

Beijing and The Great Wall of China

Beijing-Motaz Othman

Beijing is not only the capital of one of the great powers of our time: it is a city which confirmed its greatness for thousands of years. Its historic sites require a whole book. It is with emotion that one could talk about the Forbidden City, the palaces of kings and emperors, such as the famous Summer Palace, the old historical temples, such as the Temple of Paradise, the old city, or the museums and shopping centers. A minimum of five days is required to see these sites but due to my participation in the Beijing International Tourism Exhibition, I could visit only the Great Wall of China and certain shopping centers.



The Great Wall: general view

منظر عام لسور الصين

The Great Wall of China

The fight between humans was more fatal during previous centuries, because their engagements were face to face, with swords and lances. This is clear from the large fresco representing the battles around the Great Wall of China, which one finds at the principal entry. In the past some nations

built their forts in a limited area but the ancient Chinese built a 6400 km wall resembling a giant snake crawling between mountains, plains and valleys.

I met thousands of tourists, with cameras and bottles of water, on the steps of this wall, 9 meters wide and 8 meters high.

The entry ticket costs five euros including an

insurance coupon covering any possible accident, especially if one wants to visit the highest points and control towers. The Chinese are taking no chances with the safety and well being of their tourists.

The Great Wall of China is one of the Seven Wonders of the World. When the astronaut Neil Armstrong was asked, what he had ➤

One day of shopping in Beijing

Beijing is undoubtedly one of the world's shopping paradises, with distinguished shopping centers and diversified goods. All hotel reception desks can supply a list of shopping centres including the famous silk market: six floors, each one specialized in certain types of goods. Even if you do not want to shop there, it is worth a visit to see the infinite range of cotton fabrics for all the family, 70% cheaper than anywhere else. However, shopping in this market requires great bargaining skills and product knowledge. On other floors, one finds accessories and valuable, beautifully-coloured stones with splendid designs. There are also famous Chinese silk fabrics decorated with bewitching drawings and colors, as well as antiques and ceramics. The stores, with simple folding screens, are open from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. The shopkeepers are not concerned about theft - Beijing is a city where safety reigns. And security men are on hand after the shops have closed.



Daily life in Beijing

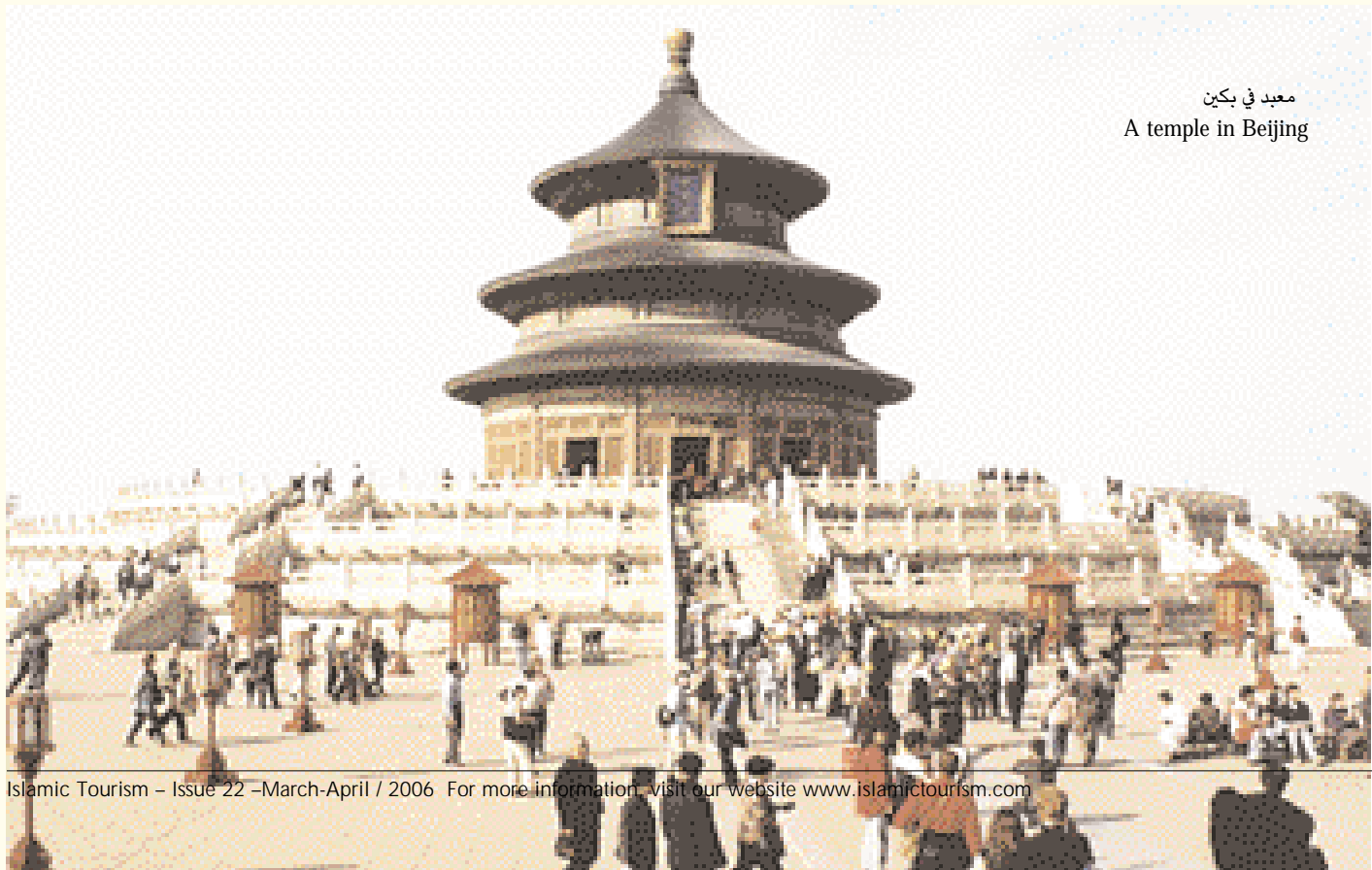
الحياة اليومية في بكين



Shopping in Beijing

التسوق في بكين

seen on earth when he was on the moon; he answered: "The Great Wall of China". One can reach the wall by public transport, or go on a tour arranged by local travel agencies. Unlike other countries, who neglect access to their 'wonders', the Chinese have paid a great deal of attention to the roads which lead to the wall. The journey takes visitors through beautiful mountains, a tourist attraction in their own right. ■



معبد في بكين
A temple in Beijing