Hello! China
Suzhou Travel Guidebook

Group Tours with Solo Adventure!
Suzhou Quick Facts

- **City Name:** Suzhou (苏州, sū zhōu)
- **Population:** 10.7 million (2012)
- **Location:** East China
- **Features:** A city boasting the most famous Chinese classical gardens.
- **Area Code:** 0512
- **Zip Code:** 215000

Overview

The city of Suzhou, situated on the shores of Lake Taihu in Jiangsu Province near the Yangtze River, is and has long been one of the key cities of the rich Yangtze River Delta. Due to its favorable location and many sites of interest, Suzhou is one of the most popular tourist destinations in all of China.

The city of Suzhou is known above all for its garden culture. A prosperous city even as it was being founded, Suzhou gave rise to enormous personal wealth that was translated into elaborate private gardens, many of whose histories can be traced back to the origins of the city and are among some of China's best and most exquisite. The height of Suzhou garden art was during the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) Dynasties.

The Wu culture produced a rich tapestry of cultural influences that would shape the city of Suzhou beyond the cultural period defined by the Wu state proper.
Suzhou is located in the lower reach of the Yangtze River, belonging to the monsoon ocean climate zone, with slightly cold winter and humid summer. The best time to travel is during the spring and autumn seasons.

Table of average temperature of Suzhou in each month of the year.

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What to See in Suzhou
Lion Grove Garden (Shi Zi Lin) is one of the 4 famous gardens of the city of Suzhou in Jiangsu Province. It was originally built in 1342 in the 2nd year of the reign of Emperor Zhizhen (1341-1368) during the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368).

The most important thing that visitors should remember about Lion Grove Garden is that it was constructed as a scholars’ garden, and thus there are many references to Chinese literature, calligraphy, and in general to the open-mindedness that characterized the Chinese scholar after Confucianism had transformed Chinese society into one where philosophical contemplation went hand in hand with frivolous cavorting, much like it does today on a modern university campus.

Covering an area of roughly 1,000 square meters, Lion Grove Garden is certainly famous for its unique Tai Hu stone formations, or rockeries in addition to the ancient lion creations. These odd rocks, some boulder-sized, have all been collected from the bottom of Lake Tai, then stacked atop one another to create a maze of nooks, crannies, caverns, and peaks which, from a distance, give the illusion of miniature mountains. Specially shaped Tai Hu rocks are given prominent placing, such as those that resemble lions. It is the rockeries that define this garden, and therefore it is no wonder that it is also called the Rockery Kingdom.

- **Adress:** No.23 Garden Road, Suzhou City
- **Admission:** 20-30yuan
- **Opening Hours:** 8:00—17:30
- **Getting there:** Tourists can take No.1, No.2 or No.5 touring bus, No.202 (former No.2), No.204 (former No.4 bus), No.23, No.549 (former No.29 bus), No.40, No.78, No.301 and No.305 bus to Lion Grove Garden. You can visit Suzhou Folk Custom Museum at the same time and go to Humble Administrator's Garden after walking one hundred meters southwards along Garden Road.
Tongli Ancient Town

This ancient town is surrounded by water on its four sides and contains five lakes: Tongli Lake, Jiuli Lake, Yeze Lake, Nanxing Lake, and Pengshan Lake. Buildings sit next to the water, giving the area its name, "Small Oriental Venice." Tongli's main features are plentiful water and bridges, buildings from the Ming Dynasty and the Qing Dynasty, celebrities, and refined scholars. Tongli is famous for small bridges, flowing water, and households.

Attractions

Tongli's major attractions are a garden, two halls, and ternate bridges. Tuishi Garden, Chen Qubin's former house in Shanyuan Street, was listed in the Focus Cultural Relic Unit under State Protection.

The ternate bridges, Taipeng Bridge, Jili Bridge, and Changqing Bridge, are a treasure of bridges built during the Ming Dynasty and the Qing Dynasty.

Gengle Hall was built during the Ming Dynasty and has survived the rise and fall of several dynasties.

- **Get There:**
  Transport: Tongli is a town under jurisdiction of Wujiang city (at county level) Jiangsu province, seven miles apart from Songlin, the location from Wujiang government, and 25 kilometers from the urban area of Suzhou. In Suzhou, Wu Jiang and Shanghai buses are dispatched at high frequency.

