

Ring a bell, make a wish

Sheshan Hill

Fei Lai

New Year celebrations differ from the reunion tradition of the Spring Festival. They're more like a party and are enjoyed in many different ways climaxing with the countdown to midnight.

Here are a few "hot spots" for a New Year celebration.



For those wanting to get close to nature, welcome in the New Year at Sheshan Hill, the highest geological point in Shanghai.

Far from the concrete jungle, it is 35 kilometers from downtown. West Sheshan Hill and East Sheshan Hill are the two main sites.

While the east hill is famous for its bamboo scenery, the west hill boasts the biggest Marian Basilica in the Far East plus the Sheshan Observatory an Astronomical Museum at the top.

How to get there:

Bus: Take Tour Bus Line 1, Shanghai-Sheshan Line or Nanpu Bridge-Sheshan Line.

Car: Take Shanghai-Hangzhou Expressway and get off at Songjiang exit. Then take the Husong Road and turn to Shenzhuan Road and Waiqingsong Road to reach Sheshan Hill.

Tickets: 40 yuan for East Sheshan Hill; 30 yuan for West Sheshan Hill.

For more information: www.sjtravel.org

Longhua Temple



The striking of Longhua Temple bell on New Year's Eve has attracted numerous local and foreign tourists every year since its debut in 1988.

At midnight on December 31 each year, the event begins with dragon and lion dances.

Then 108 lucky visitors ring the bronze bell 108 times to expunge the 108 worries of the past year and bring good luck for the coming year.

In the square of Longhua Tourism Zone, visitors can make wishes beneath the 10-

meter-high Longhua "Auspicious Tree."

Located to the south of Xujiahui commercial area, Longhua Temple is the largest in scale and the oldest Buddhist temple in Shanghai.

It is worth a visit around New Year.

Admission: 200 yuan per person

Time: 10pm, December 31

Bell-striking ticket: 318 yuan per person.

Time: after 12pm, January 1

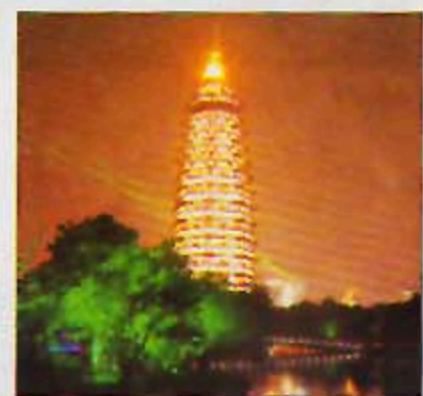
Tianning Pagoda

Standing 153.79 meters high and one of the country's largest Zen Buddhist temples, the 13-story Tianning Pagoda is in Changzhou, in east China's Jiangsu Province. Dating from the prosperous Tang Dynasty (618-907AD), it has been destroyed and rebuilt five times in about 1,350 years.

An enormous bronze bell, weighing 30,000 kilograms, graces the 13th floor and hangs highest among all the bells in the country at 118-meters from the ground. It is a unique opportunity for tourists to visit and strike the bell at New Year.

How to get there:

Bus: Take Shanghai-Hangzhou Expressway and get off at Chouzhou Hengshan Bridge exit. Go straight to the end of Dongfang Avenue, turn left on Qingyang Road and then turn right on Changqi Road. It takes



about two hours.

Train: It takes one hour by train from Shanghai to Changzhou.

Trains leave every 10 minutes starting from 5:50am to 10pm.

Luxury Concierge China

Special package deals and discounts are available if you book through Luxury Concierge China. These are the people — Jonathan Hasson and Spencer Doddington — who tailor-make tours to suit visitors seeking the heartbeat of the city, whether it's talking to people about the Bund's history or discovering young fashion designers and artists.

Also, there's a culinary tour, which may begin at a local wet market to marvel at the array of vegetables, pigs

live fish, turtles, tofu and dumplings. And then visit a Chinese healer who explains the balance of foods and their value in traditional medicine. Onward to lunch at an exclusive restaurant overlooking the Bund, with its fluttering red flags and ceaseless parade of barge and ferry traffic on the Huangpu River. You can enjoy a personalized cookery demonstration with the executive chef of the Whampoa Club.

Requests have ranged from the bizarre to the weird

— we were once asked to arrange a motorcycle sidecar race through the French Concession," says Hasson. "We also offer a wellness tour, where we take people through a tai chi lesson before visiting a healer and receiving TCM treatment."

"For us, it's wonderful to hear from people when they get home, having been delighted by Shanghai and wanting to come back."

For more information, www.luxuryconciergechina.com, or 135-0166-2908

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