

000919 Start with some silk worms and end with an oops

BBQ

As the cool weather approaches, the outdoor BBQ places will unfortunately disappear. These restaurants are great for an outside dinner with delicious and inexpensive food. There are about 7 or 8 places around the night market, which is down the street from my school. Basically, the set up includes a long, covered table covered with different skewers of raw meat for you to choose from. There are pork kebabs, chicken wings, chicken necks, squid and other goodies. All of these are stuck onto a metal rod so that they can be cooked. The pork kebabs are the staples as they are the least expensive. The chicken wings involve two wings stuck onto a rod and are delicious. The chicken necks are long and bonny and offer little meat for the effort. For the squid you can choose the head (toe), tentacles and all or the body (barb). Also on the table is always a pan full of silk worms, moving about. The critters are about an inch long and 1/2 inch in diameter. They have hard, brown shells that are articulated so that they can move about.

The procedure is to choose what you want to eat, haggling on the price, of course. The waiter takes your order and you sit down at one of the many plastic tables and chairs. Some tables have umbrellas with lights under them. Meanwhile, your skewers are sent to the grill where they are slathered with a tasty sauce and then placed on the grill. This includes the silk worms which are usually about five critters to a skewer. As you sit and drink your mug of beer, you may also want to order bread, either corn bread or flat bread. These too are sent to the grill and slathered with the sauce. Both breads are delicious.

The food will arrive about the same time as your visitors. There are occasionally vendors with fruit for dessert. But, more likely there will be singers asking you to pay Y5 for a song. Cute, little girls with guitars will go around and sometimes teenagers as well who will sing duets. Other little girls will offer roses. None of the little girls stay very cute when they are very persistent, refusing to leave until the waiter chases them away or you ignore them long enough. One time after several stood around me, I told them that I did not want a song, but that Brian who was sitting across the table might. He was then swarmed and not very amused.

Despite the sales women, BBQ is delicious and a great way to enjoy a nice evening as you watch the night market. Jennie loved the BBQ and even tried the silk worms. My parents also liked BBQ, and even tried the squid, but were not all that fond of them.

Olympics

China Central Television (CCTV) has been getting everyone ready for the Olympics for weeks by showing old footage of competitions in Atlanta and interviews with Chinese athletes. China is only five hours behind Sydney (China is a big country, but has only one time zone, Beijing time, of course.) All of the students at my school watched the opening ceremonies and when China's team was introduced they all went nuts. The games are being carried on several stations and the public Jumbletron (giant TV) down the street is shown the coverage (no city is truly a city without of these giant TVs. Shanghai had three TVs within blocks of each other.)

I assume that the TV networks all over the world are pooling the video feeds, so what I can watch is similar to what you see, but with Chinese commentary. However, the stations here also uses video footage concentrating on the Chinese athletes. I always hated the way that the US network always only concentrated on the US matches. Now I get to see it from a different perspective. There are also a lot of crowd shots, more than I remember on the US network. For example, when the swimming relay teams were announced or the teams entered the opening ceremonies, the network would cut to people in the crowd who were waving that particular country's flag.

The coverage here is of course interrupted by Chinese commercials. I wonder how much the spots cost here as opposed to those in the US?

I currently have several bets running on who will win the women's football (soccer) gold medal, as the Chinese are very proud of their team. However, no one here is ever quite certain of the time when the teams will play. My students can also name all of the Chinese ping pong and badminton athletes, as they are very good as well.

Classes

I am currently still using my introductory lessons with both my J2 and J3 classes. The lesson is particularly good for my J3 classes, as I have never taught them before. During these classes I outline my class rules, which I repeat in Chinese to ensure that they understand. For the classes I have also been forming teams for when we play games later in the year. The teams are mostly just those students in each row. I am also having them choose a team name and a team captain. I wish that I had thought of the captain last semester. Now when we play a game, I just need to make sure that the captains understand what is going on and they will hopefully keep their teams in line.

Email Woes

Upon returning to Yantai, I discovered that the internet speed had become painfully slow. Hotmail can take up to an hour to open (I hear as I usually give up after 1/2 hour). So, if you have written to me and I have not yet replied, please be patient. And, I love to get email, even with the slow connection rates. Emails from home are part of what help me to stay on the brink of sanity sometimes.

Oops

During my travels this summer, street vendors would occasionally try to steer me into their shops by grabbing my arm. So, I consulted my pocket English-to-Chinese dictionary to look up the word, touch so that I could tell them not to touch me. No problem. However, once I resumed my Chinese classes with Helen, I decided to run the word past her to make sure that I was using it

correctly. I said, "Don't touch me." in Chinese. She got embarrassed and started to laugh. She told me that I really did not want to use the word that I had found in the dictionary. She wouldn't tell me the exact meaning, as she was too embarrassed. However, from what I could surmise, the word I was using meant a "special touch". Oops. Fortunately, I had looked up this word early on in my travels so I had plenty of time to use it all over China.

Well, that is it for this week. Take care,

Jeff



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