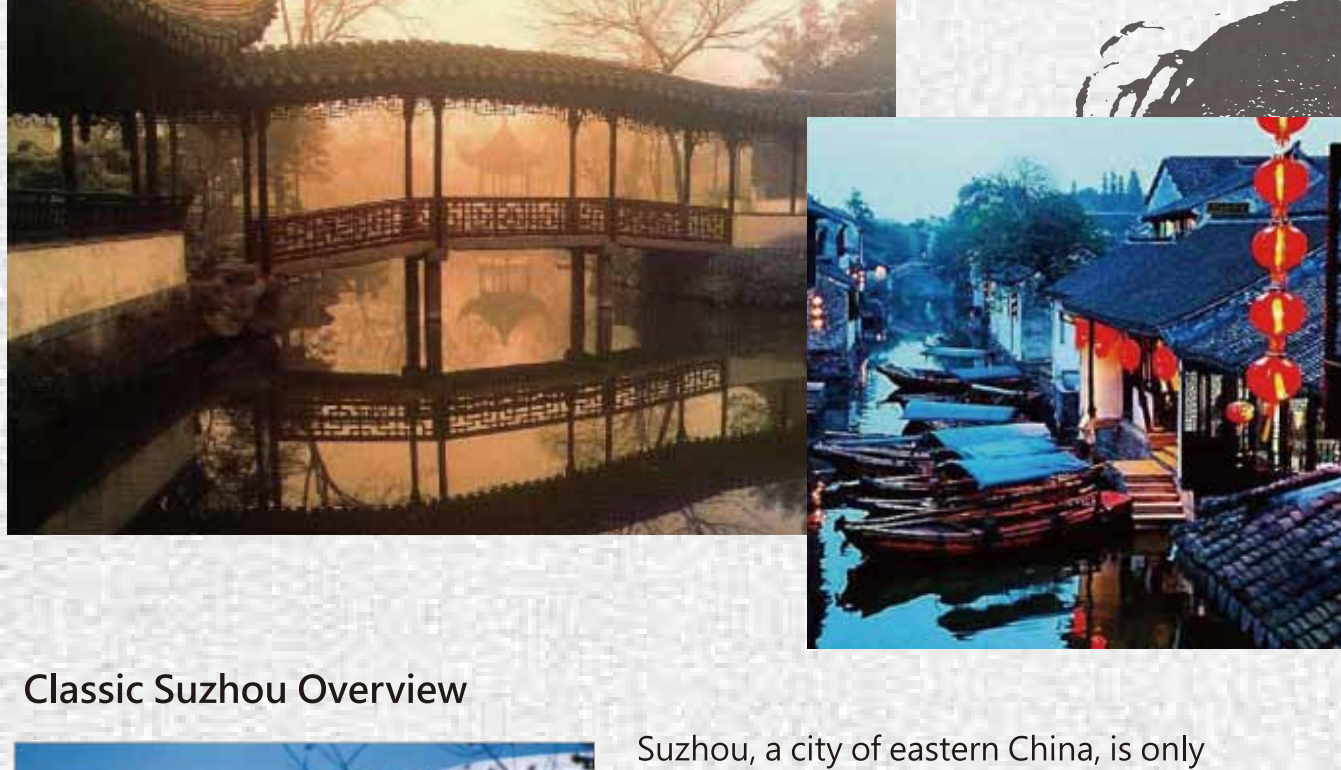
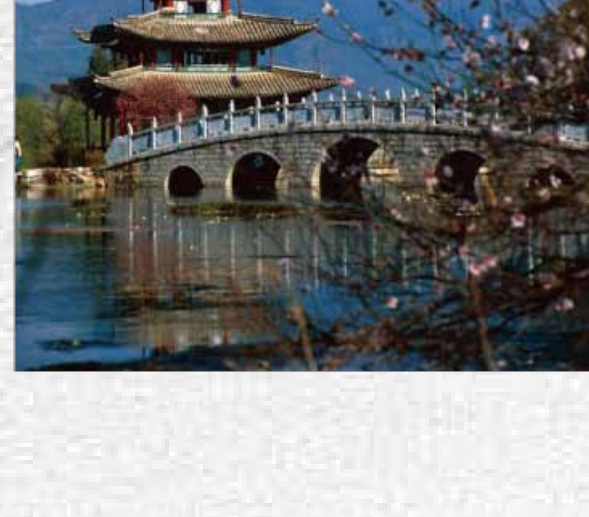


# Paradise on Earth – Suzhou, China 苏州

Suzhou is the most exquisite garden city in China, noted for its unique layout, intertwined with waterways, stone bridges and private gardens.



## Classic Suzhou Overview



Suzhou, a city of eastern China, is only one-hour from Shanghai, on the lower reaches of the Yangtze River and on the shores of Lake Taihu in the province of Jiangsu. It was the capital (6th - 5th century B.C.) of an ancient vassal state – the Wu kingdom of Zhou Dynasty. It was renamed Suzhou in the 6th century A.D. and is famous for its classical gardens, beautiful stone bridges, pagodas, silk, Grand Canal and canal-side housing, which have contributed to its status as one of the great tourist attractions.

