

Title:

Not only olympic games

Word Count:

741

Summary:

2008 offers many reasons why one should pack up and catch a flight to Beijing.

Keywords:

Hostel, china, beijing

Article Body:

The 2008 Olympics are for sure a world-wide event attracting thousands and thousands of visitors. Let's see how the Government will adjust together the 15 millions citizens with the foreign human flood in hot and humid August

For sure is not the best time to go. And somehow we perceive a kind of contradiction between the sport ethic of fair play.. and the human right deception China is constantly trying to mask. Luckily impossible in its 100%.

Further reasons why this metropolis is worth a visit are to be discovered in its past rather than in its present. From Chinese mythic bicycles, to Tai-Chi practice, tea houses and old hutongs or special foot massages you will have a glance of what the Chinese Republic is and was.

To escape from the mass touristy attractions, entertainment, anonymous luxury accommodations and expensive cliché, or simply to hide away from the city smog and confusion there are a few things that someone can do to discover some Beijing traditional pearls.

Fragrant Hills, in the north-western corner of Beijing, is a good place for weekend outings and picnics. Formerly a Qing imperial garden, today Fragrant Hills makes an easy short climb in the suburbs of Beijing. It's also home to the Fragrant Hills Hotel, designed by I.M. Pei (Louvre Museum Pyramid). Take buses 331, 726 to the last stop. ¥10, students ¥5. From here, if you like green, have a visit to the Botanical Garden, next door.

Steps away from the east gate of Fragrant Hill, Beijing Botanical Gardens offer acres of greenery and flowers where Sir Johnston, teacher of the last emperor Puyi, had a villa in Cherry Glen, a silent and beautiful retreat in the Gardens.

In the spring, the gardens hosts special exhibits of tulips, peach, plum blossoms and peonies. Buses 331, 726. ¥10, students ¥5.

A smart cool place to visit, not so common among tourists, is the 798 Art Zone, a part of the Chaoyang District. A thriving artist community set among 50-year old decommissioned military factory buildings of unique architectural style. It is often compared with New York's Greenwich Village or SoHo, but faces impending destruction from the forces driving Beijing's urban sprawl.

The Hutong Villages of Beijing most represent the traditional housing of Chinese locals. Some of the streets in the Qianmen Hutong have a history of about 500 years, with unchanged street layouts. The Hutongs are the perfect place to get a glimpse of Chinese daily life. Unfortunately, the majority of Hutongs have been demolished to make space for modern buildings. However some of them are still well preserved and converted in lodgings for tourists. They offer the warmest atmosphere you can imagine while keeping the traditional architecture, decoration and style. Hutongs are considered very valuable and are popular to some kind of tourists. If you can transform an attraction into a place where you can rest, and live for a while as you were in XIX century, well, maybe this is the best way to experience Beijijng.

Many of the hutongs have been transformed in youth hostels often run by former European travellers that decided to stop their run, save this enchanted peaceful places and establish a business. They offer all the comforts you can expect on private rooms decorated with taste and making use of traditional colours and red-wax piece of furniture. All rooms, as in traditional hutongs, face an inner secret garden well kept and decorated with marble statues and plants.

And finally, how would you move around these typical Hutong Villages? Rickshaws that can weave in and out of their narrow streets are the answer. But for a more personalized and traditional approach to this Country of bicycles, (the so called Bike kingdom) we recommend you rent a bike a healthy, environmentally friendly, convenient, economical, safe and fun means of travel transportation and recreation! China truly is producing and using more bicycles than any other nation in the world. Cycling in China is a kind of life style for the Chinese people. Don't forget that in the traffic and in the narrow alleys of the Hutongs bikes are the best means to explore the city and is a super-individual way of transport by your own pace! There are some companies like The Bicycle Kingdom.com to rent your own bike.

So what are you waiting for? See the Olympics in the freshness of your home with a beer and some friends and let other melt in the smoggy sun. Experience Beijing in Springtime.

