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Hunan Overview

Hunan, "Xiang" for short, is located in the middle reaches of the Yangtze River. It is called the "land of hibiscus" because hibiscus has been widely planted here since ancient times.

The Hunan landscape is dominated by mountains and hills and the Dongting Lake, surrounded by plains. The area boasts water resorts like the Dongting Lake wetland, the mysterious and magnificent scenery of Zhangjiajie as well as the Danxia landform in Mount Lang.

Hunan enjoys a continental subtropical monsoon humid climate with abundant light and heat and ample rainfall. Vertical mountain climate changes significantly, particularly in the mountain area in Western and Southern Hunan.

The province has a long history and

long-standing and well-established culture. Many talented people have come from the province. Numerous cultural and historical sites remain, such as the Yueyang Tower, Yuelu Academy, and others. Hunan is also Mao Zedong's home province, making it an important location for visitors interested in the Chinese revolutionary history. Shaoshan City is especially important in this history, as numerous historical sites relevant to Mao Zedong have been preserved here.

Hunan is also rich in ethnic minority customs. Fenghuang Town and stilted buildings along the river demonstrate the mysterious charm of the Mao people in Western Hunan.

Website: www.hnt.gov.cn

Area & Population

211,800 square kilometers.

By the end of 2012, the permanent population was 66.389 million.

Administrative Divisions

Hunan Province comprises 13 prefecture-level cities and 1 ethnic autonomous prefectures, including Changsha, Zhangjiajie, Changde, Yiyang, Yueyang, Zhuzhou, Xiangtan, Hengyang, Chenzhou, Yongzhou, Shaoyang, Huaihua, Loudi and Xiangxi.

Fenghuang Ancient Town

Although Fenghuang Ancient Town has more than 300 years' history, it remains well preserved. The quartzite streets in the town, the wooden-structured stilted buildings along the river, Chaoyang Palace, Heavenly King Temple, Longevity Palace, Daoheng Hall and other buildings all share ancient characteristics.

Website: www.hnphoenix.com

Former Residence of Shen Congwen

The Former Residence of Shen Congwen is a courtyard dwelling with strong Western Hunan characteristics. It is divided into front and back buildings with a red square stone courtyard in the middle. On both sides there are 11 side-rooms of different sizes. His posthumous handwriting, manuscripts, relics, portraits and others are displayed here.

Longevity Palace

The Longevity Palace, also known as Jiangxi Hall, is a group of grand, elaborate, distinctively-designed, and exquisitely-carved architectural complex. The buildings consist of over 20 palaces, towers and houses which present a magnificent spectacle of architectural art.

Hongqiao

Located at the center of the Fenghuang Ancient Town, Hongqiao Bridge straddles the Tuojiang River, and is divided into two floors. On the first floor are mainly shops and grocery stores while the second floor serves as a folk culture building. Looking over Fenghuang Town from Hongqiao Bridge, a panoramic view of the picturesque scenery of both sides of the Tuojiang River can be enjoyed.

Transportation

● By Air

Changsha is the aviation center of Hunan Province. There are multiple flights to major cities at home and abroad at Changsha Huanghua International Airport. The other four civilian airports are Zhangjiajie Hehua Airport, Changde Taohuayuan Airport, Yongzhou Lingling Airport, and Huaihua Zhijiang Airport.

● By Train

Hunan's rail network is developed, with the Beijing-Guangzhou Railway, Shanghai-Kunming Railway, Hunan-Guangxi Railway, Shimen-Changsha Railway, Luoyang-Zhangjiajie Railway, Jiaozuo-Liuzhou Railway, Changqing-Huaihua railway and others running throughout the province. The four major railway centers are Changsha, Zhuzhou, Hengyang, and Huaihua.

