



HANGZHOU: WEST LAKE AND MORE



BASIC INFORMATION		World Rank	Similar To
Urban Area Population (2007)*	4,200,000	60	Dallas-Fort Worth, Alexandria, Milan
Projection (2025)	5,020,000	80	Boston, St. Petersburg, Barcelona
Urban Land Area: Square Miles	250	150	Sapporo, Copenhagen, Lima, Grand Rapids
Urban Land Area: Square Kilometers	650		
Density: Per Square Mile	16,800	300	Ankara, Osaka-Kobe-Kyoto, Novosibersk
Density: Per Square Kilometer	6,500		
*Continuously built up area (Urban agglomeration) Land area & density rankings among the approximately 750 urban areas with 500,000+ population. Data from Demographia World Urban Areas data. See: ¹ <i>Demographia World Urban Areas Population & Density</i> <i>Demographia World Urban Areas: 2025 & 2030 Population Projections</i>			

9 December 2008

LOCATION AND SETTING

Hangzhou is the capital of Zhejiang Province, in the southern part of the Yangtze Delta region. Hangzhou is approximately 400 airline miles (625 kilometers) southwest of Shanghai and is the largest urban area in Zhejiang (Slide 2). The province itself is named for the Zhe River (now called the Qiantang River), which runs through the southern part of the Hangzhou urban area. The historic core is located approximately 100 miles to the southwest of Shanghai.

Most of the Hangzhou urban area is flat, but there are intermittent hills. There are more significant hills to the west of the urban area, especially beyond West Lake (aerial photograph, Slide 3).

¹ <http://www.demographia.com/db-worldua.pdf> and <http://www.demographia.com/db-worldua2015.pdf>.

Hangzhou's most famous feature and tourist attraction is West Lake, which is immediately to the west of the historic center. Hangzhou is also the southern terminus of the Grand Canal, or Beijing-Hangzhou Canal. The historic core is 2.5 miles (4 kilometers) north of the river, though a new business center is developing near the river.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Hangzhou urban area now has nearly 4.2 million people and is expected to increase to 5.020 million by 2025. Hangzhou covers 250 square miles and has a population density of 16,800 per square mile (6,800 per square kilometer).

GETTING TO HANGZHOU

Airport access is by Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport, which is about 15 miles (25 miles) east of the central business district on the south side of the Qiantang River. There is both domestic and international service. However, given the short distance, many international travelers use Shanghai airports to access Hangzhou.

The CRH high speed rail train from Shanghai makes the trip in less than 1:20 (Slides 76-82). There is also bus service

Hangzhou is connected to the rest of the nation by the modern "7918" expressway system, which provides access in every direction. This system had reached 27,000 miles by the end of 2006 (45,000 kilometers) and will eventually exceed the United States interstate highway system in length.

WEST LAKE

West Lake is located immediately to the west of the historic core. The lake is ringed with parkland and historic sites. From the core park areas (Slides 4-43), the lake looks large, but in reality is only 2.5 square miles (6.5 square kilometers). The south, north and western parts of the lake are hemmed in by hills. The lake has three islands. Five causeways cross the lake, in the western and northern sections. Su Causeway, to the west, is the longest at 1.5 miles (2.5 kilometers). Su Causeway is more than 900 years old (Slides 3, 21-38 & 42)). The lake has been altered by human engineering frequently through history, often to improve agricultural production.

West Lake is considered one of China's prime tourist attractions. One travel website ranks West Lake as "one of China's four most beautiful lakes."² West Lake has considerable competition, between the glacial lakes of the western and southern mountains and some of the world's most striking urban lakes, such as East Lake in Wuhan and Xuanwu Lake in Nanjing.³

There are many tea houses on the northern shore. Boat rides are available across the lake and to the islands.

² <http://www.mysteriouschina.com/china-travel-tour-the-most-beautiful-four-lakes-in-china/>

³ See Nanjing Rental Car Tour.

Lihu Pagoda (Six Harmonies Pagoda) is located on the southern shore of West Lake. This structure, 13 stories on the outside, was first built in 970 AD and has since been rebuilt a number of times. The Pagoda was recently modernized, with escalators and elevators. Lihue Pagoda provides expansive views of West Lake and the nearby urban and rural areas (Slides 55-74 and 107-110).

THE GRAND CANAL

Hangzhou is the southern terminus of the Grand Canal, or the Beijing-Hangzhou Canal, which is more than 1,100 miles (1,700 kilometers) long. The canal was started more than 2,500 years ago and completed 1,500 years ago. It is the longest canal in the world. The Grand Canal courses through Hangzhou and carries considerable commercial traffic (Slides 44-54).

