

Shanghai, I Love You. I Am Proud to Call You Home!

2020.2.14

Dear Shanghai,

Well, it's Valentine's Day, so... Shanghai - I love you.

4 weeks ago, I landed in New Zealand for a 'trip of a lifetime' with my family. Making the most of the Lunar New Year break from school. We went to pick up our rental car and... guess where I'd left my driving license? Yep, tucked away in my drawer back in good old Shanghai!

And then, Shanghai, you delivered. My mad, crazy WeChat driven world made recovery possible. A message to my ever wonderful ayi, a message to my amazing friend who was headed to New Zealand for her own big trip. A photo to confirm what was needed to be found. A scooter ride from my compound to my friends. A hugely grateful me (& a hugely amused rental car employee)... and 2 days later... a license and the ability for me to share the driving around the amazing NZ.

I was singing my crazy life's praises... How Shanghai makes anything and everything possible. How I had more help, more connections, more options than anywhere else that I have had the pleasure of living. That WeChat had made my life so simple...

Was that only 4 weeks ago?

I've been in Shanghai for 3.5 years.

I hate the stinking hot summers and I love the efficiency of the aircon in my oversized house. I love the school, the local community, the friendships and the adventures that my family have had. I love the look of surprise on locals faces when my littlest starts chatting away to then in Mandarin (& I hate the fact that I can't understand her!).

I love The Bund - both sides - and I love Jinqiao.

I love Mobikes and Decathlon and the fact that I can get anything delivered to me at any time of day. I love flower man and fruit man and the fact that I still order all sorts of 'mistakes' from taobao.

And now, 4 weeks on... I find myself in Sydney. A marvellous, modern metropolis... and Shanghai... I long to come home. There's nowhere quite like you... and I'm already looking forward to my coffee from Jamaica Blue, my margarita from Pistoleras, and the stories that will be shared amongst us all on the other side of this unexpected interruption.

Thank you Shanghai. I am proud to call you my home.

Nicki Leaper

