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ProjectsAbroad

中国



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Nihao! Or Hello!

My name is Chananan Sutsadang but most people know me as Chane. I came from Thailand, where I've worked for Projects Abroad Thailand for more than seven years. I arrived in Shanghai the morning of March 11. Michael, the Project Manager, came to meet me at the airport. The temperature at that moment was 5 degrees Celsius and freezing for someone like me, who had just come from 35 plus degrees in Thailand!

My purpose for being here is to help my colleagues accomplish their goals; to work with our volunteers in the community by helping in ways that will make our community a better place to live. This month our Social Outreach joined the River of Hearts Group sorting donated clothes to be given to those people who desperately needed them.

This month we have many fun activities planned for our volunteers, so please remember to check our Projects Abroad China The Official Group for pictures. If you have any questions please feel free to contact us.

There's a lot of work to be done and we welcome our future volunteers as you prepare for your trip to Projects Abroad China. We have many fun activities planned for you throughout the month. If you would like to learn more about us, please check out our Projects Abroad website. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at chanesutsadang@projects-abroad.org.

Projects Abroad China The Official Group Members have now reached 280!

Now you can view our Newsletters on Projects Abroad China The Official Group on facebook. You just click on the link and that's it! Photos can be seen of our weekly activities in our Projects Abroad China The Official Group on facebook.

China's Holiday: Tree-planting Day 12th March.

Best Wishes,

Chane

Social Manager



清明-Tomb Sweeping Day

Qingming Festival

Date: April 5, 2011

The Qingming Festival, also called Tomb Sweeping Day or Pure Brightness in English, usually falls around April 5 in the solar calendar. From the beginning, this festival served as one of the 24 solar terms in Chinese lunar calendar. After having undergone continual change, the day has now become a traditional festival for most Chinese people, including both Han and many other minorities, and it is when they sweep tombs and commemorate their ancestors. On this day, tomb sweeping, also called Shang Fen (to visit a grave to honour the memory of the dead) in Chinese, is the most important and popular activity for offering sacrifice and showing respect to ancestors. On May 20, 2006, the festival was selected as one of the first national intangible cultural heritage events.

Origin

Tomb Sweeping Day, with a long history of more than 2,500 years, originated from the extravagant and ostentatiously expensive ceremonies that many ancient emperors and wealthy officials held in honour of their ancestors. Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang Dynasty, seeking to curb this practice, declared that respect could only be paid formally at ancestors' graves on the day of the Qingming solar term. The observance of the rule gradually found a firm place in both royal and common families and continued for over two millennia. The day before Tomb Sweeping Day was the traditional Chinese Cold Food Day when people used no fire, ate cold food, and swept their ancestors' tombs. As time passed, the two festivals were gradually combined into one festival, Tomb Sweeping Day.

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清明-Tomb Sweeping Day(Continued)

Customs

Tomb sweeping

Tomb sweeping during the Qingming Festival shows respect and offers sacrifice to ancestors at gravesites. Many people had long followed the custom before the festival was established. According to the custom, when sweeping tombs, people offer food, tea, wine, chopsticks, joss paper accessories, and libations to their ancestors, add fresh soil to the grave, and stick willow branches on the tomb. Kowtowing is also an indispensable part of the custom.



Taqing (spring outing)

Qingming is also the best time for Taqing, or a spring outing, getting out and enjoying the early blossoms before summer. During the spring, everything in nature takes on a new look, as trees turn green, flowers blossom, and the sun shines brightly. It is a fine time to go out and appreciate the beauty of nature during the festival.

Extracted from www.chinahighlights.com/travelguide/festivals/qingming-festival.htm







Lisa Mclean's Story (Law, UK, 2 Months)

I came to China to experience a culture completely different to my own and I have, and still am, doing exactly that. The information you read about China before you arrive doesn't always do it justice. The sights are greater than you imagined, both in terms of buildings, people that you see and their activities on the street. On my walk to the metro in the mornings through Zhong Shan park (and also on the street near my office) I see elderly men doing Tai Chi, mixed groups of men and women of varying ages doing Tai Chi, some with swords and ladies of a certain age doing what can only be described as Chinese line dancing but to the tune of Jingle bells!

