

# TALES & TRAILS

**Editor's note:**

*China Daily reporters leverage local expertise to devise diverse itineraries that showcase a blend of historical landmarks and natural wonders in highly recommended cities and sites, offering practical guidance to experience the country.*

## CIVILIZATION SHAPED BY MIGHTY WATERS

China's 'mother river' opens its cultural park, sharing with visitors its long history, expansive landscapes and unmatched heritage, **Deng Zhangyu** reports.

In the heart of China flows a river that has witnessed millennia — a silent, sage-like elder whose waters murmur tales of empires, poets and civilizations. This is the Yellow River, often revered as the nation's "mother river", which has nurtured a rich civilization for thousands of years. It's also the cradle of Chinese culture and a timeless emblem of the nation's soul and roots.

Born from the snowcapped heights of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau in northwestern China, it journeys eastward, carving through nine provinces before emptying into the vast Bohai Sea in Shandong province. Along its path, nature and humanity intertwine in breathtaking harmony.

This year, the completion of the Yellow River National Cultural Park transforms this ancient corridor into a natural and cultural museum. Spanning the river's entire course, the park preserves both the dramatic landscapes carved by millennia of its water flow — towering cliffs, mystical stone forests, deep gorges, vast grasslands, and thundering waterfalls — and the rich human heritage that blossomed along its banks.

It is here that nature's grandeur is matched by its deep history. The river basin unfolds as a cultural corridor, where ancient heritage flourished, from the Yangshao culture in the upper reaches, dating back 5,000 to 7,000 years and known for its painted pottery, to the Longshan culture in the lower reaches, marked by the emergence of rice agriculture.

Intricate Buddhist grottoes at Bingling Temple in Gansu province whisper of spiritual devotion, while the architectural marvels of Luoyang, Henan province, speak of dynasties' long past.

Each site unfolds like a page from an epic scroll, recording a chapter of Chinese history.

More than a repository of relics, the park also pulses with the cultural traditions of folk performances, artisanal crafts, festive celebrations and culinary arts that have been passed down through generations.

The allure of the Yellow River lies in its storied past and enduring vitality. Today, the Yellow River National Cultural Park not only safeguards the ecological environment of this great river but also breathes new life into ancient culture through modern display techniques and interactive experiences. Visitors can immerse themselves in the folk traditions of the river basin, sample authentic local cuisine, and appreciate the profound depth and richness of Yellow River culture.

To visit the Yellow River National Cultural Park is to embark on a journey through time — to stand where emperors ruled, poets dreamed, and nature sculpted its masterpieces. Given the park's vast expanse, a complete exploration demands considerable time, but China Daily has curated key cities along the route to offer a condensed immersion into the river's allure.

The Yellow River not only carves out majestic natural landscapes but also irrigates a brilliant culture and civilization. We invite you to experience these selected segments and witness the enduring spirit of a civilization shaped by the river's mighty waters.

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In Gansu province, the emerald waters of the Yellow River merge with the sediment-laden Taohe River, transforming into a golden hue. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY