

THE ARRIVAL TOUR

Becca tripp

There were a lot of great things about this week-long tour. I think in every good tour you have options in your itinerary and the days aren't packed morning to night. The way that it was organized, we did our sight-seeing in the mornings or during the day for the most part, then the rest of the night was free to explore Beijing and learn first-hand what the culture is like. I loved being able to spend time being a tourist before diving into being a teacher for the first time.

The food was fabulous! I loved everything I ate (and everything I didn't).

The people are amazing. Everywhere you go they try to take pictures of you. Some try to be sneaky and fail at it, but most of the time they are open about taking your pictures. They will bend over backwards to try and help you, even if they have to embarrass themselves by acting out what they are trying to tell you. The kids are the best part! They are so adorable, all you want to do is take pictures with them. Katie Bell and I went to take a picture with one kid and it turned into a mass photo shoot with a handful of random children and a whole lot of cameras flashing from proud mothers and fathers. Not only are the locals great, but the people we met at the tour are fantastic. It was a really good way to get to know the teachers in my area. A lot of the friends I became close with in Beijing went to my city with me and we all love to spend time together and reminisce.

All in all it was a great, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity you absolutely cannot afford to miss!





USA to CHINA

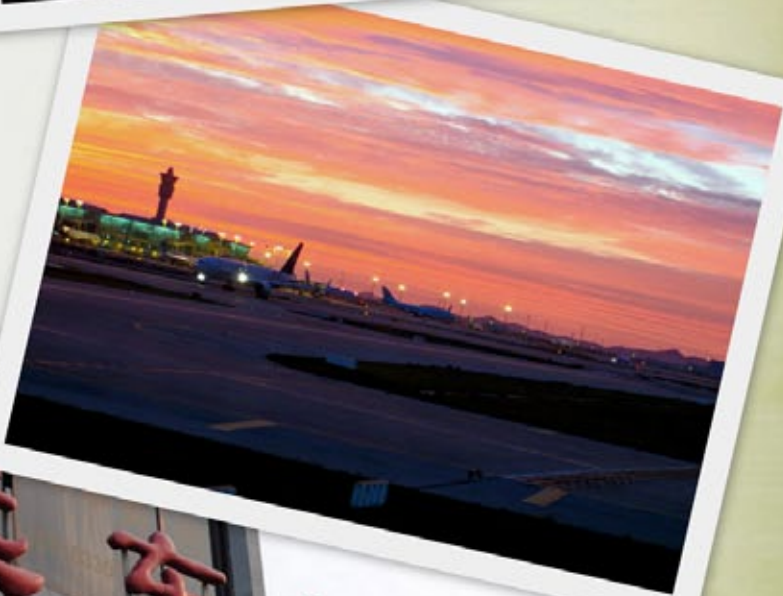
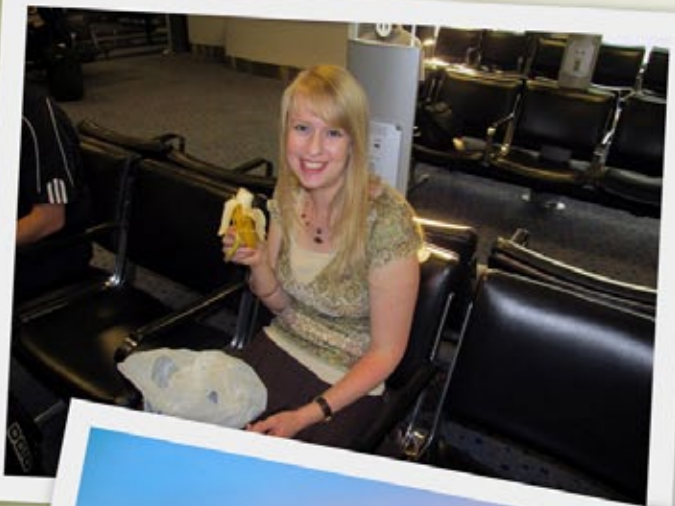
Tom and Alicia Russell