- **Opening Hours:**
  Opening hour: the whole day
Tiger Hill

Known as the “First Scenic Spot in the State of Wu”, Tiger Hill (虎丘) is absolutely a must-see when visiting Suzhou for its leaning tower and legends. It is ranked #5 of 200 Suzhou attractions on Trip Advisor.

Located five km northwest of Suzhou City, Tiger Hill is famous for its leaning tower, legends, stunning scenery in the lush park.

Legend
Emperor Kangxi has visited Tiger Hill four times in his life and even stayed a night in the palace on the hill in 1707. The name of the temple on the hill was renamed as Hufu Temple (虎阜禅寺) and the plaque is still hung on the temple until today.

What to See
Tiger Hill is actually located in a lush park with well-marked trails and useful English guide. It is so big that the park absorbs the crowds perfectly and visitors are easy to find a tranquil area to rest.

The leaning Tower in the park is the reason attracting most visitors.

Wanjing Resort (万景山庄) in the east of the park is the gathering area for bonsai in Su style.

It is worth noting that there is a stone well in the hill named Luyu Well (陆羽井) since it was dug by Lu Yu in the Tang Dynasty (618 A.D-907 A.D).

- **Best time to visit:** May to July
- **Address:** 8, Inside the Gate of Tiger Hill, Suzhou
- **Get There:** Take bus 32, 949, 146 and 快3 to Huqiu North Gate (虎丘北门).
- **Opening Hours:** 07:30-17:30
- **More Tips:** Suggested visiting time: 2-3 hours
The Lugu Lake is a magnificent body of water which is tucked amidst gorgeous land formation. This is like a shimmering gem which rests right in the middle of the hills and mountains in Yunnan. Hence, the immense beauty that envelopes the surroundings can be very overwhelming.

The great thing about the Lugu Lake is that it is not too far from the main streets of the Lijiang City. People do not have to go too far to be able to escape the noisy streets and busy areas of the city. This lake is just about 200 kilometers from the center.

There are also five different islands which can be seen in Lugu Lake. Some people climb up the higher plane to be able to catch a glimpse of the five islands and take beautiful pictures. When seen from a bird’s eye point of view, the five islands look like boats which gracefully float on the serene water of the lake.

- **Location:** Jinxi Ancient Town, Gunshan County, Suzhou City
- **Get There:** In Kunshan railway station you can take No. 107 bus to bus station and then take CMB to Jinxi with the journey of 40 minutes which costs you 6 Yuan. On every weekends or holidays, you can take chartered touring car to Jinxi in Shanghai Hongkou soccer stadium and Shanghai Stadium Drive by oneself: exit of Kunshan in Shanghai-Nanjing expressway - Zhougong Road - Jinxi
- **Ticket Price:** 50 yuan/person
- **Opening Hours:** whole day
Grand Canal is the earliest and longest canal in the world. It is about 1,700 kilometers long. It has played a great role in the economic and cultural communication and the development between the north and south of China.

Known as one of the oldest canals, the Grand Canal along with the Great Wall are considered as two great exploits well-known to the whole world. It is a wonder created by ancient people, and has become a spirit wealth passed down from generation to generation. It is an important surviving human legacy. In the process of the development of our two-thousand-year-long history, the Grand Canal has made a great contribution to the growth of economy, unification of the country, progress of the society and the prosperity of culture.

At present, although not the whole Grand Canal is navigable, it still plays a significant role in the transit of coal, building materials, salt, commercial products, provisions, oil and so on. Furthermore, as the main route of south-to-north water diversion, the old Grand Canal will surely coruscate the youth and vitality again.

