

Countries Of The World: China

By National Geographic Kids, adapted by Newsela staff on 02.15.18

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Image 1: The Great Wall of China is a popular place for tourists to visit. It is the longest man-made structure in the world. Parts of it were first built 2,700 years ago. Photo by: Getty Images/Aaron Geddes Photography.

China is a large country. It is located in Asia. China's land stretches 3,100 miles wide. That is a little wider than the United States. The land includes mountains, deserts and forests.

Mountains cover a big part of China. Mount Everest is there. It is the world's tallest mountain. Everest sits between China and the country of Nepal.

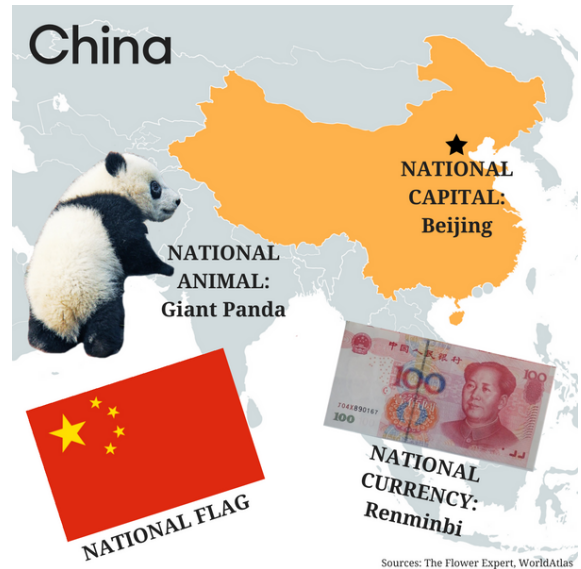
China has many rivers. The Yangtze is an important one. It is the third-longest river in the world.

Nature

China is full of animals. Thousands of kinds of fish swim in its rivers. Many reptiles live here, too.

Some of China's wildlife is in danger. The wildlife is losing its forest homes. People are cutting down trees. They need the land for farming. But the Chinese government has a plan. It has set aside land just for animals. These places will keep the animals safe.

China is also home to pandas! It is the only place in the world where pandas live in the wild. However, not many are left. Hunters have nearly wiped them out. Groups in China are trying to fix that. They are working hard to save the panda.



People And Culture

China is very crowded. It has more people than any other country. More than 1 billion people live in China. It is four times the number who live in the United States.

China has a long history of art. The early Chinese people made art with paper. They were some of the first people to do that. They used silk and wood, too.

Confucius was an important Chinese thinker. He lived nearly 3,000 years ago. Confucius taught important lessons. He showed people how to be kind and respectful. His ideas are still important in China today.

Government And Economy

China has an authoritarian government. Authoritarian means a small group has all the power. The leaders control the people. And the people do not have much freedom. They only have as much as the government wants to give them.



The Chinese government also controls businesses. It follows a system called communism. Communism says people cannot own property. Only the government can. The leaders decide what things people will make. They also decide how they will be made.

Today, that is changing. Many new businesses are opening. Some are now owned by people instead of the government. These businesses are helping China grow. People all over the world buy their products.

History

Many dynasties have ruled China. A dynasty is a long line of rulers. They all come from the same family.

The Qin Dynasty was the first in China's history. "Qin" sounds like "chin." This dynasty ruled thousands of years ago.

China's dynasties lasted thousands of years. The last one ended about 100 years ago. Then, in 1949, China became a communist country. A man named Mao Zedong took over. He gave the country a new name. He called it the People's Republic of China.

Many thought Mao was a cruel leader. They feared him. Still, some of his changes helped people. Schools and hospitals got better under Mao. Today, he is respected by China's government. He helped make China what it is today.

