



Windsurfing on the waters off Hainan province's coast is a popular option for people visiting the travel destination in China. JIANG JURONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Visitor routes showcase the best of Hainan

Province set to make the most of “Silk Road Tourism Year”

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Tourism authorities in Hainan province have put forward seven tourism routes along the ancient maritime Silk Road to further tap into the rich tourism resources and explore opportunities brought about by the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Initiative.

The country's plan to develop the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road will further showcase the important strategic

location of Hainan province, as the country's southernmost province has already played significant roles in the protection and development of the South China Sea.

The decision to build the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road was made during the third plenary session of the 18th Communist Party of China Central Committee in November 2013.

The National Tourism Administration set the theme for this year's tourism development as “Beautiful China —

Silk Road Tourism Year.”

The Silk Road Tourism Year is part of the tourism industry's efforts to implement the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road initiatives, collectively referred to as the Belt and Road Initiative.

The Hainan Provincial Commission of Tourism Development named seven tourism routes to showcase maritime Silk Road culture along the South China Sea.

The routes include a trip to see Southeast Asian culture in Hainan, a route to trace ancient shops in Hainan, a cruise to Sansha, the newest and southernmost city in China, and a journey to taste the flavors of Hainan's cuisine.

Other routes include a treasure hunting trip experience of Tanmen, an ancient township along the maritime Silk Road.

The tourism routes aim to showcase the charm of Hainan province and its maritime Silk Road history through culture, buildings, ports, cuisine, ancient nautical maps and exported Chinese products.

The maritime Silk Road has connected China with Southeast Asia, south Asia, east Asia and Europe for more than 2,000 years. It is a major transport route for the maritime trade and for cultural exchanges in the northeast Asia region.

Hainan has long been an important hub for the maritime Silk Road, with historic evidence suggesting that it was the starting point of the trade route during the Tang Dynasty (AD 18-907). Several historic sites with links to the maritime Silk Road have been discovered on Hainan Island and in the South China Sea areas.

The Southeast Asian culture along the Hainan province route includes visits to ancient streets in Haikou and Wenchang, the ancient harbor for fishing boats in Tanmen town of Qionghai and the ancient house of the Cai Family in Boao. Other sites on the route include a Southeast Asia-style town in Zhongyuan county, Dongshan Hill in Wanning and Coconut Island in Lingshui.

The trip to ancient business hubs in the province includes



Fenjiezhou Island in Lingshui is a newly developed diving destination in Hainan province. HUANG YIMING / CHINA DAILY

the bell tower in Haikou, Qionglan port in Wenchang, Longwan Port in Dalu township of Qionghai, Boao Port in Qionghai, Xiaobei Port in Wanning, Xincun Port in Lingshui and Dadan Port in Sanya.

Destinations to the western coast of Hainan Island include the ancient city of Chengmai, Xinying Port in Lingao, Eman Port in Danzhou, the ancient

salt fields in Yangpu, White Horse Well in Danzhou and an ancient city in Changhua.

Hainan cuisine travel destinations include local cuisine in the Qilou area of Haikou, Wenchang rice cooked with chicken, seafood in Tanmen, Southeast Asian snacks in Zhongyuan, Xinglong coffee in Wanning, fish steak in Xincun town of Lingshui and fish

soup of the Hui people in Fenghuang township of Sanya.

The treasure hunting trip destinations in Hainan include Fragrance Street in Haikou, Wennan Ancient Street in Wenchang, Tanmen township in Qionghai, Wanlong coffee and fragrances in Wanning, dried seafood products in Lingshui and pearls in Sanya.



A foreign surfer participating in the international surf festival in Wanning, an annual event held since 2010. HUANG YIMING / CHINA DAILY

New dock expected to help boost tourism

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Tourism authorities in Hainan province are looking to further boost ocean cruises, as a port to handle the ships is set to become operational by the end of next year.

Sanya, which already had a port that can dock cruise ships up to 80,000 metric tons, plans to open another port that can handle ships with maximum displacement of 230,000 tons by the end of 2016, according to the provincial commission for tourism development.

