



Au Pair in China Program

FAQ

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In General

1) How much does the Star Exchange Au Pair in China Program cost?

The successful applicants just have to pay the costs of the travel preparations, and if they stay less than a year, they will also have to pay a part of the flight costs. Costs of travel preparations:

- fee for health certificate (no infectious diseases)
- fee for certificate of good conduct (no criminal records)
- visa fee
- costs of vaccination (if not yet vaccinated)
- fee for passport (if not yet held)

Usually these costs will not reach 300 €. If you plan to stay less than a year, you will have to pay part of the flight costs:

Ticket Allowance – in dependence on the period of stay:

3-5 months: 300 €

6-11 months: free ticket home

From 12 months on: flights to and back from China for free

However, it should be noted that fees for special services of self-inflicted costs (e.g. re-booking) will not be paid by Star Exchange.

2) Why should I become a Star Exchange Au Pair?

As a Star Exchange Au Pair you will receive many services and benefits which combine quality, individuality and affordability. You will stay for free within a wealthy Chinese host family. You will have free Mandarin classes on business days. Throughout the whole program we will take care of you and help you to realize your subsequent plans in China. Since your benefits and our services are so plentiful, please, for further information visit our website:

www.starexchange.eu

We ourselves know no better program of that kind! And after a year's stay in China you will for sure speak Chinese quite well and also will have laid a good basis for your future career.



3) For how long should I/can I stay in China?

3 months is the minimum period of stay. However, you should remember that the children need to get used to you, that you have to take part in our intensive au pair training and that you yourself need to get used to the new environment. Therefore an application for a longer stay has better chances of success - the standard period of stay is one year. It would be no problem to stay longer if you got along well with your host family.

4) In which cities can I stay?

Most of our host families live in Beijing, Shanghai, Changchun, Qingdao, Chengdu and Chongqing. If you prefer to stay in another city, we will do our best to find a suitable host family for you. If no suitable host family is available in that city, we will offer you alternatives.

5) Can I participate in the Star Exchange Au Pair in China Program together with my friends?

Actually this is no major problem. Most likely you would live within different host families, but in the same city. Additionally we would enroll you at the same university. In any case you should mention your wish to your personal advisor as soon as possible. However, if you insist on participating together, your applications may have less chances of success.

6) Is it possible to abort the Au Pair in China Program?

Of course! In the worst case you can abort the Au Pair Program. So far, however, it has not been necessary as usually changing the host family is more than sufficient. Please, keep in mind to stay in contact with your personal advisor during your stay and to inform him or her immediately if any problems should arise.



Conditions

7) Can I be older than 29 years?

Yes, however, your chances for a successful application would be less.

8) Can I be younger than 18 years?

Yes, however, in that case you will require another visa than the X2 visa, and in many cases you will not be subject to the standard procedure – though your benefits will be the same. We will do our best to fulfill the required paperwork to your greatest convenience. Therefore you should keep close contact to your personal advisor.

9) Do I need to have acquired the matriculation standard?

No, that's not necessary. However, in that case the choices regarding your future university might be limited.

10) How well must be my English language skills?

You should be able to speak English well and fluently with an acceptable pronunciation. In 95% of all cases the host family wishes its child to learn English. If that is not the case we will contact you directly and ask you to teach your mother tongue.

11) Do I need to pass an English exam?

No, that's not necessary. You can proof your English skills with a copy of your school report. Furthermore the registration form for the Star Exchange Au Pair in China Program is in English. Should we have any doubts regarding your English skills, we will invite you to a Skype conference to check directly.

12) Is it enough if I speak Chinese, but no English?

Unfortunately not. The Chinese host families invite au pairs so that they can teach their children English. Therefore it is no problem if you do not speak Chinese before coming to China, however, to speak English is mandatory.



13) What do you mean with “I should be healthy and have no infectious diseases”?

Of course the host family expects that you have no diseases dangerous to the child. In general it refers to contagious diseases which can't be healed or only be healed with difficulties like AIDS/HIV or hepatitis. That also means it's no problem if you just caught the flue when applying. Allergies are no problems, either.

