round of Kamikazes at Shooters.
20. Dance on the stage at Vics/Mix.
21. Watch a sports game in a bar in Sanlitun or Wudaokou.
22. Order the Xiao Long Bao dish at the restaurant Dim Tai Fung.
23. Watch a show at the National Opera House.
24. Eat a fried scorpion at the outdoor food market in Wangfujing.
25. Buy a DVD for 7 kuai at the store right across the street.
27. Get the mochis from the mochi shop in Xidan.
28. Go shopping at the Zoo markets.
29. Go to the Beijing Zoo and see the pandas.
30. Eat meatsticks.
31. Go to the pizza buffet at Pyro pizza.
32. Eat the one kuai ice cream they sell at all tourist sites.
33. Eat Beijing duck (kaoya).
34. Eat dim sum at the restaurant near Ditan (Temple of Earth).
35. Get a picture with a Chinese guard outside of the Forbidden City.
36. Taste Yanjing and Qingdao beer.
37. See Mao’s preserved body at Mao’s Mausoleum.
38. Get lost in a hutong.
39. Play badminton with the locals.
40. Join a game of pickup basketball.
41. Eat hot pot.
42. Learn how to play mahjong.
43. Relax with cupping or acupuncture.
44. While away an afternoon in Ritan Park.
45. Buy pearls for your mother at the Hongqiao Pearl Market.
46. Eat a bowl of zhajiangmian (noodles).
47. Go haggling at the Silk Market.
49. Watch the flag raising ceremony in Tiananmen Square.
50. Hug your Director especially if it is Mao Laoshi.
**APPENDIX VIII: Ordering Food and Eating**

**Meat Dishes**
- Sweet & Sour Chicken [糖醋鸡] – tángcù ji
- Sweet & Sour Pork (tenderloin) [糖醋里脊] - tángcù lǐjǐ
- Chicken Slices over Rice Crust (think Rice Krispie treats w/o Sugar) [锅巴鸡片] - Guoba jǐpiàn
- "Iron Plate" Beef [铁板牛肉] - tiebān niúròu
- "Iron Plate" Squid [铁板鱿鱼] - tiebān yóuyú
- Shredded Chicken w/Spicy & Sweet Garlic and Mushroom Sauce [鱼香肉丝] – yǔxiāng Jìsi
- Kung Pao Chicken [宫保鸡丁] - gōngbào Jídīng
- Green Pepper Beef [青椒牛肉] - qīngjiāo niúròu
- Old Woman’s Tofu [麻婆豆腐] - mápó dòufu málà
- Hot & Spicy Tofu [麻辣豆腐] – mala dòufu

**Vegetables**

(most of these can be ordered ‘qing chao’ or ‘sū chao’, which means stir-fried. either with garlic or in soy sauce)

- Snow Peas [荷兰豆] – hélán dòu
- Broccoli [西兰花] - xīlán huā
- ‘Empty Heart Vegetable’ [空心菜] - kōngxīn cài
- Potato [土豆] - tǔduò
- Potato shreds stir-fried with vinegar [醋炒土豆丝] - cūchāo tǔduōsī
- Eggplant [茄子] - qiézǐ
- Tomato & Scrambled Egg (番茄鸡蛋 or 西红柿鸡蛋) - fanqié jídàn or xīhóngshì jídàn
- Corn with Pine Nuts [松子玉米] - sōngzǐ yùmǐ
- Winter Melon [冬瓜] - dōnggua
- ‘Home Style Tofu’ [家常豆腐] - jiācháng dòufu
- White rice [米饭] - mǐfàn
- Noodles [面条] - miántiáo

If you don’t already know, most Chinese dishes are named by having a cooking verb, the main ingredients, and often a description of how the ingredients are cut. For example, everyone’s favorite Sweet and Sour Chicken is usually rendered tángrczui (Sugar-vinegar) jí (chicken) tíào (strips). So a lot of times you can mix-and-match. However, some names don’t give any clear indication of the ingredients (e.g., fēng zhua, ‘phoenix talons’).

