

Letter from the editor-in-chief

Jiangsu is the only province in China that has "rivers, lakes, and seas." The Yangtze River flows from west to east and passes through eight cities in Jiangsu: Nanjing, Yangzhou, Zhenjiang, Taizhou, Changzhou, Wuxi, Suzhou, and Nantong. These eight cities are like eight brilliant pearls, showcasing the sound natural environment, profound cultural heritage, and happy life of the people on both sides of the river. Let's go downstream and learn more about these cities along the river.

Nanjing

Nanjing is the capital of Jiangsu, with a long history and rich cultural heritage. By taking the Yangtze River cruise, visitors can enjoy panoramic views of famous landmarks such as Mufu Mountain, the Cherry Blossom Avenue, the Yangtze River Bridge, and the Yangtze River Scenery Area. The grand Purple Mountain and vast Xuanwu Lake add natural beauty to Nanjing.

Yangzhou

Yangzhou, known as the Creative City of Gastronomy and the City of Canals, is a world-renowned destination with a plethora of international brands. At the intersection of the Yangtze River and the Grand Canal lies Guazhou Ferry, which served as the starting point for Tang Dynasty monk Jianzhen's journey to the east. Today, visitors can explore the splendor of ancient Yangzhou by visiting attractions such as the Slender West Lake and the China Grand Canal Museum. Indulging in the delectable delights of Huaiyang cuisine, including Yangzhou fried rice and crab meat lion's head, is a quintessential experience that allows us to savor a life of happiness.

Zhenjiang

Zhenjiang is a city of scenic

beauty and entrepreneurial opportunities. The urban area is surrounded by the "Three Mountains" cluster of Jinshan Mountain, Jiaoshan Mountain, and Beigushan Mountain, while the Maoshan and Baohua Mountains in the vicinity create a stunning landscape like that of a fairyland. Zhenjiang is well-known throughout the country for its prized Zhenjiang Vinegar, the unique Taoist music of Maoshan, and the ancient tale of the White Snake, which have all contributed to showcasing the distinctive allure of the city.

Taizhou

Taizhou, meaning "the city of auspicious prosperity". The city is beautifully integrated with the Fengcheng River running through it, creating a harmonious coexistence between water and urban life. Taizhou is blessed with a favorable ecological environment, thanks to the Qinhu Wetland and the Qjanduo Rape Flower Field. These natural attractions, along with Mei Lanfang's Peking Opera and Taizhou's unique morning tea, come together to form a picturesque representation of a happy life.

Changzhou

Changzhou, known as the "City of Dragons" in China, brims with innovation

and creativity. It combines technology, culture, and tourism to create theme parks such as Spring and Autumn Yancheng Tourism Area, Oriental Salt Lake Resort, and China Dinosaur Park. The integration of ecology and leisure vacations is seen in attractions like Tianmu Lake, Nanshan Bamboo Sea, and natural hot springs, which attract a large number of domestic and international tourists each year.

Wuxi

Wuxi is home to many literary figures such as Qian Zhongshu, painter Xu Beihong. Currently, Wuxi's tourism industry is flourishing and is known for its scenic spots like Lingshan Cultural Tourism Group and Nianhuawan, as well as intangible cultural heritage products such as Yixing Zisha and Huishan Clay Figurines. These attractions are exuding an immense amount of charm and continue to attract visitors from all around the world.

Suzhou

Suzhou is a typical representative of the water towns in the Jiangnan region, and is known as the "Venice of the East." Together with the Jinji Lake Business Tourism Zone, the Jiangnan gardens and ancient water towns such as Humble Administrator's

Garden, Master of the Nets Garden, Zhouzhuang, and Luzhi create a city that harmoniously blends modernity and antiquity. Suzhou is also recognized as the Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art globally, with cultural treasures such as Kunqu Opera, the origin of Chinese operas, and intangible cultural heritage like Suzhou embroidery that are truly awe-inspiring.

Nantong

Nantong, also known as the "Gateway to the River and Sea," has a unique charm that stems from its connection to waterways. The first ray of sunshine in Jiangsu shines on Nantong's Yuantuo Cape. Nantong is a city of museums, with over 20 museums, including the China Abacus Museum and the Blue Calico Museum, linked by the Haohe River. Wushan, named after its five mountains, serves as a model for preserving the ecological balance of the Yangtze River. It is an excellent place to view the majestic flow of the river as it meets the sea.





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On the cover: The Nanjing Yangtze River Bridge



01

JIANGSU IN THE GLOBAL VIEW

Yangtze Cruise is Perfect Summer Outing

A stiff breeze on the mighty Yangtze River is a perfect way of keeping cool in this summer. To immerse yourself in the charm of the Yangtze River, it's worth experiencing the river cruise "Yangtze River Legend".

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YANGTZE CRUISE IS PERFECT OUTING

By Frank Hossack



**JIANGSU
IN THE GLOBAL VIEW**

Frank Hossack

Born in 1969, Frank Hossack comes from Scotland and settled in Nanjing in 2003. Since 2010, with foreigners in Nanjing, he has set up an English magazine, "Nanjinger," for foreigners in Nanjing and overseas to tell stories about Nanjing and its people. Frank Hossack has been committed to cultural exchanges between China and the West actively, and was named Jiangsu Outstanding International Friend in 2015.

A stiff breeze on the mighty Yangtze River is a perfect way of keeping cool in this summer. To immerse yourself in the charm of the Yangtze River, it's worth experiencing the river cruise "Yangtze River Legend".

Visitors can take this cruise to see more than 10 famous cultural and natural attractions along the river, including Muyan Riverside

Scenic Area, Nanjing Yangtze River Bridge, Zhongshan Wharf, Pukou Wharf, Yuejiang Tower, Yanziji Park and Baguazhou. And if you are lucky enough, you can also see Yangtze finless porpoise swimming in waves. With a total distance of about 27 kilometers and about 2 hours of sailing, the tour offers an in-depth look at the natural scenery, historical and cultural landscape and the charm of the Nanjing section of the Yangtze River.

The spiral stairs on the "Yangtze River Legend" cruise remind tourists of the movie Titanic starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet. Once off land, you can find yourself at the foot of the spiral stairs. But it only takes you just a split second to realize again that this is in China and everything needs to be as good as it gets.

In retrospect, those steps are also a glimpse of things to come; that you're in for a really rather



special experience.

Starting from the Wumadu Cruise Terminal on Yongji Avenue, the cruise has been put into use for many years. Over one year ago, the "Yangtze River Legend" cruise entered service after being upgraded as a luxury liner.

The "Yangtze River Trip" sets off by sailing a few kilometers downstream, passing Muyan Riverside Scenic Area (affording a great view of the Bodhidharma caves) and Yanziji, before turning around near the Nanjing Baguazhou Yangtze River Bridge (formerly the NO. 2 Nanjing Yangtze River Bridge).

Then it's on to the highlight of the cruise; the Nanjing Yangtze River Bridge. And top of the bucket list for all on board is a pic of themselves in front of the first bridge spanning the Yangtze River built without foreign help. It's hard not to be touched when tourists are rushing to take photos. On a more practical level, the detail discernible on the bridge's substructure can be viewed from the cruise, which will be a delight to any civil engineer, while nice touches are also afforded by the sign informing captains to "obey



the law of the sea".