Since ancient times, Suzhou has always been one of the most prosperous cities in China. The GDP per capita was RMB106, 412 (\$15,322) in 2008, ranked 2nd among 659 Chinese cities.

## Location and Population



Suzhou lies in the Yangtze Delta, bordering Shanghai in the east, Zhejiang Province in the south, Lake Taihu in the west and the Yangtze in the north. Its east longitude is between 119°55" and 121°20" and its north latitude is between 30°47" and 32°02" with an altitude of about 4 meters. The total area of Suzhou is 8488.42 square kilometers, 2.7% of that mountainous; 42.5% under water. The land under cultivation occupies 288160 hectares. Built-up urban areas cover 1,650 square kilometers.

Suzhou is composed of Suzhou Downtown and 5 county-level cities. Suzhou Downtown contains seven Districts: Wuzhong, Xiangcheng, Pingjiang, Canglang, Jinchang, Suzhou Industrial Park and Suzhou New Hi-tech District. The 5 county-level cities are Changsu, Kunshan, Taicang, Wujiang and Zhangjiagang. Suzhou has a population of 5.8 million, of which 2.1 million live in urban areas.



## History and Culture

Suzhou, the cradle of Wu culture, is one of the oldest towns in the Yangtze River Delta region, which retains much of its original character. 2500 years ago in the late Shanghai Dynasty, local tribes who named themselves "Gou Wu" lived in the area which in time would become the modern city of Suzhou. After the completion of the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal the city began to thrive. Suzhou served as the centre of silk trade along the bustling waterway. Marco Polo once marveled at the city's prosperity and he recorded that its inhabitants were comprised of "prudent merchants, and, as already observed, skilful in all the arts". Polo noted that a number of the Suzhou people were learned in natural science, were good physicians and able philosophers. In Polo's words, the city of Suzhou was "great" and "noble".

During the Ming dynasty (1368 - 1644) with an increased concentration of silk manufacturers based here, Suzhou became a leading silk fashion center. However, the city also faced difficult times; during the 1860's Suzhou was occupied during the end of the Taiping rebellion and then again in World War II.

With the foundation of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Suzhou has once again rightly reclaimed its fame and developed into one of the most prosperous cities in China. As far as tourism development is concerned, it has been chosen as one of China's 24 historical and cultural cities and is one of only four tourist cities with top environmental protection (the other three being Beijing, Hangzhou and Guilin). In 1997, Suzhou caught the world's attention by having its classic gardens placed on the UNESCO list as a World Cultural Heritage site. Since then, tourism has grown along with a burgeoning economy.

## Attractions in Suzhou



Lingering Garden (留园)  
UNESCO World Heritage  
One of the top 4 classic gardens in China



Humble Administrator's Garden (拙政园)  
UNESCO World Heritage  
Famous for its lush landscape



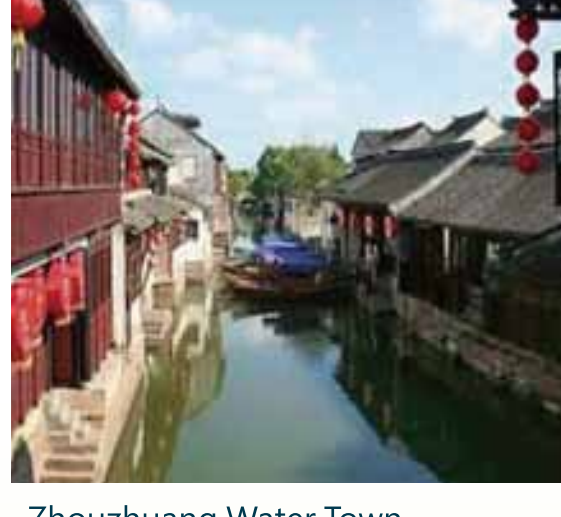
Guanjian Street (观前街)  
Well known for many one-century characteristic shops with profound Taoism culture.



Central Park (苏州中央公园)  
A beautifully landscaped park with large greenery and an open-air cultural square.



Master of the Nets Garden (网师园)  
Constructed in 1140 AD UNESCO World Heritage



Zhouzhuang Water Town (周庄)  
A water town with profound culture & elegant waterways  
Regarded by Marco Polo as the "Venice of the East"



Ouyuan Garden (耦园)  
A classic garden built by a couple  
Everything comes in pairs in the garden



Luzhi Water Town (用直古镇)  
A simple and beautiful water town  
Known as a "Land for Bridges"



Hanshan Temple (寒山寺)  
A peaceful temple with a long history  
Famous for its bell-tolling sounds mentioned in a remarkable ancient Chinese poetry



Panmen Gate (盘门)  
A famous historical landmark in Suzhou  
Estimated to be 2,500 years old



Suzhou Ferris Wheel Park (苏州摩天轮主题公园)  
120 meters high  
60 capsules imported from Switzerland



Suzhou Museum (苏州博物馆)  
More than 15,000 historic artifacts  
2,200 sqm of display area



Tiger Hill (虎丘)  
An over 1000-year-old landmark of Suzhou  
Featuring the Yunyan Pagoda which predates the Leaning Tower of Pisa



Tongli Water Town (同里)  
A water town in the Wujiang county  
UNESCO World Heritage