Our first plane ride to LAX went by pretty quickly. We spent a couple of hours chatting with other China Horizons people at the LAX airport while we mentally prepared for the impending long flight to Korea. Wow, moving from Delta to Korean Air was a major upgrade. The airplane was like an all-inclusive Hilton in the sky: individual TV screens with over 100 movies, games, music stations, etc. for all of your entertainment needs; semi-hourly drinks and treats hand-delivered by blue-scarfed fancy matching Korean air hostesses; two full meals; hot refreshing towels; and even a small shopping area where you can buy gifts, purses, perfumes, and much more. It had two levels of seating and easily held 700+ passengers. We shared our row with a Korean guy who spoke zero English and produced strange noises. The two meals were yummy. The funniest part was that they gave the Korean guy next to us completely different meal choices from what they gave us. Also, because we were flying in the same direction that the Earth was rotating, our daylight lasted for

something like 20 hours that day. Crazy. Eventually we made the quick transfer onto our last plane to Beijing. This is when the sleepiness really started to kick in. Basically, we boarded the plane, ate another tasty Korean Air meal, and next thing we knew, we woke up while flying in over Beijing. The city didn't look quite as huge as we had expected (height-wise); it seems to be much more of a sprawling city. After getting off the plane, grabbing our bags, and exchanging some money, we made our way to the hostel. We got into our room (which was definitely nicer than we expected; we had our own room with its own bathroom and everything) and crashed.





THE GREAT WALL



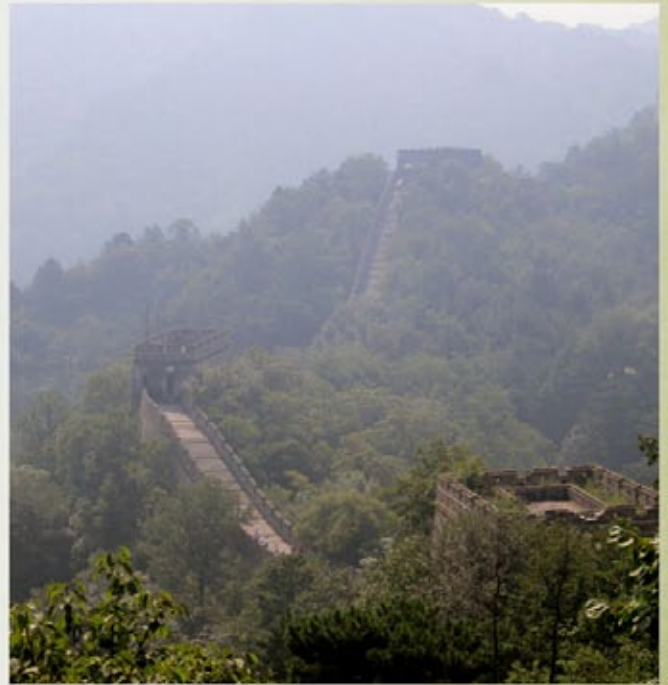
Alastair and Laleinia McKee

To be honest, the most anticipated part of our whole adventure in China was our visit to the Great Wall. It is one of those things that you have always had in the back of your mind, one of those places to which some day you plan on going, but part of you believes and accepts that you will never get there. But this August, we went--we got to visit one of the most iconic places in the world!

We decided to take the ski lift to the top of the wall, which was a great decision. The wall gradually got closer and closer until we were there, hiking up and down the Great Wall of China. I think we took the craziest section because we hiked stair set after stair set after stair set. The views were unbelievable, and I won't lie: standing on the Great Wall is an amazing experience. We almost cried with happiness at one point!