As the bridge recedes, we come upon Pukou Wharf and Pukou Railway Station, before once again turning around. According to the guide, Pukou Railway Station was the place where well-known Chinese scholar Zhu Ziqing was inspired to write the reminiscence essay *Retreating Figure*. It's also the place where *The Story of a Noble Family*, the Chinese television series based on famous Chinese novelist Zhang Henshui's novel was filmed. Back on the right, going downstream again offers excellent views of Zhongshan Wharf that was completed in 1928. And there is also the former Nanjing Train

Ferry Loading Trestle, built in 1933, which was the first railway train ferry line in China to ferry trains on giant wheels laid on rails, thus opening a direct railway line from Shanghai to Beijing.

Not long after we come upon a new sightseeing bridge right beside the Nanjing Yangtze River Bridge. Looking far away, the transparent ring-shaped bridge looks like a shining pearl necklace for the south fort of the bridge. The bridge with a central glass deck is part of a 1.1-km-long extension to the Binjiang Greenway, which has finished its construction. From the bridge to the Nanjing Yuzui Wetland Park in the

south, now a total of 21 kilometers of riverside walk for running and biking.

Then we're back under the Nanjing Yangtze River Bridge. On our way back, we can see the Yangtze finless porpoise observation point, Nanjing Green Exposition Park and Nanjing Jinling Shipyard. Although we didn't have the chance to witness the Yangtze finless porpoise, known as the "giant panda in water", leaping out of the river, the "Yangtze River Legend" cruise still brings visitors a wonderful trip. It may be one of the most enjoyable afternoons you have spent in Nanjing.



Nanjing

From Qinhuai River to Yangtze River

The mighty Yangtze River roars down from the snowy Tibetan Plateau and slows down its pace as it flows through Nanjing, making the city the "capital of the Yangtze River."

Nanjing's history is closely related to the Yangtze River. A 600,000-year-old fossilized skull of *Homo erectus* was excavated at the headwaters of the Qinhuai River, a tributary of the Yangtze River. During the Spring and Autumn Period (770 BC-476 BC), the Yue State conquered the Wu State and built the Yue City on the banks of the Yangtze River, guarding against rivals. During the Three Kingdoms period (220-280 AD), Sun Quan, king of Wu, built the Stone City on the banks of the Yangtze, ushering in the legacy of Nanjing as an ancient capital of six dynasties. During this period, Jiankang, now Nanjing, was considered one of the "two centers of ancient world civilization" alongside ancient Rome. Zhu Yuanzhang, the founder of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), established the capital in Nanjing. Commissioned by the emperor of the Ming Dynasty, the great navigator Zheng He started his journey in Nanjing, leading his fleet on seven expeditions and visiting over 30 countries and regions. In April 1949, the People's Liberation Army (PLA), led by the Communist Party of China (CPC), launched the Crossing-the-Yangtze-River Campaign and destroyed the Chinese Kuomintang (KMT) party military's defense line. The PLA then captured Nanjing without encountering much resistance. The liberation of Nanjing marked the end of the KMT's 22-year governance in China.

The cultural genes of Nanjing come from the Yangtze River culture. From the North Yin-Yang Camp culture and the Xuecheng culture of the Neolithic Age 6,000 years ago, to the Hushu culture of the Bronze Age, and the Wu culture, Yue culture, and Chu culture of the Warring States period (475-221 BC)... these are all parts of the distinctive Yangtze River culture.

 the Nanjing Third Yangtze River Bridge



↑ The Nanjing Riverside Scenic Belt

The Nanjing Riverside Scenic Belt

The Nanjing section of the Yangtze River is 97 kilometers long, 58 kilometers of which have been developed into a beautiful riverside scenic belt. The two banks of the river complement each other, with natural landscapes and ecologically rich resources such as Fishmouth Wetland Park, Green Expo Garden, Wanjiang Garden, Green Bay Wetland Park, and dolphin watch spots, as well as cultural landscapes and historic sites such as Zhongshan Wharf, Bao Shipyard Site, Pukou Railway Station, Yangtze T-Stage, Ferry Beach, Yangtze River Bridge, Dharma Ancient Cave, and Yanji Evening Glow. They are embedded in a "golden belt," like pearls on a string, making it the best place to appreciate the Yangtze River, get close to water, take leisurely walks, hike, and have fun.

Purple Mountain, Xuanwu Lake, and Changjiang Road

Nanjing is backed by the perilous Yangtze River, with "Zhongshan Winding and Stones Crouching." Since the third Century AD, 10 dynasties and regimes made Nanjing the capital, hence the title "Capital City for Ten Dynasties. Zhongshan Mountain, also known as Purple Mountain, has three peaks connected to form a giant dragon. It blends mountains, water, and the city together. There are many famous scenic spots on

the mountain, including the Ming Xiaoling Mausoleum, a world cultural heritage site, which is the joint tomb of Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang and Empress Ma of the Ming Dynasty. On the east side of the Ming Xiaoling Mausoleum is the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum, the tomb of Sun Yat-sen, a great national hero, great patriot and great forerunner of China's democratic revolution. There are also many memorial buildings around, including Music Stage and Yongfeng Society, which are all masterpieces of famous architects. On the south side of Ming Xiaoling Mausoleum is Plum Blossom Hill, known as the "No.1 plum blossom hill in the world" with nearly 400 varieties and over 13,000 plum trees. There are also many other attractions, such as Toutuo Hill, Meiling Palace, Yanque Lake, Linggu Temple, and the old site of the Central Sports Stadium, making Zhongshan Mountain the "No.1 cultural mountain in Chinese cities."

Between the Purple Mountain and the Yangtze River lies a huge lake, Xuanwu Lake. In the Six Dynasties, its area was four times larger than it is now. Its surface was vast and connected to the Yangtze River, making it an important place for naval training

and military parades. Later, it was developed into a royal garden and became a place for emperors, ministers, and poets to enjoy leisure and hunting. There are many famous scenic spots along the lake, such as Shence Gate Park, Lovers' Garden, White Horse Park, Ancient Yuewutai, Jiming Temple, and Taicheng Wall. The inner side of the lake is the Ming City Wall. The Taicheng section is the best preserved. Wei Zhuang, a poet of the Tang Dynasty (618-907) once wrote, "the most heartless thing is the Taicheng's willow, still smoke-shrouded on the ten-li dike." Outside the city wall lies the bustling metropolis.

Nanjing has a road named after the Yangtze River, which is not only a main road in Nanjing, but also a famous cultural street of the Republic of China era. The east-west running Changjiang Road is about 1,800 meters long, with a scenic spot every three steps and a historic site every five steps. It is home to many attractions, including the Presidential Palace, Jiangnan Textile Museum, Six Dynasties Museum, Jiangsu Art Museum, Nanjing Library, Nanjing Great Hall of the People, 1912 Block, and Pilu Temple. "A road named after the Yangtze River, half of the history of Jinling (now Nanjing)." Strolling along Changjiang Road allows you to experience Nanjing's 1,800-year-old history.



↑ Xuanwu Lake



↑ Yanzhi River in Lishui District, Nanjing

Qinhuai River, Yanzhi River, and Xuhe River

The Qinhuai River, known as "the No.1 historical and cultural river in China," is Nanjing's mother river. It splits into two branches in the southeast of the city, known as the "Inner Qinhuai" when flowing through the city and the "Outer Qinhuai" when encircling it before both emptying into the Yangtze River. The Inner Qinhuai is also known as the "Ten-Li Qinhuai,"



↑ Nanjing Confucius Temple

which connects many famous scenic spots and historical sites with the Confucius Temple, Ming City Wall, Wuyi Lane, Taoye Ferry, White Egret Island, Jiangnan Examination Hall, Wu Jingzi's Former Residence, Wangdao Xie'an Memorial Hall, Li Xiangjun's Former Residence, Zhan Garden, and Zhonghua Gate Castle... the list goes on. Boating on the Qinhuai River at night, savoring various delicacies of the Confucius Temple, and taking a cruise to experience the sounds of paddles

and lights on the Qinhuai River is a feast for the senses.

