

# **Preparing to Study in Shanghai**

## **7 THINGS YOU MUST DO BEFORE COMING:**

1. Get a VPN (page 6);
2. Bring your original Fudan Admission Letter (page 3-4);
3. Link your Skype account to a credit card (page 5);
4. Download and register for WeChat BEFORE YOU COME TO CHINA; it can be problematic to register for Wechat in China when you get here, so register an account before you come.
5. Unlock your cell phone (page 5-6);
6. Do the Digital Disbursement setup (follow instructions provided by the Malibu office)
7. Confirm your overseas medical insurance coverage (pages 6)

## **FAQs:**

### PACKING

#### **1. Check the dimension and weight limits for luggage with your airline before you start packing.**

We CANNOT advise on the size, weight, or number of bags allowed, nor on the cost. Please visit the airline website, and be aware that restrictions/allowances may differ based on connecting airlines and departure cities (the allowances going over may not be the same as the ones for when you return).

#### **2. Less is so much more.**

Every semester, students pay ridiculous overweight fees at the airport when they go home. Keep this in mind: You're coming to China – the world's factory. We suggest you lay out all the things you plan on packing, and then reduce everything by 1/3. It's a difficult process, but it is worth it.

By packing less, you will have more space for shopping without throwing away or shipping items. If you do choose to ship things home, be aware that it can be very expensive. You don't want to use the cheapest regular postal service in China as it takes forever and it's just not reliable. If you use faster logistics providers like UPS, FedEx or DHL, shipping a box home may cost 300 – 400 USD. Bottom line: don't plan to take back more than you can fit into your regular luggage allowance.

#### **3. Packability and multiple-use garments are key.**

Look for jackets and coats that pack down into a very small size. Bring clothing that can be used for a variety of purposes/occasions. The goal is to maximize usability while minimizing the amount of stuff you need to bring.

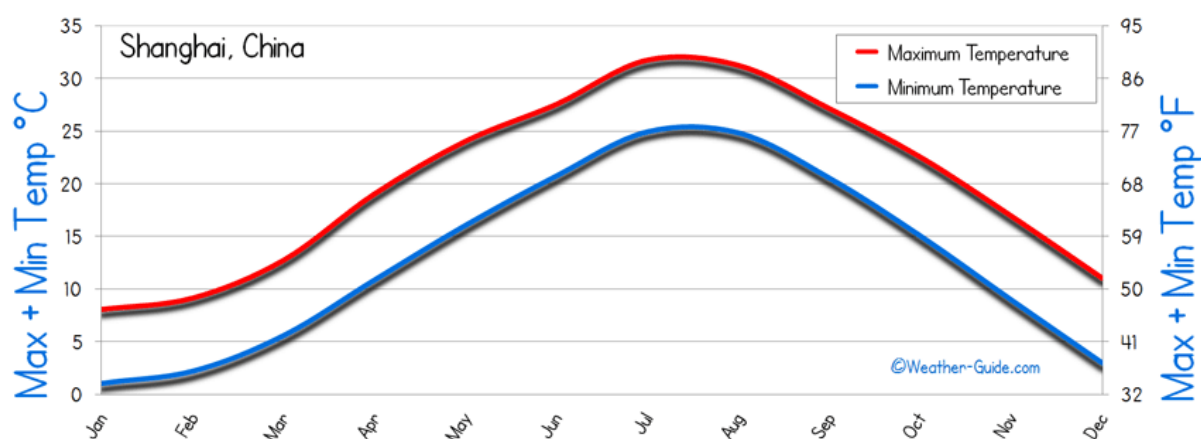
#### 4. Things you should consider bringing.

Firstly, note that Shanghai is a major cosmopolitan city. There are hundreds of thousands of foreign nationals living in Shanghai and, as such, you can get pretty much anything here. However, there are a few things that you should bring from the US:

- Medications (especially if they are prescribed!). There are a lot of over the counter medicines that are not available or slightly different in China, so if you prefer a certain brand, you should bring it.
- If you have a serious allergy, bring your epipen!!
- Your favorite hair product or deodorant (you can get these in China, but they may not have your favorite brand).
- Your own credit card (for emergencies) and an ATM/Debit card.
- If you are a light sleeper, bring earplugs and sleeping mask.
- A cell phone that is **UNLOCKED**. If you are not sure if your phone is locked or not, check with your service provider.

#### 5. Weather

Shanghai has extreme climates, **very hot and humid in the summer** and early months in the fall and quite cold in the winter. See below for the average temperatures in Shanghai. The Spring and Summer can be quite rainy too.



