

The high life.. in Blackpool

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IT'S TOWER POWER

By JACQUI THAKE

ON a flat roof below me I can see a body-shaped police outline. Next to it, in large capital letters, is painted the word "OUCH!"

I'm standing 380ft above and all that stops me leaving my own shape on that roof is a glass floor. Stupidly I'm trying out one of the less attractive (to me) features of Blackpool Tower, the Walk of Faith. It's reinforced to take a five-ton weight - and I haven't eaten THAT much this holiday - but looking down I feel positively sick.

My heart is kept racing throughout the two-hour circus special, which is included in the Tower ticket price. The magnificent theatre is an awe-inspiring backdrop for death-defying acrobats who leap, whirl and fly before us. Blackpool's definitely got talent... and six-packs!

We spend an hour in the splendid ballroom where the Strictly Come Dancing finals have been held twice. As the music - played on a £450,000 organ - builds, the floor opens and up comes the famous Wurlitzer. What a note to end on - and all this costs just £12 for adults, £10 for children.

Blackpool is truly a children's paradise and they'll think they've gone to heaven at the Pleasure Beach. I've put my rollercoaster days behind me now so I'm pleasantly surprised to find I can still enjoy the park... bars offering oysters (three for £2.50) and champagne. Mum and Dad will be quite happy based here or in one of the coffee bars while the kids run free.

Children will also love the zoo (£13.99 adults, £9.99 children, family ticket £41).



In the loop... the Big One rollercoaster at Blackpool's Pleasure Beach



Highly entertaining... Tower is stuffed with attractions

PICTURE: ALAMY / PICTURES COLOUR LIBRARY

It is beautifully landscaped with lots of room for the animals, which look well cared for. I am particularly taken with Darwin, a gigantic 90-year-old tortoise who lazily opens one eye in contempt as we watch him, with his legs sprawled awry in the sunshine.

Our next stop is the multi-award-winning Blackpool Model Village and Gardens (£5.95 adults, £4.75 children aged three-16, family ticket £19). And we haven't even been to the beach yet - seven miles of golden sand with a newly-built promenade.

Millions have been spent regenerating Blackpool so it's no longer all Kiss Me Quick

Hats and run-down boarding houses with only cold running water - as we discover at our fabulous five-star B&B, Number One South Beach.

Tastefully decorated throughout, it's the height of luxury. Egyptian cotton sheets, jacuzzis, 42in TVs and wi-fi all come as standard and the rooms have interesting names, such as Intrigue and Passion.

Blackpool's gone classy, without losing its sense of good old-fashioned fun, and as we get ready to leave my face aches from all the smiling and laughing I've done here.

●NUMBER One South Beach: doubles, three nights from £330, family room, three nights for £375 (www.numberone southbeach.co.uk, 01253 343900).

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