



Cruise ship moored in Hainan.



An average of 10,000 tourists visit the duty-free store in Sanya daily.



Tourism is increasingly expanding from the seashore to inland tropical forests.



PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Water-splashing Festival is as popular in Hainan as it is in Southeast Asian countries.

# Rising tide of tourist attractions in Hainan

By WANG YI

Sunshine and the beach first come to mind about the island of Hainan — China's southernmost province, an allure that is increasingly known worldwide as it is set to become an international tourist destination.

Since the province's tourism was included in a national blueprint about a year ago, local authorities have taken new initiatives to add to its attraction.

One of the moves is free-duty shopping, which has made Hainan one of the few islands worldwide with such a benefit for travelers. Since the policy took effect in April, many new tourists have included Hainan on their itinerary.

Every morning before the duty-free shop in Sanya opens, crowds of people wait in the adjoining square to begin their shopping, with the average number daily customers now surpassing 10,000.

The shopping fever has proven so popular that it even triggered a 10 percent rise in tourist agency prices for a trip to Hainan.

Another incentive is a new policy implemented last November that allows yacht owners without residency in Hainan to register their boats on the island. As well, overseas yachts can be exempted from the previous compulsory system requiring a pilot to bring their boats into harbor.

The moves have spurred growth in wharf construction. In addition to the number of berths already built in the famed tourist resorts of Sanya and Haikou, another 13 recreational harbors are planned.

Hainan Empress, a luxury Greek cruise liner named after the province, is expected to launch its Hainan island trip in the second half of this year.



The island province first gained fame for its stretches of beach and year-round sunshine.

The efforts reflect Hainan's yachting advantages over many port regions of China. It faces Southeast Asia and is near Taiwan to the northeast.

Already home to the country's first berth specially designed for cruise ships, a new cruise terminal of a 250,000-ton berth is planned in Hainan.

The province is also putting the final touches on two 70,000-ton cruise berths in Haikou.

As well, helicopter routes are expected to begin this year.

New ways of overland travel are also under development, with recreational vehicle (RV) sites being built or planned.

Popular in the West as traveling homes, RVs will soon be able to take a leisurely road trip to a national RV tourism demonstration

base in Hainan built by the China Tourism Group or the RV campsites planned by a Beijing-based Centech RV Co.

The province's first RV camping site opened in Haikou in early February, enabling tourists to experience a new mobile lifestyle and view the natural landscape beyond the seaside, including the island's rich tropical forests.

A growing number of couples favor Hainan for their holidays, enjoying scuba diving, ocean cruises or even wedding ceremonies wearing the traditional clothing of Hainan's native Li ethnic group and honeymoons in a forest hut.

The local government also plans to improve infrastructure and introduce more water sports to the island in the near future.

## Congratulations on the first National Tourism Day May 19

