



The old town scenic view at Mu's resident in Lijiang old town is a major tourist attraction due to its architectural beauty

Top tourist destinations

- Hainan Centre for the Performing Arts
- Shenzhen Cultural Center
- Capital Cities and Tombs of the Ancient Koguryo Kingdom
- Forbidden City
- Great Wall of China
- Leshan Giant Buddha
- Mao Zedong's Former Residence
- Shanghai Library
- Mausoleum of Mao Zedong
- Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall
- Beijing Liao and Jin City Wall Museum
- National Museum of China
- Gobi Desert
- Mount Everest (Himalaya's ranges)
- Thousand Buddha Mountain
- Three Gorges
- Tiger Hill
- Beijing Exhibition Center
- China National Convention Center
- Mercedes-Benz Arena
- Tiananmen Square
- Great Mosque of Xi'an
- Temple of Heaven
- Shanghai World Financial Center
- Beijing National Aquatics Center
- China Dinosaurs Park
- Dragon Tower
- Valley of the Kings
- Beijing Zoo
- Nanjing Underwater World

Why you must visit China this year

By Jacky Achan

There is a popular saying in Asia that goes, "better to see something once than to hear about it a thousand times."

Stories have been told about China in newspapers, on television, in books; you can nearly feel you know China inside-out, when in reality you have not set foot there. So, what will it take to visit China, the world's largest country by population?

Perhaps, the answer lies in another great saying, "Travel is never a matter of money, but of courage", coined by Paulo Coelho, a Brazilian novelist best known for his novel, *The Alchemist*.

If you can combine money and courage this year, the best experience awaits you as you get to tour and discover China. Here is why;

The Great Wall of China

The Great Wall was inscribed as a World Heritage site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in December 1987.

But also in 2007, more than 100 million people voted to declare the New Seven Wonders of the World of which the Great Wall of China was in the list of the winners representing a global heritage.

The Great Wall of China is a chain of multiple walls spanning about 6,438km (4,000 miles), but the official length is indicated as about 21,197km or 13,171 miles, making it the world's longest man-made structure.

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Built between the 5th BC and 16th century, the Great Wall of China is a stone-and-earth fortification created to protect the borders of the Chinese Empire from invading Mongols an ethnic group native to Mongolia and to China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.

More than 2,300 years old, The Great Wall of China is a cultural representation of the early Chinese society. It attracts many tourists who get to admire traditional Chinese architecture at its best.

Adrian Bwanika, a journalist who has navigated this wall, describes it as the best experience of his life.

"I managed to go up to the top and received a medal; we were only 10 out of 40 who got to the top." For Bwanika it was great seeing such a landmark conserved for many years. Impressive too is that the local Chinese tourists come in large numbers.

The Forbidden City

It is considered the capital of



Tourists at the Beijing National Stadium also known as the Bird's Nest



The landscape of Lijiang old town as viewed from Shizi mountain Wangu in Lijiang, Yunnan

the ancient Chinese Kingdom and is located in the middle of Beijing. The Forbidden City was residence for 24 emperors of two dynasties for a period stretching over 700 years.

It was named Forbidden City because it was illegal to enter its gates without royal permission from the emperor. The Forbidden City is vast in

size and covers 74ha, hosting more than 8,700 rooms.

The Forbidden City attracts tourists from all over the world who come to have a look at what is the traditional heart of China.

The Himalayas (Mount Everest)

It is also known as the roof of



Yueyang tower is among China's top three towers

the earth. The Himalayas are a chain of mountain ranges which are located along the China-Nepal border in Tibet.

It is famous for being the site of the highest mountain on earth, Mt Everest. The Himalayas were formed by tectonic plate nearly 70 million years ago but they are some of the youngest mountains in the

world.

Distinct from being the highest point on earth, the Himalayas attract thousands of mountaineers, tourists who attempt to reach its highest peak of Mt Everest. The name Everest was given by the Royal Geographical Society in 1865.

Other tourist attractions

Known for its great man-made attractions, China too has natural wonders that rival many other natural wonders in the world

According to topchinatravel.com, Jilin Rime in Jilin City located at bank of Songhua River in the north of China is distinct by the cold weather and mild water, which contradict each other making, it one of the natural wonders in China.

There is also the Stone Forest in Yunnan Province. The stones are odd and strange, towering up from the ground. Some look like trees and others look like walls. Because of its uniqueness, the stone forest attracts numerous tourists, both local and international ones.

The Hukou Waterfall is reportedly the most magnificent waterfall in China. The largest waterfall on the Yellow River, and second largest in China, Hukou Waterfall is known around China for once gracing the 50 note official currency of the People's Republic of China.

Measuring 20m high and 30m wide, the fall is located on the border of Shanxi and Shaanxi provinces. The May to October flood season is the best time to visit, when water flow and velocity increase, sometime swelling the fall into a 50m-wide spectacular scene.