



# Hainan Island

Tropical paradise is not a description often used in connection with China but Hainan Island the ‘tail of the dragon’ is just that. Long the secret of northern Chinese and Russian snowbirds, Hainan aims to become an international tourism island by 2020 so expect the red carpet to be rolled out.

**Haikou** and **Sanya** are the two major population centres. Most luxury resorts are concentrated in the **Yalong** and **Haitang Bay** areas of Sanya with international chains running facilities so giving a high level of service.

Much of the attraction of Hainan lies with its beaches. **Wuzhizhou Island** off Haitang Bay is also a major water sports centre. Clear warm waters year round make Hainan a great diving location and the seas have an abundance of coral.

Sanya’s **Serenity Marina** offers world class facilities and is now the base for the China leg of the Volvo Ocean Race. This has helped Sanya cement its place as China’s sailing capital and the island holds an annual Round Hainan Regatta. The marina itself is home to an array of luxury yachts and sailing boats, along with the facilities to service them.

*Sanya Insiders* offer a different take on the island experience with their tailor made tours. Using vintage like Changjiang 750 sidecars, they take visitors to historic towns such as **Yacheng**, complete with Hainan’s answer to Pisa’s leaning tower, and discover the traditional way of life in fishing villages. Using a Beijing Jeep they delve into the island’s not so ventured heart, long the preserve of the *Li* and *Miao* minorities.

Generally the best dining is at the international hotels in the resorts with seafood not surprisingly being prominent. *Aqua* at the *Intercontinental Haitang Bay* has an ‘underwater’ dining area in a tunnel of the aquarium bringing you that much closer to your meal. Local specialities include Hainan chicken rice, dongshan lamb, and wujiao pork.

Haitang Bay is also home the world’s largest duty-free shop, the *CDF Mall*, covering 72,000 square metres with nearly 300 international brands such as Chanel, DKNY, Omega, Burberry and Lacoste.

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