● Useful Telephone Numbers and Websites

IDD Code of China	86
Police	110
Fire	119
Ambulance	120
Traffic Accident	122
Telephone Number Enquiry	114
Weather Forecast	12121
Human Tourism Complaints	27-12301
Railway Ticket	95105105
Changsha Huanghua Airport	731-969777
Zhangjiajie Hehua Airport	744-8238417
Hunan Airport Management Group	www.hncaac.com
Fenghuang Bus Station	743-2151888
Hunan Tourism Bureau	731-8474484

Changsha

Changsha has a long cultural history of 3,000 years. There are many famous attractions in Changsha such as the Yuelu Mountain, Mawangdui Han Dynasty Tomb and Orange Island Kaifu Temple. Hunan Satellite TV, China's most popular entertainment TV, is located here. It is also a capital of famous delicacies.

Website: www.csta.gov.cn

Mount Yuelu

Yuelu Mountain is located on the west bank of the Xiangjiang River. The Aiwan Pavilion, Temple of Yuelu Mountain, Grave of Cai E, Grave of Huang Xing and other attractions are all located in this scenic area. Yuelu Academy at the base of the mountain is one of the four ancient Chinese academies. Many ancient exquisite buildings have been preserved here.

Website: www.hnyls.com

Mawangdui Han Dynasty Tomb

The Mawangdui Han Dynasty Tomb is the cemetery of an early Western Han Dynasty duke family. The unearthed remains of a woman, finely woven silk garments, a large batch of utensils and silk paintings from the Western Han Dynasty are all preserved in Hunan Provincial Museum.

Orange Isle

The Orange Isle is the world's largest inland island. Its major attractions include the

Fenghuang Ancient Town

Nanhua Mountain

The crescent-shaped Nanhua Mountain surrounds Fenghuang Ancient Town. The clear Tuojiang River flows through the town, forming a beautiful landscape with the town in the forest and parks in the town. Main attractions are the Library Collection of Shen Congwen and the Nanhua Buddhist Temple.

Laodong Miao Village

As a stone citadel, Laodong Miao Village has a history of over 600 years. With a 9-grid and 8-trigram layout, it is designed

elaborately. Moreover, the castle-like attack and defensive systems and the drainage system remain almost completely preserved.

Wolong Gorge

In the Wolong Gorge there is a 100-meter-high valley waterfall, 100-meter hanging ladder Thread of Sky, a cluster of over 500 meter high cliffs, and the unique spectacle of boulders in shape of the dragon head and the tiger head.

Map of Fenghuang Ancient Town

The map shows the layout of the town, including the Tuojiang River, the Wolong Gorge, the Nanhua Mountain, and the Laodong Miao Village. It also shows the locations of various attractions and landmarks.

Yueyang

Located on the shore of the Dongting Lake, Yueyang is a historical and cultural city with a history of over 2,500 years. It is world-famous for the Yueyang Tower.

Website: www.ytyour.com.cn

Yueyang Tower

Yueyang Tower is one of three famous towers in the Jiangnan region, with a historical site of original Qing Dynasty construction preserved to this day. The tower is famous for its long history, natural scenery, artful craftsmanship, and excellent prose, poems and songs that mention it.

Website: www.yueyanglou.com

Junshan Island

Being an islet in the Dongting Lake that

stretches 400 km, Junshan Island faces the ancient Yueyang Tower at a distance. Junshan Island is made up of 72 peaks of different sizes, and boasts the Grave of Two Imperial Concubines, the Hall of Imperial Concubine Xiang and other attractions.

Miluo River

There are cottages with white walls, peach trees and green willows, simple and honest people, and nutritious and beautiful water and plants along the banks of the Miluo River, presenting the typical style of a Jiangnan watertown. Historical sites include the Grave of Qu Yuan and the Ancestral Hall of Qu Yuan, among others.

Fenghuang Ancient Town

Southern Great Wall

The Southern Great Wall was built in the Ming Dynasty. Every 3 to 5 ft on the wall there is a border station, a camp and a checkpoint. The forts, fort battlements and side walls can be vaguely seen at the Tingzi Pass, the Wuchao Pass, the Ala Pass, the Jingbian Pass and others.

Huangsiqiao Ancient Town

Huangsiqiao Ancient Town is the best-preserved Tang Dynasty castle found in China so far, used as a station for troops in ancient times. The ancient town is composed of bluestone and includes three gates on top of which are over 10 meter high towers in the Qing Dynasty style.

