

Black Boy in Zunyi, China

Some people may wonder what it is like for a twelve year old black boy in China who speaks fluent Mandarin. Well in this journal, I chronicle my four day visit to Zunyi, China.

I have attended an Asian Immersion school since 1st grade. This summer, I had the unique opportunity to travel with some of my schoolmates to Beijing, Chengdu and Zunyi for a 15 day visit, including a 4 day home stay. During my time in China, I attended school with my host brother, climbed the Great Wall, visited several temples and the largest standing Buddha in the world. There was much to discover and to share, but I decided to highlight my visit to the last stop, Zunyi, because it was my favorite due to the beautiful countryside and kind people.

DAY 1 Zunyi, China

We just had just arrived at our hotel and my father had checked us into our room. We went to our room and I jumped on the rock hard bed still tired from the train ride. Today was the day I could finally relax after having been in two other provinces in China for the past 10 days. My father and I left the room to meet our group and go eat lunch. As we walked down the street to where we would be eating lunch, people stared, took pictures, and pointed at us. After what seemed like forever, we walked into the overpopulated restaurant and smelled delicious food being cooked by the chef. My group was lead to the back where there were three big rooms. Our meals were pre-ordered by our tour leader and we had a choice of chicken, rice, greens, and ramen. I chose the ramen and after we finished eating, we walked around the city of Guizhou and saw so many people, basketball courts, and large run-down apartment complexes. Following our long tour through the light-filled and smelly alley of Guizhou, it was time for bed.

DAY 2 Zunyi, China

I woke to someone knocking on our door. When I opened the door, it was my schoolmates who were with me on this journey telling me that it was time to go or we would be late. When we got downstairs to the breakfast room, everyone was waiting for us to eat, so we could get going. I stuffed my mouth with eggs, bread, cereal, and bacon, I was so happy to eat American food again after having been in other parts of China, including a home stay. We boarded the bus and set off to the tea fields. It took an hour and a half to get to the tea field. When we arrived, we walked past a summer camp of kids who work in these bug-filled tea fields. My group went into the shade when a man who worked in the fields explained his job and his favorite tea to us. We then walked over to where they make the tea and we had a tasting session. I tried 3 different types of tea, which tasted complex and did not agree with my stomach. We then took the bus back to the hotel and it was time for dinner. We were happy to learn that we could decide where we would like to eat, so my friends and I picked a restaurant with American food. I ate chicken, ramen, and greens and drank bubble tea, which is one of my favorite drinks.

DAY 3 Zunyi. China

Today would be the hardest day in China because we would be climbing a very high mountain called Jin Ding Shan. We all put on our running shoes and packed our bags full of food and water. When we arrived, we were told we could go at any pace we wanted, but if we stopped we had to inform an adult. I started to climb up the steps, there were a total of seven temples we had to pass on the way up and so far I passed three. An hour had passed and I had only made it to the fifth temple. When we arrived, we stopped to pray with a very kind monk. Another hour went by and I finally reached the summit. At the top, my dad and I for waited for the rest of our group. When my group reached the top, it was time to eat, so we stopped

at a restaurant at the top of the mountain. After we ate, we started to walk down. The walk was easy and when we reached the bottom, it was 4pm, and the day was practically over. We were all tired and looking forward to getting back to the hotel.

THE LAST DAY IN ZUNYI

We packed our bags and waited in the lobby for our bus to arrive. I have to admit that I was ready to return home. I was starving, since I am a very picky eater and the food was very different, and I was tired after 15 days in China with a jam packed schedule.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion out of the three places, I visited Beijing, Chengdu, and Zunyi, Zunyi was my favorite, because it was beautiful warm welcoming, and people in Zunyi love basketball. This is relevant because I also love basketball. However, there are a few things I would like to point out about being a black boy in China. 1. You must be prepared for people to want to touch your hair, take lots of pictures and stare 2. If you say no to people taking your photo, they will still take your photo. 3. Some people did not even want to look at us because we were black. 4. It is rare for those in China to see a black boy that speaks fluent Mandarin, but when you start speaking their language they are much more friendly.

This was definitely a once in a lifetime experience that I will never forget the and I am glad that I was able to change the perception for some of a Black American boy. I am grateful for this opportunity to practice and perfect my Mandarin and explore another part of the world with my dad and school mates.

