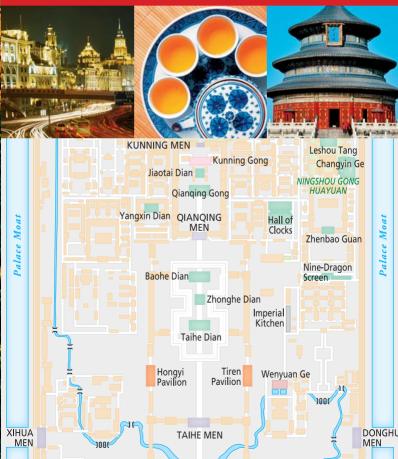




Priceless China

Top 20 Holiday Guide 2008



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Willie Fung Executive Vice President & General Manager Greater China MasterCard Worldwide

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Beijing: 20 Favorite Moments



Beijing is a city of contrasts, rushing boldly into the future. Modern skyscrapers spring up in neighborhoods of traditional courtyard homes. Fancy fusion restaurants open up next to friendly street-side food stalls. Rolls-Royces speed past bicycles. Below are some of our favorite moments in this dynamic city. Savor them, and you'll come to love Beijing as we have.

1 The Summer Palace (Yihe

Yuan). This expanse of elaborate Qing-style pavilions, bridges, walkways, and gardens is the grandest imperial playground in China. It's located 12km (7 miles) northwest of the city center in Haidian.

2 Global Village (Diqiucan). Drop in for 1- and 2-hour Chinese listening, speaking, and reading classes daily, for all levels, from beginning to advanced (35 Chengfu Lu, northwest of metro stop; 2 010/6253-7737).

The Great Wall. This ancient landmark meanders to dizzying heights in places. One of the more peaceful sections is Juyongguan, a recently restored section only an hour from Beijing. Badaling is one of the more dramatic sections of the Great Wall, but the number of visitors can be daunting. The bus trip from Beijing takes an hour.

4 Commune at the Great Wall.

The Commune assembles the work of 12 established architects who were given tracts of land near the wall to build their dream homes. An hour's drive from Beijing.

S Lama Temple (Yonghegong). Offer up your prayers as you sit with the monks in one of Beijing's most colorful temples. Don't miss the 18m (59-ft.) statue of Maitreya (the future Buddha) carved from a single piece of white sandalwood.

6 The Hub of the 798 Dashanzi Art District (798 Dashanzi Yishu Qu Zhongxin). Local artists set up the area's first studios and galleries here in 2001. Take a look at 798



The Forbidden City.

Photo Gallery (2010/6438-1784) and the Bauhaus-style **798 Space** (2010/6438-4862).

7 Houhai Lake. Rent a boat and glide past the city's quaintest (though touristy) areas. The banks are overflowing with cafes, bars, and the odd curio shop, but back alleys are still ripe for exploration.

Orum Tower (Gu Lou). The upper chamber has replicas of traditional drums, which are showcased several times an hour. Fly a kite with the locals in the nearby square, in the heart of Beijing's old courtyard district.

Hutongs. Bike or take a pedicab through the back alleys of Beijing. The best preserved can be found around the alley of Nan Luogu Xiang. There's also a memorable bike ride along the lakes. Rentals are available at Cycle China, 12 Jingshan Dong Lu (2010/6402-5653). For guided trips, contact the Beijing Hutong Tourist Agency (2010/8067-2471).

10 Forbidden City (Gu Gong). This 720,000sq.-m (7.75-million-sq.-ft.)

palace, on the north side of Tia'anmen Square, is a complex of redwalled buildings and pavilions, topped by a sea of glazed vermilion tiles. It is the largest and most intricate imperial palace in China.

(i) Loving Life Massage Center (Lesheng Mangren Baojian Anmo Zhongxin). Indulge in affordable full-body and foot massages on the second floor of the Donghua Hotel (32 Dengshikou Xi Jie, 2010/6525-7531, ext. 3201).

Wangfujing. This area has the best pedestrian-friendly mix of historic sites, museums, kitchy Chinese shops, and outposts of Western consumerism, from Nike to Tiffany. Gongmei Dasha (200 Wangfujing Dajie) is a jade store that sells the real thing. Small Eats Street (Wangfujing Xiaochi Jie) is home to our favorite street food. The lamb skewers are yummy.

Ritan Office Building (Ritan Shangwu Lou). We always find great bargains in this collection of some 70 humble shops, where Marc Jacobs jackets and Diane von Furstenburg dresses cram the racks (15A Guanghua Lu).

G Tia'anmen (Gate of Heavenly Peace). Above the central door hangs a famous portrait of Mao flanked by inscriptions that read "Long Live the People's Republic of China" (left) and "Long Live the Great Unity of the Peoples of the World" (right). Climb to the dais above the portrait for a view along the former Imperial Way.

Chairman Mao Memorial Hall (Mao Zhuxi Jinnian Tang). In the center of Tia'anmen Square is the final resting place of the Great Helmsman, as he's known. Mao was chairman of the party from 1945 until his death in 1976.

16 Laoshe Teahouse. This traditional teahouse has undergone a



Practicing tai chi at the Temple of Heaven.

slick makeover, but still offers the same traditional tea and snacks, plus afternoon musical performances with traditional Chinese instruments. (Building 3, Zhengyang Shichang Qianmen Xi Dajie).

Uulichang. Named for a factory that once churned out glazed roof tile, this is a charming labyrinth of alleys brimming with life—still much as it was at the turn of the century. Look for **Rongbao Zhai** (Liulichang Xi Jie), one of the most renowned art shops in China.

Panjiayuan. Old photos, folk art, and traditional minority costumes are found in the bustling stalls of Beijing's best antiques and curio market.

Qian Dian (Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests). The current building is a replica of the 1420 original, which burned to the ground. The circular wooden hall, the centerpiece of the Temple of Heaven, is perhaps the most recognizable emblem of traditional Chinese architecture.

Temple of Heaven (Tiantan Gongyuan). Just after dawn, regular parkgoers practice tai chi, kung fu, or ballroom dancing in this huge park. Birds and crickets chirp in their cages as their owners take them for an early morning walk.

Beijing: The Best Lodging Masercard

Bamboo Garden Hotel. This courtyard guesthouse is the place to live out your Chinese emperor fantasies. Red lacquer walkways lead to rooms decked out in Ming dynasty style. 24 Xiaoshiqiao. 2010/5852-0088.