THE URBAN FORM

Historic Core: The historic core is located on the eastern shore of West Lake and extends eastward and northward (Slides 75-137). Like other cores of Chinese urban areas, commercial buildings are widely spaced and there is considerable residential development. The railway station is located at the eastern side of the historic core. A number of government buildings are located on the northern side of the core, some on the north side of the Grand Canal (Slides 98-102 and 129). There are rental bicycles in the core area, which use a payment and storage system similar to that of the ville de Paris (Slide 137).

New Central Business District: A new central business district is being developed to the south of the historic core, close to the Qiantang River (Slides 138-167). The New Central Business District covers approximately 2.4 square miles (4.0 square kilometers) and may be the largest such new development in China (Slide 139).

The adjacent river itself is over high flood barriers, which prevents the area from having the attractive kind of riverfront of a Paris, London or Moscow. The new central business district has very wide streets as well as considerable high-rise commercial and residential development. The wide streets and large block designs are evident from a close-up view of the southern portion of the New Central Business District (Slide 140). The buildings are widely spaced. Hangzhou is not alone in developing a new core commercial district. For example, Suzhou is developing a newer western core, Shenyang has a newer uptown district and Xi'an has new commercial cores both to the north and south of the city walls.⁴

Qiantang River: The urban area is split in half by the Qiantang River, which enters the Pacific Ocean (East China Sea) through Hangzhou Bay. The river is approximately 0.8 miles (1.3 kilometers) wide at Hangzhou. There are five bridges. The south bank is lined with new high-rise luxury condominium buildings (Slides 66-74). The Qiantang River has the world's highest tidal bore, at more than 30 feet (9 meters).

Other Areas: The southern, northern and northeastern part of the urban area has extensive industrial areas, with the usual (for China) grid of wide arterial streets. It is also typical for such areas to have large traffic circles or similar enlargements at major intersections (Slide 170).

⁴ See Xi'an and Shenyang Rental Car Tours.

Housing: Hangzhou has many of the standardized pre-reform condominium buildings, often within the same block and only pedestrian walkways between. At the same time there is considerable construction of high-rise condominium towers, such as south of the Qiantang River, spread across greenfield land.

Villas, or detached housing, are found in nearly every direction in the suburbs and exurbs. These developments are generally behind security, which makes it difficult to obtain clear, unobstructed photographs. House lots tend to be approximately one-quarter acre or 0.1 hectares (Slides 169).

Small Businesses: As is the case in virtually all Chinese urban areas, many major streets are lined by small businesses (Slides 136)

Industry: Hangzhou has a number of industrial parks, located on the urban fringe to the north and south. Each of these parks is typified by exceptionally wide streets.

TRANSPORT

Hangzhou is well served by high-quality roads. The urban area has very wide streets, which is typical of China. There is a freeway standard ring road, which is a part of the nation's 7918 toll expressway system, is also to be built. Toll expressways (freeway standard) connect Hangzhou to the rest of the nation in nine directions from the ring road. No American urban area has more radiating intercity freeways. There is an increasing volume of travel both by car and electric motorcycle.

Like many Chinese urban areas, Hangzhou is building a Metro (Slide 123). A bus rapid transit system is also being developed (Slides 171-172). Most public transport is by bus and trolley-bus.

THE YANGTZE DELTA

Hangzhou is one of the principal urban areas on the Yangtze River Delta, which includes Shanghai, Nanjing, Wuxi, Suzhou, Ningbo and a number of smaller urban areas. This is one of China's two "mega-regions," --- areas of large adjacent metropolitan areas. The other is the Pearl River Delta, with a somewhat smaller population but much higher population density (see Rental Car Tour: Pearl River Delta Overflight).

EATING IN CHINA

The food in China is superb. My rule in China is to never frequent a restaurant that takes credit cards. That way, there is a good chance of getting genuine local food. The experience is a happy one, though language difficulties make it virtually impossible to enunciate any recommendations (Slide 81). There is a plethora of good local restaurants along virtually all of the main streets in Chinese urban areas. Ordering can be difficult, since few such establishments have menus in English (though rather more than have Mandarin menus in Western Europe or the United States). Moreover, given the humble status of these restaurants --- low prices, good food, they will not be found in any of the tour guides.

It is recommended, however, that tap water be avoided. The hotels provide bottled water. Generally, bottled water should be relied on in all but the most affluent nations. This is my unfortunate advice after having contracted Montezuma's revenge on every continent but Australia and Antarctica.

