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Let's Get to Know China!

By Anita Kim Venegas

The country of China is located on the continent of Asia.

The shape of China is often compared to a rooster, with the rooster's head facing east.

Although China's land area is nearly the same as that of the United States, the population is more than four times as large. The population of the United States as of 2019 is

about 329,000,000, while the population of China is approximately 1,386,000,000. That's right, over one billion people! China has the largest population of any country on Earth.

China's two largest cities, Shanghai and Beijing, lie near the east coast. Many people live and work in the cities, while farmers remain in the countryside. Many acres of land are required to raise crops of rice, corn, and soybeans to provide food for the growing population.

The effects of such a large population are many. For example, nearly all families in the cities live in high-rise apartments rather than in single family homes. Most families do not have a garage to park their car in, nor do they have a front or back yard. Instead, there are parks inside the city where people can take the opportunity to walk under shady trees, treat themselves to an ice cream or tasty snack, or simply sit on a park bench and watch people walk by. Inside elementary classrooms, there may be 40 to 45 students. The city streets are three lanes wide. Cars crowd the streets like sardines in a can. Family cars share the road with taxis, buses, scooters, and bicycles. In the last several years, subways have been built in major cities to decrease the traffic on the streets. During the morning and evening rush hours, cars honk their horns and weave in and out of traffic to get to their destination.





Food vendors selling dumplings, steamed buns, meat on a stick, and bowls of noodles are busy from early morning and into the evening along city sidewalks. Children and parents often buy a quick breakfast as they hurry to work and school. Bottled water is necessary because the local water is

not safe for drinking. At home, families will boil water before using. Hot water is served in restaurants as well. Most people prefer to drink hot water instead of cold water.

At one time, China's population was growing so quickly, the government wrote a law that families could only have one child. This seems strict; however, China has experienced many droughts, periods of time without enough rain, resulting in starvation of millions of people when there wasn't enough food to feed everyone. The law was intended to limit the suffering of families who could not provide food for a larger family. In 2015, the law changed to allow families to have two children.

China is situated thousands of miles from the United States. Even though it is a country with a different language and cultural practices, the daily lives of Chinese people are more similar to ours than they are different. Adults work, children attend school, and someone cooks dinner. Clothes are washed, floors are scrubbed, and homework is finished. The biggest difference is that families move through their days speaking Mandarin, the people's language.

About the Author

Anita Kim Venegas is the author of The Adventures of Peanut and Dutch.