

REGION



Pic. 1: map of china with guangxi province

FACTS

Surface:	236 700 km ²
Inhabitants:	44 980 000
Average Income:	CNY 6790
Life Expectancy:	69.07 (m) / 73.75 (f)
Illiteracy rate:	3.79 %
Language:	Southwestern Mandarin, Cantonese, Pinghua, Zhuang
Religion:	Budhism, Taoism, Animism

INTRODUCTION

Guangxi is located in southern China between Guangdong, Guizhou, Hunan and Yunnan provinces. It shares a border with Vietnam and it is the only border region in China that has access to the sea along the Gulf of Tonkin. Guangxi has a diverse mix of ethnic minorities, with the Zhuang people making up a significant proportion (27%) of the population.

HISTORY

Conflicts have been the dominating factor in Guangxi's history. Up until the 19th C the Han and the ethnic minorities fought for possession of the region, and then the French and the Bri-

tish tried to gain control. At the end of the 19th Century Longzhou, Wuzhou and Nanning were obliged to open themselves up to foreign trade. In 1939 and in 1944 near the end of World War II, Japan invaded Guangxi, in an attempt to seize the Guangxi railway line and open up a land link to French Indochina. The Japanese succeeded, and most major cities in Guangxi came under Japanese occupation.

Guangxi was conquered by communist forces rather late in 1949, two months after the founding of the people's republic. In 1958, Guangxi was converted into an autonomous region for the Zhuang people, because they were one of the biggest minority groups in China, and were mostly concentrated in Guangxi.



Pic. 2: franco-chinese war

CLIMATE

Situated in a region at low latitudes, Guangxi borders on the tropic sea in the south, and has mountain ranges in its northern part. Under the joint action of the sun radiation and atmospheric circulation, the climate here is characterized by having a short winter and long summer with the annual temperature averaging between 16°C and 23°C. The north experiences slightly cooler temperature than the south. Throughout the region, temperatures are warm enough to assure agricultural production throughout the year.

The annual rainfalls in Guangxi are between 1,000-2,800 mm, growing gradually southward from the north. The rainfalls from April through September make up 75% of the annual rainfalls. The rainy season just coincide with the hot season. Affected by abnormal advances and retreats of monsoon, Guangxi often sees changes in precipitation and temperature. The monsoon wind blows from the south and southwest from late April to the end of September, precipitation is abundant; the drier areas are in the northwest, and the wetter areas in the south and east. Drought, floods, typhoon and hailstorms may frequently hit the area.

TOPOGRAPHY

The predominance of limestone gives many parts of Guangxi a spectacular type of landscape, known to geographers as „karst“. Guangxi is known for its picturesque mountains and rivers. High on four sides and low in the middle, it is called the Guangxi Basin topographically. Guangxi forms a tableland that descends in elevation from the north and northwest to the south and southeast. Elevation between 3,000 and 6,000 feet above sea level are reached at the edge of the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau in the northwest, the Jiuwan Mountains and the Fenghuang Mountains in the north, and the Mao-er Mount in northeast. The greater part of the region is composed of hilly country lying at a height of between 1,500 to 3,000 feet. In the west, the Duyang Mountain rises to 6,500 feet. In the southeast, lowlands are situated at the height of between 300 and 1,500 feet. The central part of the basin contains vast areas of flatland with fertile soil and is the major grain and sugar-cane grower of the region. The southern half also contains wide areas of hilly land interspersed with orchards and rice fields. Limestone predominates over more than half of Guangxi. The Guilin-Yangshuo area has a karst topography where the age-old erosion of the limestone has given shape to numerous exotic pinnacles and spires, bizarre sink-holes and caverns, and picturesque hills and subterranean streams. There are numerous rivers with large volumes of flow. The Zhujiang river system drains 85 per cent of Guangxi's total area.



Pic. 3: karst mountains at li river



Pic. 4: landscape near yangshuo



Pic. 5: village near yangshuo



Pic. 6: view over li river at guilin

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VEGETATION

Guangxi ranks first among the Chinese provinces in being home to the rare species of plants. About 8,354 wild plants have been found in the region, including 122 kinds which are near distinction and need special protection.

Stands of fir, red pine, cedar, camphor, and rosewood are found in north and west; oranges grow in profusion in the south; while the cassia tree, anise, and betel nuts flourish in many parts of the region. In central and south Guangxi, many denuded hillsides have been taken over by tall coarse grass, which is used for fuel or as pasturage for young water buffaloes. Prominent types of wild life include the bison, boar, bear, gibbon, hedgehog, and cockatoo.

SOCIETY

People in Guangxi are multinational. Besides the Han nationality, there are ethnic groups of Zhuang, Yao, Miao, Tong, Maonan, Yi, Shui and others. Various cultures are one of the important characteristics of China. Most of Guangxi's population resides in the southern and southeastern parts of the region; the northern and southwestern parts are sparsely populated. Great differences exist in population distribution and density between urban and rural areas. Ethnic minorities are concentrated in the west and northwestern hilly areas, while most Han people live in the northeastern and southeastern plain areas. Two distinct Chinese linguistic influences are noted: a southwest version of Mandarin is spoken in the north, including Guilin and Liuzhou districts while Cantonese dialect is spoken throughout the south of the region.

The Zhuang people have inhabited Guangxi since ancient times. Living on the plains and in the river valleys of the hilly west, they are often referred to as „water dwellers“ because their settlements are close to water and their dwellings are constructed on piles or

stilts. For two millennia, the Zhuang have coexisted with the Han; together they constitute the two largest ethnic groups in Guangxi.

Since the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, especially since the 1960s, Guangxi has achieved a lot in terms of providing its population with a proper education. However, it is still low compared with the rest of the country.

Images:

- Pic.-Nr. 1: Ran, <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bild:China-Guangxi.png>
Pic.-Nr. 2: french illustration, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Taking-of-bac-ninh.jpg#filehistory>;
Pic.-Nr. 3 - 5: Jan Flemmig
Pic.-Nr. 6: Loewe, http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bild:Li-Fluss_vom_Fuboberg_aus.jpg

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