Shanghai Deep Dive

Shanghai - 5 days / 4 nights

Sample itinerary - Subject to availability

Travel style: tailor made

Overview

Treaty port to skyline: the layers of the modern Chinese city.

The journey

Five days inside Shanghai's layered story - treaty-port riverside, shikumen lanes, museum bronze, and the water town on the canal edge. The city that invented the modern Chinese metropolis, walked at street level.

Highlights

- Shanghai Museum's bronzes and porcelains
- The Bund's treaty-port facades and the Pudong skyline across it
- Yu Garden and the City God Temple bazaar at opening
- Shikumen lanes of the former French Concession
- Zhujiajiao water town by canal
- Wukang Road's plane-tree streets

Day by day



DAY 1 Arrive Shanghai

Met and settled into the Concession's plane-tree streets - the neighbourhood that was a European city inside a Chinese one from 1849 to 1943, and still reads like it. The first evening is the Bund from the water side: the treaty-port facades on one bank, the Pudong towers on the other, a century and a half of ambition facing itself across the river. Early night; the museum tomorrow. (Arrival day: keep it light - an early night is the best thing for the week ahead., Arrival day: keep the evening light - the first night sets the pace for the week ahead.)

Meals: - - Hotel: Shanghai, former French Concession

DAY 2 Shanghai Museum & the old city

Morning with a specialist docent in the museum's bronze gallery - the ritual vessels' inscriptions are China's own written archive - and the porcelain rooms that track the kilns' thousand-year arms race. Afternoon in the old city: Yu Garden's Ming-dynasty rockeries and zigzag bridge (raised from 1559 by a Sichuan governor for his father, at roughly a province's two-year income in Taihu rock), then the City God Temple bazaar as the snack lanes warm up. Evening free around the Bund's night side. (A day that works at any pace - the guide reads the group and adjusts on the ground., The guide can flex the order inside the day; the pace is set around the group.)

Meals: B - Hotel: Shanghai, former French Concession



DAY 3 The Concession on foot

The former French Concession walked properly: Wukang Road's mansion arcades, the shikumen lanes - the stone-gate terrace housing Shanghai invented for its new middle class - and Xintiandi's restored blocks where the Communist Party's first congress met in 1921, a fact the guide lets the architecture tell. Lunch is a Concession-era bakery; the afternoon takes in the Shanghai History Museum's treaty-port decades. Evening: the West Bund's museum row or free time as the group prefers. (Keep an hour of slack in the afternoon; the best moments on this route are rarely scheduled., The guide can flex the order inside the day; the pace is set around the group.)

Meals: B, L - Hotel: Shanghai, former French Concession

DAY 4 Zhujiajiao water town

Half a day out to Zhujiajiao, the Ming-era canal town whose rice and cloth trade built Shanghai's hinterland: stone bridges over the Caogang river, the oldest dated to the Song dynasty, sampan runs and tea houses that still serve the ferry wait. Back in the city by mid-afternoon for Tianzifang's craft lanes or Nanjing Road's department stores, and the evening open - the list runs from dumpling counters to rooftop bars. (Pace is set by the group today, and the local guide knows where the quiet hour sits., The guide can flex the order inside the day; the pace is set around the group.)

Meals: B - Hotel: Shanghai, former French Concession



DAY 5 Depart

Transfer timed from check-in; the morning fits a last Bund walk or one more long breakfast. The UK desk stays reachable until boarding, and Shanghai links forward cleanly - Hangzhou and Suzhou by high-speed rail, or the river journey west - for whichever brief comes next. (Departure day: bags out early and three hours at the airport keeps check-in unhurried., Departure day: bags out early, three hours at the airport, no rushed check-in.)

Meals: B - Hotel: -

What makes this journey different

- Shanghai Museum's bronze and porcelain galleries with a specialist docent - the bronzes alone repay the trip.
- The former French Concession on foot: plane-tree lanes, shikumen courtyards and the 1920s houses where the Party's first congress and the city's jazz age shared one neighbourhood.
- Yu Garden and the City God Temple bazaar explained as Ming merchant culture, not a souvenir queue - early, before the tour buses.
- Zhujiajiao's canals as the working water town behind the city's rice and cloth wealth, plus the Bund at both ends of the day.

Where you stay

A four-star in the former French Concession's tree streets or a five-star Bund-facing suite - location is the luxury here, and both options put the lanes in walking range.

Food & local life

Xiaolongbao at the source diners, red-braised and drunken crab in season, Concession-era bakeries and the coffee houses that make Shanghai the caffeinated city it is - with the City God Temple's snack lanes as the afternoon institution.

Included

+ Accommodation in the agreed grade, with breakfast
+ Private guide and private vehicle on touring days
+ All internal transport between cities as stated - high-speed rail, internal flights and transfers
+ Entrance fees for the sites named in the itinerary
+ Meals as stated (B = breakfast, L = lunch, D = dinner)
+ Drinking water in the vehicle, and a 24-hour emergency contact while the group is in China
+ Shanghai Museum specialist docent
+ Zhujiajiao half-day by private car

Not included

- International flights to and from China
- Chinese visa or visa-application costs
- Travel insurance, including medical and cancellation cover
- Meals not marked in the itinerary, drinks and personal spending
- Anything listed under subject to confirmation until it is confirmed

Planning note

Advance reservation may be required during peak travel periods. Your quotation confirms current availability, opening arrangements and any booking lead times.

Customisation

Every framework can be re-built around your client's dates, party size, hotel grade, pace and interests - or combined with scheduled small group departures where budget matters. Send us the brief and we will quote in writing.

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