

China Electricity Guide

INTRODUCTION

This is a guide to some important issues when deciding to use your electrical appliances in China. It includes illustrations of electrical plugs you may run across, advice on using your computer and other general advice that you may find helpful.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

If you are going to use electrical appliances in China, you need to know what type of electrical voltage is used the type(s) of plugs and outlets used there.

If the voltage is the same, or if you're using a universal power supply (see below), all you may need is a plug adapter. Converters are available to change line voltage from one amount to another. However, there are different types of converters for different types of appliances. Small electronics, razors and non-heating appliances can operate with a 50-watt converter. Heating appliances such as hair dryers, irons, coffee makers and other high-power electrical appliances need a 1600-watt converter. You can also purchase combination converters for both types. Check the label on your electrical appliance to find its wattage.

Also, since the quality of electrical power might be an issue, an Universal Surge Suppressor might be a goody buy, especially one that includes plug adaptors that will work in most of the world.

In addition to voltage, the frequency at which the power is generated may also differ, usually from 50 Hz to 60 Hz. Does this matter? Yes, it might. While it is possible to convert voltage, it is not possible to convert frequency, though some devices are built to handle these differences.

Given the complexities of safely using your electrical appliances overseas, you may want to consider some alternatives. If you plan on staying in China for a while, you might want to buy a hair dryer or electric razor here. Battery operated appliances are another option if you don't mind replacing the batteries.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR COMPUTER, camcorder, CD/DVD player, etc?

Fortunately, many portable computers today come with power supplies that can be used in almost any part of the world. Check the manufacturer's label to see what type of input it can handle. This applies to many digital cameras, VCRs, video games and other electronic devices as well.

Those designed for use just about anywhere have a section on the label that looks something like this:

INPUT: AC 100V- 240V~ 1.0A 50 / 60 Hz

This shows that the device is designed to be used over a wide range of voltage levels and at different electrical frequencies. In this particular example, the device can accept "nominal" voltage anywhere from 100 volts to 240 volts and can operate on either a 50 Hz or 60 Hz system. It is designed for alternating current (AC). (Like most appliances, it should not be used on a direct current, or DC system -- DC electrical systems are not common, but some may still exist.) If your device has a label with these parameters, it can be used pretty much anywhere. In that case, all you need is a plug adaptor.

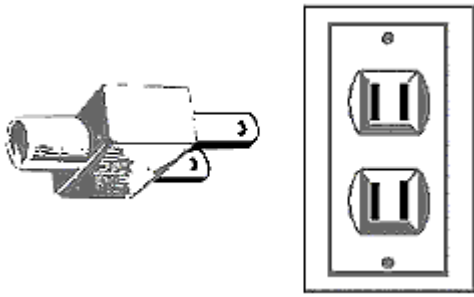
If you must take other types of electrical appliances with you abroad, your best bet is to buy travel-size dual-voltage appliances that can run on both 110 and 220-volt currents. Make sure the switch is on the proper voltage for the country you are in before using the appliance. You will also need to carry adapter plugs with you to fit the outlets in China.

ELECTRIC PLUGS IN USE

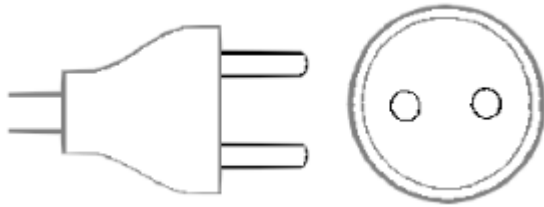
The main types of electrical plugs that are used in China are listed on the next page.

Note: the illustrations below are not to scale. Also, the labels (type A, B, etc.) used are not any type of standard nomenclature; labels and descriptions used by various vendors may differ.

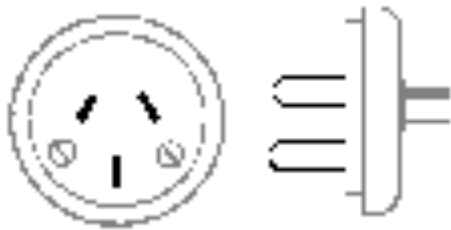
Power Voltage in China is 220/230volt/ 50 hertz and plugs and sockets are mostly A, C or i types, most often as combination sockets.



TYPE A -- 2 PIN FLAT



TYPE C -- 2 PIN ROUND



TYPE i -- 3 PIN (ACTIVE/NEUTRAL OFFSET)

CAUTION: Electrical trades work, sometimes, is not necessarily up to Western standards and **care** should be exercised when handling some electrical appliances and installed switches, power sockets and wiring.

Power is supplied continuously 24 hours per day, except in some very remote areas. Being without electricity is unlikely to affect you unless traveling.