### ELECTRICITY

#### 1. Outlets in China are 220V, outlets in the U.S. are 120V.

Check to make sure that the items you are bringing to China are rated for voltage at 220V. This information is usually written on the back of your device or on the electrical cord. Most “digital age” electronics, such as laptops, iPads, iPhones, electric razors, etc. are

rated for voltages that range from 110-220V. For items that are rated for 220 V, you only need to purchase an adaptor, not a converter. If your items are not rated for 220V, then you will need to buy a converter.

Adaptor	Converter
Adaptors change the shape of the plug so that it fits properly into Chinese electrical sockets. <b>Adaptors DO NOT change the voltage coming out of the socket.</b>	<b>Converters reduce or increase the electrical output of a power source.</b> The most common use for these converters is to change the voltage from 220 V down to 110 V, or from 110 V up to 220 V. They may or may not change the shape of the plug to fit properly into Chinese electrical sockets.

## 2. Buy the right adaptor for your items that are rated for 220V.

Chinese electrical plugs have 2 or 3 flat prongs that fit inside the socket. (see below)

3.  **Leave your U.S. appliances at home.** 

In the U.S., hairdryers, flat irons, curling irons, juicers, toasters, etc. are not usually rated for 220 V. Even with a converter, these appliances often blow fuses, break converters, and can even start fires when they are plugged into our sockets. Leave these items at home!!! Within the first couple of days upon your arrival you will be shown where to buy Chinese appliances that are rated for 220 V if you need. Any appliances we consider to be dangerous to our electrical system will be confiscated.



## CHINESE VISA

All students must get an "X1" or "X2" visa from Chinese Consulate before you leave America. Please be aware that there are agents in the US that can help with the process so that you don't have to go to the embassy/consulates on your own. Non-intern students can apply for additional 'entries' once you arrive in China (which allows you to travel

internationally during the semester). Up to two entries can be added for 1,000 yuan per entry. Interns' visas will be converted to SR2 visas and cannot add entries.

## HOUSING

You will be living at “the Jia,” Pepperdine's facility in Shanghai. Constructed in 1937 (the same year that George Pepperdine College was founded), the Jia is in one of the most historic and convenient locations in the city.

Almost half of the student rooms are doubles; others are triples and multiples depending on the guy/girl ratio. Having individual air conditioning/heating units inside, all rooms are furnished with bunk beds, armoires, desks, and bookshelves. Students share sinks and bathrooms. The program provides linens, which include bath towels, sheets, blankets, pillows and pillowcases. Rooming assignments will be done upon your arrival. You cannot request roommates or rooms.

Besides the student rooms and a faculty apartment, the property also features a private garden and a sunshine room, and accommodates the program offices, three classrooms, a library, a student lounge and a study room. A program kitchen, and free laundry machines are also available for student use.



## DINING

### **Breakfast**

7 breakfasts/week are provided in the sunshine room.

### **Lunch**

Money for lunches Monday to Friday will be digitally disbursed to your account (50 RMB/meal).

### **Dinner**

Group dinners will be provided Monday through Thursday at different local restaurants on a rotating basis. Friday dinner is “on your own” – 100 RMB/meal will be digitally disbursed to your account.

## MONEY/CASH

- 1. Should I bring USD?**
- 2. Should I exchange to RMB before I come?**
- 3. How much should I bring?**
- 4. How do I open a local bank account?**

You should have access to funds while you are here. We think it is best to bring both USD and have access to funds via a debit card. Pulling out money from the ATM is much easier and faster than exchanging USD (the rates are the same), so we recommend you plan to use your debit card and only exchange cash if necessary. If you bring cash, you will be provided a safe in your bedroom.

The program does not make recommendations on how much to bring because every student has different spending habits.

You **MUST** have a debit/ATM card (for access to digital disbursement funds). Credit cards are optional, but highly recommended for emergency situations.

It is recommended that you tell your bank you will be abroad so that they don't suspend your card due to suspicious activity.

You do not need to exchange to RMB before you come.

Make sure your bank account is linked with your digital disbursement so that you can receive your monthly stipends. IP will email you information and a link to start the process. It is recommended that you do this **BEFORE** coming to Shanghai.

Students cannot open a local bank account without a residence permit.

## CELL PHONE SERVICE, INTERNET AND VPNS

We highly recommend every student get a Chinese number during your stay in Shanghai. If you have a contract with a service provider in the US, call to see if you can unlock your phone to use a different SIM card. We'll show you where and how to get a Chinese SIM card after your arrival. Most students will purchase a local cell service plan, which can include minutes and data. Wifi, which allows you to use messaging services, is available at the house as well as some coffee shops, restaurants and hotels.

If you do not wish to unlock your iPhone, you may simply leave your phone in "Airplane Mode" or only use free Wi-Fi when available. But we still highly suggest you get a cheap Chinese smart phone to get connected with the group through WeChat.

