

Strolling Through the Streets of Paris: An Ode to Haussmann-Style Architecture

● WORDS / JIAN YUAN

PHOTOGRAPHS / JIAN YUAN, Panorama Media Inc., LV XING

At night, the orange lights, resembling stars, illuminate this ancient and romantic city, embellishing the yellowish buildings. Whether it is daytime or nighttime, these warm colors become eternal memories, forever engraved in the hearts of travelers.

If you go to Paris, you will undoubtedly discover that the city's architecture bears a unified name: the Haussmann style. Speaking of the Haussmann style, one cannot fail to mention a person: Napoleon III.

According to historical records, Napoleon III was an ambitious individual.

After the French Revolution in 1789, the revolutionary factions considered everything existing at that time as remnants of the feudal monarchy in France. Besides beheading the rulers of the feudal monarchy, all buildings associated with the feudal monarchy had to be destroyed. Consequently, in Paris at that time, any architecture related to the feudal monarchy suffered varying degrees of damage. Napoleon III, being a descendant of the Bonaparte family, felt that he could not become an emperor in such a dilapidated city.



Therefore, he decided to embark on a thorough transformation of the city.

This transformation took eighteen years to complete. Starting in 1852, the buildings were demolished and rebuilt, and the poor were displaced while the slums were demolished. After a tremendous amount of effort, the Paris we see today was constructed. Due to the unified planning, each building has the same specifications and height.



The task of revitalizing Paris was entrusted to a man named Georges-Eugène Haussmann, more commonly known as Baron Haussmann. Baron Haussmann served as the administrative head of Paris, as well as the Chief of Police. He conducted comprehensive planning and design for the city of Paris, resulting in a strikingly similar architectural style for 90% of the buildings within the city. Later in architectural discourse, this style became known as the Haussmann style.

From the appearance of Haussmann-style architecture, it is easy to notice that its walls are usually in a light yellowish color. Why was this color chosen? Firstly, the light yellow color highlights the elegance of the Parisians. Secondly, Paris is a city with a relatively high latitude, experiencing long and cold winters. At that time, the Parisians did not have as many measures to combat the cold as they do now. The light yellow color helped the stone city to appear less cold and heavy, providing a hint of warmth for the Parisians during the frigid winter months.

Perhaps someone might wonder why the rooftops of Haussmann-style buildings are painted a blackish-gray color. This is because the blackish-gray color enhances the aristocratic atmosphere desired by the Parisians.

Upon closer inspection, one can observe that the rooftops of Haussmann-style buildings are all sloped. Information indicates that these rooftops have a 45-degree angle slope. This design is a response to the long and cold winters, which often bring heavy snowfall. In an era when architectural design was not as advanced, it was



not feasible to create stone rooftops. Therefore, the rooftops of all Haussmann-style buildings are made of wood, covered with wooden boards, and topped with blackish-gray tiles. If all the rooftops were designed flat, the weight of accumulated snow could potentially cause them to collapse. The 45-degree slope design allows the snow to slide off, providing better protection for the rooftops.

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In fact, apart from the unified colors, the height of

the staircases in Haussmann-style buildings is also standardized.

From the viewpoint of Montmartre Hill, observant individuals will notice that all Haussmann-style buildings are situated on the same horizontal plane, with a few exceptions for certain structures such as churches, train stations, hospitals, and others visible along the streets. Apart from these exceptions, all Haussmann-style buildings are positioned on the same level. To be precise, none of them exceeds 37 meters in height.

There are two reasons for this. First, Napoleon I constructed the Arc de Triomphe, which stands 49.5 meters tall with an interior arch height of 37 meters. Keeping all structures below 37 meters represents a gesture of respect toward the

monarchy of France. Second, as Paris was rife with conflicts during that time, it was important to ensure that the city had no defensive blind spots in comparison to other European cities.

