

A Podcast Guided Tour of Shanghai Science and Technology Museum

Welcome to Shanghai Science and Technology Museum. If you think science is no fun, think twice. This biggest science museum in Shanghai will soon prove you very wrong. Let's go and check it out! This bilingual podcast is presented by Shanghai Daily and supervised by the Shanghai Science and Technology Committee.

Located in the Century Square in Pudong New Area, the 68,000-square-meter Shanghai Science and Technology Museum is the biggest and the premium high-tech science museum in Shanghai.

The enormous glass building right before you, as you get out of the subway station, is the museum. Go down the side stairways, and you will be at Gate 6.

There's a box office just inside the gate. But don't worry if you missed it, there's another one on the first floor. Now, let's go upstairs.

Turn around and you'll see the entrance. Remember to take a free copy of the maps and brochures, and take time to plan your trip well.

Ready? Here we go!

The verdant "forest" on your left is called "Spectrum of Life". As one of the museum's twelve exhibition sites, "Spectrum of Life" imitates the natural scenery and the climate of Yunnan Province. The exhibition section is divided into two parts: the rain forest and the stone forest part. The rain forest part is home to over 300 types of plants, including trees, bushes, herbs and epiphytes. The stone forest part boasts many kinds of microcosms, insects, birds, amphibious and sea animals. In the bat holes, for example, you'll learn about the ecological habits of that strange flying creature.

Stepping out of the "Spectrum of Life", let's take the elevator and go up to the third floor. We'll come back to the first floor later.

Here we are, on the third floor. Go directly forward and you'll see the "Space Navigation" section. One of the attractions here is the Shenzhou-5 Manned Spacecraft, which was independently developed by China. The spacecraft comprises three cabins and one additional section. These are namely, the orbit cabin, return cabin, propeller cabin and the additional section. Don't miss the "four shaft balancer" if you can handle all the dizziness. In fact, it is a training device to help astronauts maintain body balance in the three-dimensional gravity-less space craft. The "space cinema" is also worth a look.

Further ahead is "Human and Health". Try the fitness assessment here and you'll improve your knowledge about your body. Precious samples of human tissues are

displayed along the pathway to the "Light of Exploration" section.

In this section, you'll truly explore the outstanding breakthroughs of the 20th century, such as the Quantum Theory. You'll also have a glimpse of the brilliant history of biotechnology throughout the past century, from the discovery of the double helix structure of DNA to the birth of Dolly the sheep. Finally, take a seat in the "Relativity Theater". The 16-minute show will explain to you the theory of relativity in a totally understandable way.

Take a rest and let's go down to the second floor.

Turn left after getting out of the elevator. At the far end of the hall is the "World of Robots" section, where you can compete with robots at chess and archery. Don't forget to sing karaoke with the robot that plays the piano. It's really fun.

The "Information Era" shows you the difference between information technology and traditional technology, as well as how information technology affects our life, study and work. On a tree-like sculpture are hanging various displays, with the early CRT displays at the bottom, followed upward by liquid crystal displays (LCD) and plasma display panels (PDP). The simulated lab on your right is a teaching platform where you can test yourself on a variety of interesting tasks.

Here we enter the "Home on Earth" section. First, take a look at the floor. It's actually a remote picture of the world's landscape. In the "Ecological Disasters Theater", you will witness the tragic process of how nature evolved into a final state of desolation from its early, primitive, beautiful landscapes. Through the exhibition of "Birds on the Verge of Extinction", you'll learn about why these birds are under such serious threat and what we can do to improve this situation. Also, you'll see a dynamic demo model of a local waste burning power plant. The plant can process up to 1,000 tons per day of residential waste and generate up to 100 million kw/hrs of electricity annually.

Now let's take a rest and go downstairs to the first floor. Don't worry if you want to go out for lunch. You will get a "magic" stamp, that is, an invisible one on your arm as a sign of temporary leaving; this will only be recognized by a UV light when you return.

Go straight forward and you'll see a big exhibition area called "Earth Exploration". The first thing that catches your eyes is the magnetic levitation globe suspended in the air with the same rotation as the earth itself. This is made possible by the latest magnetic levitation technology. At the "Volcanic Scene", a tranquil volcanic eruption is simulated by a system consisting of lights, sound and electricity. The whole process lasts 150 seconds.

Further ahead is the "AV Paradise", where you can feel the magic attraction coming from high-tech audio and video technology. Here the virtual studio combines the real

person and the virtual background by synthesizing the technologies of recording, light, photography and film. This allows you to switch role from weather forecaster, to fashion broadcaster to children's show presenter. With the holographic sound system, you can clearly feel the shaking sensation of a real "ghost castle". In the "Robot Theater", the robot will introduce to you the city visage, its economic development and the colorful cultural life of the residents here in Shanghai.

Walking across "Children's Technoland" designed for kids aged one to twelve, here we are in yet another section this time called the "Light of Wisdom". Through a fascinating series of interactive exhibits, this section will demonstrate some typical phenomena and basic principles of physics, mathematics, chemistry, biology and many other subjects. Pluck "the string" of the electric harp and you'll hear delightful music. This exhibit combines 28 laser beams and the photosensitive receiving devices to control the "on" and "off" of the circuit. When you block one of laser beams by hand, its corresponding light-seeking component will produce a voltage signal that triggers the relevant electrical circuit to start the work, thus an electrical signal with fixed frequency comes into being. Don't forget to try the "Hairs Sticking Upright", which displays the high-pressure static electricity phenomenon.

The final exhibition section of the museum is the "Cradle of Designers". Here, visitors can participate in designing and manufacturing activities, and savor the basic techniques of modern designing and advanced manufacturing. This includes CAD, CAM, laser burning, quick modeling and so on. Come on and have a try!

That wraps up our tour of Shanghai Science and Technology Museum.

If you are still in the mood for playing and exploring, I strongly recommend you visit one of the amazing movie theaters here. The iWERKS 4-D theater on the first floor will give you a whole new experience of 3-D effects combined with touchable water, wind and smoke, just as if you are integrated into the movie. And in the IMAX dome theater, the ring-like design of the screen display is very particular enabling it to produce a much clearer picture. As one of the most advanced theatres in the world and the first 3-D large format theatre in mainland China, the IMAX 3-D large format theater is an amazing experience for both the audiences' eyes and ears.

We hope you enjoyed your visit to Shanghai Science and Technology Museum.

The opening times are as follows:

Tuesday to Sunday: 9am - 5:15pm (Remember the museum is closed on Monday.)

The ticket price is 60 yuan (US\$7.5) and the address is 2000 Shiji Avenue, Pudong New Area.

To get there, you can take Metro Line No.2 and get off at Shanghai Science and Technology Museum station.

For details, call the museum on 6854-2000.