



4 Diverse ethnic culture

Xiangxi area is located at 30 degrees north latitude, belonging to the subtropical monsoon climate zone. The rain and high temperature happen in the same period. It has four distinct

seasons. It is designated as one of the 17 key biodiversity areas with global significance in China, and known as “Biological gene bank in central China”. The geopark has a forest coverage rate of up to 67%, where many plants of living fossils, such as ancient metasequoia, ancient ginkgo, Chinese dove tree, ginkgo, and Chinese yew are distributed, while dozens of wild animals, such as giant salamander, pangolin, crimson-bellied tragopan, macaque, live in dense forests, among which there are some rare and endangered animals under special state protection and some species endemic to China.

The unique geological and ecological conditions in this area have provided living conditions for the human beings. Xiangxi Geopark is an outstanding example of combining geosites and ethnic culture. The traces of human activities could be found on the platforms and canyons as long as more than 10,000 years ago. In ancient times, when the human beings looked for shelters in

the process of migration, the primitive tribes went upstream along Youshui and Wushui rivers, and gradually formed the aboriginals focusing on Tujia and Miao ethnic groups in Xiangxi due to obstruction of dangerous terrains. For several thousand years, all the ethnic groups in Xiangxi have lived together in this area in a harmonious way. The unique topography and rich ecological resources in Xiangxi have resulted in mysterious and time-honored ethnic cultures, and become valuable intangible heritages. The area is mainly inhabited by the ethnic groups of Tujia and Miao, in addition to Hui, Yao, Dong and Bai ethnic groups.

In Xiangxi Geopark are still kept many original, ancient villages and towns, which truly inherit the traditional folk customs focusing on Tujia and Miao ethnic groups. The area is noted for its ancient myths and legends that have been passed on orally from generations to generations, folk operas, songs and dances of diverse styles, bright and beautiful costumes, as well as unique and delicious local food. As time goes on, the local people have built fields, houses, roads and bridges, and created a series of man-made miracles...These physical objects and intangible cultures have well demonstrated the diligence and wisdom of the local people in Xiangxi.

The splendid natural landscape, as well as the profound and long history of Xiangxi, and its fascinating ethnic culture not only highlight the unique charm of the local area, but set a good example for the harmonious co-existence between man and nature.



How to Travel in Xiangxi Geopark?

Xiangxi Geopark is a vast area with beautiful natural landscape and charming cultures. How can you enjoy it in a limited time? Here are some recommended tourist routes.

③ Recommended tourist routes

Travelling in the geopark will focus on the natural landscape including platforms, valleys and other geological wonders, as well as the folk cultures in Xiangxi area. To meet the needs and expectations of different tourists, the following six tourist routes are offered in the geopark:

1 Appropriate for those who are interested in the timeline of Earth.

Xiangxi Geopark Museum – Hulu tillite section (Ediacaran period) – The GSSP for Guizhangian Stage, Miaoling Series, Cambrian System – Guizhang Red Stone Forest (Ordovician period) – Luota Redbed in Silurian System– Luota Karst Platform (Permian – Triassic periods) – Zejia Red Stone Fortress (Cretaceous period)

2 Appropriate for those who are interested in dissolution of the ground (karst landform)

Luota Karst Platform – Luota Stone Forest – Lingdong Karst Window Group – Lanhua Cave – Zuolong Valley – Guizhang Red Stone Forest – Dafengchong Canyon – Lvdongshan – Jinlong Grand Canyon – Dehang Grand Canyon – Dalongdong Waterfall–Jianduoduo Waterfall – Tianxingshan Grand Canyon

3 Appropriate for those who are interested in biology and ecology

Luota Ancient Sequoia – Zuolong Valley National Forest Park – Donghe River National Wetland Park – Aizhai National Forest Park

4 Appropriate for those who are interested in Tujia ethnic culture

Wuzhuchong Relics – Xichehe Ancient Town – Rebala Village–Hengzhang Village– Laosiyao – Zhangjiapo Village – Zuolong Valley – Furong Town

5 Appropriate for those who are interested in Miao ethnic culture

Qixin Miao Ethnic Village – Jidou Miao Ethnic Village – Dehang Miao Ethnic Village – Chongwu Miao Ethnic Village – Pingnian Miao Ethnic Village – Lvdong Miao Ethnic Village – Jinlong Miao Ethnic Village – Shibadong Miao Ethnic Village

6 For those who are interested in architecture-transportation culture

Pavilion Bridge over Xiche River –Shelter Bridge in Rebala Village –Soaring Tower in Rebala–Stilted Building in Furong Town – Hunan-Sichuan Highway in Aizhai – Aizhai Bridge – Shibawan Hanging Road on the Cliff –Shitou Stockade in Qixin Village