In addition to the Yangtze River and Qinhuai River, Nanjing has also dug canals and interconnected with other water systems. After Zhu Yuanzhang established his capital in Nanjing during the Ming Dynasty, in order to avoid the risk of the Yangtze River and transport grain and grass safely from southern Jiangsu and northern Zhejiang to Nanjing, the Yanzhi River, an artificial canal connecting the Qinhuai River with Shijiu

Lake, was dug. There is a huge stone bridge across the two cliffs, ingeniously designed during the excavation as a "natural bridge," which is now a popular spot for taking photos. The Xuhe River, excavated in 506 BC, originates from Gucheng Lake, connects to the Yangtze River at Shuiyang River in Wuhu, Anhui Province, and the Jingxi Water System of Taihu Lake at Jingxi, making it the earliest canal in China and in the world.

You must come and visit the beautiful Nanjing.

DUCKS:

First to Know the Yangtze River is Warming

The Yangtze River Basin is one of the birthplaces of Chinese agricultural civilization and the cradle of Chinese cuisine. The products along the Yangtze River are abundant and there are countless delicacies with Yangtze flavor. Chongqing hot pot, Wuhan pork ribs and lotus root soup, Taizhou Jingjiang crab roe steamed dumplings, Shanghai grilled fish... From the Yunnan-Tibet Food Civilization Zone at the source of the Yangtze River, to the Bashu Food Civilization Zone in the upper reaches, to the Jingchu Food Civilization Zone in the middle reaches, and to the Wuyue Food Civilization Zone in the lower reaches. We can say that the Yangtze River Economic Belt is also a belt of delicious food.



Jiangsu has two "World Culinary Capitals" awarded by UNESCO, Yangzhou and Huai'an, and "Huaiyang Cuisine", one of China's eight major cuisines, was born here. Jiangsu is located across rivers and seas. There are many lakes on both sides of the rivers, dense water networks, and abundant products. Aquatic products, poultry, and vegetables are available all year round. Therefore, the raw materials of local dishes are fresh, and the cooking pays attention to the original taste.

Su Shi (Su Dongpo), the poet of the Northern Song Dynasty, once wrote – "the duck is a prophet when the water is warm in the spring river". The ducks sense not only the warmth of spring, but also Jiangsu people's expectations for delicious food. Suzhou boat braised duck, Yangzhou three sets of duck, Suzhou soy sauce duck, and Gaoyou salted duck eggs that Mr. Wang Zengqi will never forget... Jiangsu people are very good at eating duck.

The duck-eating civilization reached its peak in Nanjing. For Nanjing people, duck fat sesame pancakes with duck blood vermicelli soup are a must for breakfast, roast duck or salted duck can be a feast for lunch, and duck pot with dried bamboo shoots can be enjoyed leisurely for dinner. These diverse ways of eating ducks benefit from the numerous river ponds and tidal flats in the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River, which are rich in fish, shrimp, snails, and aquatic plants, providing a rich source of food for ducks and making ducks a delicious source of poultry.

As a land of plenty, Jiangsu has a profound tradition of eating fish and crabs. The autumn wind blows and crabs' legs wiggle. Hairy crabs are migratory creatures. After the autumnal equinox every year, the gonads of hairy crabs living in freshwater lakes mature and they will enter the river in groups and go eastward along the current to mate in the shallow waters of the estuary. In the early summer of the next year, the newborn crabs move up the river again and enter fresh water to grow. Since Yangcheng

Lake in Jiangsu is close to the Yangtze River estuary, the migration route of hairy crabs is relatively short and rich in nutrients, which makes Yangcheng Lake hairy crabs famous all over the world.

In addition to the rich aquatic products and abundant rice crops, the Yangtze River also generously provides Jiangsu people with fresh flavors for their taste buds: wild rice, water shield, lotus root, water chestnut, gorgon fruit, broadleaf arrowhead and water celery... For thousands of years, Jiangsu has been enjoying the charm of water. In this fertile land, chefs and diners combine the culinary skills of the north and the south to create countless delicacies using rich ingredients, including exquisite and grand dishes, "intangible cultural heritage" delicacies with exquisite craftsmanship, and ordinary alley dishes snacks, refreshments, and local delicacies from the fields. This time, we received submissions from five students from the School of Foreign Languages of Nanjing University of Finance and Economics, talking about their recommended Jiangsu delicacies in autumn.

A Bite of the Yangtze River

By Zhang Yiyu, Wang Zhiyi, Zhang Yiping,
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From: The School of Foreign Languages of
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Nanjing roast duck

The duck necks from Wuhan (Hubei) and the duck with redskins from Wuhu (Anhui) are our favorite. When we come to Nanjing which is also a city along the Yangtze River, we find truly that it's never a joke to say "No duck can swim across the Yangtze River alive". When it comes to the speciality of Nanjing, you can't miss the Nanjing roast duck, the reputation of which dates back to the Ming Dynasty.

The lake duck is preferred, because this kind of duck is distinguished for its tender meat. Hung by a hook, the duck is roasted in a stove almost closed, which is different from that of Beijing, roasted over the charcoal fire. During cooking, the cook needs to brush special sweet-sour sauce on the duck carefully and regularly, till its skin turns dark red, which seems tempting and just at its best.

For the locals, the essence of this food lies in the special sauce, which is made of different spices and particularly the crystal sugar. Before eating, they tend to pour over the sauce onto the duck or to dip a piece in the sauce. The fairly crispy skin, the fat but not greasy meat with the salty and sweet sauce, all contribute to its unique taste.



Vermicelli soup with duck blood

Apart from roast duck and salted poached duck, daily favorite foods of the locals of Nanjing, the duck blood and offal (intestine, gizzard, liver, heart, etc.) can never go to waste in the "capital of duck", nickname of Nanjing. Another famous duck snack is the vermicelli soup with duck blood. Vermicelli are boiled in duck stock, along with fried tofu dices. With coriander, ginger and pepper, the soup has a very Chinese flavour. The smooth texture comes from the vermicelli and coagulated, diced duck blood.



Noodles with dried and fried pigskin

Chongqing simple noodles, Wuhan hot-dry noodles, Yibin burning noodles, Shanghai saury noodles... Like the neighbors in the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, the Nanjing people love noodles. They often put dried and fried pigskin and a variety of ingredients into them. The preparation of pigskins is not easy: it is dried in the open air and fried in oil, then it is macerated in water until it turns tender, finally it is cut into strips. Put in the bowl of noodles, the alveolate skin absorbs delicious broth.

In addition, dried and fried pigskin is never alone. When we check in this kind of restaurant, we may find meat, sausages, offal, eggs, vegetables, mushrooms



in noodles. In fact, it is a bowl of noodles with dried and fried pigskin. You will glut yourselves with them more or less, according to your requirement.

Soup of taro with osmanthus fragrans sugar & Plum blossom cake

Jiangsu's diet is deeply marked by water, which generates a variety of cuisine: Huaiyang cuisine, Su Band cuisine, Boat cuisine, etc. The people's daily diet is also inseparable from the fresh water vegetables. In the autumn streets of Jiangsu, a sweet soup made of taro seedlings stops us every time.

