10 Things to know about

HANGZHOU

UNESCO City of Crafts and Folk Art

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1. Historical and Cultural City.

Hangzhou is one of China's seven ancient capitals and among the first batch of “Historical and Cultural Cities”. It is not only the capital but also the economic, cultural, and science education center of Zhejiang Province. The city covers an area of 16,600 square meters with eight districts and five counties under its jurisdiction, and a permanent population of the city is 8.7 million. Marco Polo, the famous Italian Traveler in the 13th Century spent one fifteenth of his travels describing the spectacular of Hangzhou. He regarded Hangzhou as “the city of heaven” and “the finest and most splendid city in the world”.

2. UNESCO’s World Heritage — West Lake Cultural Landscape.

In June of 2011, The World Heritage Committee inscribed the West Lake Cultural Landscape of Hangzhou in eastern China on UNESCO's World Heritage List as a cultural property. The West Lake scenic spot is a historical and cultural site integrating elegant hills and lakes, splendid cultural relics and cultures and arts. It is called “Giant Landscape” with oriental artistic style and together with Lake Geneva regarded as two pearls shining in the east and the west in the world.


In 2009, the seal engraving art of Xiling Seal Engraving Art” and “Chinese Silk Weaving Skills”, which represented by “Shimizu Silk Wadding production skills” and “Hangzhou Silk Gauze Weaving Skills” were officially listed in the “UNESCO’s Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.”

4. Tea Capital of China.

Tea is the national drink in China and Hangzhou is the Capital of Tea. China is the place of origin for tea trees and the earliest country to use tea in the world. The fresh and elegant qualities of tea are consistent with the oriental traditional philosophy which promotes “quietness and indifference to fame and gain”. Hangzhou, known as “Capital of Tea in China”, has been one of the famous tea production bases in China since ancient times and endowed with profound tea culture and history. The West Lake Longjing tea produced here even ranks first in the Top 10 famous tea in China for its exquisite tea making processes and unique qualities and styles.

5. Capital City of Porcelain.
Pottery is found in almost every country around the world in history, but porcelain is only found in China. The invention of porcelain is a major contribution of China to human civilization, and China is named after it. Hangzhou has a significant position in the history of ceramics. As the old saying goes, “Hangzhou witnessed half of the entire Chinese ceramic history”. Royal porcelain kiln of the South Song Dynasty tops the five famous kilns in the Song Dynasty in China.


At the end of the Qing Dynasty and beginning of Republic of China, prosperous and delicate urban common life, especially the flourishing of modern market economy, drove the booming of handicraft products for daily use represented by “Five Hangzhou Products” (Hangzhou fans, scissors, threads, powder and smoke). A number of Chinese modern handicraft brands were emerging in Hangzhou, like Zhang Xiaoquan Scissors, Wang Xingji Fans, West Lake Silk Umbrella, Du Jinsheng Brocade, Kong Fengchun Cosmetics and Tianzhu Chopsticks. Among the “Five Hangzhou Products”, Zhang Xiaoquan Scissors and Wang Xingji Black Paper Fans were once used as imperial tributes and received repeatedly awards on Nanyang Commodity Exposition, Panama World Expo and other international exhibitions. At present, Wangxingji Fans, Zhang Xiaoquan Scissors, West Lake Silk Umbrellas and Tianzhu Chopsticks are called “Four Tourist Products in Hangzhou”.


Hangzhou has more than 30 public, corporate or private professional museums including China Silk Museum, China Museum of Knives (Scissors), Swords, Fans and Umbrellas, Museum for Folk Art Live Show and Zhu Bingren Bronze Art Museum etc. Totally, Hangzhou has 7 national museums of arts and crafts, which is the largest number compared to other cities’ in China.

8. Characteristic Events of Crafts and Folk Art.

Currently, it holds at least 10 sessions of large-scale brand culture activities every year, in which more than 100,000 people get involved. In the last few years, there are 2008 World Handicraft Conference, the 10th CIOFF Asian-Oceania Folk Art Festival, Chinese Arts and Crafts Masterpieces and Best Arts and Crafts Works Expo, and China’s Folk Artist Festival.

Currently, Hangzhou has 84 art and craft masters, including 5 national masters, 29 provincial masters and 50 municipal masters. Also, there are a large number of handicraft research and training centers relying on relevant colleges, universities and enterprises, which cover all major specialized fields and are formed into an all-around, multi-level and diversified creative talents service system including regular specialized education, vocational education and all kinds of non-professional trainings. The professor of China Academy of Art and Chinese architect Wang Shu has won the 2012 Pritzker Architecture Prize.


In Yangtze River Delta Regional Planning (2010), the Chinese government clarified the strategic position of Hangzhou as the “National cultural & creative center”, and Hangzhou aim at promoting the development of cultural & creative industries and leisure and tourism industries.