

Market Survey: Marriot Tomorrow Square, Shanghai, China

Located in one of Shanghai's most iconic buildings, the Marriot Executive Apartments Tomorrow Square epitomizes living in modern Shanghai. Overlooking People's Square on West Nanjing Road, Tomorrow Square's central location allows for easy accessibility to the entire city via car, metro, and foot. Although the apartments have separate access from the hotel, they do share the hotel's seventh-floor fitness center and pool as well as its traditional, yet modern décor. Overall, the premier address, striking architecture, and newer construction create an appearance of a fine home, but the small, suite-style apartments and the popular tourist location detract from the otherwise superior property.

Location

The Marriot Executive Apartments Tomorrow Square is located at 399 West Nanjing Road. On the edge of People's Square, the building has easy access to both Pudong and Nanjing Road offices, as well as Shanghai's premier dining, shopping, and nightlife destinations. With its well-known location and recognizable architecture, the building is very easy to find for visitors and locals alike. However, because of its location in the heart of Nanjing Road and People's Square, the area surrounding the Marriot is very tourist-oriented, which may be undesirable for potential residents.

Building

Built in 2000, the 60-story glass and steel building is an impressive place to call home. With a separate entrance and intimate first floor lobby, the apartments remain surprisingly secluded from the hotel and its guests. The exterior's bold lines and glass and steel construction are juxtaposed with curves, natural stone, water, and plants throughout the light-filled first floor common areas. Carefully designed, the building both elegantly, as well as symbolically, captures the tension in Shanghai between new vs old, East vs West, and natural vs artificial.

With 255 total apartments, the building's floors do feel intimate for residents. Each floor's corridors are shaped like an H, with the key-accessed elevators located in the middle. There are 8-10 apartments per/floor on floors 8-34 of the building, with a total of 15 studios, 101 one-bedrooms, 103 two-bedrooms, and 36 three-bedrooms. The common areas on each floor have traditional décor accented by soft lighting and natural woods and stones.

From the Starbucks on the first floor to the gym and pool, the building provides standard competitive hotel facilities for its long-term residents. The 24-hour gym, which is shared with the hotel, has high ceilings and large windows, and an adequate amount of cardio and weight-lifting equipment. The pool area, which includes an indoor lap pool, an outdoor pool and landscaped pool-deck for sunbathing, is a beautiful escape from the busy city. The building does not offer the wide selection of stores and restaurants as Shanghai Centre.

Apartments

Tomorrow Square's small apartments feel more like a hotel-suite than an actual apartment. When I visited the property, I toured a one bedroom and a two bedroom unit. All the apartments have floor-to-ceiling windows, offering east-facing apartments panoramic views of

People's Square. These high floor east-facing apartments do pay a premium of approximately 20-30% for their views over a comparable lower floor apartment. The apartments have adequately sized bathroom(s), and the apartment's high ceilings, floor-to-ceiling windows, and natural light compensate for the small size of the living areas.

Decorated in a modern, yet traditional, style, the apartments do have a somewhat cookie-cutter feel. It is not hard to imagine the same apartments in any four-star property in any of the world's major cities. The living room features hardwood floors, providing needed warmth and contrast to the expansive glass windows. The television, surprisingly, is not a plasma/LCD (these are being upgraded, I was promised). The reasonably sized kitchen features the expected amenities and finishes, although it is somewhat closed off from the rest of the apartment. No apartment in the property has balcony or a terrace, which adds to the hotel-like feel of each unit.

Overall, despite the small size of the apartments, the large windows, high ceilings, and pleasant décor makes the units more than adequate for a business resident.

Type	Number of Units	Size	Asking rent (Long term)*
Studio	15	49 square metres	RMB 24/month
One-bedroom	101	58-72 square metres	RMB 25-35/month
Two-bedroom	103	92-105 square metres	RMB 35-44/month
Three-bedroom	36	149-152 square metres	None available

*Apartments are also available for lease periods of 1-6 months and available nightly.

Services/Amenities

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-arrival consultation • Welcome orientation • Welcome amenities • Personalized 'At your Service' 24-hour assistance • 24-hour concierge services • Housekeeping: 3 times weekly (2 full, 1 light) • 24-hour Business Centre Services • Laundry Delivery Services • Grocery Delivery Service • Room Services • Premium Satellite/Cable TV • Complimentary Morning Coffee • Private Resident Lounge 	<p><i>Included Services</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housekeeping: 3 times weekly (2 full, 1 light) • Service Charge Tax • Healthclub • Utilities <p><i>Extra Charges</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone • Internet (entire building is WIFI): RMB 550/month • Parking RMB 1000/month
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Conclusion

Marriott Executive Apartments Tomorrow Square is an impressive property overall, but its small apartments and high rents definitely gear it to the single, shorter-term business traveler. It is a well-maintained facility with traditional hotel services and amenities that are comparable to Shanghai Centre. Although in terms of architecture and impressions Tomorrow Square blows Shanghai Centre away, Shanghai Centre has much larger apartments for less rent, similar interior apartment finishes, and a great selection of stores and restaurants right in the building.

Verdict: Tomorrow Square has a definite wow factor with its architecture, locations, and views; but these come at the expense of space and substantially higher rents.

Tour guide: Maggie Xia was friendly, knowledgeable, and quickly replied to questions I sent via email. I arrived 20 minutes early for my appointment, and she was able to accommodate me then.

Ryan Hagerty Sample Shanghai Centre