TRAVELING IN CHINA

China has one of the world's most advanced air transport systems and has built many new airports. The new Beijing Terminal 3 and Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport are among the most impressive in the world. Other large and medium sized urban areas also have new airport terminals, such as Chengdu, Wuhan, Xi'an, Shenyang, Shenzhen, Taiyuan and a new terminal is under construction at Hongqiao International Airport in Shanghai.

Passenger rail is a very inexpensive and comfortable way to travel, especially over shorter distances. China has developed the fastest intercity train in the world, which operates between Tianjin and Beijing. It reaches nearly 220 miles per hour (350 kilometers per hour). Rail travel is very inexpensive. For example, second class travel between Hangzhou and Shanghai has an approximately cost of \$15.

China has developed the world's second longest freeway system, but it is largely inaccessible to foreign drivers because China has not ratified the international drivers license treaty. When and if they do, anticipate a rental car tour covering thousands of miles of Chinese intercity freeway.

“CITIES” IN CHINA

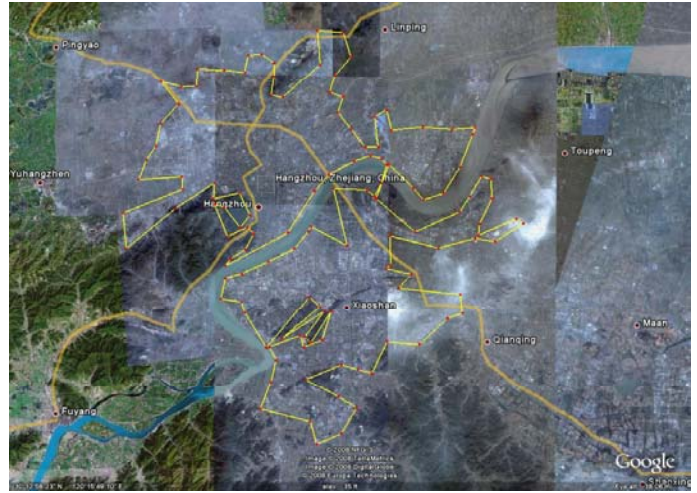
Analysts are often confused by the “city” (“shi” in Chinese) terminology used in China. All of the Suzhou urban area is contained within the city or municipality of Suzhou. Similarly, most (if not all) Chinese urban areas are contained within a single city. While Chinese “cities” are municipalities, they are far different from municipalities in the western world, by virtue of their geographical size and vast rural territories. A better rendering of the Chinese word “shi” would be region.

These cities or regions routinely include large areas of agricultural land, which keeps their density relatively low and leads publishers and analysts to report density data that is so low that it belies a complete misunderstanding of urban geography. For example, the largest municipality in the world is Chongqing, which has more than 30,000,000 people. Its land area is more than 30,000 square miles (more than 80,000 square kilometers) --- nearly as large as Austria or the state of Indiana. The urban area of Chongqing, however has a far more modest population of 4,000,000

<http://www.rentalcartours.net>

<http://www.demographia.com>

<http://www.publicpurpose.com>



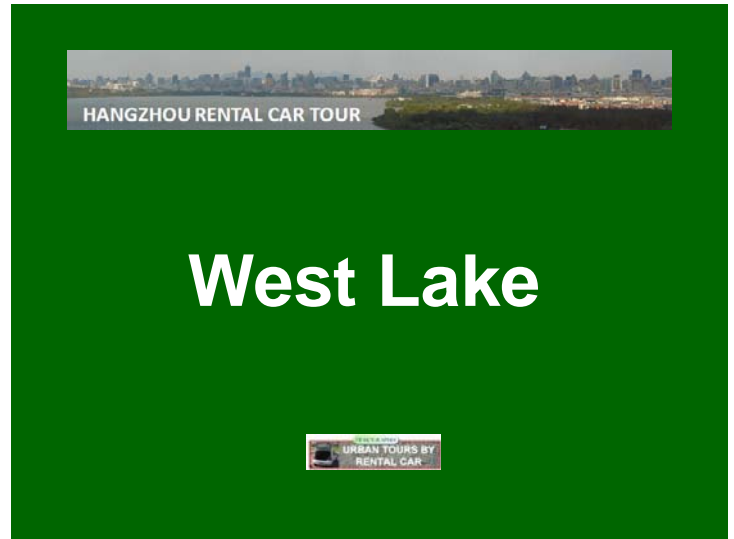
Hangzhou Urban Area

2



West Lake & Qianting River from Air

3



West Lake from Core

5



West Lake: Core

6



West Lake Core: The Buffalo

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West Lake from Core

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West Lake:

