

Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension

Monday

After a year of hard saving, we were finally ready to hit the road towards Heathrow.

Woo! In a slightly different way to what we normally do, we decided this time to book a hotel at Heathrow which included parking for the duration of trip. We used hotelextras.com and bagged a bargain in The Park Inn by Radisson. Luck was on our side as due to already being in South London due to family commitments, we arrived at the hotel quite some

Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension

time before or 2pm check in time- but this wasn't a problem and we were allowed to check in early for no extra cost.

We dumped our cases and did a quick U turn- eager to get into London for a day playing tourists.

The Park Inn couldn't have been better located for our needs. There was a free bus to every Heathrow terminal from across the road - which then connected to the Underground. There was also the Hopper bus which picked you up outside the hotel door, but this was £5 pp each way, so for the sake of crossing the road we saved ourselves £10 pp.

Our first destination in London was the Guild-

Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension

hall and Roman Amphitheater. The remains of the amphitheatre were unearthed in the 80s and have been made into a wonderful free attraction underneath an art gallery. I particularly enjoyed seeing the Roman drainage systems, which were remarkably still intact. There is a wonderful crossover of old remains and new projection to give you an idea of how it would have looked.

Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension

Across Guildhall Yard is the Guildhall. Again, it's a free visit but it was fascinating to see. Some famous trials occurred here including one of Guy Fawkes' conspirators.

The weather was terribly wet and bleak, but it didn't bother us as our next stop was Elephant and Castle for a visit to the Cinema Museum. This needed to be pre booked in advance as entry is by guided tour only. Keith was so excited as a life long fan of cinema.

First impressions were fab- on entry you're shown into a wonderful room set up as an Art Deco cinema, with wonderful chairs, lights etc. The venue of the museum is in an old building from Lambeth Workhouse- where Charlie Chaplin lived for a while, a fact that

Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension

the museum are very proud of.

After a rather lengthy introduction our guide, Ronald, who is a passionate cofounder of the privately run museum, began to show us around some of the many items they have at the museum. Sadly this part lasted only 15 mins or so, before we were lead upstairs for a complimentary tea and biscuits. We were then left in that hall for over half an hour (and weren't allowed to browse through some of the items we'd been rushed past) before being taken back down to the original theatre for some short movies.

Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension

At this point we'd already been there coming up to 2 hours, and so we made a sneaky exit as we didn't fancy giving up any more time. It's a shame really- the museum don't get any investment so have to work very hard and rely on volunteers to survive. They clearly have loads and loads to see but haven't managed to find a decent way to display it as there are piles upon piles of history all over. We weren't the only ones to come away early.

After a disappointing visit I was worried how to turn the day around! Needn't worry though, and before we knew it we'd stumbled down the Lambeth walk (Oi!) and onto the South bank near Lambeth Palace (London residence of the Archbishop of Canter-

Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension

bury). By now the weather had cleared up and we enjoyed a beer right opposite the London Eye on The Tattishall Castle Pub boat.

Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



We enjoyed a beautiful Italian meal at our favourite, Pierinos in South Kensington before nipping back to Embankment and Tatishall Castle for “one for the road”!

Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Tuesday

Flight day! Yay!

After a very peaceful night's sleep, we checked out of the Park Inn at the very re-

Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension

spectable hour of 08:30. 20 mins later we were at Terminal 3 dropping our bags at the Cathay Pacific stand and 20 mins later we were chilling in the departure lounge for our 12:20 flight to Hong Kong.



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension

Our flight with Cathay Pacific was very smooth and comfortable- despite being almost 12 hours long! We paid extra for the extra legroom seats owing to Keefy's 6foot 4ness and these were a roaring success.

At 06:30 **Wednesday** (HK time, 23:30 Tues UK) we landed and an hour later we'd reached our home for the next two nights, The Harbour Plaza Metropolis. Due to the early hour we were unable to check in, so we headed to the rooftop pool for a quick dip, jacuzzi and shower before heading out to do some sightseeing. After weeks of very low temperatures in the UK, the warm weather was very welcome!

Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



By 09:00am we had freshened up and had our explorer hats on. We departed the hotel by Metro (attached to the hotel via Mall) and travelled two stops, disembarking by the famous and historical Star Ferry. We crossed Victoria Harbour on the Star Ferry which offered fabulous views of the Hong Kong sky-

Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension

line.



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Outside the ferry terminal we boarded a public bus which took us up to the Peak. We thought that this would take us up to the Peak Tram but actually it took us to the Peak during a twisty journey of about an hour. The views from the top were amazing, but I was a bit disappointed that we hadn't ascended on

Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension

the Peak Tram. Luckily we were able to buy a single ticket to descend only- and actually this worked really well as there was no queue to go down, and the views were really great! Plus we got to experience a very steep descent! At the Tram terminal there was a HUGE queue so actually our bus journey up was a triumph as we'd have probably wasted at least 2 hours just queuing to get on the tram.

Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension

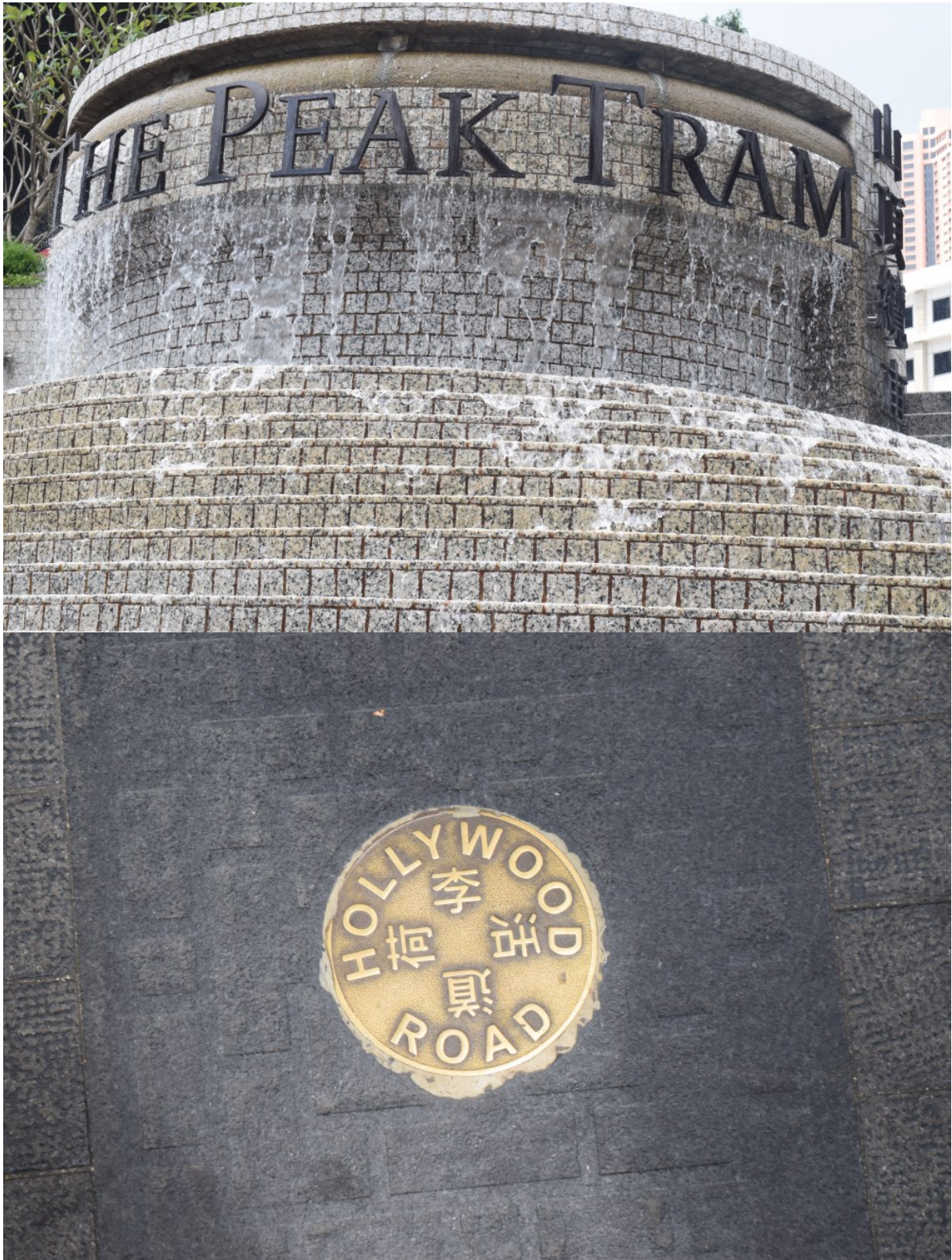


Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



We decided to walk the streets of the South Island, taking in the various street markets and food vendors before settling on lunch at Tim Ho Wan, in the Central Station. This is the cheapest Michelin Star restaurant in the world! We enjoyed a fabulous and rather large Dim Sum lunch and the whole thing only came to £12!

Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



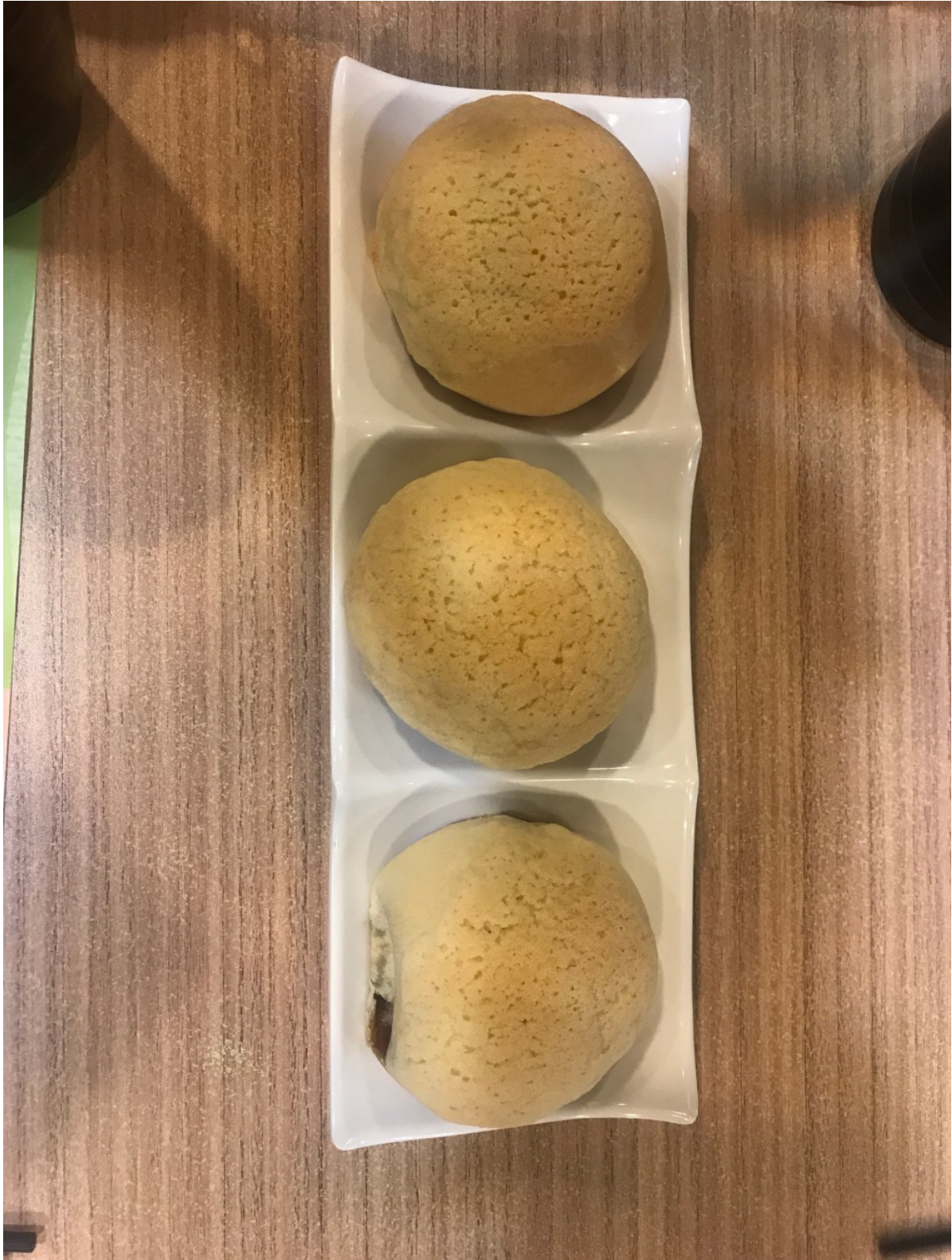
Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



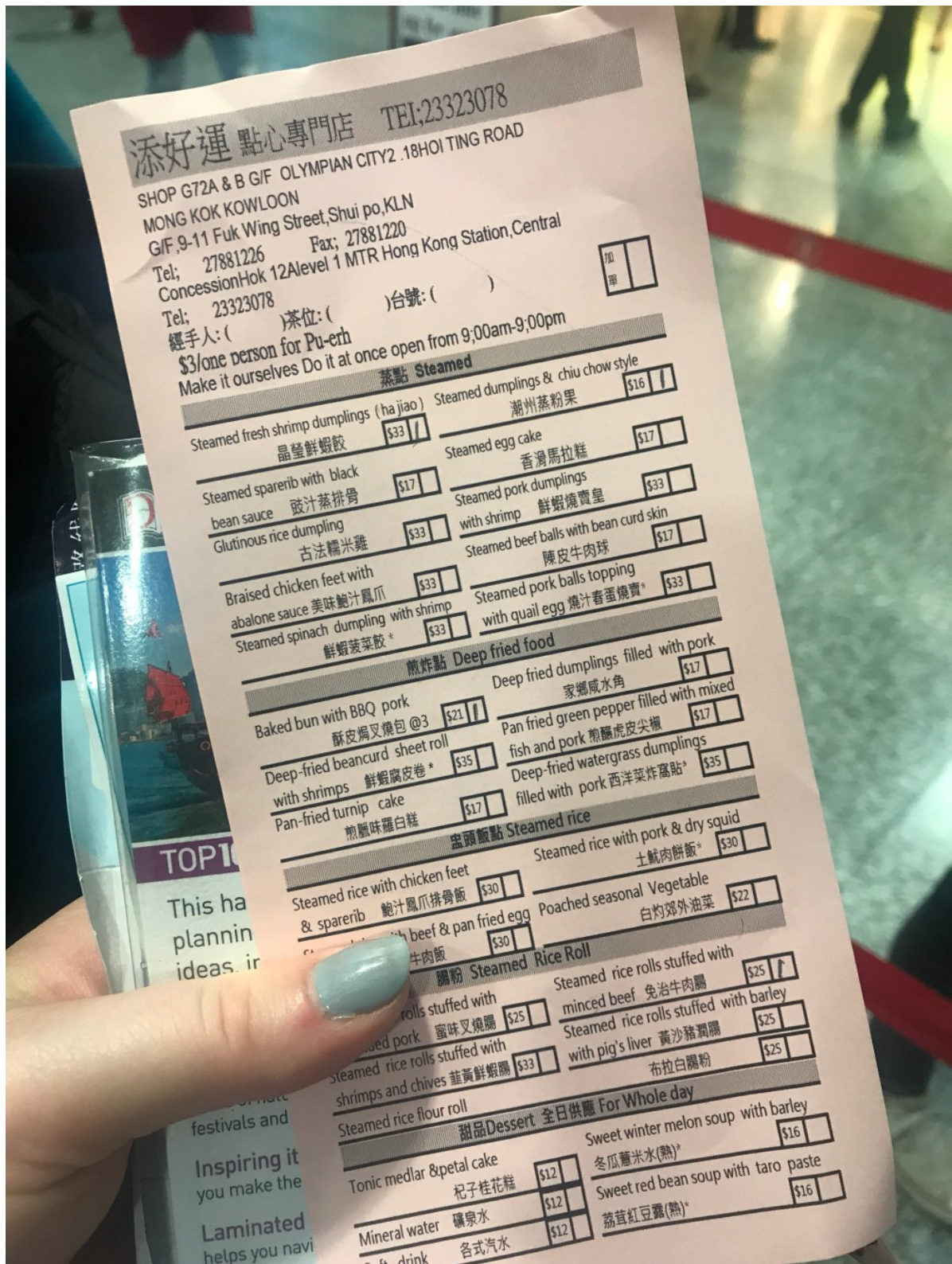
Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension

