

Treasures in China's Seas – China's Star-studded Islands

In 1982, Article 121 of United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea says: An island is a naturally formed area of land, surrounded by water, which is above water at high tide.

China is a country with many islands. According to statistics, there are over 6,000 islands of over 500 km² each, over 50 archipelagoes, with a total area of 80,000 km², accounting for about 0.8% of the total land area of China, which is equivalent to half of the area of Jiangxi Province.

China's islands are pieces of treasure with unique features, shining in the sea.



Xiaoqingzhou Island of Sanya of Hainan Province

Kite of the Continental Crust – Taiwan Island



Sketch Map of Taiwan Island

Taiwan Island is the largest island of China, located southeast of Mainland China. Taiwan Province includes over 80 islands, such as Taiwan Island, Penghu Islands, Diaoyu Island and other islands, with a total area of 36,000 km².

In ancient times, Taiwan was connected with the continent, but due to crustal movement, the connecting part sank into the sea and formed a strait, and the Taiwan Island came into being.

With the Pacific Ocean to its east, Taiwan Island overlooks the Ryukyu Islands to the northeast, the Philippines through the Bashi Strait to the south, and Jinmen, Xiamen of Fujian Province through the Taiwan Strait to the west.

Taiwan Island is a mountainous island, with the Central Mountain Range as the island's backbone, Taitung Mountain Range on the east, and Yushan Mountain and Ali Mountain on the west. There are 62 mountains over 3,000 m high, of which the highest is the Yushan Mountain Range in the west of Central Mountain Range, with an elevation of 3,997 m. The mountains and hilly areas account for two-thirds of the island.

Surrounded by sea, the Taiwan Island faces the vast Pacific in the east. The famous Kuroshio Current passed the eastern side of Taiwan Island. The Taiwan Strait on the western side of the Taiwan Island has flat and broad sea floor, and the abundant nutrient substance brought by the rivers from Mainland China make here a major spawning ground for many marine benthos. Therefore, Taiwan Island is surrounded by waters with abundant



Typical Wind-erosion Landform on the Northeast Coast of Taiwan – Yehliu Geopark

fishing resources. Taiwan Strait is a major fishing ground for China.

Keelung and Kaohsiung are two key ports on Taiwan Island.

“Snow Pear” in the Sea – Hainan Island

Hainan Island is located in the northwest of the South China Sea, to the south of Leizhou Peninsula. As the second largest island of China, it is within the land of Hainan Province.

In plain view, the 34,000-square-km Hainan Island is like a snow pear lying in the vast South China Sea. The island has a tropical monsoon climate, a long summer with no winter and abundant rainfall making it an important base for tropical crops and plants.

Hainan Island overlooks the Leizhou Peninsula through the Qiongzhou Strait to the north. With a width of 20 km, the Leizhou Strait is the offshore “corridor” between Mainland China and Hainan Island, and the shipping lane between Beibu Bay and the South China Sea.

Hainan Island faces Beibu Bay and Vietnam, overlooks Taiwan

Province through the South China Sea to the northeast, and neighbors The Philippines, Brunei and Malaysia in the South China Sea to the southeast and south.

Since January 2010, construction geared towards attracting international tourism on Hainan island has been on track. As part of its major strategic deployment, Hainan Island will gradually become a world-class island resort.

A 1,300-year-old “Lying Silkworm” – Chongming Island



With three sides of river and East China Sea to the southeast, Chongming Island is located in the Yangtze River’s estuary. As the third largest island of China and the world’s largest alluvial island, Chongming Island is known as the “Gateway to the Yangtze River and the Sanctuary of the East China Sea”.

Chongming Island has over 1,300 years of history. Chongming Island is shaped like a lying silkworm, with a total area of 1,041 km², but currently, the eastern and western ends are growing so that the island grows at a rate of 143 m per year. The island is flat and fertile, with a flourishing forest and abundant products, which makes it a famous land of abundance.

The Chongming Island is a strategic space of the sustainable

development of Shanghai. In recent years, relying on technical innovation, Shanghai promoted the recycling economy, developed ecological industry, and tried to build the Chongming Island into a modern ecological island with harmonious environment, intensive utilization of resources and coordinated development of the economy and society.

