YOU CAN TAKE IT WITH YOU

In ancient China, death was not the end. People believed you moved on to another life. Not only that but you could even take stuff with you. For ordinary folk that meant a few favourite knicknacks, for nobles usually some fancier treasures. But for Qin Shihuang, First Emperor of China, it meant, literally, his entire world.

Thinking ahead
Qin Shihuang began planning what to take with him as soon as he became emperor, in 246. And over the next 36 years, had over 700,000 people build and furnish his tomb.

Taking no chances
Clearly Qin Shihuang suspected the afterlife might not be all peace and tranquillity, as he decided to take along an entire army. Sure, the soldiers were made of clay, or terracotta, but there were 8000 of them. And they had real weapons and chariots.

WE'RE READY FOR ANYTHING!

Qin's world
At the centre of his tomb Qin placed a bronze palace – full size of course. Around it he had labourers dig trenches and fill them with liquid mercury to represent the seas and rivers of the Qin world. And he had the tomb ceiling painted to look like the stars.
A HEADS-UP

A farmer digging for water in a field in 1974 must have got the shock of his life when he dug up a lifelike clay head. That was the find that led archeologists to Qin’s tomb. Yet still only a small area has been excavated and most of the site, including the main palace, awaits discovery.

Some clay soldiers were armed with crossbows primed to shoot anyone who entered the tomb.

You’re coming too!
For company, Qin took along dozens of wives—they were buried alive near his body. Finally, Qin’s successors rounded up all the craftsmen who knew the tomb’s secrets and walled them inside too, before covering everything with a mound of earth 76m (250ft) tall.

QIN’S ARMY
☆ 8000 soldiers
☆ 130 chariots
☆ 670 horses
☆ 10,000 weapons

The entire tomb is thought to cover 50 sq km (20 sq mi).