A good place to start when eating out is the Tàipíng Jiaoziguan, which has an English/Pinyin menu and a friendly staff. To get there, take a left out of the east gate. (The English menu was done a few years ago by a clever BNU student from California who, in return for his services, now receives free meals for life.) Once you know the names of the dishes you like, be adventurous. There are restaurants everywhere and each presents the classic dishes a little bit differently.

A separate mention is reserved for yángprouchuann, a Chinese version of kebabs that can be found anywhere on the street (specifically, three blocks north of BNU, just ask where to find the chuann and you will get there). This is about one of the nicest social experiences you can get – for the cost of 1 kuài, you get 1 kebab in an outdoor table, with things ranging from beef, to seafood, to veggies. Add a cold Tsingtao or milk tea to this, and you have a feast. Be sure to exploit this as it leads to great ways to pass an afternoon as you get to know your fellow FSPers.

Finally, don’t be afraid to just jump on a bus and get off a few stops away from campus. You’re bound to find a few good Chinese restaurants, and if you get lost, you can always take a taxi back.

*If I have to eat Chinese food again, I think I’m going to die. What else is there? As you will no doubt have discovered by the time you get to this point, there are places for Western, Korean, and Japanese food on campus, and even more in the immediate area around BNU. One of the Korean places, located outside the south gate, delivers to your dorm room; so does the Japanese restaurant by the Jiaoziguan, called Hóng Yè (Red Leaf). Students receive a 50 percent discount on all meals. If you are craving sandwiches or pizza, go to Tube Station (think Subway imitation). To get there, go across the pedestrian bridge, take a left, and walk for a few minutes. They have pizza and various subs (roast beef, turkey, tuna, etc.) and their oatmeal raisin cookies are baked to perfection. Tube Station also has pretty good curry, and they will deliver to the dorm as well. This restaurant has been immensely popular with students in the past for the convenience of their delivery and their decent selection of pizzas and sandwiches. Note that the delivery person does not expect tips, whether you are ordering from Tube Station, Domino’s, or anywhere else. Even closer is Origus Pizza Factory, an all-you-can-eat-for-VJ30 joint that has wings, chicken nuggets, pasta, French fries, ice cream, drinks (including beer on tap), and, of course, pizza. They also have free beer on Tuesdays if you buy a large pizza. For good pizza and some of the best coffee in Beijing (not quite Dirt Cowboy, but the best approximate I’ve found after six months of coffee hunting), go out the south gate, cross the street, and head right about 100 feet to a café called Sculpting in Time. There’s a bookstore just to the right of the entrance.*
**APPENDIX IX: Beijing By Foot (Mostly)**

It is pretty easy to get caught up in classwork but seeing Beijing is one of the most important parts of the FSP. Take some time off and rather than watch half of the season of Grey’s you bought at the pirated DVD store across from campus, go wander around the city. Pay attention to your bearings; until you start walking, you won't appreciate how important that lesson about Beijing’s city planning really is. Buses are an excellent means of transport; you can buy a handy guide at a number of bookstores, including the Foreign Language Bookstore on Wangfujing.

1. **Rendinghu Park.** A mere 5-10 minute walk east from campus, this park is a fantastic place to retreat from the bustle of Beijing. It features a short jogging loop around a small pond, the ubiquitous outdoor exercise equipment, and plenty of good reading spots. To get there, walk south towards 二炮, the hospital across the street from BNU, and head east (left) on 新康街 xinkangjie. The next major intersection is with 德胜门外大街 deshengmen waidajie; still heading east, cross at the pedestrian crossing, bear right, and walk down the little side street that’s not quite across from 新光街 xinkangjie until you run into the park.

2. **Xiaoxitian.** The main gate is a 15 minute walk south on 西小天街 xiyako or a 5 minute ride on the 22 (or a number of other buses), Xiaoxitian is host to scads of night restaurants (including several run by Uyghurs) and some of the cheapest/best baozi and noodles around BNU. If you’re feeling more adventurous, you can wend through the neighborhood using the alley entrance that’s just west of the South Gate.

