



By YANG FEIYUE
yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

Liu Jiping is selling bottled air from Hainan. And sales are brisk. He had just signed a deal for 100 bottles when I met him on the second day of the Hainan International Tourism Trade Expo in Sanya, which ran over Jan 12-15.

“Many big cities (in the mainland) suffer due to smog, so our product is popular,” Liu, the company’s marketing director says.

Beijing, Shanghai and Nanjing are major markets for his products.

Liu’s company began to sell air just four months ago. The air is from a national forest park in Hainan’s Bawangling, in the Changjiang Li autonomous county, where the forest cover is around to 98 percent.

Approximately 500,000 bottles of air have been sold so far, according to Liu.

Each bottle can be used for 20 minutes and costs 79 yuan (\$11.5), but was priced at 39 yuan at the expo.

Liu’s company is just one of more than 500 exhibitors from more than 20 countries and regions worldwide, which are seeking business opportunities at the Hainan expo. Deals worth 98 billion yuan were signed at the event, and on-the-spot sales exceeded 200 million yuan.

Last March, the expo saw 330 business visitors, and deals worth 400 million yuan were struck.

Fresh air, sunny weather, attractive beaches and a laid-back pace of life attracts visitors to Hainan, especially at this time of the year, when the chill and the smog hold many domestic cities hostage.

In fact, Sanya in Hainan is the most popular destination in China among those who used the country’s biggest online travel agency Ctrip as winter set in. And most of those from Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen who made air travel bookings on the site generally did so 30 days ahead of time.

Sanya saw more than 16 million visitors spend at least a night last year, according to the local government.

Duty-free shopping

Meanwhile, duty-free shopping is another reason that draws visitors to Hainan.

The southern island province offers a duty-free allowance to non-locals of 16,000 yuan.

Around 15,000 visitors went to the Sanya International Duty-Free Shopping Complex daily in 2016, says Zhao Jing, an assistant to the marketing director of the shopping complex.

And the figure has increased to 20,000 a day as the Chinese New Year holiday approaches.

Also, sales figures are expected to rise as those leaving Hainan by train are able to enjoy tax-free shopping as of Jan 15. Under the new rules, buyers can pick up their purchased



More than 500 exhibitors are seeking business opportunities at the Hainan International Tourism Trade Expo, which is one of the many measures that the island province has taken to transform itself into an international destination. PHOTOS BY YANG FEIYUE / CHINA DAILY

Fresh air, sunny weather, attractive beaches and a laid-back pace of life attracts visitors to Hainan.

goods at Haikou train station. Previously, only those leaving by plane could indulge in duty-free shopping.

“This (duty-free shopping for train travelers) means that those who leave the island by rail for nearby cities such as Guangzhou can also buy duty-free items,” says Zhao.

Duty-free sales were 4.3 billion yuan in 2015, and the purchases mostly comprised perfumes and cosmetics. The sales figures were 340 million yuan for the weeklong Spring Festival holiday last year, say customs sources.

Fruit and seafood are also big

attractions in Hainan.

Liang Zhenyang, who displayed local specialties from his hometown, the Lingshui Li autonomous county, at the expo, gave up his job that gave him 1 million yuan a year in 2015 and returned home to start a business selling local fruits. And with help from the local government, he and his team achieved 4 million yuan in sales just half a year later.

Liang then set up an e-commerce association to train locals to promote their products. His association now has more than 300 members, and locals have opened more than



200 online shops on taobao.com.

The county has 5,000-mu (333.3-hectare) area growing cherry tomatoes this year, and they are now being sold to all parts of the mainland. In addition, mango, Hami melon, litchi from Hainan are also popular.

The county inked deals worth 22.7 billion yuan at this year’s tourism expo, and they cover agriculture and recreation among other things.

The expo is just one of the measures that Hainan has taken to transform itself into an international destination.

Tourism boom

By 2020 the island province aims to attract more than 80 million tourists a year, including 1.2 million from overseas, and total annual tourism revenue is projected to surpass 100 billion yuan.

Separately, sea tours along the eastern fringe of the province and forest-themed trips are also being developed.

Camp sites for self-drive tourists are on the anvil too, and a total of 100 towns and 1,000 distinctive villages will be developed before 2020 to spice up visitor experience.

