

Monday, July 31, 2006

We woke early and walked to Times Square to take the Gray Line bus tour. This company runs several bus tours of different parts of the city. We had purchased a 3-day tour thru the Internet before coming to NYC for \$109 a person. The tour bus was a red double-decker bus that looped thru the city taking us to see many of the famous sights.

Figure 1: Grey Line Bus



The tour was divided into three parts: downtown Manhattan, uptown Manhattan, and Brooklyn. We took the downtown Manhattan part of the tour today; which included Ground Zero, the Empire State Building, Wall Street, City Hall, Greenwich Village, Hell's Kitchen, Chinatown, Little Italy, and Macy's.

We walked around Chinatown and had brunch at a Malaysian restaurant there. The food was quite authentic. Chinatown itself was smelly, dirty, and crowded. The sidewalks were jammed with street vendors; more so than other parts of New York. There was garbage on the streets, and way too many people walking around. There was a perpetual smell of garbage, sewage and raw seafood and meat hanging in the air, the latter being due to the various open air markets along the streets. Of all the Chinatowns we have been in, this was probably the worst.

During the afternoon, we went to Battery Park, which is a large public park at the south end of Manhattan Island. From there, we took a boat tour that took us around Liberty Island. The Statue of Liberty is on Liberty Island. We did not actually stop on the island, but just cruised around it for pictures.

Figure 2: Liberty Island



Later, we stopped at Rockefeller Center. This is where the big Christmas tree is lit up every Christmas in NYC, and where the big ice skating rink used in the Home Alone movies is located. It is also the home of NBC studios, and we went up to the top of it (Top of the rock) from which we got a great view of the whole of Manhattan.

Figure 3: Rockefeller Center and NBC Studio



Dinner was at a Chinese restaurant; not in Chinatown. The food was good. In general, it seems the cheapest food in New York is ethnic Asian food.