14) Which infectious diseases are you talking about?

Usually it's sufficient if you prove that you have neither AIDS/HIV nor hepatitis or tuberculosis. If there are any special regulations regarding your country, your personal advisor will tell you so.

15) Are allergies or chronic diseases a problem? (E.g. hay fever, asthma, diabetes, allergies to animal hair...)

These illnesses are no problem. Please, remember to hand in appropriate information during your registration, so that we can meet your needs.

16) Is it a problem if I smoke?

Usually it's no problem as long as you do not disturb your host family. You should state your smoker/non-smoker status during your registration. According to that we will look for a suitable host family.

17) What do you mean with „open-minded regarding different cultures“?

As an au pair you will live in a foreign country with traditions and common habits different from those of your home country. We expect from you to tolerate those. Following the proverb: If you are in Rome, do as the Romans do!



Travel Preparations

18) How much does the Star Exchange Au Pair in China Program cost?

The successful applicants just have to pay the costs of the travel preparations, and if they stay less than a year, they will also have to pay a part of the flight costs. Costs of travel preparations:

- fee for health certificate (no infectious diseases)
- fee for certificate of good conduct (no criminal records)
- visa fee
- costs of vaccination (if not yet vaccinated)
- fee for passport (if not yet held)

Usually these costs will not reach 300 €. If you plan to stay less than a year, you will have to pay part of the flight costs:

Ticket Allowance – in dependence on the period of stay:

3-5 months: 300 €

6-11 months: free ticket home

From 12 months on: flights to and back from China for free

However, it should be noted that fees for special services of self-inflicted costs (e.g. re-booking) will not be paid by Star Exchange.

19) How much costs a one-way ticket to or from China?

It usually costs not more than 500 €.

20) What do I have to expect after landing in China?

After your landing you will have to go through immigration control. There your visa will be checked. Afterwards you will claim your luggage and pass the customs zone on your way to the arrivals area. There your personal advisor will already be waiting for you and explain to you the steps following.

21) Which vaccinations do I need?

The standard vaccinations are usually the same as the ones you get in your childhood. In addition a vaccination against rabies is often recommended. However, in any case we advise you to consult a doctor about the vaccinations recommended for your area of stay.



22) How much do the vaccinations cost?

This depends on three things:

- Do you have to refresh your childhood vaccinations?
- Are there special recommendations for your area of stay?
- How much does your insurance cover?

Therefore, for detailed information, please, contact your family doctor and your insurance company.

23) What should I bring along to China?

Of course you should not forget to take your passport, mobile phone, insurance card and bank card to China. In addition you will of course need clothes. Please, also remember to bring small gifts for the members of your host family and a traveler's dictionary. Actually it is a journey like any other. If there should be any questions in particular, please, contact your personal advisor.

24) What type of visa do I need?

China has no special au pair visa. Therefore you will enter China via the X2 student visa. A list of the required documents for the visa application you will find on www.starexchange.eu within the subsection "Application Process".

25) What do I need for the X2 visa?

A list of the required documents for the visa application you will find on www.starexchange.eu within the subsection "Application Process". If you have any further questions, please, contact your personal advisor.

26) How long does it take to get a visa?

If you personally apply for it at the consulate the processing of your documents will usually take 4 business days. The period may vary from country to country. Detailed information is available on <http://www.visaforchina.org/> or the website of the Chinese embassy in your country. If you have any further questions, please, contact your personal advisor.



27) How much does a visa cost?

The standard visa usually costs less than 85 €. Detailed information is available on <http://www.visaforchina.org/> or on the website of the Chinese embassy in your country. If you have any further questions, please, contact your personal advisor.

28) What kind of insurance do I need?

You yourself do not need to acquire any additional insurance before your departure or during your stay. This will be handled by one of our partner agencies. We recommend that you do not cancel your local insurance. Usually your health insurance can also be extended to foreign countries for less than 20 € a year. An overview over the provided insurance benefits can be downloaded on www.starexchange.eu under the subsection „Links & Downloads“.



Living in China

29) Is it dangerous in China?

No, China is one of the safest countries in the whole world and can be compared to Western Europe.

