



THE EPIC DISPATCH

WHAT A CHINA TRAIN TAUGHT ME

Recently, I spent a month in China on a site visit as well as vacationing.

As usual, I tried to maximise my time and cover as much ground as possible. And that was how I ended up on a long-haul train from Zhangye to Jiayuguan, bound for Urumqi.

When I saw the train during booking, I was like, “Oh no.”

I had my fair share of local trains previously in Zhangjiajie, and I knew what to expect.

Hard sleeper? Sold out.

Soft sleeper? Also sold out.

All that was left was a hard seat.

I had to mentally prepare myself.

This was **NOT** a tourist train. It was a train used by locals travelling along the Silk Road route to and from Xinjiang for work or to visit family.

Yet no matter how much I prepared myself, it was still **SHOCKING** when I boarded.

Big bags were stuffed everywhere in the overhead compartments. There was a stench everywhere. This was a train journey spanning more than 24 hours, and everyone smelled.

And it was a “**SMOKE-FREE**” train.

Everyone was smoking.

When I finally found my seat, I had to vigorously shake this lady who was sleeping across all three seats.

She woke up completely confused and was still mumbling about why I had woken her up.

The contrast with the first-class high-speed trains I had been taking could not have been greater.

Would I recommend this train to my clients?

Never.

I would tell you to take the later high-speed rail, sit comfortably and enjoy your journey.

But for myself, I sometimes tread into the unknown.

I need to experience these things for myself. I need to know what works, what doesn't, and what may look perfectly fine when planning from behind a computer screen, but is a completely different story when you are actually there.

Sometimes I experience the bad, so I know what to protect my clients from.

To me, that is the least a responsible Travel Designer should do.

**BEST TEO
CHIEF TRAVEL DESIGNER**



Where Are You Going Next?

Many of you reading this have travelled with me over the past decade, especially through Taiwan and Japan. Some of you have travelled with me again and again, while others have ventured with me to more unusual corners of the world.

Over the years, my work has also taken me far beyond Taiwan and Japan. In just the last two years, I have designed journeys across:

Europe

Switzerland · Scotland · Spain · Germany · Italy

The Nordics & Remote Islands

Finland · Norway · Lofoten Islands · Faroe Islands · Azores Islands

Central Asia & The Himalayas

Kyrgyzstan · Nepal · Bhutan

East & South Asia

Japan · Taiwan · South Korea · Sri Lanka

Southeast Asia

Thailand · Vietnam

Today, I design journeys around the world.

So perhaps the next question is simply:

Where would you like to go next?

If you already have somewhere in mind, great!

Tell me what you are thinking about. I can share some insights, what to look out for, and perhaps a few hidden gems you may not have considered.

And if you have absolutely no idea where to go next, that's fine too.

I will start with you. Who is travelling, what you enjoy, how you like to travel, and what you want from your next holiday.

Then, let's see where in the world we end up.

WHATSAPP ME