③ Recommended Special Local Products and Food

The vast area and unique geological environment have provided favorable conditions and soil for the growth of various special local agricultural products. The wisdom of local people has also resulted in many folk arts and crafts, which can be used as souvenirs for tourists.



mainly including: Guizhang Maojian Tea which was used as the royal tribute in Qing dynasty; Baojing Golden Tea characterized by “high amino acid, high tea polyphenols, and high water extracts”; Cave-stored Liquor made with traditional corn and secret formula; kiwi fruit with high content of Se; top-quality Longshan lily; and mandarin orange with good taste and sweetness, etc.

mainly including: Miao paintings originating from the embroidery patterns of Miao girls; brightly colored Miao embroideries with unique styling; Tujia brocade Xilan Kapu (quilt cover); blue printed batik cloth; and plaited bamboo products made with exquisite workmanship.

Xiangxi features spicy and cured food, which combines the flavors of Tujia, Miao and Han people's food. It has a strong local flavor, mainly including: sour food (corn, vegetable, carrot and fish) of Miao ethnic group, etc.; cured meat and other cured food (sausage, bean curd, fish, etc.); native, wild vegetable (i.e., fungus, cress, fiddlehead and wild bamboo shoot); and some special cuisine (e.g., duck blood cooked with glutinous rice, food eaten in the day to worship earth God; glutinous rice cake, rice Tofu, etc.). Tourists can enjoy the food in local restaurants, and take some finished food products back home. They can enjoy different flavors in different seasons.

③ Transportation and Accommodation

As Xiangxi Geopark is adjacent to Jishou City, the capital city of Xiangxi Prefecture, tourists can firstly arrive in Jishou by bus, train or air, before they can choose their tourist routes.

The nearest airport is Tongren Airport in Guizhou, with flights to Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and other places. The airport is more than an hour's drive from Jishou City. In addition, Zhangjiapiao Hehua Airport and Huaihua Zhijiang Airport are near the city. Changsha Huanghua International Airport is 382 kilometers away from Jishou City.

At present, Jishou can be easily accessed by train, with 38 train lines passing through the city. The planned Zhang-Ji-Huai High-speed Railway can greatly shorten the travel time between Zhangjiapiao-Jishou-Huaihua.

Xikou Bus Station (0743-8229161) in Jishou has buses to Changsha, Tongren, Chengdu, Hengyang, Wuhan, Chongqing and Huaihua, etc. The 209 National Highway, Baotou-maoming Expressway (G65) and Zhangjiapiao-Huayuan Expressway (S10) passing through the city offer convenient self-drive.

Within the geopark, various transport means, including buses connecting to villages and towns, battery cars among different scenic spots, transfer buses, pleasure boats, and rented bicycle, can be offered to meet the different needs of tourists.



Welcome to Xiang xi Geopark!