Furthermore, Haussmann also established specific uses for each floor in Haussmann-style buildings. The ground floor of these buildings is typically occupied by small pubs, cafes, and shops, emphasizing the significance of commerce throughout different eras. Moving up to the second floor, you won't find ornate ironwork balconies, as the sunlight may be obscured by the large balconies on the third floor. This floor was reserved for gatekeepers, stablemen, and security personnel during that time. As you reach the third floor, the prominent feature is the ironwork balconies designated for the residence of the aristocracy. The fourth and fifth floors feature smaller balconies and windows, serving as living quarters for the children and family members of the nobility. Looking up, you'll see the roof of the Haussmann-style building, the blackish-gray area, with a small window.

The servants resided in this cramped space of only a few square meters, where it's cold in winter and hot in summer. Naturally, the servant quarters lacked independent bathrooms and kitchens but possessed a unique contraption. Imagine a time when architectural and design technologies were not advanced. What would the master do if they wanted a cup of coffee downstairs? Shouting at the top of their lungs wouldn't be considered appropriate. Thus, a small bell was installed in the servant's room. A wire was connected to the bell and led downstairs. When the master needed the services of the servant, they would



pull the wire, causing the bell to ring. Upon hearing the sound, the servant would immediately rush downstairs to attend to the master's needs.

People often say that Paris is a city above ground with another city underground. Over 150 years ago, Paris already had an underground drainage system spanning nearly 1,200 kilometers. Today, the total length of the underground drainage system in Paris has reached over 2,600 kilometers. Let me put it into perspective. It is equivalent to the straight-line distance from Beijing to Shenzhen. This powerful underground drainage system is incredibly useful as it prevents long-lasting and continuous flooding even during heavy rainfall. These clever French individuals have also utilized this extensive underground drainage system to construct 14 metro lines. If you visit Paris today, you can still travel along these metro lines that were built all those years ago. It is a truly remarkable feat when you really think about it. ©



一个老菜场，让西安把烟火人间和文艺浪漫用它独有的手法揉在一起，再约上三五好友把酒言欢，这种文艺在左、烟火在右的生活，繁盛不减当年，甚至更加有趣。

西安一入夜就成了长安。傍晚时分，西安城东约 30 千米处的华清宫景区门口，游客有序排队入场，舞剧《长恨歌》是夜游西安亮丽的风景。华清宫又名华清池，周、秦、汉、隋、唐等历代帝王在此建有离宫别苑，尤以唐玄宗和杨贵妃的一段情缘而声名远播。

“杨家有女初长成”“一朝选在君王侧”“春寒赐浴华清池”“仙乐风飘处处闻”“花钿委地无人收”“天上人间会相见”……山作幕布，天为背景。九龙湖边，一幕幕经典场景，经演员们细致入微地演绎活了起来，在感慨从开元盛世到安史之乱人物命运的同时，人们也感受到了浓郁的唐代文化气息。

大唐不夜城和长安十二时辰也是夜游的好选择。大唐不夜城用绚烂的灯火，把西安的夜色点亮。在宽阔的步行街上漫步，可以欣赏到一场场精彩的夜间演出，如果路遇“诗仙”李白，还可以上前和他对诗。若喜欢舞蹈，只要凑近小五台就能近距离欣赏婀娜的胡旋舞。在长安十二时辰，节目单就更长了，如果喜欢“穿越”的感觉，你可以穿上飘逸的汉服，做一天古时的长安人，边逛边吃边感受这座“网红”城市的魅力，也是一件趣事。

