



Terry's Travels

TT17-1 Emirates to New Zealand November 2005

I know I am a swallow, every year I have to migrate as the English winter approaches - we had heard good reports on flying with Emirates Airline and since they now go to Auckland NZ this was our choice. The first leg was an easy 7 hour flight from Manchester UK to the Emirates hub at Dubai. This was amazingly large and over 90% of the aircraft there were wearing the Emirates logo with a reminder that they are a major sponsor of the upcoming Soccer World Cup. The air hostesses had put on their hats over a semi veil in a very chic way which was the main reminder of being in the Middle East.



As we had landed we were amazed that everywhere was brightly lit at 1am local time – we were soon to understand why. We went for a walk next morning but the 35C humid heat had us back in the hotel after an hour or so. Our travel agent gave good advice and we were overlooking the busy shipping area of the Dubai Creek. Arabs were like ants moving tatty cardboard boxes onto the small boats moored three deep in the Creek. Our plan for the afternoon was to have a tour – as it happened a cruising taxi with Pakistani taxi driver saw us and we agreed on a 2 hour tour. This was an amazing experience as he showed us all the shopping malls and Gold Centres. We saw the equivalent of council houses for the Dubai Passport holding natives – very impressive, then splendid villas with spacious grounds. These were as nothing as we started to pass the Royal Palaces with huge and many buildings for each brother.



I never knew that hotels could carry more than 5 stars but they do here, in fact one of the worlds very best hotels is here, the Jumeira. You cannot even enter unless you have given a couple of days warning of your proposed visit. Arriving onto a skyward helipad is the better way to arrive and exclusivity is maintained by the \$US 1400 per night for a room on the lovely beach.(We had an excellent room in our hotel for about 50 English pounds – although we were lucky and got a free upgrade). Each time I saw more of the developments I became more and more “gobsmacked”. Can you imagine that they are making islands in the sea, just one of which will have 200 hotels. The scale of the building almost defies description and continues 24 hours a day hence the floodlights at night. We had arrived during Ramadan so even as a non believer you are expected not to eat and drink until a given time. Our taxi driver bought a brown bag of pakoras which he was keen to share with us as the burning sun went down. The new commercial areas are sorted (planned) into “villages” like Knowledge for all the Universities and teaching centres and schools. Media for all the communication and HiTec companies and yet more Disney style themed shopping malls. We walked along the river later in the cooler evening and had food at a local style Turkish

Restaurant alongside the Creek. Now we were able to people watch. The ladies in their smart Burqas, sometimes with full veil, with some of the men in the cool looking white Arab robes. It all felt very comfortable and non threatening – in fact the crime here is almost zero. I was intrigued to see a 35 year old man in robes eating with his sister? Who looked an attractive 16 year old. They each were smoking Hubble Bubble pipes. Yes its worth a visit and we look forward to stopping again on the return leg.

Terry - now in Nelson,NZ. - until April 2006



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The journey to the Southern Hemisphere continued with Emirates taking us to Singapore - again we got lucky with a hotel upgrade and enjoyed walking by the river. The developments are removing even more of the old Singapore but it's still a good place to visit. Brisbane was next with a rental car waiting so we could drive to our friends some 50 miles North. It was hot and buggy but a little shopping, a market visit and watching my pals projection TV and reading passed the time along nicely for three relaxing days. It really felt like a holiday tour rather than a L-O-N-G- flight. Driving back to Brisbane airport along the Moreton Bay Tourist Drive was excellent and some cafes were packed with people enjoying Melbourne Cup day (the same idea as Ascot in the UK) you know, all posh clothes, fancy hats and a flutter. We had a truly excellent dinner outdoors (no bugs) before our night at the Compass Hotel.

Arriving in Auckland the customs were busy as usual but once outside we shared a Shuttle to get to the Ferry Terminal to catch the ferry for our final night before arriving "home". This was staying with more friends who had bought a lovely house on spectacular Waiheke Island, which is in Auckland Bay just a 30 minute ferry ride away from the busy Auckland City Centre. They are really integrating into "island" life, we especially found it fun to see the workers getting on the ferry and having a beer and a chat as they headed home from work.

It was a thrill to look down on Nelson before we landed, my pal Malcolm was waiting in the small airport and we were quickly back at "The Cut" - wonderful, we didn't feel jet lagged or tired with spending nine days to get here.

Life has been blissful, the weather has largely been summer like even though its Spring and the garden has needed water. The car and motorcycles started up OK - I have even bought a pedal bike.....

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