Map of Fenghuang Ancient Town

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Dining and Shopping

● Dining

As one of the eight major Chinese cuisines, Hunan cuisine is fresh, spicy, and fragrant. Famous dishes include taste shrimp, Smoky Flavors Steamed Together, fire baked fish, Mala chicken, steamed fish head in chili sauce, etc. Snack food includes longevity spiced dried tofu with sauce, stinky tofu and so on.

Steamed Fish Head in Chili Sauce: Steamed fish head in chili sauce is a famous dish in Hunan. This dish infuses the "salty" and "spicy" flavors of the chopped chili into the fish head and combines the "fresh flavors" of fish head and the "spicy flavor" of "chopped chili together, creating a unique taste.

Changsha Stinky Tofu: It is dry and yellowish, crisp on the outside and tender on

the inside, refreshing, salty, distinctive, fresh, spicy, and matchlessly delicious. It is crisp but not burned, delicate but not greasy. It smells stinky at first but very attractive then.

● Shopping

Special local products include Hunan embroidery, Liuyang chrysanthemum stone carvings, Yiyang oil-paper umbrellas, Junshan Island Silver Needle Tea, etc. In addition, silver jewelry and handicrafts of Tujia of Miao people in Western Hunan are also very typical.

Hunan Embroidery: One of the four famous Chinese embroideries. Due to a rigorous layout, vivid colors, and a variety of expressive stitches, the embroidered figures, animals, landscapes, flowers and birds have special artistic qualities.

Shaoshan

Shaoshan has a long history. According to legend, it got its name because Emperor Shun once played music here. Mao Zedong was born and raised here. There are many monuments and memorial buildings dedicated to Mao Zedong.

Website: www.ssl.gov.cn

Birthplace of Mao Zedong

The Birthplace of Mao Zedong is a concave farmhouse of earthen and wooden structure facing the south. There are 18 houses. The 13 eastern tile rooms were Mao Zedong's home, and the western four thatched cottages were public property belonging to people surnamed Mao. The public shared the middle house.

Mausoleum of Mao Zedong

The Mausoleum of Mao Zedong is a structure of cement, brick and wood. Creatively combining the Hunan farmhouse style with the Suzhou garden style, the whole building has a bright and spacious inner garden and a lively corridor.

Mao Zedong Square

The bronze statue of Mao Zedong at Mao Zedong Square weighs 3.7 tons and is 6 meters high. The pedestal is 4.1 meters high, and the full height is 10.1 meters, which refers to the date on which the People's Republic of China was established.

Zhangjiajie

Zhangjiajie is a famous tourist city in China. Famous attractions are the Zhangjiajie National Forest Park, Suoxi Valley Scenic Spot, and Mount Tianzi Scenic Area. They are listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Website: www.zhangjiajie.com.cn

Zhangjiajie National Forest Park

The rocks are peculiar in Zhangjiajie National Forest Park, with thousands of rolling and overlapping pinnacles in the sky. The strange pinnacles are steep, towering in different shapes. Elegant peaks stand alone and other groups of peaks complement each other in perfect shapes, creating vivid landscape.

Suoxi Valley

"Suoxi Valley" in the Tujia dialect means "a mountain village in a heavy mist". Elegant peaks, secluded valleys, green waters, and mysterious caves are its features. The main attractions are the Western Sea, 10-li Gallery, Four Gates Surrounded by Water,

100-zhang Gorge, Yejiagang, Baofeng Lake, Huanglong Cave, and Guanyin Cave.

Mount Tianzi

The most spectacular scenes here are seas of clouds, stone waves, winter snow, and the rose clouds. The scenic region is covered with primitive forests. Odd trees and different plants grow everywhere. The main attractions are Yuhai Peak, Shentang Gulf, Immortal Soldiers Gathering, Fairy Bridge, Midair Garden, etc.

Map of Zhangjiajie National Forest Park

The map shows the layout of the park, including the Tuojiang River, the Wolong Gorge, the Nanhua Mountain, and the Laodong Miao Village. It also shows the locations of various attractions and landmarks.