<http://www.controlrisks.com/RiskMap/Pages/Security.aspx>

30) Are electricity and water available around the clock?

Yes, of course.

31) Can I use my mobile phone?

Yes, of course! We recommend you to buy a Chinese SIM card to save money. However, you will have to register your Chinese SIM card first before being able to make foreign calls. In order to make cheap phone calls to destinations abroad, you will first have to save the respective contacts on your cell phone using the prefix 17951 + country code, e.g. 179510049 ... For help and/or detailed information, please, contact your personal advisor.

32) Do I have internet?

Yes, at home and in many WIFI spots all over the city.

33) Do I have a private room?

Yes.

34) How big is the room?

It is furnished and at least 8m² big; internet is available.

35) How long do I have to work a week?

On average you have to work 25 hours a week.



36) How much of the au pair work is housework?

Since your host family expects you to teach their children a foreign language and Western customs, no more than approximately 10% of the au pair work is housework; e.g. clearing the table after eating.

37) An au pair needs to do which kind of housework?

Almost all Chinese host families have a maid or a household help. Therefore usually you do not need to do more than what is also polite in Western Europe, i.e. you should help to clear the table and keep your own room tidy.

38) Is it a problem if I do not speak Chinese?

That's no problem at all. Actually most of the au pairs participating in our program do so in order to learn Chinese.

39) Are the members of the host family able to speak English?

In most host families there is at least one person capable of speaking English. And even if that's not the case, according to our experience daily communication will be no problem. The main reason is that your task is not to do the housework, but to teach the child.

40) Will I get language classes? If so, where?

Yes, at a prestigious university close to your host family. Usually you will have 3 hours of class a day from Monday to Friday.

41) Which kind of food do I have to expect?

Normally, your host family will cook Chinese food. In addition you will find a rich selection of international cuisine in every major city. Furthermore Western supermarkets like Carrefour or Wal Mart are available.



42) Is it a problem if I do not like the food?

If you do not like the food at your host family, you can cook for yourself. Please, remember to clean up afterwards. To avoid unfortunate surprises, please, state special eating habits of yourself directly during registration.

43) Can I change my host family?

Yes, if there are problems between you, it is of course possible to change the host family. However, to prevent this from happening, please, keep close contact to your personal advisor. If the worst case happens, he or she will already be prepared.

44) Am I allowed to travel?

Yes, of course you are! And you should definitely use the opportunity to do so. China is not by coincidence the third most popular travel destination in the world.

45) How many days off do I have a year?

In addition to public holidays you will have further two weeks of paid vacation a year.

46) How many days off do I have a week?

You will have two days off a week.

47) Do I have to work on weekends?

During the week the children are most of the time in school. Accordingly, you will have quite a lot of time for yourself during the week. That's why most host families would like you to work at the weekends. Therefore, you will usually have one day off during the week and another at the weekend. Of course you can discuss these things individually with your host family.

48) May I go out in the evenings?

Of course you can do that. Please, always notify your host family and set a time to be back.



49) When should I be back in the evenings?

This you will have to discuss with your host family. Usually Chinese themselves are back not later than 10 pm.

50) Can I have a boyfriend/girlfriend?

Of course you can! However, like anywhere else your relationship should not affect your work.

51) Can I take my boyfriend / girlfriend home?

Yes, you can. However, please talk to your host family first. The best would be if you behaved very well in the presence of the other family members. Chinese are a more traditional than Westerners and close, physical contact in the presence of others is seen as a little immature.

52) How much does the life as an au pair cost?

In China you will usually just spend money of yourself during your free time. Therefore, the costs highly depend on your individual life style. Normally (au pair stay of 12 months) you will only have to bear the costs for the travel preparations (usually less than 300 €) and your vacations.

Ticket Allowance – in dependence on the period of stay:

3-5 months: 300 €

6-11 months: free ticket home

From 12 months on: flights to and back from China for free

However, it should be noted that fees for special services of self-inflicted costs (e.g. re-booking) will not be paid by Star Exchange.

53) What should I do when I get lost?