We headed back to the hotel for a quick freshen up and then had a couple of drinks in the patio bar Happy Hour which had a lovely view of the Harbour.

Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension

The hotel ran a free shuttle bus (0700-2300) so we took advantage of that to get us closer to the main Golden Mile Street which is the equivalent of Regent and Oxford Street. About a mile along the Golden Mile we reached Temple Street Market, which is a popular night market where you can pick up all sorts of knock offs and cheap souvenirs- haggling is a must!

Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



We found a traditional noodle restaurant down one of the back streets and after deciding it looked clean (spotting a Michelin recommendation sticker helped) we popped in and ordered some noodles for supper before heading back to bed – only 33 hours later than we got up in London!

Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension

Thursday

Thursday dawned another sunny and hot day, and after a welcome 8 hour snooze we were up and raring to go! After a delicious breakfast at the hotel we caught the tube to the Ngong Ping 360 cable car on Landau Island. We had pre booked our tickets in advance and as such that, and the fact that we had arrived relatively early, meant that we had minimum queuing time. We had chosen to travel on the Glass bottomed carriage, which was interesting if not mildly scary! We were rewarded with amazing views.

Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension

Unfortunately we shared our car with a family which had particularly excited (read that as loud!!!) children who screamed all the way through the 25 min journey! So when we disembarked my ears were ringing!

Being on Landau island Peak was great! The main feature is the large Buddha at the Peak, but also there are some fantastic buildings to explore too.

Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension

After a couple of hours we headed back down again- I spoke to a member of staff who allowed us to take the glass bottomed car again for our descent - and happily we enjoyed a much more peaceful journey down, enabling us to relax and enjoy the tremendous views.

We decided to have our lunch at Tsim Sha Tsui which is by the Star Ferry pier. We found a very nice restaurant overlooking the harbour and enjoyed a delicious mix of Chinese cuisine along with lots of green tea.

After a quick freshen up at the hotel we enjoyed an hour at happy hour again before taking the shuttle back to Tsim Sha Tsui to enjoy the daily 8pm show of The Symphony of

Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension

the lights show- a free light display where many of the sky scrapers use projection to light up the buildings.



We then boarded our Aqua Luna Junk Boat for our tour of the harbour. This was a highlight of our time in Hong Kong. Originally we had booked the sunset cruise but the lights

Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension

along the harbour are spectacular so we luckily got the concierge to change us to the 20:45 tour.

Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension

After our harbour cruise we took a cab to the Ritz Carlton hotel, for a nightcap at the highest bar in the world. The Ozone bar is located on the 118th floor and has the most incredible views over the harbour. Drinks are obviously pricey, but we grabbed a beer each for just over a tenner which we didn't feel was too bad as they didn't seem to mind us only having the one and there was no entry charge.

Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension



By now it was well past 10pm so we started making our way back to the hotel as we had an early start in the morning.

We may have only had 48 hours in Hong Kong, but we sure had enjoyed our time here!

Grand Tour of China; Part 1. Hong Kong extension

Until next time

Lx

Share this:

- **Share on X (Opens in new window) X**
- **Share on Facebook (Opens in new window) Facebook**
- **Share on Pinterest (Opens in new window) Pinterest**
- **Share on WhatsApp (Opens in new window) WhatsApp**
- **Email a link to a friend (Opens in new window) Email**