ZHANGJIAJIE NATIONAL FOREST PARK
All Things You Need to Know

Mountains In Zhangjiajie National Forest Park

Zhangjiajie National Forest Park is a must-see for nature and photography lovers. What to see in such a huge park? How to avoid the crowds...

- The Top 6 Attractions You Shouldn’t Miss
- Recommended Itineraries
- The Best time to Visit
- How to Get There
- Recommended Restaurants and Hotels
- Insider Tips
- Nearby Attractions

The Main Areas of Zhangjiajie National Forest Park

Zhangjiajie National Forest Park is mainly divided into two parts, the top sections and the bottom sections of the park.
The scenic areas at the top of the mountains are:

- Yuanjiajie: where the Avatar mountains are
- Tianzi Mountain: incredible view from the cable car
- Yangjiajie: the least-crowded area, with spectacular scenery, and challenging hiking

The scenic areas at the bottom of the mountains are:

- Golden Whip Brook: nice for a comfortable walk along a stream
- Yellow Stone Village: less spectacular than Yuanjiajie, but less crowded
- Suoxi Valley: a leisure valley for a tram ride or a walk

1. Yuanjiajie: Where Avatar Mountain Are

- Visiting time: 2-3 hours
- Fitness needed: ***

Yuanjiajie is a natural platform where you can enjoy sweeping vistas of the grotesque rock pillars. It is the most famous and most crowded area for the Avatar Mountain.

At the top of the mountain, you will enjoy a walk along the cliffside with picturesque avatar views.
Avatar Mountain in Zhangjiajie National Forest Park

The top three attractions: Avatar's "Hallelujah Mountain", The First Bridge under Heaven, and Enchanting Terrace.

**Avatar's Hallelujah Mountain**

It is a 1,080-meters (3,540 feet) vertical pillar. It served as the inspiration for the floating mountain, the Hallelujah Mountain in the famous American film “Avatar”, so got its name.

The best place to take the photos of it is standing on the bridge which directly faces the mountain.

**The First Bridge under Heaven**
The First Bridge under Heaven In Yuanjiajie

It is a natural bridge spanning 25 meters (27 yards) between two mountains. With a height of 400 meters, it is the highest natural bridge in the world. You can step onto it and appreciate the natural creation.

Enchanting Terrace

You can see many mesas of various shapes and sizes. If visiting after a rain when the peaks are shrouded in mist, you will find you are standing in a celestial wonderland.

Bailong Elevator
Bailong Elevator In Tianzi Mountain

It is the highest outdoor elevator in the world against the wall of the mountain. It brings you to 336 meters height in just 88 seconds. It is a quick trip to the top of the mountain.

The elevator is not recommended if you visit during peak time. You might be met with a long queue, 2 hours or more.

Here are two alternatives:

- One is to take the cable car at the bottom of Tianzi Mountain from where take a shuttle bus to Yuanjiajie;
- The other one is by hiking from Luanchuan Slope in the middle of Golden Whip Stream to Back Garden which takes about 80 minutes along the way.

2. Tianzi Mountain: Incredible View from the Cable Car
Tianzi Mountains is another famous area of Zhangjiajie National Forest Park. It is about 20 minutes travelling from Yuanjiajie by shuttle bus.

The place is so rich in green trees and rocky mountains, and everywhere you go you can see the mountain peaks.
The things you shouldn't miss in this are:

- “Nod-to-the-General Platform”: a place where you will see hundreds of tall rock pillars of different shapes.
- “The Emperor’s Pens” are 3 finger-like mountains towering into the sky.
- The cable car is the highlights for many visitors. Sit in the cable car and you will feel like you float through the clouds. The view is incredible.

3. Yangjiajie: the Least-Crowded Area with Challenging Hiking
Yangjiajie in Zhangjiajie National Forest Park

- Visiting time: 3-5 hours
- Fitness needed: *****

Yangjiajie is located at the northwest of Zhangjiajie National Park. This route is only good for hiking lovers because there are lots of steps and challenging climbing even though you take the cable car up.

The rewards for the visitors are no queue and breathtaking scenery.

If you are generally fit, we recommend visiting the Natural Great Wall, Tianbo Mansion (天波府) and One Step to the Heaven (一步登天). Need to walk many steps uphill and downhill.

4. Golden Whip Brook: Relaxing Walking along a Pristine Creek
At the bottom of the mountain, the Golden Whip Brook is a place where you can enjoy a pleasant walk along the stream's edge.

The stream flows below the floating mountains. You can have a new angle to admire the towering pillars, standing tall like upright javelins.

You can do the entire walk which is 7.5 km long, about 2 hours.

Along the way, you are likely to encounter some wild monkeys. You can even see them swimming in the river in the summer months which is pretty cool to observe.