Internet in Shanghai is widely available but can be slow and unstable at times. The Wifi at the Jia is designed to accommodate many people but will slow down considerably if multiple people are simultaneously downloading and/or streaming content. Wifi speed

and reliability can be a source of frustration for people in Shanghai, so be prepared and try to be patient!

**You NEED to get a VPN** (virtual protocol network) in order to access many important sites like Google, Pepperdine email, which has been upgraded to Gmail, Facebook, Youtube and many international news media sites. VPNs are relatively affordable and there are a wide range of options. Students in the past have used Astrill, Express VPN and PandaPow, among others. Some VPNs have been unreliable for students, so don't assume that all VPNs are the same. Also, the government occasionally limits VPNs, so they are not 100% reliable and you will need to be flexible once you get to Shanghai.

**Skype:** The easiest and best way to call the US is via Skype. Register and **link your account to a credit card** and you can call any phone number at local rates (so, almost nothing). Skype also allows you to call toll-free numbers, which long-distance calling cards do not allow. It is highly recommended that you set up your Skype account prior to coming.

## Medical Coverage

Note that Pepperdine offers emergency medical coverage during the students' time abroad, however if a student needs to see a doctor for non-emergency reasons then he/she must use his/her own insurance or pay out of pocket. An "emergency" is defined as an urgent medical need that cannot wait for coverage. Colds are not considered an emergency.

Shanghai has excellent international hospitals with English-speaking staff and Western doctors. Costs are similar to medical services in the U.S.

**Please contact your medical insurance provider to confirm your overseas coverage.** Many insurance companies will require that you pay out of pocket and then seek reimbursement when you return to the U.S.

## STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

We rely much on student leaders as an important part of our program team. Shanghai program provides both paid positions and volunteer positions, which include:

### **Paid Positions:**

- Office Worker
- Food Managers

More information about each role and responsibilities will be shared by the Program Director during the first orientation meeting. Students who are interested in the paid positions can sign up in the program office after the meeting. Candidates will be interviewed by the Director and decisions will be announced shortly thereafter. Student

Workers are paid through the central Student Employment Office in Malibu, and must submit their hours through Pepperdine's MyTime Kronos system.

### **Is my internship paid?**

Legally, interns in China cannot receive compensation.

## **SUGGESTED READINGS/MOVIES/RESOURCES**

It is highly recommended that you start your journey before you actually fly to Shanghai but learning about the history, culture and people of China. Here are a few recommendations:

### **Books:**

#### **Wild Swans** – Jung Chang

The story of three generations in twentieth-century China that blends the intimacy of memoir and the panoramic sweep of eyewitness history. Wild Swans is a first-hand documentation of the impact that Mao had on China. In Chang's book, she accounts for the members of her family and what she and they had to struggle through just to survive. This is a good narrative from the first person account of what really took place during Mao's Cultural Revolution and how it left much of China in shambles and in need of repairs.

#### **Brave Dragons** – Jim Yardley

Brave Dragons is set in a time when the Chinese basketball team, the Shaanxi Brave Dragons are one of the worst teams in all of China. Their coach picks out the former NBA coach Bob Weiss to come coach and "Americanize" the team. Though this idea seemed promising, it turned out to be a lie and Weiss must go through trial and error to get this team on its feet again. This story is an accurate representation of how China will only change when forced to or when it wants to.

#### **The Private Life of Chairman Mao** – Li Zhi-Sui

Straight from the personal physician of the Chinese ruler, Dr. Li Zhi-Sui was able to document the many talks over political and personal matters that Chairman Mao would share with him. Over the 22 years from 1954, up until Mao's death, the Doctor kept close records of the Chairman and had them published years after the rules passed. This book gives an accurate representation on how even the rules of China viewed his country and what China had to go through to start evolving to where it is now.

#### **River Town** – Peter Hessler

River Town is a very deep story written from the first-hand accounts of an English Peace Corps Volunteer. The story is set in the village of Fuling that sits in the river basin of the Sichuan valley region of Western China. Hessler tells of how he taught the Chinese children of the village English and literature but while he taught the children, the children taught Hessler in deeper ways than he could have imagined. The students were able to give Hessler a new found understanding that can only be achieved when immersed in a foreign culture that of like China. Hessler shows us the type of love that China really has for its expatriates and foreign visitors.

### **Oracle Bones – Peter Hessler**

Another pure original from Peter Hessler, this book picks apart people's views that nothing ever changes in China and that it is a stagnant nation. He changes this view by accurately showing how from a century ago, China has exhibited its real strength as a nation and how it has grown to become one of the biggest rivals to our large nations such as the US. Oracle Bones tells of the transition from Ancient ways to the now Modern ways and how China has evolved more than it ever has.