Taro seedlings, also known as taro carrots, one of the "Eight Aquatic Delicacies", grow mainly in the Yangtze River Basin, the Huai River Basin, and the Pearl River Basin. Taro is steamed, peeled and cut into pieces. Then they are boiled in water before being mixed with lotus rhizome starch, so that the soup becomes smooth and soft. Finally add brown sugar and dried osmanthus fragrans which give off a sweet fragrance.

As an ideal mate of soup of taro, plum blossom cake, made from flour, sticky rice, red bean puree, dried or



candied fruit, nuts, sesame, etc., is baked in a heated hexagon mould, subdivided into seven small ones in the shape of a plum blossom. It is well-known for its appetizing colour, moderate sweetness, tender texture and aromatic flavour.

Taro, osmanthus fragrans, lotus rhizomes as well as fruits and nuts all reach perfect ripeness in autumn. So these autumnal desserts ask you to accept an ochre and golden, tender and fragrant greeting from the people of Nanjing.



ZHENJIANG:

NAMED AFTER THE YANGTZE RIVER

The Yangtze River flows southward from Nanjing, forming a "几" shaped bay in the territory of Zhenjiang. Encircled by the river from the west, north, and east, the city is nestled in the embrace of the mighty Yangtze.

Until the Tang Dynasty, Zhenjiang was still the estuary of the Yangtze River. Wang Wan, a Tang Dynasty poet, wrote, "At the foot of the mountain, the sea produces a lingering night; At the Yangtze River in spring, entering a new year," which describes what he saw and felt on the banks of the Yangtze River in Zhenjiang.

Zhenjiang has been a strategic military

location in China since ancient times. As recorded in history, "Zhenjiang is guarded by the mighty Yangtze River, surrounded by mountains, and treacherous on three sides. It is a land of natural beauty. Even without any fortifications, it is challenging to cross it." Zhenjiang was originally called "Yi," which referred to the land assigned as a fiefdom to the Duke of Yi by King Kang of Zhou over 3,000 years ago. Among the items given to the duke were many bows and

arrows, marking the beginning of Zhenjiang's recorded history. During the southern tour of Emperor Qin Shihuang, the first emperor of China, he witnessed the formidable terrain here and said that "the mountains form a fortress, overlooking the river and the sea." He ordered 3,000 prisoners to excavate Jingxian Mountain to break the spirit of the kings, and changed its name to Dantu. Zhenjiang's military importance reached its peak during the Three Kingdoms period, when Sun Quan, king of Wu, built the Tieweng City on Beigu Mountain, marking the beginning of his singular dominance and Zhenjiang's contribution to history. In the third year of the Zhenghe period of the Northern Song



Maoshan

Beautiful Scenery of Zhenjiang Wetland

Dynasty (1113 AD), Zhenjiang Prefecture was established, and it became known as Zhenjiang, meaning "guarding the Yangtze River."

After the completion of the Grand Canal in the Sui Dynasty (581-618), Zhenjiang became the crossroads of the Yangtze River and the Grand Canal, serving as a vital hub for water transportation and grain shipments. Zhenjiang transformed from a military fortress into a significant commercial metropolis. The poem "Boats loaded with grain sailing for three thousand li; Lights glittering for ten thousand families along the riverbanks" depicts the prosperity of Zhenjiang.

After the decline of grain transportation in modern times, the geographical advantage of Zhenjiang makes its prosperity continued. In 1861, Zhenjiang became a treaty port, the first commercial port in the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River, apart from Shanghai.



↑ Runyang Yangtze River Bridge

Shiyezhou Island

Over 600 years ago, a sandbank northwest of Zhenjiang gradually formed an island, which has now become the fourth-largest island in the Yangtze River. It is said that Ruan Yuan, a famous scholar and government official during the Qing Dynasty (1616-1912), inherited the property on the island and renamed it Shiyezhou.

Shiyezhou Island is situated in the middle of the Yangtze River, with fresh air, quite environment, green trees, birds and flowers. It is like an idyllic sanctuary, allowing visitors to momentarily escape the fast-paced city life. As a result, it has earned the reputation of being the "healthiest island in the Yangtze River." Nowadays, its transportation is very convenient. The Runyang Bridge, which opened to traffic in 2005, links Shiyezhou Island to Yangzhou and Zhenjiang, reducing the travel time to the city to just two minutes.



If you visit Shiyezhou Island during the May Day holiday, you can enjoy the Changjiang International Music Festival, which has been held on the Egret Island on Shiyezhou every year since 2009. It's the largest live music show in the Yangtze River Delta region. Every year, countless young people flock to Zhenjiang for this music festival.

Stone Sculptures in Danyang

Thanks to the convenient boat transportation at the confluence of the Yangtze and other rivers, Zhenjiang used to be the "forward station" for the Central Plain immigrants arriving in the south. In history, the famous Southward Migration in Yongjia Period of the Western Jin Dynasty (307-311) made Zhenjiang an important place again. The ancestors of the emperors of the Southern Qi and Liang dynasties moved their families from Shandong's Lanling to Danyang. Although the two dynasties established their capitals in Jiankang (now Nanjing), after the emperor's death, they were buried in their ancestral home. Today, more than ten emperors' mausoleums are clustered along the Xiaoliang River in Danyang, spanning about 16 kilometers long from Lingkou to Shuijingshan Village.

In front of these mausoleums, there are stone

sculptures of "Sacred Way." Generally, the emperors' tombs have Tianlu and Qilin, and the nobilities' tombs have Pixie, all auspicious and powerful celestial creatures. Qilin has one horn, Tianlu has two horns, and Pixie has no horn. The stone sculptures were displayed in a strict ranking order. They are considered to be at a high level among the existing mausoleum stone sculptures of the Southern Dynasties (420-589), and masterpieces in the history of Chinese sculpture.

Maoshan Mountain

Maoshan Mountain is located at the junction of Jurong in Zhenjiang and Jintan in Changzhou. It is the birthplace of the Shangqing school of Taoism and is revered by Taoists as the "Shangqing ancestral altar." Legend says that as early as over 5,000 years ago, there were experts cultivating here. During the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420), a Jurong resident, Ge Hong, practiced on the Baopu Peak and wrote books. During the Southern dynasties of Qi and Liang, the famous Taoist Tao Hongjing had lived on Maoshan Mountain for over 40 years. During the Tang and Song dynasties, Taoism on Maoshan Mountain reached its peak, with over 300 Taoist buildings, including palaces, temples, halls, and pavilions, and thousands of Taoist priests living

here, earning the reputation of "three palaces, five temples, and 72 Maoshan hermitages."

Maoshan Mountain is picturesque with numerous scenic spots, including the Nine Peaks, Nineteen Springs, Twenty-six Caves, and Twenty-eight Ponds. The peaks are impressive, and the clouds and mist are floating, with a pleasant climate. The mountains and caves are filled with rare stones, and the paths lead through tranquil forests. The holy pools and springs are scattered all over the mountain, with cascading streams intertwining with lush greenery. The Taoism community acclaims Maoshan Mountain to be "The Eighth Grotto Heaven and The Most Auspicious Land."

Zhenjiang is a city known for its beautiful landscapes. Apart from Maoshan Mountain, there is also the famous Jinshan Mountain, the Jiaoshan Mountain known for its inscriptions, the Beigu Mountain famous for poems about it... When visiting Zhenjiang, don't forget to try the famous pot-cover noodles, paired with a dish of vinegar brewed with Zhongling Spring water, to experience the unique flavor endowed by the Yangtze River.



