

Bringing the clan to Wuhan, China

By Elizabeth Kennedy

Elizabeth Kennedy is a Chinese teacher in Christchurch, New Zealand. She received a scholarship in 2017 to further learn Chinese at Huazhong University of Science and Technology. Her article about life in Wuhan was published in New Zealand's biggest news website Stuff.co.nz.



"Before we boarded our Wuhan river cruise." Photo provided by Elizabeth Kennedy

We're an ordinary Kiwi family of five doing something a little bit different.

We've taken six months off work and school to live in the largest city in Central China: Wuhan.

The weird and wonderful city of Wuhan is made up of three large towns combined into one enormous central powerhouse.

Wuhan has more than 8 million people living, working and playing in this heady hub of business, transport, industry and education. We are here for the latter.

I have brought my husband and three boys under 13 to live in a Chinese university for one semester so that I can improve my language skills for my job as a Chinese teacher at a Christchurch high school.

So why Wuhan?

As Christchurch's sister city, a relationship exists between this university and Canterbury University.

Through various cultural exchanges it's a place I've had the pleasure of visiting many

times and I've come to understand its charms.

We arrived in the summer in 2017. The weather was starting to cool, but changeable weather patterns meant that one day could be a muggy 30 degrees Celsius (real feel 39 degrees according to my Chinese forecast) and the next was an almost chilly 14 degrees!

The autumn weather was settling in and the days were getting shorter, which meant that my husband left the apartment at dusk to teach his English language classes and returned home after dark.

This was the arrangement so that I could go to my classes during the day while he looked after the kids and taught them New Zealand schoolwork and Chinese.

We also had many "cultural" outings ranging from simply going to the market to buy bananas to visiting some of Wuhan's many beautiful tourist sites like Yellow Crane Tower and East Lake. Our favorite outings were less known to foreign tourists, like

an evening boat cruise on the Yangtze, having a picnic in a forest park with wild monkeys and visiting Wuhan's famous "snack street" with all kinds of amazing street food.

Another highlight of our time here was a short trip to Beijing by bullet train. We enjoyed an acrobatic performance, ate our fill of Peking duck and had an incredible time climbing the Great Wall. The boys loved being able to experience a piece of history more than 2,000 years old. (Hint: the Mutianyu section of the wall is a bit more expensive than the Badaling section but much less crowded and noisy.)

On the surface Wuhan is a gritty, bustling city but in the local streets and the university avenues you meet genuinely friendly people with a curious and humorous nature.

China is a stunning and fascinating place where modernity sits comfortably with tradition, and Wuhan is a perfect city to experience that interesting paradox.

New column for 'Belt and Road' travelers

Changjiang Daily has opened a new column calling for articles on travel in countries along the Belt and Road.

Interested readers can send articles, either in English or Chinese, to 249785623@qq.com. Each month the authors of the best articles will be rewarded with tickets for live shows on the Zhiyin Cruise.

NEW
COLUMN

English editors needed

Changjiang Weekly is looking for part-time or full-time English editors. The English editors will work with the Changjiang Weekly staff and assist with editing and proofreading several days each week.

Qualifications:

Native English speakers are preferred. Familiarity with the Chinese language would be an advantage.

Applicants who have a background in journalism, English writing, or editing are preferred.

If you are interested in this position, please submit a resume, cover letter, and writing samples to changjiangweekly@126.com. Please also include a copy of your passport, visa, and degree certificate.

HR will only contact qualified candidates for interviews.

Call for contributions

Changjiang Weekly is looking for articles written by foreign readers. You can write about your experiences with friends, interesting places and things you've seen in Wuhan, or whatever is meaningful to you. Furthermore, the following columns are also looking for contributions.

1. Photographing Wuhan: Share your photos of Wuhan.

2. Drawing Wuhan: Share your sketches of Wuhan.

Please send your photos, drawings, and articles to changjiangweekly@126.com. We will pay RMB 300 for a 700-word article and RMB 50 for one photo.