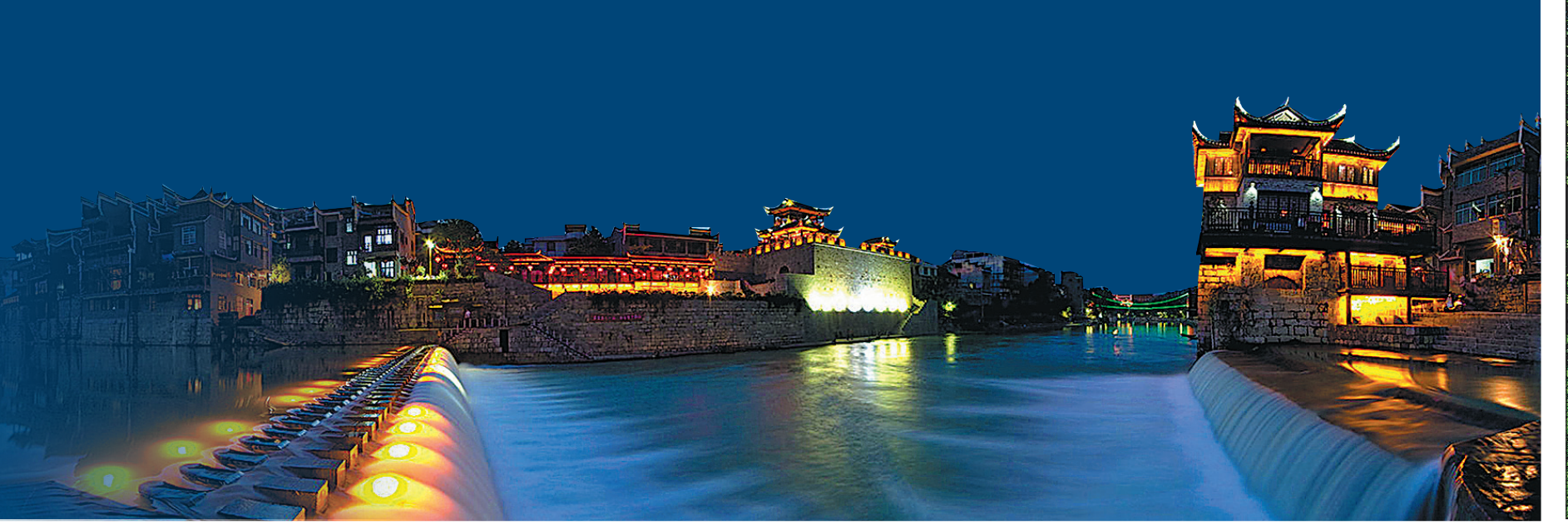




HUNAN IS RICH IN CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE SITES, INCLUDING THE ZHANGJIAJIE SCENIC AREA, LANGSHAN MOUNTAIN, THE YUELU ACADEMY, THE MAWANGDUI TOMBS OF THE HAN DYNASTY, AND TANHELI ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE



THE CAPITAL OF THE PROVINCE, CHANGSHA, WAS GRANTED MEMBERSHIP OF THE CREATIVE CITIES NETWORK LAUNCHED BY UNESCO IN 2017. IT IS THE FIRST CITY IN CHINA TO BE RECOGNIZED AS A CITY OF MEDIA ARTS



Top from left: Former residence of Mao Zedong, a founder of the People's Republic of China, in Hunan province. The largest Fengyu (wind-rain) Bridge, an important structure in a Dong ethnic village, in Hunan province, can be dated back to more than 400 years ago. Yuyang Tower is depicted in a well-known Song Dynasty (960-1279) essay. Phoenix ancient town is a popular tourist attraction in Hunan. The Yuelu Academy in Changsha, capital of Hunan province, was among the top four private academies of classic learning in ancient China. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Province in Central China is also home of many influential and talented celebrities, including thought leaders, artists, inventors and political figures, Yuan Shenggao reports.