Yangzhou:

The Peak of Garden Art, Unrivalled in the World

"Spring river tides merge with the sea, and the bright moon rises over the sea."
Over a thousand years ago, a Tang Dynasty poet named Zhang Ruoxu stood on the banks of the Yangtze River in Guazhou, contemplating the universe and human life, against the backdrop of the vast sea and the shining moon. His poem, "Chun Jiang Hua Yue Ye," or "Spring River in the Moonlight," with its surging tides and ethereal moonlight, bings us back to the poetic realm of Guazhou. Today, there is the Zhang Ruoxu Memorial Hall, also known as the Chun Jiang Hua Yue Ye Art Museum in the Ancient Ferry Park.

↑ Runyang Yangtze River Bridge

During the Han and Tang dynasties, the Yangtze River estuary was located near Yangzhou and Zhenjiang, and the tide-watching at Guangling was a local spectacle that rivaled the Qiantang River Tidal Bore Watching, attracting numerous literati and scholars. In 486 BC, Fuchai, king of the State of Wu, excavated the Hangou Canal and built the city of Hancheng, which marked the birth of Yangzhou. Under the influence of the Yangtze River and the Grand Canal, Yangzhou was as prosperous as the cities of Chang'an and Luoyang during the Tang Dynasty. Thus, it earned the saying "Yangzhou is the No.1 and Yizhou (now Chengdu) is the No.2).

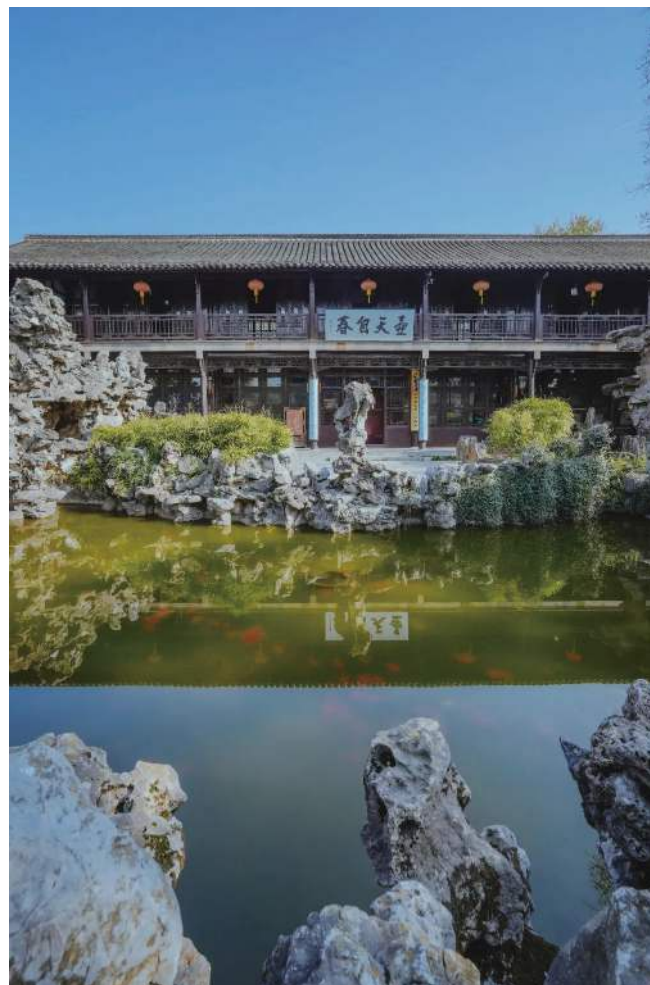
"Go to Yangzhou in March, in the mist of the flowers of spring." The great Tang Dynasty poet Li Bai visited Yangzhou seven or eight times in his lifetime, leaving many famous works such as "Farewell to Li Ben at the Xinhe River in Guazhou," "Farewell to Friends in Guangling," "To a Friend in Huainan," "Farewell to Guangling," "A Young Man's Journey," "Climbing the Xiling Pagoda in Yangzhou in Autumn," and "Writing My Thoughts when Traveling at Night."

With the economic and cultural prosperity, the privileged class began to focus on improving quality of life, which led to the flourishing



Heyuan Garden

of gardens in Yangzhou. Particularly during the Qing Dynasty, Yangzhou became the transportation hub of grain and salt from the north and south. Salt merchants from all over the country flocked to Yangzhou, hiring master craftsmen from various regions to build gardens. Inspired by royal gardens in the north and classical gardens in Jiangnan (the area south of the lower reaches of the Yangtze River), as well as innovating on their own, the craftsmen created gardens that integrated southern and northern characteristics. Gardens in Yangzhou occupy an important position in the history of Chinese gardens, represented by the Slender West Lake, Geyuan Garden, and Heyuan Garden.



Geyuan Garden

Yizheng Zaolinwan Tourist Resort

Yangzhou, renowned for Chinese traditional private gardens, is now sparing no effort to become an eco-friendly garden city. Today, we will take you to visit a unique attraction—Zaolinwan Tourist Resort in the county-level city of Yizheng. The resort is situated adjacent to the Jiangbei New District of Nanjing. It is said that in the early Ming Dynasty, fearing a severe shortage of food due to

droughts, Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang ordered the cultivation of fruit trees such as jujube trees, persimmon trees, and walnut trees throughout the country. People in Yizheng, which is next to Nanjing, planted many jujube trees in the northwest hilly region, hence the name Zaolinwan (jujube forest bay).

In 2007, the Yizheng Zaolinwan Tourist Resort was established, featuring natural resources such as "three mountains, five lakes, two springs, and one river," as well as large areas of wetlands, orchards, flowers, and nursery gardens. The resort hosted the 10th Horticultural Exposition of Jiangsu Province in 2018, and the International Horticulture Exposition in 2021. The resort is home to the No.1 Chinese peony garden, and China's largest outdoor sports park, as well as the largest off-road vehicle experience base in east China. It's not just a modern agricultural technological park but also a great place for eco-sightseeing, sports and leisure.

The Yangzhou people know how to enjoy life. There is a saying in Yangzhou, "Skin wraps water in the morning, and water wraps skin in the evening," that is, to eat steamed buns and tea in the morning and enjoy time in bathhouses in the evening. Strolling through a garden, enjoying the moonlight, listening to the flute, touring the centuries-old canal, and gazing at the tides in spring... Such a Yangzhou is such a great attraction that visitors tend to linger on there.



Zaolinwan Tourist Resort

Taizhou:

A City of Auspicious Prosperity and Heroes

Ten thousand years ago, the area where Taizhou is located was still a vast sea. The Yangtze River carries more than 450 million tonnes of sediment into the sea each year. After thousands of years, the land of Taizhou gradually emerged. It can be said that without the Yangtze River, there is no Taizhou. Five thousand years ago, there were already human settlements here, and the recorded history can be traced back to over 2,000 years ago in the Western Zhou Dynasty (1046-771 BC). It was named Haiyang during the Qin Dynasty (221-207 BC), Hailin during the Western Han Dynasty (202 BC-25 AD), and Taizhou during the Southern Tang Dynasty (937-975 AD). For most of history, Taizhou was subordinated to Yangzhou. In 1996, Taizhou became a prefecture-level city.

