



Personal Information

Full name: Amir Brik

Email: brik.amir@gmail.com

Degree Program at TAU: Financial Management

Host University: Fudan Da-Xue, Shanghai, China

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Exchange Experience

- **About the country and city:**

Welcome to China – a country with many citizens and no internet access.

While I haven't travelled much out of Shanghai, three months, during which one spends quite some time on school assignments, are not enough to see and enjoy everything this huge city has to offer.

The city has many impressive skyscrapers with beautiful light and video shows starting sunset through... 22:00.

In Shanghai you can find all types of food, including prestigious restaurants in hotels.

The river bund is beautiful and the east bank – Pudong, now hosting the financial center, is a breath taking must see.

Unfortunately, we did not travel to the Great Wall of Beijing during the summer or autumn, and hence, when we finished school by the end of November, it was too cold to travel (Beijing is northern to Shanghai).

The weather in China is extremely humid, which makes you sweat during the summer, especially when you walk through the endless streets of Shanghai (nothing that cannot be solved by 4-5 decent showers a day), and makes you extremely cold starting mid-November.

Facebook and Google services are blocked in China, and, therefore, you must install a good VPN application on your smartphone and computer (I recommend Cloud VPN, available for mobile only).

In addition, Chinese people use WeChat for instant messaging, but not only – they also use it as an electronic wallet to transfer money among each other and pay in stores, in taxis and even in street food stands (only available for people holding an account in a Chinese bank), and view their online updating gas, electricity and water consumption bills.

Once you install WeChat you will never want to remove it – it is way cooler than WhatsApp, and, unlike WhatsApp, it is linked to your E-Mail, rather than to your phone number.

There are many Israeli and Jewish WeChat groups.

There are several Jewish communities in Shanghai – including the Seffaradies, progressive and Chabad.

There are three Chabad centers in Shanghai, providing kindergarten and Torah study services, as well as a Kosher food store, prayer service and Shabbat and holiday dinners free of charge for students. I lived near the "Intown" center at the Jing'an district (Jing'an is Shanghai's Buddhist Temple – a must see), operated by Rabbi Shlomo Azulay and his family.

My recommendation is to go to the Shabbat and holiday at the Jewish community centers – I used to go to the Chabad "Intown" centre, but went once to a Shabbat meal with the progressive community, when they were hosting a delegation from Haifa University.

The Shabbat meals will be your opportunity to get a feeling of home and of belonging to the community, while the Chinese people are not nice, impolite and disgusting (they spit on the streets and they even have special tanks for spitting in the swimming pools).

Gym and swimming pools are rare in Shanghai – you can swim in Tongji University (one station on line 10 south to the Handan campus station, located on Guoquan rd.), and you have to work hard to find a gym – I haven't been able to find one.

Jogging on the streets is not at all recommended, both to the heavy pollution and to the fact that pedestrians do not enjoy the preemptive right – neither on crossroads nor on the sidewalks (if a sidewalk even exists).

- **About the Host University:**

Fudan has two campuses in Shanghai, due to a merge with another university.

The business school classes take place at Starr Building at the Handan rd. campus – a campus lying over a huge surface on the north edge of line 10 of the metro (line 10 crosses some of the most important sights of the city, including the Former French Concession, which is considered to be the main entertainment and night life arena of Shanghai).

The student dorms are also located in the Handan campus.

The campus is enormous, and during your first days in the university you will be spending many hours walking through the campus to get all the bureaucracy errands done).

The exchange program leaders do not arrange any social activity.

They only publish the weekly program of guest lectures. My advice to you is to participate some lectures, if your schedule allows it, as they provide some added value.

Despite that, the atmosphere was great as I made social connections and friendships with many of the other foreign students (including European and American students originated from hostile countries such as Pakistan and Iran) and with some local students – our program was an international MBA, consisting of both Chinese and foreign students.

I have not encountered any presence or activities of any student unions. I believe that student unions are banned in China.

There are some career center activities such as presentations of global firms and corporations.

Our semester started on September 5th, 2016 and will end on January 7th, 2017.

However, we were required to participate the orientation day on August 30th, and once we had our attendance requirements fulfilled, we were allowed to leave Shanghai. Hence, I left Shanghai on December 1st.

Beware that the chance finding people who speak humans' language in Shanghai is smaller than the chance of winning the first price on the USA federal lottery. The rest of Chinese people can only bark their language.

- **Courses and professors:**

The courses are interesting and the professors make great efforts to create interest and to hold a vivid discussion in class.

The study level is not at all difficult, so you can study the material with minimal effort and difficulties.

However, you will be required to do a lot of reading between classes and to prepare many group and individual assignments and presentations.

Most professors form the working teams by themselves, in order to force the mingling of both Chinese and foreign students.

Most of the professors give grade or bonuses for class discussion contribution.

- **Accommodation:**

The university neither provides any help in the search of accommodations, nor does it reserve dorms accommodations for the exchange students.

Therefore, if you wish to live at the dorms, preserve a room as soon as you're informed you were accepted.

Otherwise, you could take the gamble I took – I lived 5 days at the Crowne Plaza near the university (Guoquan rd. and Handan rd.), then moved to a motel also on Guoquan rd, (near Siping rd.) – the 7 Days Inn (make your reservations using Booking.com, as they will not allow you to make a reservation at the reception desk – they are afraid of foreigners).

After living at the 7 Days Inn for almost a month, I went with an agent to look for apartments (there are many real estate agents in Shanghai). A Texan guy joined our tour, where the agent took us to see some horrible holes, The Texan guy said he was about to leave his apartment, as his roommates decided to leave the apartment.

