

Classic Suzhou City Profile



Suzhou is the most exquisite garden city in China, noted for its unique layout, intertwined with waterways, stone bridges and private gardens.

On the Noble City of Soochow (Suzhou)

*From The Travels of
Marco Polo*

Soochow is a very great and noble city. The people are subjects of the Great Khan, and have paper money. They possess silk in great quantities, from which they make gold brocade and other stuffs, and they live by their manufactures and trade.

Classic Suzhou Overview

Suzhou, a city of eastern China, is only one-hour from Shanghai, on the lower reaches of the Yangtze River and on the shores of Lake Taihu in the province of Jiangsu. It was the capital (6th - 5th century B.C.) of an ancient vassal state – the Wu kingdom of Zhou Dynasty. It was renamed Suzhou in the 6th century A.D. and is famous for its classical gardens, beautiful stone

bridges, pagodas, silk, Grand Canal and canal-side housing, which have contributed to its status as one of the great tourist attractions.

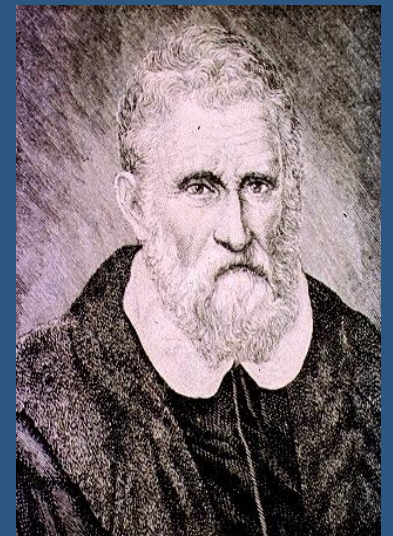
Since ancient times, Suzhou has always been one of the most prosperous cities in China. The GDP per capita was RMB106,412 (\$15,322) in 2008, ranked 2nd among 659 Chinese cities.

Location and Population

Suzhou lies in the Yangtze Delta, bordering Shanghai in the east, Zhejiang Province in the south, Lake Taihu in the west and the Yangtze in the north. Its east longitude is between 119°55" and 121°20" and its north latitude is between 30°47" and 32°02" with an altitude of about 4 meters. The total area of Suzhou is 8488.42 square kilometers, 2.7% of that mountainous; 42.5% under water. The land under cultivation occupies 288160 hectares. Built-up urban areas cover 1,650 square kilometers.

Suzhou is composed of Suzhou Downtown and 5 county-level cities. Suzhou Downtown contains seven Districts: Wuzhong, Xiangcheng, Pingjiang, Canglang, Jinchang, Suzhou Industrial Park and Suzhou New Hi-tech District. The 5 county-level cities are Changsu, Kunshan, Taicang, Wujiang and Zhangjiagang.

Suzhou has a population of 5.8 million, of which 2.1 million live in urban areas.



