

Invitation to Wild Three Gorges expedition

It's summer time now. *Changjiang Weekly* highly recommends Enshi Wild Three Gorges as a resort due to its unique landscape. It is a soothing site for urban tourists within convenient reach by car.



Wild Three Gorges Scenic Area

The Wild Three Gorges Scenic Area is located in Jianshi County, Enshi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture. The mountains, rivers, and wilderness are all well-preserved in the area. It also boasts colorful rock faces, sharp mountain ridges, clear springs and creeks, waterfalls, trees in blossom, woody vines, disused mountain passes, and old streets.

The area is home to the living Tujia culture — with customs like crying at a wedding ceremony and dancing at a funeral. The relics of Jianshi Homo Erectus who lived in the caves 2.15 million years ago, and the unearthed Hu Niu Chun Yu (a military troop's marching drum with a knob on the top in the shape of a tiger), which is the totem that they inherited from the Spring and Autumn / Warring States Period, are some of the many samples of its tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The mountain residents have maintained their way of life over thousands of years.

The Wild Three Gorges is a panorama of monumental mountains and water, nature and culture, all in harmony.



Yellow Crane Passage



The relics of Jianshi Homo Erectus

The Yellow Crane Passage, located just south of Huaping Town and on the north side of the Qingjiang River, was named because of a chasm on the top of a steep cliff, from which legendary yellow cranes soared. A passage was once built there to bridge the chasm and that is where the name Yellow Crane Passage comes from. There is a full range of rock outcroppings around there: stone-columns of different sizes, rocks in bizarre shapes, deep valleys, chasms, clefts, and vertical slopes.

The Qingjiang River Valley is located in Jingyang Town. The 28-kilometer Jingyang section of the Qingjiang River that flows through the valley is, to quote local poets, "the best of the best upon the 800-kilometer main stream of the Qingjiang River." As the river comes up against a narrow section flanked by high mountains and vertical cliffs, the colorful ridges, rocks, and waterfalls, this area resembles a riverside gallery. The area consists of three parts from north to south: the Wildman Gorge, the Wild Water Gorge, and the Wild Mountain Gorge.

In Mazhaping Village, Gaoping Town, 12 kilometers upriver along the Wildman Gorges, lies the relics of Jianshi Homo Erectus, who lived between 1.95 and 2.15 million years ago. The Homo Erectus is called Wildman by the locals.

Foodies will surely be intrigued by the local Tujia cuisine in the village dining halls, like fresh chubs from the Qingjiang River, Jingyang chicken, muntjac, Tujia bacon, and minced meat with tofukasu. The Tujia folk songs and dances, campfire parties, and cottage home stays are also all part of the fun of the area.

Address: Jingyang Town, Jianshi County, Tujia, and Miao Autonomous Prefecture, Enshi, Hubei (湖北省恩施土家族苗族自治州建始县景阳镇)

Transportation: Drive 430 km along the Shanghai-Chengdu Expressway, and leave the way at Jianshi Exit, then drive 9 km along Hong'er Road until you reach the destination.