



Going to Shanghai for business? Do yourself a favor. Cross the Huangpu River, leave the skyscrapers of the Pudong district behind, and get lost in this city of 24 million people. That's when you'll discover why Shanghai is considered the Paris of the East.

You won't find quaint corner bistros, medieval cathedrals, or week-long festivals featuring next season's got-to-have-it fashions. But you will sample some of the world's best street food, wander through beautiful Buddhist temples, and enjoy unmatched shopping opportunities. You just have to get off the beaten path and join the crowds.

A clean, modern subway system is an inexpensive way to get around, yet I stick to taxi. For 14 Yuan (a bit less than two U.S. dollars) you can travel three kilometers; every three kilometers after costs an additional 35 cents.

Ask the concierge to write in Chinese the locations of a couple places to visit. Take a cab to the first destination. After sightseeing, walk the nearby back alleys for an hour or two and gain a sense of the neighborhood. When you get completely lost (as I repeatedly found myself), hail another cab and head for the next destination.



Do this all day: You'll experience things tourists never see and spend no more than 20 bucks on transportation.

Most visitors start off in The Bund watching cargo ships cruise past the skyline.



Here, you get a vivid impression of China's colonial period strolling past art deco landmarks built by British bankers after the Second Opium War. Resembling a wee bit of London, you'll still find expats discussing deals at view restaurants like *The House of Roosevelt* or *M on The Bund*.

An oversized bronze bull competes with the riverside statue of Mao Zedong, a reminder that this city has long been a center of high finance.

Turn at the Fairmont Peace Hotel – its green roof illuminated all night – and you quickly leave colonial China behind.



East Nanjing Road is one of the world's great shopping streets, distinctly Chinese in the same way London's Regents Street is distinctly British and New York's Fifth Avenue is distinctly American. It's renowned for both grand department stores and souvenir stands.

Closed to vehicle traffic, over 1 million pedestrians stroll East Nanjing Road very day checking out high-end jewelers, silk merchants, stores that seem like museums with carefully arranged displays of traditional Chinese scroll paintings, cultural centers, nightclubs, fine restaurants and local outlets of KFC and McDonald's.

In People's Square, where East and West Nanjing roads meet, older women practice T'ai Chi while younger women use lunch break to shop for clothing and accessory.

A fair warning for Western visitors: Steel yourself for the quick stroll across the square. You'll be spotted by street merchants offering everything from counterfeit jewelry to much-less-reputable wares. I lost track of the number of times young women (and even once, a young man), hip bumped me in the crowded square and repeated the same memorized lines:

"Hello mister. How are you going?" pausing to make sure you feel their hip against yours and don't mistake the contact as accidental. "What are you looking for? "Want massage?"

Head north or south, toward the Hongkou or Nanshi (Old Town) neighborhoods, and your adventure begins.

Within two blocks, you'll reach the point where more

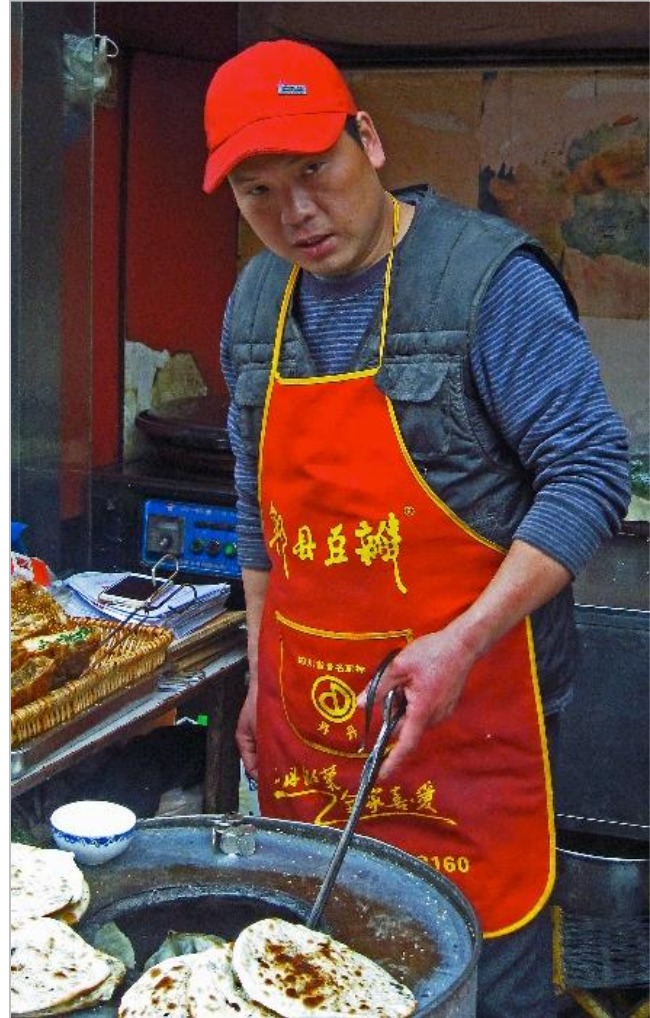


people and commerce move by bicycle and hand truck than by motorized vehicle. Once there, trust your nose to find lunch.

Just beyond Nanjing Road, I taste multiple types of kabobs; sesame pancakes cooked in metal drums; dumplings filled with chicken, vegetables, pork, seafood, and in one instance, hot broth. In Old Town, fresh hand-pulled noodles are prepared on the street.

The only thing I can't summon sufficient courage to taste is soup served from 20-gallon plastic buckets loaded in back of an industrial tricycle. Still, it smells delicious.

Sweet and savory, Shanghai cuisine is served in steamer baskets and dipped in vinegars, oils and soy sauce. Heavenly to taste, it takes skill to eat with chop sticks without leaving stains on your shirt.