9



West Lake from Core

10



West Lake: Core

11



West Lake from Core

12



West Lake toward Northern Historic Core

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West Lake: Core

14



West Lake: Core

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West Lake: Core

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West Lake: Core

17



West Lake: Core

18



West Lake: Core

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West Lake: Core

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From Su Causeway

21



West Lake toward Core from Su Causeway

22



West Lake toward Core from Su Causeway

23



Liuhe Pagoda from Su Causeway

24



West Lake toward Core from Su Causeway

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From Su Causeway

26



Su Causeway

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West Lake: Su Causeway

28



Su Causeway

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West Lake toward Core from Su Causeway

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Su Causeway

31



Su Causeway

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Su Causeway

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From Su Causeway

34



Su Causeway

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Su Causeway

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West Lake from Liuhe Pagoda

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West Lake & Su Causeway from Liuhe Pagoda

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West Lake from Liuhe Pagoda

39



West Lake & Core from Liuhe Pagoda

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West Lake & Core from Liuhe Pagoda

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Su Causeway from Liuhe Pagoda

42



West Lake South Shore from Liuhe Pagoda

43

HANGZHOU RENTAL CAR TOUR

Beijing-Hangzhou Canal (Grand Canal)

URBAN TOURS BY RENTAL CAR



Beijing-Hangzhou Canal

45



Beijing-Hangzhou Canal

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Beijing-Hangzhou Canal

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Beijing-Hangzhou Canal

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Beijing-Hangzhou Canal

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Beijing-Hangzhou Canal

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Beijing-Hangzhou Canal

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Beijing-Hangzhou Canal

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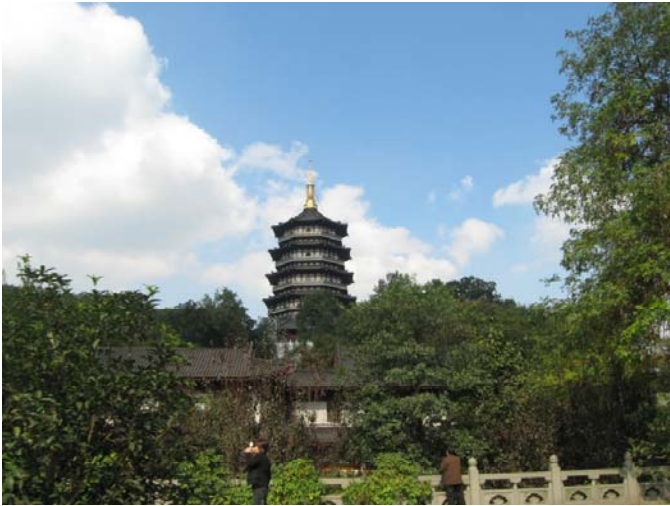
Beijing-Hangzhou Canal

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Beijing-Hangzhou Canal

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Liuhe Pagoda

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Liuhe Pagoda

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Liuhe Pagoda

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Liuhe Pagoda

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Liuhe Pagoda

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Liuhe Pagoda

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Liuhe Pagoda

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Liuhe Pagoda

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Liuhe Pagoda

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Liuhe Pagoda

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HANGZHOU RENTAL CAR TOUR

Qiantang River & South Bank

URBAN TOURS BY RENTAL CAR

A green background featuring a city skyline at the top. Below the skyline, the text "HANGZHOU RENTAL CAR TOUR" is written in white. The main title "Qiantang River & South Bank" is displayed in large, bold, white letters. At the bottom, there is a small logo for "URBAN TOURS BY RENTAL CAR".



Qiantang River Floodwall

67



Qiantang River Upstream

68



Qiantang River South Bank

69



Qiantang River: Downstream

70



Qiantang River South Bank

71



Qiantang River South Bank

72



Qiantang River South Bank

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Qiantang River South Bank

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Hangzhou Railway Station

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Arriving at Hangzhou Railway Station

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Arriving at Hangzhou Railway Station

78



Hangzhou Railway Station

79



Chongqing-Hangzhou Train

80



Dining at Hangzhou Railway Station

81



Hangzhou Railway Station

82



Historic Core

83



Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core: Bridge Across Grand Canal

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Northern Historic Core from Liuhe Pagoda

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Eastern Historic Core from Liuhe Pagoda

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Southern Historic Core from Liuhe Pagoda

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Southern Historic Core from Liuhe Pagoda