### **Age of Ambition – Evan Osnos**

Full of revolt, rebellion, and upheaval...Evan Osnos documents how the Chinese government has fought over the years with the Chinese population on who really rules the country. Does the Communist party rule or does the Individual rule? This is the question that is really portrayed in the story and it still relates to today where the capitalistic/individual aspect is gaining ground more than ever and China is moving away from its very Red roots to a new found openness that of characterized by other leading nations all over the world.

### **The Soong Dynasty – Sterling Seagrave**

The Soong Dynasty documents a runaway Chinese family that for years were kept away safe by the American Methodist Church. Later the family would return to China in an epic way to sell western Bibles in China and make millions. The members of the Soong family would end up marrying key figures in Chinese history such as; Ai-Ling Soong who married one of China's richest men, H.H. Kung; Ching-ling Soong, who married Sun Yat-sen, leader of China's republican revolution; and how May-ling Soong married Chiang Kai-shek, the autocratic ruler of Nationalist China whose ties to the Shanghai underworld were enormous. This family made millions of dollars and lived one of the most prosperous and richest life's in the 20th century of China, but while they ate like kings, the other millions of Chinese citizens were starving and without a home.

### **The Distant Land of my Father – Bo Caldwell**

Full of love, Shanghai, distance and pain, this story documents first-hand how a girl, Anna, lives at the time of Japanese controlled pre-World War II Shanghai. Her world, full of love from her wealthy parents, starts falling apart when her and her mother have to leave her father to flee Japanese-controlled Shanghai for California. Her father, now across the Pacific Ocean is left in his own world where he believes all will be fine, but little did he know, his world would turn upside while at the same time further wrecking his own wife and daughter's world. This book is a good insight into just how exotic Shanghai was back in the pre-World War II era and how you can still see that influence in the city today.

### **Movies:**

#### **The Last Emperor**

This movie accounts the life of Pu Yi, the final emperor of China. It takes place just prior of his resignation from the throne and shortly after when he is captured by the Red Army. While in prison he reflects back on his lavish childhood in and behind the walls of the Forbidden City in Beijing. He remembers all that was given to him and how he was never afforded the luxury of seeing and experiencing the real misfortunate world that was set just outside the walls of the Palace. This movie relates to modern day China how many



Chinese men and women aren't allowed to experience the poor and wretched of their country and can only live within the borders of the rich.

### **Empire of the Sun**

Set in 1930's Shanghai, a young boy is hit in the mix of the Japanese army invading his city. Played by Christian Bale (his first movie), the boy is put into an internment camp along with other Shanghainese born men and women, and along with foreigners such as himself. This is another good movie to see the effects that the Japanese had on Shanghai and the people here. This also is another way to see how diverse culture wise Shanghai was during this period of time and how the last effects are still seen today!

### **Seven Years in Tibet**

Tibet, 1940's, this movie is based upon a true story and novel based upon an Austrian mountaineer who traveled to Lhasa, the capital of Tibet and in turn befriended the 14th Dali Lama. The story shows through Henrich Harrer (Brad Pitt), the effects of World War II and the invasion of Tibet by first hand experiences. Harrer is welcomed into the Holy City of Tibet by the Dali Lama himself who is still a young boy. The Dali Lama's relationship grows with Harrer when Harrer becomes a personal tutor and mentor to the young boy for several years. The beginning of the Chinese invasion of Tibet is shown for a while in the movie before Harrer must return home and away from the violence. This movie is a powerful representation of why Tibet and China's government do not get along and cooperate well.

### **Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon**

Set during the Qing Dynasty (1779), Crouching Tiger is full of great Chinese traditions and culture. From the beautiful scenery to the impressive representation of the Qing Dynasty culture at the time, this movie portrays love mixed in with martial arts. The plot of the movie, two warriors who are taught in the ways of martial arts and swordsmanship, hunt down a thief who stole a once great sword (Green Destiny). While on their hunt, they come across a young nobleman's daughter who is at the crossroads in her life, ultimately joining the hunt and becoming a great warrior.

### **Textbooks:**

Students are responsible for purchasing their books before coming to Shanghai. You can either bring books with you from the States.

We have limited copies of used books in Shanghai. Please check the details in the textbook list that is provided to you. We rent out these used textbooks to students on a first come, first served basis. Please contact our Academic Assistant Ms. Mona Chen ([Mona.Chen@pepperdine.edu](mailto:Mona.Chen@pepperdine.edu)) if you'd like to rent any of the used textbooks.

### **Chinese Language podcasts:**

**Chinesepod.com** – This is an excellent tool for improving your listening and reading skills. Subscriptions are not cheap, but we view this as one of the best podcast/app resources available.

**Pleco** – Dictionary app for your smart phone. Pay the extra three dollars to get the full suite of options within the app. This is an important tool for use in Shanghai.