Me and my friend from TAU went to see his place, and fell in love with it. We immediately took his two available rooms.

There are many WeChat groups – such as "House Hunters SH", which will assist you in your search for apartments, and, of course, the Israeli community groups and Jewish community groups will also be of help.

- **Visa:**

Israeli students are required to pay 100 NIS for an X2 visa (single entrance for a stay that does not exceed 180 days), providing the admission letter from your host university.

This visa is only valid in mainland China, and is not valid in Macau or Hong-Kong.

My advice to you is to perform the residence permit application process (requires medical tests at the Entrance-Exit Bureau), to enable you to travel around south-east Asia (Hong-Kong, Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam, etc.), and go back to Shanghai.

- **Transportation:**

Transportation in Shanghai is very convenient and Cheap.

The price of a single ride on the metro (no matter how many lines you switch) usually does not exceed 6 Yuans (equivalent to about 3.5 NIS), and the price of a 40-minute drive by taxi in Shanghai is equivalent to the price of a 5-minute ride by taxi in Israel.

Many drivers will take longer routes in order to get a few extra Yuans.

The metro is very convenient, and you can download a non-interactive metro map application to your mobile.

There are metro stations everywhere and you usually don't walk too long to get from the station to the sight you are about to visit.

The taxi drivers lack basic intelligence and out of hundreds of taxi drives, only once have I encountered a driver who can speak English.

Use Smart Shanghai application, which will enable you to find the sights you wish to visit (commercial sights only – no private house addresses) – by metro or by address, and, pressing the taxi icon will open a screen with the address – both in English and Chinese, so you can just say "Ni Hau" (Hello) to your driver and show him the address.

Don't panic if the driver draws you in the middle of nowhere or if they refuse to allow you on the taxi – you will always be able to find another taxi that will take you exactly to where you wished to go.

The metro's only disadvantage is that most lines close at 22:00 and other lines close at 23:00.

I haven't tried the buses in Shanghai, but I was told they are as cheap and convenient as the metro.

Buy an SPTC (Shanghai Public Transportation Card), which will enable you to switch lines within the metro without buying a new ticket and which are also valid on the busses. The SPTC can be reloaded and you can return it before leaving Shanghai and get the change left in it and the primary deposit of 20 Yuan (given it remained intact).

DO NOT take a taxi for a fixed price! Always demand to turn the meter on.

There are Uber taxis in Shanghai, but if you know Chinese, you can always use the local Didi application to order a taxi.

Navigation with google maps (using a VPN) does not always work, but you can always use the local Baidu navigation applications.

- **Insurance and Health Services:**

Fudan University requires buying its health insurance.

Luckily, I did not require any medical treatment.

You will be walking a lot. Make sure to get some work out, and get a massage once in a while (there are massage shops everywhere and the prices are cheap) and you will be fine.

- **Living expenses:**

Rent is the only expensive thing in Shanghai (about 75% of the rent prices in Tel-Aviv).

Street food, simple Chinese restaurants and McDonald's are funnily cheap.

KFC is a bit more expensive, Starbucks holds a European price level and, of course there are the luxury restaurants where you will spend hundreds to thousands of NIS (!!!) for a dream meal.

Transportation is cheap.

Shopping in global network stores is at least as expensive as Europe, but you can find some great items that worth the price.

No point in buying smartphones, tablets, phablets or smart watches, as they do not support Google services or Facebook (or different languages, other than Chinese, in some cases), and you will be required to replace your operating system in order to support these services.

Fake products are everywhere (there are even two fake markets – one of them is in the metro line 2 Science and Technology Museum station), and you can bargain over the prices.

Clothing in the fake market can be of great quality.

You should also go to the fabric market, where you can buy great clothing and accessories for cheap prices – a whole suit (including the shirt and the tie) should not cost you more than 700-750 Yuans, 20 scarfs would cost you 650 Yuans and a coat should not cost more than 650-700 Yuans. Just bargain and do the walk away thing.

- **Food:**

Street food is great, and the stand operators are surprisingly hygienic.

Chinese restaurants are cheap, and you should definitely try hot-pot restaurants (where you order a soup and a set of meat and vegetables to put in it – and cook it yourself).

Try some western restaurants, they are pretty good.

And if you want a luxury meal – go to one of the hotels.

Most of the meet in Shanghai is chicken, beef and pork, and most seafood is calamari, prawns, oysters and shrimp, but I cannot commit that I haven't eaten other types of meet (hopefully I haven't, but I usually don't ask).

Kosher food is hard to find, so go to the Chabad food stores.

- **Night life:**

Night clubs usually close at about 3:00 AM, and pubs and restaurants close between 22:00 and 00:00.

Make friends with promoters – they allow foreigners in to parties for free.

Go to the KTV – you must have at least one Karaoke night experience.

Go to the Vue bar on the 32nd floor of the Hyatt on the Bund hotel. It has a great foot Jacuzzi for mingling. It is recommended for the warm days, of course.

The National Holiday (October 1-7) is extremely fun.

- **Tips:**

- Go to Shabbat and Holiday meals at the Jewish community centers.
- Bargain at the fake market and the fabric market.
- Make contributions to the class discussion.
- Most important – remember that one day des not resemble the next day, so even if you've had a bad day today, tomorrow can be a great day.
- Go to Disneyland!
- Invite your family and friends to visit you there.

- **General experience:**

Shanghai can be a tough place, but if you surround yourself with friends, you can enjoy your time there.

I enjoyed it, although I missed home a lot.

- **Photos:**



