

Overview of Hunan

Geographic location

Hunan Province lies in south-central China between 24°38'-30°08' N and 108°47'-114°15' E. Hunan is named after its location at the south of Dongting Lake (Hu means lake and Nan means south literally). It covers an area of 211,800 square kilometers (81,776 square miles), 2.2% of the total of the whole country. It is adjacent to Jiangxi Province in the east, Chongqing Municipality and Guizhou Province in the west, Guangdong Province and Guangxi Autonomous Region in the south, and Hubei Province in the north.

Geology

Surrounded by mountains and hills in the east, west and south, Hunan comprises of hills and basins in the center and plains in the north. The center and northern parts are a somewhat low and a U-shaped basin, open in the north and with Dongting Lake as its center.

Huping Mountain in Shimen County, Changde, Hunan's highest mountain, reaches an elevation of 2,009 meters, while its lowest area Huanggai Town in Yueyang is only 21 meters above sea level.

Dongting Lake is the largest lake in the province and the second largest freshwater lake in China. Xiangjiang, Zijiang, Yuanjiang and Lishui Rivers are the four main tributaries of Yangtze River flowing through Hunan, and into Dongting Lake at Chenglingji, Yueyang.

Climate

Hunan is located in a region with a continental subtropical seasonal humid climate with four distinct seasons. It has abundant sun, long frostless periods and abundant rain. The annual sunshine duration is 1300 to 1800 hours. The annual average temperature is between 16°C-18°C. The frostless period is as long as 260-310 days. Annual rainfall is 1200-1700 mm, which is favorable for agricultural crops and green plants.

Population and Nationalities

Population

Hunan is one of the most populous provinces in China. Covering 2.2 percent of China's territory area, its population amounts for about 5 percent of the country's total, ranking No.7 in China (2013). The average population density is 318 people per square kilometer.

By the end of 2016, the registered permanent resident population of the province had reached

68.22 million, among which 35.176 million were males, and 33.044 million were females. The registered households numbered 20.23 million, involving a population of 66.55 million. The population in urban areas reached 35.986 million, realizing an urbanization rate of 52.75%. The birth rate of the registered permanent population was 13.58‰ while the death rate of the same population was 6.89‰. The natural growth rate of the registered population was 6.72‰.

Population and Its Composition by the end of 2016

Item	Population (year-end figure) (million persons)	Proportion (%)
Total	68.22	100
Of which: Urban	35.986	52.75
Rural	32.234	47.25
Of which: Male	35.176	51.56
Female	33.044	48.44
Of which: Aged 0-15 (under the age of 16)	13.448	19.71
Aged 16-59 (under the age of 60)	42.762	62.68
Aged 60 and above	12.011	17.61
Of which: Aged 65 and above	8.015	11.75

(Chinese source: Statistical Communiqué for the 2016 Economic and Social Development of Hunan Province)

Nationalities

Hunan is a multiethnic province, where the Han nationality and other 55 ethnic groups reside. The population of the ethnic groups exceeds 7 million, accounting for 10.23 percent of the province's total.

Hunan is a concentrative residence of the Tujia, Miao, Dong, Yao, and Bai people. The population of the five groups totals more than 100,000.

As for distribution, Xiangxi Tujia & Miao Autonomous Prefecture, Huaihua, Zhangjiajie, Yongzhou, Shaoyang and Changde are inhabited by 96.86% of Hunan's ethnic population. Xiangxi, Huaihua, Zhangjiajie each has over one million ethnic people, and Yongzhou, Shaoyang and Changde respectively have more than 100,000.

For more information about the ethnic groups in Hunan, please refer to [National Customs](#).

Religion

Hunan has over 5.44 million religious people, including 3.697 million Buddhists, 1.108 million Taoists, 144,000 Muslims, 44,000 Catholics and 446,000 Christians. There are about 7700 clergies, working in 5,313 sites for religious activity.

