

# French Concession

FRENCH CONCESSION EAST | FRENCH CONCESSION WEST

## Neighbourhood Top Five

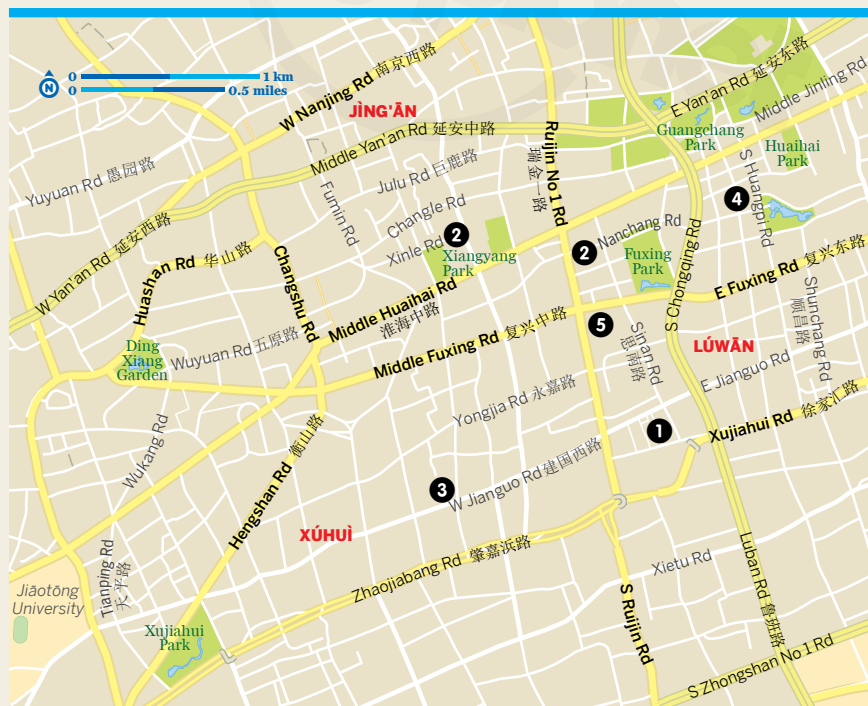
**1 Tiānzǐfāng** (p94) Weaving through a forest of shoppers' elbows in the charming *shíkùmén* (stone-gate house) warren.

**2 Xinle and Fumin Roads** (p120) Shopping for fashion and homewares in the boutiques along these strips.

**3 Jian Guo 328** (p107) Savouring home-style Shanghaiese cuisine.

**4 Xintiandi** (p95) Moseying around the interior of a *shíkùmén* house.

**5 Speak Low** (p115) Finding the secret portal to some of the city's best cocktails.



For more detail of this area see Maps p302 and p306 ➔

## Explore: French Concession

The French Concession is Shànghǎi's sunny side up; it's the city at its coolest, hippest and most elegant. Once home to the bulk of Shànghǎi's adventurers, revolutionaries, gangsters, prostitutes and writers – ironically many of them weren't French – the former concession (also called Frenchtown) is the most graceful part of Pǔxī. Shànghǎi's erstwhile reputation as the 'Paris of the East' owes a big debt to this neighbourhood's tree-lined avenues, 1920s mansions and French-influenced architecture.

The concession's leafy backstreets and European disposition make exploration a delight. Most first-time visitors start off in Xintiāndì, which offers an all-in-one introduction to the local *shíkùmén* (stone-gate house) architecture alongside alluring dining and shopping options. South from here is the former concession's other big draw: Tiánzifáng, a less-polished warren of lanes and arty boutiques that can keep you wandering (often lost) indefinitely.

The French Concession's real attraction is not sightseeing. Like Shànghǎi itself, the area thrives on its endless quest for sophistication. Its tirelessly inventive restaurant and bar scene, coupled with pop-up boutiques, cool cafes and diverse entertainment options, means that you should come prepared to expand your tastes – just make sure you have cash to spend.

## Local Life

➔ **Lilòng & Lòngtáng** Slip down some of Shànghǎi's most charming alleyways for a glimpse of the homely rhythms of community life.

➔ **Foot massages** Sink into an armchair (maybe catch some Hong Kong action on the tube) and have your tension kneaded away.

➔ **Snacks** Dumplings, noodles, haute cuisine, Sichuānese, Húnánese, stinky tofu and lychee ice cream – no matter when or where, you'll find something to eat (and a local at your elbow).

## Getting There & Away

➔ **Metro lines 1 and 10** Main lines serving the French Concession area, both running east-west past Xintiāndì. Line 1 continues on to People's Square, while line 10 serves the Old Town and East Nanjing Rd (the Bund). The two lines meet at the South Shaanxi Rd metro stop.

➔ **Metro line 9** At the southern edge of the concession, line 9 serves Tiánzifáng.

➔ **Metro line 7** North-south line providing a handy link between the French Concession and the Jìng'ān neighbourhood; it connects with line 1 at Changshu Rd and line 9 at Zhaojiabang Rd.

## Lonely Planet's Top Tip

Although most expats use the colonial-era term 'French Concession', the name means little to most Shanghainese. Locals call much of the eastern area Lúwān (卢湾) or Huángpǔ (黄浦), while the area west of South Shaanxi Rd is known as Xúhùi (徐匯), a district that extends southwest into Xújiāhuì. If you're in Shànghǎi for more than a short visit, it's worth familiarising yourself with these official district names. The literal Chinese for the historic French Concession is Fǎzūjiè (法租界).

### Best Places to Eat

- ➔ T8 (p106)
- ➔ Jian Guo 328 (p107)
- ➔ Lost Heaven (p109)
- ➔ Dī Shuǐ Dòng (p105)

For reviews, see p100 ➔

### Best Places to Drink

- ➔ El Cóctel (p115)
- ➔ Speak Low (p115)
- ➔ Boxing Cat Brewery (p115)
- ➔ Dr Wine (p115)

For reviews, see p112 ➔

### Best Places to Shop

- ➔ Tiánzifáng (p94)
- ➔ Pīlǐngpǎlāng – Anfu Lu (p122)
- ➔ Dòng Liáng (p122)
- ➔ OQAK Concept Boutique (p122)

For reviews, see p119 ➔