The volunteering experience can bring joy and pain in some ways. Joy because you meet so many different people from different nationalities, there is so much to see, new places to eat and try out both Western and Chinese, clubs, old historical buildings as well as amazing new structures that blow your mind. Experiencing the sights sounds, smells (not always nice!) and tastes with new friends and acquaintances is a great way to do it. The pain is that you get to know people well, bond and forge links but then they leave, often to continue their travels.

Hardly enough time to talk about the placement but I am doing a law placement where the work is varied, from preparing a charter contract for the lease of an oil rig, to intellectual property rights employment and restraint of trade issues. The working culture does take some getting used to though, the English habit of having 4 cups of coffee before 11 and catching up about what happened on Eastenders/Big Brother etc the night before hasn't caught on here but I would definitely recommend Shanghai as a place to visit and intern. Lastly if you come in February like I did bring your thermals!

Sumandeep Sohi's Story

(Law, Uk, 1Month)



(Sumandeep, the fourth from the left)

After a long, restless flight from London, I was anxiously anticipating my arrival into China's buzzing financial hub, Shanghai. Slightly dazed and tired I was greeted by Michael, a Projects Abroad officer who had kindly guided me through my "Welcome Pack" at the airport. We had been driven from the airport across the huge city, passing what seemed to be thousands of impressive towering skyscrapers across various bridges and I was truly overwhelmed. As we were halfway across the city, it suddenly dawned on me that I had misplaced my "Welcome Pack". Frantically searching through the cab I realized I had left it at the airport. With my monthly allowance and apartment key missing I had assumed it was never to be found, feeling like an absolute idiot and extremely exhausted we had rushed back to the airport where Michael made a series of phone calls and discovered that it had been found and better so, nothing was missing! I was told at the time that the Chinese would say that such a situation would mean I would receive great luck in the future- and I did.

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My placement at Everbright Law Firm gave me a great insight into the Chinese legal system and the opportunity to research policies, draft contracts and give weekly presentations to the Senior Partner and attorneys, which what I would have previously regarded as a daunting prospect- eventually gave me great confidence in developing many key skills. My Chinese colleagues had made me feel instantly welcome and were extremely knowledgeable and helpful with both legal and social issues, and the authentic fresh Chinese cuisine at the lunch canteen was definitely an experience to try!

One expectation that I didn't have was that of the great social side of interning in Shanghai, from being taken to lunch and dinners by my work colleagues to enjoying cocktails over the Bund, dvd marathons with my flat mates, exploring markets, temples and the morning after brunch with the other interns- there was never a dull moment.

I could write pages and pages about my experience here but here are a few of the highlights of my trip:

See: - Hangzhou is a must see for picturesque views with a real Chinese feel. Only an hour away from the city by bullet train.

Try: - Cycling around the West Lake, in a large group this can be heaps of fun.

See: - The French Concession, with a great number of boutique shops, trendy café's and historical buildings it's a great area to explore at day or night.

See: - The Bund, the city really comes to life with a walk along the river side backing onto the great landscapes that really capture the modern day Shanghai, with the glistening Oriental Pearl TV tower or the gigantic Jin Mao tower in the distance; it's very difficult to miss!

Try: Drinks on the terrace at Bar Rouge, the view is amazing.

My month placement had passed by in a flash, almost too quickly and I am certain that I would return to China as there is yet so much more to see of the historically enriched, vast and budding country, time really does fly when you're having fun!

River of Hearts

Chane Sutsadang



On 12 March 2011 Projects Abroad China Social Outreach took place at the Concordia International School Shanghai, joining The River of Hearts Group to help sorting donated clothes. Kay, our Director has been bringing our volunteers here to help in this activity for many years now. River of Hearts presented Projects Abroad an award for our part in helping them with their work. Today's activity marked the 33rd time they've met.