History and Culture



Tiger Hill, the tomb of King He Lu

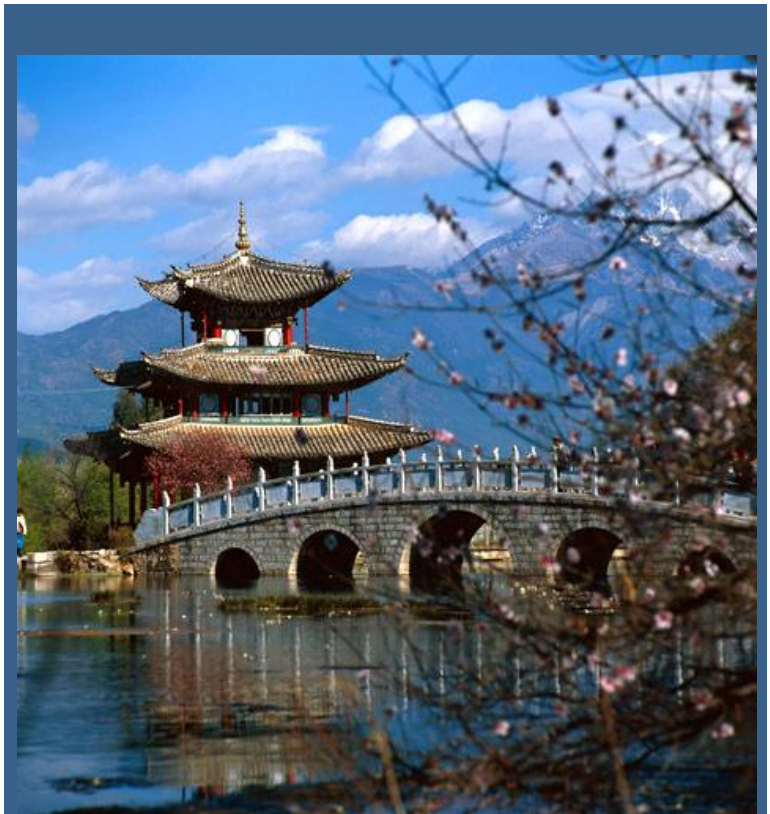
Suzhou, the cradle of Wu culture, is one of the oldest towns in the Yangtze River Delta region, which retains much of its original character. 2500 years ago in the late Shanghai Dynasty, local tribes who named themselves “Gou Wu” lived in the area which in time would become the modern city of Suzhou. After the completion of the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal the city began to thrive. Suzhou served as the centre of silk trade along the bustling waterway. Marco Polo once marveled at the city’s prosperity and he recorded that

its inhabitants were comprised of "prudent merchants, and, as already observed, skilful in all the arts". Polo noted that a number of the Suzhou people were learned in natural science, were good physicians and able philosophers. In Polo’s words, the city of Suzhou was "great" and "noble".

During the Ming dynasty (1368 - 1644) with an increased concentration of silk manufacturers based here, Suzhou became a leading silk fashion center.

However, the city also faced difficult times; during the 1860's Suzhou was occupied during the end of the Taiping rebellion and then again in World War II.

With the foundation of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Suzhou has once again rightly reclaimed its fame and developed into one of the most prosperous cities in China. As far as tourism development is concerned, it has been chosen as one of China's 24 historical and cultural cities and is one of only four tourist cities with top environmental protection (the other three being Beijing, Hangzhou and Guilin). In 1997, Suzhou caught the world's attention by having its classic gardens placed on the UNESCO list as a World Cultural Heritage site. Since then, tourism has grown along with a burgeoning economy.



Suzhou,

A prosperous and classic city in China

Economy

Suzhou is the largest economy in Jiangsu Province, which has been recognized as the “Most Aspiring City of Prosperity and Civilization in the Southeast of China”. In the 1970s and 1980s, Suzhou economy developed with the growth of township enterprises and collective enterprises. But during the 90s, Suzhou adjusted its development strategy, leveraging on its state level development zones to attract a large amount of foreign investment and energize the development of an externally oriented economy.

Being an important economic and tourist city, Suzhou has made great improvement to its infrastructures. It is accessible by train, bus, boat and plane.

The railway, Jinghu Railway (Nanjing-Shanghai), passes through the city and Suzhou Railway Station is among the busiest passenger stations in China, having 139 trains stopping daily.

Suzhou is also conveniently linked by several highway/expressway including Huning (Shanghai-Nanjing) Expressway, and Suzhou-Hangzhou Expressway.

The new Suzhou Outer Ring Expressway was completed in 2005, connecting the peripheral county-level cities of Taicang, Kunshan, and Changshu. Sutong Yangtze River Bridge opened in June 2008, connecting Nantong and Changshu of Suzhou jurisdiction and making it a new

Economic Goals

Suzhou is now embarking upon two major strategic directions:

To be the “Leading destination of FDI” and the “base for new and high-tech industries”

City Infrastructure

transportation hub for communication between the north and south of Jiangsu.

Suzhou is abundant in water resources, including many canals, rivers and lakes.

The city's waterway is one of the most convenient transportations for locals, travelers and cargo. Taking these rivers and canals, you can easily reach its water towns, neighboring cities including Hangzhou, the capital of Zhejiang province, and Suzhou Port.

Suzhou has its own airport, Suzhou Guangfu Airport, but this airport is principally a military base and is only partially used for civic transportation. Three nearby airports, including Wuxi Shuofang Airport, Shanghai Hongqiao International Airport and Pudong International Airport, serve visitors to the city.