City guide: Wuxi

General

Wuxi is an old city in southern Jiangsu province, and has a rich history. Wuxi became a center of the textile industry in China and was one of the four most important rice markets nationwide. The city even became the leading silk-producing county in Jiangsu, outranking Suzhou, the traditional center. In the late 19th century, Wuxi was also the regional center for the waterborne transport of grain and a major commercial center.

During the period between 1900 and 1940, Wuxi was considered one of the most important counties in China. In Cao Yu’s well-known drama "Thunderstorm", Wuxi was mentioned several times with a comment “Wuxi is a good place”. After the People’s Republic of China was established in 1949, Wuxi continued to grow in importance, with the establishment of more textile production and both light and heavy industry. This city was considered the second most important city in Jiangsu Province after the capital Nanjing. However, its developmental model has been criticized due to the environmental decrease it has caused. New strategies are now under consideration to ensure its sustainable development.

Industry and Economy

In 2017 the GDP reached 1051.2 billion RMB, which resulted in a GDP per capita of 160,706 RMB. The annual growth was 14%.

Currently Wuxi is designated as an investment grade city, and has two large industrial parks devoted to new industries. While being the current manufacturing centers on textiles, there are projects to move to electric motor manufacturing and MRP software development. Wuxi is the solar technology hub in China as two major photovoltaic companies are based in the city.

Bars and Clubs

The main area for nightlife is undoubtedly 1912 Bar Street which lies next to the canal. Here you will find a variety of pubs and clubs.

For a more expat-orientated drinking environment, there are a number of places in Wuxi which should suit your needs. Nanchang Jie Street, and Yang Chun Xiang, generally busy with expats, each selling imported beers often with special offers.

Wuxi was ranked as “Taihu Pearl” and “Little Shanghai”

Taihu Lake is Wuxi’s name card
Wuxi City is served by the Shuofang domestic airport. Passengers can take a plane to Wuxi from many major cities in China. Airports in cities nearby are Hongqiao and Pudong International airports in Shanghai City and Lukou International airport of Nanjing City.

Wuxi is on the Shanghai-Beijing railway track and has frequent services. There are trains to Beijing, Shanghai, Suzhou, Nanjing and Hangzhou. The Wuxi Railway Station is located in the north of Wuxi City. It is 1337 km from Beijing, and 126 km from Shanghai. As an important railway hub in East China, Wuxi station serves over 150 trains every day.

In terms of city transportation, Wuxi has a sound public bus network. Sightseeing buses depart from the railway stations taking you to almost all the major tourist sights. The sightseeing bus is very useful and convenient for you to tour around the city.

The taxi fare in Wuxi is 8 yuan for the first three kilometers, after that 1.8 yuan for each additional kilometer.

Shopping

As is the case in much of the developing cities of China, Wuxi offers shoppers plenty of choice due to the ever-growing list of large malls. Center 66, LIVAT (owned by IKEA), Wanda Plaza and Suning Shopping Plaza all offer a wide-range of domestic and international stores and restaurants inside.

As a very cosmopolitan city by Chinese standards, there is plenty of choice if you require your favorite imported goods from foreign supermarkets. Carrefours are dotted around the city, with most having an entire section dedicated to imports from all over the world. In addition, German chain Metro is very prominent in the city and has a huge hypermarket located near the airport. Further stores which feature foreign goods are Merry Season and the English-orientated Tasty Life.

Places of Interest

The Turtle-Head Peninsula Scenic Spot (Right) is an ideal place for natural enjoyment, vacation and leisure as it has a rich natural environment. The resort at the Zhongdu Hill, surrounded by water with green trees and beautiful scenery, was listed one of the first sanatoriums as early as in the 1950’s by the State Council. Since it has been renovated in recent years, it is now a good place for vacation, health care and business travel with a new and professional physical examination center, sub-health consulting center and conference center. The lake offers a perfect scenery for waterfront dinners, boat feast of lake foods, night cruise on the Taihu Lake, local speciality shops and recreational facilities which meet your various needs of dining, shopping, entertainment and health care. The sightseeing train, high-speed luxury yacht and seven-sail fishing boat of the ancient style give you great enjoyment while touring the hills, water and gardens.

Located in the Maji Mountain area, the Lingshan Grand Buddha, together with the historic Xiangfu Temple, is one of the most renowned tourist attractions in Wuxi. The Xiangfu Buddhism temple is more than a thousand-year old. More than 80 meters high, the statue is a bronze Sakyamuni standing Buddha and was built at the end of 1996.

Dining

People in Wuxi, similar as Shanghai, tend to eat a lot of sweet food. Famous dishes include Fried Spare Ribs, Steamed Buns, and Yangtze River food. If you are looking down the street food route in Wuxi, there are many local dishes scattered around Nanchan Temple and Chong’an Temple.

Transport

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Parking
Parking spaces can be very limited in Wuxi and there is hardly any free parking available downtown. In the centre of the city, hotels and other large building complexes are good places to find a parking spot. Spaces are priced at usually around 3 Yuan per hour; however, you can often get discounts for long-term stays. If you wish to rent your own parking spot, you will be looking at paying roughly 500 Yuan a month.

