

Travel Within China

JIUZHAIYOU

By David Straughan

Learn:

Jiuzhaigou, which translates to 'Nine Village Valley', is one of China's most stunningly beautiful and well-recognised tourist attractions. Situated in Sichuan Province's Aba prefecture, Jiuzhaigou has long been the home of nine traditional Tibetan and Qiang ethnic minority villages with a rich highland agricultural heritage dating back centuries, perhaps even millennia. In a move to protect the environment, the national government put a ban on once-rampant logging in the area in 1979, and in 1982 declared the area a national park. The area was finally opened to tourists in 1984 and has since climbed tremendously in popularity. Nowadays, Jiuzhaigou is labelled as a UNESCO World Heritage site and is well-outfitted for tourism.

Do:

One would be hard-pressed to find an area of the world with more jaw-dropping scenery than Jiuzhaigou. The park is renowned for - well, just about everything scenic. The mountains provide an excellent scenic backdrop to an incredibly diverse array of foliage and terrain, but it's the water that's the star of the show. Jiuzhaigou's rivers, streams and waterfalls are coloured an almost fluorescent blue due to the water's unique mineral content, providing plenty of opportunity for well-deserved 'oohs' and

'aahs'. Simply put, have your eyes and your camera ready at all times. There is not much to do in the surrounding areas, which is probably for the best since it would be a shame to be distracted from the park's immense and stunning beauty.

Eat:

Perhaps one of the biggest drawbacks to the development of Jiuzhaigou as a tourist destination is the influx of opportunistic, overpriced and rather mediocre dining options that have sprung up around the park. However, this is still Sichuan province we're talking about here - one of the world's greatest culinary regions - and as such there is a wealth of fiery, flavourful food to be found in the area; just make sure to ask for advice on where the authentic stuff is. A fantastic and unique choice for dinner is A Bu Lu Zi, a traditional Tibetan establishment serving up tasty food not easily found anywhere else. Try anything yak-related or one of the many, many vegetarian dishes for a sure fire winner.

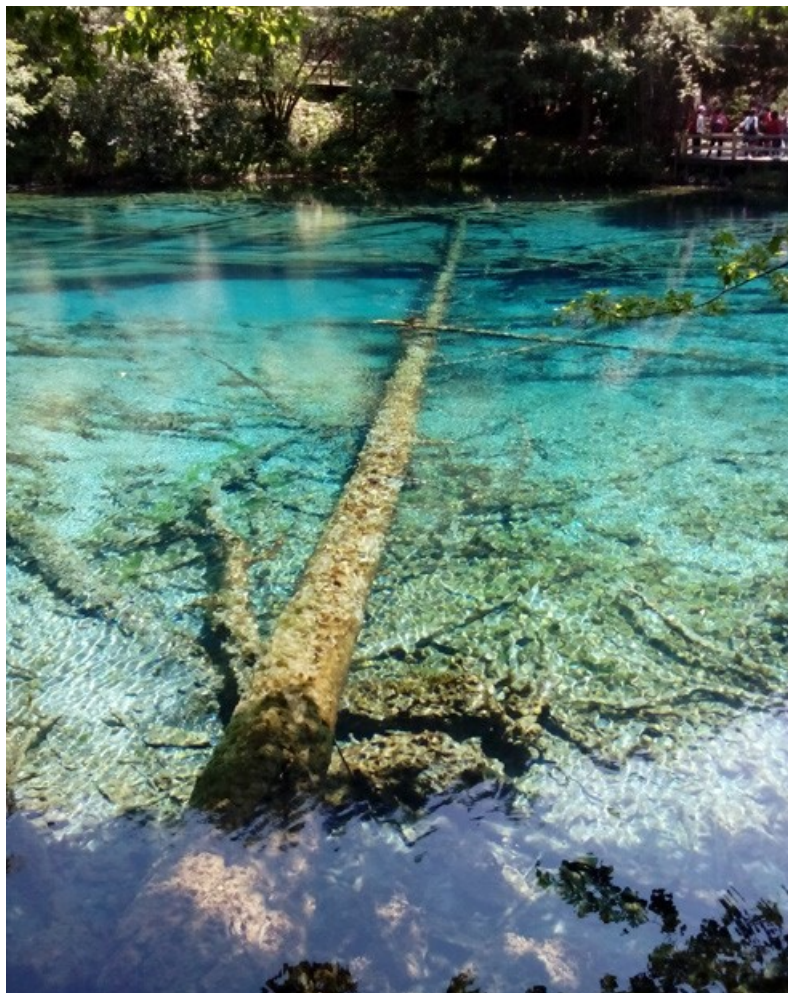
Stay:

