

NANJING (南京)



Nanjing, the capital of Jiangsu Province, is an important Chinese city which has an extremely interesting history. Nanjing, which literally translates as 'South Capital' was the capital city of between 6 and 10 Chinese dynasties, before being declared by the Chinese government as the country's capital in 1927. which is reflected by the city's abundance of cultural sights and attractions.



Attractions

Memorial Hall to the Victims of the Nanjing Massacre: On September 13th 1931, the Japanese launched a war of aggression against China and rapidly invaded large areas of the country, with the aim of attacking the cities of Shanghai and the then capital, Nanjing. On December 13th 1937, the Japanese reached Nanjing and occupied the city, where they began a bloody and inhumane massacre that took the lives of 300,000 innocent civilians and unarmed soldiers in the space of six weeks. Very



few managed to escape from being brutally murdered and city soon became a warzone, littered with the corpses of women, men, children, pensioners, nuns and soldiers.

The Memorial Hall was built by the local government in 1985 as a lasting memorial to those who fell victim to this brutal atrocity. It contains three different areas; outdoor exhibits, the remaining bones of the victims and an exhibition hall filled with historical documents. All three areas form a moving tribute to the victims and make for a very heart-wrenching, yet informative visit. I highly recommend any visitor to Nanjing to visit the Memorial Hall and take their time there, but be prepared for an emotional few hours.

The Memorial Hall is free to enter, but donations by visitors to lay flowers down for the victims are greatly appreciated. It is open every day except for Monday, from 08.30 – 16.30.

Getting there: take bus no. 7, 37, 61, 63, 161, 166, 170 or 186 to get off at Jiangdongmen. Subway: take subway line 2 and get off at Yunjin Road. Take exit 2 and walk westwards to get there.

Confucius Temple (Fuzimiao): The Nanjing Confucius Temple was a place to worship and consecrate Confucius, the great philosopher and educator of ancient China. The Confucius Temple sits behind the Qin Huai River and is surrounded by numerous shops and restaurants in traditional style buildings. This is a great place to visit at day or night and sample some of the local food.



Opposite the Dacheng Hall of the Confucius Temple you can buy tickets to go on a boat cruise along the Qin Huai River. This is a great way to see some of the interesting sights along the river, including Zhanyuan Garden and Zhonghua Gate. Cruises run during the day and night, cost 55 RMB and last just under an hour.

Getting there: By bus: take no. 1 or 31 and get off at Fuzimiao. By subway: catch line 1 to Sanshanjie, or take line 3 to Fuzimiao directly.

Nanjing City Wall: This is one of the key historical and cultural remains of Ming Dynasty and is an ancient Chinese architectural masterpiece that has a history of over 600 years. Standing at 14-21 metres tall and 21 kilometres long, Nanjing City Wall was built to protect the Palace City and is one of the city's most historical attractions

Getting there: By bus: Take bus no. 10, 13, 22, 28, 32, 33, 45, 56, 64, 66, 69, 73, 130, 136, 143, 157, 318, 801, 810, 813, 815, 819 or 823, and get off at Zhongyangmendong Station. By subway: Take [subway line 3](#) or [line 4](#) to Jimingsi Station, Exit 4. Walk north, and you can see the wall.

Purple Mountain: This mountain is one of South China's most famous mountains and is home to several historical and cultural relics. It covers an area of around 12 square miles and boasts over 200 scenic spots and the The Xiaoling Mausoleum of Ming Dynasty and Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Mausoleum, both of which are important protected areas. The Purple Mountain offers visitors plenty to see and do, more on which can be found [here](#). If you plan to visit the mountain, make sure you do so when the weather is good – I visited on a very foggy day and couldn't make out what was 5 metres in front of me!



Getting there: Where you choose to visit on the mountain will determine how you will get there. Follow the link above for detail information on routes.

Xuanwu Lake: Situated at the foot of Mt. Zhongshan in Nanjing, Xuanwu Lake is a beautiful protected scenic spot. It is also one of the three most famous lakes in Nanjing and is home to a number of temples, pavilions and islands. During Spring, certain areas around the lake beautiful cherry blossom can be seen. If you're feeling active and the weather is nice, it's possible to rent a boat or pedalo, which is a great way to see the lake from a different perspective. This is a beautiful, peaceful area that is lovely to wander around.



Getting there: By bus: take no. 1, 25, 28, 30, 33, 35, 47, 56 or 201 and get off at Xuanwu Lake Park. By subway: take [subway line 1](#) to get off at Nanjing Railway Station or Xuanwu Gate.

Zhanyuan Garden: This is one of the five most famous gardens of Southern China and is Nanjing's oldest architectural complex. The gardens are divided into two parts; a museum containing relics from the Taiping Rebellion, a farmer led resistance against the government that took place in the 1800's,

and a scenic area, consisting of pavilions, ponds, pathways and rockeries. A visit here will teach you even more about Nanjing's interesting historical background and make for a pleasant stroll around a beautiful Chinese garden.



Getting there: By bus: Take bus no. 2, 16, 26, 44, 46, 49, 166, 202, or 302 and get off at Zhonghua Road Zhanyuan. By subway: Take [line 1](#) and get off at Sanshanjie, or take [line 3](#) to Fuzimiao.

Hunan Road: Hunan Road is a famous road in Nanjing, which is also known as the entertainment centre of the city. Along Hunan Road, you can find all kinds of restaurants, shops, food stalls, market stands, banks and entertainment centres. Hunan Road is known for its bright lights and lively atmosphere during the evening.



Getting there: 95, 114, 303, 318, and get off at Hunan Lu station.

