

# XI'AN

A METROPOLIS THREE  
MILLENNIA IN THE MAKING

西安市

The delicious scents of Chinese cooking fill the air, vying for attention in the narrow streets around the Great Mosque below the imposing Drum Tower: saté lamb and fish, noodle soup and dumplings, spicy hotpots and dim sum – a culinary kaleidoscope to be savoured. Vendors with fully laden handbarrows entice with candied fruit, moon cakes and nuts while artists adorn silk with custom calligraphy and motifs. A normal night in Xi'an – the Yellow River metropolis that's home to over eight million people and one of the world's most famous ancient treasures ...

In 1974, a group of farmers digging a well made a discovery that continues to take on new dimensions to this day: the over 2,000 year old Terracotta Army of Emperor Qin Shi Huang. The First Emperor of China commissioned the mausoleum which is believed to house over 8,000 soldiers and 130 chariots with 520 horses as well as various other figures. Xi'an is also considered the be-

ginning and the end of the Silk Road and was the capital of the Tang Dynasty that reigned from 618 to 907. In addition to conducting successful military campaigns, the rulers also widely promoted art and philosophy, making the world's most populous city at the time the centre of what is generally regarded as the high point in Chinese civilisation.

While Xi'an is now a jumble of highrise apartments, office towers, fast food franchises and the modern infrastructure necessary to keep a modern metropolis up and running, it's also still the setting for some sensational sightseeing! The old town centre with its hatch road layout is still surrounded by a 12 metre high wall that runs just under 12 kilometres in length. Built in the 14th century, the base is up to 18 metres thick, making ▶



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the four gates seem more like tunnels. Bicycle tours along the top and through the battlements are popular as well as a great way to literally "travel around town". Approximately four million people live within the old wall and one can be forgiven for thinking time has stood still in some areas – especially as the dawn breaks and traffic is at a minimum. The park areas draw people to engage in some morning exercise such as coordinated dancing to fast beat music or traditional Tai Chi. Vendors begin selling their wares such as Xifan – a rice soup popular at breakfast – and Baozi – steamed buns with various fillings. No meal is complete without Cha – a hot Chinese tea and this is commonly drunk from a clear glass.

In the centre of the city lies the impressive Bell Tower built in 1384 during the early Ming Dynasty. Some of the bells date back a further 700 years or so to the Tang Dynasty. They once signalled the gatekeepers when to open and close the town centre. Adjacent is the famous Defachang dumpling restaurant where the service personnel wheel multilevel trolleys packed with mouthwatering local specialties between the tables.

Diners can choose between prepared vegetables, sauces, soups and of course: Jiaozi dumplings in bamboo steam baskets. The restaurant is renowned for providing over 170 different types of dumpling including variations of pork, chicken, fish, crabmeat, vegetables, mushrooms and sweet walnut paste. The kitchen chefs also enjoy an enviable reputation for their dough-folding artistry with dumplings taking the form of birds, fish, fruit, nuts and even flowers. Almost too good to eat!

The Shaanxi Province's capital has a lot on offer and the best starting place to set out on unforgettable city safaris is the Kempinski Hotel Xi'an. The state-of-the-art hotel was inspired by the shape of a dragon and is representative of both proud Chinese tradition and the culture's futuristic orientation. The hotel is located close to the Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor – better known by many as the Terracotta Army. From outside the UNESCO World Heritage Site, visitors often think they are entering a factory or