As for transportation, air links are being improved. The island province added 30 outbound flight routes last year, taking the total number to 51. As a result, Hainan is now linked to Russia, South Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia in the region, as well as Australia, Italy and Germany.

The number of inbound tourists for 2016 at the end of November was 645,500, up 19.5 percent over the previous year.

China Southern Airlines carried 7.39 million travelers to and from of Hainan in 2016, up 5.2 percent on year. It carried 25,700 travelers to and from Hainan on Jan 13 alone, the first day of the mass migration for Chinese New Year in 2016, according to Liu Jing, the deputy general manager of the company’s Hainan branch.

The airline now offers flights from Hainan to 37 destinations at home and abroad. And it increased the number of seats by 13 percent in 2016.

It is planning to link Sanya and New Delhi via Guangzhou and Haikou and Yangon via Guangzhou in 2017, say Liu.

Lunar New Year 2017 events across the US

By ASSOCIATED PRESS in New York

Lunar New Year begins Jan 28, kicking off the year of the rooster. The holiday is observed in China, Vietnam and other Asian countries, but a number of US destinations from New York to Las Vegas also host celebrations. Events include parades featuring lion dancers, special holiday menus at Asian restaurants, cultural festivals and more.

Disney California Adventure Park in Anaheim, California, hosts a Lunar New Year celebration from Jan 20 through Feb 5. Mickey Mouse and Minnie Mouse will be costumed for the occasion, greeting guests and offering photo opportunities alongside other Disney characters like Mulan and Mulan’s dragon sidekick Mushu.

Live performances at Disney California Adventure will include Chinese acrobats, dancers and musicians in colorful costumes, activities and crafts themed on the holiday and three new marketplaces offering food inspired by Asian cuisine. A new short feature called *Hurry Home* will be shown each night prior to the *World of Color* show, telling the story of a little lantern on a journey home for Lunar New Year, using projected animation, lighting, special effects and fountains. The park will also be decorated with lanterns and banners wishing guests a happy Lunar New Year in English, Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese. Details at <http://www.Disneyland.com/LunarNewYear>.

San Francisco has been celebrating Lunar New Year with a parade that dates back to the 1860s. This year’s events include lion dancers and a flower market fair.

In New York City, visitors have three Chinatowns to explore: one in downtown Manhattan, one in the Sunset Park neighborhood of Brooklyn and one in Flushing, Queens. Check out the restaurants, food markets and shops selling everything from housewares to souvenirs. In Manhattan, holiday events include a Jan 28 firecracker ceremony and cultural festival in Sara D. Roosevelt Park and a Feb 5 Lunar New Year parade kicking off at 1 pm, <http://www.nycgo.com/events/lunar-new-year-parade-festival>. There’s also a parade and festival in Flushing on Feb 4.

San Francisco has been celebrating Lunar New Year with a parade that dates back to the 1860s. This year’s event rolls the evening of Feb 11 with acrobats, lion dancers, floats and a 268-foot dragon, kicking off at Second and Market streets. Other events include a Feb 19 5K/10K run-walk.

In Las Vegas, Jan 28 is the kickoff for a 15-day celebration at Lucky Dragon Hotel & Casino, a new resort themed on Asian culture. Elsewhere in Las Vegas, at The LINQ Promenade, a four-day festival is scheduled for Jan 27-30 including dragon dances at 6 pm nightly on the Fountain Stage. A Jan 27-29 *Chinese New Year in the Desert* event includes performances, a parade on Fremont Street, a party at Downtown Container Park and the DragonFest Benefit Concert at The LINQ Theater.

Other Las Vegas venues hosting lion and dragon dances, parades, performances and more include the Cosmopolitan, ARIA Resort & Casino, The Palazzo Las Vegas and The Venetian Las Vegas, MGM Grand Hotel and Casino, Palms Casino Resort and the Bellagio and Palace Station. The Conservatory & Botanical Gardens at Bellagio will host a display that includes incense, red lanterns and a rooster perched atop a mountain. The Palazzo’s Waterfall Atrium and Gardens will host a 15-foot, crystal-covered rooster and an 18-foot dragon. In addition, many restaurants offer holiday menus.

Lunar New Year parades will also be held in Washington, DC, Jan 29; Chicago, Feb 5; and Orlando, Florida, Feb 11.