

The Ultimate Guide to Trade Fairs in China

- With a Focus on the Canton Fair

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About the Author

I am Ashish Monga, founder of [IMEX SOURCING SERVICES](#).

I came to China six years ago to start my importing services & quality-control Company. I'd been on the other side of the business, living in the UK where I was importing various products from China and India & selling via both offline & online channels.

This experience prompted me to start my company here in China, so I could address many of the issues and obstacles I'd encountered as an importer. I've put together a fully bilingual Chinese team with years of experience in sourcing, factory manufacturing, and international business as well as industry specific experience of several key industries. We serve customers worldwide, from medium to large Fulfillment by Amazon (FBA) sellers to multinationals with seven-figure, multiple-container sourcing budgets.

I've had an amazing experience here in China, a country bursting with opportunities. My business has given me and my team the chance to work with interesting clients from all corners of the world, especially the UK, US, Canada & Australia.

Boredom? Not in this market. Never. We may be sourcing world-class kayaks on Monday, working with a startup company developing new technology products on Tuesday and helping a builder source fittings for a 50-story office building in London on Wednesday.

I've travelled throughout China visiting factories of all sizes. It presents a perfect opportunity to study their processes and build relationships. I've come to understand their challenges and help them understand my clients' as well, trying to bridge the "Gap" which is often the root cause of most quality problems that arise when sourcing from China.

It's a give-and-take interaction that ultimately helps both sides understand each other's needs. Ultimately, it's about improving communications and building relationships so everyone wins. This travel and deep dive into Chinese manufacturing and business practices has prompted me to build my company on systems and processes that help my clients minimize costs, manage risk, and maximize quality. In this way, they can take advantage of China's massive export capability & resources, while streamlining and improving their supply chain.

Clients tell me stories and share their issues either during our interactions on the projects we work on or during the [consultation](#) work I do. I also read online about the many pitfalls importers face when doing business in China and find the same issues repeated over and over. Perhaps you face the same problems: corruption, quality and ethics, transparency and honesty, and scams and fraud.

You're not alone. Anyone wanting to succeed in China has to deal with these potential issues. But once you figure out how to maneuver through this minefield, you open the door to unlimited business opportunity.

I love to share the lessons and experiences I, and my clients, have learned in dealing with Chinese factories, and importing and exporting generally from China.

Why Should I be Writing This Book?

I still remember the first time I came to Guangzhou to attend the Canton Fair. I used to work in Beijing and was looking to set up a business in Guangzhou related to international trade but that's pretty much all I knew. I had no clear plan for my business model, what value I could offer, or an action plan.

What I did know was that the best place to look for a lot of answers and inspiration would be the Canton Fair. So I packed my bag and flew down to Guangzhou for a few days to attend the fair. I attended all three phases of the fair at that time and went back with tons of inspiration and some of knowledge.

Fast forward a few months from my first Canton Fair visit. I moved to Guangzhou and have since attended the fair on countless occasions. At my company, [IMEX Sourcing Services](#), we don't really use the Canton Fair much to look for suppliers anymore, but I still love visiting the fair to see how the market is changing and get an idea of the mood of the industry. Talking to importers at the fair and occasionally accompanying clients is an experience I always treasure as due to the physical distances, I hardly get much face-time with clients.

I receive hundreds of email enquiries every year about the Canton Fair, from our clients as well as other visitors to our website and [the blog](#). Most of these enquiries relate to the same key issues: travelling to the fair, hotels, food, tips on finding the right suppliers, shortlisting suppliers at the fair, etc. So I thought it was high-time we create one centralized resource that can address most of those questions and concerns.

When I first visited the fair, I was totally unprepared, and the suppliers could smell that from a distance. It showed up in how seriously they took me, as well as the price quotes they gave me. In fact, I had to shut down my mailbox 30 days after the fair had ended due to the constant bombardment of emails from suppliers I met, suppliers I did not meet and their relatives.

Over the years I learnt several lessons on how to navigate the Canton Fair, and trade fairs in China in general. More importantly, I learnt how to come across as a serious prospect to suppliers and how to discuss products and pricing in a way that best represents a buyer's interest. This ebook is a combination of those experiences and resources. I hope it will cut

down the learning curve for new importers & travelers to the trade fairs in China as well as provide experienced importers with some new tools.

A lot of the information shared here can be applied to most trade fairs in China. However, as the Canton Fair is by far the largest trade fair in China, it will be the focus of this book, and a lot of the information shared here will be specific to the Canton Fair only.

Chapter 1: What is the Canton Fair

The Canton Fair is the largest trade fair in China, connecting sellers (manufacturers and traders) of various products with importers from around the globe. It takes place twice a year in April and October, popularly referred to as the spring and autumn sessions.

Each session is divided into three 5-day phases, with a 3-day break in between each phase. Each phase focuses on different industries and lasts around two weeks.

The fair is held in Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong Province. Guangzhou was formerly known as Canton, hence the name of the fair. Guangdong is also one of the major manufacturing hubs of China and one of the first places where the economic liberalization of China started.

Purpose of the Fair

The Canton Fair focuses mainly on export trade, although now there is an area for foreign suppliers as well, thereby promoting imports. Other business activities such as economic and technical cooperation and exchanges, commodity inspection, insurance, transportation, advertising, consultation, etc. are also scheduled around the Canton Fair time.

Fun Fact: The First Canton Fair was held in April 1957, staged in the former Sino-Soviet Friendship Building.

Key Info

Venue: China Import and Export Fair Complex (No. 380, Yuejiang Zhong Road, Guangzhou)

Hosts: Ministry of Commerce, PRC

People's Government of Guangdong Province

Organizer: China Foreign Trade Centre (CFTC)



Gross Exhibition Space:

The China Import and Export Fair Complex is the Canton Fair Venue and has a gross exhibition space of 1,125,000 square metres which can hold over 55,800 standard booths.

Canton Fair Sessions and Industries

Spring session: April to May

Autumn session: October to November

Note: You can visit the official Canton Fair [website](#) to check the dates.

Phase 1: Consumer Electronics, Electronic and Electrical Products, Computer and Communication Products, Lighting Equipment, Household and Electrical Appliances, Building and Decorative Materials, Tools, Chemical Products, Large Machinery and Equipment, Sanitary and Bathroom Equipment, Hardware, Small Machinery, Construction Machinery, Vehicle Spare Parts, Motorcycles, Bicycles, Vehicles International Pavilion





Phase 2 : Kitchenware and Tableware, General Ceramics, Household Items, Toiletries, Personal Care Products, Clocks, Watches and Optical Instruments, Toys, Gifts and Premiums, Native Produce, Art Ceramics, Home Decorations, Weaving, Rattan and Iron Arts, Festival

Products, Glass Artware, Furniture, Gardening Products, Stone/Iron Decoration and Outdoor Spa Equipment

Phase 3: Men and Women's Clothing, Kids' Wear, Underwear, Sports and Casual Wear, Home Textiles, Fashion Accessories and Fittings, Furs, Leather, Down and Related Products, Carpets and Tapestries, Textile Raw Materials and Fabrics, Cases and Bags,



Office Supplies, Shoes, Sports, Travel and Recreation Products, Food, Medicines and Health Products, Medical Devices, Disposables and Dressings, International Pavilion



Some Other Popular Trade Fairs in China

They say that China is the world's factory, and almost all products are manufactured in China. Here's a comprehensive list of some of the major trade fairs that showcase and specialize in several industries.

Guangzhou International Lighting Exhibition – Guangzhou, China | June

The Guangzhou International Lighting Exhibition has always been the world's most appreciated platform for lighting products and cutting edge lighting technology.

Facts and Figures:

Total Exhibition Area: 2,421,900 square feet

Product Categories:

Outdoor/Commercial Lighting



Indoor/Decorative Lighting

Lighting accessories and electronic components, LED Technology



Electric Lighting



China International Furniture Fair – Guangzhou

China International Furniture Fair or CIFF Home Furniture is a barometer of China's furniture industry.

Scope of Exhibits:

Modern Furniture:

Living Room Furniture, Bedroom Furniture, Soft Furniture, Sofa, Dining Room Furniture, Children's Furniture, Teenage Furniture



Classical Furniture:

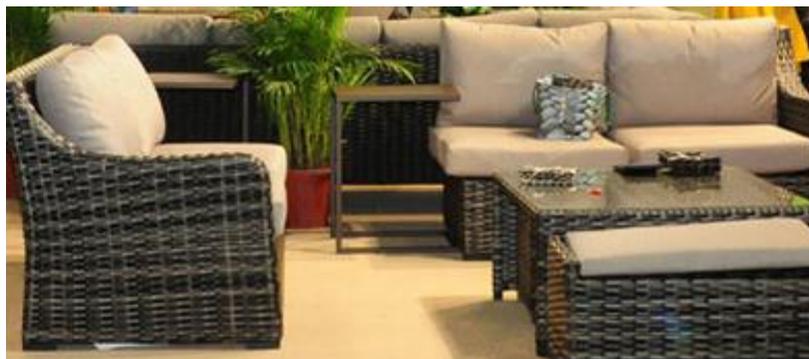
European Style Furniture, American Style Furniture, Neo-classical Furniture,
Classical Soft Furniture, Chinese Mahogany Furniture, Others

Home decor and Textile: Carpets and Rugs, Artificial Flowers, Pictures, Mirrors and
Frames, Pottery and Glassware, Resin, Plastic and Metal Crafts, Lighting, Phones,
Clocks, Carvings, Small Furniture, Other



Outdoor and Leisure :

Outdoor Living: Garden Furniture, Leisure Tables and Chairs, Garden shed
Equipment, Outdoor Items



Outdoor Activities: Barbecue Items, Outdoor Tents, Garden Decorations, Tools and
Equipment



Office Furniture: Office Seating, Book Shelves, Office Desk/Table, Safe Cabinet, Partition, Storage Units, Partitioning Wall, Filing Cabinets, Office Accessories, Others

Hotel Furniture: Hotel Furniture, Mattresses, Restaurant Furniture, Sofa, Bar Chair and Desk

Commercial Furniture: Public Furniture (Airport Furniture, Theatre/Auditoria Furniture and so on), Public Seating, School Furniture, Laboratory Furniture



CIFM:

Machinery: Edge banding machinery, Wood processing, Drying equipment, Engraving machinery, Leather tailoring machinery, Tools and cutters, Pneumatic tools, Machines for upholstery and bedding, Others

Furniture Materials: Hardware fitting, Semi-finished products for office furniture, Aluminum section for modular furniture, Panels and Stone, Upholstery and Bedding, Packing materials, PVC and Veneers, Fabrics and Leather, Chemical materials,



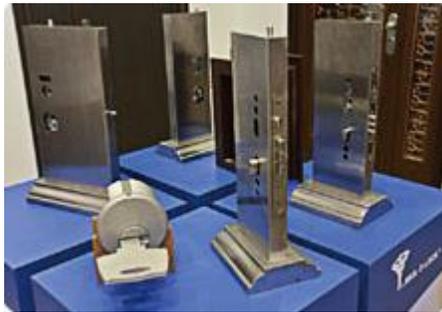
China International Building Decoration Fair – Guangzhou

Facts and Figures:

Total Exhibition Area: 340,000 square metres

Product Categories:

Integrated Furnishings and Integrated Wooden Decoration, Kitchen, Decorative hardware, Door and Window, Sanitary Ware and Building ceramics, Floor Covering, Decorative Glass, Ceiling, Glass equipment and accessories, wallpaper and fabric, coating and chemicals



Home Furnishing China – Guangzhou

Home Furnishing China showcases the latest trends and innovations in the home furnishing industry.

