

Dear Shanghai,

It was love at first sight. My 'crush' for you started in 2013 when I visited you on a business trip for the first time. You charmed me so much that subsequent visits transformed my crush into love. I have witnessed you evolving with time including changing majestic skyline that you proudly boast of. I have experienced your progress and hence it was partly quite an easy career decision to move to Shanghai in early 2018, when I became a resident.

There is so much to write about you, so many things which the whole world admires about Shanghai.

Few things which remain close to my heart will always remain special to me about this amazing city which is famously known as 'the Paris of the East'.

- Top of my list remains how **safe** I am in your arms. I feel I am welcomed here and your people are simply fabulous.
I draw energy from your **vigorous and robust pace**.
- **Greenery** around stimulates me to feel closest to **nature in an urban life**.
- I love your **seasons** and the **altering floral landscape** takes your beauty to the next level.
- I get mesmerised watching the **BUND skyline**, anytime of the day – be it on a sunshine morning to a vibrantly lit evening. I love the splash of red and China graphics on gigantic structures during National day week.
- I enjoy the nightlife at **Xintiandi** – a great confluence of the traditional Shikumen elements and modern appeal.
- I respect the **site of the first congress** of the Communist Party of China being able to learn the history.
- I admire crafts and art shops at **Tianzifang**
- I relish **diverse and delicious spread** of the Chinese **cuisine**, steaming hot fish soup with pickled vegetables and numbing pepper being the hot favourite.
- I never miss out trying new crazy tea launches at **Hey Tea, Le Le Cha**.
- I explore modern coffee lifestyle at **Starbucks Roastery**.
- An evening visit to **Disney town** for a lip smacking dinner at the Cheesecake factory makes my weekend simply perfect!
- I am always ready to drive down to **Zhijiajiao water town** on a sunny autumn weekend.
- Winter memories of **snow covered West Lake** will stay with me forever.
- An **evening walk** in the by lanes of Jin Qiao is a great stress buster and spending a Sunday morning at the Century Park invigorates me for the busy week ahead.
- I shop like crazy on **Taobao**, get pampered with the online food delivery of **HeMa**.
- I am amazed with the availability of **fresh produce**, fruits, seafood in abundance which makes me feel I am consuming healthy food.
- My knowledge on **tea** has increased immensely and I enjoy different **varietals of tea** every now and then.

I eagerly look forward to the spring when cherry plants inside and outside of Vizcaya blossom transporting me to a heaven on earth world.

A home away from home – Shanghai- I love you and I feel I belong to you.

Nandita Prabhu