• **Add:** The Grand Canal starts from Beijing and extends to Hangzhou.
• **Ticket Price:** The ship fare from Hangzhou to Suzhou is about 130 to 55 according to different types of ships.
• **Getting there:** Coming from Suzhou, you can take boat from the South Door dock. If you are from Hangzhou, you can take water from the Wulinmen dock.
• **More Tips:** There is only one ship from each side Hangzhou to Suzhou or Suzhou to Hangzhou everyday. The ship leaves at 17:30 and arrives at 7:00 a.m.
How to travel in Lijiang

**Suggested Itineraries**

**Travel to Suzhou in Two Days:**
- **Day 1:** Arrival - The Administration Garden - Ancient Grand Canal - Lingering Garden
- **Day 2:** The Garden of the Master of Nets - Rickshaw Ride - Departure

**Travel to Suzhou in Three Days:**
- **Day 1:** Arrival
- **Day 2:** The Administration Garden - Ancient Grand Canal - Rickshaw Ride - Lingering Garden
- **Day 3:** Tongli Water Town - Departure
Recommended Suzhou Tours
2-day Hangzhou & Suzhou Highlights Tour

Day 1 Hangzhou to Suzhou
West Lake, Qinghefang Pedestrian Street, Meijiawu Tea Village and transfer to train station

Day 2 Suzhou (Departure not Included)
Humble Administrator's Garden, rickshaw ride in Suzhou, Panmen Gate and an embroidery institute

3-day Suzhou & Hangzhou Tour from Shanghai

Day 1 Shanghai to Hangzhou (Train G7409 0839-0942)
Train station transfer, sightseeing in Hangzhou (West Lake, Lingyin Temple and Feilai Peak. and a tea village)

Day 2 Hangzhou to Suzhou (Train G7390 1708-1847)
Qinghefang Pedestrian Street, Huqingyu Tang Chinese Traditional Medicine Museum and the famous Six Harmonies Pagoda.

Day 3 Suzhou to Shanghai (Train G7101 1814-1839)
Visit Humble Administrator Garden. Sitting on a rickshaw, we will ride through the city and visit the ancient water-defense system of Panmen Gate.

Leave Suzhou for your next destination Click [http://www.chinatravel.com/tours-to-suzhou/](http://www.chinatravel.com/tours-to-suzhou/) for more Suzhou tours. If you want to design your own tour, China Travel can help [tailor-make a tour for you](http://www.chinatravel.com/tours-to-suzhou/) which can save your time, money and trouble!
What to Do in Suzhou
Tianping Mountain is an attraction with abundant humanistic and natural sceneries. It has been a place of great interest ever since Tang Dynasty. From then on, many famous people in the history such as Bai Juyi, Fan Zhongyan, Tang Bohu, and Emperor Qianlong went there, leaving a large amount of poems and travels. Along with its rich humanistic recourse, it is also famous for its grotesque stone, crystal spring and red maple, which are known as the three treasures of Tianping Mountain. In front of the mountain, there are a number of maples with a history of more than 400 years, which were planted by Fan Yunlin (Fan Zhongyan’s offspring). When the winter is coming, the mountain is colored red by maple just as when the sun is going down, the sky is covered with afterglow. It is extremely spectacular. Therefore it becomes a good spot to appreciate maple.

Tianping Mountain is located in the west of Lingyan Mountain in Suzhou and is at an elevation of 211 metres. It is named Tianping Mountain because of its smooth top. It has another name, Baiyun Mountain, because the top of the mountain is often surrounded by clouds. Furthermore, it is named Fanfen (grave of Fan Family) Mountain for the grave of Fan Zhongyan’s ancestor is located there.

- **Location:** situated 3 km northwest of Mudu Town
- **Get There:** Visitors can take the number 4 bus to get there.
- **Ticket Price:** 18 Yuan in low season and 25 Yuan in peak season.
- **Opening Hours:** 08:00-17:00
- **More Tips:** To appreciate the charm of Tianping Mountain and the beautiful maple, it is better to go there in early winter.
The Humble Administrator's Garden, located on Dongbei Street in the city of Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, is a traditional landscape garden in the style of the south Yangtze River region. It features streams, ponds, bridges, and small, man-made islands that are covered in bamboo plants. The main pond comprises roughly 60% of the entire garden, such that it can be seen from any particular point on the grounds. As beautiful as it is, it is no wonder that the garden's creator wished for it to play a prominent role in his creation.

During the Tang Dynasty (618-907), the site of the present-day Humble Administrator's Garden was a typical scholar garden featuring, among other elements, rockeries. Later during the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368), the scholar garden was transformed into a monastic garden for the nearby Dahong Temple. Finally, it was during the reign of Emperor Zhengde (1505-1521) in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) that a dismissed government official by the name of Wang Xianchen returned to his hometown of Suzhou and purchased the land on which the temple and garden stood.

