

VISUAL

WHERE TEA BLENDS WITH CULTURE AND TOURISM

Rizhao defies latitude limits to become a green tea powerhouse



1. Customers take selfies at a tea shop in Rizhao, Shandong province, on May 25. 2. A worker makes tea at a tea science innovation demonstration park in Rizhao on May 23. 3. Students learn to pick tea leaves at a plantation in Lanshan district on May 22. PHOTOS BY CHEN ZEBING / CHINA DAILY



4. Yunyin town in Lanshan district is a development project that combines tea culture dissemination, sightseeing and leisure activities. LU ZHONGQIU / CHINA DAILY 5. A farmer picks tea leaves at a tea plantation in Lanshan district on May 23. 6. A farmer displays newly harvested tender tea leaves at a plantation in Lanshan on May 23. 7. Visitors, wearing hanfu, experience harvesting tea leaves in Yunyin Town.

By CHEN ZEBING in Rizhao, Shandong and CHEN LIANG

Located at 35 degrees north latitude, tea cultivation was once deemed impossible in the coastal city of Rizhao in Shandong province.

Previously, the academic community widely believed that “tea trees cannot be grown north of 32 degrees north latitude”.

However, in 1954, as the government launched the “south tea northward” initiative, Rizhao embarked on a 12-year journey to cultivate tea

along its northern coastline. By 1966, this effort successfully brought tea cultivation to the city.

Rizhao's unique coastal environment, with its high-latitude maritime climate and significant temperature variations between day and night, endows its tea leaves with exceptional qualities: thick leaves, a rich flavor, a yellow-green tea color and a distinctive chestnut aroma.

Over the decades, Rizhao has grown to become one of the largest green tea production areas in northern China. It has also become one of the world's three major coast-

al green tea production cities.

In recent years, local initiatives have vigorously promoted the integrated development of the “tea industry plus culture plus tourism” model. This has led to the creation of a range of new comprehensive ventures that combine tea culture dissemination, sightseeing and leisure activities. These efforts have significantly supported the high-quality development of the tea industry in Rizhao.

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8. Workers tend tea tree seedlings in a greenhouse at the demonstration park in Lanshan district on May 23. 9. A worker sells tea products through livestreaming at a tea shop in Rizhao's Donggang district on May 25. 10. Visitors, wearing hanfu take selfies at a tea garden in Yunyin town on May 23.

