

59 ways to tell if you are new to Beijing

1. You can't believe you're supposed to put used toilet paper in that tiny trash bin in the stall.
2. You freak out when a nicely dressed young woman snorts mightily and hawks a lugie the size of a baseball into the street, raising clouds of dust.
3. You're terrified to cross the street - even with the green light and a crowd of people.
4. You don't know about VPN and your Facebook friends think you've died in China.
5. You have "This is China" moments five times a day.
6. You buy a "jī n" of everything.
7. You believe the air pollution ratings on the news.
8. You read the People's Daily daily.
9. You buy movies from the iTunes store, not at the local DVD shop.
10. You think CCTV 9 is just China's version of CNN.
11. You're stuck in chapter 1 of book 1 of Practical Chinese Conversation.
12. You say "xiè xie" to everyone for everything.
13. You buy Tylenol™ Cold, not the local equivalent at half the price.
14. You feel relieved when you see another foreign face.
15. You challenge the logic of "èr" vs. "liǎng" in counting things.
16. You pay for software.
17. You need tissues to blow your nose.
18. You let old ladies cut in front of you in a queue.
19. You think you're dying when you cough up black stuff in the morning.
20. You attend "networking" events hoping to make useful connections.
21. You wonder what's in those "sex shops" you see all over the city.
22. You think people actually sing in KTV lounges.
23. You are dismayed when the non-smoking section is right next to the smoking section.
24. You think Chinese women naturally have perfect complexions.
25. You have yet to identify what that funny smell in the air is.
26. You can't believe it takes five people to put their seals on 15 pieces of paper to do any transaction at the bank.
27. You still think eating Peking Duck is a special treat.
28. You think the suit you bought at the Silk Market will last a lifetime.
29. You don't have a wallet bursting at the seams with point cards.

30. You email folks back home with newly learned Chinese words in pinyin with tones indicated by numbers - “ni3hao3” - and they think you’ve lost it.
31. You can write things like “Beijing is a vibrant city, bustling with energy, and new adventures to be found around every corner” without bursting into laughter.
32. You don’t know who Kaiser Kuo is.
33. You don’t have at least three “shānzhài” clone products.
34. You can’t say “Běijīng” with the correct tones.
35. You can’t say “Sanlitun” like a pirate.
36. You think people will laugh at your jokes about Beijingers sounding like pirates.
37. You actually carry your passport and work permit with you at all times.
38. You “face” all the bills in your wallet.
39. You’re not sure why the bank runs 100 RMB notes through the bill validator before they give you the money.
40. You know Jenny Lou’s is expensive but you shop there because they sort of speak English.
41. You think you might find true love on a Saturday night in Sanlitun.
42. You can’t say your cellphone number in Chinese.
43. You have your bags scanned at subway security.
44. You desperately need your hair styled but you’ve heard one too many horror stories about hair salons where staff doesn’t speak English. (females)
45. Your hair is always cut a bit too short because you’ve discovered those stories about barber shops are true. (males)
46. Your Chinese name doesn’t mean “hairy monkey with hemorrhoids.”
47. You believe it when Chinese people compliment you on your Chinese.
48. You think “gee, that’s cheaper than back home” means it’s actually cheap.
49. You lack the courage to try whatever it is locals are eating for breakfast near the subway station.
50. You think pinyin was designed specifically to drive foreigners crazy.
51. You haven’t found a favorite “jiǎozǐ” place yet.
52. You have only one mobile phone number.
53. You desperately hope someone will compliment your skill with chopsticks.
54. You’ve bought 1000-year-old eggs, hard-boiled salty eggs, and then finally fresh eggs.

55. You're shocked to discover that brand names like "Starbucks" in Chinese sound nothing like they do in English.
56. You don't know you're supposed to have the vegetables weighed and price-tagged before you pay at the register.
57. You believe you'll finish reading The Analects of Confucius.
58. You are fascinated by the old guy on a bike slowly pedaling his bird somewhere.
59. You self-censor your emails ... just in case.

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