Well, getting down was just as memorable. We took the Toboggan, and luckily we had a clear slope ahead, and made the most of the open track. I (Alastair) ended up flying off my Toboggan around a corner because I was going too fast, and got a big nasty burn on my arm for my trouble. Anyways, the Great Wall of China was just incredible. If we get to go to more places like that, our lives will be complete.











WHEN I ARRIVED IN CHINA, MY FIRST IMPRESSION WAS...

...Wow! I'm going to have such a blast here!" I was fascinated by the differences of culture. I found it particularly funny that the men roll up their shirts to stay cool. I secretly snagged a picture of this phenomena.

-Meka Bradshaw



...DANG. This place is ghetto.

-Katie Bell







MY FAVORITE PART OF THE ARRIVAL TOUR WAS...



...All the crazy people we'd meet on the side of the road.

-Jonathan Blomquest



...Visiting the Great Wall.
It was Awesome.

-Joel Green



...The Great Wall.

-Joy Higginson







THE CRAZIEST THING I SAW IN BEIJING WAS...

...Mao Zedong himself.

-Dustin Higginson



...A guy eating a scorpion.

-Joy Higginson







What was your favorite meal in Beijing? What did you eat?



My favorite food from Beijing is my favorite in all of China: fried eggs and tomatoes. It's simple but delicious. It can be sweet, spicy, or tangy depending on who makes it, but it's always good.

The rice becomes ten times better when you pour the juices over it. Yum!

-Bonny Olson



Food is really good in China. Our favorite food is on side streets at different vendors. You really can't go wrong when you find some freshly barbecued meats hanging on a skewer. Lamb skewers are very tasty! And meat-filled dumplings are to die for!

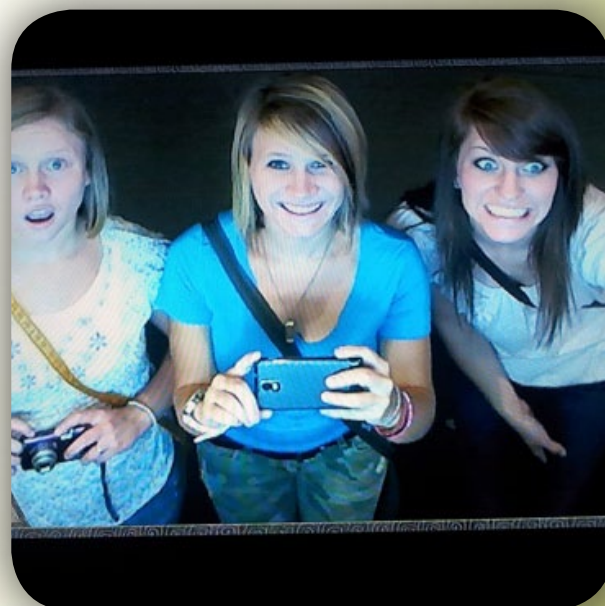
-McKees



Right down from the hostel there's this tiny restaurant, maybe four tables inside. I played it safe and ordered diced chicken & green peppers. It was so worth it though!

It was enough for two, and I ate it all. So good! Spicy & saucy, perfect with a cold Sprite. 18RMB. I definitely went back again before we left.

-Shannon Robertson







dinosaurs in CHINA?

Daniel Crapse



The day that we went through the Forbidden City was already fairly spectacular and more than imagined (as are many things and places in China). Then, as outlined in the Beijing itinerary, we were given the option of going to Jiangshan Park for a small additional cost. What I learned--along with Katie Bell--is that as you walk down the left side of the mountain, and somewhat hidden in Jiangshan park, you begin to hear theme music from the movie Jurassic Park. Following the music, we discovered the actual Jurassic Park itself.

No run-of-the-mill, outside, stuffed dinosaur exhibit. These were certified moving dinosaurs making their individual calls of territory claims and other such calls as dinosaurs have been discovered to make. I knew that no one would believe me so I brought back pictures as proof. Not even our tour leaders knew anything about this. Again, follow the Music and you'll see.





