

Shanghai's an incredible place, but to make life easy, Port Adelaide die-hard and occasional Shanghai-visitor Tom Jankovic takes you through all your travel essentials...

Tommy's guide to Shanghai travel

My name is Tom Jankovic, and I'm a Port member. I've been to Shanghai four times, and spent four months working there back in 2015.

I'm sure all those making the trek to Shanghai are really excited. Shanghai is an amazing city with so much to see and do. As you would expect there are some cultural differences. I thought I'd share some handy tips to help make your stay a bit easier, and make sure we all hit the ground running.

Getting around – Sim cards/metro card/taxis

For ease of travel, but not necessarily the best deal, pick up a sim card before you leave baggage collection/customs. It's quick and convenient, it's always good to have access to internet when you're trying to show your Chinese speaking taxi driver where you are staying, or access to maps when you've gotten lost exploring the city (much better than paying those roaming charges).

Metro cards are also handy for traveling around, you can pick one up at the airport and you can load them at any metro stop across Shanghai. The metro card can be returned at the airport on departure and you be reimbursed for the card.

Taxis are not expensive, but it will add up and they can be hard to find at peak hours.

At the airport it is much easier to find English speaking workers so make sure you use this to your advantage. Check out your local metro stop near your hotel and remember the name, downloading an app showing the lines and stations is always helpful.

Water

If you want to lower your chances of getting sick, remember to take bottled water home (hotels will provide water, but for those in apartments or Airbnb you'll want to buy some on the way home).

Also:

Keep a bottle handy for using to brush your teeth

Try not to open your mouth in the shower

Toilets

The bane of the foreign travellers, toilets can be one of the more challenging parts of living/holidaying in China. *Carry your own tissues*

First, carry your own tissues. I cannot stress this enough, most public bathrooms in Shanghai do not have toilet paper.

There are often paid public bathrooms around that will only cost a few yuan and is well worth it compared to the state of many public restrooms.

As a westerner we can usually get away with entering hotels or shopping centres just to use the restrooms.

For the part most westerners do not want to hear, toilet paper is not simply flushed down the drain. Unless you want a clogged toilet, remember there will always be a bin next to the toilet (yes this is

where toilet paper goes). This is emptied by daily room cleaning at hotels (or by yourself if you stay in Airbnb/apartments).

Cash

You are not in Australia, so say bye bye to pay-wave and hello to wallet exploding currency (100 yuan is the biggest denomination). Unless you are in major stores and hotels you'll need to carry cash on you. Especially when you are passing by some mouth-watering restaurants, or stopping in your local family mart/7 Eleven.

Crossing the road

For many first-time travellers to China crossing the roads can be quite a scary experience. Throw all your notions of pedestrians having the right-of-way out.

Scooters will go down the sidewalk to escape traffic and cars can still turn on green walk lights, and they will not patiently wait for you to cross the road.

Make sure to get a feel for roads before you attempt to jaywalk (illegal in Australia and foolhardy in China).

Don't forget, cars drive on the opposite side of the road in China.

Safety

Be wary as you would in Australia, but Shanghai is a very safe place. This city doesn't sleep so you'll always find people on the street at any time of the day or night. Having your hotel address written down is always handy especially if you're thinking of a night out. Phone batteries can go down fast and taxi drivers don't always speak much English, so think ahead.

Scams

We all know that you're not getting a real Rolex for \$20AU from a guy on the street, but the real scam to watch out for is 'The Tea House Scam' -a scam targeted at foreigners.

These scammers often speak perfect English, are usually young and attractive, and hang out at major tourist destinations. They will often will strike up a conversation by asking you to take a photo for them, and will invite you to try Chinese tea and help them practice English, the result will be them leaving you with a huge bill to pay.

I'm not saying don't trust anyone asking for a photo, just please don't go to a teahouse with people you just met on the street and if you do contact the police.

Social Media

You will probably make friends in Shanghai - so what's the best way to keep the conversation going? WeChat of course! This is the social messaging app in China - it's great if you want to contact friends or business partners in China. Make an account before you go, and it will require a phone number to receive a message to create the account.

Language

Don't be scared. Yes, you can get away without knowing any Mandarin, but I think as a show of respect it's always good to know a little.

You'd be surprised how genuinely happy people can be just from just hearing you say 'ni hao' (Hello) and 'xie xie' (thanks).

Don't be afraid to try!

These two apps can be a real help;

- 'Pleco' – an amazing dictionary app helpful for looking up words and showing sentences as well as pronunciation.
- 'Google translate' – You can type in sentences or take a photo of a menu or sign to show what it says (not perfect, but helpful).

Enjoy yourself!

Shanghai is an amazing city, prepare to be awestruck. Don't let this trip go to waste hiding in your hotel. Here are just a few things to do.

Go for a walk or have a coffee in the French concession (Jump off the metro at Hengshan Lu on line 2), and drop by to the Australian sports pub 'The Camel'.

Head to the 'Yu Garden' (Yu Garden stop line 10) and see the 'Chinatown' of Shanghai.

Visit Xintandi (line 10) for some western style bars and restaurants (A favourite area for foreigners).

Head over to Tianzifung (Dapuqiao stop line 9) and take some photos of the cool shops and alleys and pick up some gifts to take home for family and friends.

Walk around 'People's Square' and visit the museum, then walk down Nanjing Lu and see their pedestrian street, and follow it all the way down to 'The Bund' on the Huangpu River and look across at the Shanghai CBD (Best seen when the buildings light up at night).

Head to Jing'an, and see the huge temple and go shopping in one of the main shopping districts.

You could pay entry to go to the Observation deck at the Oriental Pearl TV tower or Shanghai World Financial Centre building (better known as the bottle opener), or a neat trick is to instead go a few floors lower and have a nice drink at the Hyatt bar on the 92nd floor and enjoy the view (No entry fee but you'll have to buy a drink).

Shanghai is not a concrete jungle, there are lots of open spaces and parks to enjoy and they are well used by locals for dancing, chess and sports.

Try the local food, I find more people get sick ordering bad western food than good Chinese food. A simple trick is to eat where locals eat, don't go to that food vendor on the street with no customers.

Head to the 'People's Square' metro station on a work day and enjoy seeing one of the busiest stations in world, or try your hand at jumping in a train at peak hour.

Wake up early and try the breakfast pancake called 'jianbing', you'll see stalls for these all around (look out for vendors breaking eggs on a circular hotplate) with everyone from business men and woman to children and the elderly lining up to order one.

Shanghai is a hub for business and travel, expect to meet people from all around the world.