Commune at the Great Wall. This hotel's stunning architecture and location near the Great Wall, an hour from the city, make it a perfect retreat. Families will love the large kid's club. Exit at Shuiguan, Badaling Hwy. ♀ 010/8118-1888.

Grand Hyatt (Beijing Dongfang Junyue). The big draws are the amenities, including the city's best pool in a surreal tropical setting, and some of the best restaurants in the city. 1 Dong Chang'an Jie. 20 010/8518-1234.

Kerry Centre. Kerry Centre offers modern, nicely appointed rooms ideal for international business travelers, with commendable amenities, including a health club and pool. 1 Guanghua Lu. 20 010/6561-8833.

Lu Song Yuan. This midrange hotel has a prime location in the hutongs and plenty of character. Dimly lit rooms are decorated with Chinese antiques. 22 Banchang Hutong, Kuan Jie. 20 010/6404-0436.

The Peninsula. Perhaps Beijing's most luxurious hotel, with spacious rooms, tasteful modern Chinese art, and flawless service from a staff fluent in English. The Peninsula is also home to the city's most top-end shopping arcade. *8 Jinyu Hutong, Wangfujing.* **2010/8516-2888**.

Regent Beijing. Everything about this newish hotel is elegant and understated, from the muted tones of the rooms to the swimming pool. Rooms are spacious and outfitted with DVD players and flatscreen TVs. **99 Jinbao Jie 22 010/8522-1888.**

Ritz-Carlton, Financial Street. Though it caters to a business clientele, the Ritz is rife with homey touches. The beds are the comfiest in town. The basement health club has a luxurious pool. Also check out the brand new Ritz-Carlton Beijing in the heart of the thriving commercial district along Chang An Avenue (83A Jian Guo Rd.). 1 Jinchengfang Dong Jie. 20 010/6601-6666.

Swiss Road. Near the Lu Song Yuong, this modestly priced guesthouse is hard to find but worth the effort. Rooms are small; ask for one on the second floor. 48 Jianchang Hutong, Guozijian Dajie 2010/ 8409-0922.

The Westin Financial Street.

The Westin offers some of the most luxurious rooms in town, complete with marble bathrooms and a host of in-room amenities. Check out the poolside bar. Popular with investment-banker types. 9 Jinrong JieYi. 2010/6606-8866.

The swimming pool at the Grand Hyatt.



Beijing: The Best Dining Materia

Café Sambal. This chic, sophisticated Malaysian eatery is set in a cozy courtyard house with relaxed service and a balanced wine list. Try the mildly spicy Kapitan chicken or the lamb curry. *Doufu Chi Hutong* 43. 2010/6400-4875.

Cepe. If you want to splurge on a Western meal, come to the Ritz-Carlton for the best upscale Italian fare in the city. Specialties include lobster spaghetti and roasted veal. 1 Jinchengfang Dong Jie. 2010/ 6601-6666.

The Courtyard (Siheyuan).

Located in a restored courtyardstyle house with a bright, modern interior near the Forbidden City, this restaurant offers a fusion menu that includes cashew-crusted lamb chops and grilled chicken breast with lemon grass and coconut curry. **Donghua Men Lu 95. 20** 010/6526-8883.

Din Tai Fung. This popular Shanghainese restaurant with locations around Asia has the best *xiao long bao*, or soup dumplings. There's a kid's playroom on the second floor. 24 Xinyuan Xili Zhongjie. 2010/ 6462-4502.

Made in China (Chang An Yi Hao). This Northern Chinese restaurant is one of our favorites. The Peking duck is as good as it gets, and the open kitchen lets you watch the chefs in action. Save room for homemade ice cream and sorbet. Grand Hyatt, 1 East Chang An Ave. 2010/6510-9608.

Mala Youhuo. Write off the mockvillage decor as fun, and enjoy Beijing's most popular Sichuan restaurant, known for its friendly service and fresh fish. Guang'an Men Nei Dajie 81. 20 010/6304-0426. Mare. For a change of pace, try this Spanish restaurant with a wide range of tapas, a large wine list, and an elegant dining room. The mush-room risotto and chocolate molten cake are favorites. 14 Xindong Lu. 2010/6417-1459.

Noodle Loft. This Northern Chinese restaurant serves more kinds of noodles than you knew existed. One dish consists of a single, long, hand-pulled noodle. 20 Xi Dawang Lu. 20 010/6774-9950.

Three Guizhou Men. The sour and spicy Guizhou cuisine is popular with hip, trendy Chinese. The hot pot is good, but we never leave without trying the *cuigu* (ribs) and *tudou ni* (mashed potatoes). 2/F, Bldg. 8, Gangti Xi Lu.

Vineyard. A neighborhood lunch spot with a Continental menu and a sunny patio. The cafe has wireless and good wines. 31 Wudaoying Hutong (just north of the Confucius temple). 20 010/6402-7961.

Wangfujing Night Market (Wangfujing yeshi). Adventurous eaters should stop by for sticks of scorpions, which taste like popcorn, and silkworms, with their distinctive nutty taste. Wangfujinig yeshi, west of Sundongan Guangchang. No phone.



A bowl of noodles at Noodle Loft.

Beijing: The Best Shopping

Botao Haute Couture. Innovative designs and luxurious fabrics think "affordable couture." 18 Dongzhimenwai Dajie. 2010/ 6417-2472.

Deal. Deal has a wide range of international special edition shoes by Ice Cream, Nike, and Adidas. 280 Gu Lou Dong Dajie. № 010/6402-8262.

Fine Jewelers. Where the expats go for custom-made jewelry. A6 Gongti. 2 010/6592-7118.

Panjiayuan Jiuhuo Shichang. This large outdoor market has everything from Chinese curios to paintings, calligraphy, ethnic clothing, and ceramics. Be sure to bargain. South side of Panjiayuan Lu.

Shin Kong Place (Xin Guang Tiandi). The gold standard in Beijing for luxury shopping. Jianguo Lu 87. 20 010/6530-5888.

Torana. The place to go for genuine, hand-woven Tibetan rugs. *Kempinski Hotel.* 2 010/6465-3388, ext. 5542.

Wangfujing Dajie. At the south end of this street is a pedestrian-only area with shops, fast-food, and two of the city's top malls, the Sun (Xin) Dong an Plaza and the Oriental Plaza (Dongfang).