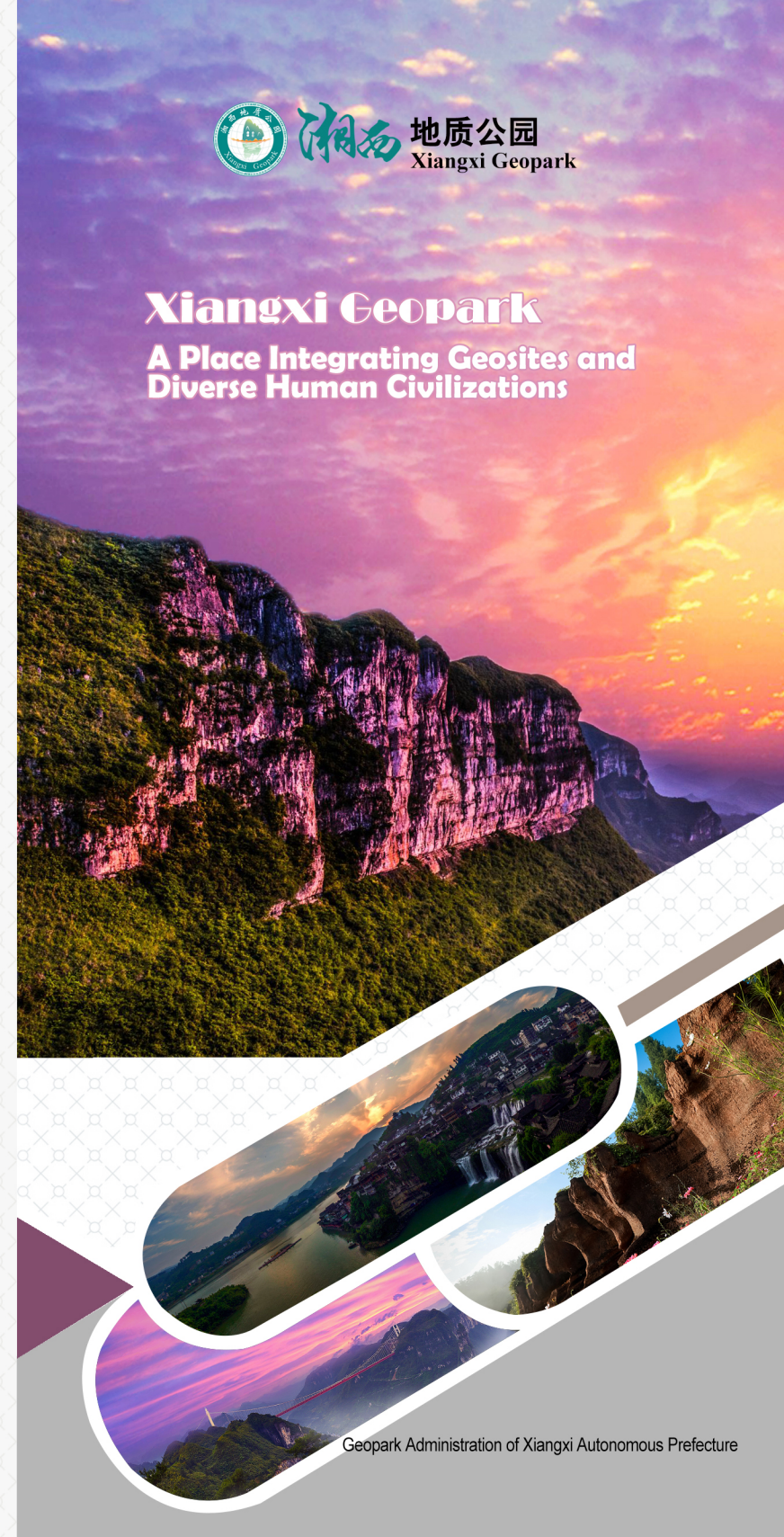


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Xiangxi Geopark
A Place Integrating Geosites and
Diverse Human Civilizations





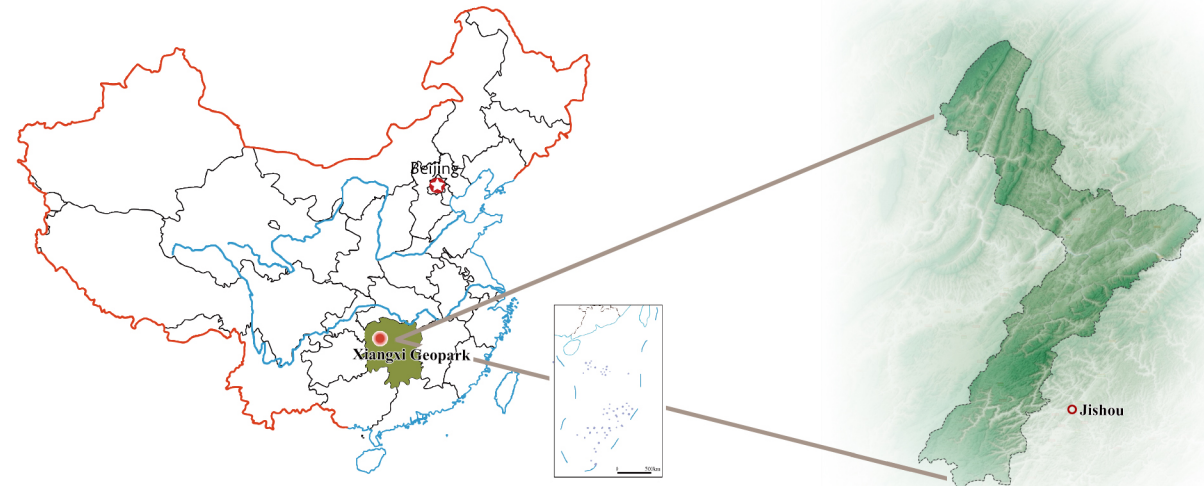
Four Features of Xiangxi Geopark



1 Diverse karst platform-canyon landscapes

The geopark is situated in the slope of eastern fringe area of Yunnan-Guizhou Karst Plateau, the second step of China, which is characterized by strong geological movement, intense incision and obviously uneven

terrain. The spectacular landscapes of incised plateau-based karst platform-canyon are formed due to erosion and dissolution of flowing water. Statistics show that the karst platforms in the geopark cover an area of 688 km². The platforms are overlain by surface depressions, dolines, stone teeth and stone forests. The geopark is home to diverse karst geological landforms, including sinkhole, shaft, cave, valley, depression, light through cave, doline, karst window and karst wall-karst pillar... This attractive landscape can rarely be seen in China, representing the incised plateau-based karst platforms in south China.



