



Harbin Information Pack

Harbin, also known as the 'Paris of the East'.



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About Harbin

Harbin is the capital of Heilongjiang Province and located in the northeast of the northeast China Plain. Harbin is famous as a historical and cultural city and renowned for its snow and ice culture. Harbin is also well known for its large number of European-style buildings. Harbin is also known as the ice city. Through the winter Harbin displays thousands of ice sculptures and has hundreds of ice-related activities.



Harbin's History

Harbin's history isn't as long as some cities. The city is around 110 years old and has become the biggest city in the north-eastern section of China with currently over 10 million people.

Harbin was originally a fishing village until the Russians started to build a railroad into the area in 1897.



Local amenities and facilities

Harbin has many shops and leisure facilities available. There are many different places to go shopping but the most famous shopping streets are:

Zhongyang Dajie (Central street)- Full of new shopping malls such as Euro Plaza, Parksons, and Lane Crawford that carry international brands and are expensive. There are Nike stores, KFC and interesting Russian thrift stores. The streets are lined with beer gardens during the summer as Harbin is the 3rd biggest city for beer consumption.

Guogeli Dajie- The area around here is dotted with Russian buildings and large shopping complexes. At night there are numerous night markets, a small scale Russian church where people dance, and a small and lively "bar lake."

Important Numbers:

Hospitals-

Harbin has a number of hospitals and clinics from traditional Chinese medicine to local hospitals, though there are no western-style clinics. You can go to the local hospitals where doctors and nurses speak English. Some medical facilities are:

- No. 1 Hospital of Harbin Medical University
- No. 2 Hospital of Harbin Medical University
- Provincial Hospital
- No. 1 Hospital of Harbin
- Harbin Red Cross Hospital
- No. 1 Hospital of Qiqihae

Dial these free emergency numbers directly with any fixed and mobile phones anytime and anywhere when in an emergency:

110 Call police for help in any danger

119 Dial this number when fire or other disaster happens

120 Call for an ambulance

122 Dial this number when a traffic accident happens

Expat

An expat is the name given to someone temporarily or permanently residing in another country.

When you look online it is easy to find many different expat groups that you can join. This is a good way to meet new people that may be in similar position and can share their experiences.

Some expat groups hold meeting and events. This is a good way to meet everyone. This is a good way to feel welcome and at home.

Websites: www.internations.org/harbin-expats

Climate and lifestyle

Climate

Harbin has long winters and short cool summers. January is the coldest and temperatures can drop to -40°C but in the summer on average temperatures can reach up to 20°C .

Average Temperatures

| Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | June | July | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| -24°C | -20°C | -10°C | 0°C | 8°C | 15°C | 18°C | 16°C | 9°C | 0°C | -10°C | -20°C |

Spring

- Little rainfall
- Windiest season
- Occasional sandstorms

Advised wearing sweaters and cotton padded jackets outside. Drink plenty of water and eat more fruit. Lip balm. Hand cream and other moisturising skin creams may be needed.

Summer

- Plenty of rainfall
- Hardly have any storms

Advised that you have an umbrella at all times. Its cold in the mornings and evenings.

Autumn

- Has little rainfall
- Fluctuated temperatures

Advised that long-sleeved tops and jackets are worn.

Winter

- Is the coldest city in China
- Snow storms

Advised to where wool sweaters and have hats, scarves, gloves and big coats to keep warm outside.

Lifestyle

In Harbin people pay a lot of attention to the quality of life. It is noticed that through the summer they like to have a romantic atmosphere. In the evening people like to go for walks, sit and chat, some choose to play badminton and the children tend to skate.

Most shops close around 9pm each day but bars will stay open later. The nightlife in Harbin is colourful but doesn't last long; this may be down to the weather. The people of Harbin like to relax by singing, dancing and drinking. They tend to make friends by drinking beer; this shows their hospitality and passion.



Cost of living

The cost of living in Harbin is very different to the UK. In some areas it is cheaper but other can be more expensive.

In Harbin they use Chinese Yuan. 1 GBP= 8.80 CNY

| Item | UK price | Harbin |
|-----------------|----------|--------------|
| Basic Utilities | £150 | ¥ 344 (£40) |
| Internet | £20 | ¥ 96 (£11) |
| Meal out | £12 | ¥ 20 (£2.30) |
| Milk | £1 | ¥ 13 (£1.50) |
| Chicken | £5 | ¥ 25 (£3) |
| Cinema | £10 | ¥ 50 (£5.50) |

All the information source for price comparison:

https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/compare_countries_result

Local attractions

As already discussed, Harbin is known for being historic and cultural. There are many places to visit in Harbin. A few scenic spots are:

Saint Sophia Cathedral

Built was build in 1907 and is the most comprehensively preserved classic Byzantine style cathedral in China. This is now currently a museum that is known as an artistic church filled with culture. Locals like to go for walks around the square of Saint Sophia Cathedral and what the pigeons fly around.

Address;

No88 Toulong Street, Daoli Distric, Harbin City



Sun Island

The sun island is located on the north shore of the Songhua River. It is surrounded by water, boats and beautiful. There is also an art exhibition hall to visit. Main venue for the annual international snow sculpture art fair (December- January).



Address:

North shore of Songhua River, Harbin Urban District, Heilongjiang Province

Erlong Mountain

This is also known as Harbin's east garden. It is 50 Kilometres (31 miles) east of Harbin and southwest of the ancient city of Binzhou. There is a lake at the bottom of the mountain.

Erlong Mountain is a host to lots of natural sceneries. This is a good place to visit in the summer.



Harbin also has some local food that is worth trying.

- Harbin red sausage
- Dalieba (bread)
- Guo Bao Ru (Fried streaky pork with sweet and sour source)

There are other activities available to book:

- One day tour in Yabuli Ski Resort
- Historical tour of Harbin
- Two day tour in winter

Public transport

Harbin is only two hours from Beijing by flight, or eight hours by bullet train. Harbin Taiping International Airport is about 45 minutes' drive from city centre. Overall, you'll find that Harbin's air travel, rail, and highway systems allow for fairly inexpensive, modern and rapid transportation.

Taxi

There are several types of taxis, and the cost depends on the type you use, but the price difference is small. Usually, the flag down price is 8 or 9 yuan for the first three kilometres, and then no more than 2 yuan for every additional kilometre.

Trains

As the railway transportation hub in Northeast China, Harbin is easily accessible and connected by train from most major cities in China. Most of the trains between Beijing and Harbin are overnight trains that leave in the afternoon and arrive early the next morning. There is also a bullet train system operating between Harbin and Beijing. Bullet trains leave Beijing for Harbin each day, and the trip takes about 8 hours.

Bus

The public traffic system in Harbin city is well developed, with over 100 bus routes connecting nearly all parts of the city. There are two special tourist routes running past scenic spots. One departs from Flood Control Monument and ends at Sun Island Scenic Spot. The other passes several tourist spots in city centre. Cost for a public bus ticket is 1 or 2 yuan per ticket.

Travel Tips

When you travel by taxi, make sure that the drivers turn the meter on or that you negotiate about the price beforehand. If you don't, when you arrive, they will charge you their own prices.