Facts and figures:

Visitors: 98,401

Product Categories:

Overall home decoration, Lighting, Carpets, Ceramic, glass and stone furnishings, Fabric and Bedding,
Decorative Painting, home furnishing accessories



Furniture Manufacturing and Supply – Shanghai

The FMC conference bridges the gap between the upstream and downstream upholstered furniture businesses, and encourages cooperation and innovation in the upholstered furniture industry.

Facts and figures:

Exhibition area: 59,000 square meters

Product Categories:

Woodworking Machinery, Upholstery Machinery, Wood-based Panel Machinery, Flooring Machinery, Wooden Door Machinery, Accessories for Woodworking Machinery, Saws/Blades and Tools, Furniture, Hardware and Fittings, Furniture Fabric and Leather, Upholstery Furniture Components and Supplies, Office Furniture Supplies and Gas Springs, Furniture Panels, Surface Décor, Furniture Coatings, Adhesives and Chemicals, Furniture Inspection and Design, Cabinet and Wardrobe Fittings, Other Furniture Fittings and Supply



Guangzhou International Toy and Hobby Fair

Facts and Figures:

Exhibition space: 75,200 square metres

Product Categories:

Electronic and electrical toys, outdoor sport toys, Hobby models, Wooden and Paper Toys, Inflatable Toys, Animation Licensing, Dolls, Plush and Soft Stuffed Toys, Pre-school and others



Automechanika – Shanghai, China | December

Automechanika Shanghai is the largest automobile fair covering equipment, tools, machinery and services for this sector

Product Categories:

Parts and Components

- Powertrain
- Chassis
- Body
- Standard parts
- Interior
- Alternative original
- equipment drive units
- Charging accessories
- Regenerated
- Restored and renewed parts
- for cars and commercial vehicles



Electronics and Systems

- Engine electronics
- Vehicle lighting
- Electrical system
- Driver assistance systems
- Vehicle safety
- Comfort electronics



Accessories and Tuning

- Vehicle accessories
- Special equipment
- Tuning
- Performance systems
- Design refinement



Repair and Maintenance

- Equipment for vehicle service and repair
- Bodywork repair and painting
- Workshop Equipment
- Dealership equipment
- Waste disposal and recycling



IT and Management

- IT Products
- Vehicle exchange marts
- Insurance
- Finance
- Leasing
- Claims management
- Vehicle inspection services
- Dealership planning and construction
- Dealership marketing



Service Station and Car Wash

- Service station equipment
- Car Care and car wash

Others

- Industry institutions
- Publishers



China International Medical Equipment Fair – Chongqing, China | October

China International Medical Equipment Fair is one of the most prominent medical tools and products sector trade events in China

Product Categories:

- Medical imaging
- Electro-medical devices
- Surgical and emergency treatment devices
- Lab and clinical testing devices
- Hospital equipment
- Rehabilitation, therapy and healing devices
- Optical devices
- Ambulances
- Information technology for hospital management
- Publications
- Medical devices components and design



Kitchen and Bath China – Shanghai, China | June

Kitchen and Bath China exhibits a wide range of freezing cabinet, laundry appliance, utensils, house ware, Kitchen and washroom faucets, sanitary ware, shower box, unit bathroom, steam room, sauna

Product Categories:

Bathroom furniture

Bath Mirrors

Bathroom Vanities

Bathroom Accessories



China International Industry Fair – Shanghai, China | November

CIIF has become the brand trade show of China's manufacturing equipment industry and also an important vehicle and cooperative platform between China's Industrial sector and global magnates

Product Categories:

Metalworking and CNC Machine Tool, Industrial Automation, Environmental Protection Technology and Equipment, Information and Communication Technology, Energy, Scientific and Technological Innovation, Aerospace and Aviation.



China Information Technology Expo/China Electronics Fair – Shenzhen, China | April

China Information Technology Expo/China Electronics Fair-Shenzhen is a three day event held at the Shenzhen Convention and Exhibition Center in Shenzhen, China. It showcases products from building construction, electronics and electrical goods, telecom products and equipment, and household consumables industries

Facts and Figures

Total Exhibit Area: 1,076,400 sq ft

Product Categories: dedicated to the communication and software industry and electronic information products. Including:

- Cloud computing
- IOT
- Electronic devices and tools
- Industry control
- Circuit protection
- Test and measurement equipment
- New electronic materials
- Sensors
- Smart phones
- International areas
- Mobile internet
- Flat panels
- Consumer electronics
- LED
- Lithium battery and new energy
- Defense electronics

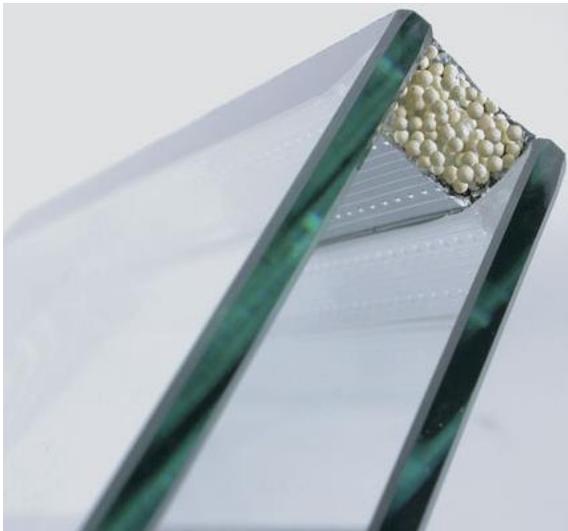


China Glass – Beijing, China | May

China International Glass Industrial Technical Exhibition is a dedicated trade show that offers industry professionals matchless opportunities and insights into China's vibrant glass industry

Product Categories:

Cell production, components, container glass, double glazing equipment, flat glass, photovoltaic glass panels, process engineering, safety glass, sealing materials, solar technology, spare parts, specialty glass, stained glass, and sun protection glass



China International Optoelectronic Exposition – Shenzhen, China | September

The China International Optoelectronic Exposition (CIOE) is a worldwide exhibition, presenting the most advanced optoelectronic technologies and innovations

Product Categories:

Optical Communication – Optical communication system equipment, fiber lasers and sensors

Laser and Infrared – Laser Devices, Laser components and material, security and Infrared device and system equipment, Laser system equipment

LED – LED components and materials, LED packaging module, LED semiconductor lighting, LED Display

Precision Optics – Optical components and Materials, optical instruments, optical processing and testing equipment, Optical coating equipment, Optical imaging and measuring technology



Expo Finefood – Shanghai, China | March - April

Expo Finefood offers a delicious spread of food products, food items, bakery products, meat and poultry, dairy products, seafood, confectionaries, sweets, frozen foods, chilled foods, canned and processed foods, healthy foods, fresh produce, mineral water, juices and soft drinks, beverages, non-alcoholic beverages, wines and spirits, coffee chains, bakery chains, dessert chains, snacks, liquor and other varieties of food and drinks

The event offers a unique experience to all visitors and with innovative cuisines and delicacies

Product Categories:

Food and Beverage

Bakery,

Coffee and

Wine and

Tea
Spirits



Asia Appliance Expo – Guangzhou, China | August

AAE offers sourcing opportunities with various appliance sectors. such as a pavilion for brand enterprises, water heater, solar water heater, air-conditioning, ventilation, refrigeration and air-improving, audio-visual and entertainment equipment, washing and disinfection electric, kitchen and bath appliance, small household electrical appliances, water drinking and purification, electric accessories, electric heating technology and equipment, temperature measurement and control technology, commercial and office electric appliance, etc

Exhibition Area:

60,000 square meters

Product Category:

Kitchen and bathroom appliances, water heaters, heat pumps and solar heaters, air-conditioning, ventilation and refrigeration, water drinking and purification appliances, electric heating technology and equipment, small home appliances, appliance industry design, disinfection appliances, commercial and office electric appliances, appliance accessories and service



International Hospitality Equipment and Suppliers Fair – Guangzhou

HOSFAIR Guangzhou is the most effective stage for showcasing the biggest hotel suppliers fair.

Facts and Figures:

Exhibit area: 600,000 square meters

Product Categories:

Hotel Equipment and Supplies

kitchen Equipment, hotel furniture, hotel textiles, freezing equipment, tableware and accessories, interior supplies Intelligence and POS systems, hotel lighting

Food and Beverage

wine and spirits, ice-cream, canned and processed food, coffee and tea, bakery products, dairy food



Hotel Furniture



Kitchen Equipment



clean and Laundry



Hotel Intelligence



Hotel Inform Textile



Hotel lighting



Wine, food and beverage



Interior Supplies

China Beauty Expo – Shanghai, China | May

The China Beauty Expo is one event that international cosmetics industry looks forward to. Exhibitors show products such as formulations, skin care products, personal care products, fragrance, color cosmetics, makeup kits and accessories, oral care products, baby care products, natural health products, beauty salon products, spa products, nail care products and much more.

Facts and Figures:

Exhibition area: 127,000 square meters in 11 halls

Product Categories:

- skin care, make-up and color cosmetics, fragrance, make-up accessories, personal care, household detergent, nature and health beauty products, franchises and retail stores, importers, agents and distributors.
- beauty salon and spa products and equipment, professional make-up, nail care and tattoo, hair products and equipment, shape wear and underwear, professional beauty accessories, beauty schools, institutions and other service providers.
- OEM/ODM/, private label, raw materials and ingredients, packaging, pumps/valves/sprayers/caps and accessories, color cosmetics packaging, tubes, printing, paper/boxes/bags and machinery



China International Auto Accessories Electronics, Tuning and Care Products Expo – Beijing, China | March

The China International Auto Accessories Electronics, Tuning and Care Products Expo or CIAACE presents an amazing assortment of the best of auto equipment and accessories, electronic products and services, auto tuning services and products, auto care products, car care products, car maintenance services, repairs, auto parts and tools, safety management requirements and essentials and allied products and services

Product Categories:

Auto Electronics

Car Care

Window films

Car perfume interior and exterior accessories

Car seats and cover

Foot mat, outdoors



Natural and Nutraceutical Products China – Shanghai, China| June

Healthplex and Nutraceutical China or NPC ranks as one of the leading trade events worldwide. It concentrates on the pharmaceutical and health products industry. A large number of exhibitors and visitors meet here to freely exchange information on health and nutraceutical products

Product Categories:

Healthcare products, beauty products, dietary supplements and Chinese treasures



China (Shanghai) International Optics Fair – Shanghai, China | February

China (Shanghai) International Optics Fair is a three day event at the Shanghai World Expo Exhibition and Convention Center in Shanghai, China. This event showcases product from the medical and pharmaceutical industry

Facts and Figures:

Total Exhibit Area: 376,740 square feet

Product Categories:

Spectacle frames, Sunglasses, Lenses, Contact lens, 3D glasses, Digital lenses, Visual test equipment, Machinery and materials for making spectacles frames and lenses, Spectacle accessories, parts and components, Raw materials for frames and lenses, Moulds, Eye care products and solutions for lenses and contact lens, Cases, Instrument for Optometry and Ophthalmology, Ophthalmic products, Tools and equipment for optical workshop, Ophthalmic lenses, Low-vision aids and test equipment, Trade magazines and exhibitions, Association of the optical industry



Hong Kong Electronics - Asia World-Expo ,next to Hong Kong Airport | April

Massive selection of high-growth products including the latest in gaming peripherals & accessories, electric personal transporters and more!

Product Categories:

- Audio/Video Products & Accessories
- Digital Cameras & Accessories
- Gaming Peripherals & Accessories
- Computers & Peripherals
- Networking Products
- 3D Printers & Consumables
- GPS
- Electric Personal Transporters
- In-Car Electronics
- In-Car Entertainment
- LED & Lighting Products
- Components
- Power Supplies
- Interconnects
- CCTV & Digital Surveillance
- Alarms



Global Sources Gifts & Home Products Trade Show, AsiaWorld-Expo | October

Global Sources Gifts & Home Product Trade Show presents gifts, premiums, smart home products that take place every Apr & Oct in Hong Kong AsiaWorld-Expo.

Product Categories:

All types of gifts and premiums including:

- Advertising Gifts & Premium
- Avenue of Inspiration
- Beauty Products & Accessories
- Boutique Deluxe (Luxury Gifts)
- Christmas Lighting
- Corporate Gifts
- Fashion jewelry & Accessories
- Figurines & Decorations
- General Gift Items
- Green Gifts
- Hiking and Camping Products
- Hong Kong Design New Force
- iAccessories
- Jewelry Galleria
- Luggage & Travel Goods
- Packaging
- Party & Festive Items / Wedding Favours
- Personal & Well-being Gifts
- Pictures & Photo Frames
- Scarf & Tie
- Stationery & Paper
- Sunglasses
- Tech Gifts
- Testing, Inspection and Certification
- Toys & Sporting Goods
- Trade Services
- Travel Souvenirs Piazza
- Umbrella and Outdoor Goods
- Watches & Clocks



Trade Fair Calendars

You can refer to the links below for all Trade Fairs in Hong Kong and Mainland China.



Hong Kong

<http://tradeshowcalendar.globalsources.com/TRADE-SHOW/Country/HK/Hong-Kong.HTM>

Mainland China

<http://tradeshowcalendar.globalsources.com/TRADE-SHOW/Country/CN/China.HTM>

Is the Canton Fair Right for you?

This is a question every potential visitor to the fair should ask themselves prior to making their decision. Travel to China is not inexpensive, especially during the fair.

Some visitors to the fair are our clients. They have been importing from China for a few years now and may have started with a specific product in mind and sourced the product using a sourcing company like ours. Or they may have used one of the B2B Platforms. Other visitors are new importers looking to take the plunge but weighing their options.

Scale of the Canton Fair

The Canton Fair is held in Guangzhou twice a year, in April-May and October-November and has been around for over 50 years. The Canton Fair is by far the largest among all China's fairs.

This will give you an idea of the scale: the 116th session of the fair (Oct 2014), attracted 202,766 buyers from around the world and had 59,431 exhibitor booths. Each session consists of three, five-day phases, with a three day break separating each phase.

When I speak to people in the industry here in China, I often get very different opinions to this question which shows that people have their own views on whether a visit to the Canton Fair is worth it or not, especially for existing importers who have established suppliers. So the opinions shared in this post are very much my own, based on my experience.

I believe at least one visit to the Canton Fair is a great experience for any importer, whether new or experienced. You will get an understanding of how the industry in China works and realize the enormity of the scale and diversity of manufacturing in China.

However, for a highly practical importer, with limited time or financial resources, or someone who wants a direct ROI on the trip to the Canton Fair, the decision may require a bit more thinking.

Ask yourself these four key questions to see if the Canton Fair would be the right fit for you. These questions will help you clarify expectations and allow you to assess if a visit is worth the investment.



Q1. Are you looking to cut costs or looking for Ideas?

The Canton Fair is an absolute goldmine for importers looking for new product ideas.

Many suppliers use it as a Launchpad for their new products. If you are on the lookout for new, exciting products in your niche or across industries, the Canton Fair is a great place to gain early-mover advantage.

If you are already importing a specific product from China and your purpose is to meet new suppliers in order to cut costs, then the Canton Fair may not be the best avenue to reach this goal.

Why? Because a very large percentage of booths at the Canton Fair are manned by trading companies or large manufacturers, with impressive marketing budgets. Pricing in general at the Canton Fair tends to be higher. There are other great ways to look for alternative suppliers for your existing products in order to manage costs.

Q2. Are you Sourcing Consumer Goods or Industrial Goods?

While the Canton Fair normally has both consumer and industrial products on display, I have personally found that it is not always the best place for sourcing industrial goods. For consumer products, however, there are very few places where an importer will find such a wide choice of products under one roof.



China has many industry-specific fairs for both consumer and industrial goods. For industrial goods, I find these fairs offer greater access to a wider range of products and suppliers. Exhibitors tend to be factories, as opposed to large trading companies, which dominate the Canton Fair.

Q3. What is your Business Model?

Many importers have business models which might not directly profit from a visit to the Canton Fair, aside from the experience itself and insights gained from seeing the products and exhibitors themselves.

At [IMEX Sourcing Services](#), I work with a lot of eBay power sellers and Amazon sellers who sell significant volumes of merchandise each year. Their business models revolve around looking at new product opportunities with high margins, rising demand trends and low competition (An online seller's dream).

Many of these importers do not have or care about product or industry specialization. They maximize product earnings in a 6-18 month time-frame. By the time the competition starts to come in, they move on to a new product.

While they could benefit from visiting the Canton Fair, or China in general, to find new products, a visit is not an imperative because their focus is not on developing a supplier base within an industry or improving relationships with the supplier. Instead, they're looking for products backed by sales research and data. They move on to the next big thing every time the market starts to get saturated.

There are also online sellers who mix and match many products and import these in consolidated shipments. The Canton Fair may be of little value to them since suppliers' minimum order quantities (MOQ) would be too high for them.

These importers are better off buying through wholesale markets in China (traditional importers), through B2B wholesale sites or through sourcing companies in China.

Q4. What is the Scale of your Business?

While I believe anyone looking to do serious business with China would consider a visit to the Canton Fair as a small investment, I also believe a visit to the Canton Fair, or China in general, is not necessarily the best investment for new ecommerce-based importers on a tight budget.

I believe their money is better spent on a lot of other areas like educating themselves about the nuances of international trade through web-based courses and training programs, using those funds for increasing purchase quantities and being able to meet supplier MOQ's in order to get better pricing and control over quality, investing in quality control for example through pre-shipment inspections of goods, or in improving sales and marketing systems.

Final Thoughts

In summary, a visit to the Canton Fair in Guangzhou can be a great way to find new products, to find new suppliers for your existing products, and to build relationships with existing suppliers. For relative newcomers, it's a great way to assess the opportunities that exist in importing from China. It can also be a great cultural experience.

But if you are on a tight budget or switch products regularly, you can find better ways to invest your money. The Canton Fair is definitely not the place for buying goods in smaller quantities (i.e. wholesale lots) and not the best place for finding low-cost suppliers for your products.

If you are in Guangzhou for The Canton Fair, you are always welcome to visit our office for a chat. [Drop us a line here](#)

Chapter 2 – Preparing for the Canton Fair

This chapter will help you prepare for your visit to The Canton Fair. The fair is incredibly huge, with thousands of exhibitors gathered in one place. To get the greatest rewards from your visit requires careful and focused preparation in advance of your visit to the fair.

What are your goals for the visit?

Determine your objectives for visiting the fair. They might include:

- a. Identifying and meeting new suppliers of your product



- b. Building a relationship with your existing suppliers
- c. Discovering new opportunities, such as new products to market.



Pre-Visit Research

As part of your preparation, organized research is critical. This will serve as your guide when it comes to product details, pricing, supplier standards, compliance, and much more. Once you are clear on your goals, you can start your pre-visit research.

Get some quotes from [B2B Websites](#) for reference pricing.

If you are clear on your target product, it is good idea to send out RFQ emails to some potential suppliers before you come. A request for quotation (RFQ) is a standard business process which invites suppliers to quote on your product.

How to get Suppliers in China to respond to your emails?

Many importers complain that Chinese suppliers don't reply to email requests for quotations or are generally slow at responding to emails. This issue has come up in so many discussions, let me deal with it in some detail.

Chinese suppliers are slow at responding to emails, or do not bother to reply at all, for cultural and practical reasons.

- They receive a large number of enquiries, very few are serious. Many simply for benchmarking
- Time zone differences
- Lack of organization skill, emails often get lost
- Preference for face to face talk

Some other reasons I have noticed:

- **Lack of Perceived Investment:** Many suppliers still do not take online enquiries seriously. Coming to China signifies the importer is “invested” in the process. In my opinion, even a phone call signals a higher degree of investment than an email and is a useful filtering criteria for suppliers.

- **Enquiry is not specific enough:** This is a major issue with new importers. Enquiries like “I am looking to import keyboards from China” are not likely to get too many responses.
- **Company No Longer Exists:** A lot of the supplier entries on B2B portals tend to be outdated, especially the free ones.
- **Company No Longer makes that product:** It is not uncommon for small and medium sized factories to change production lines every few years, i.e. manufacture a completely different product and even switch industries based on what is “Hot” at the time. This is especially applicable to “assembly plants” that add little value to the manufacturing process.
- **Quantity is simply too small for the supplier to be interested:** This is probably the most common reason suppliers don’t respond to enquiries. Quantity is the single most important factor affecting feasibility of manufacturing operations and pricing from a factory’s point of view.

MOQ’s are in place to ensure that manufacturing a product is feasible for a factory. So when factories see orders for small quantities, they often do not even bother to respond. In my experience, “The first order will be a small trial order, followed by large orders if the product becomes successful” doesn’t work anymore either, unless it is disguised more creatively.

