



The diverse peoples have given Kaili, Guizhou province a strong ethnic ambience. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



# THE PEARL OF GUIZHOU

Attractions from scenic beauty to bullfights lure visitors to this multiethnic community

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**R**ich ethnic culture, a primitive natural landscape and exotic gourmet food never fail to draw in visitors to Kaili.

The city sits in the southeast of Guizhou and is capital of the Qian-dongnan Miao and Dong autonomous prefecture. Ethnic Miao people are in the majority in a community with 33 ethnic groups that account for 75 percent of the local population of 1 million.

The diverse peoples have given the city a strong ethnic ambience.

Roughly 135 folk festivals are staged throughout the year for locals to express their various traditions, according to the Kaili tourism authority.

These include exotic ethnic song and dances, thrilling bullfights and exquisite art, such as embroidery, batik and silver ornaments, says Zhang Miao, Party secretary of Kaili.

One could stop by the Qian-dongnan prefecture museum in downtown Kaili to get a working knowledge of local ethnic culture before exploring further afield.

The museum was founded in 1988 and covers an area of 11,000 square meters. It preserves daily objects and artifacts made by locals that tell the stories of local history.

Be sure to visit the museum's biggest treasure, a Miao costume traditionally embroidered with tin wires. Free guide service is usually offered to a group of four to five people in Mandarin.

From there, local villages are the best way to savor ethnic culture.

Nanhua village is roughly 20 minutes' drive from downtown Kaili and has enjoyed a history of more than 400 years. All residents are of Miao ethnicity and surnamed Pan.

The village is tucked away in a green forest, with towering trees and chirping birds. A gallery lies halfway up the mountain and can serve as a resting point. A moss-covered stone path down from the gallery leads to the Bala River.

Most of residential buildings in the village are *diaojiaolou*, suspended wooden houses featuring stone foundations and green-tiled roof. Some buildings have been a century long.

A pebble-paved lane connects every household.

Locals are hospitable and would serve wines to arriving guests. On major holidays, they would play a *lusheng*, a reed-pipe wind instrument and dance to greet visitors.

Girls will wear pleated skirts, with



Xiasi is a town of Kaili city, Guizhou province. The town was established in 1931, it has a total area of 154 square kilometers. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



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the longest being 0.8 meters long, and one-meter-long silver ornaments resembling ox horn.

Convenient transport has enabled relatively good tourism development in the village.

Wooden inns have been built along the river, and bonfire parties are often held to spice up the visitor experience.

Jidao village is another site that shouldn't be missed. Just several kilometers away from Nanhua, it offers a century-old pedestrian lane, granary and plaza, as well as mystic animal footprints and caves along the way.

The village sits on the river bank and is home to 500 Miao people. A wood of ancient trees stand in the back; a paddy field and the river stretch out in front.

Compared with Nanhua, Jidao is less developed and thus presents more primitive local elements.

*Diaojiaolou* can be spotted from afar, surrounded by clouds of cooking smoke. Most of them are of two stories, with the lower level being used to raise livestock or for storage.

The old pedestrian lane starts off at the entrance of the village and winds into its depths. The lane looks like golden bricks under the sun while resembling oily black jade when it rains.

The lane leads to the granary, which is a rare public facility in a village. It was built out of the concern for theft back in the old days, when all households put their food together under guard. Now, the granary has been out of use but one could get a sense of ancient people's wisdom by looking at the granary structure.

All is quiet and extramundane inside the village. Small lanes criss-cross it.

When a holiday or a visitor comes, locals perform ancient songs that reflect the history and beliefs of the Miao group.

In addition to the villages, one could visit the Miao and Dong Ethnic Customs Park, where one can shop for distinctive local food, silver ornaments, embroideries and other handmade art products.

Modern farm pleasures including fruit picking, a playground for children and outdoor exercises can be enjoyed in Wecco Park.

The Huakai bullfight city claims to be the first of its kind in China. Visitors can get a taste of Chinese bullfighting culture on weekends.

The city is now going all out to woo visitors from far and wide.

Kaili signed deals with several major travel agencies at a tourism road show in Beijing on April 2.

Those agencies, including China National Travel Service (HK) Group Corporation and China Ocean International Travel Service, will plan travel routes and send tourists to Kaili.

