

LIFE



Locals dressed up in Miao ethnic group attire are ready for their traditional "long-table banquet" in Danzhai Wanda village in Qiongdongnan Miao and Dong autonomous prefecture in Guizhou province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Crafts, heritage brighten up Guizhou

More tourists are attracted to the rich and diverse landscapes and culture that the province has to offer, **Xu Lin** reports.

Visitors have long heard about the great Huangguoshu Waterfall in Guizhou province — one of the largest waterfalls in China.

Apart from such amazing natural scenes, many parts of Guizhou boast rich and exotic ethnic cultural heritage and unique local customs.

One example is Danzhai county in Qiongdongnan Miao and Dong autonomous prefecture, which has seven national, 24 provincial and more than 100 prefecture and county-level intangible cultural heritage sites. Guizhou ranked in the top three destinations that Chinese tourists want to visit most after the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a report by online travel agency Trip.com released in April.

In late November, the Guizhou provincial government announced that all impoverished counties have been lifted out of poverty.

Duan Qiang, chairman of the World Tourism Alliance, says this is partly thanks to the province's efforts focusing on its tourism industry. "The integration of intangible cultural heritage and tourism has greatly contributed to Guizhou's poverty alleviation work," Duan says.

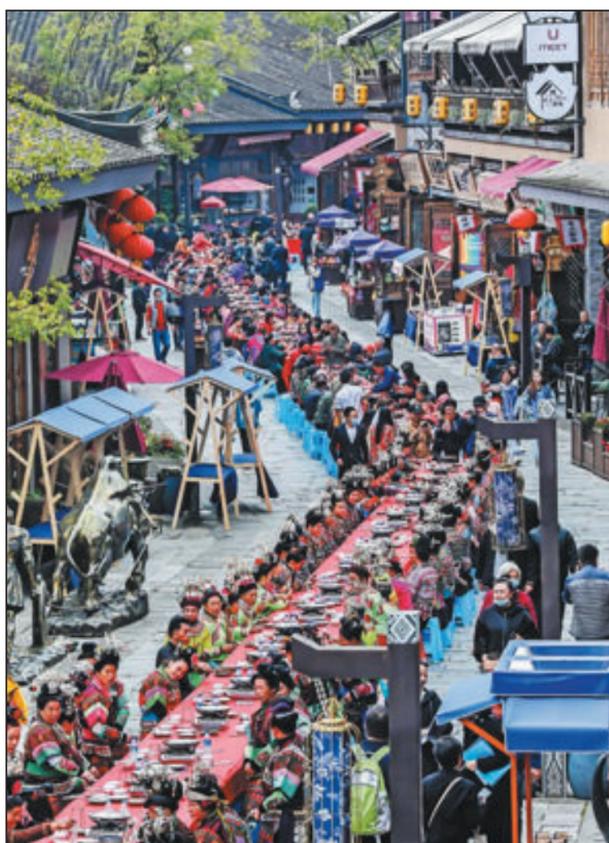
China Tourism News recently introduced 12 intangible cultural heritage tourist routes selected by experts and scholars from more than 160 routes submitted from across the country. The aim was to get tourism corporations to work more closely with intangible cultural heritage institutions, and enrich tourism offerings in the market. Among the 12 recommended routes, one of them is located in Guizhou.

In regions like Danzhai in Guizhou, intangible cultural heritage becomes an integrated experience for visitors and an essential way for locals to make a living.

Danzhai Wanda village is 145 kilometers from Guiyang Longdongbao International Airport. It is a major project started by the Wanda Group to help the county shake off poverty. The county managed to achieve this goal last year.

Since its opening in 2017, the scenic area has attracted more than 19 million tourists to its picturesque scenery and architecture, exotic ethnic culture and intangible cultural heritage activities.

Walking along a street lined with traditional architectural buildings, tourists can learn more about the Miao ethnic group's traditional silver ornaments and embroidery. In one store, tourists can learn how to dye a handkerchief in traditional batik style.



Clockwise from top: The "long-table banquet" is a tradition of Miao ethnic group with thousands of people dining on the street to mark a festival. The Miao ethnic group's traditional silver ornaments. An ethnic Miao woman works in a local factory in Danzhai county to make batik cloth to support her family. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Villagers are able to support their families with traditional skills and they don't have to leave their hometown to be migrant workers in big cities."

Wang Qiu, a villager in Danzhai, Guizhou province

At night, tourists can take a breathtaking walk across a transparent glass bridge above the river, dress up in traditional Miao costumes to take photos, and soak in the relaxing hot springs.

There is also a chance to rub shoulders with intangible cultural heritage inheritors.

Wang Dengshu learned the art of making animal-shaped clay whistles at the age of 18. His elegant colorful whistles are often shaped into animals from the Chinese zodiac.

Since 2015, the 52-year-old has been invited to showcase his craftsmanship at the Guizhou Provincial

Museum in Guiyang, along with other national intangible cultural heritage inheritors. They are also offered subsidies when they visit other cities for exhibitions.

"The government policy helps promote intangible cultural heritage. It also increases the sales of my whistles as more people know about them," says Wang, who recently visited the village for an exhibition.

In Danzhai, the Kala village is famous for its beautiful bamboo birdcages made by the local Miao people, who have used them to raise laughingthrush for generations.

Wang Qiu, a local from Kala village, says the birdcage making industry has boosted the local economy and tourism, attracting visitors to buy birdcages as souvenirs and enjoy getaways in their homestays. "Villagers are able to support their families with traditional skills and they don't have to leave their hometown to be migrant workers in big cities," says the 32-year-old.

She learned the skill, which has a 400-year history, from her father-in-law, who is a provincial intangible cultural heritage inheritor. He is one of the pioneers in the village who traveled afar in the early days to sell birdcages in other regions.

