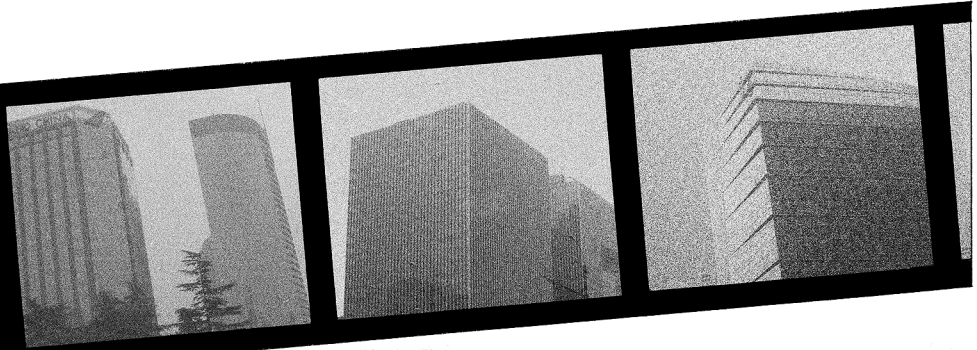


I recently spent a few hours in the Chinese capital. Doesn't it sound überchic? For those tempted by this form of light-speed tourism, here is

THE COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE OF WHAT TO DO IN LESS THAN A HALF-DAY IN Beijing

First, make a futuristic short movie. Take a cab along the highways, and shoot the rapid succession of glass towers. If they appear blurry, don't worry about the camera: this is a special effect called smog.



While walking, you might see more antiquated scenes. Like that man with a knife on a busy street corner. I first thought he was playing with the dog...



Minutes later, the animal was lying in blood as the Cook was waiting at the door of his restaurant.

Go to The Forbidden City.
(Tip: Actually, it is forbidden only until you pay the entrance fee.)



588 years, 24 emperors, and a Starbucks. But don't look for it: the coffee empire closed up shop last year.

At the front gate, check out Mao super-vising legions of tourists as they march on Tiananmen Square with their digital gear. His expression seems to have a Mona Lisa quality. Is that a grin?



CHINESE TOURISTS HAVE A FUNNY WAY OF POSING FOR PICTURES. IF IT WASN'T FOR THE UNIFORM, YOU COULDN'T TELL WHO'S WHO.

After the visit of the what's going on? Partiers are all over the crowd has gathered. Is here with a Tibetan

Palace, cross to Tiananmen. of the square is sealed, soldiers place, a Richard Gere sign?



No, it's just 6pm, and the lowering of the national flag has started. Solemnly, the banner is grounded, then escorted to bed. As soon as the flag is gone, the sun sets. This nation has a sense for spectacle!

At night, around Qianhai Lake, see improvised balls of elderly couples dancing under the sky. After each tune, they change partners. A few meters away, you'll come across their grandchildren cruising along flashy shops and loud music bars. You'll be offered plenty of "lady massages?", "lady bars?", lady anything. Capitalism with Chinese characteristics is alive and well.