The Humble Administrator’s Garden requires about an hour's leisurely walk to take in everything on a first pass, but the garden is truly worth a second, more studied look, as it is rich in history, and perhaps irony as well.
What to Eat in Suzhou

Suzhou Food belongs to Su Cuisine, one of the eight famous culinary schools in China. In sum, Su cuisine has the following several characteristics: first, with precise material choice and exquisite and fine cooking, it is made according to materials and on schedule. Second, it excels in a variety of common cooking methods such as stewing, simmering, baking over a slow fire, warming-up, steaming, sautéing and stir-frying. Next, it has a clear and fresh taste with moderate saltiness and sweetness, which is thick without being greasy and light without being thin. Finally, it places an emphasis on flavoring soup and retaining original juice.
Crispy Rice Crust Soup

No.1 dish, also called crispy rice crust soup, is a famous traditional dish of Shi’s Hotel. The special features of the dish are: shrimp meat is white and tender, crispy rice crust is golden yellow and crispy and tomato is red with sweet and sour. Fried crispy rice crust and put it into the bowl with lotus leaf soup and then pour it with boiled oil; made sauce with shrimps and tomatoes. When it served, put the hot sauce into the bowl with crispy rice crust. Legend has it that when Emperor Qianlong toured the south of the Yangtze River and tasted the crispy rice crust by chance, he could not stop praising: “the dish can be regard as the No.1 dish in the world.” The name of the No.1 dish came into existence from then on.

Boat Dessert

Suzhou Boat Dessert is a part of the sumptuous Wu banquets that used to be served on traveling boats in Suzhou during the Ming and Qing dynasties.

Suzhou was known as the "Oriental Venice" due to the rivers and the water canals in the city. Since the boats were the chief means of transportation within Suzhou, boats of all descriptions such as large flat-bottomed junk, lightship, fast boat, touring boat, variety-show boat, etc. used to be plying through the Suzhou city waters. Many of these boats were equipped with kitchens.

Local businessmen, used to take advantage of the exotic surroundings provided by the boats and entertain the businessmen from Wu area by giving banquets on boats. This practice resulted in the boat dishes becoming more and more sumptuous. The Wu banquets, as they came to be called, used to serve cold dish for drinking followed by fried dishes. The dessert used to follow the last big dish made of fish. The cooks knew the psychology of the diners and so the desserts used to be small and exquisite like ornaments on the elaborate feast; the desserts used to be beautiful to look at and delicious in taste. These desserts served on the Suzhou boat banquets had earned fame in their own right as Suzhou Boat Dessert.
What to Buy in Suzhou

Shopping at Suzhou is not only to enjoy the materials, but also to receive a kind of taste and culture. The rivers and lakes at the south of the Yangtze River bring intelligence to the Suzhou people, which make them produce particularly delicate goods. As early as in Ming and Qing Dynasties, the goods will be sold extraordinary well so long as they have a “Su” character on it.
Suzhou Fan

Suzhou Fan is the general term for Suzhou folding fan, sandalwood fan, silk palace fan, paper fan. Suzhou Fan is well known for its long history and refining craft ship. The folding fan got its name for folding is keeping, and is also called scattering fan for scattering it while opening to use. The frame is mainly made of bamboo slats with fan surface made from rice paper. Suzhou fans were produced first at Southern Song (1127-1279) and flourished in Yuan and Ming Dynasties when many masters appeared. Levigation bone jade folding fan attracted many experts to write poems and draw pictures and carve on it when came out, then formed the fine and elegant style. The “Old Fan face”, well-known for its fine, strong, even and endurable quality, is the best among the Suzhou fans. With the paintings and calligraphy, this fan can be appreciated as well as cool people. The area of Peach blossom Shipyard of Changmen has been the centralized place for Suzhou fan ever since.
What to Buy in Suzhou

