

This section aims at providing a big picture of Shanghai serving the practical needs of a first or second time traveller to Modu | 魔都. For those amongst us, who are more interested in the development of the city a visit to the [Shanghai Urban Planning Museum](#) is hotly recommended (> walk 2). Great exhibitions and updates on infrastructure development will certainly sharpen the sense what a human feat it is to operate a metropolis of this size.

All links provided below redirect to the Chinese original source if not otherwise indicated. To obtain English information it is most convenient to either search on [Smart Shanghai](#) or [Time Out Shanghai](#), where most directions, entry fees and opening hours are provided. It is moreover strongly recommended to check out following websites for English language or bilingual events.

[Royal Asiatic Society Shanghai](#): events on Chinese culture and history organized by Shanghai branch volunteers of London based RAS; open to members and non-members; moderate admission fees

[Shanghai Review](#): Ideas and Observations on China and the Social Sciences; organized by Frank Tsai; no membership requirement; moderate admission fees

[Green Initiatives](#): Shanghai based environmental protection NPO initiated by architect and strategic designer Nitin Dani; shows great documentaries and organizes environment awareness campaigns; no membership requirements; moderate admission fees

[Shanghai Foreign Correspondents Club](#): discussions and presentations on current China affairs with a journalistic tinge; membership requirement; moderate admission fees

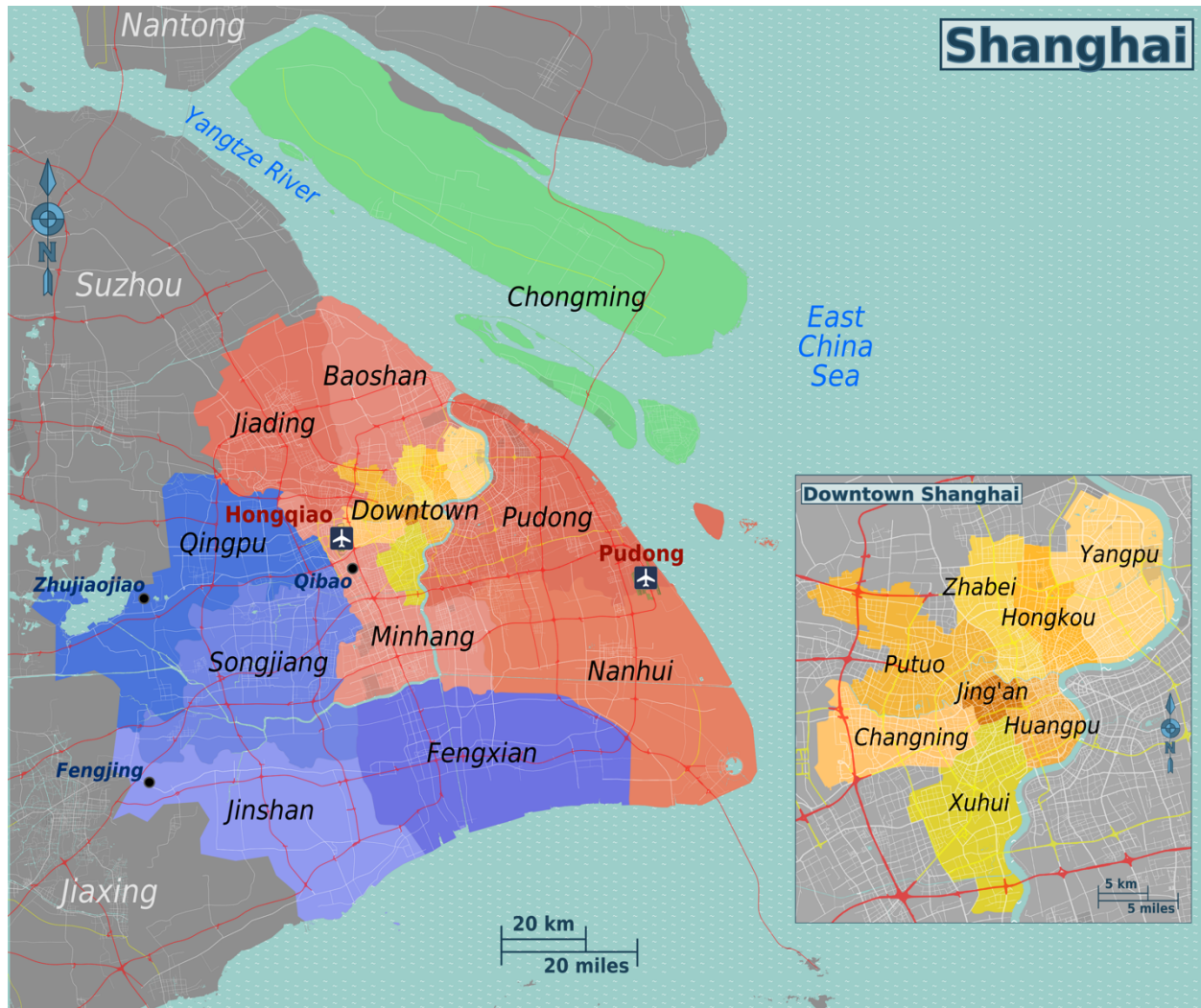
[Start Up Grind Shanghai](#): presentations of new entrepreneurial ventures; no membership requirements; moderate admission fees

