



A DIFFERENT BEIJING

The side tourists do not see

Sheila Chan

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逛街

Usually, tourists are directed to locations such as WangFuJing and XiuShuiJie. However, the one stop destination for shopping among locals is Xidan Shopping Center. Xidan actually consists of multiple malls in the same general area. There are high end malls where locals like to shop for brand name products. Xidan also has many swap-meet-style buildings, where the entire mall consists of private vendors. Since Xidan is more directed towards locals, the prices of goods are the cheapest in Beijing. For more of a traditional shopping experience, locals frequent QianMen, where the architecture remains the same as it has been for hundreds of thousands of years. Again, the shopping experience is similar to a swap meet, but it is definitely a sight to see.



Traditional style back street at Qianmen



Stands at Qianmen



Shaved ice from Master Kong's



Traditional style back street at Qianmen

新业

Can you believe this is a college campus? To me, some parts look like an imperial garden. This is, in fact, Tsinghua University, the highest ranking university, the Harvard of China. Unlike in America, the highest ranking universities in China are public schools rather than private schools, due to the fact that public schools receive loads of funding from the government, while private schools only rely on the tuition of students. The architecture and overall feeling of the campus is very unique in that it is very inconsistent. There are Western-style buildings (both traditional and modern) as well as many traditional Chinese-style buildings. Nevertheless, it is definitely a sight to see.



休闲



A retired person practicing calligraphy on the pavement in a Beijing park

Even retired people have loads of fun in Beijing! There is so much to do in Beijing that one never has to worry about being bored. Early every morning at every park in the city, retirees gather to do morning exercises. Some choose to dance to traditional music, some choose to do tai chi, and others practice their calligraphy on the ground with giant brushes dipped in water. Tourists tend to frequent the imperial gardens, but another destination that deserves more hype is the Beijing Zoo. Visitors can see the animals at an incredibly close proximity. Though it may not be very humane, it is a once in a lifetime experience to encounter these beasts so up close and personal.



Retired people doing morning exercises in a Beijing park



About the Author:

Sheila Chan is a sophomore Information Systems major at Carnegie Mellon University. She created this booklet because she loves to travel to China. In fact, she has been there four times in her lifetime. She believes that everyone should visit China at least once in their lifetime. The next destination that Sheila wants to go to is Los Angeles, where she was born and raised. She can't wait for summer vacation!

