



The coastal city of Sanya is the top tourism destination in Hainan province. WEI PENGFEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Hainan set to tap potential of cultural tourism wave

Two expos display the island's desire to attract domestic and foreign tourists

By HUANG YIMING in Haikou and DONG JIDONG in Beijing

The 2015 Hainan Culture Industry Expo and the First Cross-Straits (Hainan) Cultural Arts Expo were held in Haikou, Hainan province, from March 13 to 16.

The expos, the largest of their kind to be hosted by the island province, will boost the development of the province's culture industry and help build a trading platform for cultural products, said Dong Junxin, vice-president of the China International Culture Exchange Center.

The expos were jointly hosted by the China International Culture Association; the Hainan Department of Culture, Radio, Television, Publication and Sports; the Hainan Taiwan Affairs Office; the Hainan Federation of Literary and Art Circles; and the Haikou city government. More than 60,000 visitors attended the three-day event and sales of cultural products totaled 10 million yuan (\$1.6 million).

About 160 exhibitors from China, Vietnam, Pakistan and India showcased their products. The items displayed at the expo included calligraphy, photos, ceramics, paintings, wood products, sculpture and jewelry.

The expo epitomized the rapid development of Hainan's culture industry and is expected to provide support for the



People from the Li and Miao ethnic groups perform a bamboo dance in Hainan province.

HUANG YIMING / CHINA DAILY



province's drive to become an international tourist destination, Hainan Daily reported.

Hainan has issued a range of policies and regulations in the past few years to promote its cultural development. Featuring a combination of unique



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local and fashionable culture, the industry has forged its own path of development.

In November 2013, the province issued a guideline on selecting and naming cultural parks and bases to promote the systematic development

of its culture industry.

The provincial government invested a total of 400 million yuan to reform the industry in 2013 and 2014.

Several scenic zones in the province, including the national 5A Yanuoda Rainfor-

est Cultural Tourism Zone, the Tianyahaijiao Scenic Area and the Dazhipo Dramatists' Center, were listed as national model bases for the cultural industry.

Culture is the soul of tourism, said Luo Baoming, Party chief of Hainan, after he inspected the Haikou-based Mission Hills Movie Town in June. "Without culture, the tourism industry loses its quality and competitiveness," he said.

The Mission Hills Movie Town, a film-themed tourism joint venture by director Feng Xiaogang and film production company Huayi Brothers, features movie-themed sightseeing and shopping facilities.

The theme park covers an area of 90 hectares and boasts three main streets with replicas of scenes from Feng's classic works. The annual Hainan Carnival, which features ethnic dance, local opera and dining, has been held 15 times. More than 100,000 people attended the three-day event in Haikou in December last year. The carnival has become a symbol of the province's integrated development of the cultural industry and tourism.

In September 2013, the Qian-guqing Scenic Zone in Sanya launched an opera themed on Hainan elements, including folk legends, the ancient Maritime Silk Road and the Li ethnic culture, winning wide acclaim. During the Spring Festival holiday this year, the number of tourists visiting the scenic zone increased by 12.9 percent compared to the same period last year.

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Customers wait in line to pay for products at the duty-free shopping center in Haitang Bay in Sanya, Hainan province, on Friday. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Duty-free items expanded in bid to attract more domestic buyers

By HUANG YIMING in Haikou

A broader range of imported items is now available at duty-free shops in Hainan province.

The variety of such items was increased on March 20 in a bid to promote the island province as an international tourist destination. Seventeen additional kinds of products, including baby formula, coffee, healthcare supplements and air purifiers, have been added to the duty-free program, bringing the total to 38.

Authorities have also loosened the quotas on purchases of 10 popular goods, including cosmetics, perfumes and watches.

The province has two duty-free shops — the Haitang Bay Duty-free Shopping Center in Sanya and the duty-free shop in the Haikou Meilan International Airport.

By 3 pm on March 20, daily sales at the shops reached 8.59 million yuan (\$1.38 million), up 6.72 percent from the previous day.

The offshore duty-free program was launched in April 2011 on a trial basis. After a revision to the program in November 2012, it now allows individual tourists and Hainan residents aged 16 or above to enjoy exemptions on certain imported goods worth no more than 8,000 yuan in total before flying to destinations on the Chinese mainland.

Hainan residents can only shop at the province's duty-free stores once a year, while others can purchase items twice each year, according to the program.

By December 2014, more than 4.08 million people had spent a total of 10.9 billion yuan at the shops since the launch of the program, according to the Hainan pro-

“The changes will help attract more tourists and stimulate their consumption.”

Wang Huiping, deputy director of the Hainan provincial department of finance

vincial department of finance.

Liu Deqian, an expert at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' tourism research center, said the changes will make Hainan more attractive to visitors and help to further boost its tourism industry.

He said he hopes that more Chinese cities adopt the duty drawback and duty-free policies so people can buy high-quality products at reasonable prices at home rather than go on shopping sprees overseas.

Wang Huiping, deputy director of the Hainan provincial department of finance, said: "The changes will help attract more tourists and stimulate their consumption."

However, tourist consumption in Hainan still lags behind that of some overseas resorts, including Jeju Island in South Korea, Wang said.

Passengers who purchase duty-free goods in Hainan account for less than 10 percent of the departing passengers, compared to 30 percent on Jeju Island, Wang said.

The addition of new products to the program and further relaxation of the policy will further stimulate people's demand for consumption, he added.

Long-stay visa-free visits provide boost to exchanges with other countries

By HUANG YIMING in Haikou

In December 2009, the State Council issued the notice Several Opinions on Promoting the Construction and Development of the Hainan International Tourism Island.

The plan to develop Hainan into an international tourist destination was being upgraded to a national strategy.

Under the policy, tourists from 23 countries who are traveling with a tour group of five or more people and organized by a travel agency based in Hainan may travel in the province visa-free for up to 15 days. The policy was revised in August 2010 to include tourists from more countries.

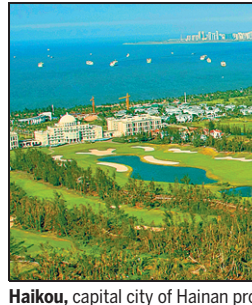
The countries are: Australia, Austria, Britain, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Philippines, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Ukraine, and the United States.

Groups of two or more people from Germany, South Korea and Russia whose travel arrangements were made by a Hainan travel agency may travel visa-free for up to 21 days.

The policy has significantly strengthened Hainan's cooperation and exchanges with other countries in science, culture and trade. It also benefits overseas tourists who spend

their vacations on the island resort.

More than 46,500 people from 26 countries visited Hainan in 2014 through the visa-free policy, according to the entry and exit administration bureau of the Hainan provincial department of public security.



Haikou, capital city of Hainan province. HUANG YIMING / CHINA DAILY



The luxury cruise ship Arcadia, with 1,971 passengers on board, arrives in Sanya on March 18. WANG JING / FOR CHINA DAILY