HISTORY, CULTURAL HERITAGE AREAS OF PRIDE

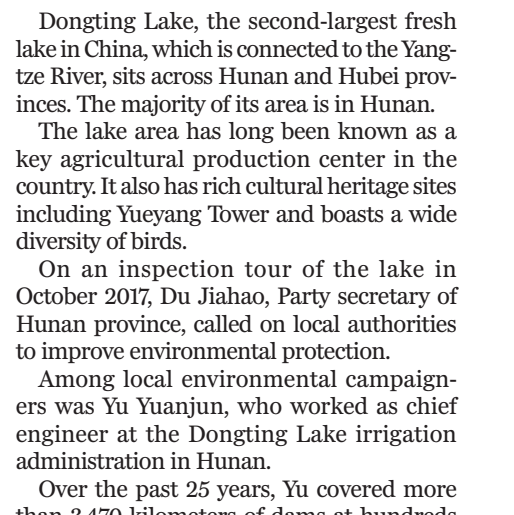


Hunan's rich culture, picturesque natural beauty a draw for visitors

By CAO YINYING
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Known for its natural beauty and abundant tourism resources, Hunan is becoming one of the most popular tourism destinations nationwide and attracting visitors from around the world.
The province in Central China is rich in cultural and natural heritage sites. They include Penghuang Gaosheng, or Phoenix ancient town, which is among China's most beautiful ancient towns. Hengshan Mountain, one of the five most renowned mountains in the country. Yuyang Tower, depicted in a well-known Song Dynasty (960-1279) essay, and Yuelu Academy, one of the four major private institutions of higher education during the Song Dynasty, among others.
The Yuelu Academy has served as an institute for higher education since its establishment in 976.
The academy on the western bank of the Xiangjiang River, has been an educational institution for more than 1,000 years. It focuses on Confucian education and is said to be the oldest academy of its type still in existence in the world. The school evolved into the Hunan Institute of Higher Learning in 1903, the now part of Hunan University.
In recent years, the province has expanded tourism development and made efforts to improve its infrastructure and attract more visitors from home and abroad.

According to the Hunan Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism, the province received 755 million visits last year, up 12.2 percent year-on-year. The revenue generated by the tourism industry grew 14.5 percent to 835.6 billion yuan (\$126.7 billion) last year.
The added value of tourism in Hunan reached 253.1 billion yuan last year, accounting for 6.12 percent of the province's GDP.
Last year, the province was listed as one of the world's top 10 best-value destinations to tempt frugal travelers* by Lonely Planet, a leading travel guide publisher. The Lonely Planet guide book cites Zhangjiajie for its "amazing sandstone canyon with almost 250 bizarrely shaped peaks" and "the world's longest glass bridge opened in 2016".
Located in northwestern Hunan province, Zhangjiajie, a 5A-rated national scenic spot, is famous worldwide for its craggy peaks, charmingly grotesque rocks, deep valleys, beautiful streams and karst caves.
The main draw of Zhangjiajie is the Wulingyuan Scenic Area and other popular spots in the Zhangjiajie National Forest Park, including the Saizi Valley, Tianzi Mountain and Baofeng Lake.
The park became the first national forest park in China in 1982 and was listed among the UNESCO World Heritage in 1992.
Another 5A-rated tourism site in Hunan is Langshan Mountain, well-known for its unique Danxia landscape, which literally means crimson glow.

The landform is a rare topographic feature in geographically worldwide. The huge red dark red color with grotesque shapes offer tourists a marvelous view.
Covering an area of 108 square kilometers, Langshan Mountain is abundant in natural resources. There are 1,100 scenic spots, 30 cultural tourism industrial parks and 100 cultural tourism towns as well as 30 cultural tourism projects with 1 billion yuan investment in the next three years.



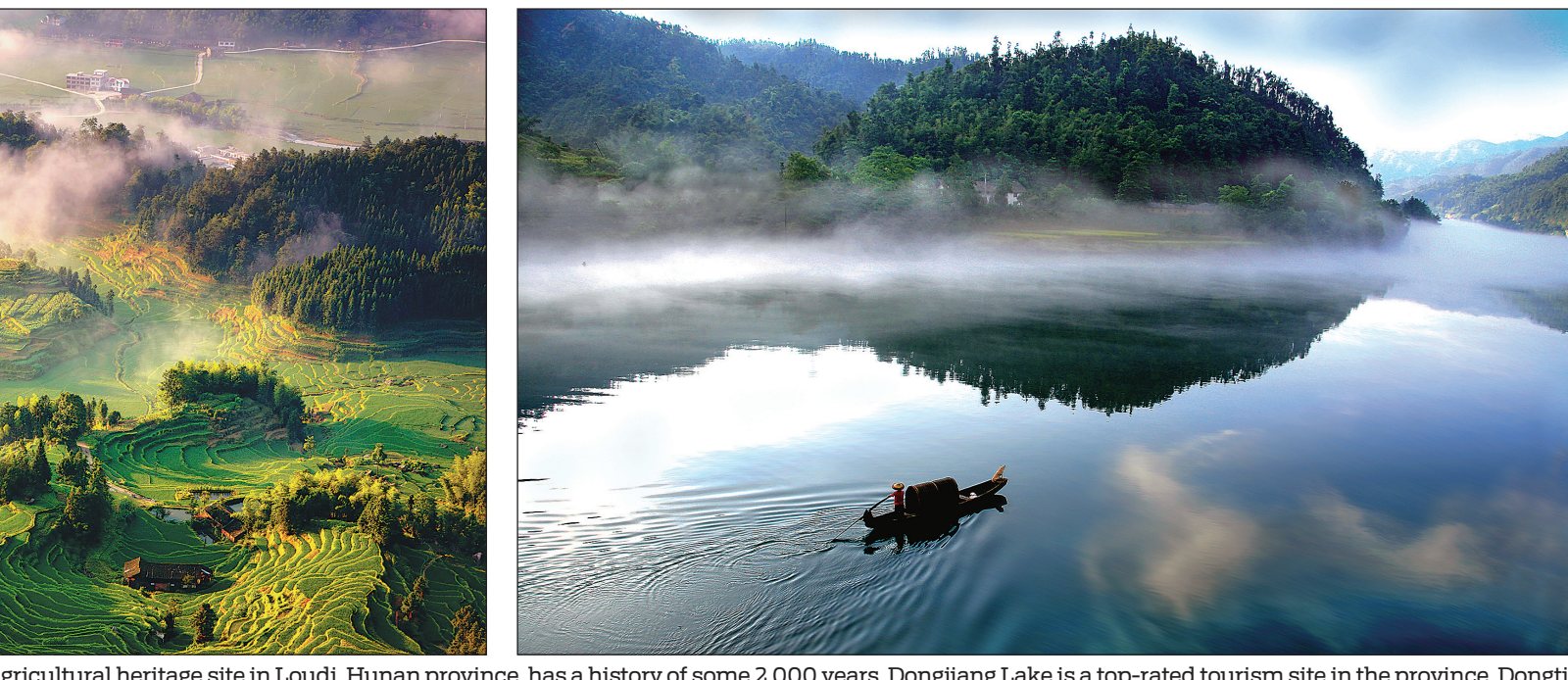
Xiang Embroidery, named after the abbreviation of the province's name, is among the top four Chinese embroidery types. PHOTOS BY CHINA DAILY