Taizhou is located at the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, the bank of the Huaihe River and the coast of the Yellow Sea. It's interesting that the Chinese character "泰" (Tai) is composed of "三" (three), "人" (people), and "水" (water), which accurately describe Taizhou people live near the Yangtze River, Huaihe River, and Yellow Sea. In Taizhou, it's easy to get close to the water. One quarter of Taizhou's territory is covered by water,

with nearly 20,000 rivers and lakes of different sizes. In Taizhou, you can climb the hundred-li dike and enjoy the scenery of the "Yangtze River turns its head to the east;" you can take a night tour on the Fengcheng River to appreciate the city which is surrounded by two waterways; you can paddle on the Qinhu Lake to celebrate the Qintong Boat Festival; you can also savor the intoxicating scenery of the sea of flowers at Qianduo Cole Flower Scenic Area.

You can experience the rich culture in Taizhou.

It has been the birthplace of many great figures throughout history, including Wang Gen, who founded the Taizhou School of Confucianism, Liu Xizai, known as the Hegel of the East, Shi Naian, who wrote the epic novel "Water Margin," Zheng Banqiao, a representative of the "Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou," and Mei Lanfang, a world-famous maestro of Peking Opera. The Mei Lanfang Memorial Hall is located at No. 90 Yingchun East Road, commonly known as the Meiyuan. It is surrounded by water on three sides and has a very elegant scenery. Taizhou has been the first stop for Kunqu Opera to go north over the Yangtze River, due to its geographic

advantage of being located on the north bank of the Yangtze River. Taizhou has provided fertile soil for the development of theater culture. The southern part of the Lixiahe River basin, centered on Taizhou, is not only one of the departure points for the Four Hui Opera Troupes to Beijing, but also a gathering place for the Lixiahe Hui Opera Troupe, the origin of Southern Huai Opera and Southern Peking Opera.

↑ Taizhou Yangtze River Bridge



Nanshan Lvsi Temple ↑

Taizhou Navy Vessel Cultural Park

Though Taizhou is no longer by the sea, it is still closely related to the word "海" (sea). On April 23, 1949, amidst the rumbling fire of cannons in the Crossing-the-Yangtze-River Campaign, the establishment of the navy of the People's Liberation Army East China Military Command was announced at the Baima Temple in Taizhou, where the commanding post of the Third Field Army for the Crossing-the-Yangtze-River Campaign was located. The Taizhou Navy Vessel Cultural Park, located on the south of the Taizhou Yangtze River Bridge, officially opened to the public in 2021. The theme park draws in the crowds with the impressive fixed displays of a Xining guided missile destroyer, a Hongzehu integrated supply ship, a Xiamen guided missile frigate and a conventionally powered submarine.

More than 700 years ago, Marco Polo traveled to Taizhou and praised that that "this city is not very big, but there are many kinds of worldly happiness." Having endured the vicissitudes of time, Taizhou boasts rich culture and is a nice place to live. "Beach wormwood is teeming, the asparagus just sprouting, the season when globefish are coming upstream." The Song Dynasty poet Su Shi's "Inscription on Huichong's Painting of a Spring River" depicts the clear sky and beautiful scenery on a spring day in Jingjiang, Taizhou. In the spring, we can enjoy the blooming flower sea and taste globefish; in the summer, we can taste the eight delicacies at night; in the autumn, we can visit wetlands and taste crabs; and in the winter, we can enjoy hot springs and taste soup dumplings. Come to the water city of Taizhou and experience the slow-paced life.

CHANGZHOU:

WHERE THE YANGTZE RIVER AND LAKES MEET



Changzhou is a historic city in the Jiangnan area, with a 300,000-year history of human activity, a 7,000-year history of agricultural civilization, and a 3,200-year written history. In 547 BC, Jizi, the youngest son of Mengshou, the emperor of Wu during the Spring and Autumn period (770-476 BC), ruled Yanling. In 202 BC, Emperor Gaozu of the Han Dynasty (202 BC-AD 220) renamed Yanling as Piling. In 311 AD during the Eastern Jin Dynasty, it was renamed as Jinling. Later, it had been named as Changchun, Changzhou, Wujin, among others. It was not until 589, the ninth year of Emperor Wen's reign in the Sui Dynasty that the name Changzhou was officially established.



Changzhou Qingguo Lane



↑ Jiaoxi Ancient Town



a distance, it looks like a village, but up close, it's a city. The homes of the people are the city walls, and the rings of gates are the city gates." This is a unique pattern of Jiaoxi.

Walking through the ancient streets of the town, one can see buildings of the Ming and Qing dynasties and Republic of China period (1912-1949), which have withstood the test of time and are dignified and beautiful. Various yellow stone walls that were built with local materials, the old houses on the long streets and alleys, ancient trees that turning green... the beauty of Jiaoxi ancient town lies in its pure and ancient landscape characteristics and Jiangnan style, as well as its natural and unpretentious charm.

As the saying goes, "If the harvest in Suzhou and Changzhou is good, no one fears famine." The Yangtze River makes Changzhou one of the main grain-producing areas in China. From the "canal era" to the "river and sea era," the Yangtze River offers Changzhou the chance to return to the global stage. With beautiful rivers and vitality, Changzhou is waiting for you.

Among the eight cities along the Yangtze River in Jiangsu, Changzhou has the shortest shoreline of only 25.8 kilometers long. However, the connection between Changzhou and the Yangtze River runs deep, as Changzhou inherits the "genes" of the mighty river. About 8,000 years ago, the ancient Yangtze River estuary was located between Yangzhou and Zhenjiang, and much of Changzhou was still in the vast sea. Today, almost half of Changzhou's land was formed by sediment carried downstream by the Yangtze River.

Even before the excavation of Hangou Canal, Fuchai, king of the State of Wu, dug a canal from Wangting in Suzhou to Benniu in Changzhou, which flowed into the Meng River and finally met

the Yangtze River. This was the earliest canal in Jiangnan that's recorded in history. Fan Li, a grand master of the state of Yue during the late Spring and Autumn period (770-476 BC), dug the east and west Li canals. Emperor Yang of the Sui Dynasty connected canals in the north and south. During the Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, great emphasis was placed on the operation of these canals. They jointly shape Changzhou's water system and bring it the charm of water town and commercial prosperity, making it a window for the Yangtze River culture.

Jiaoxi Ancient Town

Jiaoxi ancient town in Wujin District, Changzhou, is

located on both sides of the Shun River, a waterway connecting the Yangtze River and Taihu Lake. Over 4,000 years ago, Emperor Shun, who is regarded to be one of the ancestors of the Chinese nation, dug a canal connecting the Yangtze River and Taihu Lake in Yanling, in order to realize his dream of crossing the Yangtze River to unite China. (People later renamed the canal Shun River to thank and commemorate Emperor Shun). The water and land transportation of Jiaoxi is very convenient, with streets built against mountains and shops built by the river. The streets and lanes are well-organized, and the houses are clustered together, with stone bridges lying across the water, forming a village layout of "one river, four bridges, five streets, thirteen alleys, and multiple gates." "From



Wuxi is an important birthplace of the Wu culture. The name Wuxi, meaning "without tin," came into use by the early Han Dynasty, suggesting the tin deposits were already played out by that time. The recorded history of Wuxi can be traced back to the end of the Shang Dynasty (1600-1046 BC). In the late 11th century BC, Taibo, the eldest son of emperor Zhoutai in the West Zhou Dynasty (1046-771 BC), resigned sovereign authority to his third brother Jili and came to Meili (today's Mei Village in Wuxi) with his second brother Zhongyong. Taibo and his followers set up the State of Wu, and made Meili its capital. He introduced the inland culture to the south and created the Wu culture.