- **Language and Mind-set Barrier:** The boss’s friend who knows some English helped him set up an English website, however, the boss doesn’t speak any English. His friend helps him check his English emails every now and then when she comes over. The boss recently hired a young graduate who understands some English but he is worried that the newcomer would “steal the leads” and hence would rather wait for the friend to come over.

Getting Factories to Respond to your E-Mails

Now that we know why factories don't respond to client emails, let's look at some tactics you can employ to improve your response rate.

Drafting detailed product requirements

As I pointed out, an email with limited information about what a buyer wants is not taken too seriously. It shows the client is not invested in the process, i.e. hasn't done his own background research and hence the deal is not likely to result in business for the factory.

From my own experience, when we receive enquiries with limited information, we are 95% certain those enquiries won't result in business. The lead is simply not ready to import, or is at a very early stage in the process.

As a [Sourcing Company](#), an importer in an early stage is not always a problem for us, since we specialise in assisting such buyers. However, for factories, this is a poor lead since the factory has neither the time nor resources to train the buyer and get them to a stage where they are ready to import. They have tonnes of other enquiries to deal with, and there is no guaranteed ROI in going through this "training" process.

Creating detailed product requirements can make a big difference to your response rate and will help you stand out in the supplier's inbox. This tells the supplier you understand the product and the market for the product well and hence are likely to be a serious importer.

Creating such a document will also help reduce the back and forth communication with suppliers who do respond to your initial email. It shortens their list of follow-up questions.

Mastering the Product

There will be cases when you genuinely don't know much about the product. For example, if it's a new product you are looking to source. In such cases, try to get at least one or two price quotes before sending messages in bulk to suppliers. The first couple of suppliers will give you a lot of product info if you ask the right questions. This makes you look more prepared when you contact other suppliers.

Another benefit of this preparation is that suppliers feel you know the product and the industry, and they tend to quote you lower prices. If you act like a complete newbie, they are more likely to give you higher quotes. Suppliers have a knack for identifying inexperienced importers from a distance.

Finally, this exercise will also help you understand the minor differences in suppliers' products so that you can ensure you are [comparing like for like](#) and have a more realistic understanding of the reasons for price variances among suppliers.

Providing Order Details

Aside from providing product details, you should also provide details about the "size" of the order. Every time you ask a supplier in China, for a quote, their first question will be, "what is your quantity"? If you do not provide this, they will quote based on MOQ. Providing these details early helps ensure that there can be a match between your size and the supplier because not every supplier would be right for your order quantity.

This is especially important if your quantities are large or at least meet the MOQ, as that becomes part of your selling proposition. If your quantities are very small but you are still looking to work with manufacturers, you may want to try the "under the radar" methods, but it does make the process a lot more tedious.

Other than the quantity, it also helps if you are upfront about your country of import, certification requirements and other important details like which incoterms do you want to be quoted for, i.e. FOB, CIF, etc.

Standing out as a “Hot Prospect”

Just as you are shortlisting suppliers, suppliers are shortlisting and qualifying leads too, so they can invest their limited human resources in chasing the best leads, i.e. “Hot Prospects”. So it is important you come off as a hot prospect.

How do suppliers define a “Hot Prospect”? A hot prospect for a supplier would be someone:

- Who is ready to buy from China “RIGHT NOW”
- Has the capital to invest to at least meet their MOQ’s
- Has great “repeat potential”

There are other factors but the above three are the most critical qualifying criteria. Because suppliers in most industries in China work with wafer-thin margins, repeat potential is very important. This is why the points mentioned in the previous heading are critical. Show you have product and market knowledge, and you signal higher repeat-potential.

Aside from approaching the supplier armed with product knowledge, you can appear as a “Hot Prospect” by:

- Approaching as a business as opposed to an individual
- Having a professional company website
- Provide a company intro. A couple of lines about your business and your previous China imports make a big difference, because new importer = low repeat potential

Follow Up Phone Call

This is where “culture difference” really comes to the fore. Just because you sent an email to someone in China does not mean they are obligated to reply. A phone call to let them know that you have sent an email is often needed for them to take your email seriously.

This one simple change in your approach to suppliers in China can make a big difference in your response rate. Many westerners would argue that this is a sign the supplier may be less than professional and while that may be true, this is a cultural difference and the faster

you accept it, the easier it will be to navigate the China landscape. If you hate making those calls, then you should get a [sourcing company](#) like ours to do it for you ;).

Visit China

Finally, if you are not having luck getting responses from suppliers, or your product is truly unique and your supplier is a monopoly or worse, if it's a state owned enterprise, visiting China and meeting the supplier personally might be the best solution. Of course, if your budget doesn't justify the visit then it probably won't satisfy these suppliers MOQ's and in that case, looking at alternate products may be a better solution.

If you look at approaching suppliers like a sales process, you will find that a few tweaks in your approach can make massive differences to your response rate.

Ok I went really off track there, back to the pre-visit research process:

Make a list of questions to ask suppliers

Ask a lot of questions, and you will learn a lot about the product. Especially when it comes to MOQs, FOB, shipping, certifications and supplier policies. This is one of the reasons why I love to visit trade fairs.



You can use the checklist below as a guide when you do your planning -- edit if necessary based on your specific product and industry.

Supplier Checklist: Questions to Ask Suppliers

- ✓ Factory Address and Website
- ✓ Manufacturer or Trader
- ✓ Number of Years in the Business
- ✓ Main Product Lines
- ✓ Production Processes
- ✓ Production Capacity
- ✓ Do they Outsource (some of) of Their Production
- ✓ Do they make any of the components or do they just assemble the different components?
- ✓ Order MOQ and Production Lead Times
- ✓ Main Markets for Export
- ✓ Number of Workers
- ✓ Product Certifications
- ✓ Product Standards
- ✓ Factory Audit and Inspection Experience
- ✓ Product Safety Testing Experience

When you starting asking “technical questions” about the product, components and manufacturing processes, that is where you can differentiate the good factories from the average ones and also stand out as a buyer who knows what he wants, which means you are less likely to get “newbie pricing”.

The best way to learn quickly about a new product and its manufacturing process I find is YouTube, there are tonnes of amazing videos on how a lot of the products are manufactured.

Visiting the Canton Fair

First things first. To gain entrance you need to apply for an Invitation and Pre-apply for Multi-entry Badge or IC Card. The good thing is, once you have the card, you can use the same card for all visits to the fair, so this is a one-time process.

Pro Tip: Don't throw away your entry card after the visit as it allows you to avoid the tedious registration process each time.

Step 1 - Apply for Invitation

The Canton Fair Invitation letter can be used to apply for a Chinese Visa, so this is where you start. If you do not need to apply for a Chinese Visa, an invitation letter is not necessary. If so, please go to the 2nd Step - Pre-apply for Buyer Entry Badge (IC Card) directly.

For those buyers who need an Invitation letter to apply for a Chinese Visa, please apply via the following methods:

- Method 1: Online application
Please apply via [Buyer E-Service Tool \(BEST\)](#). Click "Registration for New Buyers". The Canton Fair will provide a user name and password for your company within 3 working days once the registration is completed.
- Method 2: fill in the Application Form
Download and complete the [Application form for Canton Fair invitation](#) and return to The Canton Fair Hong Kong Representative Office by email (application-hk@cantonfair.org.cn).

2. The application will be approved and an email notice will be sent within 3 working days.

3. Fee: Free of charge

Step 2 – Pre-Apply for Buyer Entry Badge (IC Card)

1. Log in to the [Buyer E-Service Tool \(BEST\)](#) by using the given user name and password for your company and make pre-application for the IC Card.
2. The application will be approved and an email notice will be sent within 3 working days.
3. Charge: Free of charge

The Canton Fair Registration

Visitors must register before they will be admitted to the venue. You should have your Buyer Card (IC Card or Entry Badge) stamped and confirmed upon registration.

New Buyers

For companies that have never received a Canton Fair invitation in any form or have never been registered as a buyer, application cost is 120HKD or 100CNY. Bring the following with you to the venue:

1. Original travel documents
2. Recent color photo
3. Personal business card

Replacement: The IC card can be used for upcoming Canton Fair Sessions. If you have lost or forgotten the card, you need to re-apply for it which costs 200CNY or 250HKD.

Or We Can Do it for you 😊

Simply visit our website for more details of our [Canton Fair/China Visit Package](#)

Getting a Visa for China

Documents needed for application

I have always felt that Chinese Visa application is a lot more simplified than a lot of the other countries. All you need is a valid passport, duly completed and signed visa application form (which is fairly short), a passport photo and supporting documents based on the purpose of your trip, in this case the invitation letter from Canton fair or from one of your suppliers. Some of the developing countries sometimes tend to have a few additional documentation requirements.

What type of Visa to get?

- Single Entry Visa – perfect for visiting the fair - basically means you can enter into mainland China from Hong Kong only ONCE.
- Multiple Entry – A good idea & ESSENTIAL if you plan to attend the Hong Kong fair which is strategically dated during the breaks between the Canton Fair phases.



Can I use a Tourist Visa?

As you are only visiting the fair, a tourist visa will be sufficient, and all you need is your air ticket reservation and hotel bookings.

Procedure for Chinese Visa Application – UK Citizens

You can apply for a visa through UK agencies online or visit the London embassy which would help you with the required paperwork and documents.

Alternatively, you get your visa in Hong Kong from an agency. Agencies are very efficient and typically provide you your visa on the same day. Although we recommend getting a visa before flying to Hong Kong.

If you plan to visit China just for the Canton Fair then a 'single entry tourist visa' would suffice. This means you can enter into mainland China from Hong Kong once. If not, then get a 'double or multiple entry visa', but it's going to cost more. The price should range from about 80 – 120 GBP.

Download and fill in the [Visa Application Form](#)

Processing Time and Visa Fees

1. Regular Visa Fee per Person

Visa Types	British Citizens	American Citizens	Citizens of Other Countries
Single-Entry with 3-month Validity	GBP 30	GBP 90	GBP 20
Double-Entry with 6-month Validity	GBP 45	GBP 90	GBP 30
Multi-Entry with 6-month Validity	GBP 90	GBP 90	GBP 40
Multi-Entry with 12-month or 24-month Validity	GBP 180	GBP 90	GBP 60

Note: Visa Fee is Subject to Changes

2. Service Fee per Person

Regular processing time: 4 working days

Express service (before 12:00 noon, Monday to Friday): GBP15 extra

Moreover, additional service fees will be charged as follows:

Service	Time Needed	Fees
Regular Service Fee	4 working day collection	GBP 36 (VAT inclusive)
Express Service Fee	3 working day collection	GBP 48 (VAT inclusive)
Postal Service Fee	Apply by post	GBP 54 (VAT inclusive)

Procedure for Chinese Visa Application – USA Citizens

U.S. citizens must obtain a visa before arrival in China.