3. **月坛, 天坛, 大坛.** Yuetan, Ditan, Tiantan, and Ritan. These parks are arranged East, North, South, and West of the Forbidden City. They’re about an hour and a half apart from one another by foot, and much more accessible by дилет or bus. Yuetan is small and fairly quiet; there are a number of spacious benches on which to read; the gardens are modest but pretty. Ritan is larger and tends to have more visitors; it’s in Chaoyang District not far from the Alien Market. Nonetheless, it’s a good place to take a Frisbee, lunch, and a good book. Tiantan is my favorite of the parks. In addition to having one of the best-kept and uniquely designed temples in Beijing, the area outside the temple grounds is wooded with a number of paths/clearings that make quite a substantial running loop, provide space for badminton, Jianzi, and chess players, and host a number of area musicians. The community of Tiantan is best appreciated in the late afternoon and early evening. Ritan is a bit stark but worth visiting, especially in the evening when the sun is beginning to go down.

4. One of the best things to do is to identify a number of places you’re interested in seeing in your guidebook and then just go. Use Google (with VPN) to get a sense of possible routes, and then write down the characters/pinyin for the landmarks you’ll need. It’s a great character recognition exercise, and will expose you to parts of the city you won’t see on the scheduled activities. If you get lost, you can ask for help from passers-by or grab a taxi/the дилет/ a bus home.
APPENDIX X: Excellent Restaurants, “Watering Holes” and Dance Joints

A few things to do that might be of interest. The best way to get to a venue efficiently is to call the venue on your cell and have the taxi driver get directions from the fawuyuan.

For brunch:

**Comptoirs de France**
Chaoyang, East Lake Villas, 35 Dongzhimenwai Dajie → 6461-1525
Chaoyang, Central Park Place, Building 15, 89 Jianguo Lu → 6530-5480
If you are craving a French pastry or a baguette, head to one of its two locations to get your quick fix. Also serves good coffee, but don’t expect the nice, busy buzz that Grandma’s Kitchen and Vineyard Café offer.

**Grandma’s Kitchen**
Chaoyang, Jianwai SOHO, Building B, 39 Dongsanhuan Zhonglu → 5869-3055
Chaoyang, Ati Xiushui Nanjie → 6503-2983
While Zagats describes this place as great for providing “hangover-friendly fare,” this is really a great place to go when you are homesick for Lou’s Diner, or Homeplate for that matter. Not badly priced at about 90¥ per person.

**Vineyard Café**
31 Wudaoying Hutong → 6402-7961
My favorite place to have brunch in Beijing. Always teeming with ex-pats, mostly twenty-somethings, with a cozy feel in a converted courtyard house down a hutong alley. Has a good selection of coffee and tasty fresh orange juice (a hard find in Beijing) along with all the brunch necessities of French toast, muesli, pancakes, waffles, etc. Try and leave room because the desserts are delicious too.

For dinner:

**Alameda**
Chaoyang, Sanlitun Beijie → 6417-8084
My favorite restaurant in Beijing. Tucked into a back alley of Sanlitun and surrounded by cute boutiques (each worth a stop too), this greenhouse-style restaurant serves a great Brazilian lunch and dinner. Call ahead for a reservation for lunch and dinner as tables always seem hard to come by.

**Annie’s**
Chaoyang, 16 Dongsanhuan Beilu → 6503-3871
Chaoyang, 5 Laiguangying Donglu → 8470-4768
Chaoyang, 88 Jianguo Lu → 8589-8366
Chaoyang, Chaoyang Gongyuan Xilu → 6591-1931
Chaoyang, Jiangtai Lu, 2nd floor → 6436-3735
A decent Italian place with good pasta, lasagna, and ravioli. Yummy garlic bread too. Very kid-friendly, so expect to see them running around and making a bit of noise.

**Bellagio**
Chaoyang, 35 Xiaoyun Lu → 8451-9988
Chaoyang, 6 Gongti Xilu → 8561-3533
A funky Chinese restaurant full of a mix of both locals and ex-pats. The good food has an eclectic vibe that matches the tone of the décor. Even the androgynous-looking waitresses are identical with coifed haircuts and no make-up. Don’t miss the shaved ice desserts that they are famous for.