You should call your host family or your personal advisor. If you already can speak Chinese properly, you can also ask someone on the street for directions.



54) Are there many foreigners in China?

Yes, in Beijing are approximately 300.000 foreign residents, in Shanghai even more. I.e. in major cities you can easily meet many foreigners at many places.

55) Am I allowed to drink alcohol?

Yes, but, please, do not do so in front of the children. Also, please, do not get drunk if you plan to return home to your host family that night. Usually the traditional Chinese festivals will lead on many occasions to an exception to the rule.

56) How do I travel in China?

Public transportation in China is excellent and cheap. For example you would just have to spend 25 Euro Cents to cross the whole of Beijing by subway. Using the Bus would just cost you 13 Euro Cent. Also taking a taxi is very cheap in China. Regarding taxi prices Beijing is one of the most expensive cities in China, but even there you can get from one side of the city to the other for approximately 12.50 Euro (ca. 1.5 hours during decent traffic). Also long-distance transportation is well developed and quite cheap. Every major city has its own airport and the Chinese high-speed train travels between cities with a speed of 320 km/h.



Service in China

57) You really offer 24/7 support in China?

Yes, if you have problems, you will be able to contact a representative of our partner agencies on a 24/7 basis. Most of our advisors have been au pairs themselves before. Therefore they have a lot of patience and a good understanding of your situation.

58) Are the personal advisors able to speak English?

Yes, your personal advisor will either speak English or your mother tongue.

59) What is the training center good for?

The training center will prepare you for your following au pair tasks. For more detailed information visit us on www.starexchange.eu and have a look under the subsection „Training Center“.

60) Do I have to attend the training center?

Yes, even if you already have experiences in child care. We want to prepare you for your following tasks. And believe us: This way you will encounter fewer problems during your stay in China. The duration of the training will depend on your individual needs and abilities.

61) Will you support me:

- if I want to study in China afterwards?
- if I want to work in China afterwards?
- if I want to do an internship in China afterwards?

We will also support you in your subsequent plans – that’s part of our service. Please, inform your personal advisor about your subsequent plans as soon as possible – preferably at least two months in advance.

62) Will you help me if I want to travel?

Yes, we will help you with your preparations and you can also call your personal advisor during your vacations.



63) Will you help me to plan activities for my time off?

No problem! If you need help or suggestions, just contact your personal advisor.

64) Will you help me to find friends?

Yes, we arrange au pair get-togethers on a regular basis. Also during your language classes you will be together with many people in similar situations. If you still should have some problems, please, don't be shy and contact your personal advisor. We will do our best!

65) If I want to go home earlier, will you help me?

Yes, we will abandon no one! But please, you have to be aware that your benefits regarding the flight allowance might change subsequently. It depends on how long you have stayed altogether:

Ticket Allowance – in dependence on the period of stay:

3-5 months: 300 €

6-11 months: free ticket home

From 12 months on: flights to and back from China for free

So if you fall in another category, you might have to pay back flight subsidies.

66) Will you help me to open a Chinese bank account?

Yes! Within the first days after your arrival, your personal coordinator in China will help you to open a Chinese bank account. You will then be able to pay in China with your bank card.

If you want to withdraw money from your bank account at home, you have to use a VISA card since the ATM banking system in most Western countries switched from Maestro to V-Pay and most of the standard bank cards do not work anymore at Chinese ATMs.



Processes

67) How does the program work?

For a detailed overview, please, visit us on our website: www.starexchange.eu

68) How can I change my host family?

Please, if you want to do so, inform your personal advisor as soon as possible and we will take care of the rest. The following steps will be similar to those of the earlier application phase after you have been accepted.

69) How can I change my visa?

Please, inform your personal advisor and we will take care of it.

70) How do I register for temporary residence?

Your personal advisor and your family will do this together with you. It's just paperwork, so please, don't worry!

71) How does the au pair contract between me and my host family look like?

For a sample contract, please, visit us on www.starexchange.eu and download the sample contract under „Links & Downloads“.

72) How do I cancel the program?

Please, inform your personal advisor as soon as possible. He or she will plan and go through the next steps together with you.