

Mainland Scenery VIII

The Yellow River, the second-longest river in China with a total length of about 5,464 km, is said to originate in Kariqu, Qinghai Province. It passes through nine provinces, cities and autonomous regions from West to East, namely Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu, Ningxia, Inner Mongolia, Shaanxi, Shanxi, Henan, and Shandong, and empties into the Bohai Sea in Shandong Province.

Hukou Waterfall is located in the middle section of the Yellow River Basin and the southern section of the Jin-Shaan Grand Canyon. It is adjacent to Ji County of Shanxi Province in the East and Yichuan County of Shaanxi province in the West, which is also a common tourist resource shared by both provinces. Hukou Waterfall is one of the three major waterfalls in China, along with the Detian Waterfall in China–Vietnam border and Huangguoshu Waterfall in Guizhou Province.

Hukou Waterfall was listed as a national natural scenic spot in 1988 and one of the “40 Best Tourist Attractions in China” by China National Tourism Administration in 1991. In January 2002, the 45-square-kilometer area of the Hukou Waterfall was designated as a national geological park and a national AAAA tourist attraction.

When the Yellow River reaches the west bank of the Hukou, the surface of the river looks very calm, but the river bottom shelves here. The 400-meter wide Yellow River suddenly narrows and is forced violently through a 30- to 50-meter-wide gorge before falling turbulently as a waterfall, where the topographic structure of the riverbed is shaped like a giant tea kettle, collecting all the surging water and forms the waterfall, hence the name Hukou (“kettle spout” in Chinese). The most famous scenic spots in Hukou include the Spectacular Views of the Dragon Caves, Boats on the Land, Neon Rainbow, Flying Mountains and Standing Seas, Thunder on the Sunny Day, Ice Peaks Hanging Upside Down, Smoke under the Water, and so on. Due to the extension of roads and railroads and the construction of bridges, the Boats on the Land had gone, leaving only the deep traces of the stone river banks on the East and West sides, the old town and the old ferry crossing. The other scenery varies according to the seasonal weather changes, which leads to the difference in the amount of water and the flow of the river, so it has different scenery throughout the year and welcomes visitors from all over the world.

There are two best viewing periods of the waterfall. In spring, in March and April of the lunar calendar, the mountains are full of peach blossoms and the frozen cliffs on the shore begin to melt, so that it's called the “March Peach Blossoms Flood”; the other is

September and October of the lunar calendar in autumn, as the rainy season passed by, many springs riverside gather a lot of clean water, so that the amount of water increases greatly. The river roars and flows down, with water mist rising and roared waves. As autumn winds blow, rainbows often appear. That's why it is called "Hukou Autumn Wind".

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