For those seeking a high-class stay with all the accoutrements, Sheraton Jiuzhaigou Resorts is about what you've come to expect from this world-class chain. The atmosphere, food and accommodation are all outstanding

and it's not far from the park itself. For a more 'local' stay, Angelie Hotel is a great choice. It's about a 15-minute walk from the park, the rooms are cosy and serves surprisingly good western and Chinese cuisine. The hotel owner, present and attentive throughout most of the day, is perhaps the Jiuzhaigou area's best host, having intimate knowledge of the area and possessing a real knack for understanding the needs of a variety of different types of travellers.

Ultimately, there is far too much that can be said about Jiuzhaigou. While there are certainly some frustrations that come from its rapidly-growing popularity; namely the crowds at the more well-known scenic areas and long lines to get in the park and on buses, the awe-inspiring natural beauty is well worth the minor inconveniences. Do yourself a favour and take a stroll through some of the park's less beaten paths which may not be quite as dramatic by comparison, but are soothing to the soul in the peace and quiet they provide and are still pretty darn beautiful. Also, remember to put down the camera every once in a while and see one of the world's most unique places in real-time, full HD. ■

Photos by: David Straughan



中国境内游 | 九寨沟

作者：汤善达

简介：

九寨沟是中国最美丽、知名度最高的旅游景点之一。位于四川阿坝自治州，九寨沟拥有9个藏族村寨以及一些羌族村寨，它有着几百年，甚至是几千年的丰富的高原农耕历史。为了保护这里的环境，中国政府于1979年下令禁止在这片曾经遭到疯狂砍伐的区域伐木，在1982年政府宣布九寨沟成为国家自然保护区。1984年，这里首度向旅客开放，自那以后，它便越来越受到游客们的欢迎。现在，九寨沟已被列入联合国教科文组织世界自然遗产，成为旅游的理想之地。

玩：

想要在世界的其它之处找到比九寨沟更令人惊奇的地方是非常不易的。该保护区如此出名，是因为它处处是景。那里的山脉映衬着多种美得令人窒息的植物和地貌，但是九寨沟最大的亮点是那儿的水，由于水中含有独特的矿物元素，九寨沟的河、溪和瀑布呈明亮的蓝色，你需要随时随刻准备好你的眼睛和相机。在那片区域，尽情饱览美景是最令人满足的事情，如果你的注意力从自然区无边无际的美景中转移到别的事物上，那就太可惜了。

吃：

作为旅游胜地，九寨沟在发展中的最大缺点之一也许是机会主义的出现，自然区中的就餐点定价普遍偏高。然而，我们现在所讨论的还是位于四川省境内，这个世界上最棒的美食地之一，因此火辣的重口味食物在该区域还是很多的；你所要做的就是问问哪里有正宗的美食。有一个非常独特的就餐选择叫阿布穆孜，一家提供在别处吃不到的美食的传统藏族餐馆。尝尝牦牛菜式，或是许许多多蔬菜菜肴中的其中一种，绝不会有错。

住：

对于那些寻找高标准住宿的人们来说，九寨沟喜来登国际大酒店，这个世界一流品牌一定不会让你失望。那里的环境、食物和住宿都非常出众，离自然区也不太远。如果你想选择更为“本土化”的住宿，九寨沟三喜宾馆是个非常不错选择。从自然区步行15分钟就能到达，那里有舒适的客房，并提供好的出乎意料的西餐和中餐。酒店的老板在大部分时间都待在那里，他对那片区域有着深入的了解，并深知各类不同旅客们的需求，他或许是九寨沟最棒的主人。

九寨沟的美是难以用言语来表达的。虽然快速增长的受欢迎程度让那儿有不尽人意之处，如著名景点前拥挤的人群，入口处和等大巴时的长队，但是那里令人惊叹的自然美景能让这些“不便之处”非常值得。你可以在自然区一些非常规路径上漫步，那儿也许并不会非常幽静，但却足以用宁静和平和抚慰你的心灵，景色也依旧美丽。还有，记得不时的拍拍照，用高清的画面实时地记录下这个世界上最美丽、最独特的神奇之地。

图片来源：汤善达

