

JILIN'S SKI RESORTS OPEN FOR SNOW SEASON



Kids take part in a young skier training program in Jilin province. Ski resorts in the province have implemented several programs for students to learn how to ski in 2019. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



An entire forest is coated in snow in the Changbai Mountain region in Jilin province. The region is home to some of the best ski resorts in China. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



During the annual snow season, Jilin province is one of the most popular skiing destinations in China. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Beidahu area in Jilin province attracts visitors to take snowy snaps after some heavy snowfalls. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Province in Northeast China boasts some of country's best competition facilities, lodges

By HAN JUNHONG

After the first snow of the season fell on Oct 13, followed by several heavy snowfalls in the mountainous areas of Northeast China's Jilin province, its ski lodges and resorts have opened their doors once more to skiers, snowboarders and winter sports lovers from around the world.

Jilin province has long been a formidable force for winter sports in China, rich in great locations and facilities. The province gets some of the country's best powdery snow, the type favored by skiers and snowboarders, at its leading resorts and courses for competitive skiing.

The annual skiing season lasts for some 150 days in Jilin province, according to the government.

"China has only four skiing areas that are more than 100 hectares each, and three of them are in Jilin province," said Yang Andri, director of the Jilin Department of Culture and Tourism.

According to Yang, they are Lake Songhua Resort, Beidahu Ski Resort and Changbai Mountain Wanda International Resort.

The snow season carnival at Lake Songhua Resort, boasting one of the largest ski courses in China, opened on Nov 16. Songhua has ranked China's top ski resort for the past two years since 2017 in terms of sheer visits, according to official statistics. In 2018, the resort welcomed more than 560,000 skiers.

This year, Lake Songhua Resort joined hands with ski course operators in nine cities and provinces to introduce a joint membership card that allows cardholders to enjoy discounted ski activities at the 15 member ski courses.

A young skiers training program has been launched this year to teach students in 100 primary and high schools how to ski. Twenty school skiing teams will be formed in Jilin province with Lake Songhua Resort agreeing to provide free lessons to the young skiers.

Night skiing at the resort will begin on Dec 7. Every Wednesday night, children in Jilin city, capital of Jilin province, under 12 years old, are welcome to experience skiing, free of charge.

This year, Lake Songhua Resort has also partnered with the New Zealand's Cardrona Alpine Resort to build four new and more varied ski courses.

Beidahu Ski Resort, home to one of the largest professional ski courses in Asia, opened its winter season on Nov 16. Similar to Lake Songhua Resort, Beidahu, which stands at an altitude of 870 meters above sea level, will also promote skiing activities among kids during the 2019-20 snow season. It has partnered with auto brand Audi to develop an enclosed ski park for children this season. A trail with an altitude of 690 meters for teenagers will also open this year.

Beidahu resort is launching programs for students in primary schools, high schools and universities to experience skiing this year. The operators of the resort said they hope more students will experience and enjoy skiing after taking part in the programs.

Beidahu Ski Resort has been approved and supported by the General Administration of Sport and Chinese Ski Association to organize a series of large-scale sports events this year, such as the International Open in Alpine Ski Orienteering and the China Youth Skiing Grand Prix. Commentators said the events will help to demonstrate the resort's growing ability to host top level winter sports events and boost its reputation on the global stage in terms of winter sports and tourism.

Changbai Mountain Wanda International Resort opened to skiers this year on Nov 15. The ski resort has a support team for skiers of nearly 450 staff members. It has two courses covering 6,900 square meters and 4,300 sq m that can be used by 3,000 to 4,000 skiers at the same time. A terrain park with different landscapes has been upgraded for professional skiers.

This year, an ice and snow-themed park, covering nearly 800 sq m, was developed for kids to build snowmen and play on snow slides and sledges.

"Jilin not only has good snow but also leading ski resorts," Yang said. "Those leading companies have formed a nationwide ski alliance to set ski course operation standards, and Jilin's standards could be China's standards."

So far, Jilin province has developed a Jilin city and Changchun city-centered ice and snow sports and leisure industrial cluster, and a Changbai Mountain region-centered resort industrial cluster.

During the 2018-19 ski season, which ran from Nov 1, 2018, to March 31, 2019, Jilin province recorded 84.32 million visits to its tourist attractions, and reported some 169.81 billion yuan (\$24.13 billion) tourism revenue.

