

PLAN NOW

# 7 SHORT BREAKS FROM SHANGHAI

Jenny Gao selects the best escapes out of China's most cosmopolitan city.

Illustration by Heather Gately

Towards  
Tangshan

## TANGSHAN

The **hot springs** at this city near Nanjing have been a popular destination for **bodily healing** for more than 1,500 years. Once reserved exclusively for emperors and high officials, the springs are now available to guests staying in several neighbouring resorts. **Stay at:** The Kayumanis Nanjing Private Villa & Spa ([www.kayumanis.com](http://www.kayumanis.com)), which has spacious villas with private pools fed directly from underground hot springs. **Getting there:** Three hours by road



## SUZHOU

Dating back to 514 BC, this city — with its **vast network of rivers, canals and manicured gardens** — is one of the Grand Canal's oldest and most picturesque. Despite rampant urbanisation, much of its cultural charm survives through traditions such as **silk embroidery, calligraphy and Kunqu opera**. **Stay at:** Scholars Hotel - Pingjiang Fu (<http://pingjiangpalace.com>). **Getting there:** One-and-a-half hours by road



## WUZHEN

A historic outpost along the Grand Canal, this town's dense network of **waterways and ornate bridges** were once home to a vibrant class of merchants and literary elites. The spirit of the town can be felt on a stroll through its **sleepy streets** or a boat ride along its canals. **Stay at:** Wuzhen Clubhouse ([www.slh.com](http://www.slh.com)), a **wellness retreat** housed in an ancient timber lodge beside the river. **Getting there:** Two hours by road



Towards  
Xi'an



## XIAN

Jade Valley Wine & Resort, created by architect Qingyun Ma, sits on the slope of a valley in the **Qinling Mountains**, just 35km east of Xi'an city. In addition to an **impressive variety of wines**, there are several modernist villas and guest houses on site. **Stay at:** Stone House at Jade Valley Wine & Resort ([www.jadevalley.com.cn](http://www.jadevalley.com.cn)). **Getting there:** One-and-a-half hours by air to Xi'an, then 50 minutes by road



## MOGANSHAN

The tea plantations and bamboo forests of this picturesque town at the base of **Mount Mogan** have long hosted Shanghai's high society seeking refuge in the scorching summer months. **Stay at:** Le Passage Moganshan ([www.lepassagemoganshan.com](http://www.lepassagemoganshan.com)). This **French country house** revives the savoir vivre of the 1930s. Relax in the pool, pick organic tea and indulge in rustic French food here. **Getting there:** Three hours by road

## HUANGSHAN

This mountain in **Anhui province**, with its jagged peaks and evergreen pines, is one of China's most **stunning natural wonders**; its beauty played backdrop to Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. An early-morning hike offers **breathtaking views** of Mount Huangshan's famous 'sea of clouds'. **Stay at:** The newly renovated Xi Hai Hotel ([www.hsxihaihotel.cn](http://www.hsxihaihotel.cn)). It's a great base to explore the **nearby ancient villages**. **Getting there:** One hour by air



WUZHEN  
MOGANSHAN

HANGZHOU

## HANGZHOU

Marco Polo declared this the most beautiful place he had visited, and the city's **serene lake and surrounding tea hills** explain why. Watch the **Impression West Lake Show**, directed by Zhang Yimou, the man behind the Beijing Olympics Opening Ceremony. **Stay at:** Four Seasons Hotel Hangzhou at West Lake ([www.fourseasons.com](http://www.fourseasons.com)), situated on the lake amid **exquisite gardens**. **Getting there:** 45 minutes by train



Shanghai

Brand new

Retreat to the 211-room **Shangri-La Hotel, Qufu** in Shandong province, which opens on 1 August. The hotel pays homage to the philosopher, Confucius, who was born in this city. ([www.shangri-la.com](http://www.shangri-la.com))