

Ways to escape the daily grind

Coffee shops, like the beans they filter, come in all shapes and sizes, **Li Xinzhu** reports.

Is there life beyond Starbucks and Costa Coffee? Fortunately, Shanghai has a lot more to offer than the regular grind of big chain coffee shops. Whether you are looking for unusual coffee blends served in unusual cups, veritable menageries of kittens and parrots, or just seeking somewhere with a bit more atmosphere, the city has something for everyone.

1. No 3 Gao'an Road Café

This cozy café in the former French Concession takes on the appearance of a menagerie with its array of cats, dogs and parrots, but this is all part of its charm. If you don't like playing with animals while you sip your coffee, you can always chat to the Mongolian owner or his Russian mother, who are usually on hand and more than willing to pass the time. The café not only provides a quiet and friendly environment, but also serves delicious sandwiches, especially the roast beef and cheese. Some customers who reviewed the food online have described this as the best sandwich in downtown Shanghai.

Address: 3 Gao'an Road, Xuhui
Transport: Metro Lines 1, 10

2. Le Jardin Secret

This coffee shop is hidden in the entrance of a historic building that has been set up as a creative zone for new enterprises. To enter you have to pass through a dark alleyway and an old piano. The name of the café means secret garden, which is apt: lots of plants and wild flowers are placed throughout this beautiful, but never too crowded space. The café opens from 11 am to 2 am every day. It offers ground coffee with treats including chocolate lava cake, homemade tiramisu and cheesecake. Italian dishes are also available at lunch and dinnertime.

Address: 525 Fahuazhen Road, Changning
Transport: Bus Line 48

3. Vienna Café

A cozy Café on Shaoxing Road, hidden between the bustling Ruijin Er Road and Shaanxi Road S. The owner of the Café is a man from Austria, who married a Chinese woman many years ago. With traditional taste Vienna coffee and typical European-style decoration, dark brown floor boards, marble pattern tables and dim lighting, it is the best place for those Europe travelers or businessmen who feel a bit homesick. The Café sometimes has performances or shows, movies at night to attract those who like to stay in its warm and friendly atmosphere. Besides coffee, it also provides delicious desserts, such as apple pie and banana cake.

Address: No 2, Lane 25, Shaoxing Road, Luwan
Transport: Bus Lines 104, 864

4. Citizen Café & Bar

This busy two-story café, located on a pleasant and shaded street, mixes modern and classical styles. The walls are painted in bright colors and the sofa is furnished with dark red cushions. There is something of a lunch-time buzz when foreigners and nearby residents rush in to grab a coffee and some pasta or

salad. The café also scores points for its friendly waitresses.

Address: 222 Jinxian Road, Luwan
Transport: Metro Line 1; Bus Lines 24, 41, 128

5. Cat-Café Bliss

This coffee shop is suitable for cat lovers only, as not everyone can stomach having cat bowls and litters scattered around. It has the look and feel of a home — which is precisely what it is. The owner, a Japanese lady who lives upstairs, has given the place a very personal touch, and space is limited to 15 people at any given time. In true Japanese style, customers need to change their shoes when they enter. The café also offers homemade chocolate cakes and plenty of Japanese-style coffee, including their popular Matcha Latte. Pet-lovers may also be able to adopt one of the cats if their timing is right.

Address: No 1, Lane 8, Taiyuan Road, Xuhui
Transport: Metro Lines 1, 10; Bus Lines 42, 45

6. Café Laomai

Café Laomai offers a haven for young and trendy souls. It is hugely popular among artists, media workers, cameramen and designers, many of whom spend their free time lounging around inside seeking inspiration for their art or work. Old Mike, the owner, is more of a poet than a businessman. He loves to travel the world collecting fancy decorations and adding them to his shop. In addition to the homely environment and delightful coffee, Laomai is also a great place for singles to hang out, make new friends and see if romance blooms. Write down your contact details along with a nice photo and you may meet someone special there one day.

Address: 25A Taojiang Road, Xuhui
Transport: Metro Lines 1, 7; Bus Lines 9, 15, 93 (numerous)

7. The Coffee Beanery

This elegant café offers a neat and modern style and is popular with foreign residents living in the nearby Biyun community. It also has coffee tables lining the street outside as well as a large playground for children. Food-wise it offers generous portions, especially with regard to its 20-yuan fried breakfast, which includes a cup of coffee. With a range of magazines to leaf through and Wifi Internet available, you're unlikely to feel bored and can also keep on top of your work.

Address: Room 101, No 20, Lane 777, Biyun Road, Pudong
Transport: Bus Lines 990, 790, 609

8. LP Café, 1A

LP may be located on a crowded street, but it appears as an oasis of calm once you step inside and relax to the strains of its gentle lounge music. The interior is small, only seven tables, and the decorations are relatively sparse, being limited to a few pieces of art. But all this combines for a nice, homely vibe to help you unwind after a stressful day. The caramel macchiato is a popular choice among long-time customers, who appreciate being able to choose which type of coffee bean they drink. Special grinding machines and cups offer a more unique and personalized service than other coffee shops.

Address: 1399 Huashan Road (close to Hunan Road), Xuhui
Transport: Bus Lines 506, 44, 923, 911, 113



Cat-café Bliss is a heaven for cat lovers. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY