

Welcome to Shànghǎi

*Shànghǎi: few cities in the world
evoke so much history, excess,
glamour, mystique and exotic
promise in name alone.*

Architecture

Shànghǎi is home to the world's second-tallest tower and a host of other neck-craning colossi. But it's not all sky-scraping razzmatazz. Beyond the crisp veneer of the modern city typified by Pūdōng, you can lift the lid to a treasure chest of architectural styles. The city's period of greatest cosmopolitan excess – the 1920s and '30s – left the city with pristine examples of art deco buildings. And there's more: from Jesuit cathedrals, Jewish synagogues and Buddhist temples to home-grown *lǒngtāng* (laneway) and *shíkùmēn* (stone gate) housing, Shànghǎi's architectural heritage is like none other.

Cuisine

Thirty years ago Shànghǎi's dour restaurant scene was all tin trays and scowling waiting staff, with international food confined to the dining rooms of 'exclusive' hotels. Today the mouth-watering restaurant scene is varied, exciting and up to the minute – and Shànghǎi has its own Michelin dining guide in 2017, proving just how far the city has come. Food is the hub of Chinese social life. It's over a meal that people catch up with friends, celebrate and clinch business deals, and spend hard-earned cash. Some of your best memories of the city could be culinary, so do as the Shanghainese do and make a meal of it.

Shopping

Bearing in mind that Chinese shoppers constitute up to 47% of the global luxury-goods market, shopping is rarely done in half-measures in Shànghǎi. Retail therapy is one way of spending new money and the Shanghainese aren't called 小资 (*xiǎozī* – 'little capitalists') by the rest of China for nothing, especially at the luxury end of things. But it's not all Prada, Gucci and Burberry. There are pop-up boutiques, bustling markets, cool vintage shops and young designer outlets. Beyond clothing you're also spoiled for choice, whether you're in the market for antiques, ceramics, art, Tibetan jewellery... whatever is on your shopping list.

Entertainment & the Arts

Běijīng often hogs the limelight as China's cultural nexus but, for what is essentially a town of wheelers and dealers, Shànghǎi is surprisingly creative. Many art galleries are exciting, offering a window onto contemporary Chinese concerns, while nightlife options have exploded. Acrobatics shows are always a favourite and you might grab the chance to catch some Chinese opera. Shànghǎi's music and club scene is vibrant: from unpretentious jazz and indie venues to all-night hip-hop and electro dance parties, the city swings with the best of them.



Why I Love Shànghǎi

By Kate Morgan, Writer

From the architectural landmarks lining the Bund and the rickety charm of the Old Town to the leafy backstreets of the former French Concession, Shànghǎi is a city that just begs for wandering. And eating. I love that you can slurp a bowl of hand-pulled noodles or bite into soupy *xiǎolóngbāo* dumplings for next to nothing, then splurge on cocktails and fusion fare while gazing out from a rooftop bar on the Bund, over the Huángpǔ River to Pūdōng's space-age night scene. Shànghǎi's roller-coaster backstory is as decadent as it is debauched, but these days there is a palpable energy and confidence that the city is on the rise...again.

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