Wuxi is also the birthplace of the Jiangnan culture. Today's Jiangnan specifically refers to the area south of the lower reaches of the Yangtze River. For thousands of years, the Yangtze River, with its "spirit" of "rushing into the sea and never come back," has brought different landscapes of mountains and rivers to the Jiangnan area, shaping and enriching the Jiangnan culture, which is an important part of the Yangtze River culture.

Wuxi is home to many natural landscapes and cultural landmarks. Guo Moruo, a Chinese literary and cultural celebrity,

once wrote, "The best place in Taihu Lake is in Yuantouzhu (Turtle Head Isle)." Yuantouzhu, a famous peninsula situated at the northwest side of Taihu Lake, is a must-visit place in Wuxi. In addition to the beautiful landscape, there are over 30,000 cherry trees of over 100 varieties, making it one of the three major cherry blossom viewing spots in the world. At the Qingming Bridge historical community, you can take a boat cruise to experience the flow of time. In Huishan Ancient Town, you can taste the "second-best spring in the world." Huishanbang, a branch of the Grand Canal, flows through the ancient town. There are many historic sites on both sides, including gardens, ancestral halls, ancient bridges, archways, and old streets, just like an open-air museum of Wuxi.

↑ Jiangyin Riverside Scenic Belt

Jiangyin Riverside Scenic Belt

Most of the Wuxi section of the Yangtze River is in Jiangyin, a county-level city in Wuxi. When the Yangtze River reaches Jiangyin, the river surface abruptly narrows, with the narrowest width being only 1,250 meters. Therefore, it is called the "key to the Yangtze River," as it looks like the throat of the Yangtze River. When people mention Jiangyin City, they first think of its strong economic strength. Many people have heard the legend of Huaxi Village, where every household owns a villa and a car. With a history of over 1,000 years, Jiangyin has numerous historical and cultural sites



↑ Jiangyin Riverside Scenic Belt

and a large number of talents. It is the hometown of the famous traveler Xu Xiake, the pioneer of the New Culture Movement Liu Banong, and the master of Chinese modern ethnic music Liu Tianhua. Cultural relics and tourist attractions include the Millennium Confucian Temple, Ebizui Park, and the Yangtze River Bridge Tourism Zone.

Jiangyin is also a city that thrives on the Yangtze River. If you want to know about Jiangyin and understand the Yangtze River, you must go to the Yangtze River Protection Exhibition Hall. It is located inside the Shiyu Port Park in the core section of the Jiangyin Riverside Scenic Belt, which is close to the Yangtze River. With its lush green lawn, swaying reed marsh, gentle breeze, and flying birds, the shoreline in Jiangyin that was once filled with cranes has turned into a beautiful "bund."

About 400 years ago, Xu Xiake, dubbed the "Saint of Travel" in the Ming Dynasty, began his 30 years of travel through the country and penned his masterpiece. "Travel Notes of Xu Xiake" mapped out a well-defined geography of the country and highlighted its remarkable sights and attractions. As recorded in the book, the first place Xu traveled to was Tiantai Mountain in east China's Zhejiang Province, where he wrote about the mountain's sceneries. He began writing his masterpiece on May 19, 1613. In 2011, the Chinese government designate May 19 each year as the tourism day.

So, let's start our journey by exploring the hometown of this great traveler.

SUZHOU:

**YANGTZE RIVER,
GRAND CANAL,
TAIHU LAKE,
AND EAST CHINA SEA**

With 21,084 waterways and 401 lakes, Suzhou is known as the "Venice of the East" as described by Marco Polo. Shipbuilding thrived and shipping began in the Spring and Autumn period. Since the Han Dynasty, the construction of water conservancy projects has flourished, promoting agricultural prosperity. During the Sui Dynasty, the Grand Canal was constructed to develop water transportation, and Suzhou became a key hub. Since the Tang and Song dynasties, numerous ports have emerged, and the city has become a prosperous place in southern China, second to none in economic prosperity.



Jinji Lake, Suzhou

Suzhou is truly a "water city." Taihu Lake, China's third-largest freshwater lake, has a surface area of 2,338 square kilometers, three-quarters of which is located in Suzhou. Among the 72 hills that are scattered in and around Taihu Lake, 58 are in Suzhou. And among the 69 scenic spots in the lake, 34 are in Suzhou. In addition to its beautiful scenery, Taihu Lake is also home to many historical sites. Here, you can find the place where Da Yu, an ancient hero, tamed the great flood, and the place where Fuchai, king of the State of Wu, and Xi Shi, the first of the four ancient beauties, spent their leisure time. Of all the mountains of Taihu Lake, the East and West Dongting Mountains are the most famous. The East Mountain is a peninsula, while the West Mountain is the biggest island in Taihu Lake. The Grand Canal runs through the beautiful ancient city of Suzhou like a jade belt, nourishing the world cultural heritages of classical gardens. Suzhou also has 158-kilometer-long shoreline, linking Zhangjiagang, Changshu, and Taicang, all in the top 10 places on the list of China's top 100 strongest counties..



Shuangshan Island

Zhangjiagang Bay is the last bay before the Yangtze River enters the sea and also the first bay where the sea and river meets. And when it comes to Zhangjiagang Bay, we cannot miss Shuangshan Island, known as the pearl of the Yangtze River. The island, seated across the Yangtze River in the northwestern suburbs of Zhangjiagang City, covers an area of about 16 square kilometers. Due to its unique geographical location, it is one of the islands with the most intact original ecological environment in the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River.

Jianzhen, a knowledgeable and devoted Buddhist in the Tang Dynasty, started his sixth journey to Japan in Huangsipu Town, Zhangjiagang, to spread Buddhism. Despite five failed attempts, Monk Jianzhen succeeded in his sixth effort to reach the Japanese islands at the invitation of a Buddhist temple there. It took the monk 10 full years to succeed in his endeavor and, afterward, he spent the last decade of his life there spreading the Chinese culture and arts, such as Chinese painting, calligraphy, medicine, sculpture, architecture, printing and craftsmanship. Jianzhen's work in Japan more than 12 centuries ago contributed to a great extent promote the growth of Japanese civilization. The noted monk has since been regarded as the founder of Japanese Vinaya (a discipline sect), and a friendship envoy for cultural exchanges between the people of China and Japan.



↑ Zhangjiagang Port

Yangtze River Cultural Festival

Since 2004, Zhangjiagang has held the Yangtze River Culture and Art Festival for 19 consecutive years. The county-level city has been working with cities in other provinces, cities and autonomous regions along the Yangtze River to promote the integration, sharing, and utilization of the Yangtze River culture.

The Yangtze River flows eastward from Zhangjiagang to Changshu, which is also a historical and cultural city with national intangible cultural heritages such as Baimao Mountain songs and the Yushan school of Guqin, an ancient seven-stringed zither in China.

Taicang, located in the south of the Yangtze River estuary was named so because the King of Wu in the Spring and Autumn period set up a granary here and "Taicang" means "royal granary." The most prosperous period of Taicang was during the Yuan Dynasty. In the Tang, Song, Ming, and Qing dynasties, grain was only transported via

the Grand Canal. But in the Yuan Dynasty, grain was also transported via a sea route, which started in Taicang. At that time, Taicang port was crowded with ships and merchants. The sea routes linked Taicang with countries including Goryeo, Ryukyu, and Japan, making it an important stop on the Maritime Silk Road.