Flagging another a cab, I hand the driver the note scribbled by the hotel concierge and he drives me to Jade Buddha Temple in the upscale Jing'an neighborhood.

Worshippers gather around open fires, lighting incense and praying for prosperity. The sweet, thick smell makes my eyes water.

Although filled with more than a thousand people, the temple offers a quiet respite from the streets outside.

Three impressive golden Buddhas inhabit the Grand Hall. Dozens of smaller statues, colorful lanterns and silk banners fill the rest of the temple. Upstairs are the two namesake jade Buddha statues, brought to Shanghai by a Burmese monk in the 1880s.



Touring the complex takes at least an hour – longer if you spend 10 Yuan to view the sitting and reclining jade Buddhas in areas

where photography isn't allowed.

Back in the surrounding neighborhood, I push beyond nearby souvenir stores. Half a mile away, I discover a small shop packed with fine old furniture. It's there I get a lesson in haggling, Chinese style.

A husband and wife run the store. She rocks the baby, he sells the merchandise. I'm on a business trip, so there's no way I'm



going to purchase an antique dining table or a full-sized armoire. There's not enough room in my suitcase.

To communicate, we rely on the universal language of pointing. The storeowner beckons me to follow him downstairs where, besides even more furniture, is a giant room filled with cloisonné vases, jade carvings and porcelain figurines.

I pick up a small tea cup, and the owner rushes to my side to show me five matching cups and a porcelain tea pot. I not planning to buy yet, somehow, I sense I have already committed.

Pulling a pad from his pocket, he jots down a figure: 1,500¥. More than 200 U.S. dollars.

It's a pretty tea set, but not something I want to buy. I try to walk away.

The owner begins pantomiming aggressively. Poking his chest, he speaks loudly, stands on tip toes and lifts his palm above his head – letting me know it's his job to start the bidding high. Then he pokes me in the chest, bends down and waves his palm just above the tops of my shoes. I understand. I'm supposed to bid low.

I write my opening bid on the pad. 200¥. Less than 30 bucks. The owner rolls his eyes and lets out an exaggerated sigh. Then, he thrusts out his right arm and shakes my hand, affirming that we have a deal.

While boxing up the tea set, he pokes my chest in a good-natured way, shakes his head and again waves his palm at shoe level. Clearly, he thinks I need to be a better negotiator to continue shopping China. We laugh as I step out on the curb and grab a cab to the next location.

Officially known as Luwan, most Western visitors refer to this area of town by its colonial moniker – The French Concession.

While the British tried to recreate the architecture of London in China, the French recreated the feeling of – but not the look of – Paris in this section of Shanghai.

Tree-lined boulevards in a neighborhood filled with bakeries, restaurants and boutiques. There's even a residential neighborhood of brick buildings and arched alleyways named Cité Bourgone.



Frequented by writers, artists and intellectuals before the Chinese Revolution, future leaders Sun Yat-sen and Zhou Enlai once lived in The French Concession – their homes now small museums.

Like central Paris, this neighborhood is best explored on foot. Take time to people watch, window shop, soak in the atmosphere and don't worry about seeing the tour-guide sights.

When it's time for serious shopping, head to Tianzifang where alleyways have been transformed into more than 200 artist studios, restaurants, shops and bars. Just beware: While haggling is common across China, in Tianzifang's higher-end shops, the price on the tag is what you should expect pay.

Visiting just after Lunar New Year, red lanterns hang in every alleyway and major streets are covered with colorful umbrellas overhead.



The final spot where I got totally lost during four days wandering Shanghai is the Yuyuan Gardens and Bazaar.



Guidebooks call it one of the nation's best examples of a traditional Chinese garden, but it's not at all what I'm expecting. More like a cross between Disneyland, a megamall on steroids and a Chinese theme park set in a gritty part of town.

Thoroughly enjoyable all the same!

The 450-year-old garden is surrounded by hundreds of shops, an opportunity to bargain for fine silks, knockoff wrist watches and treasures to bring home.

At one store, a jade merchant dangles a necklace over the hot flame of a disposable cigarette lighter, repeatedly saying, “Not fake, not plastic.” It doesn’t necessarily convince me the jewelry is authentic, but her efforts prompt me to spend ten bucks more than planned to buy the necklace for my wife.

(High-pressure sales are just one indication that capitalism is alive and well in this Communist country. Clues are everywhere, including illuminated signs above major highways listing closing prices on global stock exchanges.)



Like other parts of Shanghai, you’ll find hidden gems by wandering beyond the tourist areas. The adjacent Chen Xiang Monastery of Buddhist nuns is just one example.

In the streets outside the bazaar, I discover great places to eat and a quaint shop – wedged among small stores and outdoor stands selling plumbing supplies, hand tools and kitchenware – with a wonderful collection of cloisonné plates, vases and jars. I purchase a jar and the owner invites me to take her picture.





So, what if you can't find time during your business trip to cross the river? There's still plenty to do in Pudong.

The 100th floor observation deck of the Shanghai World Financial Center shouldn't be missed. Overcome fear of heights by looking down through the glass floor at the skyline below. Or look up at the adjacent Shanghai Tower – the world's second-tallest building.

Check out the spectacular lobby of the Grand Hyatt at the nearby Jinmao Tower.



Crane your head back to catch a glimpse of 88 floors of gold-colored balconies connected by a glass elevator tube. Visit the Cloud 9 bar and drink in the view from the top of Jinmao. Cocktail prices might be nearly as high as the tower, yet worth it since it is the best place in the city to watch sunsets.

And when the sun goes down, Shanghai's light show truly begins as skyscrapers are illuminated by ever-changing LCDs while the Oriental Pearl Tower shifts colors all through the night.