**Padauk Carving**

Suzhou padauk carving has a long history. It has formed the Su style---the style of simple modeling, upright and straight lines, worked excellently and well polished since Ming Dynasty. The wood for padauk carving products are mainly used to decorate meeting rooms, dining rooms, studies. They include beds, tables, sofas and wardrobes. There are other products like boxes, plates, rolling scrolls, etc. Tub-shaped objects, chests and animals, flowers, characters are engraved in the way of shallow relief, relief sculpture and engraving. The padauk first must be dried in order not contract, distort or crack. The main products are whole set furniture as beds, cabinets, desks, sofas etc, What’s more, the padauk are also used to decorate higher class bedrooms, dining rooms, reading rooms and meeting rooms. They includes the small things as boxes, plates, seats, tables, folding screens; the craftworks as canister, cages, covers as well as characters, beasts, and flowers through simple carving, embossing or engraving skills; and some travel souvenirs: chopsticks, seal boxes, the bookmarks, line boards, teacup saucer and other thousand varieties.
Suzhou embroidery, multi-colored and gorgeous, is regarded as a pearl of Chinese art. The original place of Suzhou embroidery is in the area of Wu County, and now it has already spreaded to Wuxi, Changzhou, Yangzhou, Suqian, Dongtai and other places of Jiangsu. With fertile land and mild climate, Jiangsu is a good place for raising silkworms; as a result this place is rich in silk and wins the name of the town of brocade and embroidery. The superior geographical environment, the gorgeous brocade, and the prismy thread together create favorable condition for Suzhou embroidery. Daily necessities of Suzhou embroidery do not only varied stitches, superb workmanship and elegant colors, but the designs have the meaning of festivites, longevity, fortune which are welcomed by the populace. There is also an upscale variety, called "the picture embroiers" or "Lady's chamber embroidery".
Solo Adventure in Suzhou
Tongji Restaurant

Tongji Restaurant has broken the tradition of beverage and food service by moving from the old city town to the shopping mall on the Lvbao Plaza of the high-tech region, becoming the first “restaurant in the air”. With 11 years' experience, Tongji restaurant has won a high prestige for its traditional Suzhou cuisine. The main dishes are the old-baked goose, fish, roasted pig hoof, and Monochoria vaginalis and so on. You can make a reservation before you go.

Songhelou Restaurant

Songhelou Restaurant, created in 1737 during the Qing Dynasty, is the most famous old trademark of Suzhou Cuisine. This 2000-year-old Songhelou Restaurant in Taijian Alley has long been known for its authentic Suzhou dishes. The restaurant fully inherits the traditional features of Suzhou Cuisine, attaching importance to materials, cutting and duration and degree of heating. While maintaining tradition, the restaurant has made many innovations. Songhelou's most popular dishes are freshwater fish and shrimps, including sweet and sour mandarin fish, fried snails with shrimps and braised eel.
Grandma’s Restaurant (外婆家餐厅), with an area of over 1,000 square meters, is a very famous local restaurant in Suzhou, boasting dishes of bright color, unique flavor and excellent taste. Due to its tasty cruises and reasonable prices, the restaurant is always very crowded and you can always see people waiting in long lines.

Specialties
Grandma’s braised pork in brown sauce (外婆红烧肉), tea scented chicken (茶香鸡), stewed bean curd with minced pork in pepper sauce (麻婆豆腐), green tea cake (绿茶饼), steamed eggs with clams (蛤蜊蒸蛋), puree of peas (青豆泥), braised eggplant (鱼香茄子), shredded perch soup with ham and ginger (宋嫂鱼羹), bean curd with Fish (豆腐鱼), coral shrimp (珊瑚虾)

• **Average Price:** 47 Yuan per person
• **Business Hours:** 10:30-14:00; 17:30-21:00
• **Transportation:** No. 68, 158, 219, 53, 148, 818, 26, 156, 261, 812, 109 and 100 buses
Garden Hotel Suzhou

Rooms
There are 238 well-appointed rooms and suites, consisting of presidential suites, deluxe suites, deluxe family suites, ambassador suites, executive suites, executive family rooms, deluxe rooms, executive rooms and villa Chiang. Internet, English (Chinese) newspaper and magazines are convenient.

Feature
The hotel specializes in classic Su cuisines and Yangtze River flesh seafood. Guests have easy access to both Chinese cuisines and Western cuisines provided by a variety of restaurants and lounges. Japanese teppanyaki is also one of the highlights in the hotel.