The city is now accelerating development to keep up with China's Belt and Road Initiative.

At the Beijing road show, Kaili also signed 24 deals covering real estate, internet technology, traditional Chinese medicine and folk art and culture, with a total investment of 21.1 billion yuan (\$3.1 billion).

To spice up travelers' experience, there have been various shows and events.

The international 100-km race around the Leigong Mountain and the Chinese music instrument contests have been hits among travelers, according to Li Mengqun, deputy director of the Kaili tourism authority.

The grand Silver Show is a visual feast. It tells the life and the love story of the Miao and Dong boys and girls. The show features traditional Miao and Dong dances and songs with 3-D and other dazzling effects.

Those activities have helped Kaili to pack in 30 million visitors in 2016, up 35.38 percent over the previous year, according to the tourism authority.

Tourism income surged 42.3 percent to 28.6 billion yuan.

Improved transportation has also helped tourists get to Kaili easier. It now takes three hours by air from Beijing to the city and roughly 10 hours by high-speed rail.

Local authority is planning to integrate health preservation, expedition and sport elements in future. The goal is to achieve a 15 percent growth annually during 2017-2020 period, and ultimately draw in 45.3 million visits, according to Li.

## Recommended routes

### One-day trip

- Nanhua village-Jidao village-Sour soup culture-Huakai bullfight city-Kaili ethnic culture park-Yinxu (Silver show)
- The Miao and Dong Ethnic Customs Park-Sour soup culture-Wecco Park-Xiasi ancient town-Huakai bullfight city-Kaili ethnic culture park-Yinxu (Silver show)

### Two-day trip

- Guiyang-The Miao and Dong Ethnic Customs Park-Sour soup culture-Xijiang Qianhu Miao Village-Nanhua village-Jidao village-Xiasi ancient town-Wecco Park-Kaili ethnic culture park-Yinxu (Silver show).

### Three-day trip

- Guiyang-The Miao and Dong Ethnic Customs Park-Xiasi ancient town-Wecco Park-Kaili ethnic culture park-Yinxu (Silver show)-Yuntai Mountain, Shamuhe scenic spot-Wuyang River-Zhenyuan ancient town-Qinglongdong scenic spot-Tiexi scenic spot

# Tourism giant focuses more on customers' needs

By YANG FEIYUE

More travel packages exclusively targeting mothers with children and senior-aged travelers are expected to hit the market soon.

The Jiangsu-based online travel agency Tongcheng Network Technology will put together such products as part of its strategy to focus more on consumer needs and develop products targeting specific age groups.

The whole travel industry is likely to pay more attention to customer



**You'll face the same product whether you are a mother ... or senior traveler."**

**Wu Zhixiang**, Tongcheng Network Technology CEO

types, instead of their numbers, in the future year, says Tongcheng's founder and CEO Wu Zhixiang. He spoke at a CEO summit focusing on the new economy in Beijing on April 15.

Roughly 20 CEOs of major business players, such as the bike-sharing company Ofo Inc, the group-buying provider Meituan, and live-streaming powerhouse Yixia Tech, attended the meeting to discuss future moves in their market.

Most agreed that business, especially startups, will shift focus from resources to products and ultimate-

ly to consumer experience.

When that happens, Wu says, "traveler's needs in tourism consumption will be better satisfied."

At the moment, travel products are mostly offered indiscriminately to customers without targeting or tailoring for age groups.

"You'll face the same product whether you are a mother who is taking your child with you or middle-aged or senior traveler," Wu explains.

He believes that travel products and services exclusively for travelers

of specific classes will be available in the next 18 years.

For mother-and-children customers, travel packages should cater to the needs of mothers, while helping children expand their vision and grow along the way, Wu explains.

"It's about totally redesigning our products and integrating customer needs with our understanding of the industry," Wu says.

The travel agency set up a special club for elder clients in September 2016, and the number of members has grown at 300 per-

cent month-on-month ever since.

Members have now spread across 160 cities nationwide.

The club has launched a series of customized tours for seniors since the end of last year.

In addition to health checks and travel insurance, "second honeymoon" trips to rekindle old flames have also been developed.

The ultimate goal is to meet the elder customers' needs in travel, leisure and social life and create a happy community for them, according to Wu.