

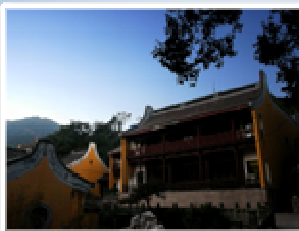
HANGZHOU

Hangzhou (pinyin: Hángzhōu; Postal map spelling: Hangchow) is a sub-provincial city located in the **Yangtze River Delta** in the People's Republic of China, and the capital of Zhejiang province. Located 180 kilometres (112 mi) southwest of **Shanghai**, as of 2004 the entire **Hangzhou Region** or Prefecture-level city had a registered population of 6.4 million people. The urban agglomeration of the Hangzhou metropolitan area has a resident population of 3,931,900 as of 2003, of which 2,636,700 are permanent residents. There are 1,910,000 residents in the six urban core districts.

As one of the most renowned and prosperous cities of China for much of the last 1,000 years, Hangzhou is also well-known for its beautiful natural scenery, with the West Lake (Xī Hú) as the most well-known location.



Six Harmonies Pagoda, (Liùhé Tǎ): Down by the Qiantang River, about a 15 minute cab ride from the lake in light traffic, but it is a pretty road to drive down through all the tunnels and tea fields. Besides the pagoda itself, which is arguably the most prominent of all the temples and pagodas in Hangzhou, there is an adjacent park with hundreds of realistic replicas of the world's most famous pagodas, complete with mini-sized trees in front of the pagoda models.



Lingyin Temple, (Língyīn Sì): Meaning "heart of the soul's retreat", this temple west of the West Lake is an active Buddhist temple at the bottom of a hill. Nearby you can take a chairlift to the top of the hill where there is another temple (walking up is also an easy set of stairs below the chairlift). This is one of the 3 oldest and most famous temples in China. There are hundreds of Buddhist stone statues carved into the cliffs in the "Peak Flying from Afar" section next door.



Leifeng Pagoda: Located on the shores of the southeast side of the lake and originally built in the year 977, all that remains of the original pagoda is the crumbling foundation, viewable from outside the glass case that it is housed in (Pagoda Remains Memorial Museum at the bottom floor of the pagoda). With escalators, elevators, and a totally new pagoda places on top of the foundation, there is not much to see within the pagoda itself; it was most recently rebuilt in 2000. However, the view of the city skyline is one of the best from here, and some of the smaller seating areas around the perimeter of the pagoda have a nice breeze and view of the structure. One of the 10 Scenes of the West Lake is "Leifeng Pagoda in Evening Glow", but this is best viewed from a distance (across the lake) just after sunset. Keep in mind that the entry fee for the

Leifeng Pagoda is very expensive (¥40/person, Oct 2008) and it's not original, just rebuilt, so if your budget is not that huge, consider to not enter the Pagoda. You can still take pictures in front of it.



Baochu Pagoda, (Bǎochù Tǎ) and the surrounding temples on this hill on the north side of the lake. You cannot climb the pagoda, but the view and surrounding Baoshi Hill are awesome.

Jingci Temple: Off Nanshan Road, built in 954, the Jingci Temple has a huge 10-ton bell inside. Located on Nanping Road, they ring the bell 108 times here to ring in Chinese New Year. It is also rung every evening for much fewer times. Jingci Temple is the site of the legend of the miraculous well, which can be seen on the grounds of the temple.

Jade Emperor Hill (Yuhuang Shan Gong Yuan): One of the least-visited sites in Hangzhou despite its somewhat central location. The main temple on top of the hill is currently under reconstruction (Aug 2008), but still offers a wonderful view of the city and lake below, and has a restaurant next door. There is another temple partway up the hill. The area can provide a quiet escape and a nice hike, as well as the chance to visit one of the few Daoist sites in the area (most other local temples are Buddhist). It is located directly south of Leifeng Pagoda. The main entrance isn't far from the Silk Museum. If you are playing along with the "10 Scenes of the West Lake" scavenger hunt still, the one that applies to the top of this hill is "clouds flying over Jade Emperor Hill".

DO

Early morning bikeride. Start on the north side of the lake, and head west towards Zhejiang University, then down Lingyin Road past the Botanical Gardens and into Longjing Village. Keep heading West and south through the tea villages, bamboo forest, and scenic valleys to the river and cut over towards Six Harmonies Pagoda. Go back to the south end of the lake via the road right next to Six Harmonies, past the zoo, through the tunnels.



Walk around the lake. It will take you about 5 hours of slow walking. The lake is not very big and there are two shortcuts (causeways) through it. You can also hire small non-motor powered boats (¥80/hour for personal boat with driver, or use the ferry services) to take you around the lake and to the two islands, which feature some interesting sites.

Spend an afternoon at a tea house. A highlight of visiting Hangzhou is getting out to Manjuelong Village, (South of the lake on top of the hill) Longjin Village or Meijiawu Village, (west and further west of the Lake, respectively) to drink your tea. These villages have had a make-over in the last 2 or 3 years and while can be busy at weekends they are still great places to while away an afternoon watching the tea being picked. The tea houses all serve very local food - pickled vegetables, chicken broth etc - but often there is no menu; rather the owner will suggest what you should eat. Make sure you get a price for the dishes before you tuck in.

INFORMATION

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