On July 11, 1405, Zheng He and Wang Jinghong led more than 27,800 officers and soldiers to went on board 62 treasure ships at the Liujiagang port in Taicang to begin his sea adventure. The fleet also included more than 140 vessels loaded with silk and satin fabrics, linen cloth, ceramics, potteries, gold, silver, copper, and iron utensils. In the 28 years that followed, Zheng He lead seven major expeditions, involving fleets of more than 200 vessels and nearly 30,000 people. He visited more than 30 countries and regions, including the Indochina Peninsula, Malay Peninsula, the east Indies, India, Persia and Arabia, and as far as the

east African coast. These voyages promoted then cultural and economic exchanges between china and foreign countries.

Located at the mouth of the Yangtze River, Liujiagang with calm waters was the closest international port to the then capital city of Nanjing. It served as an important base for canal transportation, tribute and foreign trade. Therefore, Taicang possessed a strong maritime foundation, dock facilities, favorable trade conditions, and shipbuilding technology, along with a large number of experienced sailors, ensuring the success of Zheng He's voyages to the West.

The bridges and water towns along the canal, the tens of thousands of fishing boats on Taihu Lake, the turbulent Yangtze River, and the sea-level horizon on the East China Sea... Suzhou, with its rivers, lakes, and the sea, is setting sail towards a dreamy future.

NANTONG

GATEWAY TO THE YANGTZE RIVER AND THE SEA

Located on the northern shore of the head of the Yangtze River estuary, Nantong is surrounded by water on three sides, and thus is shaped as a peninsula, with its northern to the northeastern parts adjacent to the Huanghai Sea, and its southern part facing the Yangtze River. The Qingdun Neolithic Site in Haian, a county-level city in Nantong, dates back to 6,000 years ago, revealing Nantong's ancient history. At that time, most parts of Nantong, except for Haian, were still submerged, and Langshan Mountain, Junshan Mountain, Jianshan Mountain, Ma'anshan Mountain, and Huangnishan Mountain were still five isolated islands. From the fifth century to the Qing Dynasty, the shoals gradually "embrace" the mainland, forming the present-day Jiang-Hai (Yangtze River-Yellow Sea) Plain. Today, this process is still ongoing. The land of Qidong was completely formed only one or two hundred years ago. Located at the estuary of the Yangtze River and at the easternmost tip of Jiangsu, the Yinyang town in Qidong has the earliest sunrise in Jiangsu.

Five Mountains, Haohe River, and Tangzha Town

located on the east coast of the Yangtze River, Langshan Mountain actually consists of five mountains—Junshan Mountain, Jianshan Mountain, Ma'anshan Mountain, and Huangnishan Mountain. On the boundless plain by the river and sea, five mountains raise straight from the ground and lie imposingly at the Yangtze riverside with graceful posture like five green emeralds. It has the reputation of a "natural water bonsai." The mighty Yangtze River and beautiful mountain always stimulates poetic inspiration. The inscription hill on Langshan Mountain still preserves the inscriptions of many literati.

The city wall of Nantong, formerly named as Tongzhou, was built in the year of 985 during the Late Zhou Dynasty (958 AD). During the construction, a significant amount of mud was required, so a moat was dug outside the city wall

to obtain the mud. It gradually became the Haohe River, one of the most complete and well-preserved city moats in China. Starting from the Haohe River, a canal was dug 20 kilometers northwest to connect it with the ancient salt canal of Baipu in Rugao, forming the main salt and water transportation route directly from Yangzhou to the ancient Tongzhou. This connected Tongzhou with the Yangtze River, the Huai River, and the Grand Canal, providing access to major salt fields and key cities along the coast, making Tongzhou a transportation hub at that time.

Covering 3.23 square kilometers, the Haohe River scenic area features beautiful natural scenery and a variety of cultural relics. Its best attractions include the Tianning Temple built in the Tang Dynasty, the Wenfeng Tower, ancient city walls, Beiji Pavilion, China's first public museum, the former residences of Zhang Jian, Li Fangyin, and Zhao Dan, Haoxi Bookstore, Huanxi Culture Square, and Yinghonglou Restaurant. The river has been known as "the Emerald Necklace of Nantong."



Tangzha Town was named after a water lock on the Nantong-Yangzhou Canal that was located there in ancient times. The eastern and western parts of Tangzha are separated by the Nantong-Yangzhou Canal. Tangzha is one of the birthplaces of national industry in modern China. It is here that Zhang Jian (1853-1926), a well-known local business magnate and renowned

↑ Nantong Yangtze River Bridge



academic, founded China's first large-scale cotton spinning business, the Dasheng Cotton Mill, in 1895. Centering on the textile industry, Zhang built a business empire, which contributed to the industrial modernization of Nantong.

Then the industrialist gave back to society. In 1903, Zhang founded Tongzhou Normal School, the first normal school in modern China. In 1905, he founded Nantong Museum, the first public museum founded by Chinese. In 1914, Zhang set up his embroidery school, the Needlework Institute. The stock certificate of the Dasheng Cotton Mill in 1897 is one of the earliest such documented proof of shareholding issued by modern Chinese enterprises. Zhang Jian introduced foreign capital, bringing in the world's most advanced technologies and machinery. Nantong became a famous "model county" at home and abroad in the early 20th century, earning a reputation as the No.1 city in modern China.

Kaisha Island, Changqingsha Island, and Xinglongsha Island

Nantong, situated along the coast, has many beautiful islands, like diamonds embedded in the city's outer clothing.

Kaisha Island is located in Wujie Town of Tongzhou District, facing Zhangjiagang across the Yangtze River. The island has developed scenic spots featuring leisure, fishing, picking, sports, and cuisine, and has built a table tennis training center, which has become an important talent training base and exchange window for China's table tennis.

Changqingsha Island is located in the south of Rugao, renowned as a longevity city with the largest number of centenarians among county-level cities in China. Changqingsha is home to several ecological scenic spots along the Yangtze River, including Jindao

Ecological Park and the Yangtze River Medicinal Botanical Garden. Additionally, due to its location in Rugao, a world-famous longevity district, the fascinating "longevity code" adds an extra touch of mystery to this small island in the river.

Xinglongsha Island is located in Qilong Town, Qidong City. In the early stages, Xinglongsha was a small sand island formed by sediment accumulation in the center of the northern branch of the Yangtze River estuary. Later, it gradually enlarged, due to continuous sedimentation, merging into the Chongming Island in Shanghai in the early 21st century. It is now dubbed "Shanghai's backyard." The climate is favorable, and the land is fertile, without industrial pollution, making it the third location in China, after Liaoning and Heilongjiang, to be confirmed by the National Green Food Development Center as a pollution-free, safe, high-quality, and nutritious green food production area. An uninhabited islet

in the east of Xinglongsha Island has become a haven for birds. The Xinglongsha Birds Nature Reserve was established on the island.

Numerous historical events in Nantong were closely related with the Yangtze River. In the Tang Dynasty, a Japanese monk named Yuanren came to China in search of the Buddhist Dharma. He landed at an area now known as Rudong. Wen Tianxiang, an outstanding national hero of the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279), crossed the sea from Maiyu Bay near the Yangtze River estuary and continued to resist the Mongol rule. The Jiang-Hai (Yangtze River-Yellow Sea) culture has given birth to many intangible cultural heritages, such as Tongzi Opera, Haimen Mountain Song, and Blue Print Fabric. Nantong is a city that was "shaped" by the Yangtze River. Its history is developing together with the Yangtze civilization, harmoniously coexisting with each other.



↑ Nantong Riverside