

How to Successfully Access Facebook in China

One of the major problems travelers face when visiting China is the Chinese government's restrictions on access to the internet. Specifically, popular social sites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube will be blocked by the government's firewall, just as other news sites will be blocked. If you want to share travel experiences with your friends and family, follow the instructions below to unblock and access the websites you want.

VPN



Find the right VPN service for your needs. A VPN (Virtual Private Network) is an encrypted connection to a remote server that allows you to access the internet from behind a restricted firewall. A VPN impacts all your internet traffic, i.e. Skype and other messaging services are not trapped under a firewall. The VPN isn't free, but it does offer a monthly plan instead of an annual plan, which can be very helpful for travelers.



Check to see if the VPN plan you chose is available in China. Several major VPN servers have been blocked by the Chinese government and are no longer accessible. Check with the company you're signing up for and check out the service reviews online.

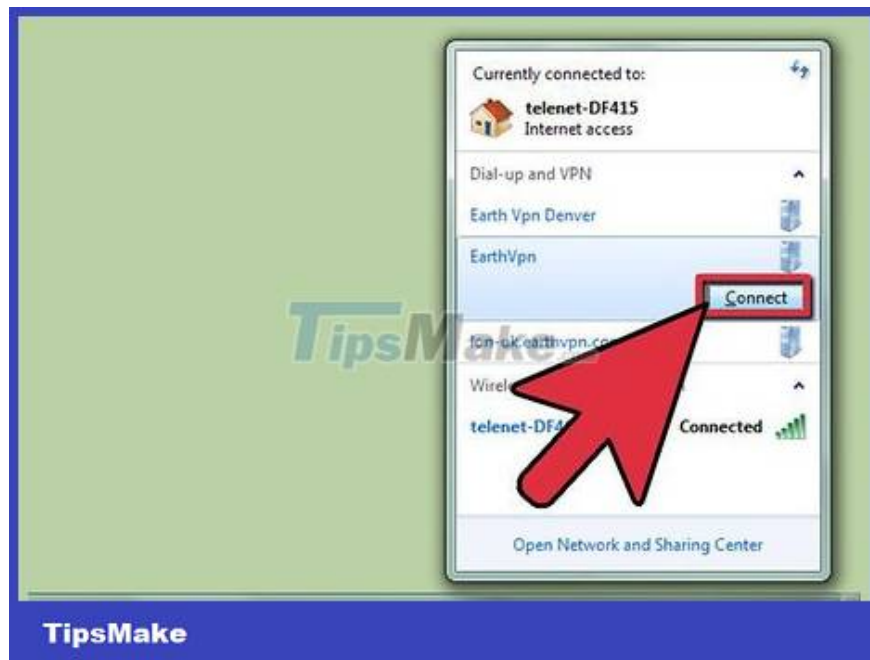
| | VPN Client Software | SSTP |
|---------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Windows 8 | Download | SSTP VPN Setup Tutorial |
| Windows 7 | Download | SSTP VPN Setup Tutorial |
| Windows Vista | Download | Setup Tutorial |

TipsMake

Download all necessary software. Some VPN services will provide you with a VPN client package (package for remote users) - and you will need to install it on your computer. Or some other VPN service that will give you connection information to access Windows or Mac's connection manager.

Ideally, you should download and install VPN software before going to China. Many popular VPN programs are blocked, not allowing to sign up or download any remote client packages. Setting up your VPN plan outside of China makes it easy to contact customer support if you have any issues.

Some VPN services offer mobile apps that you can use on your iPhone, iPad, or Android device.

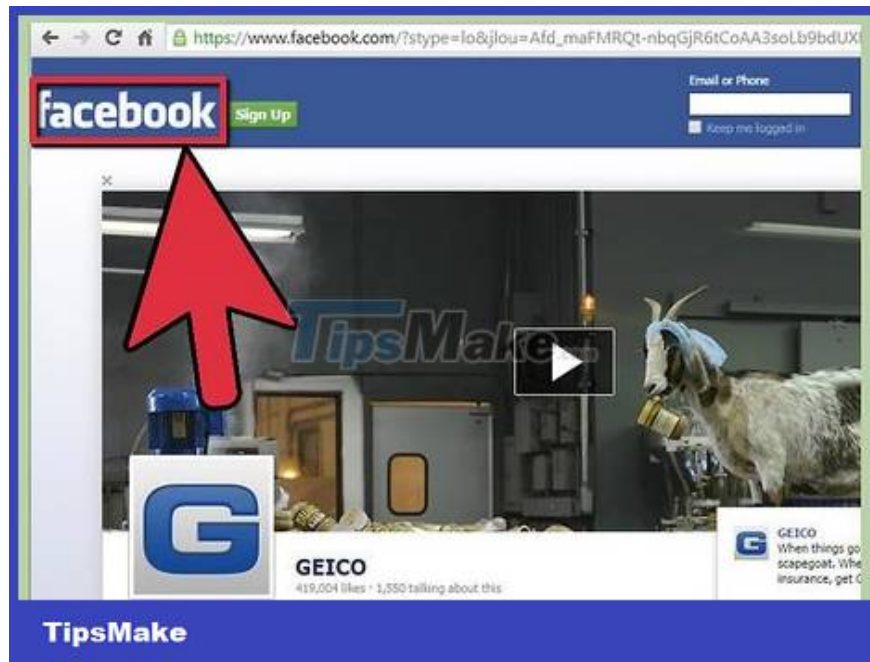


Connect to a VPN. Run the client, or enter the VPN information in your operating system connection settings. VPN clients are preconfigured when serviced and only require login information.

