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ZHANGJIAJIE

3 Days

Shortguide



a travel guide

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INTRO

Zhangjiajie—this city in the mountainous region offers some of the most breathtaking landscapes in all of China.

You can reach the city from all major airports and train stations in the country. From the airport in Zhangjiajie—as in almost all Chinese cities—it's easy and affordable to take a Didi (the Chinese equivalent of Uber) to your hotel. Didi is also the best option for getting from one place to another within the region.

It's important to download the two main payment apps, Alipay and WeChat, in advance and link your credit card to them.

In addition to the three apps mentioned, I can also recommend the eSIM from Airalo, which includes a VPN, because without a VPN, you can't use many Western apps—such as Google Maps—in China. The alternative in China is AMap.

You should plan on staying for two to three days.

During that time, you can enjoy all the region's scenic highlights.

When booking tickets for both the National Forest Park and Tianmen Mountain, there are a few special considerations to keep in mind, which I'll explain in detail below under "Highlights."

HIGHLIGHTS



01.

Avatar Mountains

Zhangjiajie National Forest Park is definitely one of the region's most famous highlights, and the park—which covers nearly 50 km²—has its own unique attractions.

One of these highlights is the Avatar Hallelujah Mountains—the lush, green mountains that served as the inspiration for the floating mountains in the Avatar films.

The mountains are definitely a spectacular sight.



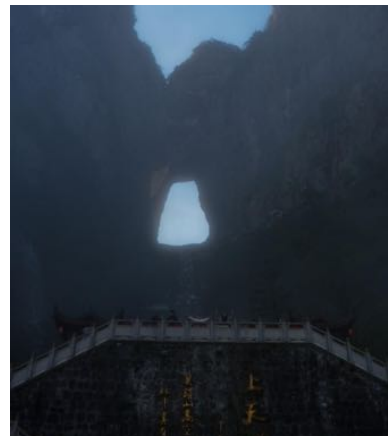
02.

Bailong Elevator

The Bailong Elevator marks the start or end (depending on the direction of travel) of a visit to the National Forest Park.

As of 2026, the Bailong Elevator is the world's highest outdoor elevator.

It takes you up to or down from the Yuanjiajie area a full 326 meters. The ride, however, takes only a few seconds.



03.

Tianmen Mountain

Tianmen Mountain is the region's second major highlight. It's located 5 km south of the city, and when you arrive up here by cable car, you'll find 999 steps leading up to Tianmen Gate, a gap in the mountain that's a good 130 m high and 60 m wide.

Tianmen translates to "Heavenly Gate."

You can continue on to the mountain summit via the world's longest indoor escalator.





National Forest Park

Buying tickets for the National Forest Park is relatively complicated. You should purchase your tickets—either as an admission ticket or a guided tour (top left)—at least 1–2 weeks in advance; they're also available through Klook or Viator. The ticket is always valid for 4 consecutive days, and you must select a time slot and entrance for each of those days at the time of purchase. The tickets generally include all buses and trains (elevator and cable car) in the park. It's best to choose the earliest possible time slot at the East Gate. On the first day, you must arrive at the correct gate within your one-hour time slot.

Your passport serves as your admission ticket.

Tianmen Mountain

You should also buy a ticket well in advance for Tianmen Mountain. There are three ticket options here—A, B, and C.

If possible, you should choose Route A or B, which include a cable car ride on either the way there or back. The ride covers a distance of 7.5 km, climbs 1,200 meters in elevation, and takes just under half an hour.

The drive itself offers fantastic views, especially of the road winding below with its 99 curves.

With Option C, you first take the bus and then ride a shorter cable car only for the last part of the trip.



08.

72 Wonder Tower

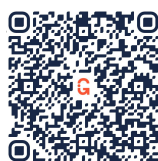
The 72 Wonder Tower is also a fascinating sight—especially when illuminated at night and during the light show. The building, which looks like a cluster of smaller structures and stands just under 100 meters tall, is considered the world’s tallest building built on stilts as of 2026.



09.

Zhangjiajie Glass Bridge

The Zhangjiajie Glass Bridge is also considered one of the region’s most popular attractions. As of 2026, it is the longest and highest glass bridge in the world, measuring approximately 430 m in length and standing over



10.

Old Towns

Near Zhangjiajie, there are also smaller traditional villages that give you a sense of what China was like in the past. These include Fenghuang Ancient Town, which is 3–4 hours away, and Furong Ancient Town. You can get there by train, and you should plan to stay at least one night, as it’s a bit too far for a day trip.

DAY TO DAY

Day 1 – On the first day of our tour, we didn't arrive in Zhangjiajie until late afternoon.

From there, we drove to our hotel in Wulingyuan, which was close to Zhangjiajie National Forest Park and therefore conveniently located for us.

After checking in, we drove back toward the city, where we marveled at the light show at the 72 Wonder Tower.

For dinner, we then grabbed a bite at a street food stand in the town of Wulingyuan.

Many restaurants here are of a decent standard, but there aren't any particular recommendations.

Day 2 – We spent most of the second day in Zhangjiajie National Forest Park.

We decided to enter through the East Gate via Route B.

On this route, we visited the highlights—the Bailong Elevator, the Yuanjiajie area with

the Avatar Hallelujah Mountains and the First Bridge under Heaven, Tianzi Mountain, and the ride on the long cable car—in that order.

After returning to the East Gate, we went for dinner at the Maoshi Restaurant Characteristic Cai, located right around the corner from our hotel.

Day 3 – We spent the morning of our last day at Tianmen Mountain and the afternoon on the glass bridge over the Grand Canyon.

In the evening, we ate at the Night Street Market in Wulingyuan, and the next morning we flew on to our next destination.

Alternatives – If you have more time, you can also visit attractions outside the city, such as the traditional villages of Fenghuang or Furong, or take a boat ride on Baofeng Lake or through the Grand Canyon.

WHERE TO SLEEP

Zhangjiajie also offers a variety of excellent hotels and accommodations. During our stay, we chose the

Yoba Boutique Hotel

and were very happy.

The hotel was located very close to the park entrance, stylishly decorated, and very modern.

Check out hotel here:



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