
On The GreatWall

5 Minute Chinese

What Facilities Are on China High-Speed Trains?



PandaWu: Hello, this is 5 Minute Chinese from On The GreatWall. I'm PandaWu.

Emma: And I'm Emma.

Emma: PandaWu, since I'm coming to Guangzhou next week, I've been looking at my short train trip to Zhuhai. I know China's high-speed trains are fast, but I realized I know almost nothing about what they're like inside.

PandaWu: That is a very practical question. The speed gets all the attention, but when you are actually sitting on the train, the small things matter more.

Emma: Exactly. Can I charge my phone? Is the carriage smoky? What kind of toilet will I find? These are the things I actually care about.

PandaWu: Then let's start with the easiest one. China's high-speed trains are non-smoking. Not just your seat. Not just your carriage. The spaces between carriages are non-smoking too.

Emma: That is a relief. I do not smoke, and I really do not like sitting somewhere that smells like smoke.

PandaWu: Then you should feel comfortable. On high-speed trains in China, smoking is taken seriously, because it can affect the train's safety systems.

Emma: So it is not like someone can sneak between carriages and smoke there.

PandaWu: No. On a high-speed train, the whole train is non-smoking.

Emma: Good. That already makes the ride sound better.

PandaWu: The second thing is charging. On many high-speed trains, you can find a USB port or a power socket near your seat. Sometimes it is under the seat. Sometimes it is around the armrest. On some newer trains, you may even see wireless charging.

Emma: So I can use my phone without watching the battery drop every minute.

PandaWu: Usually, yes. But the exact setup can depend on the train model, the seat class, and the route. So I would still bring a power bank, just in case.

Emma: That feels like a good travel rule anywhere. Hope for the socket, bring the power bank.

PandaWu: Exactly. Now, the third thing is toilets.

Emma: I was waiting for this one.

PandaWu: On China's high-speed trains, you may find both squat toilets and Western-style toilets. They are often placed in different parts of the train, or arranged in different carriages.

Emma: That is very good to know. I'm not very used to squat toilets, so I would probably look for a Western-style one.

PandaWu: You can usually find one if you walk through a carriage or two. And station toilets are also worth checking before you board, especially for a short ride.

Emma: That is practical. For Guangzhou to Zhuhai, the ride is only about one hour, so I probably do not need to overthink it.

PandaWu: Right. For your trip, the basics are simple. The train is non-smoking. Bring a power bank as backup. And if you need a toilet, look for the one that feels more comfortable for you.

Emma: So far, that sounds easy. Clean air, phone charging, and toilet options. Anything else I should know?

PandaWu: Actually, there is one more thing about China high-speed trains that surprises many visitors.

Emma: What is it?

PandaWu: You know, on some China high-speed trains, you can even order KFC delivery to your seat.

Emma: Wait, what? KFC delivery on a train? Are you serious?

PandaWu: Yes. Not on every route, and it is more useful on longer rides, but it is real. Through Railway 12306 or related train food ordering services, passengers can order food from certain stations along the route.

Emma: So the train stops, and someone brings the food onto the train?

PandaWu: Pretty much. The food is prepared at an upcoming station. When the train arrives, the order is handed over, brought onto the train, and then delivered to your carriage or seat.

Emma: That is genuinely surprising. I was expecting maybe a snack cart, not station-to-train food delivery.

PandaWu: Exactly. Depending on the station and the route, it could be KFC, rice meals, or other simple hot meals.

Emma: But for my Guangzhou to Zhuhai trip, I probably should not plan my lunch around that.

PandaWu: Right. One hour is too short to make food delivery the main event. For your trip, it is more of a fun thing to know. Save it for a longer high-speed train ride.

Emma: I like that. A small China travel surprise for later.

PandaWu: And this brings us to the useful Mandarin word for today.

PandaWu: 高铁

Emma: 高铁

PandaWu: 高 means high. 铁 is short for railway in this context. Together, 高铁 means high-speed rail, or high-speed train.

Emma: So if someone tells me to take the 高铁, they mean the high-speed train.

PandaWu: Exactly. You will see this word in station signs, ticket apps, travel guides, and everyday conversations.

Emma: And if I am going from Guangzhou to Zhuhai, I am taking the 高铁.

PandaWu: Yes. For many travelers, 高铁 is one of the easiest and most comfortable ways to move between Chinese cities.

Emma: So let me see if I have this right. China's high-speed trains are fully non-smoking. Many seats have charging ports, but I should still bring a power bank. There may be both squat toilets and Western-style toilets. And on some longer rides, I might even order KFC or a hot meal to my seat.

PandaWu: That is a good summary. Just remember, small details can depend on the train model, seat class, route, and station services.

Emma: So I should not expect every train to be exactly the same.

PandaWu: Right. But the general experience is very traveler-friendly. Especially for a short ride like Guangzhou to Zhuhai, you do not need to worry too much.

Emma: Good. One hour, no smoke, a charged phone, and maybe a future KFC train delivery adventure.

PandaWu: That sounds like a good plan.

Emma: And the word to remember is 高铁.

PandaWu: 高铁, high-speed train.

Emma: I will definitely use that next week.

PandaWu: Once again, our five minutes are up, but if you'd like to hear more authentic stories about Chinese food, history and culture, you can head to our topic page on our website, onthegreatwall.com. See you again soon. But for now, it's goodbye.

Useful Examples

高铁

Gāo tiě

High-speed rail or high-speed train.

车厢

Chē xiāng

Train carriage or train car.

洗手间

Xǐ shǒu jiān

Restroom or toilet.