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China's Famous Sites

China is booming, as evidenced by the impressive skylines of its prosperous cities. But there is also a world to explore outside of the busy metropolitan areas; regions of enchanting natural beauty and fascinating people, where a rich cultural history combines with modern life. The ancient teachings of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism are being rediscovered in today's China. Over the past few years UNESCO has given world heritage site status to innumerable buildings and natural wonders in provincial China.

01 Yunnan – Enchanted Forests and Shaman Priests

Located in southwestern China, Yunnan province is best known for its mountainous landscapes and impressive rock formations. Far to the south in Yuanjiang, the Hani people still use a centuries old, yet ingenious irrigation system to water the terraced rice fields. This “Stairway to Heaven” climbs high on mountainsides, overcoming an altitude differential of up to 1,500 meters.

02 Sichuan – Pandas, Bamboo and Spices

The mountainous climates of Sichuan Province are the natural habitat of the giant panda bears with their love of the cool bamboo forests. The region is renowned for its natural beauty and its cuisine, and is a favorite tourist destination. Some highlights are the Jade Lake region, rugged alpine landscapes with breathtaking vistas, rich cultures dating back thousands of years, ancient yet affective irrigation systems and last but not least, Mount Emei, one of four sacred Buddhist mountains of China.

03 Hunan – Monks, Artists, Mummies

Hunan, the birthplace of Mao Tse Tung, the son of a peasant farmer, is also famous for its cultural treasures, dating back as much as two thousand years, and spared from destruction during Mao's rule. One of a kind archeological masterpieces, Zhangjiajie National Park and one of China's oldest universities make Hunan a must-see attraction.

04 Jiangsu – Between the Grand Canal and Skyscrapers

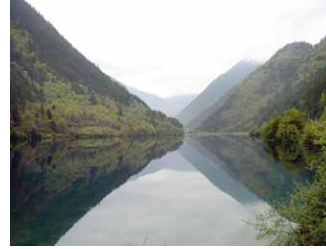
The mighty Yangtze river, the ancient, awesome Grand Canal, Lake Taihu, one of China's five largest navigable waterways, timeless villages criss-crossed by canals, referred to by some as the Oriental Venice. The province of Jiangsu, west of Shanghai, boasts a region and culture inextricably linked to the most basic element: water.

05 Anhui – The Land of Peach Blossoms

Anhui Province can't lay claim to Royal or religious monuments. Instead, it bears witness to the rich and varied rural culture, of trading houses and entrepreneurial dynasties. Anhui is a living illustration of China's rural roots. The wellpreserved ancient villages of Hongcun and Xidi have also been added to UNESCO's list of world heritage sites.

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06 Shandong – The Cradle of Confucianism

The Yellow River divides Shandong into an eastern and western watershed. Mount Tai, or Tai Shan, is one of the five sacred mountains of Taoism. The ancient Chinese “Middle Kingdom” was seen as a square, with Tai Shan marking the boundary on an eastern corner. The city of Qufu is one of China’s most important national treasures.

07 Guizhou – Caves and Tropical Forests

The site of Asia’s largest waterfall, the cascading Huangguoshu. Guizhou is a mountainous province, with hills in the west, while relatively flat in the south and east. A rough country, home to many minorities, the Buyi among them, which gives credence to the proverb: Guizhou people are so poor, they don’t have three coins to rub together. Guizhou land is so rugged, a patch of level ground is never more than three meters square. Guizhou weather is so bad, there’s never sunshine for three days in a row.

08 Guangdong – The Dragon Takes off

Guangdong lies on the coast of the South China Sea. The lights and skyscrapers of its capital Guangzhou, formerly known as Canton City, illuminate the delta of the Pearl River. Bustling with modern finance and crafts, traditional dragon makers for example, the city is also home to delicious Cantonese cuisine and all its delights.