[Flaneur Walkshops](#): city walks with a cross-cultural narrative guided by experts and organized by team of consulting agency constellations.

Shanghai is split in 7 downtown districts and 9 suburban districts (see [here for more on Shanghai's administrative division](#)), which encompass an area of roughly 6000 km²; that is about half the size of Beijing, but six times the area of Hong Kong.

Population data varies greatly, but oscillates somewhere between 25 and 30 million depending on who and when counted; numbers drop typically by 1/3 for Chinese New Year holidays and Golden Week; so that's the time to hit town, folks.

If you don't have family to visit or business to attend in the suburbs, you will spend 90% of your time in downtown and the remaining 10% in Lujiazui | 陆家嘴, the financial hub at the far Western tip of Pudong, where most of the iconic skyscrapers are located.



Downtown districts:

1. [Huangpu | 黄浦](#): population of 900k; main sights: remains of pre-colonial Shanghai, People's Square, Nanjing East Road, Bund
2. [Hongkou | 虹口](#): population of 800k; main sights: Japanese concession; northern Bund
3. [Yangpu | 杨浦](#): population of 1.3m; main sights
4. [Jingan | 静安](#): population of 1m; main sights: Jingan Temple, Nanjing West Ave; English Concession heritage architecture
5. [Putuo | 普陀](#): population of 1.1m; main sights: Jade Buddha Temple, Caojiadu Flower market, Tongchuan Fish market
6. [Changning | 长宁](#): population of 700k; main sights: Zhongshan Park, English Concession heritage architecture
7. [Xuhui | 徐汇](#): population of 1.2m; main sights: French Concession heritage architecture

Suburban districts:

1. Chongming 崇明	2. Jinshan 金山
3. Minhang 闵行	4. Qingpu 青浦
5. Fengxian 奉贤	6. Jiading 嘉定
7. Songjiang 松江	8. Baoshan 宝山
9. Jinshan 金山	10. Pudong 浦东

Travelling times are despite excellent public transport not to be underestimated. It takes about 1 hour by public bus or 2 hours by metro from [Pudong International Airport](#) to Jingan District. Calculate about 45' from Jingan to [Hongqiao Airport](#). Arrival and departure information for both airports can be checked [here](#) in both Chinese and [English](#).

Shanghai provides currently 14 subway lines and the city government adds roughly one more line each year. Lines 2 and 10 are the main East-West connection, lines 1, 7 and 11 the main North-South connections. Most information in regard to the subway is available in both [Chinese](#) and [English](#). Its recommended to download the metro app for iOS or Android from the website.

The speed at which public infrastructure improves is breathtaking, but the size of the city and population and the increasing number of private vehicles make these improvements look like not being enough. Latest improvements to the public transportation network and plans for the years to come can be retrieved from the [Shanghai Municipal Transport Commission | 上海市交通委员会](#) website.

[Shanghai public transport debit cards](#) can be purchased at all major subway stations and are valid for metros, buses and ferries. A deposit of CNY 20 is to be paid for the SPTTC plastic card, which is usually charged with CNY 30 to 100. Children up to 130cm are entitled to use public transport FOC. Fees of CNY 2 for bus and CNY 3-6 for metro rides make the public transport not only the most convenient, but also the most economic way to get around. Operating hours of all metro lines can be retrieved [here](#).