You must submit your visa application to the Consular Office of the Embassy or Consulate-General which holds consular jurisdiction over the state in which you reside.

You can locate a Visa Office that serves your state by clicking [here](#).

1. If you cannot appear in person, you are allowed to entrust someone such as an agency to drop off and submit your application at the office. You need not set an appointment as there is a walk-in service available.
2. Mailed applications are not acceptable and will be returned.

[Download Visa Application Form of PRC](#)

Processing Time

1. It takes 4 working days to process your document.
2. If you so require, there is an express service for \$20 additional charge for 2-3 working days processing and a same-day rush service for \$30.

Visa Fees

Acceptable methods of payments: Visa, MasterCard, Money Order, Cashier's Check

Entry and Validity	American Citizens	Citizens of Other Countries
Single Entry for 3 Months	USD 140	USD 30
Double Entry for 6 Months	USD 140	USD 45
Multiple Entries for 6 Months	USD 140	USD 60
Multiple Entries for 1 Year or 2 Years	USD 140	USD 90
Multiple Entries for 10 Years	USD 140	NA

Note: Visa Fee is Subject to Changes

Pick-up

On or after the pick-up date specified in the receipt, applicants can pay and pick up their passports themselves or have it given to entrusted persons or travel agencies, as long as they have the receipt.

Other Countries

For a guide on how to apply for a Chinese Visa for Other Countries, you can visit this [Chinese Visa Application Service Center](#) for a step by step guide. Choose your country and the nearest center to start.

To hire or not to hire an Interpreter?

This is one of the questions we get asked a lot. Do you really need an Interpreter for the Canton Fair or for your China trip in general?

Well this depends on your needs. At the fair a lot of booths have English speaking sales who speak enough English to give you basic product details and pricing. Larger factories tend to be better at this.

Smaller suppliers however often hire students or part-time employees who speak some English but may not know much about the product.

If you are looking to ask technical questions about a product or production processes then it is a good idea to hire an interpreter. Also, an interpreter can be extremely useful if you are planning to visit wholesale markets and other places.

Hiring an experienced interpreter can also save you valuable time and reduce headaches from miscommunication due to the language barrier which results in “lost time” during your visit. It will make your trip easier and more pleasant. However if you are a budget and planning to just visit the fair, you do not necessarily need an interpreter and get by just fine at the fair venue. IMEX also has a [China Visit package](#) where interpretation is one of the services.

Checklist of things to bring with you

Based on my experience, here are some useful things that you should bring with you before you get on the flight to China.

A Trolley or Wheeled-Suitcase.



This is where you will put all your brochures and samples. Trust me those laptop bags or shoulder carry bags will not work. Canton fair venue is massive and most of the people are out of energy by the end of the day.

Lots of business cards. Including some dummy ones.



Bring a lot of business cards. I like to keep my “Genuine Cards” in my right pocket and some “Dummy Ones”, i.e. with the wrong email address, in my left pocket. I will give my

genuine cards to the suppliers I am really interested to do business with. I give the dummy ones to suppliers who I am considering but I am not sure of. Giving them a business card gets you their catalogue. The reason why should consider giving your email twice is because, you can be rest assured it will get spammed.

It gets worse 3 months later, because most of the data is sold-on through marketing companies and you start getting lots of emails until you reach a point where you have to shut down your email address.

Camera



For taking sample picture (suppliers will rarely hand you the samples at the fair), booths, and other stuff you find interesting and even worth sharing. Always ask for permission before taking pictures of samples as some suppliers, especially those with unique products, will not allow this. Your phone or tablet camera will do just as well.

Notepad, notebook or anything that you can write notes on

Notepad – for jotting down important notes. If you are the techy type, your iPad will come in handy. You will meet so many suppliers at the fair that it is easy to forget information and



specific points you will discuss with the various suppliers.

Internet Censorship

China strictly controls internet access. You won't be able to access all your internet essential sites such as Google, Facebook, YouTube, etc. This can be frustrating. It is important therefore to get a good Virtual Private Network (VPN) when you are in China. A VPN lets you go through the Great Firewall to these sites.

Below are the best VPN options that work well in China:

1. [Astrill](#) –
Speed: 121 mbps
Fastest Servers: US
Best Protocol: OpenWeb, OpenVPN



2. [Strong VPN](#) –

Speed: 20 mbps

Fastest Servers: US

Best Protocol: PPTN VPN



3. [Express VPN](#) –

Speed: 19 mbps

Fastest Servers: US

Best Protocol: OpenVPN, SSTP, PPTP



Finding Suitable Accommodation

The official organizers of the Canton Fair provide hotel booking services you can find online when you visit their [official website](#). There are recommended hotels which are close to the fair venue.

Important Tips for Canton Fair Visitors for Booking Hotels and Getting Around

- Book early as prices go through the roof during popular trade fairs and especially during the Canton Fair season. The government has put a price ceiling to curb this but hotels have found a work around to this.

- Make sure the hotel provides a shuttle bus service to the fair. Most good hotels do and this is the best form of transport during the fair as lines for both the metro and taxis are massive at the fair venue especially during closing hours.
- Make sure your hotel is as close to the fair venue as possible. Traffic during Canton Fair days tends to be extremely bad and a day at the Fair is extremely tiring. The last thing you want at the end of a tiring day is to be stuck in traffic for two hours.
- Consider hotels close to “Guangzhou East Station” if you are looking to travel to and from Hong Kong as they are quite convenient.
- If you are looking to spend a lot of time in wholesale markets for shoes, clothing and lots of other stuff, consider hotels around the “Guangzhou Railway Station”. (It is different from Guangzhou East Station). It is a bit far from the Fair venue but depending on your split of days between the fair and wholesale markets, this can be a good choice.

Advice on Choosing the Right Hotel Location

Guangzhou is one of the three largest cities in Mainland China, and since it's the trading capital of China, it has many good hotels. Many are around the fair complex and in surrounding areas. Whether you want to travel and sleep in luxury or like to stay within a budget, there will be a perfect hotel for you.

The choice of a hotel location is a very personal choice and you should consider your overall travel plans. For example, if you will be coming from Hong Kong or plan to attend the Global Sources fair in Hong Kong which is strategically scheduled to fall on the three day breaks between the Canton Fair phases, then staying close to Guangzhou East Station is an excellent idea. There is a direct train from Guangzhou east station to Hong Kong and you will find plenty of hotels in that area to suit most budgets.

If you plan to spend majority of your time at the fair and have a decent budget, you could stay in one of the hotels at the fair venue, i.e. in Pazhou area. If you want to have the option to go out in the evenings and check out the restaurants and nightlife, then you may considered a hotel in a downtown area, like Zhujiang New Town. This is where the majority of the expat community is based and this place lots of options to eat out to suit all tastes and plenty of nice bars.

Hotel Recommendations

5-Star Hotels

1. The Westin Pazhou

Address: Hall C, Guangzhou International Convention and Exhibition Center, Fengpu Zhong Road, Haizhu District, Guangdong, China
Tel. +86-20-8918-1818



2. Weldon Hotel

Address: 1 Hualun Yi Road, Yonghe Ave. Luogang District, Guangzhou
Tel. +86-20-3222-3668



3. Vanburgh Hotel

Address: No. 126, Huangpu Dadao West, Tianhe District, Guangzhou, P.R.C
Tel. +86-20-38683028



4. Shangri-La Hotel, Guangzhou
Address: 1 Hui Zhan Dong Road, Hai
Zhu District Guangzhou, China
Tel. +86-20-89178888



5. China Hotel, A Marriott Hotel
Address: No.122, Liu Hua Lu,
Guangzhou, P.R.C
Tel. +86-20-86666-888



4-Star Hotels

1. Fraser Suites Guangzhou

Address: Onelink Walk, 232-2, Tianhe Road, Tianhe District, Guangzhou, China

Tel. +86-20-28019888



2. Panyu Hotel

Address: No.130, Dabei Road, Shiqiao St., Panyu District, Guangzhou, China

Tel. +86-20-84822127 ext. 86636



3. Imperial Traders Hotel

Address: 293 Guangzhou Road Central, Guangzhou, China

Tel. +86-20-87371288



4. Guangzhou YiFeng Hotel

Address: No. 278. Yi Jing Road, Haizhu District of Guangzhou, China

Tel. +86-20-89802888



Budget Hotels

1. Guangzhou Hanting Express
Address: No.97-99 Tianhe Road, Tianhe District, Guangzhou 510620, China



2. Baigong Hotel Guangzhou
Address: No. 17 Ren Min Nan Road Guangzhou



3. Southern Airlines Pearl Business Hotel Guangzhou
Address: No. 181 Huanshi Xilu



4. Paco Business Hotel Guangzhou Tianhe Branch
Address: No. 236 Tianhe Road, Tianhe District Guangzhou



Hotels we recommend

1. J Hotel

Rating: 4-star

Address: 105 Tianshou Road, Tianhe,
Guangzhou, Guangdong, China, 510610
Tel. +86-20-38097888

If you are an [IMEX Sourcing client](#), this is the hotel for you as our office is located right next to this building.

A few minute walk to Metro Line 1 and Line 3, 8 minute walk to Guangzhou East railway station giving you easy access to Shenzhen & Hong Kong and 15 minutes to the United States consulate. Only 20 minutes to Pazhou Exhibition center by car, and a 35 minute drive to Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport.



2. Jianghe Hotel

Rating: 4-star

Address: 31 Tianshou Road, Tianhe
District, Guangzhou, China
Phone: +86-20-2885 0288

The hotel is also very close to the East Railway station, and if you love shopping, it's the perfect place for you to stay as it's close to the Tiahe Shopping Center.



Chapter 3 – During the Canton Fair

Getting to the Fair - Transport

Shuttle Bus

Most hotels provide shuttle buses to and from the fair complex every day at fixed times during the fair. Ask for the timetable at the hotel's front desk. At the expense of repeating myself I really want to emphasize that even if you prefer a taxi, shuttle bus is usually a better option as the taxi lines at the Canton Fair venue during closing hours can take hours.

Metro

There are eight metro lines in Guangzhou. Go by Metro Line 8 if you want to travel directly to the Pazhou Complex.

The standard fare is around 2-12 Yuan.

Download the Guangzhou Metro App to get around Guangzhou



- For Android: [Explore Guangzhou](#) is the one I like.
- For iPhone: [Explore Guangzhou Metro map](#)

Taxis

Taxis are normally easily available in Guangzhou and are the best form of transport. However during Canton Fair it's a different ball game altogether and most taxis do not want to ply by the meter and instead ask for exorbitant fares.

Very few foreign travelers realize how effective Uber is in China. Uber has a very good English App which makes it ideal for foreigners. Download it and avoid the “Massive” taxi lines during the Canton Fair:



For Android: [Uber](#)

For iPhone: [Uber](#)

Getting to the Canton Fair from Hong Kong

Hong Kong to Guangzhou by Train

You can go to Guangzhou from Hong Kong by train. All trains run direct from Hung Hom station in Kowloon and arrive at Guangzhou East Station. Immigration procedures are carried out at both the stations.