Located in Central China, Hunan province boasts a splendid history and abundant cultural heritage.
Six exquisite, five-color glazed porcelain presented at a news conference of the province in Beijing in late July, drew the attention of the media. The technical upgrade enhanced the quality of porcelains and enriched the colors of the products, improving their artistic and utility value.
There are 18 national intangible cultural heritage projects and 121 inheritors, as well as 324 provincial intangible cultural heritage projects and 104 inheritors in Hunan, according to local officials.
More than 30 sites of the Paleolithic period and 4,600 million, of which roughly 60 percent was contributed by local ceramics, according to official figures.
Besides the five-color glazed porcelains, Hunan has discovered a variety of historic relics, folk performances and products that have been carried on by generations.
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From left: The tomb of Emperor Yandi, a legendary ancestor of the Chinese nation, is located in Zhuzhou, Hunan province. The Zuoqiu Terrace Fields, a key agricultural heritage site in Loudi, Hunan province, has a history of some 2,000 years. Dongjiang Lake is a top-rated tourism site in the province. Dongjiang Lake, the second-largest freshwater lake in China, is a birds' paradise. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

In the early 20th century, the technique was improved in the company founded by Xiong Xiling, an industrialist and educator from Hunan, who employed top ceramists and introduced the most advanced manufacturing equipment.
The technical upgrade enhanced the quality of porcelains and enriched the colors of the products, improving their artistic and utility value.
Now Liling has become one of the biggest ceramic products export cities in China. In 2018, the important and export of the city totaled about \$440 million, of which roughly 60 percent was contributed by local ceramics, according to official figures.
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Hunan is closely linked with many celebrities. They include Qu Yuan, a patriotic poet during the Warring States Period (475-221 BC) who drowned himself in the Miluo River in Hunan out of despair over his king and motherland. Also, Mao Zedong, founder of the People's Republic of China, was born in Hunan and set out his revolutionary journey in the province.
Hunan is also home to Qi Baishi, one of the most noted contemporary painters in China. Yuan Longping, known as "father of hybrid rice", mostly lives in Hunan. He is still working on developing new species of rice on his mission to end starvation around the world.
At the end of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), the last feudal empire in China, a group of thinkers and politicians from Hunan played an important role in promoting China's modern civilization and social progress. They included Wei Yuan, Zou Zongtang and Tan Sitong.
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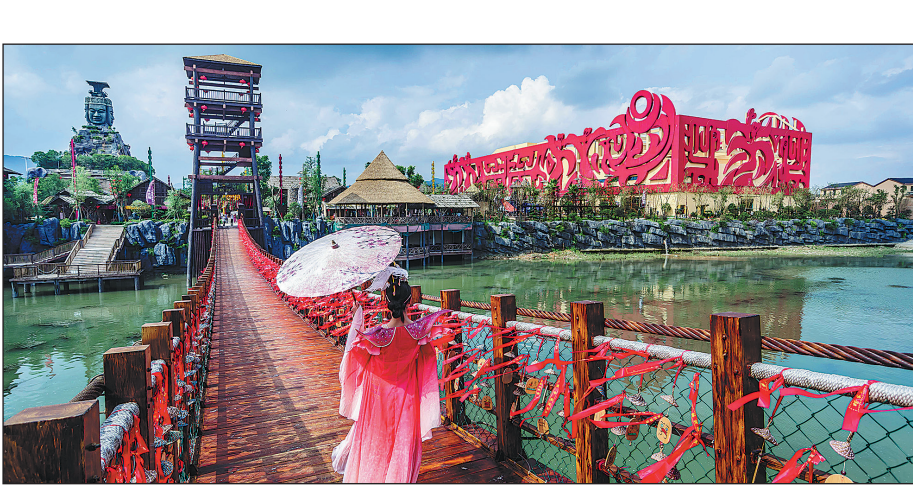


