

A few days in China

Cultural

Country : China February 2002

The most beautiful pictures







China is a big country, full of history and culture. It is difficult to have a real idea of it in a few days. This short tour starts in Hong-Kong, passes by Xian and its famous army of terracotta soldiers, without forgetting its capital, Beijing

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China

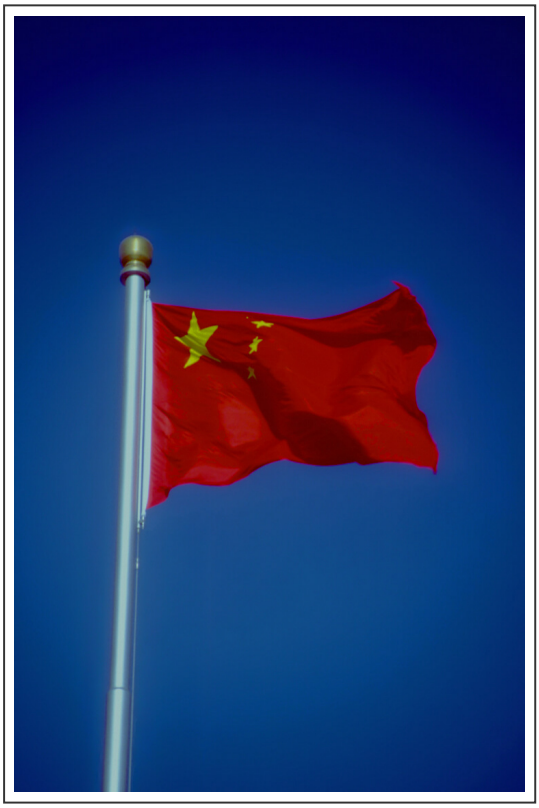
It was during a trip to Hong-Kong that the idea of taking a few days to visit China was born.

China is a huge country, with its history, its culture, its ideograms, its magnificent temples and palaces that need to be visited. But when time is short, seeing China in express mode is not necessarily a good idea. So it is better to focus on some good points to keep an unforgettable memory.

Honk-Kong

Hong Kong is a good starting point. It is a former British colony and all the comfort, technology and infrastructure that we know reassure on arrival in this country of thousands colors.

The flags are not the same (in 2002), even though the country has unified. The Hong Kong people are proud of not being Chinese and they claim it loud and clear.



Chinese flag



Hong Kong Flag

A small tour of the city, day and night, to discover that the city is not very different from ours. Sometimes, however, at the bend of an alley, we find temples, Buddha statues and other religious ornaments. Bamboo scaffolding is very popular and the workers are real tightrope walkers.



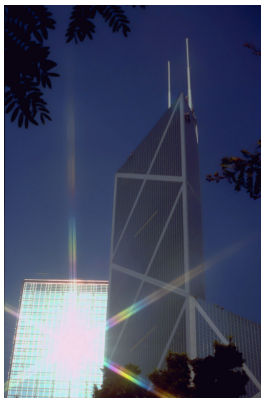
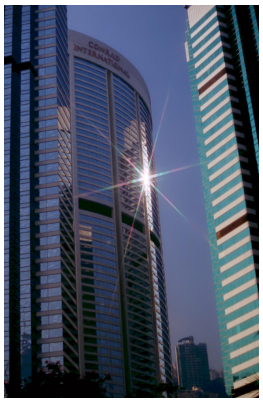



The streets of Hong Kong






Bamboo scaffolding and temple in the middle of buildings


Glass towers reflecting the sun

Kowloon Bay

Kowloon Bay is an inlet that separates the mainland from Hong Kong Island. The crossing is done by floating ferry. The crossing takes only a few minutes. Traditional junks are often seen there. The island of Hong Kong is an obligatory passage, if only for the Victoria Peak, a small mountain from which it is possible to see the whole city.



A junk on Kowloon Bay





View of Hong Kong, a stormy evening

Lantau Island

The airport is located on the island of Lantau. It is also a place located a little outside the city where you can relax. It can be reached by train or by ferry. Prefer the ferry to admire the landscape.

Lantau is full of small villages frozen in time, but especially its giant statue of Buddha, located at the top of the Landmark hill.