Avoid carrying any food in the open, unless its in the bag. Don't keep any shiny wrappers, candy etc. as they will get taken away.

5. Yellow Stone Village: Less Spectacular than Yuanjiajie, but Less Crowded
Yellow Stone Village in Zhangjiajie National Forest Park

- Visiting time: 3 hours
- Fitness needed: ***

There is a saying that "If you didn't visit Huangshi Village, you can't claim you has come to Zhangjiajie".

It is called Huangshi Village or Yellow Stone Village, but it is not actually a village.

The amazing views are similar to the area around Yuanjiajie, but it is relatively quiet due to many Chinese tour groups don't visit this place.

You either walk up or take the cable car (72 RMB) to the top of the mountain. There's a loop that surrounds the mountain with tons of incredibly nice scenic spots, overhanging cliffs, high staking platforms, jagged rocks...

Some people chose to take the cable car up and walk down which is definitely a good option for older people or people with kids. The hike downhill is only 60 minutes and relatively easy.

6. Suoxi Valley: A Leisure Valley for a Tram Ride or a Walk
Suoxi Valley in Zhangjiajie National Forest Park

- Visiting time: 1 hour
- Fitness needed: *

The most special part of Suoxi Valley is the cute ground level monorail train.

You can take the mini train to travel through the gorgeous 5 kilometers gorge, and you will see many peaks rising in various shapes, looking like “statues” carved by nature. You won’t miss the sights Three Lady Peaks, Old Man Peak, Monkey Slope and so on.

Another two famous attractions in Suoxi Valley Scenic Area are Baofeng Lake and Yellow Dragon Cave. They are out of Zhangjiajie National Forest Park, and they are not included in the ticket of the park.

Recommended 2 Days Itineraries in Zhangjiajie National Forest Park

It is usual to spend 2 days in Zhangjiajie National Forest for the main attractions. If you want to discover deeper, you can spend one or two more days. The ticket is valid for 4 days.

Here is a sample itinerary for a 2-day tour, for your reference:

**Day 1: Tianzi Mountain and Yuanjiajie**

AM: Take a cable car up Tianzi Mountain

PM: Ride a public shuttle bus to Yuanjiajie Scenic Area. In the end, take Bailong Elevator or get back
to the cable car down the mountain.
If time and energy permits, Yangjiajie can be added.

Yuanjiajie Mountains In The Forest Park

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**Day 2: Ten-mile Gallery, Golden Whip Brook and Yellow Stone Village**

AM: Take a shuttle bus to Ten-mile Gallery, and take the mini train to enjoy the view along the gorge.
Afterward, take a bus to the Golden Whip Brook. Enjoy a walk for 1 to 2 hours.
PM: Visit Yellow Stone Village. Take a cableway down the mountain.

**If you only have one day...**
If you only have one day, just visit the highlights: Tianzi Mountain and Yuanjiajie.

**If you travel with kids...**
If you travel with kids or want to visit without too much hiking, make the most use of the cable cars, elevator, tram and shuttle bus.

Walking is not hard at the main attractions, where concrete paths and steps have been built.

The recommended scenic areas are:

- Tianzi Mountain: Take the cable car up and down.
- Yuanjiajie: The Bailong Elevator takes you up and down the mountain.
- Golden Whip Stream: Enjoy an easy walk on the paved road alongside the stream.
- Ten-Li Gallery: Take a tram to enjoy the view at a slow pace.
Transportation within the park

**Free Eco Buses**

There are free Eco buses plying along the mountain top as well as the valley. Note that both these routes are fragmented, i.e. it is NOT a closed loop. Strongly suggest you do some research on the actual bus routes.

**Cable Car, Elevator and Tram**

Inside Zhangjiajie National Forest Park, there are three cableways, an elevator, and a tram (also called the mini train).

- 3 cable cableways at Tianzi Mountain, Yangjiajie and Yellow Stone Village
- An elevator up to Yuanjiajie: the longest outdoor elevator in the world
- A tram at Ten-Li Gallery: an option if you want to enjoy the view leisurely.

You can combine the two ways to get to and from different parts of the park, such as:

Take the elevator up to Yuanjiajie, and take a shuttle bus to Tianzi Mountain, and then take a cable car down the mountain after a full day of walking.

The cable car ride from Upper Station of Tianzi Mountain to Lower station of Tianzi Mountain is the most scenic one.

The elevator is always crowded, try to avoid during peak season.
Please note that they are not included in the price of your park entry ticket. It is about USD 10-12 for a single trip.

**When to Visit Zhangjiajie National Forest Park**

The best time to visit the park depends on what scenery you want to see.

Generally speaking, the best periods to visit are April to June, and September to early November, with beautiful scenery, comfortable weather and few crowds.

*April to June* is a great time for taking photographs. The forest is full of vigor, leaves are verdant, buds are tender. Misty landscapes are likely to show after rain.

In the months of *July and August*, keep in mind that you might experience heavy rainfall and thick fog due to the monsoon season and many Chinese tourists because of summer vacation.

*Summer View In Zhangjiajie National Forest Park*

Autumn months from *September to November* offer you with fabulous fall foliage and cooler and drier weather.

Winter months from *December to March* are low season, with far fewer tourists and lower prices of hotels. It is likely to see snow scenery in the mountains from mid-January to late February.

**Travel Smart - Dates to Avoid in 2019**

- Labor Day week: April 29-May 1, 2019
Dragon Boat Festival: June 7-9, 2019
Mid-Autumn Festival: Sept. 13-15, 2019
China National Holiday: Oct. 1-7, 2019

How to Get to Zhangjiajie National Forest Park

Zhangjiajie National Forest Park is about 30 km (18 mi) from central Zhangjiajie City. You need to get to Zhangjiajie City by air or train, and then take a bus or car to the national forest park.

Step 1: Get to Zhangjiajie City by Air or Train

By Air

The nearest airport of the national park is Zhangjiajie Hehua International Airport, about 35 km from the park.

There are direct flights from Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, etc. The flights from Chengdu to Zhangjiajie are available on Sunday, Wednesday and Friday.

If there is no direct flight from your cities, such as Xi'an, Guilin and Hong Kong, consider taking a connecting flight at Shanghai, Guangzhou, or Changsha.

By Train

If you travel from Guilin or Yichang, you can consider taking a train to Zhangjiajie.

- Guilin-Liuzhou-Zhangjiajie (overnight train, more than 12 hours)
Yichang–Zhangjiajie (5 hours)

Check out Ctrip.com to figure out the best train schedule for you.

**Step 2: Get from Zhangjiajie City to Forest Park by Bus or Car**

From Zhangjiajie Airport to Wulingyuan (the national park)

There is no direct bus from the airport to Zhangjiajie National Forest Park. You have two options:

- Take a taxi, about 100 RMB.
- Take bus No. 4 to Zhangjiajie Bus Station (1 RMB, 08:00 – 18:00) first, where there are tourist shuttle buses to Zhangjiajie National Forest Park, departing every 10 minutes. It takes 35–40 minutes and costs about 10 RMB.

From Zhangjiajie Train Station to Wulingyuan (the national park)

- Take a taxi, about 100 RMB.
- Turn left and walk about 100 meters to Zhangjiajie Bus Station for shuttle buses.

**Recommended Restaurants**

**In the Park:** There is a KFC at Yuanjiajie, a McDonald's at Tianzi Mountain, a few restaurants offering local flavors and some snacks stalls. Even though options are limited, it is enough to have a simple lunch. You can also bring some snacks on your own.
Near the Park: For your dinner, you can have more options in Wulingyuan Town, a small town near the national park.

If you want to try local cuisine, here are two recommended restaurants: Mr. Tang Tujia Restaurant (唐师傅土家食府) and Mr. Hu Restaurant (胡师傅三下锅). You can also find many restaurants at Xibu Street (溪布街).

Where to Stay

We recommend you stay in Wulingyuan Town where you can find many hostels and hotels. Here are some recommended hotels:

- 5 star: Zhangjiajie Pullman Hotel
- 4 star: Santo Domingo International Hotel Zhangjiajie; Zhangjiajie Qinghe Jinjiang International Hotel
- 3 star: Wulingyuan Hotel;

You might hear that there are some hostels inside the park itself. We don't recommend that because they are illegal (they were banned two years ago for environment protection.) and their facilities are limited.

Insider Tips

1. Start as early as possible in order to beat the crowd.
2. Get yourself a map to help navigate your way around Zhangjiajie National Park. Most hotels provide a free map.
3. English is not widely spoken/understood. Hence, have all your intended destinations printed in Chinese, to facilitate asking for directions. We recommend you hire a private guide, who can help you beat the crowd and save time.
4. Wear comfortable shoes and prepare for a lot of walking.

Nearby Attractions
The other two famous attractions Tianmen Mountain and Zhangjiajie Glass Bridge are not in the national forest park.

**Tianmen Mountain**, adjacent to Zhangjiajie City, about 50 km (31 miles) from the national forest park, is famous for its breathtaking scenery, the thrilling cliff-hanging glass skywalk, and the world's longest cable car ride.

**Zhangjiajie Glass Bridge**, about 45 km (28 miles) from the national park, is famous for the world's longest and highest glass-bottom bridge.

We hope this guide helped you plan your trip to Zhangjiajie National Park and that you love it as much as we did! Share this article to your friends or family who are also interested in this attraction.