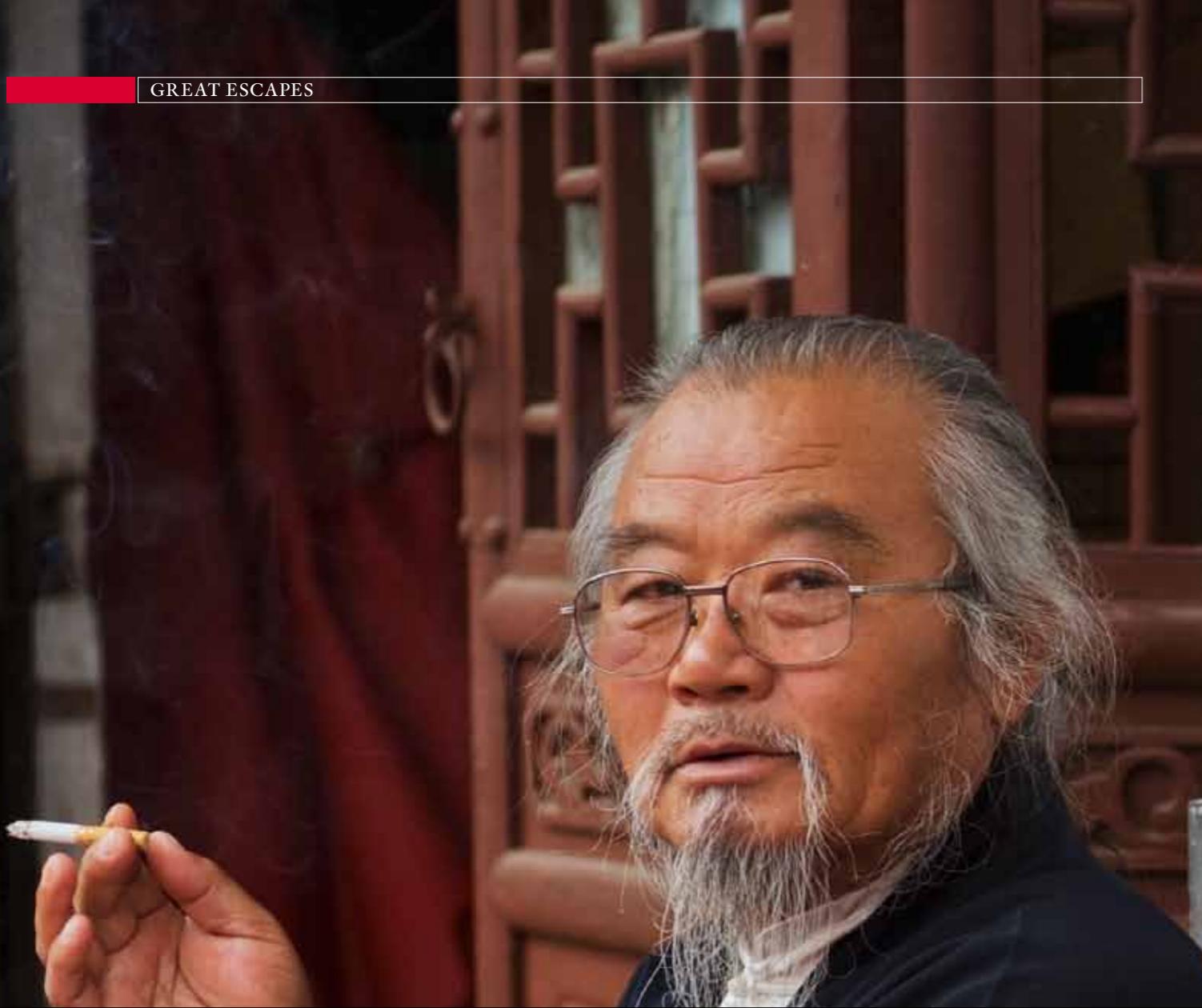
an aircraft hanger. Once inside the purpose-built facility however, they are left with no doubt that they are somewhere special. Although the statues are believed to stem from a limited number of moulds, each underwent customisations and no two identical warriors have been found to date. Standing face to face with row upon row of these formidable soldiers, one can't help but feel humbled. If not but the army itself, then by the power wielded by the First Emperor in being able to command such an incredible undertaking for his death.

The Eastern belief that you "can take it with you" is alive and well today. In fact, many businesses dealing with metaphysical issues have set up shop in the vicinity around the Taoist Temple of the Eight Immortals. These include fortune tellers, Feng Shui masters and shops specialising in forming consumer goods out of joss paper so that loved ones are not without the essentials in the afterlife.

According to Buddhist belief on the other hand, there is no need for such things. Buddhism is but one of many religions that has left its mark on Xi'an over the millennia. The Temple of Great Maternal Grace, "Da Ci'en" was rebuilt in 647 and is still a place of learning and meditation. Many other breathtaking landmarks and unforgettable sights are close by including the Giant Wild Goose Pagoda, China's largest market for traditional medicine and the Great Mosque with its intricate wood carvings. As dazzling as it all is, some of the most satisfying scenes in Xi'an are of less grandeur: a sparrow casually pecking at crumbs on a table but inches from two elderly men locked in a battle of chess for example. Visitors are urged to take the time to also enjoy some of the simple pleasures Xi'an has on offer. After all, the metropolis was three millennia in the making – a few minutes won't make a difference ...

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In den Gassen rund um die Große Moschee zu Füßen des Trommelturmes duften die Garküchen: gegrillte Lamm- und Fische, Pfannkuchen und Nudelsuppe, Teigtäschchen und Feuertöpfe – jeder Stand übertrifft den vorherigen an Köstlichkeiten. Karren biegen sich unter der Last bunter kandierter Früchte, Mondküchlein und Nüssen, Kalligraphen und Tuschemaler bieten ihre Werke feil. Abendszenen aus Xi'an, der Acht-Millionen-Metropole am Gelben Fluss. Xian – nur ein weiterer urbaner Moloch im modernen China? Nein, diese Stadt ist weit mehr.

Im Westen hat ein größernwahnsinniger Kaiser Xi'an berühmt gemacht. Nicht dadurch, dass er 220 v. Chr. die Einigung des Riesenreiches erzwang, wohl aber wegen der gigantischen Armeen aus Ton, die er mit ins Jenseits nehmen wollte. Wer sich jedoch etwas mehr Zeit für Entdeckungen nimmt, wird reich belohnt. Hier begann und endete die Seidenstrasse, Xi'an erlebte ein Goldenes Zeitalter: Die Regenten der Tangdynastie

(618-907) förderten Künste und Philosophie. Erste Opern wurden aufgeführt, die klassische Dichtung erreichte ihren Höhepunkt. Xi'an war die kosmopolitische Hauptstadt der Welt. In Europa war man noch lange nicht so weit.

Zwar prägen mehrspurige Autostraßen, moderne Einkaufszentren, Hamburger- und Pizzaketten, Wohnblöcke und Kaufhäuser große Teile der Stadt. Andererseits ist da auch noch die gut erhaltene alte Stadtmauer aus dem 14. Jahrhundert. Das gewaltige, 12 Kilometer lange Bauwerk mit seinen vier Toren und Befestigungsanlagen umschließt den schachbrettartig angelegten Stadtkern. Auf der breiten Mauerkrone radeln fröhlich chinesische Reisegruppen rund um die Stadt. Vier Millionen Menschen leben innerhalb der Mauer, in manchen Gassen ist das moderne Leben noch nicht ganz angekommen. Schon in der Morgendämmerung geht es ganz chinesisch zu: Walzermusik krächzt aus Kassettenrekordern, Paare üben Tanzschritte, andere schlürfen Xian, die

Frühstücksreissuppe. Längst sind mobile Garküchen unterwegs, um die Frühaufsteher mit Baozi, den berühmten gefüllten Teigtäschchen zu versorgen oder mit heißem Tee und Sojamilch. Schattenboxer begrüßen die Sonne mit dem Kranich und dem Krieger.

In der Stadtmitte steht der schöne alte Glockenturm, dessen Seitenfronten auf die vier Stadttore weisen. Einst wurden die geöffnet, wenn die Glocke im Morgengrauen schlug. Gegenüber lockt das Teigtaschenrestaurant Defachang. Hier sollte man unbedingt alles probieren, was die Bedienungen auf mehrstöckigen Servierwagen servieren: Tellerchen mit Gemüsen Soßen, Suppen und die berühmten Jiaozi in Dämpfkörbchen aus Bambus. Defachang lässt angeblich über 170 verschiedene Füllungen in dünne Nudelhüllen stopfen: Schweinefleisch, Huhn, Fisch, Krebs, Gemüse, Affenpilz oder süße Walnusspaste, die Köche formen die Jiaozi wie kleine Vögelchen, Fische, Obst, Blumen, Nüsse – alle aus Teig und ganz köstlich. Doch die vielen Gäste aus aller Welt kommen



nicht zum Teigtaschen-Essen nach Xi'an. Sie wollen das „Achte Weltwunder“ sehen, die Tonarmee des Kaisers. Und vom Kempinski-Hotel Xi'an ist man glücklicherweise sehr schnell bei dem Museumskomplex. Wer von dem architektonisch höchst anspruchsvollen Hotel kommt, das sich eher asiatisch-zeitgenössisch gibt und formal einem Drachen nachempfunden ist, mag sich vor der Ausgrabungsstätte enttäuscht die Augen reiben. Denn diese Gebäude sind zweckmäßig wie ein Baumarkt. Aber dann, vor der unterirdischen Kampftruppe, die wie verzaubert in langen Gräben steht, ist jeder überwältigt.

Keiner der 7000 Tonkrieger, egal, ob Soldat, Bogenschütze oder General gleicht dem anderen. Seltsam und Furcht erregend ist die Armee, keine Abbildung kann ein ähnliches Gefühl hervorrufen wie das Original. Natürlich kann nicht jeder solch einen Aufwand treiben. Rund um den Tempel der Acht Unsterblichen wird jenes Accessoire des daoistischen Totenkultes angeboten, das den modernen Normalsterblichen ins Jenseits begleitet, das „Höllengeld“: Kühlchränke, Autos, Handys – alles aus Papier hergestellt, um später in Rauch aufzugehen. Gleich daneben warten in kleinen Läden und Büros ehrwürdige Feng Shui Meister und Wahrsager auf Kundschaft.

Später muss man unbedingt auch den buddhistischen „Da Ci'en“-Tempel und die Große Wildganspagode besichtigen, den landesweit größten Arzneimittelmarkt für traditionelle Medizin, die Große Moschee aus dem 18. Jahrhundert mit ihren wunderbaren Holzschnitzereien. Doch vorerst lohnt es sich, zu verweilen und in die wunderbare Ruhe des Tempels der Acht Unsterblichen einzutauchen. Weißer Rauch kräuselt sich duftend vor den Altären. Ein Mönch im blauen Gewand sinniert über die roten Blätter eines kleinen Zierahorns. Spatzen, die nach Krümeln suchen, Daoisten beim Schachspiel – mehr braucht es nicht zum Glücklichsein. Und dann: weiter! Es gibt noch so viel zu sehen und zu erleben.