The local government offers them subsidies if they train those who live below the poverty line to make birdcages.

Wang says the price of a birdcage can range from a couple of hundred to more than 3,700 yuan (\$566) depending on the quality of the workmanship. Birdcages with exquisite carvings will fetch more handsome prices.

Some inheritors have transformed the bamboo cages into lamps or revolving bookshelves, which can make unique decorations at home.

Yang Na'niumian, a 46-year-old local from a remote Danzhai village, started work at a local factory in May to make batik cloth with a monthly salary of more than 2,000 yuan.

She will make a draft of auspicious motifs like flowers and birds with a pencil on a cloth and apply melted wax to it, which will be removed after dyeing.

Like many of her fellow villagers, Yang learned the Miao traditional batik craft of dyeing from her mother when she was a teenager.

"I used to be a housewife, so this job allows me to supplement the family income with my professional skills," she says.

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The year tourism was saved from the brink

By **YANG FEIYUE**
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With tourism still bouncing back from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, industry players continue to innovate and reinvent themselves to attract travelers.

As the year draws to a close and the industry is yet to make a full recovery, we look back on major tourism stories of the year, marking a tumultuous period of ups and downs.

Cruise quarantine

In February, 3,711 people were quarantined aboard cruise ship *Diamond Princess* in Yokohama, Japan, after a man who disembarked in Hong Kong tested positive for the coronavirus. This led to a mass cancellation of cruise trips, marking the beginning of a global tourism recession.

Consumption incentives

In March, the Nanjing government offered coupons worth 318 million yuan (\$48.5 million) to increase the purchasing power of locals and boost recovery of the service sector. Later that month, Hangzhou issued coupons worth 1.68 billion yuan. Other cities across the country soon followed suit.

Virtual tourism

Major scenic spots around the globe began offering virtual travel experiences for people cooped up at home in March. Liang Jianzhang, chairman and cofounder of Trip.com started a wave of tourism promotion through livestreaming, selling 8,000 nights of hotel stays in 1 minute and 41 sets of "hotel + scenic spot tickets" per second. Potala Palace in the Tibet autonomous region, the Palace of Versailles in France, and the British Museum also launched live online tours.

Labor Day recovery

China's tourism saw strong recovery during the May Day holiday. With epidemic control measures in place, the tourism market recovered to 50 percent of the level during the same period last year, according to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. There was a total of 115 million domestic tourists during the holiday, generating a revenue of 47.56 billion yuan. A total of nine provinces, including Guangdong and Fujian, saw tourist numbers exceed 10 million each. Tourism revenue exceed 10 billion yuan in Guangdong, Hunan and Jiangxi provinces, respectively. Scenic spots across the country limited visitor numbers to no more than 30 percent of their maximum capacity during the holiday.

Cross-provincial tourism

Travel agencies were given permission by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism on July 14 to resume group tours that crossed provincial borders, following suspension due to the pandemic. The limit on visitor numbers allowed in tourist attractions was also increased from 30 to 50 percent of maximum

capacity. Less than an hour after the restriction was lifted, the number of searches for trans-provincial group tours on online travel agency Qunar jumped nearly 400 percent. Another online travel agency, Trip.com, saw searches on its own site surge to about 500 percent.

Macao

More than 227,000 inbound tourists — 88 percent of whom came from the Chinese mainland — visited the region in August, according to the Macao Special Administrative Region's Statistics and Census Service. From Sept 23, all domestic tourists from low-risk regions can apply for tourist endorsement to visit Macao. In September, the SAR government prepared coupons worth \$36.3 million for mainland tourists to use in hotels and various shops.

Fliggy subsidies

Alibaba's online travel arm, Fliggy, initiated a 10 million yuan subsidy program in early September. The program covered tens of thousands of hotels across the country, as well as transportation and access to scenic spots and theme parks. During the second week of September, hotel bookings for the National Day holiday surged by 190 percent from the previous week, and air ticket sales increased by 160 percent.

Fly at will

From June, a dozen domestic airline companies, including Hainan Airlines and China Eastern Airlines, launched fly-at-will schemes. Tourists quickly snapped up all the fly-at-will flight tickets. Those who bought China Eastern's "unlimited weekend flights" package for 3,322 yuan redeemed more than 65,000 tickets from June 27 to 28, and nearly 90,000 trips were made using the promotion from July 4 to 5.

Preemptive rights

The Universal Beijing resort launched 10,000 "preemptive right" packages on Oct 21, which sold out in just 131 seconds. Similar packages launched on Oct 23 and 28 were also sold out within seconds. Customers who bought these packages have the right to buy tickets five days before general sale and can choose when to visit the theme park. Overall construction of the park is expected to be finished by the end of the year.

Tibetan icon

Tamdrin, a 20-year-old from Litang county in Garze Tibetan autonomous prefecture, was appointed to promote tourism in Litang after attracting online attention when a video of him smiling broadly in traditional Tibetan costume was uploaded on Douyin, known as TikTok internationally. Tamdrin then posted a short video introducing his white horse, attracting millions of views and followers. The Tamdrin effect caused searches for Litang on Trip.com from Nov 23 to 29 to shoot up 620 percent compared to the previous week.



Clockwise from top left: A group of tourists who bought China Eastern's "unlimited weekend flights" package departs from Shanghai Pudong International Airport to Guizhou's Zunyi on July 16. YIN LIQIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE The ancient town of Ciqikou in Chongqing sees crowds of visitors in early August after travel agencies were given permission to resume group tours that cross provincial borders. Wuhan's landmark Yellow Crane Tower reopens to the public on April 29. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY