Chinese search engine SEO, local and international

Generally, Chinese SEO is similar to Google or Bing.

- Chinese language content
- Chinese SEO components
    - Page title
    - Page description
    - Heading tags (H1, H2, H3, etc)
- Sitemaps
- Robots
- Webmasters (called Zhanzhang in Chinese)
- Fast access to your internet content
- Local/dedicated domain name
- Local/dedicated IP address

The main differences are;

- All Chinese webmaster systems are only in the local Chinese language
- Local/dedicated IP address
- Political correctness
- Blocked internet content
- Baidu SERP (Search engine results page), e.g., Google Rich Cards
- Search engine tools, services and add-ons

This article is a beginner's guide to Chinese search engine optimisation (SEO). You may need local Chinese support as you learn more and aim to improve your internet content rankings.

With four Chinese search engines and two overseas ones, you should aim to achieve a high ranking in the Chinese market.

Baidu
Market Share: 47.07% (2025)
https://www.baidu.com

Shenma
Market Share: 1.68% (2025)
https://m.sm.cn

360 Search
Market Share: 8.08% (2025)
https://www.360.cn

Sogou
Market Share: 3.59% (2025)
https://www.sogou.com

Google
Chinese Search Engine Market Share: less than 2% (2025)
Mandarin Speakers' Worldwide Market Share: 19.4% (2025)
https://www.google.com

Bing
Market Share: 35.96% (2025)
https://www.bing.com

Baidu is the largest search engine in China. The newest is Shenma. Its growth is robust; it took almost 10% of the Chinese search engine market in 18 months.

Please see the Chinese search engine for more information about each one.

Chinese language Metadata

All search engines will only rank your content in the language it is written in. If your content is only in English, the Chinese search engine will rank it accordingly.

A search engine;

- does not translate your internet content.
- only indexes the information it finds in your internet content.
- multi-language content will be indexed for each language.

e.g., If you are searching for "baby food", the results will only contain the words "baby food" and not 婴儿食品. (Baby food in Chinese). If your internet content is multilingual, try searching in both languages on Google or Bing.

When you ask Chinese search engines to index your internet content, consider what words Chinese users will search for your product or service, just as you would with Google or Bing.

In the "baby food" example, a Chinese consumer is likely to look for overseas baby food brands and may search for "baby food." In this example, your SEO data will need the Chinese and English words for "baby food" to rank well in any Chinese search engine.

Type your "key search words" in a Chinese search engine. What, if any, is your ranking?

Please note:

- The Chinese language for search engines is Mandarin / simplified Chinese.
- English is the first international language of China. It is the foreign language taught in schools and colleges. This means that more than 100 million Chinese people are taught English each year. We recommend Chinese and English sites for the Chinese internet market. Please note: use English with American spelling, nouns and written grammar.

Here are the language options for your website;

- Do nothing – leave your website in your local language
- Add additional page(s) to your site in Chinese containing the key information and words
- Translate the key SEO data into Chinese on a copy of your internet content, including page titles, descriptions, heading tags, etc.
- Create SERP (Search Engine Result Page) in Chinese, where available in Chinese search engines
- Translate your multimedia content
- Fully translate your internet content
- Create a new website for the Chinese market

For more information on their options, please consult the Chinese language resources available online.

Chinese SEO components

Chinese search engine SEO data, such as meta tags, titles, descriptions, and headings, is similar to that used by Google or Bing.

Remember to update the language, region, and meta tag data on the page if you have translated it or have a copy of your internet pages for the local Chinese market.

Chinese search engine sitemaps

The information is in the same format. If you have translated any information, ensure the sitemap's language information parameter is configured correctly.

Robots file

The information is in the same format. Again, do not forget to update any localisation changes

Chinese search engine Webmasters

Chinese search engines all have Webmasters, similar to Google or Bing.

In China, the term "Webmaster" is known as "Zhanzhang".

The webmaster links are as follows;

- Baidu - https://ziyuan.baidu.com/
- Sogou - http://zhanzhang.sogou.com/
- 360 Search - http://zhanzhang.so.com/
- Shenma - http://zhanzhang.sm.cn/

Please note that all web admins are in Chinese. Use the Chrome browser's translate option and work through the parameters. Many of the options are the same as those of Google or Bing.

Fast access to your internet content

Search engines will prioritise websites that are accessible from China. This means hosting your website in Asia, specifically in China.

Chinese domain name

Please consider the following points

- Meaningful – creating a domain with the product or brand name

- Local – local domain name.CN /COM.CN.We believe that COM / NET works just as well.
- Language – the domain can be a Chinese name in simplified Chinese or Pinyin.

For more information. Please see the Chinese domain names

Local/dedicated IP address

China uses the IP address to determine the location and reliability of your website.

Chinese search engines advise against sharing IP addresses when your internet content is compromised by other content. I dedicated an IP address to demonstrate the stability of your online presence. I don't understand what this means.

Please note: Chinese search engines, like international search engines, aim to distinguish between high-quality and low-quality sources of information. Knowing your website's fixed location helps a great deal.

A local IP address will be allocated to your website when you host in Asia or China.

Political correctness

China has regulations governing content. If the content is politically incorrect, it is blocked in China and/or by the Chinese search engines. Make sure your website content is politically correct from the outset. Unblocking websites / IP addresses that have been blocked is very hard.

For more information, please see the Chinese ICP certification

Blocked website

Some international website content is blocked, and access times are slowed. This includes international social media platforms, such as Google and YouTube. If you have blocked embedded content, your Chinese search engine ranking will be seriously affected.

Baidu SERP (Search engine results page), e.g. Google Rich Cards

The Chinese search engine SERP enables you to incorporate the Chinese language into your SEO strategy.

Review each Chinese search to determine the available options. Given its market share, Baidu and Shenma are recommended if you sell consumer products.

Search engine tools, services and add-ons

All Chinese search engines offer additional functionality or services, such as Baidu Maps. Adding these services to your website can help improve your search engine ranking.

Review each Chinese search engine offering, starting with Baidu and Shenma.

WeChat, a search engine?

WeChat is a social media platform and belongs in a different paper.

WeChat describes itself as an IT platform that offers all the services needed to host your website, including a search engine for WeChat users.

Whilst WeChat is not called a search engine, given its business content, many Chinese consumers start their internet searches with WeChat.

WeChat, rank your WeChat account in the following sequence;

- WeChat account title
- Page headings
- Page contents

For example, when searching for "Travel / 旅行" on WeChat, the results are limited to accounts with "Travel / 旅行" in the title. If you search for "London Tower Bridge," you will first see "London Tower Bridge" results in the Account Title, followed by results containing these words in the page headings/contents.

Therefore, the account name is significant.

Create a private WeChat account and try it in your local country.