Local SIM: check official-store registration, plan terms and your phone's SIM support.

Wi-Fi: treat it as a useful additional connection, not your only arrival plan.

Check the exact device, not just ‘ iPhone ’ or ‘ Android ’

Apple's current mainland-China support page makes local-carrier eSIM eligibility model-specific. It describes supported mainland models and in-store identity checks. That is a different question from whether your existing overseas phone can use an international provider's travel eSIM.

Find the exact model number and region of purchase.

Ask the manufacturer and provider whether that model can install the intended plan.

Check carrier-lock status and simultaneous-SIM support.

Do not buy a plan solely because a general model family is advertised as eSIM-capable.

Keep data and your verification number separate

Decide which SIM will provide data and which number will receive account messages. Follow your provider's instructions for installation, activation and roaming settings. Ask when the plan's validity starts; do not assume it begins at your first airport connection.

Check whether the plan includes a local number, SMS, voice calls and hotspot use.

Keep your existing number usable where an account depends on it.

Do not delete an eSIM to troubleshoot until you know how it can be restored.

Save the provider's support instructions and your order reference offline.

If you choose a local SIM

Official stores of China Mobile, China Telecom and China Unicom are identified in Shanghai's mobile-service guide. Registration uses the customer's identity document. Present required information directly to the official operator; China Ready does not collect it or register the SIM for you.

Confirm the package, validity, cancellation and top-up terms before purchase.

Check that the SIM type works in your phone.

Ask the operator to explain how to contact support.

Keep the receipt and the plan details.

Test a backup before departure

Public Wi-Fi is available at various Shanghai locations, but that does not prove a particular hotspot will be accessible when you need it. Confirm access with the venue. Network reachability and service availability can differ; no plan here is a promise that every overseas website or app will work.

Save your hotel address and arrival route offline.

Test your translation tool without data.

Start with the exact stations

Write down your departure and arrival stations, not only the cities. Compare their locations with your accommodation and allow for the journey to the station. A cheaper or earlier train is not automatically the better choice if it uses a distant station.

Check the Chinese and English station names.

Review the travel date and local departure time.

Keep a backup departure if your preferred service is unavailable.

Use the official rail channel

China Railway identifies 12306.cn and Railway 12306 as its official online ticketing channels. Its English FAQ accepts valid foreign passports. Ticket counters are another route; do not assume a self-service machine accepts your document.

Enter the passenger's name and document details exactly as required by the official form.

Complete verification directly with the railway service.

Do not send passport details to China Ready.

If verification fails, consult 12306 or a staffed railway counter rather than altering your identity information.

Check when your train becomes available

The official release-time guide tells travelers to select the departure date in Railway 12306 to see the relevant sale time. Check that current display rather than assuming every train opens at midnight. Availability is not guaranteed, particularly for a specific departure or seat class.

Set a reminder if the current app offers one.

Confirm the correct station, passenger and class before payment.

If using an optional request or waiting feature, read its terms and check whether a ticket has actually been issued.

Distinguish a request from a confirmed ticket

After payment, open the order and verify the train, date, passenger and status. Keep an offline record of the booking details. A payment attempt, pending request or third-party confirmation email is not a substitute for checking the actual ticket status.

Use the help channel associated with where you booked.

Review change and refund conditions before buying.

Do not assume another train can be substituted without a formal change.

If you booked through a reseller, distinguish its own fees and support from railway rules.

Prepare for station checks

The 12306 FAQ says travelers should carry the valid document used to buy the ticket for station and train checks. An itinerary sheet is not itself the boarding document. Leave time for finding the entrance, security, document checks and your boarding gate.

Carry the original travel document and keep it accessible.

Use the staffed/manual channel if directed by station staff.

Check the station boards for the actual gate and any changes.

For missed trains, changes or refunds, use current 12306 instructions; this guide does not promise eligibility or a fixed fee.

Source: https://www.12306.cn/en/faq.html?item=1 | checked 2026-11-20 | Verified

Source: https://english.beijing.gov.cn/livinginbeijing/transportation/railway/202512/t20251226_4364929.html | checked 2026-11-20 | Verified

DAILY-LIFE

China Travel Checklist

Before you commit to the trip

Use this checklist as a preparation record, not proof that a third-party account will work. Mark each item Done, Pending or Not needed. Keep unresolved items visible rather than calling the whole trip ‘ ready ’ .

Check official entry requirements for your own travel document, route and dates.

Confirm your first accommodation and its exact Chinese address.

Check cancellation terms for bookings you make directly.

Save your insurer's assistance contact and official embassy contact.

Several days before departure

Open essential apps while you still have a familiar connection and easy access to your card issuer. Follow up on unresolved account checks through the provider's own support.

Install payment, map, transport and translation tools you intend to use.

Check your own phone's compatibility with the chosen SIM/eSIM or roaming plan.

Confirm how you will receive messages at your registered number.

Prepare a physical card and an RMB cash-access backup.

Test offline translation and saved addresses.

Make a simple arrival card

Keep a paper note or offline document that helps you finish the first journey even without mobile data. It does not need to contain a passport number, banking details or account credentials.

Airport and terminal; accommodation name and Chinese address.

Official accommodation contact and check-in information.

Primary transport plan and a backup; verify operating hours for your actual arrival.

Local destination name, station or exit where relevant.