Pets
You are usually only allowed to bring one pet with you to China per adult passport. If you are planning on taking your pet with you, you will need to ensure you have all relevant health and vaccination certificates in order. In addition, you will need to provide your Chinese residential details. Once your pet arrives, it will have to be placed in between 15-30 days of quarantine in order to be checked upon. Whether or not you can keep your pet in your house/apartment is up to your landlord – therefore it is essential to ask their permission prior to your arrival. The regulation since 2012 says big dogs are not allowed in the city, and the definition of big is in excess of 1 meter tall. Thus, you need to ask for the permission from the local police as well if you think your dog is big.

PSB
Upon arrival in China, you will also need to register yourself with your local public security bureau (usually a police station), to ensure the Chinese authorities know that you are living here legally.

Garbage Disposal
Garbage will be disposed of in the relevant containers as provided by your building. Even for bigger garbage or recyclables, these can also be left at the same garbage site and maintenance will take care of it.

Voltage
In China, the voltage is 220-240V. Standard Type A, common Type I and Type C plugs can be used in this outlet. If you have appliances requiring 110V, you will easily find step-down voltage converters.

Schools
There are a few international schools in Wuxi. These include International School of Wuxi (ISW), which implements the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IB). Eton House International School, and Taihu International School are other places you can educate your child as an expat, also offering the IB programme.

Doctor
Wuxi has been a pioneer in China when it comes to establishing English-speaking medical practices. United Family Hospital has a branch in Wuxi, where all staff speak English. It enjoys a high reputation for its cleanliness and service. People’s Hospital International Division provides high quality care for expatriates, which is owned by government. Other hospitals have English-speaking staff of course, but are not specially catered for foreigners.

Mailing
When sending post from Wuxi abroad, you will need to go to the local post office. If you are not fluent in Mandarin, it’s better to go to the big post office at Xian Qian Xi Jie as the staff at that branch can speak English. Alternatively, you may wish to call a delivery company to come and pick up your post for you. DHL, FedEx, and UPS all have offices in Wuxi – however the cost is normally higher than China Post.
Domestic Help

At the moment, Maxxelli Wuxi does not provide services for finding ayi for the client. However, we do not mind asking around for you. Normally, you can find a good ayi for a decent price through another ayi who works for expats.

Banking

Consider opening a Chinese bank account. Opening one in China can be complicated if the bank employs no English speakers. Therefore, again, a translator would be recommended. This article will provide a more detailed, step-by-step guide in opening a Chinese bank account.

Telecommunication

It is recommended to buy a local SIM card if your phone isn’t locked to other networks. If your phone is locked and you want to buy a Chinese one, there are tons of stores selling inexpensive phones everywhere. There are two main mobile phone operators in China: China Mobile and China Unicom. China Unicom is popular these days due to their good promotions and faster 3G connection.

Internet

If you are worried about internet accessibility – fear not, VPNs are very accessible. Internet services are commonly provided by your landlord, and if this is the case the cost will be included in your rent. If you wish to obtain a faster service, this can be done by contacting your Maxxelli consultant.

The Center 66 (below) is one of Wuxi’s main shopping hubs

For further information on living and working in China, please check out the Maxxelli Consulting.
Tenant Lease Information

Below are the common issues and misconceptions throughout China. Maxxelli will attempt to alleviate any stresses felt from these items, and have tools and systems to ensure efficiency, but the items listed may vary greatly and are important to understand. Please be sure to ask your Maxxelli Consultant for any further explanations.

Property Representation
Open Market –Unlike many Western Countries, landlords in China are free to list their property with as many agents as they wish. This means Maxxelli has access to nearly any property available, regardless of whether or not it’s listed in our database currently.

Rental Rates
Local agencies list Net rental prices which do not include tax or compound management fees. Maxxelli will always list the Gross Rental price. Your Property Schedule will list clearly what’s included in the Gross Rental!
*Note: If your company is paying rent, the rental must usually include taxes and management fees*. “Management Fees” as mentioned by our Consultants are compound management fees (condo fees) and are not a Maxxelli management fee.

Requests for Property Alterations
Properties in China usually come fully decorated and furnished. Negotiating for changes is possible, but it is entirely dependent on the situation and is likely to cause an increase in rental. Not all landlords are willing to renovate or move/add furniture and inexpensive storage options are not readily available. Even something as simple as hanging a painting on the wall may require landlord permission.

Satellite
Foreign Satellite TV is non-government sponsored for residential use in China. The available systems are pirated, unstable, and need constant upgrading to keep up with efforts to block piracy via technological advances. Even if your property has a satellite or your landlord agrees to install one, please be prepared to maintain the costs of this unit personally. Should your property not have one and you wish to have one installed, we can provide the necessary contacts.

Online Housing Sources
There are numerous online housing sources available. It is important to remember that the majority of what is seen online is either fake, out of date, or local agents searching for new leads and doing a “bait and switch.” If you do find something online of course do not hesitate to send it to your Maxxelli representative, but please remember there is an very high chance that this property is falsely advertised.

Customer Service
At move-in, we’ll show you how to use appliances and check the condition of the property with you, as well as show you around the compound, introduce you to the management office, and show you where to pay bills. Following the move-in you will be assigned one Customer Service Agent for the length of your lease.
At Maxxelli we strive to be the best in the industry and are always searching for ways to innovate in order to better serve our clients throughout our entire network. Below is our website that have evolved over the years to support the expat community. These were created with the sole purpose of making your life in China more efficient.

Maxxelli Consulting
http://maxxelli-consulting.com

All of the information in the above City Guide can be found in detail on the Maxxelli Consulting. If you do not find what you are looking for, please let your Maxxelli Consultant know – We will create a blog article matching your needs.