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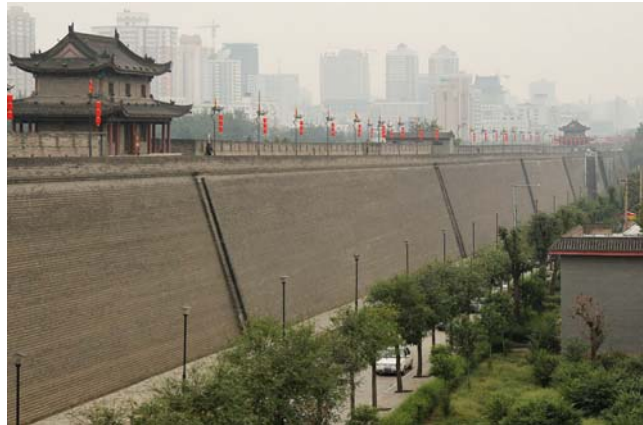
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Greater Wall



There is something impressive about a city built within a giant wall that was to protect it from enemy forces. Even more a wall built so well that it stills looks as good as it did over 500 years ago when it was built. The ancient fortification wall of Xian is one of the best and the oldest city walls in China. In recent years they have constructed a modern city that has transformed itself around this 10 mile long wall. Even with all the building the wall has remained fully intact even with thousands of buses driving under it every day.

The current wall replaces an ancient wall that dates back to BC times. But even the wall we were on

is as old as discovering America, which is just crazy when you look at the size and quality of the precise construction the wall was built to.

We had a great time here mostly because the wall is easy to access and there are relatively no tourists. Best of all there are four gates at the North, East, West and South entrances to the city and at each gate they rent bicycles for about 2 dollars an hour. Maddie and I rented a bicycle for two and Lisa got her own bike. Before you know it we were off riding on top of this massive block structure with the feeling that you are floating over the rooftops of the 3 story buildings on one side and

looking down into the moat that was on the other side. I think what made this place so special for me was more the fact that there were not many tourists here; I seem to not care so much for the places loaded with souvenir stands and tour guides.

Every time I get to visit a place like this I always start to think about all the people over time whom have walked on the stones centuries ago that I'm walking over today. Maybe even Qin dynasty emperors or Genghis Khan himself strolled down the same path – who knows.



Terracotta Warriors



The only complete soldier found.

The Terracotta Warriors also known as the Terracotta Army is probably the second biggest know historical site in China with the Great Wall taking number one. Most people know the usual stuff like there are over 8,000 of them buried underground and they were made in BC times more than 2,000 years ago during the Qin dynasty. Close to one million laborers worked for over 40 years to construct the mausoleum and its warriors that even included terracotta horses.

Well what I was very surprised to find out is that the entire lot of pottery statues had been destroyed. No one is 100% sure of exactly why all the soldiers were burnt and broken but there have

been more theories than who shot JFK.

One popular theory is that the next ruler after Emperor Qin set fire to the mausoleum and crushed all the soldiers. Another is that a rebellion broke out years after his death and the tomb was looted for the weapons the soldiers were holding.

Through all the excavation at the site since 1974

when it was discovered they have only found 1 warrior that was completely intact.

Anyway you look at it the task of digging up all the pieces from each soldier and painstakingly putting them back together is a monumental challenge. We saw over 2,000 of them rebuilt and you do not even notice that they were ever broken.



Menu Pointing

While you are in a place like China and you wish to order at a restaurant you



will have to learn the art of menu pointing unless you speak fluent mandarin Chinese.

Most fast food places will have a hidden menu with English labels under the pictures. These menus will make it very easy to point to each item you want and then raise the amount of fingers for how many pieces you wish for. This

is all fine and good but sooner or later you will get a menu that has no English and no pictures and all you are left with is to go hungry or take a trip on the wild side. Maddie and I went to a dumpling house and got a menu with only Chinese characters. We ordered 3 plates of dumplings and 2 of them were edible.

Street Food, Street Sickness



If you eat from the local vending carts that use second hand water and unrefrigerated meat sooner or later you are going to pay the price. For me the cost came after a week of eating any and everything and for that I came down with what the Mexicans like to call Montezuma's revenge, for the sake of this article I will not go into any more details.

After 5 or 6 days of getting worse and my attempts at trying the local remedies and medicines failed there seemed to be no choice but to call in a doctor. He showed up with his medical bag, briefcase full of viols and a nurse promptly to our hotel room. The doctor did his examination and then had

the nurse hook me up to an IV and gave me 3 shots. I was running a high fever and very dehydrated so whatever diseased food I had eaten was making itself at home in my blood. After 5 hours of infusion it worked its charm and I was feeling a lot better. The mix of western and Chinese

medicines seemed to be doing the trick.

In total I had 4 shots, 5 bottles of IV solution, an IV kit, 5 hours with the nurse and 1 hour with the doctor all in our room and it was expedited for the total of \$90. For that price I would only get a pack of Kleenex in the Hospitals at home.

Now the treatment I had might have made me feel better for the moment but it took another 10 days until I felt like the sickness was gone. It took another week until I could comfortably eat anything remotely third world or what they would call local cuisine.

It will take time until I will gain the courage to be lined up at that small food cart on the street waiting for the bugs to cook thoroughly in the meat.



"Case of Chinese medical viols."

Furrious



"The rumors are true about dogs in China."

We were walking down the street and a man came out of a shop and put this pretty hat on Maddie's head. The hat appeared to be your usual fake fur that is all over China. I snapped a couple of photos as seen below and then he asked if we would pay 300 Yuan for the hat which is about 45 dollars. I wanted to be polite so I offered him 4 dollars which seemed to low so then he would have to decline and we could move on. Well he took my offer and we got stuck with buying the hat which at this point we looked around his shop and notices there were dog hides hanging from the walls.

After leaving the shop the

hat just did not seem right and the more we thought about it we wondered what kind of fury little critter it just was. The hide would be about the size of a cat and seeing a dog hide on the wall – well put 2 and 2 together and you get 4. So not wanting the

animal to go to waste and not wanting to teach our daughter to kill pets for their pelts we donated it to our taxi driver. He could be the guilty one and we could just try and forget about the whole thing until I decided to write this article and tell the world.



Protected Fruit



"Pomegranates for sale."

In China labor is cheap and fruit is expensive so protecting the apples and oranges is priority. When someone works for 2

dollars a day you have the ability to cater to the individuals needs of a carrot or a tomato. We traveled through some

pomegranate groves and noticed that they enclosed each piece of fruit inside of a clear plastic bag to protect it from the insects and what not so it ripens to perfection. The care given to the fruits is similar to the care given to the Wagu Kobe Beef cattle that are raised and massaged daily in Japan.

