

Suzhou, Jiangsu, China

The 'Venice of the East' enchants with 2,500 years of history: UNESCO classical gardens, winding canals crossed by stone bridges, and a silk tradition that once clothed emperors.

⚓ River pier (Yangtze delta)

🕒 Typical call: 8-10 hrs

💰 Currency: Chinese Yuan (RMB)

🗣️ Language: Mandarin Chinese

🌿 Best for: Culture & gardens

👉 MY DAY IN PORT

Ship/Date: _____ Arrive: _____ All aboard: _____
Excursion: _____ Notes: _____

GETTING ASHORE

Docking: River pier at Taicang or Changshu; ocean-ship passengers arrive by excursion bus or high-speed train from Shanghai (25–30 min)

Best For: UNESCO classical gardens, canal-side strolling, silk shopping, and authentic Suzhou cuisine

Walk to Center: Historic core is compact and pedestrianized; expect 3–5 miles on foot across canal bridges and garden paths

Don't Miss: Humble Administrator's Garden and a stroll along free Pingjiang Road canal street

🚗 Getting around: 🚖 **Taxi** ✅ ¥120–230 CNY (\$17–32 USD) · 🚲 **Rideshare** ✅ DiDi

TOP THINGS TO DO

- **Humble Administrator's Garden** — China's largest and most celebrated classical garden — a masterwork of pavilions, lotus ponds, arched bridges, and sculpted rockeries.
- **Pingjiang Road Canal Walk** — An 800-year-old canal-side lane lined with whitewashed buildings, tea houses, silk shops, and gondola skiffs — completely free to stroll.
- **Tiger Hill & Yunyan Pagoda** — A 1,000-year-old brick pagoda that leans ~3 degrees — nicknamed China's Leaning Tower of Pisa.
- **Suzhou Museum (I.M. Pei)** — A stunning fusion of modern geometric architecture and traditional Suzhou whitewash-and-tile aesthetics, designed by architect I.M.
- **Silk & Embroidery Workshops** — Suzhou is the heartland of Chinese silk.

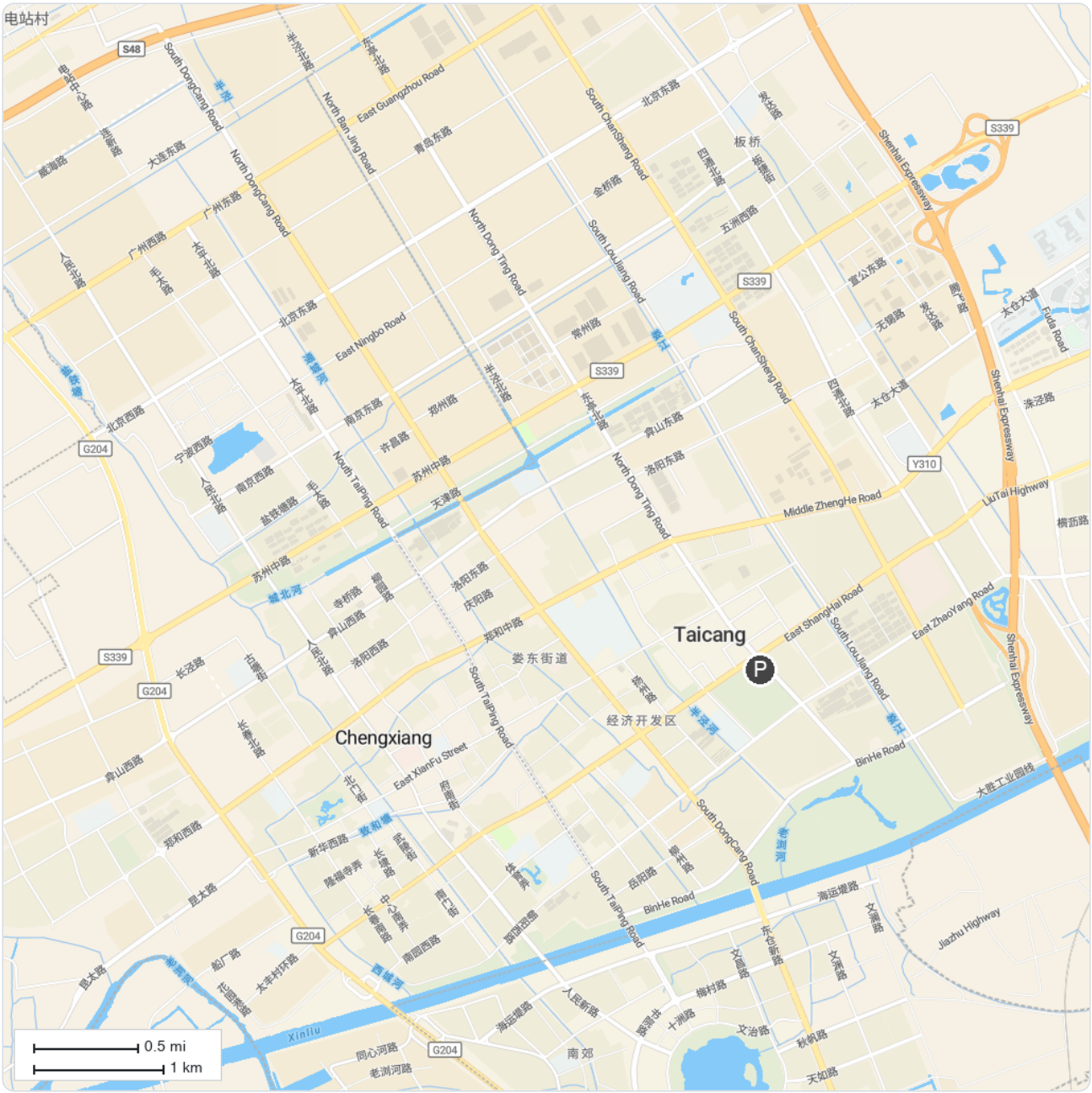
BEST WALKS

- **Pingjiang Road to Humble Administrator's Garden** ~2.5 km • Easy • 45 min one-way — Start at the south end of Pingjiang Road and walk north along the canal, crossing stone bridges and passing teahouses.
- **Shantang Street evening stroll** ~1 km • Easy • 30 min — Suzhou's most romantic street after dark — red lanterns reflect in the canal, and vendors sell osmanthus cakes and local snacks.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- Mobile pay is essential. China is almost entirely cashless — set up Alipay or WeChat Pay and link your foreign credit card before arriving. Without it, you'll struggle at restaurants, street food stalls, and small shops.
- Train beats the bus every time. Shanghai to Suzhou by bullet train is just 25–30 minutes. Cruise line coach excursions can sit in Shanghai traffic for 2 hours each way — the train is faster, cheaper, and more reliable.
- Book the Suzhou Museum tickets early. Daily slots are strictly limited and often sell out weeks in advance. Book on the official WeChat mini-program or museum website before your voyage.
- Carry pocket tissues. Public restrooms in tourist areas are generally clean but rarely stocked with toilet paper. Squat toilets are common outside hotels and big attractions.
- Gardens are best on weekday mornings. The Humble Administrator's Garden gets extremely crowded on weekends and Chinese public holidays. Arrive at opening time (8:00 AM) for the best experience.
- Try squirrel-shaped mandarin fish. Suzhou's signature dish — a whole fish deboned, deep-fried crispy, and sauced sweet-and-sour. Songhelou restaurant near Guanqian Street has served it since 1757.

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