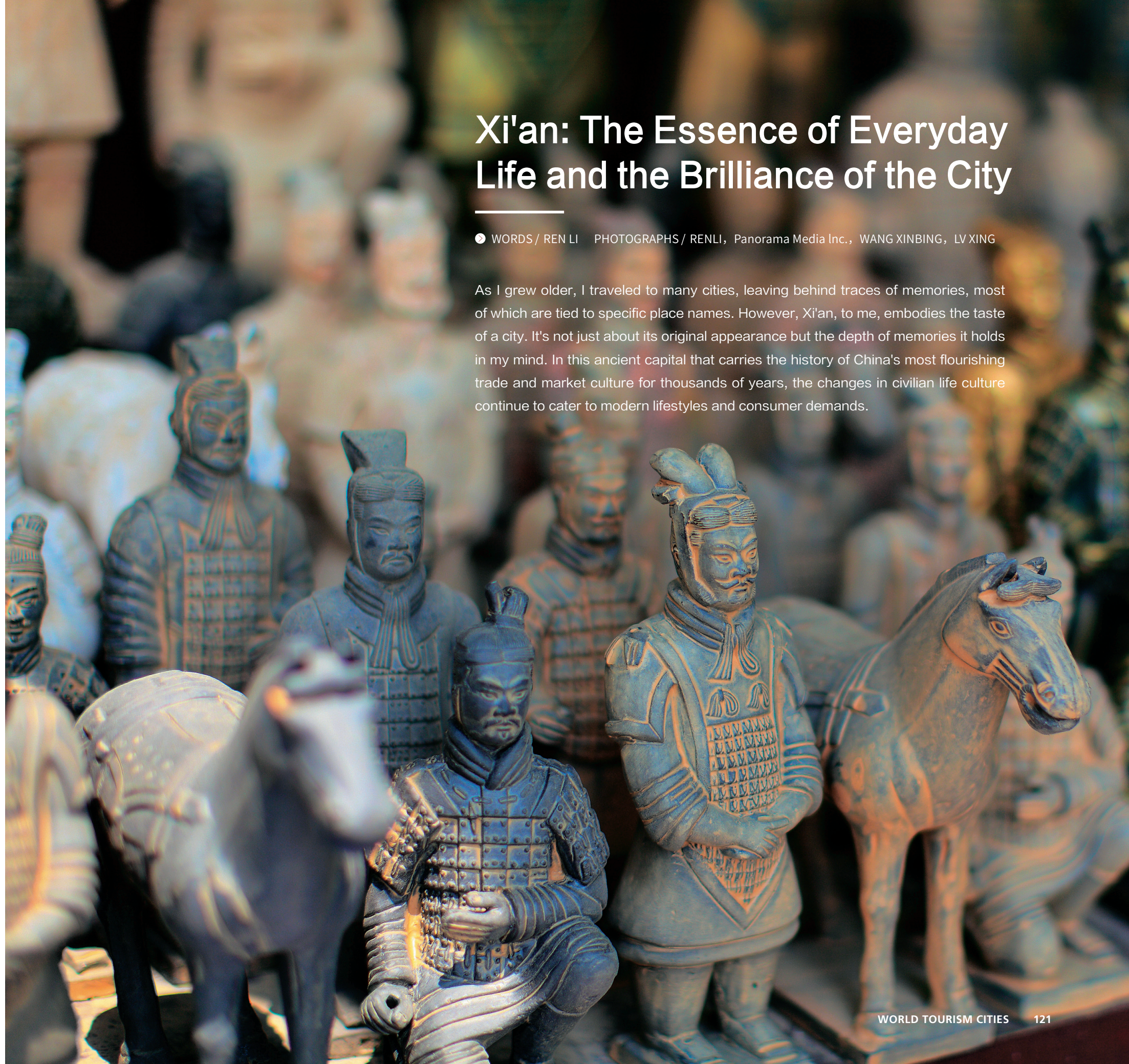
看城里城外故事，品西安人间烟火，寻访西安，常来长安。📍



Xi'an: The Essence of Everyday Life and the Brilliance of the City

WORDS / REN LI PHOTOGRAPHS / RENLI, Panorama Media Inc., WANG XINBING, LV XING

As I grew older, I traveled to many cities, leaving behind traces of memories, most of which are tied to specific place names. However, Xi'an, to me, embodies the taste of a city. It's not just about its original appearance but the depth of memories it holds in my mind. In this ancient capital that carries the history of China's most flourishing trade and market culture for thousands of years, the changes in civilian life culture continue to cater to modern lifestyles and consumer demands.



In the early morning of the scorching days, there is still a hint of coolness, and the streets are quiet. Following the lead of my old Xi'an friends, I enjoyed a breakfast that belongs uniquely to the people of Xi'an. Passing through the Small South Gate of the city wall, I could hear the hawkers' calls from afar, and there it was—the lively morning market at the foot of the city wall. This might be how the city awoke in its earliest days.

Wumu Gate, commonly known as the Small South Gate, is the second gate from west to east on the southern city wall of Xi'an, situated between Hanguang Gate and Zhuque Gate. It was named in memory of Jing Wumu, a revolutionary from Shaanxi during the period of the Revolution of



1911 (1911–early 1912). The Small South Gate morning market refers to the convenience food market from the Small South Gate to Hanguang Gate along Shuncheng Lane. Stretching for 342 meters, it houses an unpolished, bustling, and yet gentle world, carrying on the lively market tradition of over a thousand years and displaying the unique local culture and charm.

Watch the warm sunlight filtering through the mottled walls; the deep alleys bear the imprint of time. The shouts of hawkers, the bargaining voices... Being among the bustling crowd brings back memories of my childhood when I went to the market with my family. The pure essence of the market and the human touch always resonate with people. Having breakfast at the morning market is a delightful experience. In this city where "a bun complements everything," you must try the signature La Niurou Mo, a savory beef sandwich, which is both

tasty and cost-effective at only 8 yuan each.

Living below the city wall, one can enjoy the scenery from atop the city wall. "The weeping willows cast shadows on the moat, and the green stone ridge is traced by the pond." A clear pool of water winds its way through, adding to the beauty and liveliness of the Xi'an city wall. On top of the wall, young people run and ride bikes, paying tribute to the ancient city with their youthful vigor. I couldn't resist touching the blue bricks and gray tiles, feeling the summer breeze of Chang'an, and looking northwards, I could clearly see the landmark building, the Bell Tower, at the center of the city.

The Xi'an city wall was originally built during the Sui and Tang Dynasties and expanded during the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644). It has a total length of 13.74 kilometers, making it the oldest, largest, and most well-preserved ancient city wall

in China. The main part of the current Xi'an city wall was constructed in the third year of the Ming Hongwu era (1370 AD), ordered by Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang. It took eight years to complete the wall in its present form.

Time silently passes by, and the scorching sun begins to roast the earth in the afternoon. Under the shade of trees in the Huancheng Park below the city wall, elderly people fan themselves leisurely, and ducks hide under the bridge's arches in the moat. Enjoying the moment of shade, many tourists are visiting the Xi'an Tang Hanguang Gate Museum which lies within the Xi'an city wall, sighing the wisdom of the ancient people. It turns out that Hanguang Gate is the "oldest" part of the city wall of Xi'an. Here, from the 1980s to the beginning of this century, archaeologists have discovered gateways, rammed earth, and waterways dating back to



the Sui and Tang Dynasties (581 AD – 907 AD). This section of the city wall contains rich cultural information from over 1400 years ago, ranging from politics and military affairs to engineering technology.

According to the explanations of local elders, the four main gates of the Xi'an city wall—East Gate (Changle Gate), West Gate (Anding Gate), South Gate (Yongning Gate), and North Gate (Anyuan Gate)—were named by combining one character from each gate to form the phrase "Chang'an Yong'an." Today, the fully connected city walls blend harmoniously with modern city life, telling the story of "living history." The comprehensive protection and renovation of the Xi'an city wall, as well as its surroundings, including the moat, the Huancheng Park, and Shuncheng Lane, have given it a fresh and renewed appearance.

At noon, I headed eastward from Hanguang Gate along Shuncheng Lane, towards Jianguo Gate Old Food Market, a cultural and creative neighborhood loved by Xi'an locals. Passing by the Xi'an Beilin Museum, I encountered the crowds of tourists visiting during the summer break. The museum was built during the Northern Song Dynasty's Yuanyou period (1086 AD – 1094 AD) and has undergone repairs and renovations throughout the ages.

