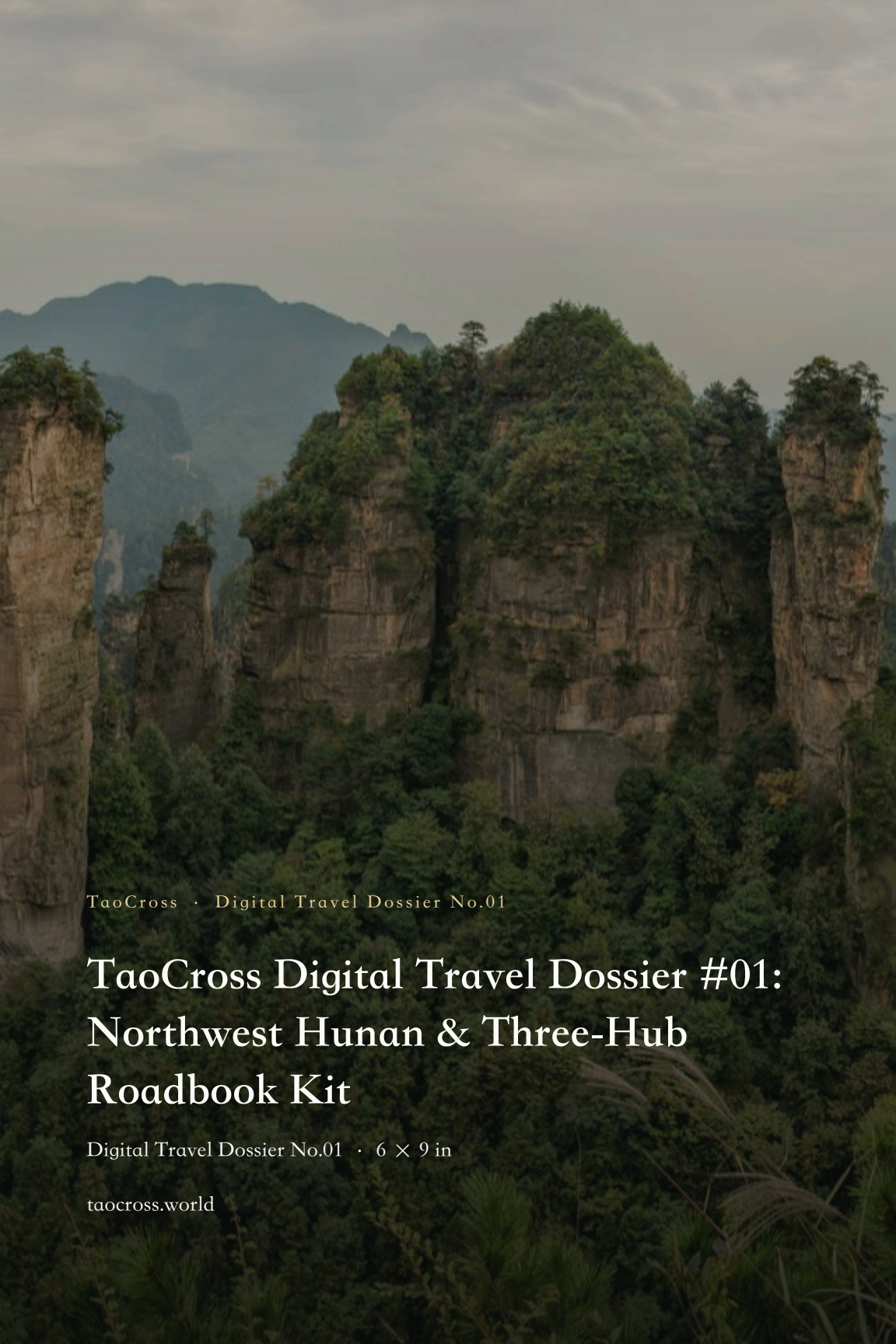


TaoCross · Digital Travel Dossier No.01

TaoCross Digital Travel Dossier #01: Northwest Hunan & Three-Hub Roadbook Kit

Digital Travel Dossier No.01 · 6 × 9 in

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Prelude

The Peach Blossom Spring: the text, the notes, and five rooms of space

A prose of three hundred characters, and the country that still answers it.

Prelude

The Peach Blossom Spring: the text, the notes, and five rooms of space

In the year 421, the second of the Yongchu reign of the Liu Song, a recluse named Tao Yuanming ground his ink in a thatched house south of the Yangtze and wrote a prose of a little more than three hundred characters: the Peach Blossom Spring. He could not have known that a fisherman of Wuling, losing his way, would become for sixteen centuries the most persuasive spiritual landmark in East Asia. People named a county after it, a town after it, and a whole longing for a quieter life. The sentences came first. The place-names came later, when people along the Yuan River set an essay down where a per - son can walk.



Houses on the water at the Peach Garden

28.7811° N, 111.4242° E

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1.1 Tao Yuanming, the received text

What follows is the received text. The tale is set in the Taiyuan reign of the Eastern Jin. By the time Tao wrote, that dynasty was at its end. The piece does not explain a constitution. It lets a fisherman enter, and then it takes the road away.

