



Cost of Living in Beijing

The potential salary offered by Expertise is not just what appears on paper. Besides the salary per month printed on paper, we also offer other benefits to our teachers (such as visa services, accommodation, and Chinese language lessons). It's also important to consider the comparatively inexpensive cost of living in Beijing.

When you see the 6,000 RMB on the contract sheet—excluding bonus—most people tend to convert it to their country's currency. This can be very misleading. For example the RMB 6,000 equals about \$930 USD. This salary would be almost impossible to survive on in the United States—especially in a major city. But in Beijing, RMB 6,000 goes a very long way (which we'll look at later).

It's also interesting to note an American kindergarten teacher's salary compared to a Chinese kindergarten teacher's salary. A kindergarten teacher in America makes about \$25,000-40,000USD a year, depending on experience and region. A Chinese kindergarten teacher makes about RMB 1,500 a month (RMB 18,000 per year). So, while an English teacher working with Expertise Education doesn't make the salary of a qualified teacher in America, he or she will make about five times more than their Chinese kindergarten teacher counterparts.

Not only will teachers with Expertise earn a higher salary than the average Chinese kindergarten teacher, they'll earn a higher salary than the average Beijing citizen. The average salary of a Beijinger is about RMB 3,000 per month, and is considered a respectable, middle class salary.

So how will the RMB 6,000 per month salary be spent? Since accommodations, visa services, and Chinese lessons are all included in the contract and many teachers receive transportation and other monthly bonuses, each teacher has about RMB 6,000 each month to eat, pay bills, and have fun with.

A typical meal in a local, independent restaurant can cost anywhere from RMB5-50. This depends on the types and amounts of dishes ordered. Last night, I had an enormous plate of vegetarian noodles for about RMB 8. As always, though, it's possible to spend much more. At nicer restaurants and, often, at Western-style restaurants, a typical meal will cost between RMB 50-100. Lunches are provided at the kindergarten, and many times so is breakfast or dinner.



Utilities (water, gas, electric) usually total about RMB 200-300/month. A mobile phone bill runs about RMB 150/month.

A random list of prices in Chinese RMB (6.35Yuan \approx 1 USD, Exchange rate is fluctuating over time):

Bus ticket: RMB 1-2

Subway: RMB 2

Can of soda: RMB 3

Taxi: RMB 10 (for the first 3 km) (2 RMB per additional km)

Dinner at a fast food restaurant: RMB 20

Dinner at a local, independent restaurant: RMB 5-50

Dinner at a western-style establishment: RMB 50-100

New bicycle: RMB 120 – 400

Local bottled beer at corner store: RMB 3-5

Local bottled beer in restaurant: RMB 5-25

New mobile phone: RMB198 and up

Mobile phone service: RMB 50-100/month

Cleaning supplies (dish soap, laundry detergent, all-purpose cleaner): RMB 3-10 per item

Cup of coffee at a cafe (like Starbucks): RMB 15-20

Typical weekly trip to grocery store (either Western or Chinese): RMB 100-200

Massage (1 hour): RMB 80-135

Housekeeper (2 hours): RMB 30-60

Movie ticket: RMB 35-60

Jeans: RMB 80-200

Sneakers: RMB 100-400

Dresses and skirts: RMB 80-300

Cost of sending a letter or postcard to the folks at home: RMB 4-10



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Bottle of water: RMB 1-3

Shampoos, soaps, deodorants, toothpaste: RMB 5-20 per item

English language books (sold on the street): RMB 10-15

These prices are all estimates and certainly not a definitive list of things someone living in Beijing would purchase. It's also important to note that while most things can be purchased at a definite price (cleaning supplies, personal hygiene products, etc.), there are often items (like bicycles and clothes) that can be purchased for much cheaper or much more expensive than the prices listed here.