Food

Duck Blood Soup: This is one of the most popular dishes in Nanjing and though it doesn't sound appealing, it is worth a try if you are feeling brave. The dish is made by combining duck blood, dried fried tofu, dried small shrimp, duck livers, shallots, ginger, sesame oil, caraway and various other ingredients, to make the soup and is served with noodles. As a popular local dish, Duck Blood Soup can be purchased very cheaply, particularly on Fuzimiao dining street.



Gan Si: This is a refreshing cold dish, made of shredded bean-curd, which is covered in a sauce made of sesame oil and vegetables. It can be served with chicken or other meat, but is usually served with vegetables, making it a good vegetarian option.

Salted Duck Soup: This is a typical dish of Nanjing and is usually eaten in Autumn, when the osmanthus blossom is out. The dish is prepared by marinating duck meat in a spice mix, of which the ingredients have been kept a secret! Once the ducks have been marinating for a minimum of 2 hours, they are steamed to create a fragrant and tender meat. The best place to try this is Jinling Restaurant near Xinjiekou.



Dou Fu Nao: If you're looking to try a local breakfast dish, then look no further! This is a popular dish made from tofu, mushrooms, coriander and chilli. It's such a popular dish, that different regions in China and even South-East Asia have their own variations. The best place to taste it is Liu Feng Ju.



Fried Spring Onion Pancake: Another popular breakfast snack, this is a kind of fried pastry that is filled with shallot, meat and other ingredients and usually covered with a pastry crust. It is quite greasy, but easy to eat on the go. The best place to taste it is Liu Feng Ju.



Accommodation

Sunflower International Youth Hostel: This hostel is very popular among young travellers and its convenient location, right in the heart of Fuzimiao makes it clear why. Sunflower Hostel is well located for anyone looking to see the top sights of Nanjing and to taste some of the local delicacies. It's also not far from the metro, so it's easy to travel around from here.

Laomendong International Hostel: This hostel is in a different area to the one mentioned above; it's located under the Ming City Wall and close to the Zhonghua Gate Castle. The hostel is clean and comfortable and offers both dorm and private rooms, though the private ones are a little pricey. The hostel is not far from bus and metro stops, making it a good choice for tourists.



Shu Guang International Hotel: If you're looking for slightly more luxurious accommodation away from the tourist herds, then this hotel is a great choice. Located only 5 minutes from Xuanwu Lake, Shu Guang Hotel offers guests a stunning view of the lake and the city and a peaceful night's sleep. Rooms are very clean and comfortable and you get great value for money here. The hotel is only a 5-minute walk from Nanjing Railway Station, the metro and a bus stop hub.



Entertainment

Fuzimiao: Fuzimiao always seems to have a buzzing atmosphere about it, but particularly so at night. Shops, street food stalls and restaurants all stay open well into the evening, street performers entertain passers-by and the whole area lights up. The Qinhuai River cruise also operates at night and gives you a different experience entirely from the daytime cruise.



Hunan Lu: If you are looking for a fun evening of exploring, then Hunan Lu is a great choice. This vibrant road comes alive at night and offers visitors so much to see, do and try. This really is the heart of Nanjing and is a must-see at night!

Nanjing 1912: This is Nanjing's Bar Street and is a popular place for young people to gather in the evenings. At Nanjing 1912, you can find a wide selection of fun bars and clubs that are open from early evening until the early hours of the morning. If you're looking for a night out rather than a casual drink, it's best to get there after 9pm, when the music comes on and the night gets going. Some of the best bars to visit in the area are: Soho Bar, Luanshi Jiaren 1912 and Seven Club.



Theatre: Nanjing is home to the Jiangsu Performing Arts Group and consequently has frequent shows and performances taking place throughout the city. The group is responsible for three of the city's theatres; Nanjing Zijin Grand Theatre, Nanjing People's Theatre and Jiangnan Theatre. Different performances are held at each of these theatres, so whether you are looking to watch a traditional Beijing Opera, comedy or ballet performances, you won't be disappointed!



Getting around Nanjing

Perhaps the most convenient way to get around Nanjing is the Subway. There are currently 7 lines in operation, allowing passengers to reach many of the main tourist attractions and popular areas of the city. By 2030, Nanjing hopes to have 24 lines serving its citizens!

Much like most cities in China, Nanjing operates an extensive bus network that allows passengers to reach almost anywhere in the city for no more than 1-2 Yuan. Buses run from early morning until late at night and routes can be found here.

Taxi is a convenient way to get around the city, particularly to attractions such as the Purple Mountain if you don't wish to take the bus. Always take a city marked taxi and make sure the driver puts the journey on the meter. Prices begin at around 9 RMB and increase by 3 RMB per kilometre.

Travel

Nanjing is served by Nanjing Lukou International Airport, which operates flights to 54 domestic and 20 international destinations. The airport operates 2 shuttle bus lines, which take passengers to various points in the city. These run from the first flight until the last flight arrival, or 23:00 (line 2). For more information on where these buses run to, [click here](#).

Nanjing is on a number of high-speed rail lines, connecting it with major cities such as Beijing and Shanghai, among a number of others. Nanjing Railway Station and South Railway Station are the two main passenger hubs and from here you can reach almost anywhere in China. Below are the average times it takes to reach a number of destinations within China:

Nanjing – Shanghai: 2-4 hours

Nanjing – Beijing: 4-5 hours

Nanjing – Guangzhou: 7-9 hours

Nanjing – Chengdu: 12 hours

Nanjing – Xuzhou: 2-4 hours

It's possible to get a long-distance bus to a number of cities including Shanghai, Hefei, Hangzhou, Qingdao and Beijing, though this will take far longer than travelling by train.