The Home of Thousands of Islands – The Zhoushan Islands

The Zhoushan Islands are the largest set of islands in China's coastal area. It has numerous islands and reefs spreading across this area, accounting for 20% of the total number of China's islands, with a total water area of 22,000 km², in which 58 islands there are over 1 square kilometer in size, which accounts for 96.9% of the area of Zhoushan Islands. There are 1,339 islands in this area, the largest one of them being Zhoushan Island, with a total area of 534 km², which makes it the fourth largest island of China.

The Zhoushan Islands are located in the northern sea area of Zhejiang Province, to the south of the Yangtze River's estuary, and to the east of Hangzhou Bay.



In Zhoushan City of Zhejiang Province, people get on top of the Foding Mountain by the cable car, and the Baotuo Temple is right in front.



The Wangfu Reef, Nanchangshan Island in the Miaodao Islands, Changdao County, Shandong Province

Known as the home of thousands of islands, the Zhoushan Islands have inevitably been the midway point for China's coastal shipping. At present, the Zhoushan Islands have become the satellite port for Shanghai and Ningbo for transshipment.

China's Gate on the Yellow Sea and the Bohai Sea – The Miaodao Islands

Located in the southern and middle part of the Bohai Strait between Liaodong Peninsula and Shandong Peninsula, the Miaodao Islands are also known as Changdao, and are made up of over 40 islands, in which the largest one is the South Changshan Island. Many waterways are formed by the islands, such as Laotieshan, Changshan, and Miaodao, which helps to control the portal of the Yellow Sea and the Bohai Sea.

The Xianying Palace on Changdao Island is also the largest Matsu temple in Northern China.

“Key to Southeast” – Penghu Islands

Located in the Taiwan Strait to the west of Taiwan Island, Penghu Islands is an umbrella name for the 64 islands in the southeastern part of the Taiwan Strait. It was the earliest island developed in Taiwan Province.

Penghu (peng means splash and hu means lake) got its name because the three islands Zhongtun, Baisha and Xiyu almost connect to each other, forming a sea area just like a lake. When the sea is surging outside, it is calm inside. The Penghu Islands have a superior location, which overlooks Taiwan Island through the Penghu waterway, and overlooks Xiamen of Fujian Province through the sea. It has the Matsu archipelago, Dachen Island and Zhoushan Islands to the north, and Dongsha Islands, Nansha Islands to the south, and access to The Philippines and Southeast Asian countries.

The Penghu Islands are in a pivotal position in the Taiwan Strait as it guards the passageway of shipment in East Asia, known as the “Key to Southeast”.

Inherent Territory of China – Diaoyu Islands

Located 180 km to the northeast of Taiwan Island, the Diaoyu Islands is also known as the Diaoyutai Islands. The Diaoyu Islands are constituted by Diaoyu Island, Huangwei Island, Chiwei Island, etc., forming a triangle shape. Covering an area of about 1,500 km², it has a land area of 3.6 km². It is mainly made up by volcano.

The shelf basin in the East China Sea near the Diaoyu Islands has superior geological conditions for oil and gas formation, and the energy resources are abundant here.

With superior ecological environment and abundant fishery resources, the sea area around the Diaoyu Islands is a traditional fishing ground for fishermen from Zhejiang, Fujian and Taiwan of China. The Chinese fishermen are occupied in fishery production and year in and year out here.

The Diaoyu Islands is the inherent territory of China since ancient



Part of the Geographic Location of the Diaoyu Islands and its Surrounding Waters

times. A large number of literature and historical records have proved that the Diaoyu Island was first found and named by the Chinese people. Since the Ming Dynasty, the Diaoyu Islands have been included into the coastal defence area of China. Meanwhile, a large number of domestic and foreign maps also plot the Diaoyu Islands into China's territory.

Portal of South China – Wanshan Islands

The Wanshan Islands are located to the southeast of Zhuhai City of Guangdong Province. The Wanshan Islands are constituted by the islands to the east of the Qingzhou Waterway and Daxi Waterway on the east of Pearl River estuary, including 76 islands such as Dangan Islands, Jiapeng Islands, Sanmen Islands, Yizhou Islands, Zhizhou Islands, Wanshan Islands, Wailingding Island, etc. Covering an area of about 2,600 km², it has a land area of about 240 km².