**Haiku by Hatsune**
Chaoyang, Block 8, 8 Chaoyang Gongyuan Xilu → 6508-8585
For a special occasion or if you are pining for a stop up in sushi, head to Hatsune (or dress up for a night out at Haiku by Hatsune in Block 8). Easily considered the best sushi in Beijing. Many signature creative, colorful sushi and sashimi rolls. Always busy, be sure to make a reservation at either venue.

**The (Hidden) Tree**
Chaoyang, 42 Beisanlitun Nan → 6415-1954
This place is definitely hidden, but is well worth finding. On the backside of Sanlitun, down the back alley past Shooters is where The Tree is to be found. A nice, open-air restaurant that provides a good selection of Belgian beers and tasty thin-crust pizza. Good to call ahead to reserve a table as the place is always packed.

**Luga’s**
Chaoyang, 41 Sanlitun Beijie → 6416-5154
Not exactly the quality of Mexican food you can find in any big American city, but close enough. With prices at 60¥ for a burrito and 40¥ for a quesadilla, this place offers well-priced munchies to satisfy your after-hour cravings in Sanlitun.

**Songzi/Matsuko**
Chaoyang, 22 Bajiaozhuang → 6582-5208
Mao Laoshi’s favorite restaurant in Beijing. This Japanese restaurant offers an all-you-can-eat buffet lunch for 68¥. Enough said. Mao Laoshi will most likely take the entire FSP group here for a Chinese language table sometime during the term.

For a dance or maybe a drink:

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For a dance or maybe a drink:
Bar Blu
Chaoyang, Tongli Studio, Sanlitun Beijie, 4th floor  
Located next to Kokomo, Bar Blu has a nice roof deck as well but not as nice of a view. What Bar Blu offers that Kokomo doesn’t is a good dance floor and lounge area with a decent DJ. Drinks are expensive though.

Bed Tapas & Bar
Xicheng, 17 Zhangwang Hutong  
Like the other bars with “bed” as the name, this bar is full of beds for lounging. Also said in the name, yummy tapas are served. Very romantic if you need a place to take a date.

Goose and Duck
1 Greenlake South Road, Chaoyang Park West Road  
Sports bar with a basketball court, a micro-brewery, and laser bow-and-arrows.

Huxley's
Xicheng, 16 Yandai Xiejie, Houhai Area  
Same owners as Nanjie with their copyrighted motto, “Shut up and drink.” Cool bar on the backside of Houhai Lake. Decorated from floor to ceiling with graffiti. Usually filled with a mix of locals and ex-pats, has good reasonably priced drinks. Expect to make friends.

Kokomo
Chaoyang, Tongli Studio, Sanlitun Houjie, 4th floor  
Rooftop terrace bar with a nice view out on the Beijing skyline. Although next to Bar Blu, it is a better venue due to the view unless you love to dance. Very reasonably priced drinks and good Caribbean food. Always buzzing by 11 o’clock with dancing and debauchery. Good Cuban music on Wednesday nights too.

Nanjie
Chaoyang  
Same owners as Huxley’s with the copyrighted phrase, “Shut up and drink.” On the other side of most of the Sanlitun scene, this place has good, cheap drinks and a colorful scene. Packed with ex-pats and room for dancing in the downstairs. Nice balcony too.

Stone Boat Café
Chaoyang, Ritan Park, southwest corner on the pond  
As the name says, this café-bar sits on a pond in Ritan Park. Excellent martinis and good beer for reasonable prices along with simple food like spring rolls and jiaozi. Good people-watching during the day. Live jazz music on weekend evenings.

For a good dance:

China Doll
OLD Chaoyang, Tongli Studio, Sanlitun Beijie, 2nd floor  
NEW Chaoyang, 3.3 Mall, Sanlitun Beijie, 4th floor  
Both located in Sanlitun along the same back street, but with different vibes. While the old China Doll is more low-key with a younger crowd, the new China Doll has an underwater theme with ocean murals and images of under-clad women swimming that attracts a more dressed-up, older crowd. Zhang Youdai, the first Chinese DJ to make it into Rolling Stone magazine, is in charge of the international music scene here. No cover charge for either, but expensive drinks make up for that.