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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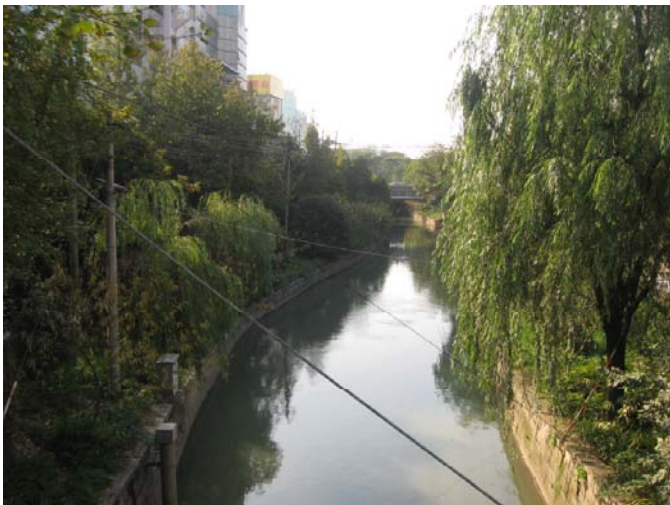
Historic Core and Grand Canal

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core: Direction Signs

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Historic Core: Freeway

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Historic Core: Metro Construction

123



Historic Core

124



Historic Core

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Historic Core: Pedestrian Overpass

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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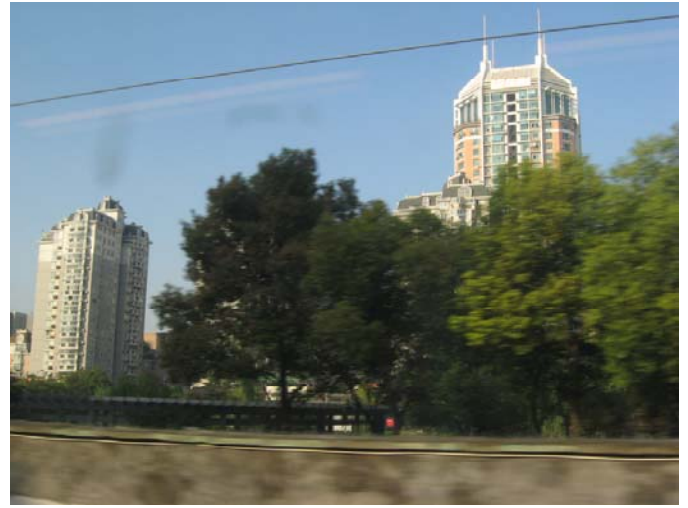
Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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Historic Core

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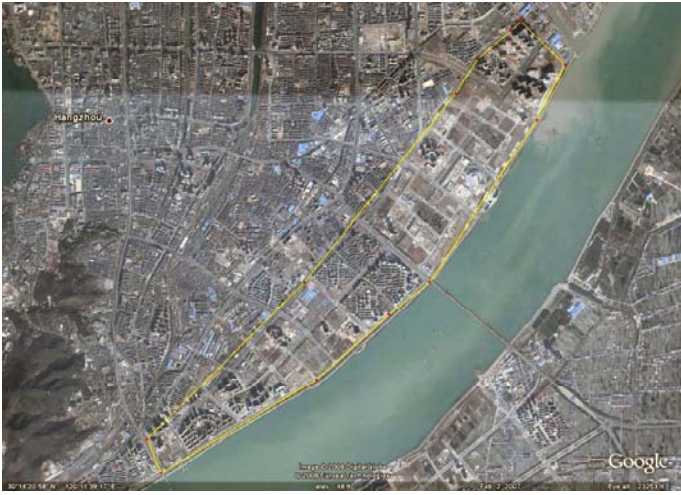
Historic Core: Rental Bicycles

137

HANGZHOU RENTAL CAR TOUR

New Central Business District

URBAN TOURS BY RENTAL CAR



New Central Business District

139



New CBD: Southern Section Before Construction

140



New Central Business District

141



New Central Business District

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New Central Business District

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New Central Business District

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New Central Business District

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New Central Business District

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New Central Business District

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New Central Business District

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New Central Business District

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New Central Business District

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New Central Business District

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New Central Business District

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New Central Business District

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New Central Business District

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New Central Business District

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New Central Business District

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New Central Business District

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New Central Business District

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New Central Business District

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New Central Business District

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New Central Business District

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New Central Business District

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New Central Business District

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New Central Business District

167

HANGZHOU RENTAL CAR TOUR

Other

URBAN TOURS BY RENTAL CAR



Villas (Detached Housing): Northwestern Sector

169



Industrial Area: Northeastern Sector

170



Bus Rapid Transit

171



Bus Rapid Transit Construction

172



Freeway Crossing

173



Condominiums: Northeast

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