Zhangjiajie

Tianmen Mountain

The Tianmen Mountain is a natural mural in Zhangjiajie where towering old trees and vines grow everywhere like natural bonsai. There are four major scenic spots here, including the Opening Heaven Gate, Birthplace of Buddhist in Heaven, Fairy Wonderland, and Immortal Residence.

Website: www.tianmenshan.com.cn

The Town of Dayong Prefecture

The town of Dayong Prefecture is composed of eight buildings with an architectural style reflecting that of the Tujia, Miao, Bai, Yao and Dong ethnic groups in the Ming and Qing dynasties. Attractions include the Chaotian Building, Celestial Street, and the town of Dayong Prefecture.

Zhangjiajie Tujia Customs Park

Zhangjiajie Tujia Customs Park is mainly composed of Tujia Architecture, folk custom shows, rare botanical gardens and other functional areas. The buildings in the park are mostly made of wood and stone with curved beams and painted rafters, which are magnificent.

Famous Mountains

Hengyang Mount Heng

Mount Heng is the most famous holy place for Taoism in Southern China. Buddhism and Taoism coexist in harmony here, with an abundance of temples. There are 375 stone carvings and nine primitive forests on the mountain.

Website: www.nanyue.net.cn

Xinning Mount Lang

Mount Lang is the most typical Danxia landform in China. The scenic area contains various Danxia landforms and a unique geological structure. The six major attractions are the Pepper Peak, Tianyi Lane, Octagonal Village, and Natural Bridge.

Website: www.langshanhong.com

Tongdao Wanfo Mountain

The Wanfo Mountain is one of China's largest Danxia landform woodlands. It includes five major scenic spots including the Wanfo Mountain, Immortal Cave, the Qixing Mountain, the General Mountain, and the Ziyun Mountain.

Website: www.dwtravel.com

Liuyang Dawei Mountains

Mountains surround the territory of the Dawei Mountains, standing high and straight. This area is well-known for its strange peaks, unique rocks, flowing springs and falling waterfalls. In the scenic area many rare animals and plants grow, earning the place a reputation of a "natural museum of flora and fauna".

Website: www.dwtravel.com

Lakes and Rivers

Sangzhi Maoyan River

Cliffs are along the banks of the Maoyan River. With many dangerous shoals, rapids, waterfalls, and ancient trees in this region, it has earned the title of "100-li Gallery." Around Fengzhangxi in the upper reaches of the river, there are strange peaks, unique rocks, and deep enigmatic ravines, giving it a mysterious atmosphere.

Lianyuan Meijiang River

The Meijiang River is beautiful with its exotic scenery and panoramic landscape. The scenic area is made up of 40 villages in the five townships of Shitao, Gutang, Qicun, Daqiao, and Sigu. The attractions here include Guanyin Cliff, Lotus Pond, Saihai, Hezhang Cliff, Guzong Cliff and Xianglu Peak among others.

Zixing Dongjiang Lake

The vast surface of the Dongjiang Lake is covered with mist and there are islands everywhere, earning it a reputation of "a lake in heaven on earth, containing thousands of scenes". The morning mist over the Small Dongjiang River is especially famous.

Ancient Villages and Towns

Jishou Dehang Miao Village

Dehang Miao Village is located in the depths of a canyon where there are elegant peaks and streams running freely. The Miao Village is built alongside the mountain, and the houses are made of gray tiles and wood, with stone roads winding between them. This quiet and comfortable Village preserves a rich ancient atmosphere.

Yueyang Zhangguying Village

Zhangguying Village is the most completely preserved ancient architecture in Southern China. The architecture of Zhangguying Village is composed of three major structural groups, namely, Dangdamen, Wangjiadian, and Shangxinwu.

Yongshun Furong Town

Furong Town is officially called Wang Village, and was an imperial capital of a Tusi king in the Qin and Han dynasties as well as a place inhabited by Tujia people. Quartzite roads and rows of Tujia stilted buildings have been preserved here.