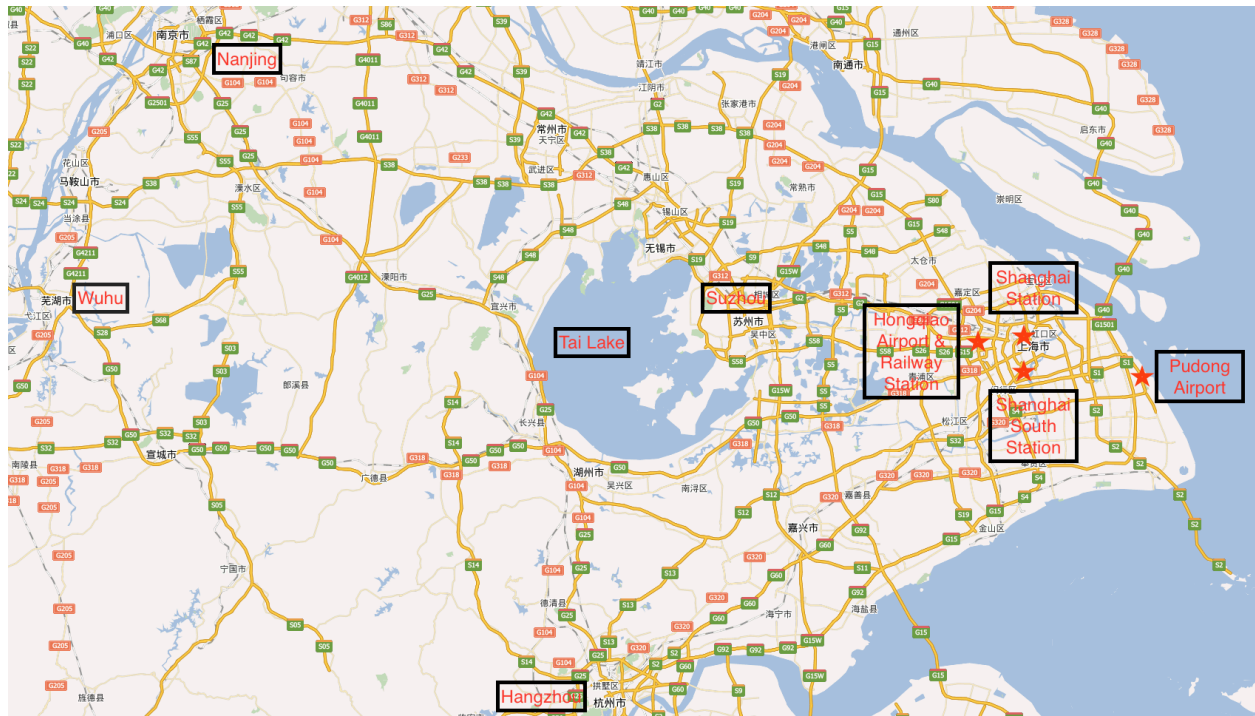
With roads increasingly congested since 2011 it is not advised to drive within the downtown districts. Renting a vehicle pays off though for visits to sights like the old watertown of Zhujiajiao, Dagan Park at Dianshan Lake or heading even further afield by taking a bullet train to Hangzhou and taking a car from the train station into mountainous Zhejiang province. The car rental business grew rapidly during the last few year with many companies on the market; [Hertz | 神州](#) seems to have currently the best regional coverage and is reasonably priced; [atzuche](#) offers a platform similar to airbnb where private vehicles are offered for car sharing.



Shanghai has three railway stations. [Shanghai South Station | 上海南站](#) serves the Yangtze (YRD) | 长三角 and Pearl River Delta (PRD) | 珠三角, i.e. destinations like Hangzhou or Guangzhou and can be reached with metro lines 1 and 3. [Shanghai Hongqiao Station | 上海虹桥站](#) serves North and West China, in particular destinations like Nanjing | 南京 and Beijing | 北京 or Wuhan | 武汉, which is the central China transportation hub at the intersection of the Beijing – Guangzhou and Shanghai – Chongqing routes. [Shanghai Railway Station | 上海站](#) is located centrally in what is now Jingan district and was originally

00 Essentials

erected in 1876, but completely modernized in 2003. It serves predominantly to the [Shanghai – Nanjing route](#).



Follow Up Recommendations:

- [Her](#): a mentally fragile man falls in love with his operating system; brilliant 2013 movie directed by Spike Jonze and entirely shot in Shanghai; a fitting location for how AI will consume man
- [Shanghai – 21st Century Capital?](#) part of the ARTE series Les Dessous des Cartes; 2011 geopolitical information about Shanghai with great online maps on the development of the city; in French and German only
- [Suzhou River](#): namesake Suzhou Creek as a filthy mirror of the city's inhabitants; year 2000 movie which might be loosely based on novels by author Wang Shuo
- [Empire of the Sun](#): 1987 movie directed by Steven Spielberg based on an autobiographical novel by J. G. Ballard who was born in colonial Shanghai and separated from his upper class family during the civil and anti-Japanese war