Beijing: The Best Nightlife

Ticket Tip

To buy tickets, try www.piao.com or www.piaowutong.com. Both will deliver tickets to center city hotels.

Chaoyang Theatre. This centrally located theatre's Traditional Chinese Acrobatics shows are always a hit with visitors (36 Dongsanhuan Beilu). Another good option is the **Tianqiao Acrobatic Theatre** (95 Tianqiao Market St.).

China Conservatory of Music. The place to go to hear traditional Chinese music (1 Anxiang Lu).

Lao She Teahouse (Lao She Chaguan). Acrobatics, opera, and dance, all in a teahouse setting. (Qianmen Xi Dajie 3).

National Grand Theatre. Opera, concerts, and theater now have a new home in this controversial, titanium-tinted glass dome that looks like an egg floating on a lake. (West of the Great Hall of the People.)

Zhengyici Xilou. This 300-yearold venue is our first choice for opera (Qian Men Xi Heyan Jie 220). For a more colorful and accessible performance, try the Huguang Guild House (Huguang Huiguan Xilou), Hufang Lu 3.

Chaoyang Theatre acrobats.



Xi'an: 6 Favorite Moments Mastercard

Yⁱan, the present-day capital of Shaanxi Provence and home to the ruling houses of the Qin, Han, Sui, and Tang dynasties, has a wide range of attractions. Seeing the Terracotta Warriors is a must, as is the Shanxi History Museum, but try to leave time for a walk or bike ride along the city walls. Beijing and Shanghai are only a few hours away by plane.

Ba Xi'an An (Temple of the Eight Immortals). Tucked away in a narrow alley is perhaps the most charming temple in town. Some of the older buildings house a flea market, which becomes a huge antiques market on Wednesday and Sunday mornings.

Bingmayong (Terracotta Warriors). This is the reason most visitors come to Xi'an, and it does not disappoint. Amazingly, the warriors are just one piece of Qin Shi Huang's attempt to reconstruct his empire for the afterlife—the tomb to the west is said to include a full reconstruction of the ancient capital. To fully appreciate the site, try to arrive early, and head to Pit 1, where more than 1,000 infantry are aligned in battle formation. Because the heads

Terracotta warriors.



were hand molded, no two are the same. The level of detail is striking. Don't miss the two magnificent bronze chariots in the small hall off Pit 1.

Da Qingzhensi (Great Mosque). Founded at the height of the Tang dynasty in 742, this is one of the most tranquil places in town. The covered alleyway on the way to the mosque is an enjoyable place to shop for souvenirs. Avoid visiting on Friday, when access is limited.

Gu Wenhua Jie. A great street for browsing en route to the Forest of Stelae (Beilin Bowuguan), a collection of huge stone slabs with calligraphic writing, much revered by the Chinese. You'll find paintings, musical instruments, and other great gifts along the street.

Shaanxi Lishi Bowugan (Shaanxi History Museum). The unrivaled collection of treasures displayed at this museum includes the frescoes (*bihua*), relocated from Tang burial mounds around Xi'an. You could easily spend 2 to 3 hours here.

3 Xi'an Chengqiang (City Wall). The largest and best-preserved city wall in China was built during the early Ming dynasty. Sections of the wall have recently been reconnected, and you can do the 14km (9-mile) loop by foot, rented bike, or golf cart. The South Gate (Nan Men) is the best place to start.

Xi'an: The Best Lodging Materia

Bell and Drum Hotel (Zhonggulou Dajiudian). A great location; clean, pleasant, decent-size rooms; and friendly management make this moderately priced hotel one of the best deals in the city. Shehui Lu 1. 2029/8812-8340.

Bell Tower Hotel (Zhonglou Fandian). This state-run hotel is a solid choice with a fantastic location. Rooms are spacious, and bathrooms are modern and clean. The lunch buffet is the best all-you-can-eat value in town. Nan Dajie 110.

Howard Johnson Ginwa Plaza Hotel (Jinhua Haosheng Guoji Dajiudian). Located right outside the southern city wall, this is one of the best-run new hotels in town, well equipped to deal with English speakers. Rooms are tastefully done, with modern bathrooms. Huangcheng Nan Lu 18. 容 029/8842-1111.

Hyatt Regency Xi'an (Kaiyue Fandian). This luxury hotel has a convenient location, a short walk from the restaurant and nightlife scene. The 2004 renovations have yet to show their age. Facilities include a health club and spa, airport shuttle, bike rental, and business center. Dong Dajie 158. 2029/8769-1234.

Sheraton Xi'an (Xilaideng Dajiudian). This hotel, located about 1.6km (1 mile) west of the city walls, has improved markedly in recent years, and the service is as good as it gets. Rooms are modern and well-appointed, with sturdy beds and plush carpets. Bathrooms are immaculate. Facilities include a large indoor pool and a health club. Fenghao Dong Lu 262 2 029/8426-1888.

Xi'an: The Best Dining

De Fa Chang. Dumplings are raised to a high art at this lively restaurant next to Bell Tower Square. Try the tasty *xiaochi. Zhonggulou Guangchang.* 2029/8721-4060.

Fanji Lazhi Roudian. This is the most famous vender of Shaanxi's most widely consumed snack, rou jia mo, finely chopped pork in a steamed bun. Zhubashi Jie 46.

Shang Palace. Located in Shangri-La Golden Flower (Jinhua Fandian), an upscale hotel, this restaurant serves fine Cantonese and Sichuan dishes in a modern setting. Try the abalone dishes and Shark Fin soup. Changle Xi Lu 8. 2029/8323-2981.

Tang Dynasty (Tang Yue

Gong). This Tang-style banquet hall delivers all your fantasies of Asia at once, with lavish costumes, a sixcourse banquet, and some amazing music and dance. *Chang'an Bei Lu* 75 2029/8782-2222.

The Sheraton Xi'an.



Chengde: 4 Favorite Moments

f you can make only one overnight side trip from Beijing,

make it to Chengde—the summer camp of the Qing emperors, built between 1703 and 1794. Chengde has one of the greatest concentrations of ancient buildings in China, plus extensive grounds—in effect, it's an 18th-century Chinese theme park. It is a 2½-hour drive on the new highway from Beijing.