Club GT Banana
Jianguomen, Scitech Hotel, 22 Jianguomen Waidajie  
Known as one of Beijing’s more famous clubs due to its bouncing dance floor, overwhelming light shows, and good music. Always a good mix of both locals and ex-pats. No cover charge.

Sóng
Chaoyang, The Place, 13108, 9 Guanghua Lu  
Upscale club always full of Europeans dropping through. Decorated like a Chinese landscape. Very pricey entry and drinks, but worth a visit if you dress up.

White Rabbit
Chaoyang, C2 Haoyun Jie, No. 29 Zaoying Lu  
Known for its excellent DJs and the best dance music in Beijing with strictly electronic music, this dive club is decorated with the inspiration from Alice in Wonderland. Usually doesn’t fill up until 2 o’clock in the morning. Standard cover charge but overpriced drinks.
APPENDIX XI: Night Life

Here are a few places that have been popular among Dart-folk the past few years:

Vics and Mixs, located in the Worker’s Stadium Gongrènyìyúchang, are your standard first-rate clubs. Many floors up and down, expensive drinks, pretty people and generally an all around good time. They are across the street from each other, although cover charges are expensive. This is the most American-like clubbing experience (both music and people wise) you will probably get in China, and if sweaty, cramped expensive places where everyone is having a good time are your thing, then you will definitely enjoy Vics and Mix. Do not miss this staple of Beijing nightlife and try it out at least once.

Propaganda is more for the adventure-lovers. Located right next to the beer gardens, this frat-like club features Beirut tables, the latest western pop music, no cover charge and cheap drinks. Be warned, people here seem to be less refined than in Mix and Vics, so everyone is advised to go in groups. While people in Mix and Vics are looking to see and be seen, people in Propaganda are ready to have a good time.

Propaganda’s surroundings deserve a paragraph of its own. “The Castle”, a 24-hour burger place right next to Propaganda will give you all the food cravings your late night appetite desires. Furthermore, the Beer Gardens is a destination on its own, where most foreigners go to relax, eat chuamn and try an American beer or two.

In terms of a more relaxed outing, bed bar is open 24/7 and offers special rooms modeled after opium dens, where one can read, play their own music and basically spend the entire day in conversation. Ironically, smoking is forbidden here, which hopefully that everyone can be comfortable and have a good time. This is a very good way to spend a lazy Friday afternoon between conversations, tapas (entrees) and drinks.

Finally, perhaps yours truly most favorite way to spend an afternoon in Beijing is in Houhai. This area is populated with cheap bars with no cover charge, where one can just enter, order anything from a beer to a bottle of Coca Cola and enjoy the sunset. Summer FSPers will have a great bonding time here, and it is fully recommended.

For Jazz, Blues, etc., there’s the CD Cafe and The Big Easy or ‘Happy Station’ in Chinese (Kuāilézhàn), by the North Gate of Cháoyáng Park Cháoyáng Gongyùn. Sanlitun also has a nice block or two of bars and clubs, including the popular Bar Blu and Kokomo, which have no cover charge. However, which clubs are hot and which aren’t is something that changes almost weekly, so it’s almost certain that by the time you arrive in Beijing things will have changed. Check out the magazines City Weekend, That’s Beijing, or The Beijinger (see below).

The way to find out what’s happening, from movies to clubs to Verdi’s Requiem and art exhibitions, is to check out Beijing’s flourishing English-language magazine press. City Weekend and That’s Beijing are bimonthlies; Beijing This Month is another good resource. Although it only comes out once a month, The Beijinger features “Best of Beijing” awards for nightlife in the July issue, which can be handy if you are into that. You can pick these magazines up for free in places where foreigners frequent—the closest place is Tube Station (see “Dining” p. 8-9); you can also pick them up in the restaurants and cafes by Jiànguómén. Also, try the Internet: www.xianzai.com, and www.cityweekend.com.cn, and www.thebeijinger.com