Tian Tan Buddha and her servants

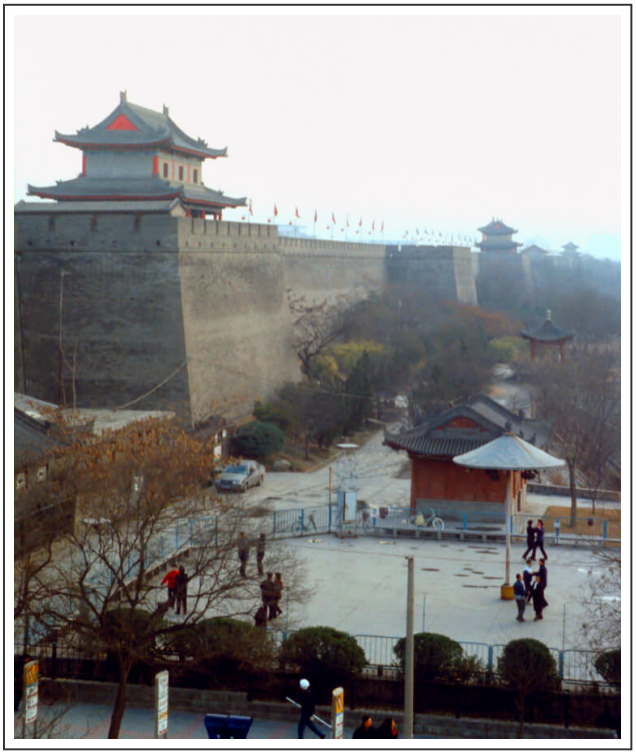
The island is a beautiful playground for those who love to hike. You can climb on the top to the small covered signal. The views are magnificent.



View from the top of Lantau Island

Xian

Xian is located in the province of Shaanxi. The city has nothing exceptional, although a walk on its ramparts in the early morning can bring some nice surprises. The city is full of open-air markets. The change of scenery is total, especially when you come from Hong Kong.



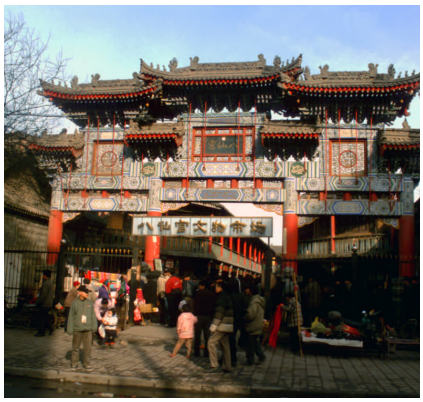
The Xian wall



The towers of the Xian wall








Streets of Xian

The army of terracotta soldiers

All tourists stop in Xian for the army of terracotta soldiers. These represent the army of the first emperor of China. There are no less than 8000 of them. All the statues were buried in a mausoleum located under a tumulus. A few rare statues have been moved to the open air.






The statues of the mausoleum





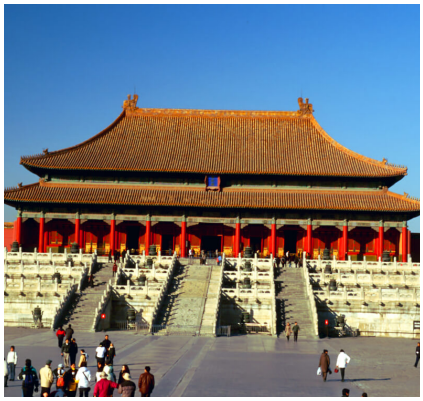
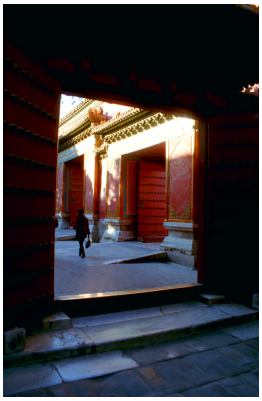
Outdoor statues

Beijing (Pékin)

Beijing, the capital of China, is a huge city. It can be very cold, especially in winter. It covers more than 16'000 km2. Its population is close to 15 million inhabitants (in 2002).

The Forbidden City

Beijing most famous is its Forbidden City, a city within a city, the home of the ancient emperors.




The Forbidden City, located in the heart of Beijing

The summer palace

A place much less known to tourists, the Summer Palace was the residence of Empress Cixi. It was built at the end of the 19th century. The various palaces, bridges and other temples were built on the banks of Kumming Lake. The lake freezes in winter and becomes a skater's paradise.







The summer palace of Empress Cixi and the frozen lake of Kumming





Children playing on the frozen lake of Kumming

The Great Wall of China

No one would visit China without seeing the Great Wall of China. All tourists go to see the renovated parts of the wall, for obvious security reasons. But it is also possible to hire guides to see the old parts of the wall still standing, for more authenticity. It is challenging and you should not be afraid of heights. The trip is nevertheless worth it.






The renovated section



A piece of the old wall

The final word

Of course, China does not stop at these three cities, already grandiose. We could mention Shanghai and Taiwan among others. And China has other assets than its cities, such as the Yangtze River which flows down to Shanghai, more than 6300 km long. It is said that its descent is a life in itself. So, if you have plenty of time...