I am new to Shanghai but when I heard about this group "The River of Hearts" working together to sort donated clothes to be given to another province in China, I was more than happy to help.



River of Hearts was established in 2003, is an outreach program of Community Center Shanghai. Their aim is to have an impact on the lives of two groups of people. The first group is the people living in China's countryside and who are mostly poor and impoverished. The second group is the expatriate and local Chinese community or Shanghai residents.

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There are various drops off locations in Shanghai. Today they all met at the Concordia International School of Shanghai to sort. with more than 600 volunteers helping to sort out clothes, packing and loading them on to the 18 wheeler trucks, it got done rather fast.

During lunch some of the people were welcome to shop for things that would bring in money to help with transportation cost for delivering of the many bags of clothes. I was so touched, when I saw so many people happy to help with sorting and buying things to help with the transportation cost. The power of the people that made everything possible.



Projects Abroad volunteers worked very hard for a very good cause today. Thank you guys for coming out on a Saturday just to help make a difference.

Lion's Head Meatballs

Traditionally this Shanghai casserole dish featuring oversized pork meatballs and greens is made with pork fat and cooked in a sand clay pot. The large meatballs are meant to represent a lion, and the shredded greens its mane.

If you like, instead of 4 large meatballs you can form the pork into 6 – 8 smaller meatballs.

Prep Time: 10 minutes, Cook Time: 30 minutes, Total Time: 40 minutes.

Ingredients:

1 pound bok choy, Peking cabbage (Napa cabbage), or spinach leaves

1 – 2 green onions (spring onions, scallions), minced

1 teaspoon minced ginger

1 large egg

1 pound ground pork

$\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon granulated sugar

2 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons pale dry sherry

3 tablespoons light soy sauce, divided

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon Asian sesame oil

Black or white pepper, to taste, optional

2 – 3 tablespoons cornstarch or flour

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups chicken broth



To serve Lion's Head Meatballs, serve each meatball on a small plate surrounding by the greens, or in soup bowls with some of the bok choy and broth. You can also thicken some of the broth with a cornstarch and water thickener and pour over the meatballs.

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1. Wash and drain the bok choy or other greens. Cut crosswise into 3 inch strips. Mince the ginger and green onion.
2. In a small bowl, beat the egg with a fork. In a medium bowl, combine the ground pork with the green onion, ginger, salt, sugar, dry sherry, 1 tablespoons soy sauce, Asian sesame oil, pepper if using, and the egg, using your fingers to mix together the ingredients thoroughly. Add as much cornstarch as needed to make so that the mixture is not too wet. (I start with 2 tablespoons and then add 1 teaspoon at a time).
3. Form the ground pork into 4 large meatballs. Flatten them a bit so that they are not completely round.
4. Heat 2 tablespoons oil in a skillet or work on medium-high heat. When the oil is hot, add the 4 meatballs. Cook for 5 minutes until browned on the bottom. Turn and cook the other side (adjust the heat if the meatballs are cooking too quickly).
5. In a flameproof casserole dish or saucepan that is large enough to hold the meatballs, heat the chicken broth and 2 tablespoons soy sauce to boiling.
6. Add the meatballs, reduce the heat and simmer, covered for 10 minutes. Add the bok choy. (you can arrange the bok choy on top of the meatballs so that it steams, or lay some right in the broth if there is room). Simmer for another 15 minutes or until the meatballs are cooked through and there is no pinkness in the middle.

Social Activities in March

Date	Activities	Time
3 Mar. Thursday	Bowling Night at Orden Bowling Centre In a prime location on Hengshan Rd.	7 – 9 PM
10 Mar. Thursday	Quiz Game Volunteers participate individually or as a team attempt to answer questions about Chinese culture and society.	7 - 9 PM
17 Mar. Thursday	Social Dinner Southern Barbarian Restaurant Volunteers meets Social Manager from Thailand, Chane	7 - 9 PM
27 Mar. Saturday	Chinese Calligraphy Class At the Chinese Mandarin School	2 – 4 PM



We are having a good time in China!