

China Tax Alert

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China immigration updates – China widens its visa-exemption policy network

Summary :

Chinese government further recently expanded its unilateral visa exemption policy to 38 countries, and extended the stay per entry to 30 days with more activities being permitted for visa-exempt entries.

Besides, more countries are added to the list of mutual visa exemption agreement countries with China in the past six months.

Chinese government also introduced a visa with longer validity to Mekong countries.

Highlights

- Unilateral visa exemption
 - In Nov 2024, the government of the People's Republic of China ("PRC") has decided to extend unilateral visa exemption policy to citizens of Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, Montenegro, Northern Macedonia, Malta, Estonia, Latvia and Japan, expanding the unilateral visa exemption policy network to 38 countries. Please refer to Appendix I for the list of countries.
 - The duration of stay in the PRC for each entry is extended from 15 to 30 days.
 - In addition to the purpose of tourism, business, family visits and transit, academic and culture exchanges are added as being eligible activities for unilateral visa-exemption travelers.
- Mutual visa exemption
 - Georgia and Solomon Islands have been added to the mutual visa exemption network. Please refer to Appendix II for the list of countries in the network.
 - The duration of stay in the PRC should be no more than 30 days per entry and the cumulative stays should be within 90 days for every 180 days.
- Citizens of the five Mekong countries, including Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam, who intend to visit the PRC for business purposes can apply for "Lancang-Mekong visas" with maximum validity of five years.
- Where the purpose of travel or length of intended stay extends beyond the permitted, the individual should apply for an appropriate visa for entry.

Why this matters

The series of visa-exemption policies are aimed at streamlining travel for foreign nationals visiting the PRC, and include transit visa-free arrangements, mutual visa exemption agreements, and the latest updates on visa-free entry. These policies offer convenience to short-term visitors to come to the PRC for cultural and business exchanges.

KPMG insights

The “upgraded” visa-exemption policies allow longer stay per entry and wider range of activities to be performed during the stay, without imposing restrictions on the number of entries. It is a positive signal of China relaxing its international mobility policy to meet the needs of social and economic development.

While China continues to encourage business exchanges, international cooperation and trade, companies and individuals should be kept up to date on the latest entry and exit policies and practices adopted, and timely evaluate business travel arrangements and policies to ensure compliance.

Passport holders of countries which are covered by the mutual or unilateral visa-free policies should travel to China for the purposes of sightseeing, visiting relatives and friends, doing business and connecting flights. Those who intend to come to the PRC to study, work, reside, or do media report and interview should apply for a visa in advance. If you are uncertain of whether the visa-exemption policy applies to you, please consult the immigration counsel or with a member of the KPMG immigration team in the People’s Republic of China.

Appendix

Appendix I

List of 38 unilateral visa exemption countries

As at 30 November 2024

Ordinary passport holders of the following countries can travel to China for the purpose of tourism, business, family visits, academic and cultural exchange and transit for up to **30 days** per entry, without applying for a Chinese entry visa until **31 December 2025**.

Andorra	Australia	Austria	Belgium
Brunei	Bulgaria	Croatia	Cyprus
Denmark	Estonia	Finland	France
Germany	Greece	Hungary	Iceland
Ireland	Italy	Japan	Latvia
Liechtenstein	Luxembourg	Malaysia	Malta
Monaco	Montenegro	Netherlands	New Zealand
Northern Macedonia	Norway	Poland	Portugal
Romania	Slovakia	Slovenia	South Korea
Spain	Switzerland		

List of mutual visa exemption countries

Ordinary passport holders of the following **25 foreign countries** can benefit from the mutual visa exemption policy to travel to China (or vice versa) for the purpose of tourism, business, family visits, academic and cultural exchange and transit for up to **30 days** per entry, without applying for an entry visa until further notice.

Albania	Antigua and Barbuda	Armenia	The Bahamas
Barbados	Belarus	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Dominica
Ecuador	Fiji	Georgia	Grenada
Kazakhstan	Maldives	Mauritius	Qatar
San Marino	Serbia	Seychelles	Singapore
Suriname	Thailand	Tonga	United Arab Emirates
Solomon Islands <i>(effective 28 December 2024)</i>			

To date, the PRC has concluded agreements on mutual visa exemption with 157 countries. Please refer to this link for the full list: [List of Agreements on Mutual Visa Exemption Between the People's Republic of China and Foreign Countries](#). The list above covers countries which ordinary passport holders are eligible for the mutual visa exemption policy.

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