460 cruise ships

arrived at the Phoenix Island International Cruise Ship Port in Sanya by March

The province has already opened cruise lines from Sanya to Vietnam, to Xisha islands and to Hong Kong.

Hainan, one of the hubs of the ancient maritime Silk Road, has tried to prioritize the development of cruise tours to boost its tourism industry.

Sanya welcomed the *Voyager of the Seas*, one of the top 10 cruise ships operated by Royal Caribbean International, on Aug 8 at the newly built port in the Phoenix Island International Cruise Ship Port.

It was the first time that the port had received a luxury cruise ship after construction of a dock was completed.

The *Voyager of the Seas* was also the largest cruise ship to arrive at the ports in Sanya. The stops for the cruise ship this time include Hong Kong, Sanya and Da Nang of Vietnam.

The 3,599 passengers who were traveling with *Voyager of the Seas* stayed more than eight hours in Sanya. It also marked the largest number of tourists Sanya has received from a single cruise ship.

An official with the Phoenix Island Port estimated that the port is capable of docking six cruise ships between 30,000 tons and 250,000 tons when the second phase of the port project is completed.

The port will have two docks that are capable of docking ships up to 150,000 tons and one dock capable of berthing ships up to 250,000 tons.

It will become one of the best ports for cruise ships in Asia and can provide docking service for *Allure of the Seas*, the world's largest cruise ship.

Wu Guoqiang, head of the border inspection station of Sanya, said there will be new cruise routes opened after the opening of the new port in Sanya, including cruise trips to Singapore.

“The Phoenix Island Port has so far received 460 cruise ship docks and 784,000 passenger visits by this March. It was the first among all ports in the country in terms of cruise ship docks and the second in terms of passenger visits (after Wusongkou Port in Shanghai),” said Wang Wan-mao, a senior adviser with the Sanya Phoenix Island International Cruise Port Development Co.



Foreign tourists play with monkeys in Nanwan, Lingshui county. Hainan has received more inbound tourists in recent years as a result of the increasing number of international flights. HUANG YIMING / CHINA DAILY

More flights planned for island province

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Hainan plans to promote tourism by increasing international flights to the island province in the near future, according to the provincial tourism development commission.

This year, the province will launch 15 international flights, as well as resume several international flights that were previously halted, in an effort to attract more international tourists, according to the provincial civil aviation authority.

More than 150 South Korean tourists arrived at the Phoenix Airport of Sanya on April 30, which marked the resumption of the regular flight between Sanya and Seoul. The flight travels directly from Seoul to Sanya every Wednesday and Sunday.

“The resumption of the flight between Seoul and Sanya will be a major moral boost for the tourism industry in Hainan,” said Chen Tiejun, deputy director with the provincial tourism development commission.

Chen said the authority will hold talks with its South Korean counterparts to ensure that the flight will be operated on a daily basis.

According to the authorities, Hainan will also open another five international routes in 2015, including the Haikou-Beijing-Brussels, Sanya-Beijing-Brussels, Haikou-Macao, Sanya-Singapore and Haikou-Jakarta routes.

The authorities will also work on the launch of flights between Sanya and Vientiane, Sanya and Luang Prabang, Sanya and Phuket, Sanya and Da Nang.

They will also explore possible air routes linking Haikou, Nanchang and Osaka; Haikou and Da Nang, and Haikou, Chengdu and Moscow. They are also studying the possibility to extend the Sanya-Shanghai route to Japan and Haikou-Shanghai route to Europe and the US.

There are a total of 21 international air routes served by two airports in Hainan — the Haikou Meilan Airport and Sanya Phoenix Airport.

Regular international flights available at the Haikou Meilan Airport include those connecting Singapore, Seoul, Taipei, Hong Kong, Perth and Bangkok.

Regular international flights available at Sanya Phoenix Airport include those linking Seoul, Osaka, Moscow, Hong Kong and Taipei.



Phoenix Island International Cruise Ship Port in Sanya welcomed *Voyager of the Seas* on Aug 8. WANG JING / FOR CHINA DAILY