Travel time is around two hours, however should account for another 90 minutes for immigration and waiting times.

The first train departs Hung Hom at 07:25 and the last train is at 19:24.

The first train departs Guangzhou at 08:19 and the last train is at 21:32.

The standard one-way ticket price is HK\$190 (As of April 2015) which can be bought up to 20 minutes before the departure time. You can purchase tickets at the station or via online ticketing services.

Hong Kong to Guangzhou by Train – 2nd Option

I often ended up getting too late in Hong Kong to catch the last train on my way back to Guangzhou. So I take the alternative way which is to use the metro to get to the Hong-Kong Shenzhen border. Walk through the immigration at the border and then take a CRH train (High Speed train) from Shenzhen to Guangzhou.

This is a better strategy if you are coming back a bit late and is also the preferred option if you are visiting parts of Hong Kong that are closer to the Shenzhen border.

Hong Kong Airport to Guangzhou

The Hong Kong International Airport offers a wide range of transportation options. For transfer to Guangzhou, you can either ride ferries, mainland coaches or limousines.

Hong Kong to Guangzhou by Mainland Coaches

Coach services are available at Terminal 2 at the mainland coach station. Regular departure time from the HK international airport is from 7:00 am to 11:00 pm.

The “Eternal East Cross Border Coach Mgt. Ltd.” bus leaves directly from the Hong Kong Airport to Guangzhou.

Travel Time

The ride is approximately 4 hours. The ticketing point is Coach Station Terminal 2 and the boarding point is Coach Station Terminal 2, Counter C13.

Prices

Around HK\$200- \$250

Registered Bus Services

Please be aware that illegal bus services and taxis may attempt to solicit you to ride their transportation and then overcharge you.

Here is a list of the registered bus services that leave from the Hong Kong airport:

- CL-Chinalink Bus
- CTS-China Travel Tours Transportation Services HK Ltd.,
- EE-Eternal East Cross-Border Coach Mgt. Ltd.,
- GG-Go
- Go Bus
- SW-Sinoway (China) Express

Hong Kong to Guangzhou by Limousine

If you prefer luxury travel, the Skylimo will be perfect for you. The service provides door to door deluxe service between Hong Kong International Airport and the delta regions around the Pearl River.

Limo service is available from 7 am to 12 am daily.

Hong Kong to Guangzhou by Ferry

Take the Airport express train to Hong Kong Central Station. The ride is 24 minutes. Transfer to the ferry from here. This [link](#) provides ferry timetables and prices.

Do I need to carry my passport around in China?

As per the Law in China you should carry your original passport with you at all times and could be asked for it at any time by the police. However, this rarely happens in areas where foreigners are expected and especially not during the fair season. However, if you are worried about carrying your passport, at the bare minimum, you should carry a printout with you or you can also keep an e-copy with you.

What to wear at the Fair?

You need not worry about what to wear when visiting the fair as you can dress as formally or casually as you like. But it is advisable to wear your most comfortable pair of shoes and clothes as you don't want to end up with blisters at the end of the day. You will be doing a lot of walking. This is especially important for women who like to wear high-heels.



A note on men in suits: From my experience and numerous conversations with suppliers, suppliers often associate suits with newbie importers. Therefore, you may want to avoid suits if:

- a. You are looking to get the best quotes
- b. You like to be comfortable on what is normally a pretty tiring experience for most people



Navigating the Fair Venue

The China Import and Export Fair Pazhou Complex, Guangzhou, or Canton Fair Complex, for short, is the largest exhibition center in Asia and the fourth largest in the world. It has a ground area of 430,000 square metres with a structural area of 395,000 square metres. It has 13 exhibition halls on the first and second floors. The complex both has an indoor exhibition area of 130,000 square metres and an outdoor exhibition area of 22,000 square metres.

The venue's sheer enormity will make it nearly impossible for you to visit each and every booth. You'd find yourself exhausted even before the end of the day and realize you've not visited those booths which are really relevant and essential. This is why I recommended above that you note down your target booth numbers before you arrive so you can cover them first and get a feeling of “accomplishment”.

Physical Maps

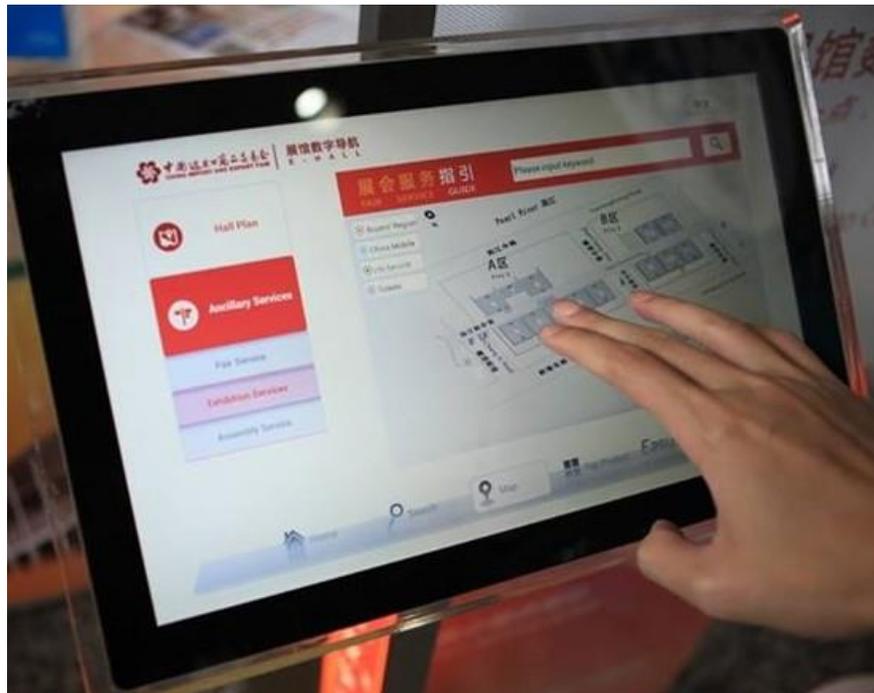
The complex is huge, and it's easy to lose focus when you see the wide array of products at the fair.

1. Take a map - Maps of the venue layout are easily available at information booths at the fair so keep an eye out for those.
2. Prioritize - keep focused. There are LOTS of products at the fair. Keep a clear mind and focus on the product that you would want to invest your money in.
3. Task Division - If you are coming to the fair in a group, it's best to have a clear division of labor. You may want to assign co-workers to different sections of the show and share reports in a meeting.



Touch Screen Device

Touch screen devices are available all over the Canton Fair venue. They allow you to search for information related to layout, ancillary services, fair services, and other services related to the exhibitions. You can also find suppliers using various metrics such as product name, keywords, etc.



The Canton Fair Mobile App

A mobile application for the Canton Fair is also available for download.

It is useful when you need to make searches for exhibitors and products, finding the shortest way to the booth, event schedule and a lot more.

For a Free Download visit the link below:

[Canton Fair App](#)



Scams in Guangzhou

Common Taxi Scams

Taxi scams in Guangzhou happen even during the day time so you need to be extra careful as they target tourists.

The common colors of taxis in Guangzhou are yellow, dark red, blue and green.

1. Drivers Taking the Long Route

This is the classic and hardest to avoid taxi scam. Most taxi drivers in Guangzhou know the shortest way to your destination but would choose to detour to take the longer route. Most of the time you won't be able to tell the difference especially when you are not familiar with the area.

Dealing with it:

Ask around and know the usual cost to your destination. You can ask your hotel lobby or a local for this information.

Pro Tip: Use your phone's GPS & Maps to see the distance between two locations if you know the destination address. Google maps does not work in China so the best English map options are Bing Maps or Apple Maps.

2. Drivers Pretending to be Lost

Some Chinese drivers pretend to be lost even when your destination is popular.

3. Drivers Giving Incorrect Amount of Change

When you pay with large RMB notes, drivers will take this opportunity to pretend that they only have small bills.

Since it's hard to get taxis in Guangzhou, sometimes passengers enter the taxi even when you are still inside pressuring you to get out fast.

Dealing with it:

Take your time. Don't walk out of the car if you haven't counted all your change and don't get pressured by the new passengers.

4. The Fake Money Switch

The scam usually happens when you pay with 100 RMB and 50 RMB notes.

Through sleight of hand the Chinese driver will accuse you of giving him fake money after he switches your genuine bill.

Dealing with it:

Don't give more money and call the police right away.

5. The Faulty Meter

A common taxi scam where the taxi is installed with a taxi meter that goes up way too fast.

Dealing with it:

Stick to reliable taxi companies to avoid this from happening to you. Avoid random people, especially at airports, who will approach you and offer you a taxi as this is likely to be scam and these private taxis are illegal, so this is also a security risk. A normal taxi meter should start out at 10 RMB and should start to go up only after 2.5 km. Guangzhou airport is notorious for this.

Fake Money Scam

This is a common scam in China where scammers exchange your genuine bills with fake ones, often practiced by cabbies, as mentioned above but also often by street vendors and sometimes shopkeepers. The most effective way for you to avoid this scam is to make yourself familiar with genuine and counterfeit RMB bills.

You can check out this [article](#) on how to distinguish a counterfeit of the 100 Yuan Bill.

Fake non-branded Foreign exchange

Even veteran cash traders are victimized by this scam so you really need to be careful. Stay away from non-branded foreign exchange companies as the chances of their being fake are fairly high.

Differentiating between Manufacturers and Traders at the Fair - How to Spot Genuine Manufacturers at a China Sourcing Fair

“I have heard there are lots of trading companies at the Canton Fair, how do I ensure I am dealing with genuine manufacturers only.”

This question stems from the belief that it is better to deal with manufacturers than traders. This is true in many cases, however under many circumstances it is better to deal with traders than manufacturers.

Let me share some pointers you can use to differentiate between manufacturers and traders at most Chinese sourcing fairs and not just the Canton Fair. But before you book your China ticket, you may want to [make sure if Canton Fair is right for you.](#)

Why do Traders Masquerade as Manufacturers

Importers who have been importing from China for a while, or people who have been on B2B websites or sourcing fairs in China will know it is common for trading companies in China to claim that they are manufacturers. Importers often look at this as an unethical practice, which it certainly is. However, traders have their own justifications for this.

Many importers, especially new ones, are under the impression that buying from a trading company will be more expensive than buying from a manufacturer. Due to this perception, they take traders off their shortlist at the very beginning of the process.

This can be quite demoralizing for the salespeople in these trading companies, since their salaries are largely commission-based. To counter this, many trading companies feel they have to claim to be manufacturers.

The degree to which they take this position varies significantly, with some trading companies even putting fake pictures of factories on their catalogues. So how do we distinguish traders from manufacturers at trade fairs in China?