For Windows, search for VPN on your computer and then select "Set up a virtual private network" (Windows Vista/7) or "Add a VPN connection" (for Windows 8). Enter your connection information. The VPN service will provide the server information to connect to, as well as the username and password. You just need to enter this in the VPN connection settings

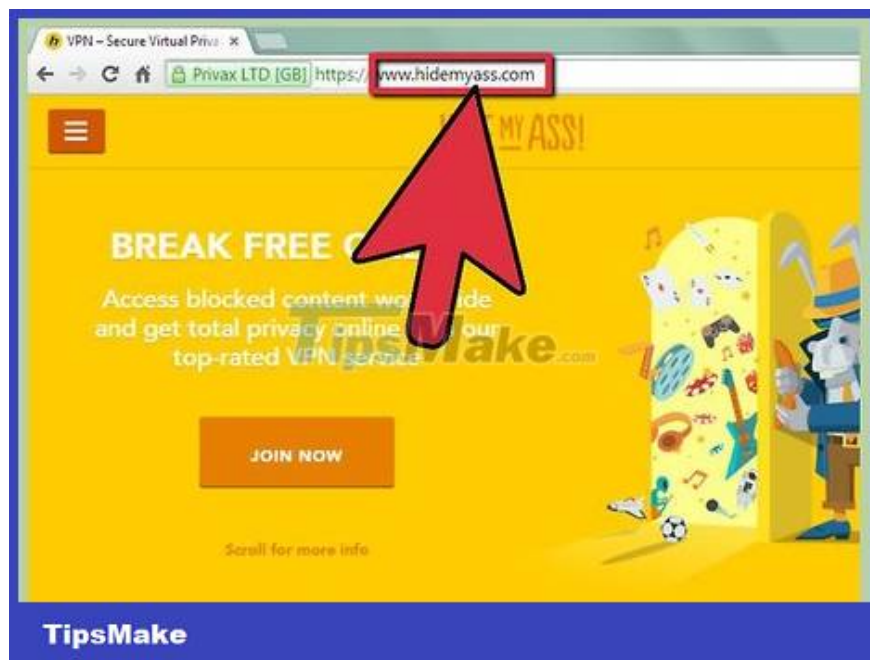
For Mac OS X, click the Apple menu and choose System Preferences. Click Network. Next click the Add (+) button at the bottom of the list, then select VPN from the list of options. Select the type of VPN you are connecting to. The type of VPN will also be provided by your VPN service. Enter your VPN settings, including the server you're connecting to and your username and password.

Click the Connect button to connect to the VPN. Most VPNs can connect automatically. If you cannot establish a connection, contact VPN support to troubleshoot.



Access Facebook. Once you're connected to a VPN, you can access any blocked websites you didn't previously access, as well as use any Internet-enabled program like Skype. It is possible that this connection will be slow, but this is completely normal given the distance between you and the VPN server.

Proxy



Try a free proxy. A proxy is a website, usually based in another location, and allows you to access other websites through the proxy. So, if your proxy is in the US and you access Facebook through this proxy, the operation is similar to accessing Facebook in the US. Here is a list of free proxies that you can try. You should try these proxies first, because they are free - However, you may find this is not a great solution for accessing Facebook in China due to:

China is constantly looking for and blocking proxies.

Proxies often don't have a good enough program to handle social media technology



Try using a secure proxy. One of the proxies that I use to access Facebook and other social media quite well is Proxy Center. This proxy has a free trial so you can make sure it works well before you pay, or even give them your email. The benefit of a proxy like this (as opposed to the VPN discussed above) is that it doesn't need to be installed on a computer - it's all web-based.

Tor Browser



Download the Tor browser package. Tor is a free distributed network that keeps you anonymous while you're connected via a browser. Information is returned between a large number of relays that exist globally. Tor allows you to bypass any firewalls or restrictions on your connection. The downside of this approach is that web pages load slowly, because the data has to travel long distances to reach you.

The Tor browser package is a self-contained program that does not need to be installed. You can save this browser to a USB drive and plug it into any computer. This browser pack is available for Windows, Mac and Linux.



Run the browser. The Tor browser is a modified version of Firefox and shares a lot of interface similarities with Firefox. When you run the browser program, a window will appear showing the status of the Tor connection. Once the connection is established, the browser will open.

Only traffic through the Tor browser will be sent over the Tor network. This means that Internet Explorer, Chrome, Safari or any other browser will not be anonymous through the Tor network while the Tor browser is running.



Check if you are connected. When the browser window opens, you will see a page confirming successful connection to Tor. You can now access previously blocked websites. Closing the browser window will mean shutting down Tor

While data in the Tor network is encrypted, it still cannot decrypt data leaving the Tor network. That means any secure transaction you need to make is just as vulnerable as on the regular internet. Only provide personal information to SSL enabled websites. That is, sites with HTTPS:// instead of HTTP:// and your browser's address field showing the security key.

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