

China | Visa Exemption Policy for 12 Countries Extended

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Chinese officials announced the extension of its visa-free policy to nationals of 12 countries through 2025.

Key Points:

- As BAL [previously reported](#), in December 2023 the Chinese government initially opened a unilateral visa-free policy to six countries: France, Germany, Italy, Malaysia, the Netherlands and Spain. Officials later [expanded the policy](#) to include six additional countries: Austria, Belgium, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg and Switzerland.
- The first policy granted visa-free status from Dec. 1, 2023, to Nov. 30, 2024. When the policy was expanded to six additional countries, the time frame updated to March 14 to Nov. 30, 2024.
- The policy has now been extended to Dec. 31, 2025, to allow nationals holding ordinary passports from all 12 countries the ability to travel visa-free to China for up to 15 days for business, tourism, family visit and transit purposes.

Background: The Chinese government has introduced various measures recently to increase inbound travel from foreign tourists and drive business in its economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Singaporean officials recently announced an agreement with China for a 30-day mutual visa exemption policy, and Thai officials are currently discussing a similar arrangement for a reciprocal visa waiver program, further expanding China's list of visa-free arrangements.

BAL Analysis: The government is focusing on new visa-free schemes and enhancing tourism infrastructure to facilitate cross-border travel and increase inbound tourism to further economic development.

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