

Your Shanghai Apartment Rental Cheat Sheet

A one-page companion to our Shanghai rental guide - save it, screenshot it, take it to your viewings.

MY RENTAL PLAN

Budget: _____ Move-in: _____ Work/School: _____ Max commute: _____ Must-have: _____

THE FAST ROUTE



1 BEFORE YOU VIEW

- Book 7-14 days of temporary accommodation; avoid committing sight-unseen.
- Choose areas around your real commute - not just the prettiest neighbourhood.
- Set a total budget: rent + deposit + agency/service fees + utilities + management fees.
- Search SmartShanghai, Zillow, Lianjia and trusted WeChat agents/groups.
- If work reimburses rent, confirm fapiao requirements with HR before signing.

2 VIEWING CHECKLIST

- Run shower + taps together; check drainage and water pressure.
- Test every AC/heating unit and major appliance.
- Look behind furniture and under sinks for damp or mould.
- Close windows and listen for traffic, scooters, bars and construction.
- Check natural light, building security, lifts, deliveries, pet rules and phone signal.

3 BEFORE YOU PAY

- Verify proof of ownership and the landlord/lessor's ID.
- If subletting, verify written authority to sublet.
- Confirm exactly who receives your payment.
- Check lease dates, payment schedule, agency fee and deposit-return terms.
- Put every promised repair, furniture change or special condition in writing.

4 CONTRACT ESSENTIALS

- 12 months is common, but terms vary - negotiate what you can actually commit to.
- Need flexibility? Get any break clause written into the lease.
- Confirm who pays for repairs and what counts as tenant damage.
- If bilingual, check which language controls if versions conflict.

5 MOVE-IN CHECKLIST

- Photograph/video scratches, stains, walls, floors, furniture and bathroom fittings.
- Record appliance condition and utility meter readings where applicable.
- Send existing damage to the landlord/agent on WeChat for a dated record.
- Collect keys/access cards and keep a copy of the signed lease and inventory.

6 FIRST 24 HOURS

- Complete required accommodation registration for your new address.
- Have the landlord/agent show you how electricity, water, gas and internet are paid.
- Check for outstanding utility balances.
- Arrange bottled/filtered drinking water and get settled.