Making a name with top TV shows and fireworks

Hunan province has developed its culture, arts, media and creative industries to create a high-profile image worldwide.
The group has grown into one of the biggest media giants in Asia, gaining an international reputation.
Hunan TV is one of the province's calling cards and has been a top-rated channel in China since 2003.
It has produced high-quality programs including variety shows Happy Camp and reality shows Super Girl, Super Boy and The Sound, which had a large number of viewers across the world.
Changsha, the capital of Hunan province, was granted membership of the Creative Cities Network launched by UNESCO in 2017. It was recognized as a City of Media Arts.
Other winners of the title include Lyon in France, York in the United Kingdom and Austin in the United States. Changsha is the first city in China to be awarded the prestigious UNESCO title.
Do Yu, secretary-general of the National Commission for UNESCO in China, said the city has done an excellent job promoting cultural development and has become internationally competitive in this area.
Local authorities are advancing the construction of cultural industrial parks and art towns. The move will encourage mass participation in cultural events and integrate local culture with urban development, the authorities said.
According to local statistics, there are more than 10,000 companies in the cultural and creative industry in the city.
The Maimian Changsha Video Cultural and Creative Industrial Park was established in Changsha in 2017 to promote the construction of cultural innovation platforms.
To date, the park has attracted more than 2,000 video production companies and provided jobs for more than 30,000 people. Its video cultural and creative industry created an output value of more than \$1 billion yuan (\$84 billion) last year.
Jian Guilan, deputy director of the administrative committee of the park, said that the park will expand by 200,000 square meters next year.
This will create employment opportunities for 20,000 people, Jian added.
A 150-meter-high building of TVZone Media, the Hunan startup design plaza and three 188-meter-high skyscrapers at Mango Mahabai Square will begin construction or operation in the near future. They will become new cultural landmarks along the Liping River.
Jian said the park is attracting more startup project initiators. In the next three to five years, the park is expected to cultivate one or two unicorn enterprises or startup companies with an estimated value surpassing \$1 billion.
Hunan and Changsha governments have vowed to provide financial support to selected companies and professionals at the park. The financial aid is expected to reach 5 billion yuan in the next five years. High-level professionals will be provided with up to 2 million yuan in bonuses and housing subsidies. Project funding is valued at up to 10 million yuan.
Innovation has given a new lease of life to the traditional fireworks industry in Hunan province.
The city of Liyang is home to about 1,000 companies producing all types of fireworks. An estimated 90 percent of the globe's pyrotechnics are designed and produced in China, with the majority in Liyang.
A large number of Liyang fireworks have been sold to other countries. Europe, Southeast Asian countries and the United States are among major export markets.
Hunan exported 217,000 metric tons of fireworks in 2018, an increase of 64.5 percent from 2017. It earned the province a record \$3.27 billion yuan from the overseas sales, up 20.8 percent year-on-year. The province contributes 57.3 percent of Chinese fireworks exports.
Local fireworks companies said that exported fireworks orders increased significantly last year. Many were from a growing number of new buyers.
For example, Zhaozhen fireworks trade company exported 13,000 bins of fireworks last year, 45 times more than 2017. In recent years, Liyang fireworks have featured technology, logical and cultural creativity.
Equipped with an intelligent spring machine featuring zero emissions, intelligent ignition technology and digital fireworks test-forming technology, Liyang fireworks have become a popular cultural product.
According to the Hunan Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism, there were more than 600 Liyang fireworks companies last year, more than 40 countries and regions.



Winners of the Chinese Professional Competition for Foreign College Students, an annual event known as the Chinese Bridge held in Hunan, pose for a group photo. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Top: A Western Zhou Dynasty (11th century-771 BC) themed cultural park in Ningxiang, Hunan province, is a shining example of the combination of culture and tourism. Above: Agatag at a fireworks show, a pavilion named after renowned poet Du Fu in the Tang Dynasty (618-907), and built in an ancient architectural style stands at the Xiangjiang River. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY