

An era of Prosperity and
Innovation

Inventions During the Tang and Song Dynasties

Porcelain: bone-hard, white ceramic; made of a special clay and mineral; beautiful finish;

Impact: a valuable export-so associated with Chinese culture that it is now called China; process a Chinese secret for centuries; luxury reserved for upper and middle classes;

Mechanical Clock: clock in which machinery driven by running water regulated the movements;

Impact: short-lived; idea carried by traders to medieval Europe;

Printing: Block printing: one block on which a whole page is cut; moveable type: individual characters arranged in frames, used over and over;
Impact: printing technology spread to Korea and Japan; also developed later in Europe;

Explosive Powder: made from mixture of saltpeter, sulfur and charcoal;
Impact: first used for fireworks, then weapons; technology spread west within 300 years;

Paper Money: paper currency issued by Song government to replace cumbersome strings of metal cash used by merchants;

Impact: contributed to development of large-scale commercial economy in China;

Magnetic Compass – floating magnetized needle that always points north-south; device had existed in China for centuries before it was adapted by sailors for use at sea;

Impact: helped China become a sea power; technology quickly spread west