

*Thursday, March 16th – Friday, March 17th*

On the far northern end of Taipei lies the famous mountains and hot springs of Beitou. You can take the Taipei Metro all the way out here, which we did on Wednesday afternoon and gamely proceeded to walk to our hotel. “It’s only about a mile!” Half an hour later, sweaty from having hauled our luggage up stone (where they existed at all) sidewalks, and I do mean “up” (have I mentioned “mountainous region?”), and past increasingly amused fellow tourists (“you walk looooong way!” and “hey, we saw you before!”), we arrived triumphantly and learned the hotel has a shuttle to the metro stop. We are expert travelers!



*A Hot Spring in Beitou (“Thermal Valley”)*

Beitou is an interesting place, the hots springs have been a tourist draw since at least the

Japanese occupation, and the city is built with the springs bubbling up in the middle and creeks running throughout. There are some public baths, where you can go and hang out with the locals (there are lines of retired folks at the entrance pretty much all the time) and some private ones owned by hotels. The room we rented had a big stone tub they claimed was filled “partially” by the local hot springs. The rest is presumably from less magical tap water.



*Our own, personal, hot spring...*



## Beitou Hot Springs



*The famous steaming streams!*

## Beitou Hot Springs

The above is from Beitou Park, which runs right through the middle of the city and is lovely if you can put aside your assumption that steaming waterways in an urban environment just means a sewer.



*Hot Springs Valley*

There is one large hot spring that you can walk right up to. The water is far too hot to bathe in and lovely to see. Apparently the townsfolk used to bring their eggs here to boil them, the minerals in the water leading to a distinctive taste.





*Steam*

It turns out that steam is less interesting in photographs (at least my photographs!) than it is in person. A perfect moment to take a detour to the local “Ketagalan Culture Center.” This is a small museum that is trying to highlight the different native peoples of Taiwan. I think.



*"Year: around 1999. Indigenous Tribe: Yami. This piece emphasizes the physical beauty of long hair and its power to*

*encourage fishermen to work harder.”*





*Respectful representation of indigenous people.*



*Traditional outfits.*

There wasn't a ton in the museum, it took up a few floors but felt a bit like a work in progress. Most folks there seemed to be visiting so they could take selfies in a tunnel the museum and setup as a backdrop to house some tools.





*Shot of Beitou Park amidst the city.*

The above is taken from the balcony of the cultural center. The main low slung building on the right side of the photograph is the library. It's a neat building in the park, and the whole park is nestled right in the middle of town.

## Beitou Hot Springs



*Enough culture, back to the park!*



## Beitou Hot Springs



*Thermal Valley*



*"No climbing" although it looks so fun!*

Beitou is also where we said goodbye to one of our Taiwanese traveling companions: the Cheese Jerky.





*Cheese Jerky - mainly just a chewy pile of salt. Kind of like meat jerky?*



*We're relaxing!*

Beitou was a nice way to wind down our time in Taiwan. We're not the best at doing things like hanging out and relaxing in hot springs, but we each had some work we needed to catch up on and the down time was nice. I hiked through town trying to convince various computer repair shops to fix my laptop, but no one had the tools to get it open. The quest continues!

On Friday we checked out and started the planes, trains and automobiles trip to Shanghai!