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## GREAT ESCAPES



The inviting Lobby Lounge terrace.

**Dragon Palace – Distinctive Cantonese and Local Shaanxi Cuisine**

Pamper yourself with excellent Chinese cuisine complemented by exclusive ambience with a stunning view – the best of Cantonese and Shaanxi Cuisine ...

Immerse in the exclusive Dragon Palace, lavish wood carvings, contemporary art, traditional and modern furniture are setting the stage for your dining experience with the Ba River as your scenery.

Featuring 16 river/garden-viewed exclusive private rooms the Dragon Palace aims to be the trendsetter in introducing a new style of Chinese dining with modern ambience, trendy food presentation and service.

**Paulaner Bräuhaus – The Taste of Munich!**

The Paulaner Bräuhaus is an international symbol for the very best beer specialties and the unique Munich lifestyle: cosmopolitan, warm, friendly and bursting with excitement! The copper brew kettles and an endless maze of piping's highlight the restaurant and allow you to experience firsthand the making of the authentic Paulaner beer. Warm colors and plenty of wood makes one feel right at home and encourage lively socializing while enjoying a unique gastronomical and cultural experience. Our dedicated Paulaner Bräuhaus employees welcome you to witness the Bavarian tradition and "The taste of Munich" at the Kempinski Hotel Xi'an.

**Lobby Lounge**

At Lobby Lounge, the vibrant meeting place of Xian, enjoy a distinctive selection of Chinese Teas, fine wines and cocktails, in the scenery of the Chan and Ba River.

Enjoy the day to soothing sounds from the grand piano while our tea master prepares a traditional Chinese tea or relax with a glass of wine in the evening as our lobby turns into a trendy lounge with a breathtaking view. With soft piano music, the Chinese bar centerpiece blends perfectly with the modern lounge furniture become captivated with our stunning view and let your imagination start.

**Pulse Health Club – Tone yourself!**

Rejuvenate and leave yourself in the caring hands of our team standing by in the Fitness area including a 33 meters indoor heated swimming pool, riverside outdoor night-lit tennis courts, a wide range of fitness and relaxation programs.

Stay in shape! Our Pulse Health Club is pro-

viding first class fitness facilities, offering a variety of NAUTILUS cardiovascular, resistance and weight equipment; our professional trained staff prides themselves on their ability to give you the best qualified personalized service.

Brush up on your skills at our riverside outdoor night-lit Tennis Courts, breathe the fresh air blowing from the river, what you are enjoying is not only the sports but also your life.

**Convention Centre – Perfect Venue for Convention & Social Events**

Experience the tranquil environment and contemporary conference facilities at the Kempinski Hotel Xi'an.

As the official venue of the Euro-Asia Economic Forum, Kempinski Hotel Xi'an caters with its vast experience and upmost attention to detail making us the premier venue in town.

Totaling 5000sqm of meeting and banquet spaces is to suit every occasion, whether it is a meeting, conference, private dinner, and banquet, or personalized wedding, all equipped with state-of-the-art audio-visual facilities, are elegantly designed for your distinguished guests of honor. The new convention centre offers a unique atmosphere with natural light and impeccable river view of the Chan and Ba Rivers. Dedicated and professional banquet service team will no doubt ensure the success of your meetings. The elegance of every detail, inside and out enhances its uniqueness.



The impressive Lobby Entrance.

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**KEMPINSKI HOTEL XI'AN**

Kempinski Hotel Xi'an, the leading luxury hotel in town with fascinating river view and extensive conference facilities, reflects the modernity and tradition of contemporary China, set in the ancient capital, home to dynasties and their treasures. Within easy reach of the airport and the Terracotta Warriors, our luxurious rooms and first-class meeting facilities are elegantly designed and topped with a peaceful view of the majestic Ba River.

Choose Kempinski Hotel Xi'an and escape conformity and enjoy modern luxury at the unique location, when it was known as Chang'an the city of Eternal Peace.

**Café Berlin – Fusion and Western Classics**

Discover culinary creativity or the best of classical western cuisine in the unique environment at Ba River, complemented by a fine selection of international wines. Your journey begins with the stunning ambience and exciting view of the Chanba Scenery, known as the Eight Great Sights of Chang'an.

The contemporary design and warm atmosphere featuring wood, granite and metal,

creates a warm and unique atmosphere and rounding up your excellent dining experience. Pick an excellent wine from the walk-in cellar to round up your culinary voyage. For the ultimate dining experience reserve a table at the window in the late evening when sunset creates a backdrop as in ancient Chinese paintings...