



## China Beyond the Terracotta Warriors

*While seeing China's terracotta warriors should be on everyone's travel bucket list, China has an array of other sites too. Here are our recommendations for sites near Xi'an and the warriors, plus some in a nearby province that you might find familiar.*



By Johanna Read, TraveEater.net

China's terracotta army is perhaps China's most famous tourist attraction, and deservedly so. Seeing the thousands of clay soldiers with your own eyes should be on everyone's travel bucket list. But China has much more to offer those on a trip to see the tombs that the country's first emperor created to protect him in his afterlife.

The province you didn't know you knew: Shandong

You can fly directly from Vancouver to Qingdao in Shandong province via Capital Airlines, and then on to Xi'an, Shaanxi. Capital Airlines flies to several locations

from Vancouver including Beijing, Guangzhou and Shanghai.

China's **Shandong** province, the closest to South Korea, sits on the coast of the Yellow Sea. You saw Shandong's largest city, Qingdao, during the 2008 Olympic Games, as the sailing competitions took place there. Qingdao is a very young city, established only in 1891. Its name means green island, evoked by the 38 hills and two mountains within and around the city.

Even if you're not a beer drinker, you'll know Qingdao's most famous product -- Tsingtao beer. Tsingtao was the old spelling of Qingdao, and in Qingdao you can go on a tour of the factory to see how the beer is made, using Canadian

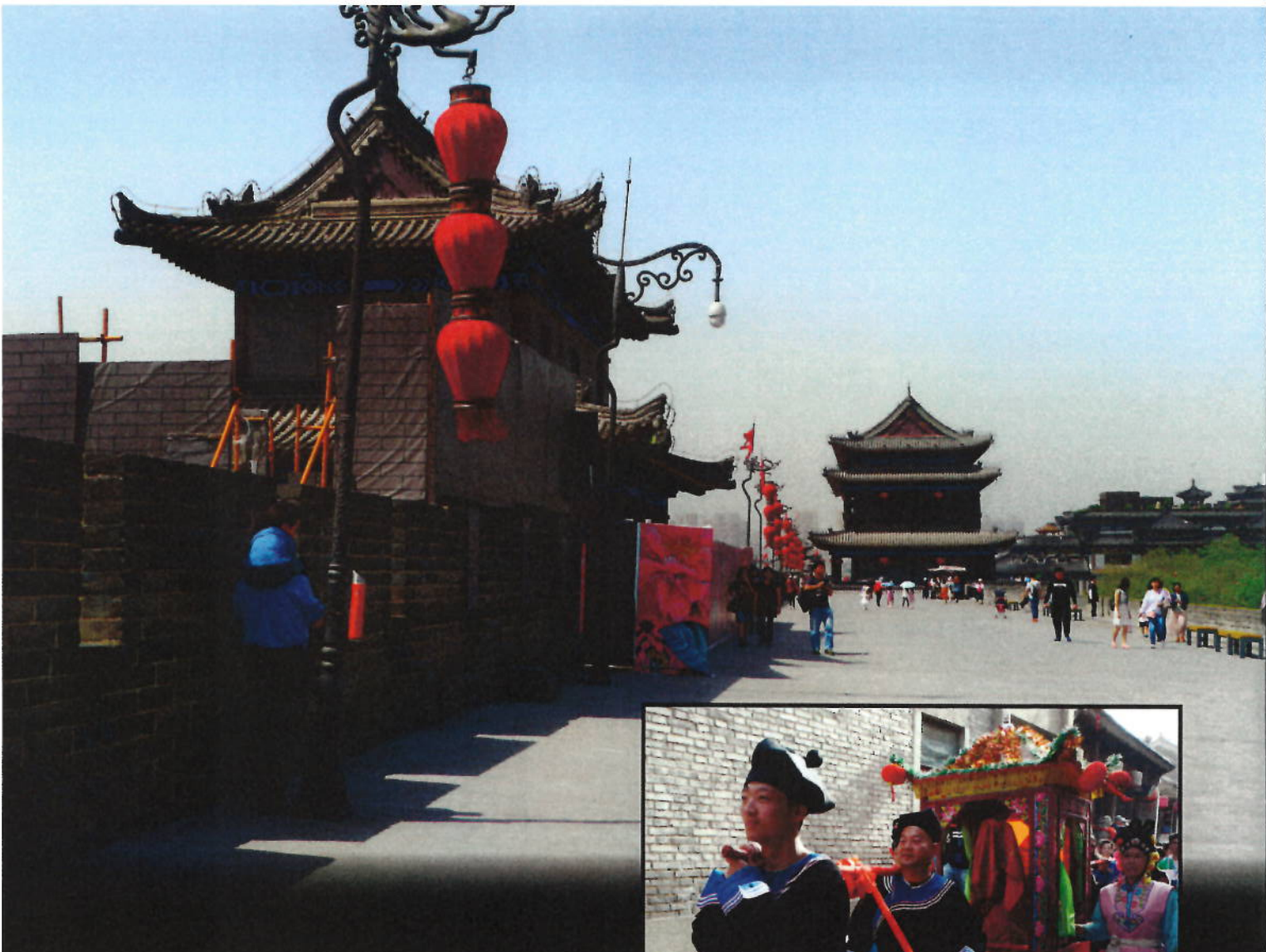
hops and barley no less. Don't go too early, as included in the tour are several samples of Tsingtao, including in raw form made fresh that day. And now you can impress bartenders everywhere by pronouncing the beer the proper way, the same way you pronounce the city: "ching-dow". Need even more beer? Qingdao hosts a two-week long beer festival every August.

**Qingdao** is a pretty coastal city ideal for people who like to explore by foot. A 40-kilometre promenade hugs the Yellow Sea and the city's ten beaches are very popular with Chinese tourists in summer. You might recognize Qingdao's pier, built in 1892, depicted on the label of the city's namesake beer. It's also easy to walk through



rs: Shandong and Shaanxi Provinces





Qingdao's historical centre admiring the red roofs of the traditional German-style buildings.

Also in Qingdao is a shell museum where you can learn about nature's wonders, including see how a conch shell can screw into another shell like they were designed by a computer. Shell fans will also want to visit a factory shop where you can see artisans turning shells into three-dimensional works of art and jewelry.

To go further afield, hop onto Qingdao's efficient and inexpensive transit system. Anyone interested in engineering marvels will want to drive through Qingdao's 7.8-km-long tunnel which takes cars 82 metres under the sea. Cross back to downtown via the 36.48-km-long freeway bridge, the second longest sea-crossing bridge in the world.

Just outside Qingdao is a beautiful 1133-metre high mountain, Mount Lao, a cradle for Taoism. Wander gardens to admire trees that are 1000 to 2000 years old and see working Tao temples (please don't take



photographs of the worshippers though). Laoshan is known for its tea and for the excellent quality of its water, which makes its way into the highest quality Tsingtao beer, marked with #1, #2 or #5 on the cap.

If you'd like to experience one of China's famous bullet trains, know that half the country's high speed trains are built in Qingdao. Take a day trip on the train from Qingdao to Zibo (pronounced "tzee-bwa") where you can see glass ornaments being made at the Shandong Lingchang Glass Design Firm. You won't believe the intricate leaves, animals and vases that the master artisans create. Stock up on glass here, as prices are much higher when the ornaments are exported to the U.S. and France.





Or take a trip to **Qufu**, in Shandong's southwest near the capital, Jinan. Qufu is the hometown of Confucius, and you can explore the UNESCO World Heritage site's temples and palaces. The temple area is immense, second only in size to the Forbidden City in Beijing. Nearby is a park-like cemetery filled with pale violet flowers in spring which has tombs memorializing Confucius and his descendents.

Other sites near Shaanxi province's terracotta warriors

While your key stop in **Shaanxi** will be the terracotta warriors, outside the city of **Xi'an**, be sure to leave time to explore the city and the surrounding area.

Visit **Dangjia**, an ancient town where you can admire courtyards of old and a six-storey pagoda tower. You may see actors performing re-enactments of ancient customs like a wedding march with the bride-to-be carried in a sedan chair. Nearby is an impressive museum, opened just in January 2018. It holds thousands of artefacts -- some 3000 years old -- found in the area's tombs.

In Xi'an be sure to walk or bike the city's 12-metre high walls, the most complete in China and first built over 600 years ago. See the important Buddhist site of the Giant and Small Wild Goose Pagodas and maybe make a wish while you're there. On your way back to the airport, stop at the Yangling Mausoleum where you can go underground to see objects that Emperor Liu Qi was buried with when he died in 141 BCE, including 50,000 doll-size terracotta figurines. They're not as detailed as the Terracotta warriors, but just as fascinating.

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Since Beijing Capital Airlines' launch of the route from Vancouver to Qingdao and Hangzhou on December 30, 2016, it has safely transported more than 70,000 passengers between the cities. In the 2018 Canada-China year of tourism, Beijing Capital Airlines, in collaboration with Lion Travel, Nexus Holidays, Tian Bao Travel, and ChinaPac International are offering special discounts to cities throughout China via the beautiful and romantic coastal city--Qingdao.

During the period of July 25th to September 25th, Beijing Capital Airlines will offer discounted travel products to domestic cities such as Xi'an via Qingdao. Passengers who purchase tickets during this period of time can also receive additional customized souvenirs from Beijing Capital Airlines.



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