



Stylish, sizzling Shanghai has everything up front and easy to find, taste and enjoy

It's been said that every city has an architectural icon that defines the very soul of the city. But Shanghai defies that — every skyscraper that's been built in recent years makes its own statement and stakes a unique claim in one of the fastest-rising metropolises in the world.

Every business traveller to Shanghai knows this by now — re-orientate yourself and get an updated update map of the city, even if you've been there just a year ago. Stylish Shanghai, sizzling Shanghai - call it whatever you like, the commercial capital of China is simply the place to be 'now'. Banish all thoughts that you're in a communist country while in Shanghai for the city's designer-label toggled fashion aficionados, sky-rocketing property prices, late-night partying “comrades” and expanding expatriate population will tell you a different story.

Business travellers arriving in Shanghai will be bewildered by the choice in high-end accommodation, dining and entertainment options.

Here's a guide to help you navigate through the maze.

Where to stay

Every international chain hotel worth its salt, has or is planning to have a presence in Shanghai. The hotels are new, so

travellers have the best in terms of product and service, especially when it comes to the executive floors. Rooms are relatively larger and Internet access (wired and wireless) is free. Most of the hotels are in Puxi area, the business district. Pudong, which is across the Huang Po river, is the newer side of the city which the authorities are pushing to develop as another business district. The only issue with being on the Pudong side of the river, is that it will take you about 45 minutes or more in the rush hour to get to downtown Shanghai. Taxis are banned from the tunnel under the river during peak hours.

The Grand Hyatt Shanghai

The modern-day pagoda shaped Jin Mao tower houses the Grand Hyatt Shanghai — the tallest hotel in the world.

The hotel is known for its view, offering panoramic views of the famous “Bund” (the waterfront promenade) and of the entire city.



St Regis Shanghai

There are only two St Regis hotels in Asia so far and they are both in China (Beijing and Shanghai). The St Regis butler (both men and women) is legendary. He or she would do anything from unpacking your luggage to organising a surprise party. They are your personal concierge and available round the clock.



Shangri La

The Shangri-La Hotel is located right on the waterfront in Pudong, looking across the Huang Pu river to the Bund and downtown Shanghai.

JW Marriott Shanghai

The two-year old hotel towers above the streets of downtown Puxi - it's the tallest there — and is close to the cultural and entertainment hub of People's Square and Xintiandi, the high-end hangout for expatriates. The hotel also houses the renowned Mandara Spa, the first in China.

What next?

Once you've chosen the roof over your head, it's time to explore Shanghai. The best way to start the day is to get out of your hotel and head out to the local restaurants for an authentic Shanghainese breakfast. A resurgence in Shanghai chic has seen many restaurants take on a sleek modern mantle, yet still serve homestyle Shanghainese food.

At the Old French Concession area, you'll find numerous restaurants, bars and cafes. For a taste of local food in a contemporary setting, try Henry (8 Xinle Road). It's popular among Shanghai's expatriates.

Try the xiao long bao (meat-filled dumplings) and get some soya-bean milk to go with that.

A part of the Old City that belonged to Chinese rule during colonial Shanghai, Yu Yuan still retains its traditional Chinese charm. It's one of the few places in modern Shanghai that feels "Chinese" and is popular with foreigners. Take time to visit the shopping bazaar at Yu Gardens.

The People's Square, a large park, represents an oasis in the middle of town. Head down to the Shanghai Museum if you are into the arts (201 Remin Da Dao, entry Rmb35). Its collection, documenting Chinese civilisation, is priceless and well presented.

Beneath the park, lies a shopping mall that is popular with the young and trendy.

For lunch, try the fashionable M on the Bund (7F, 5 The Bund). It is setting new standards for other haute cuisine restaurants in Shanghai. It's a place to see and be seen and attracts the beautiful people of Shanghai.

Once your lunch has settled down,



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The Bund...

why not try a massage at the Fu Ning Massage Centre of Blind Person (597A8 Fu Xing Zhong Lu)? For about Rmb60 (\$7.25), you get an hour's worth of full body massage that will leave you invigorated.

Another option would be to savour a bit of history and a cappuccino at the legendary Peace Hotel. While it may be dwarfed by skyscrapers nearby, it's steeped in history. It dates back to Shanghai's concession to the British and the birth of the Bund in the early 20th century. It was almost destroyed during World War II.

Options for dinner and after-dinner entertainment are mind-boggling. Sasha's (11, Dong Ping Road) is set in a restored colonial mansion, offering continental food amidst beautiful wood furnishings. Once the home of Chiang Kai Shek and his wife, Soong Mei Ling, during the civil war, it later fell into the hands of Mao

Ze Dong's wife Jiang Qin. Today, the chic Sasha's combines a bar, restaurant and patio.

Temple Saigon (1731 Huashan Lu), serving Vietnamese fare and set in a beautifully restored three-storey mansion, is one of the newer restaurants in town.

For an after-dinner activity, take in the sights of the Bund and one of the best ways to do that is a cruise. The latest luxury cruise boat to ply the waters of Huang Pu is the Sheng Rong Guo Ji.

The Ritz-Carlton hotel manages the glitzy boat. While it can accommodate corporate parties, meetings, product launches and such, it can also be hired for a romantic occasion just for a couple. (For information email srgj@ritzcarlton.com.cn)

The night should still be young after this. It's difficult to pin down the best place to party in Shanghai so here's a list to whet your appetite .

Xin Tian Di ("new heaven and earth") — the former site of the first Chinese Communist Party Congress — remains the main attraction. This mega-entertainment complex — is packed with restaurant-café, pubs, boutiques and art displays. Shanghai's vibrant club scene is probably the hippest with new places opening every week, it seems. They play anything from house and techno to blues and jazz.

California Club (2A Gaolan Road, inside Fuxing Park) is the hottest club in town and meeting point for the rich and sexy. Beside it is the decadent Park 97 — a great choice if you want to party the night away.

— Ashley Yew.