

Yangtze Three Gorges □□□□

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Three Gorges: One of nature's most extraordinary sculptures had been carved along the Yangtze river from Fengjie, Szechuan Province in the east; the San Xia (Three Gorges) - Qutang Xia, Wu Xia, and Xiling Xia.

The first of these three masterpieces, Qutang Xia (Qutang Gorge), is the shortest (5 miles), narrowest (500 feet), and most dramatic. Two mountains, Chijia Shan (Red Passage Mountain) and Baiyan Shan (White Salt Mountain), guard the entrance to this gorge like giant castle doors.

Below Wushan is the 25-mile long Wu Xia (Witches Gorge), with cliffs so sheer that the sun barely penetrates the precipices. This middle gorge is best known for twelve unique peaks. Often hidden in swirls of mist, six line the north side of the river and six staggered peaks stand to the south. The most famous, Shennu Feng (Goddess Peak), resembles a kneeling maiden. The final gorge, Xiling Xia (Xiling Gorge), is the longest (41 miles) and the deepest - its cliff walls rise to 4,000 feet. It is actually comprised of seven smaller gorges, whose varied names - Military Books and Precious Sword, Rice Granary, Ox Liver and Horse Lungs, Yellow Ox, Bright Moon, Lantern Shadow, and Yellow Cat- are all based upon ancient legends. At its eastern end are the three locks of the current "big dam" Gezhouba (Gezhou Dam).