The Xi'an Beilin Museum was originally the site of the Confucian Temple and is a quaint and elegant courtyard-style architectural complex. It is the museum with the largest collection of ancient stone tablets and the oldest in age, also being one of the cultural symbols of Xi'an. Famous stone tablets such as the "Yan Qin Li Bei," "Daxia

Shima," and "Xuanzong Shitai Xiaojing" are all housed here.

Leaving the Beilin Museum, passing through Jianguo Gate, and entering Xinyi Lane, I was greeted by old factory buildings combined with neon signs on red brick walls, a landmark exuding a strong local cultural atmosphere. This is the cultural and creative neighborhood of Jianguo Gate Old Food Market, where fashion meets civilian life under the protection of the city wall.

Here, the city wall embraces old factory buildings and century-old pagoda trees. Occasionally, one can see elderly gentlemen reading books and playing chess beside stone pillars on the roadside. Everything feels so natural. The cultural and creative neighborhood of Jianguo Gate Old Food Market is situated in a prime location near the Bell Tower, Nanmen business district, Jianguo Gate, and Shuncheng South Lane. It stands side by side with historical landmarks like the Xi'an city wall, Zhang Xueliang's Mansion, and Gao Guizi's Mansion. As Xi'an's first creative neighborhood themed around civilian life, it has preserved

as much original appearance of the local small vendors and merchants as possible while collaborating with multiple enterprises to revitalize the surrounding environment. The overall feeling is both fashionable and cozy, which resonates with the people of Xi'an.

The locals have a special affection for this place for a reason. The former plain velvet factory, after going through the ups and downs of time and undergoing minor renovations, has become a cultural landmark of Xi'an, combining elements of everyday life with fashion and art. It continues the memories of old Xi'an with a new appearance.

A simple old food market in Xi'an effortlessly combines the dynamism of the city with a touch of artistic romance and creates a world where people can meet up for a drink and conversation. This unique blend of culture and vibrancy, of art and commerce, brings the city's heyday back to life and leads to a way of life perhaps even more fascinating than before.

As night falls, Xi'an becomes Chang'an. In the evening, at the entrance of Huaqing Palace Scenic Area, about 30 kilometers east of Xi'an's city center, visitors queue up in an orderly manner to watch the dance drama, The Song of Everlasting Sorrow, a beautiful calling card of Xi'an's night scene. Huaqing Palace, also known as Huaqing Pool, was the location of imperial gardens and palaces for various dynasties including Zhou, Qin, Han, Sui and Tang. The Palace was most notable during the Tang Dynasty, where the legendary love story of Emperor Xuanzong and his beloved concubine Yang Yuhuan took place.



"A maiden of the Yangs to womanhood just grown," "One day she stood selected for the monarch's side," "She bathed in glassy water of warm-fountain pool," "With wind-borne music so divine the air was loud," "None would pick up her hairpin fallen to the ground," "In heaven or on earth we'll sometime meet again" ... With the mountains as the backdrop and the sky as the canvas, scenes from the classic play come to life by Jiulong Lake through the meticulous performances of the actors. As people marvel at the destiny of the characters from the golden age of the Kaiyuan reign to the An Lushan Rebellion, they also immerse themselves in the rich cultural atmosphere of the Tang Dynasty.

The Grand Tang Dynasty Ever Bright City and the Longest Day in Chang'an are also great choices for nighttime activities. The Grand Tang Dynasty Ever Bright City illuminates Xi'an with

dazzling lights. Strolling along the spacious pedestrian street, you can enjoy splendid nighttime performances. If you encounter the "Immortal Poet" Li Bai, you can even engage in poetic exchange with him. For those who enjoy dance, the scenic area provides the opportunity to get up close to experience the graceful Huxuan Dance near the small stage. The program lineup for the Longest Day in Chang'an is even more extensive. If you like the feeling of time travel, you can wear flowing Han-style clothing and become a Chang'an resident of ancient times. You can explore the city, savor local delicacies, and feel the charm of this "internet-famous" city—it's a fascinating experience.

Witnessing the stories both inside and outside the city, savoring the flavors of Xi'an, and exploring Xi'an—it's always great to come to Chang'an. 🇨🇳