Natural Resources

Water resources

Hunan has an extensive network of rivers, with a fresh water area covering 13,500 square kilometers. In the north lies Dongting Lake, the second largest freshwater lake in China. It has the largest reserve of natural water resources among the nine provinces of southern China. Xiangjiang, Zijiang, Yuanjiang and Lishui Rivers are the four main tributaries of Yangtze River flowing through Hunan, falling into Dongting Lake at Chenglingji, Yueyang.

Land resources

Cultivated land, forests and grasslands are distributed widely across Hunan. Cultivated land covers 3.788 million ha., accounting for 3.1% of the total of China; natural grasslands are 6.373 million ha., about 1.6% of the national's total; forests cover 10.3699 million ha., about 6.6% of the country's total. All these benefit Hunan for its agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and fisheries.

Mineral resources

Hunan is rich in both nonferrous and non-metallic minerals. To date, geologists have confirmed reserves of 143 different minerals in the province. Among the 108 minerals in verified reserves, 45 are in Top five and 64 rank Top ten in China.

The reserves of tungsten, tin, bismuth, stibium, stone coal, fluorite, sepiolite clay, garnet, and dolomite used in glass production are in the nation's front rank. Vanadium, barite, cryptocrystalline graphite, and ceramics shale reserves rank the second in each category in the country. Manganese, zinc, lead, mercury, adamas, limestone for cement and kaolin are of significant role in China.

Plants and Animals

Hunan has abundant resources of animals and plants. Five rare surviving "living fossil" in the world are found in Hunan, namely: Cathaya Aargyrophylla, Met sequoia Glyptostrobodies, Glyptostrobus Pensilis, Ginkgo and Davidia Involucrate.

There are around 5,000 species of seed plants, ranking 7th across the country. There are more than 2,000 species of woody plants, 1,000 species of wild economic plants, and 800 species of medicinal plants. 55 species are identified as rare wild plants under the state protection, making up 17.7% of that throughout the country.

Reputed as a land of rice and fish, Hunan has a wide variety of grain crops, with over 9,000 categories of rice. Oil crops include tea oil camellia, seed of tung tree, rapeseed, sesame,

sunflower, cottonseed and castor-oil plant. Economic crops are mainly cotton, ramie, jute (red jute) and tobacco. In addition, there are 100 varieties of medicinal plants like coptisroot and gastrodia elata, and 88 species of eight categories of agricultural and sideline products including citrus, tea, Hunan white lotus, day lily, water-soaked bamboo slice, lily bulb, pearl barley and chili pepper. (Click to know more Hunan Products)

There are woody plants of 103 families, 478 genera and 2, 470 species. Hunan's forest coverage reached 59.57% by the end of 2015, higher than the national and world level. 22 national and 27 provincial natural conservation areas, and 126 forest parks, have been established, and the first national forest park Zhangjiajie Forest Park is among them.

The provincial grassland area covers 6.373 million hectares, among which available grassland reaches 5.666 million hectares. The grazing capacity achieves 7,040 thousand cattle unit. There are grassland plants of 137 families and 868 species, among which 775 species serve as the food of livestock.

Hunan has a great variety of animals. There are 66 kinds of wild mammals, over 500 sorts of birds, 71 kinds of reptiles, 40 types of amphibians, more than 1,000 sorts of insects and over 200 kinds of aquatic animals. There are 18 categories of animals under the first-class state protection, like south China tiger, clouded leopard, golden cat, whitecrane and white-flag dolphin; 28 sorts of animals included in the second-class such as macaque, stump-tailed macaque, pangolin, hellbender and cowfish, and; 49 types of animals belonging to the third-class including egret, wild duck and bamboo partridge. As the well-known freshwater fish producing area in China, Hunan has over 160 types of natural fish, including carp, blackcarp, grass carp, bighead carp, silver carp, bream fish, crucian carp, gurnet, which mainly belong to the cyprinidae family. Famous species are Chinese sturgeon, Chinese paddlefish, silverfish, hilsa herring and eel. Regarding livestock and poultry, Ningxiang pig, Binhu buffalo, Xiangxi cattle, Xiangdong black goat, Wugang bronze goose, Linwu duck and Liuyang three buff chickens are the most well-known.