The five tips below should come in handy:

1. Just Ask Them

As simple as this sounds, this should be the first question to ask any supplier, if you are in doubt. There are lots of ethical and honest trading companies in China, and they will simply tell you that they are a trading company. If they claim to be a factory, tell them you would like to visit their factory as you are already in China. Observe their reaction.



If they are a trading company, they may offer a vague answer. If they are truly a factory and they see you as a qualified customer, they will in most cases go out their way to encourage you to visit the factory. Having a factory is a unique selling proposition (USP) in itself in the eyes of the factory. And once you invest the time and effort to visit a factory, the chances of your placing an order with them increase significantly.

2. Look at their Product Range

Most factories in China are highly specialized and focus on making a very limited range of products. Therefore, if you see a booth carrying a fairly wide range of products, even within a specific industry, that could be indicative of a trading company.



Another common scenario in China is that a factory may be manufacturing one product but trading in others. This is a difficult one to spot because the factory would pass most background checks and come out as a qualified factory. The only sure-shot way to confirm they are the manufacturer of a specific product is to check out the production line for that product or use tips four and five together.

3. Look at the Address

Every time I go to the [Canton Fair](#) and receive a product catalogue at a booth, the first thing I do is look at the address. The address on a Chinese supplier's catalogue can tell you a lot about the supplier.

Factory addresses would normally be in far-off outskirt areas and you can look for keywords like "Industrial Area/Zone/Park", "XYZ Village", "economic zone", etc. Most trading company addresses in China would start with something like "Room No X", or would be property addresses in cities.

If you see the latter while the supplier claims to be a factory, you can always dig deeper and ask more questions.

4. Ask lots of technical questions

Compared to trading companies, factories are normally in a better position to answer technical questions about a product's manufacturing processes and common quality

problems with the product. They typically tell you in great detail why their product doesn't have that specific quality problem while most other products in the market do :) .

This works well if you yourself understand your product well and have some idea of the materials and production processes. If you are visiting the sourcing fair with a specific product in mind, then YouTube is your friend when it comes to finding useful information about manufacturing processes for your product.

5. Ask if they are open to a [3rd Party Factory Audit](#).

You can ask suppliers if they are open to a [factory audit](#) by a third party [inspection company](#) before an order is placed. A factory audit is designed to help importers substantiate the various claims made by suppliers and analyse the production capabilities, resources, and certifications of potential suppliers.



Traders would normally not be comfortable with this as it means exposing their “source”. This tactic can also be used when finding suppliers on B2B portals or through other sources.

Don't Eliminate Traders too Quickly

I hope these pointers are handy when you're trying to distinguish traders from manufacturers at sourcing fairs in China. However, I believe it is not always a good idea to eliminate traders simply due to negative perception bias.

Trading companies can offer value in a lot of ways that manufacturers can't. They might get you access to lower MOQ's, better service quality (English speaking staff, etc.), or product accessories that a manufacturer may not carry. And they can even offer better pricing under certain circumstances.

Eating Out & Activities in Guangzhou: Food Restaurants

Top 10 Best Cultural Restaurants in Guangzhou

1. [Panxi Restaurant](#)

Pan River Restaurant is the largest garden restaurant in the Liwan District of Guangzhou.



2. [Jiang by Chef Fei](#)

Jiang by Chef Fei is unarguably the home of Cantonese Cuisine. It is one of the city's finest Cantonese restaurants.



3. [Wilber's](#)

Wilber's is known as the best little foodhouse in Guangzhou. They offer a buffet style meal as well as a complete set menu. The first floor is a charming bar style set-up, the second floor is perfect for a family meal, and the third floor is great for private functions.



4. [La Seine Restaurant Francais](#)

Serving traditional French and gourmet cuisine. Located next to the Opera by the river, you'll be able to enjoy a nice evening walk along the river after dinner.



5. [Oakroom](#)

The Oakroom is a premiere, lounge-style restaurant and bar serving buffet or set menu of a la carte and international cuisines.



6. [Le Lutece French Revolving Restaurant](#)

If you are a fan of both French romanticism and innovation then Le Lutece is the place for you.



7. Tang Yuan Restaurant

A famous restaurant serving Cantonese cuisine and other regional dishes.



8. 13 Factories

13 Factories is famous for serving American food and western food such as sandwiches, fries, and steak.



9. [Orient Express French Restaurant](#)

It boasts a lovely garden restaurant perfect for weddings and other functions. The main house has spacious terraces as well where you can enjoy lunch or dinner.



10. Tao Tao Ju Restaurant

Tao Tao Ju is a century-old restaurant which is formerly a tea-house frequently being visited by famous Chinese novelists, playwrights, and poets. Now Tao Tao Ju serves some of the best dim sum and old-school Cantonese dishes.



Halal Foods

Where can I get Halal Food near the Canton Fair? – Don't worry we got you covered.

There are lots of restaurants that serve Halal food inside the Canton Fair venue opening from 9:00am to 5:00 pm.

Below are some restaurant recommendations for Islamic cuisine in Guangzhou outside of the Canton Fair:

1. Nur Bostan Muslim Restaurant at [Tianhe](#)

努尔博斯坦餐厅天河店

Address: First floor of Zijingyuan, No.137, Linhe East Road, [Tianhe District](#), Guangzhou

地址：天河区林和东路137号紫荆苑首层

Tel: 020-38806710

How to get there?

Metro: [Line 3](#), Get off at Guangzhou [East Railway Station](#), Exit F, about 5 minutes walking.



2. Nur Bostan Restaurant at Dongfeng Road

努尔博斯坦餐厅东风路店

Address: Third floor of Guanglian Building, No. 750, Dongfeng East Road, [Yuexiu District](#), Guangzhou

地址：越秀区东风东路750号广联大厦3楼

Tel: 020-86398559

Metro: Line5 , Get off at Ouzuan Station , Exit C.

3. Casablanca Restaurant

This restaurant provides a wide range of menus, from Chinese food to Uyghur food, soup, fried, rice, and grilled meat at very reasonable prices.

Add: No 36, Xihao 2nd Road, Yuexiu, Guangzhou, Guangdong, China

Tel: 020-81867356



4. Brothers Muslim Restaurant

兄弟穆斯林美食餐厅

Address: Dongdudashijie, No.475, Huangshi East Road, Dongshan District, Guangzhou

地址：东山区环市东路475号东都大世界食街首层C区65号铺1-2楼

Tel: 020-87626466

How to go there?

Metro: [Line 5](#), Get off at Zoo Station, Exit B , then walking about 5 minutes.



5. Ottoman Turkish Restaurant

奥斯曼土耳其餐厅

Address: Huanshi Dong Road #475, Guangzhou, Guangdong

Tel: 020-87601227

Chinese address: 越秀区环市东路475号东都大世界1楼A区2-6铺

How to go there?

Metro: Line 5, Get off at Zoo Station, Exit B , then walk about 5 minutes.



6. Al-Sadda Restaurant

萨德餐厅

Address: No 316, First floor, Jingying Mansion (Close to Huizhou Mansion), Huanshi Zhong Lu

Tel: 020-83541681

Chinese Address: 越秀区环市中路316号金鹰大厦1楼(近惠州大厦)

How to go there?

Metro: Line 5, Get off at Xiaobei Station, then 2 minutes walk.



7. Bosphorus Turkish Restaurant

铂斯西餐厅

Address: 304 Huanshi Zhong Road Zhaoqing Building, Yuexiu District

Chinese Address: 越秀区环市中路304号肇庆大厦首层9号铺

Tel: 020-83767644 or 83563578

How to go there?

Metro: Line 5, Get off at Xiaobei Station, Exit A, Zhaoqing Building

5号线,地铁小北站A出入口下,走约20米到肇庆大厦



8. Qinghai Muslim Restaurant

青海穆斯林饭店

Address: No.111,Guanghua Road, Sanyuanli, [Baiyun District](#), Guangzhou

地址：白云区三元里广花路111号

Tel: 020-86570920

How to go there?

Metro: Line2, Get off at sanyuanli Stationi, Exit A1



9. 1001 Arabian Nights Restaurant

一千一夜餐厅

Address: No.899, Jiefang North Rd, Yuexiu District, Guangzhou

越秀区解放北路899号锦洲国际商务中心1楼

Tel: 020-36182280

How to go there?

Metro: [Line 2](#), Get off at [Yuexiu Park](#) Station, Exit E, 2 minutes walk



10. Yuili Restaurant

Cuisine: Xinjiang Uyghur Cuisine

Add: 1st floor, No. 186, Longkou Middle Road, Tianhe District

Tel: 020-38734742 36606779

Nearby Mosque

Payment Accepted: Cash and Credit Card



Special Delicacies in Guangzhou

Official selection of top ten famous special dishes of Guangzhou

1. Boiled Chicken with dipping sauce – a boiled chicken is chopped into bite-size pieces



and served with soy sauce or a paste of ginger and green onions.

2. Roast Goose – a traditional barbeque dish of Guangzhou.



3. White gourd bowl with eight ingredients – a soup inside a white gourd, ingredients include lean meat, ham, crab flesh, fresh oyster, mushrooms, etc



4. Lobster Poached in Chicken Consomme – a high-protein seafood dish made from lobster and chicken consommé.



5. Steamed Seafood – since Guangdong is located near the southern coast of China, seafood is a specialty in Guangdong. Guangzhou steamed seafood cuisines only use a small amount of soy sauce, ginger, and spring onion to mask the natural sweetness of fresh seafood.



6. Braised Pigeon – a classic Guangzhou dish which is high in protein. The pigeon is



cooked in a seasoned soup until it absorbs all the flavors. It is then deep fried.

7. Fried Freshwater Fish balls – a common Guangzhou delicacy made of dace, a kind of fresh water fish and is served with green vegetables.



8. Sweet and Sour Pork – a very popular traditional Guangzhou cuisine. It uses a special sweet and sour pork recipe of rice vinegar and ketchup.



9. Slow cooked soup – a popular soup especially during the hot and humid climate to remove internal humidity.



Nightlife

If you have been wondering what to do during night time in Guangzhou, then this section is for you.

Cantonese Opera – Yueju Opera

The Yueju Opera combines Mandarin operatic traditions and the Cantonese dialect. The opera showcases a unique combination of string and percussion instruments, as well intricate costume designs and elaborate face painting.



Pearl River Night Cruise

If you want to go sightseeing then the river cruise is perfect for you. You will get to enjoy the marvelous neon lights of Guangzhou via a boat and the relaxing ambiance of the Pear River surrounding you.



Pubs and Bars

If you are a fan of fun, busy and noisy places then the pubs and bars will be perfect for you. There are three famous bar streets in Guangzhou with impressive bars:

1. Yan Jiang Road Bar Street



2. Huanshi Road Bar Street



3. Bai'e Tan Bar Street



Tourist Places and Things to do in Guangzhou

Guangzhou offers you a wide variety of things to do. Whether you are a lover of food, history or adventure, there is a perfect place for you.