Located on the north rim of the tropical zone, it belongs to the south subtropical monsoon climate. As the southern barrier of the Lingdingyang Bay, it is the only access to the sea for Guangzhou City. Guarding the portal of Guangzhou, a strategic city in South China, it holds an important position.

Watcher of Important International Waterways – Dongsha Islands

Located in the northern part of the South China Sea, the Dongsha Islands are mainly constituted by Dongsha Atoll, Dongsha Island and two hidden shoals. The Dongsha Island is the largest of them, with an area of 1.8 km², a width of 700 m from north to south, and an average of 6 m above the sea.

The Dongsha Islands are the smallest of the South China Sea Islands, and the nearest to Mainland China.

Dongsha Islands are located in a pivotal transportation junction of international waterways. It is 260 km from Shantou Port to the north, 450 km from Xisha Islands to the southwest, 780 km from Manila to the southeast, 440 km from Kaohsiung Port and 425 km from Magong Port in Penghu to the northeast, 315 km from Hong Kong to the northwest.

Lily Blossoms over the Blue Waves – Xisha Islands

Located in the water area 180 nautical miles to the southeast of Hainan Island, the Xisha Islands are one of the four major islands in the South China Sea. It constitutes the southernmost territory of China with Dongsha, Zhongsha and Nansha Islands. Separated into two groups, the eastern one is Xuande Islands and the western one is Yongle Islands. The 34 islands, shoals and submerged reefs are like lily blossoms over the blue South China Sea.

There is one relic from the Tang or Song Dynasties and several relics from the Ming and Qing Dynasties, 14 temples from the Ming and Qing Dynasties, and a large number of stone monuments from the Qing Dynasty and Republic of China during the mainland period, which indicates that the Chinese people have been living on the Xisha Islands since the Tang Dynasty.



Beautiful Scenery in Xisha Islands

The Xisha Islands are a famous fishing ground of China.

Pearl in Central South China Sea – Zhongsha Islands

The Zhongsha Island is located to the southeast of Hainan Island, south to the Dongsha Islands, east to the Xisha Islands and north to the Nansha Islands. It is constituted by over 20 underwater sandy beaches and hidden shoals in the big lagoon, and Huangyan Island, Xianfa Island, Yitong Island, Shenhu Island 300 km southeast to the big lagoon.

Situated in the east of the Zhongsha Islands, the Huangyan Island is the only exposed atoll, with the shape like isosceles right triangle. With a perimeter of 46 km, it has an area of about 150 km², including the lagoon. The top of the atoll is 0.5-3 m to the surface. There are many reefs and rocks on the edge of the atoll. The largest one is 4.5 m², and the others are about 1 m² each. They are 0.3-1.5 m above the sea level.

The Huangyan Island is inherent territory of China since ancient times.



General Situation of Huangyan Island

Shield of Southern Territory – Nansha Islands

The Nansha Islands are the southernmost islands of the four islands in the South China Sea, with the most atolls spread out over the largest area. Constituted by over 170 islands, shoals, submerged reefs, hidden shoals and under water sandy beaches, it has been China's territory since the ancient times. It can be divided into three parts according to geographic location,



Bird's-eye View of the Qilianyu Islands in South China Sea

and includes Northeast Group, Northwest Group and South Group. The major islands are Taiping Island, Nanwei Island, Zhongye Island, Zhenghe Island and Wanan Island. Among them Taiping Island is the largest one, with an area of 0.43 km². Zengmu Reef is the southernmost reef of the Nansha Islands.

Located between the two major navy bases in Cam Ranh Bay of Vietnam and Subic Bay of the Philippines, the Nansha Islands hold a pivotal strategic position. Guarding the major crossroads from the Pacific Ocean to the Indian Ocean, it is an important international shipping lane to South Asia, the Middle East and Europe, a major passageway for China's opening-up, and the shield for the southern territory of China. In the 39 shipping lanes from China to foreign countries, 21 go through the Nansha Islands sea area, and 60% of foreign trade transportation passes through it.