LANE & RIVER · FIELD GUIDE

The first 48 hours in Shanghai.

What to sort before you land, how to get in from the airport, what to eat first — and two walks you can do without us.

SHANGHAI, ON FOOT · EDITION 1 · 2026

01 · BEFORE YOU LAND

Four things to sort on the plane.

Data

Buy an eSIM before you fly. A local SIM needs a passport and a shop; an eSIM works the moment you land.

Payments

Alipay and WeChat Pay both accept foreign cards now. Set one up before arrival; cash is still useful for small shops.

Maps

Google Maps is unreliable here. Apple Maps works well on iPhone; Amap is better if you can read Chinese.

Language

Screenshot your hotel address in Chinese. Drivers and metro staff will read it faster than your pronunciation.

One number to save: 120 for an ambulance, 110 for police. Most hotels will call for you, but it is worth having.

02 · GETTING IN

From the airport to the city.

FROM	BEST OPTION	TIME	COST
Pudong (PVG)	Maglev to Longyang Road, then metro line 2	45–60 min	¥50 + ¥4
Pudong (PVG)	Taxi or ride-hailing	45–70 min	¥160–220
Hongqiao (SHA)	Metro line 2 or 10	30–45 min	¥4–6
Hongqiao (SHA)	Taxi	25–40 min	¥70–110

TWO PRACTICAL NOTES

Metro stations have English signs and ticket machines with an English button. You need your luggage scanned at every station — allow an extra ten minutes.

Taxis at the official rank are metered. Ignore anyone inside the terminal asking if you need a car.

03 · FIRST MEAL

What to eat before you do anything else.

BREAKFAST

Shengjian — pan-fried pork buns, crisp underneath, soup inside. Eat them standing, from a window, before ten in the morning.

LUNCH

A bowl of *scallion oil noodles* or *wontons in clear broth*. Both are cheap, quick, and hard to get wrong.

COFFEE

Shanghai has more coffee shops than most European cities. The good ones are small, have no English menu, and roast on site.

> **Etiquette, briefly:** tip nothing, share dishes, never stick chopsticks upright in rice, and let the oldest person start.

04 · TWO WALKS

If you only have a morning and an afternoon.

MORNING · THE WATER

Start at Waibaidu Bridge, walk east along Suzhou Creek to the Bund, then take the public ferry from Jinling Road to Dongchang Road. Four minutes on the water, the best value view in the city. Walk back through Lujiazui and take the metro home.

AFTERNOON · THE TREES

Wukang Mansion, then Wukang Road south to Anfu Road, west to Wuyuan, and finish on Julu for coffee. Stay under the plane trees; the interesting things are at ground level — barbers, bakeries, repair shops, date stones above doorways.

The rule we use: three places, not thirty. Sit down once. Look up more than you look down at your phone.

05 · IF YOU WANT COMPANY

We walk these routes with a host who lives here.

Two private routes, four hours, up to six guests, in English. You can also book a health check-up or an English-speaking Chinese medicine consultation through us.

If this guide was useful, the walks go further: the stories behind the buildings, the names above the shops, the reason the road bends.

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