

# Shanghai to Liverpool

## A beautiful love affair



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Photo credit: Liverpool Echo

**The connection between Liverpool and Shanghai dates back as far as the early 19<sup>th</sup> century when the first Chinese immigrants arrived by ship. Liverpool and Shanghai were hugely important port cities in the past and share a history of seafaring.**

Chinese men worked for the company the Blue Funnel Line, who provided ships to the government during WWI. Some of the ships were destroyed during the war, which left Chinese men stranded in Liverpool and forced them to engaged with local people. As they waited for the new ships to arrive and take them back home, some of the workers fell in love with locals, which led them to stay in Liverpool, starting families and making a living through sharing their culture. Liverpool was the [first place in Europe where a Chinese community started to settle](#), which has enabled the two cities to foster a meaningful relationship. Today there are around [10,000 Chinese residents](#) in and around Liverpool; this large number is beautifully reflected in Liverpool's very own Chinatown. This quarter is full of Chinese restaurants, shops, and communities. The large imperial arch in the centre of Chinatown was gifted to Liverpool by Shanghai in 1999 and gracefully represents the Chinese communities and culture in Liverpool.

Nowadays there are many Chinese students coming to Liverpool to study. The University of Liverpool has a meaningful and well looked after relationship with its partner university XJTLU in Suzhou, a historical city outside Shanghai. The two Universities conduct a popular exchange program, promoting cultural exchange for students.

Lately, the media is full of prejudiced news stories, many of which make China seem like a daunting place with emphasis on the on-going economic and political tension between the US and China. Chinese culture tends to move further away from us and take on the role of the 'evil opponent' in the media. It is increasingly important that we open our eyes to all the beauty that has been brought to Liverpool from the Far East and see beyond the latest news story. The celebrations of the Chinese New Year in Liverpool on the 16<sup>th</sup> /17<sup>th</sup> February 2018, marked the starting point of a nine month festival called '[China Dream](#)', which runs until the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018. It's a celebration of the Chinese culture and the relationship between Liverpool and Shanghai. The exhibition of the [Chinese terracotta warriors](#) at the World Museum is the main attraction of the festival and invites us to dive into Chinese history. There are countless other, smaller exhibitions of Chinese art, music and culture, which invite us to learn about modern China instead of judging the unknown.



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We should open our eyes everyday and appreciate all those love stories that happened over 100 years ago, which lead Chinese Culture to become intertwined within Liverpool's landscape, spirit and its people. Liverpool would truthfully not be such an amazing and versatile city today if it was not for its history and the influence of the eastern culture. We should think of ourselves as privileged to call Liverpool our home, where we can step outside and learn about a culture a thousand of miles away.