Another option for laid-back evening entertainment is to go to one of the numerous street corner night markets. As the sun sets, restaurants will place tables outside and offer a limited menu of grilled items. Other markets feature a line of booths usually with minority cuisine items seasoned and grilled to order in addition to cheap beverages. You could spend hours just trying to identify what exactly is lying skewered in the metal trays, then a few more hours building up the courage to ingest it. But there’s always the staple chicken, beef, mutton, and tofu. Take a left out of the East Gate and walk for about 5 to 10 minutes. A market (outside of 小西天) appears at sunset on most nights and the food is prepared by native Uyghurs. For a bigger scene, an entire street at Wángfùjīng is dedicated to street delicacies every night.

Also, feel free to just wander around. Take the bus or a taxi to somewhere you haven’t been before, and just go down the back alleys. This is obviously best done during daylight, but doing so allows you to check out the hútòng (alleys) that make up one of Beijing’s unique features. Make sure you take advantage of these artifacts because Beijing is in the process of destroying many of the hútòngs to make way for new construction. The neighborhoods east and west of the Forbidden City are good for this sort of thing, as is the area just west of Qianmen.
APPENDIX XII: Mail and Phone

Mail

With regard to packages, they are generally delivered in decent condition, though not terribly fast (7-18 days, depending on customs). It’s somewhat haphazard as to whether or not a particular package gets delivered to the dorm (occasionally), to the Beitaipingzhuang Yóuyú (usually), or to the main International Post Office off of Jiānguómén (rarely). If either of the second two happens, you’ll either get flagged down by one of the staff on your way in or out or you’ll get a phone call from the front desk telling you that you have a package, and they’ll give you a package slip. Do not lose this slip. You can still get the package without it, but it takes a near act of God. (Well, actually of Bi Laoshi, the woman who handles foreign students’ mail, but she’s a nice lady and it’s best not to trouble her.)

To get to the Beitaipingzhuang Post Office (yóuyú), head north on Xinjiekou out of the East Gate. The post office is on the north side of the Third Ring Road, so go across the freeway and turn right. You should now be walking east with storefronts on your left and the Third Ring Road on your right. After about 200 yards you’ll come to the post office on your left. Head in and just look lost and usually one of the staff will come and help you—no joke. You might need to be a bit aggressive in line if it’s crowded. Any packages you want to ship out of China can be mailed here.

The easiest way to get to the main international post office is to take a cab to Jiānguómén Yóudìanjú. The cab drivers know it and you shouldn’t have any problems aside from the horrendous traffic in that part of town.

Phone

For family and friends to call a student in Xinsong, there are two options. The first is to dial the Xinsong Dormatory front desk at 86-10-5880-0275 or -0280. Once the operator picks up, the caller will need to give the student’s room number in Chinese, so it might be worth going over the numbers in Chinese before leaving if you don’t come from a Mandarin-speaking household. Alternately, you can call home the first time from Beijing and give the family at home your room number in Chinese.

Calling back to the US is generally best done using a calling card from AT&T, MCI, or Sprint. However, as of recently, downloading and using the phone program Skype on one’s computer has become very popular. Not only is video chatting from computer-to-computer free, but calling internationally is about the same cost as a calling card. Choosing between Skype and a calling card is really a matter of preference and convenience. HOWEVER, if you do choose Skype, make sure you have Dartmouth VPN installed as the Great Chinese Firewall may or may not decide to block Skype at any moment.

Some calling card companies based in the US have a ‘call back’ option that lets you make cheap calls from China to the US; you might want to check out www.superphone.com or Pennytalk. To reach an American operator in Beijing, dial 10811 (AT&T), 10812 (MCI), or 10813 (Sprint), first adding a 0 if need be—some pay phones require it—or a 5 if you’re calling from your room in Xinsong and your phone is on the internal system. Prepaid phone cards from US are not recommended very strongly, as the return on the investment tends to be rather short. You can get a ¥100 IP Card in Beijing for as little as ¥50, and a call to the states will last just over a half-hour (that comes to about $0.18/minute).