

World Expo 2010–Shanghai

2010 Nián Shànghǎi Shìbóhuì

2010 年上海世博会

World's fairs have always been a reflection of their times. Expo 2010 Shanghai China, also known as World Expo 2010, is no exception. The theme of the fair, scheduled to run 1 May to 31 October, is "Better City, Better Life." The world will converge on Shanghai to see products and to hear ideas designed to improve urban living in the twenty-first century.

Riding the success of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, China again opens its doors to the world in 2010 with Expo 2010 Shanghai China. The international event runs from 1 May to 31 October along the waterfront of the Huangpu River in downtown Shanghai. More than two hundred nations, business, and international organizations are participating, and up to 70 million visitors from around the world are expected. (If the United States participates, it will take funding from the private sector, not the government. Legislation prohibits official government funding.) The expo features exhibits, demonstrations, and symposiums centered on the theme "Better City, Better Life." Officials say the purpose of the expo is to encourage innovation for sustainable and harmonious urban living. The expo, or fair, is the first registered world exposition in a developing country and only China's second world's fair (the first was in Nanking in 1910). World's fairs and expositions have a long history in the rest of the world.

Brief History of Fairs

Fairs date back more than 2,500 years in human history. Fairs have always been a mix of cultural or religious festival and trade show. Some fairs are localized—like county fairs in the United States—and some are international. The goals of world's fairs are commercial and cultural. Besides offering products for sale, world's fairs provide an opportunity for both host and participating countries to display their capabilities, ideals, and culture. Expositions are also grand venues for amusement and entertainment: giant carnivals, essentially. As times change, expos change to fit those times.

One of the first modern trade show expositions took place in London in 1760. The Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacture, and Commerce organized exhibitions and offered prizes for improvements in the manufacture of tapestries, carpets, and porcelain. The first true world's fair was also held in London in 1851, the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations.

Between 1870 and 1940, an international exposition of some kind was held every year, mostly in Europe and North America. In 1928 the International Exhibitions Bureau was established in Paris to regulate the frequency and quality of expositions. Since the 1950s, however, the frequency and popularity of world's fairs has declined.

The first international fair in China was the Nanyang Industrial Exhibition in Nanking in 1910. Plans were laid for an American-Chinese exposition in 1920 in Shanghai, but it was never mounted. In 1957 the first

Canton Fair was held in Guangzhou. This trade fair has been held every spring and autumn since then. In 2007 it was renamed the China Import and Export Fair; it is the largest trade fair in China. The Shanghai Expo is expected to far surpass the Guangzhou trade show in attendance and the number of products displayed and business deals made.

Shanghai, the City

Shanghai, which literally means the “City on the Sea,” lies in the Yangzi (Chang) River Delta. It is called in Chinese Hu for short and Shen as a nickname. The city proper covers 6,340 square kilometers (2,448 square miles). Eighteen districts and one county are under its jurisdiction. Its estimated 2007 population is nearly 19 million. Shanghai has been undergoing one of the fastest economic expansions in history and is becoming East Asia’s leading business city.

Construction on infrastructure—mostly transportation—within the city and on the expo site itself began in earnest in 2007. The Shanghai Expo Park is the largest single construction project in the history of Shanghai.

Expo Park

The expo park covers 5.28 square kilometers (2 square miles). The site is divided into five zones, each averaging about 60 hectares (148 acres). Another area is a large public amusement park of about 10 hectares (25 acres). There are twenty-six clusters of pavilions. The average floor area of each pavilion cluster can accommodate forty-five exhibition areas, each covering up to 25,000 square meters (269,000 square feet). Each pavilion cluster contains cafes, shops, toilets, communication centers, nursing services, and other public facilities.

The pavilions house the main exhibits. The China Pavilion, the Expo Center, and the Performance Center are the principal structures. Other buildings include pavilions for participating countries, international organizations, corporations, and theme pavilions, including the Urban Civilization Pavilion, the Urban Exploration

Pavilion, and the Urban Best Practices area. All the pavilions and exhibits reflect the expo’s theme, “Better City, Better Life.”

Urban Theme

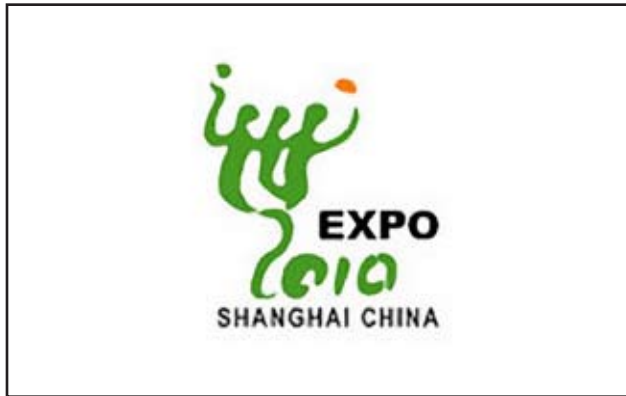
Organizers of Expo 2010 Shanghai China chose the theme to represent the common wish of humankind for better living in urban environments, recognizing the trend toward urban living in China and throughout the world. The concept of the theme is meant to stimulate innovation and exploration of the full potential of urban life in the twenty-first century. This includes creating an ecofriendly society and maintaining the sustainable development of human beings, according to the organizers. The theme plays out in exhibits that display urban civilization—habitat, lifestyles, working conditions—as it is and as how it can be with progressive thinking and global cooperation. The expo’s logo depicts three people representing “me, you, and him or her” holding hands to symbolize the family of humankind. Most of the events at the expo also reflect the theme.

Expo Events

Expo organizers have arranged for more than one hundred cultural and entertainment events each day during the expo’s 184-day run at some thirty-five venues. Official events include the opening and closing ceremonies and China National Day. Special events include symposiums on urban issues and meetings of international organizations. Certain days, weeks, and months have been set aside to spotlight China’s provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities, as well as private and state-run enterprises.

International participants are also staging events. Along with the commercial presentations, there are designated national pavilion days on which individual countries will put on special shows highlighting their cultures. United States Day is scheduled for some time in July, if the United States participates.

Many of the national and theme pavilions will remain after the expo as part of the Huangpu Riverside



The emblem for the 2010 world expo, depicting the image of three people—you, me, him/her holding hands together, symbolizes the big family of mankind. Inspired by the shape of the Chinese character image (meaning the world), the design conveys the organizer's wish to host an Expo which is of global scale and which showcases the diversified urban cultures of the world.



The motto for the World Expo in Shanghai.

Regeneration program, a project to redevelop a run-down industrial area.

After the Expo

Plans for use of the site after the expo were designed early on. Permanent buildings that will add to the skyline of Shanghai include The China Pavilion, which will serve as a cultural center; the Expo Boulevard, a semiopen structure that will serve as a large transportation and commercial center; and the Performance Center, which can be configured to accommodate between 4,000 and 18,000 audience members. In addition, for the expo Shanghai built a new tunnel under the Huangpu River, increased the number of subway trains, and generally improved the city's infrastructure. The impact of Expo 2010 Shanghai China is sure to last for many years.

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Further Reading

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