

# Tourists flock to Shanxi for winter thrills

Top athletes among those championing province's wealth of snow and ice assets



Shanxi athlete Jiang Xinjie wins silver in the final of the men's snowboarding big air event at the 9th Asian Winter Games.

MOU YU / XINHUA



The Guangwu International Ski Resort in Shuozhou city boasts 16 ski courses, with an elevation difference of up to 300 meters. JI BAOQUAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

By YUAN SHENGGAO

The 9th Asian Winter Games, which ran from Feb 7 to 15 in Harbin, the capital city of Northeast China's Heilongjiang province, were not only a venue to showcase the performance of athletes, but displayed the overall development of the winter sports sector in China.

Shanxi, a province in North China, used the event to showcase its high-quality development of the winter sports sector, in terms of athletic sports, grassroots sports, the snow and ice economy and winter sports-related industries.

On Feb 10, Shanxi athlete Jiang Xinjie won silver in the final of the men's snowboarding big air event at the Games. It marked his first individual medal at the Asian Winter Games and the first for Shanxi.

In the first round of the competition, Jiang executed a flawless 1,440-degree rotation, landing smoothly to earn 83.25 points and temporarily placing him in second. After three rounds, Jiang secured the silver medal with a total score of 160.25 points.

The young talent from Shanxi has been making a name for himself over the past two years. In February 2023, he claimed second place at the X Games China 2022 Skiing Tour Finals. In 2024, he won silver in the youth group's snowboarding slopestyle event at the 14th National Winter Games. In January 2025, Jiang was selected to represent China at the Asian Winter Games.

He was not the first Shanxi athlete to garner a medal at international winter sports events.

Shanxi athlete Su Yiming was champion in the men's snowboard big air final at the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics on Feb 15 that year, securing Shanxi province's first Winter Olympic gold.

The rise of Shanxi's winter sports athletes is testimony to the province's growing popularity and rapid development of snow and ice sports.



Left: Skaters wave flags at the opening ceremony of an ice and snow carnival held in Datong's Wenyong Lake Park. ZHAO WENGUI / FOR CHINA DAILY  
Right: Tourists admire rime in the Tongtian Gorge Scenic Area in Pingshun county. ZHANG HAI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Over recent years, Shanxi's athletes have performed brilliantly in a number of national and international events.

During the 2024-25 National Alpine Skiing Championships, for instance, Shanxi athlete Liu Juntong won gold in the men's downhill event. And during the 2024-25 National Cross-Country Skiing Championships, the Shanxi team garnered one silver and two bronze medals.

After winning a gold medal at the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics, Su continued to win at a number of international events in the years to follow.

Younger athletes have continued to contribute to the development of Shanxi's winter sports. At the 2025 China Youth Ice Hockey Tournament held in Harbin from Feb 8 to 10, the Shanxi U10 team — consisting of athletes less than 10 years old — won.

Shanxi residents were not entirely surprised with the performance, as they think enthusiasm and tradition at the grassroots level are crucial to foster top athletes.

Indeed, residents in Shanxi have an enthusiasm and tradition in winter sports. Over the recent years,

there have been plenty of such events — at either amateur or professional levels — held in Shanxi.

On Dec 7, 2024, the Baidengshan ski tournament kicked off in the northern Shanxi city of Datong, attracting the participation of more than 400 professional athletes from across the country and an even greater number of amateurs.

A woman surnamed Hu, from Shangqiu city in Henan province, brought her 10-year-old daughter to the event.

"My daughter and I are both ski enthusiasts," Hu said. "While enjoying the fun and excitement of skiing here in Datong, I hope my daughter can learn from the professional athletes at the tournament."

Ski resorts are now the major destinations for winter tourism. The Guangwu International Ski Resort in the city of Shuozhou is one such destination.

Among the skiers, there was a woman surnamed Wang from the neighboring city of Datong. She said she came to Guangwu to ski because of its comprehensive facilities.

The resort boasts 16 ski courses, with an elevation difference up to 300 meters. "This allows me to per-

fectly enjoy the excitement of skiing," Wang said.

The fun of winter sports is not limited to skiing and skating. In Shanxi, there are a wide range of options for participants to choose from.

In the northern Shanxi county of Youyu, for example, winter sports have developed in multiple forms in recent years. The enthusiasm for sports is so strong that many of the frozen water bodies in the county become skiing venues in winter.

A lake in the county's Nanhewan Wetland Park is among favorites with ice and snow sports enthusiasts. In winter, the site gathers hundreds of people every day, who attend amateur competitions, learn to ski from professional trainers, or ride sleighs, ice slides and ice motorcycles for fun.

For many visitors, the most exciting sport is riding an ice slide. Built on a natural slope at the Nanshan Forest Park in the county, the ice slide is said to be among the longest in North China.

Wang Xuefei, a local and a frequent visitor to the site, said he was thrilled with the speed achieved when riding the slide.

"It takes only 28 seconds to finish the 360-meter trip," he said. "That's

almost the speed of a car on the road."

He added that he also takes his child to the venue to learn skating and skiing from the trainers.

Meanwhile, more snow and ice-related activities were held in Datong. On Jan 22, an ice and snow carnival opened in the city's Wenyong Lake Park. The event included a grassroots skating tournament and a fishing contest on the frozen lake. In addition, there were also concerts and camping activities.

In Shanxi as a whole, the province's ice and snow sports have developed into a larger-scale industry. It has a number of clubs and professional teams in such sports as skating, snowboarding, alpine skiing, cross-country skiing and curling.

In addition to residents' enthusiasm, support from local enterprises is contributing to the development of winter sports. In Shanxi, there are hundreds of entities engaged in winter sports operations, with skiing and skating venues scattered throughout the province.

There are also dozens of enterprises offering infrastructure and service support to winter sports events nationwide. During the 9th Asian Winter Games, Geely New Energy

Commercial Vehicle — based in the Shanxi city of Jinzhong — was an official partner of the event. It offered 350 methanol-electric and hydrogen-electric hybrid cars to the Games to ensure safe and low-carbon transport for the event.

Other service providers from Shanxi to the event, including State Grid Xinzhou Electric Power Supply and Shanxi Mechanization Construction Group, have all served the Games with dedicated efforts.

Shanxi views ice and snow as a precious asset to attract tourists. The tourism administration of the province recently revealed a road map to Shanxi's 38 ice and snow sports venues for tourists to choose from.

Tourism authorities said that Shanxi adopts an "ice and snow plus" approach to its winter tourism development.

For instance, many winter sports venues in Shanxi are adjacent to popular tourism destinations, offering visitors the choices of taking part in sports, sightseeing, enjoying local food and relaxing.

Ice and snow resources are adding to the glamor of tourist destinations in mountainous areas. The Tongtian Gorge Scenic Area in Pingshun county, a part of the Taihang Mountains, for example, has been drawing in a growing number of tourists in recent winters.

People are attracted there because the rimes on the trees and rocks make the gorge a spectacular sight. Rime is a special type of frost — granular tufts of ice that appear only when warm water vapor meets colder air. In the Tongtian Gorge, running streams can produce warmer water vapor and rime can be generated if a cold front comes, according to local residents.

In the scenic area, delicate rimes cover trees with filigree of frost to create breathtaking natural scenery, turning the gorge into a dreamy landscape and attracting tourists to come and take pictures.

Zhang Qi contributed to this story.



From Left: The snow-covered Yongzuo Temple in Taiyuan city offers a special sight to visitors. ZHANG QI / FOR CHINA DAILY The Qicai Taihang Yunshang Ski Resort is a new winter tour destination in Lingchuan county. ZHAO XIAYU / FOR CHINA DAILY