Suzhou Garden Hotel is the only state guest hotel with a garden villa-style in Suzhou, since 1952, the hotel has received many Communist Party leaders, foreign dignitaries and privileged travelers.

Transport
The hotel is only 4 km away from Suzhou Train Station. With a extremely convenient location, many buses can take passengers to the Suzhou Garden Hotel, such as bus No.47, bus No.202, bus No.811, bus No.931, bus No. 529, bus No.55, bus No.204, bus No.501, bus No.261, bus No.8, bus No.89, bus No.50, bus No.40, bus No.309, bus No.200 and tour bus No.2.

- Nearby attractions:
Suzhou University, Hanshan Temple, Jinji Lake, Humble Administrator's Garden, Surging Wave Pavilion and Lingering Garden

Address:
No.99 Daicheng Bridge Road, Canglang District, Suzhou

• Hotel Tel: 0512-67786778
• Quick Enquiry: +86-773-2838787
Pan Pacific Suzhou

Rooms
Despite the traditional architecture, Pan Pacific Suzhou has 481 modern designed rooms, including deluxe rooms, superior rooms, grand deluxe rooms, grand deluxe garden-view rooms, Pacific VIP garden rooms, Pacific VIP sunlight rooms and Pan Pacific VIP suites, guests are guaranteed with center air-conditioner and internet.

Feature
The hotel specializes in local Suzhou specialties and Cantonese, and offers access to a variety of western cuisines and Asia cuisines. Traditional Italian dishes with a nouvelle cooking style perfectly present guests a new Italian dining experience.

Transport
Pan Pacific Suzhou is 4 km away from Suzhou Train Station, less than 1 km from Suzhou ferry, and 11 km from Suzhou North Railway Station. Passengers can take bus No.51 and bus No.935 to the hotel for forty minutes.

- Nearby attractions:
  Garden of Surging Wave Pavilion, Joyous Garden, Suzhou Ancient Canal, Ruiguang Temple, Guan Qian Walk Street, Humble Administrator's Garden and Lion Grove Garden.

- Address:
  No.259 Xinshi Road, Suzhou, Jiangsu, China
  吴宫泛太平洋（原吴宫喜来登）

- Hotel Tel: 0512-65103388
- Quick Enquiry: +86-773-2838787
Crowne Plaza Hotel Suzhou

Rooms
Crowne Plaza Hotel Suzhou has 402 unique, elegant rooms, consisting of deluxe rooms, grand crown deluxe, deluxe king-size rooms, royal scenery rooms, royal executive rooms, deluxe lake-view rooms, executive rooms, royal superior suites and executive suites. Hair dryer, in-room safe and air-conditioner are available in all rooms.

Feature
Crowne Plaza Hotel Suzhou provides a variety of flavors, ranging from the authentic Brazilian cuisine offered by La Isla restaurant, Cantonese, authentic Japanese served in Sun Seeker restaurant, to all kinds of cocktails and wines. Guests can also enjoy one of the most famous Suzhou dishes “Sweet and Sour fish” in the hotel.

The boat-like hotel provides indoor and outdoor swimming pools, and the luxury Wellness Spa helps gusts unwind fatigue from body to soul.

Transport
Crowne Plaza Hotel Suzhou is 22 km away from Suzhou New District Railway Station, 8.6 km from Suzhou Railway Station, 3.8 km from Suzhou North Railway Station. Passengers can take subway No.1 and get off at Gate of the Orient, or bus No.68 and bus No.2 to the hotel.

• Nearby attractions:
Suzhou Exhibition Hall, Han Shan Temple, Lingering Garden, Jinji Lake, The Tiger Hill, Embracing Beauty Mountain Villa, and Suzhou Industrial Park
Suzhou Transport

Suzhou has an advantaged geographical location. At present, the whole city has formed a huge cubic and open transportation structure. It has many types of transportation and forms circles in the outskirts of a city, nets in the counties and countryside. The waterway and the land route go side by side. The Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal in Suzhou boundary and the Suzhou-Hangzhou Highway run through the north and the south; The Shanghai-Nanjing Railway and Shanghai-Nanjing express highway wind from east to west. The highway is accessible from all directions within the territory, the rivers and harbors cover densely. So the land and water transportation is convenient and rapid.