Bishu Shanzhuang (Mountain Resort for Escaping the Heat). While the "Winter Palace," as Beijing's Forbidden City was sometimes called une the gradient of the formation of the source of the sour

called, was the creation of the indigenous Ming dynasty, the summer palace at Chengde was entirely the creation of the Manchu/Oing dynasty. The most important building is the Zheng Gong (Main Palace), which now serves as a museum for period furnishings and a few pieces of ancient military equipment. To the north lies the Weniin Ge (Pavilion of Literary Delight), a ripple-roofed southern-style building reached through a rock garden. A bit farther along is the handsome, nine-story Liu He Ta (Pagoda of the Six Harmonies), the most striking building in the park.

Potala Temple.



2 Wai Ba Miao (Eight Outer Temples). There were originally 12 temples, built between 1713 and 1780, and of those that remain. not all are open to the public. The most splendid is the Tibetan-influenced Putuozongcheng Zhi Miao (Potala Temple), with more than 60 halls and terraces. Don't miss the two nine-story sandalwood pagodas. Another must see is Puning Si (Temple of Universal Peace), with its giant wooden Guanyin figure (the Goddess of Mercy) more than 22m (72 ft.) high, the largest of its kind in the world. Enjoy a picnic on the shaded benches around the courtvards of Pule Si (Temple of Universal Joy).

3 Qingchui Feng (Sledgehammer Peak). Climb (30 min.) or take the cable car and enjoy a pleasant stroll across the hills and sweeping views of the valley.

Yingzi Dajie. Enjoy the lively nighttime market here for its color. There are several department stores here, too.

Touring Tip

Most larger hotels offer minibus tours, which are the best way to see many sights in a short time. More active travelers will want to rent bikes and peddle through the extensive palace grounds. You can also rent boats and electric carts.

Chengde: The Best Lodging

Lolo Grand Hotel (Lulu

Dajiudian). This is a comfortable, modern place with 83 clean, quiet rooms. 6 Cuiqiao Rd. 2 0314/ 590-8888.

Puning Si Shangketang Dajiu-

dian. Run by the monks of Puning Si (Puning Temple), this hotel offers cozy rooms in the west wing of the temple. Rooms are arranged around tranquil courtyards with rock gardens and ponds and are tastefully decorated. West Courtyard of Puning Temple. 20 314/205-8888.

Qi Wang Lou Binguan. When the weather's warm, peacocks roam the gardens of this courtyard-style hotel. The best rooms are in a newer building opened in 2004. *Bi Feng Men Dong Lu* 1. 20 0314/202-4385. Shanzhuang Binguan (Mountain Villa Hotel). This 370-room hotel sits directly across from the Mountain Resort. A full renovation was completed in 2005, and a real effort has been made to stay competitive with the newer hotels. 11 Shan Zhuang Lu. • 0314/209-1188.

Sheng Hua Dajiudian. Some claim this is Chengde's best-furnished hotel. Rooms are spacious and the best ones come equipped with a computer (and free Internet access). 22 Wulie Lu. 20 0314/227-1188.

Yunshan Fandian. This modern hotel, popular with tour groups, is one of the most luxurious in town. Rooms are clean and spacious, some with Internet access. 2 Ban Bi Shan Rd. 20 0314/205-5588.

Chengde: The Best Dining

Eating Local

As befits a former hunting ground, Chengde's specialty is game. Donkey, dog, and scorpion are on menus. So are venison (*lurou*), pheasant (*shan ji*), and wild boar. The best restaurants are in larger hotels. For street food, **Shaanxiying Jie** is a good bet.

Dongpo Fanzhuang. Four

branches, one opposite the train station and another a 5-minute walk east of the main entrance of the Mountain Resort, offer authentic Sichuan cuisine. Good bets are the crispy pork and seasonal specialties. 20 0314/210-6315.

Qianyang Dajiudian. The restaurant in this hotel features *lurou chao zhenmo* (stir-fried venison with mushrooms) and *queshao shanji* *pian* (pheasant slices). **18 Pule Rd.** 2 0314/205-1288.

Xin Qianlong Dajiudian. Adventurous eaters can try the plump dumplings stuffed with donkey meat and onions or pheasant with local mushrooms. Xinhua Lu. 20 0314/ 207-2222.

Yunshan Fandian hotel.





Changhai's colonial legacy gives it a character of its own.

This living museum of East meets West is China's capital of commerce, industry, and finance, and arguably the city that best shows where China is headed at the dawn of the 21st century. Following is a list of Shanghai's highlights, both the major attractions and some offbeat choices that capture what's unique about the city.

1 Jade Buddha Temple (Yufo Si).

Though it's an active Buddhist monastery, the real emphasis at Shanghai's most popular temple is tourism. The chief attractions are two gorgeous Buddhas, each carved from a single slab of Burmese jade.

Water Villages. There are numerous picturesque "water villages" nearby, where you can float along streams and canals, past quaint stone houses and classical gardens. Two villages stand out: Tongli and the more traditional Nanxun.

Jing'an Temple (Jing'an Si). Always lively and crowded, this temple has the longest history of any shrine in Shanghai: about 17 centuries. Its chief antiquities are a Ming dynasty bell and stone Buddhas from A.D. 420 to 589.

Shanghai Botanical Gardens (Shanghai Zhiwuyuan). This is the city's premier garden, with some of the best orchids in China. The hallmark section is the Bonsai Garden (Penjing Yuan), which requires a separate admission.

5 Longhua Temple (Longhua Si). This is Shanghai's largest temple, featuring the city's premier pagoda. For a small fee, you can strike the bell and dispel all worries—but only three times!

6 Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Centre (Shanghai Chengshi Guihua Zhanshihuan). This is more interesting than the name suggests, with an awesome scale model of urban Shanghai as it will look in 2020.

7 Shanghai Bowuguan (Shanghai Museum). One of China's top museums. Of particular interest are the Stone Sculpture Gallery, the Painting Gallery, and the Jade Gallery.

B Huaihai Lu. Savvy local shoppers visit the international boutiques and large department stores here for variety and good deals. Also check out nearby streets, such as Maoming Lu and Xingle Lu.

Dongtai Antiques Market (Dongtai Lu Guwan Shichang). Dealers specialize in antiques, curios, and porcelain.