During the 2019-20 snow season, Jilin province will promote international and domestic communication and cooperation, according to local officials. It has set a goal of developing its winter tourism in the region similar to that of the Alps in Europe and the Rocky Mountains in the United States.



Cable cars take visitors over snow-white scenery to rich skiing grounds above Lake Songhua Resort. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

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Snowboarders from around the world demonstrate their skills on ski courses in Jilin province. YAN BIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Membership card to launch

A skiing membership card, known as the Snow and Ice Silk Road Alliance Card, to allow cardholders to enjoy skiing benefits in 15 ski courses in 14 cities and provinces around China, including Beijing and Hebei province, will be issued on Dec 1 in Jilin province.

The card will be issued by the Ski Field Alliance, which was established at the end of 2018 in the province. Cardholders will be eligible to redeem coupons up to five times and can enjoy extra discounts at the 15 ski courses.

Supported by the Jilin provincial government, the alliance, one of the first of its kind in China, was formed at the suggestion of five ski resorts in the province. They were Lake Songhua Resort, Beidahu Ski Resort, Changbai Mountain Wanda International Resort, Changbai Mountain Luneng International Resort and Changchun Miaoxiangshan Ski Resort.

The alliance will help to improve the presence of each member ski course, allow for the exchange of resources and offer more options to skiers.

The alliance will host an elite ski race during the 2019-20 snow season. The final race will be held in Jilin province, according to Jin Zhenlin, director of the Resource Development Office at the Jilin Department of Culture and Tourism.

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Jilin province attracts a large number of skiing enthusiasts in China every winter because of its abundance in ice and snow and advanced winter tourism facilities and resorts. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



A cable car takes skiers to top of a snow-covered mountain in Jilin province. The province has a type of powdery snow which is preferred by many skiers around the world. HAN TAO / FOR CHINA DAILY



A skier slides in style on the snow course at Lake Songhua Resort. ZHU YIMING / FOR CHINA DAILY

City welcomes first rime of winter as unique frost appears

By HAN JUNHONG

The first rime in Jilin city, capital of Jilin province, appeared on Nov 20, as temperatures fell as low as -17C.

Rime is a special type of frost resembling granular tufts of ice that only occurs in very specific climactic conditions.

On Nov 20, all the trees along Jifeng East Road in the city, beside which the Songhua River flows, were coated in a crystal-clear frozen coating. The area quickly attracted residents to take out their phones for a quick frosty snap.

Jilin's rime is known as one of the four meteorological wonders of China. The other three are the sea of clouds of the Yellow Mountain in Anhui province, the sunrise at Taishan Mountain in Shandong province and the tidal bore of the Qiantang River in Zhejiang province.

Compared with rime in other regions in China, rime in Jilin is unique because it is thicker and is extremely crystal clear. A toothpick-thin tree branch can be covered in frost as thick as an adult's thumb, according to local residents.

The best time to observe rime in Jilin is between



Parts of Songhua River never freeze in the winter because of the warmer water from hydropower stations. LI HUAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

November and February, and the best observation hours are from 6 am to 10 am. Regions along the Songhua River, Rime Island and Hantun area are best sightseeing places for this rare and spectacular phenomena.

For this unique rime to form, many conditions need to



The first rime in Jilin city on Nov 20 attracts many residents and visitors to take photos. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

be met, including a heavy snowfall, a breezeless day and a big temperature difference between day and night, according to Zhao Daming, deputy director of the publicity department of Jilin city.

The formation of rime in Jilin city is influenced by the

Fengman Hydropower Station upstream of the Songhua River, about 15 kilometers from the city. The hydropower station, which dates back to 1937, was one of the largest of its kind in Asia at that time. A large reservoir, named Songhua Lake, was formed when the hydropower station was built.

In winter, there are more than 60 days when the temperature plunges to -20 C in Jilin city. A thick layer of ice forms on the huge reservoir. However, the water below the ice maintains a temperature above zero. Passing through the turbine generators of the hydropower station, the water temperature further increases, thus the river near Jilin city never freezes in the winter. When all conditions including temperature and humidity are met, rime appears.

The old Fengman Hydropower Station was dismantled in 2018, and a new station about 120 meters downstream was built. Some people were concerned the change might affect formation of rime in 2019. However, the rime reappeared as in previous years.

From Dec 1, a forecast will be provided to visitors about when and where to appreciate the natural wonder.



The first rime in Jilin city appears on Nov 20. Jilin rime is known as one of the four meteorological wonders of China. BAI XUEWEI / FOR CHINA DAILY