Karst platforms are often developed with valleys. The more incised and fragmented the platforms are, the deeper and more serene the valleys are. This is particularly true in the northwestern and southern areas of the geopark, where dense, vein mesh-shaped karst valley groups are formed as they are subject to fracture, and high-angle joints and fissures. On two sides of the valleys stand many karst wall-karst pillars, and hang many waterfalls.



Feature 1: diverse karst platform-canyon landscapes

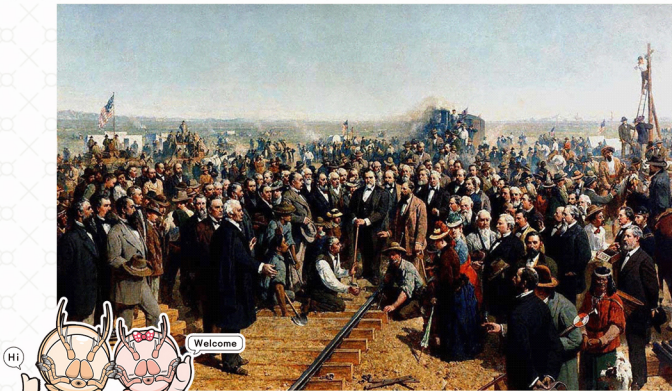


2 Rare red stone forest in the world

The major part of the Red Stone Forest is located at two sides of Youshui River, Guzhang County within the geopark. Lithologically, it comprises purple-red medium-thick layered, nodular argillaceous limestone, and bioclastic argillaceous limestone in Dawan Formation (O₁d) and Guniutan Formation (O₁g) of Ordovician system. Red and colored stone pillars with various shapes and combinations are formed due to the constraint of lithology, folds, faults, joints and fissures, under the long-term dissolution and erosion of groundwater and atmospheric precipitation, and through the differential dissolution under the soil and differential weathering of the land surface. More than 1,000 stone pillars, whose height range from 3-30m, are distributed in mountain tops, slopes, depressions, valleys and other terrains in clusters and patches to form typical slope and depression-based red stone forests. Their surface dissolution is of diverse forms, colorful and varied, with different unique and beautiful combination. It is the world's largest red stone forest landscape developed on the Ordovician red carbonate layers, and is also a demonstration site of the global red carbonate rock forests. The Red Stone Forest in Xiangxi deserves a unique type of stone forest landscape.



Feature 2 of Xiangxi Geopark: rare red stone forest in the world



3 GSSPs in the Cambrian system

Geologically, the only mark to define and recognize the boundary between the strata of two different geological eras globally is called a GSSP, or commonly known as a Golden Spike. The term of Golden Spike originates from the golden spikes in the history of American railway construction. The GSSP is to "mark a proof" for global chronostratigraphic units. Its successful "Gold nails" is equivalent to "proofing" for the global chronostratigraphy. Its successful acquisition often indicates that a country's geoscience research in this field has reached the world's leading level. Its significance is no less than the Olympic Games' gold medal and FIFA World Cup Trophy. Among the 72 GSSPs that have been defined globally, 11 GSSPs are located in China, including two in Xiangxi Geopark.



The two GSSPs in Xiangxi Geopark are: The GSSP for Paibian Stage of Furongian Series, Cambrian System (FAD of *Glyptagnostus reticulatus*) and The GSSP for Guzhangian Stage of Miaolingian Series, Cambrian System (FAD of *Lejopyge laevigata*). In the distant Cambrian period, the area where Xiangxi Geopark is located was a shallow sea, in which lived a lot of ancient organisms that transitioned from shallow sea to the deep sea. The area is now deposited as a carbonate formation. The section developed in this special geological environment is characterized by single rock facies, complete strata, continuous outcrop, obvious boundary and rich fossils. In limestone formation, Chancelloriids co-existed with trilobites, conodonts, brachiopods and hyolithoids. The first appearance datum (FAD) in the strata is called "International link point". The above-mentioned two kinds of Agnostida are actually two different types of trilobites. The sedimentary strata of the Cambrian system that extends from Paibi in Huayuan County to Luoyixi in Guzhang County in Xiangxi Geopark is the layer with the highest occurrence of chancelloriid fossils in the late period of Middle Cambrian system, which can rarely be seen in the world. This has established the position of the GSSP for Paibian Stage and the GSSP for Guzhangian Stage as the only standard stratigraphic sections of Stages 7 and 8 in the Cambrian system that have been kept intact in the world.