Fuyou Antiques Market. A favorite morning hangout for weekend antique and curio hunting in the Cangbao Lou (building) in the Old Town Bazaar, Nanshi. Expect to find a lot of junk and an occasional treasure. Be prepared to bargain!

() Nanshi District (The Old Chinese City). Shanghai Old Street (Shanghai Lao Jie) was renovated in 1999 as an

Yu Yuan garden.



Old Town theme street, but this is still one of the least explored areas in town. Nearby are the Fuyou Antiques Market, the Huxingting Teahouse, and Yu Garden. For a taste of local life, don't miss the traditional shops on Xiaoshangpin Jie or the Dajing Lu Market.

Yu Garden (Yu Yuan). The most complete classical garden in urban Shanghai: a maze of Ming dynasty pavilions, elaborate rookeries, arched bridges, and goldfish ponds.

B Huxin Ting Teahouse (Huxin Ting Chashi). Escape the crouds at Shanghai's quintessential teahouse, which has floated atop the lake at the heart of the old town since 1784.

Huangpu River Cruise. The Huangpu is the city's shipping artery and its wharves are the most fascinating in China. The main cruise company is the Shanghai Huangpu River Cruise Company (Shanghai Pujiang Youlan). If you don't have time for the full cruise to the mouth of the Yangzi, a 1-hour cruise will suffice.

Peace Hotel (Heping Fandian). This Art Deco "palace," built in 1929, is the ultimate symbol of colonial Shanghai. It's closed for renovations until 2010, but you can still catch a glimpse of its famous green roof. **(b)** The Bund (Waitan). Stroll along Shanghai's famous waterfront, lined with colonial-era buildings, with dramatic views of modern Pudong across the river. Come early morning, when tai-chi practitioners are out in force, or after dark, when the Bund buildings are all aglow.

Oriental Pearl TV Tower (Dongfang Mingzhu Dianshi Ta). Asia's tallest TV tower, at a height of 468m (1,535 ft.), with an observation deck at just the right height for panoramic views of Shanghai.

Bhanghai Municipal History Museum (Shanghai Shi Lishi Bowuguan). This excellent museum tells the history of Shanghai, with special emphasis on the colonial period from 1860 to 1949.

Din Mao Tower (Jin Mao Dasha). An observation deck on the 88th floor offers views that rival those of the nearby Oriental Pearl TV Tower.

Ohel Moshe Synagogue (Moxi Huitang). This synagogue, built in 1927, serves today as a museum devoted to the Jews of Shanghai, whose numbers topped 30,000 just before World War II. For a tour of Jewish Shanghai, visit www.shanghaijews.com.

Views from the Bund.



Shanghai: The Best Lodging Materia

Four Seasons Hotel Shanghai (Shanghai Siji Jiudian). Impeccable service, discreet staff, and surroundings as classy as classy can get. The Shanghai Museum is a short walk away. *Weihai Lu 500*. 2021/6256-8888.

Grand Hyatt (Shanghai Jin Mao Junyue Dajiudian). Visitors enjoy staying in the Jin Mao Tower (from the 54th to the 88th floors), at press time the tallest hotel in the world, and swimming among the clouds in a cascading "sky pool." Views of the Bund and Pudong are fabulous. *Shiji Da Dao 88, Jin Mao Tower.* 2021/5049-1234.

JW Marriott (Wanhao Jiudian).

China's first Marriott opened in 2003 on the 38th to 60th floors of Tomorrow Square, a short walk from subway lines and major attractions. *Nanjing Xi Lu 399.* 2021/ 5359-4969.

Old House Inn (Lao Shi Guang

Jiudian). Budget travelers with a taste for nostalgia will love this boutique hotel in a 1930s house in the former French Concession area. Rooms are a bit small but tastefully decorated with classic Chinese furniture. Huashan Lu Lane 351, no. 16.

Portman Ritz-Carlton (Boteman Dajiudian). This is one of Shanghai's top hotels for business travelers and diplomats. Rooms are plush, elegant, and fitted with all the requisite amenities. Nanjing Xi Lu 1376, Shanghai Center. 20 201/6279-8888.

Pudong Shangri-La Hotel (Pudong Xianggelila Fandian).

This is one of the biggest and boldest hotels in town, with a sleek tower annex, a slew of trendy



The atrium at the Grand Hyatt.

designer restaurants, and unbeatable views of the Bund. *Fucheng Lu* 33. 20 021/6882-8888.

St. Regis Shanghai (Shanghai Ruiji Hongta Dajiudian). Guests here enjoy some of the most spacious rooms in the city. Expect rain forest showers, Bose radios, and butlers who can act as tour guides. Two floors are for women only. Dong Fang Lu 889. 2021/ 5050-4567.

Sheraton Grand Taipingyang (Xilaideng Hao Da Taipingyang Da Fandian). Business travelers appreciate this 27-story Sheraton halfway between the airport and downtown. The hotel can arrange tee times at the Shanghai International Golf and Country Club. Zunyi Nan Lu 5. 20 021/6275-8888.

Westin Bund Center (Waitan Weisiting Dafandian). This award-winning, 26-story hotel, a 5-minute walk from the Bund, offers spacious guest rooms plushly furnished, with large desks and other state-of-the-art business facilities. *Henan Zhong Lu 88.* 2011/6335-1888.

Shanghai: The Best Dining

Eating Local

The most celebrated local dish is hairy crab, a freshwater delicacy. Also popular are "drunken" dishes (crab, chicken) marinated in local Shaoxing wine and braised meat dishes. Shanghai dim sum includes a variety of dumplings (the local favorite is *xiaolong bao*), as well as onion pancakes and leek pies.

Crystal Jade Restaurant

(Feicui Jiujia). Serves arguably the best steamed dumplings (*xiaolong bao*) in town. Nearby is **T8** for Sichuan-seared king prawn, slowcooked lamb, and a chocolate plate to die for. Crystal Jade: Xintiandi South Block/Nanli 6-7; 2021/6385-8752. T8: Xintiandi North Block, House 8; 2021/6355-8999.

Jade on 36. Jade offers fine dining with a view to match (from the 36th floor of the Pudong Shangri-La Hotel). Look for inventive combinations like foie gras layered with passion-fruit gel and cocoa powder. Fucheng Lu 33. 20 021/6882-8888.

M on the Bund (Mishi Xicanting). This Art Deco masterpiece, with unsurpassed views, put Shanghai dining on the world culinary

Steamed dumplings.



map. Zhongshan Dong Yi Lu 5. 🍄 021/6350-9988.

Meilongzhen. This local institution, opened in 1938, still draws the crowds to its regional fare and Sichuan dishes. Nanjing Xi Lu 1081. 201/6253-5353.

Shanghai Uncle (Haishang Ashu). If you only get to try one Shanghainese meal, let it be here. Try the tender pine seed pork rip, traditional smoked fish, or the cheese-baked lobster with homemade noodles. *Tianyaoqiao Lu* 211. 2021/6464-6430.

Three on the Bund (Wai Tan San Hao). Built in 1922, this former Union Insurance Company Building now houses an art gallery and exclusive fashion outlets, but it's the fine dining that draws the crowds. Our favorites include Jean Georges, offering fine light French fare from world-renowned chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten (2021/ 6321-7733); the Whampoa Club, putting a creative spin on old Shanghai classics (2 021/6321-3737); and Laris, where larger-than-life Australian chef David Laris creates his own New World cuisine, with an emphasis on seafood (점 021/6321-9922).

Zaozi Shu. This popular, moderately priced, health-conscious restaurant eschews alcohol, dairy, MSG, and smoking, while serving organic tea and fruit as an appetizer. Songshan Lu 77. 2 021/6384-8000.

Shanghai: The Best Shopping

Amy Lin's Pearls (Aimin Linshi Zhubao Dian). This is the place to go in Gubei for pearls, jade, gold, and silver jewelry. Yili Nan Lu 39. 201/6275-3954.

Friendship Store (Youyi Shangdian). For many visitors, this is the ultimate in one-stop shopping, with a generous sample of nearly everything worth bringing home. You can start here, get a good idea of what's available at a fair price, shop the streets and malls, and then return for last-minute purchases. Changshou Lu 118. 20 021/6252-5252.

Hua Bao Lu. There are some 250 antiques stores on "Shanghai Old Street," near the Temple of the Town God. Mostly reproductions, but fun to browse. **Moganshan Lu 50.** The galleries here, in the northern part of town, are a must see for anyone interested in contemporary art. *Putuo District*.

Nanjing Lu. Shanghai's top shopping street, Nanjing Lu is where modern and traditional goods comingle.

Old Town Bazaar. Near Yu Yuan, this is the best place to shop for local arts, crafts, and antiques.

Shanghai Jingde Zhen Porcelain Artware. An excellent selection of high-quality ceramics. *Nanjing Xi Lu 1185*. 20 021/6253-3178.

Silk King (Zhensi Da Wang). Silk King is the top silk retailer; there are several branches. *Tianping Lu* 139. 20 021/6282-1533.

Shanghai: The Best Nightlife

California Club. A top spot for dancing, at Gaolan Lu 2. Also try Attica (Zhongshan Dong Er Lu 15), and Bon Bon (Huaihai Zhong Lu 1331).

Chinese Opera. Performances are offered regularly at the Yifu Theatre (Fuzhou Lu 701), with 2-hour abridgements. Great fun, with spirited acrobatics and martial arts.

Face. Face is among the best bars in the French Concession (Bldg. 4, Ruijin Er Lu 118). Also try **Glamour Room,** in M on the Bund, and the Moroccanthemed **Barbarossa,** in People's Park.

Peace Hotel Old Jazz Bar Band. Nightly shows are offered at the Huating Hotel & Towers (Cao Xi Bei Lu 1200), while the Peace Hotel undergoes renovations. Shanghai Circus World (Shanghai Maxituan). This multiact circus is headlined by acrobatics (Gonghexin Lu 226). Or try the Shanghai Centre Theatre (Shanghai Shangcheng Juyuan) for 30-act variety show (Nanjing Xi Lu 1376).

Peking Opera at the Yifu Theatre.



Hangzhou: 6 Favorite Moments

Seven centuries ago, Marco Polo pronounced Hangzhou "the finest, most splendid city in the world." Then as now, the city's main attraction was its famous **West Lake (Xi Hu)**, with its islets, temples, pavilions, gardens, and arched bridges constituting the supreme example of lakeside beauty in China. A bullet train speeds you the 185km (115 miles) to Hangzhou in about 80 minutes.

Bai Causeway (Bai Di). This man-made causeway to Solitary Island provides some of the lake's finest walking.

2 Cruising West Lake. On Hubin Lu and near Gushan Dao there are boats for hire. Choose from wooden rowboats, to small junks seating 20, to full-fledged ferries.

3 Lingyin Temple (Lingyin Si). This temple has been rebuilt 16 times since 326. The main attraction is the hundreds of Buddhist carvings along the riverbanks, some dating back more than 1,000 years.

Qinghefang Old Street (Qinghefang Gujie). This is a fun, raucous pedestrian street with puppet shows, teahouses, curio stalls, and traditional medicine shops, such as Huqing Yutang Chinese Medicine Museum, dating back to 1874.

Three Pools Mirroring the Moon (San Tan Yin Yue). Just off the southern shore of the Island of Small Seas are three little floating water pagodas. When the moon is full, candles are placed inside, giving the effect of moons shimmering on the water. The best land view of the pools is from the Su Causeway.

(3) Xi Hu (West Lake). Don't miss strolling or biking around the shores and causeways of Xi Hu and visiting the tiny islands by boat. Our favorite stop is Island of the Small Seas (Xiao Ying Zhou), the island at the center of the lake. In the center is the magnificent Flower & Bird Pavilion, a graceful structure with intricate wood railings, lattices, and moon gates.

West Lake.



Hangzhou: The Best Lodging

Hyatt Regency Hangzhou

(Kaiyue Judian). The hotel fronts West Lake within walking distance of the city center. Rooms are plush and modern. Facilities include a heated indoor pool and gym. *Hubin Lu 28*. 20571/8779-1234.

Jiexin Century Hotel (Jiexin Shiji Jiudian). This budget option on the eastern edge of the lake offers limited facilities and basic, clean rooms, with discounts in low season. Nanshan Lu 220. 20571/ 8707-0100.

Ramada Plaza Hangzhou Haihua (Huameida Guangchang Hangzhou Haihua Dajiudian).

An imposing lobby and 241 tasteful rooms in walking distance of the lake make this upmarket chain hotel a winner. Facilities include a heated indoor pool. Qing Chun Lu 298.

Shangri-La Hotel Hangzhou (Hangzhou Xianggelila Fandian). This is one of the most atmospheric hotels in town, with 382 rooms on the north shore of West Lake, surrounded by forest. Beishan Lu 78. 20 0571/8797-7951.

Sofitel Westlake Hangzhou (Hangzhou Suofeite Xihu Dajiudian). This is a comfortable 200-room hotel on the eastern shore of the lake, with an indoor pool and fitness center. Xihu Da Dao

333. 2 0571/8707-5858.

Lake View Hotel (Wanghu Binguan). A business hotel with a great location a 5-minute walk from the lake and reasonable rates. *Huancheng* Xi Lu 2. 20 0571/8707-8888.

Hangzhou: The Best Dining

Eating Local

Hangzhou cuisine features freshwater fish, notably carp and eel, as well as sliced, fatty pork cooked with Shaoxing wine (dongpo rou).

Kuiyuan Guan Restaurant. This century-old eatery serves great seafood and noodles. Try the fried noodles with shrimp and eel. *Jiefang Lu* 154. 19 0571/8702-8626.

Lou Wai Lou. This Hangzhou institution on Solitary Hill Island features local specialties such as Beggar's Chicken and excellent *dongpo* pork. *Gushan Lu* 30. 20 0571/8796-9023.

Shang Palace. This is the Shangri-La Hotel's signature restaurant, specializing in local and Cantonese dishes served by a well-trained staff. Try the Beggar's Chicken. *Beishan Lu* 78. 20 0571/8797-7951.

28 HuBin Road. Chinese cuisine from the Hangzhou region at the Hyatt Regency Hangzhou. *Hubin Lu 28.* **20** 0571/8779-1234.

Beggar's Chicken at Lou Wai Lou.



Suzhou: 7 Favorite Moments

Suzhou, 81km (50 miles) northwest of Shanghai, is worth a day's excursion for its classic gardens, its embroidery and silk factories, and its interlocking canals which have earned it the title "Venice of the East." Central Suzhou is now a protected historic district where no skyscrapers are allowed. More than 170 bridges arch over the 32km (20 miles) of narrow waterways within the moated city. Trains from Shanghai make the journey in just over 30 minutes.

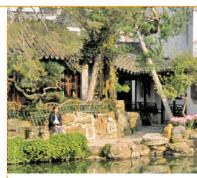
Forest of Lions Garden (Shizi Lin Yuan). A Buddhist monk built this garden in 1342, and it has four small lakes. Among our other favorite Suzhou gardens are Humble Administrator's Garden (Zhuo Zheng Yuan), a maze of connected pools and islands dating from 1523, and Lingering Garden (Liu Yuan), known for its viewing pavilions and the finest Tai Hu rock in China.

2 Master of the Nets Garden (Wang Shi Yuan). This tiny, perfect garden is a masterpiece, its tiny grounds expanded by the ingenious placement of walls, screens, and pavilions. Don't miss the lavish Hall for Keeping the Spring (Dianchun Yi). This is the former owner's study, furnished with lanterns and scrolls. Come for traditional music and dance on summer nights at 7:30pm.

Shantang Jie (Shantang St.). Enjoy a stroll among the old houses, narrow alleyways, and arched bridges, or take a canal boat ride.

Forest of Lions Garden.





Master of the Nets Garden.

Osuzhou Cixiu Yanjiusuo (Suzhou Embroidery Research Institute). This building is both a factory and a sales outlet. It's a must stop for tour groups, but don't let that stop you—some of the silk embroideries are exquisite.

Suzhou Museum (Suzhou Bowuguan). This is the new I. M. Peidesigned museum combining characteristics of a typical Suzhou garden with modern geometric designs.

③ Suzhou Silk Museum (Suzhou Sichou Bowuguan). This museum, just south of the train station, takes visitors through the history of Chinese silk, complete with silkworms, cocoons, and mulberry leaves.

Wumen Qiao. This large stone bridge is a prime place to view the ever-changing canal traffic.

Suzhou: 7 Favorite Moments

Suzhou: The Best Lodging

Gloria Plaza Hotel Suzhou (Kailai Dajiudian). This 294-unit property east of city center has all the expected amenities plus a sauna and a gym. Ganjiang Dong Lu 535. 0512/6521-8855.

Scholars Inn (Shuxiang Mendi Shangwu Jiudian). A solid budget choice conveniently located in the center of town. Rooms are simple but clean. *Jingde Lu 277*. 2012/6521-7388.

Shangri-La Hotel Suzhou (Suzhou Xianggelila Fandian).

This hotel opened in 2007, some 20 minutes west of the Old Town. Rooms are delightfully luxurious, with high ceilings and panoramic city views. Facilities include a full-size pool, outdoor tennis, and putting green. The popular Shang Palace Restaurant serves Cantonese and regional dishes. *Tayuan Lu 168.* 20 0512/6808-0168.

Sheraton Suzhou Hotel & Tower (Suzhou Wugong Xilaideng Dajiudian). The Sheraton is a perennial favorite that receives warm reviews for its quality



Sheraton Suzhou Hotel & Tower.

service and Chinese-garden-like features. Facilities include two pools (one indoor). Celestial Court serves good Cantonese cuisine. *Xin Shi Lu* 259. **2** 0512/6510-3388.

Sofitel Suzhou (Suzhou Xuanmiao Suofeite Dajiudian). This relative newcomer offers free Internet access and plush doubles. Ganjiang Dong Lu 818. 20 0512/6801-9888.

Suzhou: The Best Dining

Eating Local

Hotel restaurants offer the most reliable fare, but you'll also find good options on Taijian Nong. Popular dishes include stewed, shredded eel and sweet-and-sour mandarin fish.

Song He Lou (Pine & Crane

Restaurant). This 200-year old institution specializes in Suzhou delicacies such as *Gusu Luya* (marinated duck) and *Huangmen Heman* (braised river eel). Taijian Nong 72.

Taijian Lane. On this street are several historic restaurants, including Dasanyuan, Laozhengxing, Wangsi, and Deyuelou. All have menus rich in local specialties. Taijian Nong, Guanqiang St. 20512/6523-8940.

Yangyang Shuijiaoguan. This inexpensive, unassuming restaurant east of the city is known for some of the best dumplings in town. Shiquan Jie 420. 20 0512/6519-2728. Suzhou: The Best D

The Savvy Traveler Mastercard

Visa Requirements

All visitors to mainland China must obtain a visa in advance. Visa applications typically take 3 to 5 business days to process, although this can be shortened to as little as 1 day if you apply in person and pay extra fees. "L" (tourist) visas are valid for between 1 and 3 months. Usually 1 month is granted unless you request more, which you may or may not get according to events in China at the time. Double-entry tourist visas are also available. It varies, but typically your visit must *begin* within 90 days of the date of issue.

Getting There

China's international airlines often offer lower rates than foreign carriers for direct, nonstop flights. Many of them have partnerships with international airlines, so you can still cash in on those coveted frequentflier miles. Air China is one of the better airlines. It has recently joined international aviation network Star Alliance, and is currently partners with United. Beijing Capital International Airport (PEK), serves Beijing. In Shanghai, all international carriers arrive at Pudong International Airport (PVG). Some flights from within China arrive at Honggiao International Airport (SHA).

Getting to & from the airport: You will be pestered by taxi touts as soon as you emerge from Customs. *Never* go with these people. Instead, head to the taxi queue outside. From PEK, the approximate fare is ¥64 to ¥96 for a 20- to 30minute trip into Beijing, including the ¥10 highway toll. From PVG, expect to pay around ¥160 for the 1-hour trip to Shanghai. From SHA, the trip takes 20 to 40 minutes and costs ¥40 to ¥80.

Getting Around

BEIJING Taxis are everywhere and are a convenient way to travel around town if you avoid rush hour.

At the time of this writing, the subway is limited to five lines: two that serve the city center (Line 2, also known as the Loop Line, and Line 1), one that cuts into the eastern suburbs (Line 8), one that cuts a north-south line across Chongwen Men and Yonghe Gong (Line 5), and one that cuts a semicircular path around north Beijing (Line 13). An airport line will be open for a test run in April 2008. Fares for paper tickets are ¥3 to ¥5.

SHANGHAI Taxis are readily available in Shanghai as well. They cluster at hotels but you can just hail one from the street.

The Shanghai subway is inexpensive and easy to navigate, though extremely crowded during rush hour. **Metro Line 1**, the red line, runs roughly north-south; **Metro Line 2**, the green line, runs eastwest; and **Metro Line 4**, the purple line, makes a ring around the city.

The entire system is currently undergoing a major expansion. Fares are ¥3 to ¥8.

Currency

The word yuan (¥) is rarely spoken, nor is jiao, the written form for one-tenth of a yuan, equivalent to 10 fen (there are 100 fen in a yuan). Instead, the Chinese speak of kuai qian (pieces of money), usually abbreviated just to kuai;

Statue of Confucius.

Useful Phrases & Menu Terms

and they speak of mao for one-tenth of a kuai. Fen have been overtaken by inflation and are almost useless. Often all zeros after the last whole number are simply omitted, along with kuai qian, which is taken as read, especially in direct reply to the question duoshao qian (How much?).

Cellphones (Mobile Phones)

Beijing (and all of China) is on the GSM tri-band network, so make sure the

cellphone you bring is compatible. You may need to have your service provider "unlock" your cellphone to use it with a local provider. The cheap and painless way to get talking is to buy a SIM card at a mobile phone shop. A popular provider is China Mobile; they charge ¥0.60 per minute. Add money to your card with prepaid calling cards that range from ¥50 to ¥100 and are available at kiosks around town.

Useful Phrases & Menu Terms Mastercard

The Basics

ENGLISH	PINYIN
Hello	Nǐ hǎo
How are you?	Nǐ hǎo ma?
Fine. And you?	Wŏ hĕn hăo. Nĭ ne?
I'm not too well/Things aren't going well	Bù hǎo
What is your name? (very polite)	Nín guì xìng?
My (family) name is	Wŏ xìng
Excuse me/I'm sorry	Duìbùqĭ
I don't understand	Wŏ tīng bù dŏng
Thank you	Xièxie nĭ
Correct (yes)	Duì
Not correct	Bú duì
Excuse me/I'd like to ask	Qing wènyixià
What time is it now?	Xiànzài jĭ diăn?
Is that okay?	Xíng bù xíng?
I'm feeling ill	Wŏ shēng bìng le

Menu Terms

PINYIN	ENGLISH
babao zhou	rice porridge with nuts and berries
bănlì shāo chìzhōng	soy chicken wings with chestnuts
bāozi	stuffed steamed buns
bīngqílín	ice cream
chăo fàn	fried rice
chăo miàn	fried noodles
cōng bào niúròu	quick-fried beef and onions
dāndān miàn	noodles in spicy broth
diănxin	dim sum (snacks)
gōngbào jīdīng	spicy diced chicken with cashews
guōtiē	fried dumplings/pot stickers
hóngshāo fŭzhú	braised tofu
hóngshāo huángyú	braised yellow fish
huíguō ròu	twice-cooked pork

•		
3	PINYIN	ENGLISH
5	huŏguō	hot pot
5	jiānbing	large crepe folded around fried dough with plum and hot sauces
3	jiǎozi	dumplings/Chinese ravioli
201	jīngjiàng ròu sī	shredded pork in soya sauce
	mápó dòufu	spicy tofu with chopped meat
	miàntiáo	noodles
	mǐfàn	rice
	mù xū ròu	sliced pork with fungus (mushu pork)
	niúròu miàn	beef noodles
	ròu chuàn	kebabs/kabobs
	sānxiān	"three flavors" (usually prawn,
		mushroom, pork)
	shuĭjiăo	boiled dumplings
	suānlà báicài	hot and sour cabbage
	suānlà tāng	hot and sour soup
	sù miàn	vegetarian noodles
	sù shíjǐn	mixed vegetables
	tángcù liji	sweet-and-sour pork tenderloin
	tŭdòu dùn niúròu	stewed beef and potato
	xiàn bǐng	pork- or vegetable-stuffed
		fried pancake
	xīhóngshì chăo jīdàn	tomatoes with eggs
	yángròu chuān	barbecued lamb skewers with ground cumin and chili powder
	yóutiáo	fried salty donut
	yúxiāng qiézi	eggplant in garlic sauce
	yúxiāng ròu sī	shredded pork in garlic sauce
	zhēngjiǎo	steamed dumplings
	zhōu	rice porridge

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