Visit Yuexiu Park

It is the biggest sightseeing park in Guangzhou City, which has the statue of the Five Goats, the city's symbol.



Chen Family Ancestral Temple



Temple of the Six Banyan Trees, Guangxiao Temple



White Cloud Mountain



Experience the local cuisine



Guangzhou Ocean World

Located within Guangzhou Zoo, the Ocean World covers an area of 13,000 square metres (about 139,931 square feet) and houses more than 200 species of fish and rare ocean creatures.



Guangzhou Museum of Art

Opening hours: Tuesday to Sunday, from 9 am to 6:30 pm



Useful Numbers for Emergencies in Guangzhou:

Police (Calling)	110
Police (Text message)	12110
First-aid Ambulance	120
Fire	119
Traffic Accidents	122
SOS in Water	12395

Shopping

Since the Guangdong province is famous as an export industry region, it's definitely the perfect place to look for inexpensive clothing, electronics and other products. If you are looking to import products from China in smaller mixed lots or cannot meet manufacturer MOQ's, then the wholesale markets can also be a great resource.

Most wholesale markets in China would sell retail also.

Wholesale Markets

Guangzhou's wholesale markets are very vibrant. The most famous clothing wholesale markets are listed below:

Bai Ma (White Horse) Garment Wholesale Market

It's closest to the Guangzhou railway station and is the most popular wholesale market for clothes. Some other famous markets close to Baima are:

- Tianma – perfect if you are looking for domestic brand clothes
- Xindadi – if you are a fan of woolen sweaters and cardigans
- Zhanxi – has a wide range of products
- Hongmian Bubugao – perfect place to visit for women's clothing



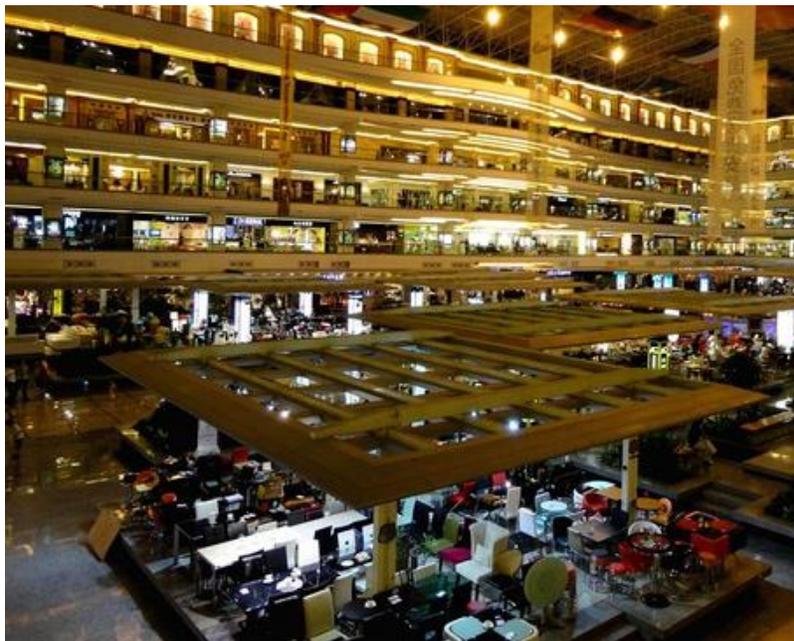
Guangzhou International Textile City

The largest wholesale market for textiles.



Lecong Furniture Market

Lecong is located slightly outside of Guangzhou in Foshan. It's considered to be the furniture trade center of China



Onelink International Toys and Gifts

For toys, fine works, house ornaments and a lot more. Nowadays, it is becoming a famous landmark on Yide Road.



Electronic Wholesale Markets

- Xicheng Electric Appliances Center – electric appliances such as TV sets, players and other audio products
- Guangdong Electric Markets – audio products, phones, computers, digital products, security monitoring equipment and radio devices
- Haeinsa Electrical Center – white goods such as refrigerators, air conditioners, a wide range of audio and video products, digital products, electrical goods, printers and office supplies

Guangzhou Beauty Exchange Center

Home to a wide range of personal care and beauty-related products such as cosmetics, salon accessories, skin care products, toiletries and personal care appliances, including health and medical care.



Retail Heaven

1. For retail shopping, the number one place to go would be the bustling Beijing Lu. You will find lots of foreign travelers doing their gift shopping on this vibrant street.



2. Guangzhou Shisanhang Clothing Market Area



3. Shangxiajiu Pedestrian Street – a nice destination to find some great bargains.



4. Tianhe Teemall: Guangzhou's Top International Mall – has the most international business center and is not a cheap place to shop. Houses famous International brands such as Lacoste, Zara, Versace, etc.



For book lovers – The largest book store in Guangzhou, the Guangzhou Book Center, is located here.



Weather

The weather in Guangzhou average temperature is 23 degree Celsius during the Spring Canton Fair and around 27 degree Celsius during the Autumn Canton Fair. It is warm but quite humid in April and dry, sunny, and moderate in October.



Foreign Consulates in Guangzhou

For a list of Foreign consulates in Guangzhou, visit this [link](#).

Other Tips while at the Canton Fair

1. Normally, you are advised to pack light as no one goes home from the Canton Fair empty-handed. A lot of suppliers from the fair hand out promotional products such as fans, lanyards, key chains or a product sample and as you would be in Guangzhou you would end up shopping quite a bit.
2. Don't take too many catalogues from fair exhibitors as you will have to throw them away. Keep only the ones you really want to hang on to or take pictures of relevant pages.
3. Print out two sets of business cards, one real and one "dummy". Set up a secondary disposable email account to go with the dummy account. This set you want to give away to suppliers you really are not interested in.
4. Take suppliers' answers to your questions with a grain of salt. Like when they say that their MOQ is this, or the lead time is that, or that they are a manufacturer and not a trader, etc. It's always best to remain a bit skeptical until you have proof of any claims. Also it is not polite in Chinese culture to directly say "No", which often ends up being a source of most misunderstandings that happen between Chinese suppliers & foreign importers.
5. Take a couple of days to visit shortlisted factories if possible. If you're too busy, you can outsource this duty to a third party sourcing or inspection company.
6. If you are a smoker, please note smoking is not allowed in the exhibition halls but there are several smoking areas which you can use.
7. Always come prepared – bring anything you think will be of use during your visit such as pens, markers, battery life extension devices such as power banks.
8. Pace yourself – if you can't help it and you need to visit an interesting booth, then limit yourself with the time you spend on every booth.

9. For lost properties, you can get in touch with the CEF Security office for help.
Room 05, 1/F, Hall 23, CECF Pazhou Complex.
Tel. +86-20-89131203

10. Set aside free time. You'll want to set aside time away from the fair venue, whether for business or pleasure. You can have dinner with potential suppliers you have met in the fair or visit Guangzhou's famous tourist attractions.

Canton Fair / China Visit Package

All of the above-mentioned are very daunting tasks. Our Canton Fair Package is designed to optimize your visit to the Canton Fair. We manage everything from booking your accommodation to providing you with an interpreter.

See more details here about our [Canton Fair Package](#).

Chapter 4 – After the Canton Fair

Preparing for Your Trip Home

- Expect heavier luggage for your return – think of all the samples and thick brochures you have accepted from the exhibitors on the fair. Tip: Take pictures of the most important pages of the catalogues you are interested in so you can dispose of the rest.
- If you have collected a lot of samples at the fair, it is normally cheaper and more convenient to courier these back home. You could [courier](#) these from the Canton Fair venue itself or use a [courier company](#).
 - Be aware of customs regulations in your home country, especially if you have bought tonnes of replica stuff from the “dark corners” of Guangzhou. In most countries, carrying these is illegal and you may get into trouble with customs.

Back to your own Country

Follow Up

Do follow up with the suppliers that you are considering via e-mail or a phone call. In your follow-up email with the supplier:

- You can resend the detailed specifications of the product, clarify product standards and compliance issues.
- You should request an RFQ so you may review it. Don't be surprised if it's not the same prices as quoted at the fair.



Chapter 5 – The Ultimate Canton Fair Checklist

Here is a useful checklist that should help you with most of the important things that we have covered in the previous chapters.

Time to ask yourself whether the Canton Fair is Right for you?

- Are you looking to cut costs or looking for ideas?
- Are you sourcing for consumer goods or industrial goods?
- What is your business model?
- What is the scale of your business?

Assuming that you have decided to visit the Canton Fair

- Perform Pre-visit Preparation and Research
 - Getting some quotes from Alibaba
 - Sending out RFQ emails to multiple potential suppliers
 - Finding Chinese suppliers before physical visit on the Canton Fair online website.

To improve the response rate from your Chinese suppliers, try the following:

- Draft a detailed product requirement
- Provide order details
- Stand out as a 'Hot Prospect'
- Follow up with a phone call
- Visit China

- Make a list of suitable questions to ask your suppliers

After the pre-visit product research, it's time for some other preparations such as:

- Register for the Canton Fair
- Get a China Visa
 - Know what type of visa to get and the application procedure
 - Prepare all the necessary documents

- Bring the Following:
 - Trolley or a wheeled suitcase
 - Business cards
 - Camera
 - Notepad
 - Comfortable shoes & clothing

- Get a reliable VPN to access all your internet essentials
- Find suitable accommodation and transport

- Book an Interpreter if required.
- Download the Important Apps (Play store is blocked in China)
 - Guanghou Metro Map
 - Uber
 - Canton Fair App

Getting to the Canton Fair Venue

- Familiarize yourself with transportation options and decide
 - Know the common scams in Guangzhou and ways to avoid them

- Be aware of how to differentiate genuine manufacturers from trading companies

- Don't accept every single product catalogue handed to you by exhibitors

- Shortlist possible suppliers you may want to visit and map out the easiest and shortest way towards their booth

Once you get some time from business, then you can relax and explore the beauty of Guangzhou:

- Cultural experience by visiting restaurants
- Guangzhou is alive especially at night – check out the nightlife
- Know other travel tips in Guangzhou, especially the weather

& Before you go back

- Do not throw away your Canton Fair ID Card. This is valid for all future canton fair exhibitions.

Conclusion

I hope you would find the information in this eBook of some value. If you do, please do share it with anyone who you feel might be able to benefit from this.

If you are planning to visit the Canton Fair, I am sure you would also have lots of questions you would like answered. You may post these questions as comments on this post [here](#) and I will try my best to answer as many of these as I can. It would also allow others to benefit from the answers and help me in my endeavor to build a valuable resource for anyone looking to benefit from China's massive manufacturing base by attending the Canton Fair.

If you have feedback on this book, please feel free to write to me using the [Contact page](#) on the site. If you found this content useful, you may also want to sign-up for updates at [The Sourcing Blog](#) for future posts.

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