

China

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China, officially the People's Republic of China (PRC), is a country in East Asia. With a population exceeding 1.4 billion, it is the second-most populous country after India, representing 17.4% of the world population. China is vast; it borders fourteen countries by land across an area of nearly 9.6 million square kilometers (3,700,000 sq mi), making it the third-largest country by land area. The country is divided into 33 province-level divisions: 22 provinces, 5 autonomous regions, 4 municipalities, and 2 semi-autonomous special administrative regions. Beijing is the country's capital, while Shanghai is its most populous city by urban area and largest financial center. Considered one of six cradles of civilization, China saw the first human inhabitants in the region arriving during the Paleolithic. By the late 2nd millennium BCE, the earliest dynastic states had emerged in the Yellow River basin. The 8th–3rd centuries BCE saw a breakdown in the authority of the Zhou dynasty, accompanied by the emergence of administrative and military techniques, literature, philosophy, and historiography. In 221 BCE, China was unified under an emperor, ushering in more than two millennia of imperial dynasties including the Qin, Han, Tang, Yuan, Ming, and Qing. With the invention of gunpowder and paper, the establishment of the Silk Road, and the building of the Great Wall, Chinese culture flourished and has heavily influenced both its neighbors and lands further afield. However, China began to cede parts of the country in the late 19th century to various European powers by a series of unequal treaties. After decades of Qing China on the decline, the 1911 Revolution overthrew the Qing dynasty and the monarchy and the Republic of China (ROC) was established the following year. The country under the nascent Beiyang government was unstable and ultimately fragmented during the Warlord Era, which was ended upon the Northern Expedition conducted by the Kuomintang (KMT) to reunify the country. The Chinese Civil War began in 1927, when KMT forces purged members of the rival Chinese Communist Party (CCP), who proceeded to engage in sporadic fighting against the KMT-led Nationalist government. Following the country's invasion by the Empire of Japan in 1937, the CCP – under the leadership of Mao Zedong – and KMT formed the Second United Front to fight the Japanese. The Second Sino-Japanese War eventually ended in a Chinese victory; however, the CCP and the KMT resumed their civil war as soon as the war ended. In 1949, the resurgent Communists established control over most of the country, proclaiming the People's Republic of China and forcing the Nationalist government to retreat to the island of Taiwan. The country was split, with both sides claiming to be the sole legitimate government of China. Following the implementation of land reforms, further attempts by the PRC to realize communism failed: the Great Leap Forward was largely responsible for the Great Chinese Famine that ended with millions of Chinese people having died, and the subsequent Cultural Revolution was a period of social turmoil and persecution characterized by Maoist populism. Following the Sino-Soviet split, the Shanghai Communiqué in 1972 would precipitate the normalization of relations with the United States. Economic reforms that began in 1978 moved the country away from a socialist planned economy towards a market-based economy, spurring significant economic growth. A movement for increased democracy and liberalization stalled after the Tiananmen Square protests and massacre in 1989. China is a unitary communist state led by the CCP that self-designates as a socialist state. It is one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council; the UN representative for China was changed from the ROC (Taiwan) to the PRC in 1971. It is a founding member of several multilateral and regional organizations such as the AIIB, the Silk Road Fund, the New Development Bank, and the RCEP. It is a member of BRICS, the G20, APEC, the SCO, and the East Asia Summit. Making up around one-fifth of the world economy, the Chinese economy is the world's largest by PPP-adjusted GDP and the second-largest by nominal GDP. China is the second-wealthiest country, albeit ranking poorly in measures of democracy, human rights and religious freedom. The country has been one of the fastest-growing major economies and is the world's largest manufacturer and exporter, as well as the second-largest importer. China is a nuclear-weapon state with the world's largest standing army by military personnel and the second-largest defense budget. It is a great power, and has been described as an emerging superpower. China is known for its cuisine and culture and, as a megadiverse country, has 59 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, the second-highest

number of any country.