晋太元中，武陵人捕鱼为业。缘溪行，忘路之远近。忽逢桃花林，夹岸数百步，中无杂树，芳草鲜美，落英缤纷。渔人甚异之，复前行，欲穷其林。

林尽水源，便得一山。山有小口，仿佛若有光。便舍船，从口入。初极狭，才通人。复行数十步，豁然开朗。土地平旷，屋舍俨然，有良田、美池、桑竹之属。阡陌交通，鸡犬相闻。其中往来种作，男女衣着，悉如外人。黄发垂髫，并怡然自乐。

见渔人，乃大惊，问所从来。具答之。便要还家，设酒杀鸡作食。村中闻有此人，咸来问讯。自云先世避秦时乱，率妻子邑人来此绝境，不复出焉，遂与外人间隔。问今是何世，乃不知有汉，无论魏晋。此人一一为具言所闻，皆叹惋。余人各复延至其家，皆出酒食。停数日，辞去。此中人语云：“不足为外人道也。”

既出，得其船，便扶向路，处处志之。及郡下，诣太守，说如此。太守即遣人随其往，寻向所志，遂迷，不复得路。

南阳刘子骥，高尚士也，闻之，欣然规往。未果，寻病终。后遂无问津者。

1.2 Notes on place and space

Taiyuan is the reign title of Emperor Xiaowu of the Eastern Jin, roughly 376 to 396. The essay sets its story in those years so that the fisherman's present and the villagers' ignorance of Han stand on opposite sides of a whole history of dynasties. Wuling Commandery was established under the Han. Its territory covered what we now call northwest Hunan: Changde, Zhangjiajie, and the west. Taoyuan County is much later. The name of the county arrives in the Zhenghe reign of the Northern Song. Read the commandery first, and the county afterwards.

“He followed the stream” is the first room of the piece. The stream has no name. Qinxi, in the scenic area today, is a later waterway built so that a reader can sit in a boat and enter the sentence, with peaches planted along the banks. It helps the reading, and it also warns the reading. In the essay the distance is forgotten. On the water today, the boatman knows it exactly.

“Petals falling in a flurry” is not a blossom advertisement. The petals have al - ready left the branch. Tao writes a flowering that is ending, not a flowering at its height. If Taoxian Ridge is in flower in March or April, you are hearing an echo of the sentence, not standing inside its hour. “At first extremely narrow, just wide enough for a person, then suddenly open” is the most exact piece of architecture in the prose. The narrow mouth reduces the outsider to a single body. The opening gives the world back, and the world it gives back can be farmed. It is not a temple.

1.3 A modern prose telling

The modern Chinese telling is for the Chinese editions. The English literary telling follows.

1.4 English literary edition

During the Taiyuan reign of the Jin Dynasty, there lived a fisherman of Wuling. He followed a stream and forgot how far he had come, until a peach wood closed over both banks for several hundred paces, with no other tree among them, the grass fresh and the petals falling. He went on, meaning to see the end of it. Where the wood and the water ended, a hill stood. A small mouth in the hill seemed to hold a light. He left the boat and entered. At first the passage was only wide enough for one body. After some dozens of paces it opened: flat land, ordered houses, good fields, bright pools, mulberry and bamboo. Paths crossed the fields. Dogs and chickens answered one another. The people at their work wore clothes unlike those outside. The old and the children looked at ease. They were startled to see him, and asked where he had come from. He told them. They took him home to wine and chicken. The whole village came to hear. They said their forebears had fled the troubles at the end of Qin, had brought their families and neighbours to this cut-off place, and had never gone out again, so that news of the world had stopped. They asked what dynasty it now was, and they did not know of Han, still less of Wei or Jin. He told them what he had heard. They sighed. House after house fed him. After several days he took his leave. They said there was no need to speak of this outside. He found the boat, followed the way he had come, and left marks. At the com - mandery he told the prefect. The prefect sent men after the marks. They lost the way and never found it again. Liu Ziji of Nanyang, a man with a name for high-mindedness, was glad and planned to go. He never did. He fell ill and died. After that, no one asked after the ford.

1.5 Five changes of space

Read the piece as an arrival, not as a dig, and it has five rooms. Each room is an action in the prose. The landings, steles, and fields at the scenic area can help you remember them. They are not the excavation of them.

Five rooms

Room	The action in the prose	A place that can be read beside it
The Drift 忘路	He followed the stream and forgot the distance.	The Qinxi boat. The passage replaces distance. Keep the word “forgot”.
The Threshold 奇境	A peach wood, petals falling.	Taoxian Ridge in March and April. The flowers are an echo.
The Passage 甬道	At first only wide enough for one body.	Any mouth you must duck to enter. Do not promote a show cave into this one.
The Epiphany 顿悟	After some dozens of paces, it opened.	The moment Qingu's fields suddenly lie flat.
The Dwelling 栖居	Ordered houses, wine and chicken.	A bowl of Taoyuan leicha on the high street. Drink, then sit.

Prelude

What “a world apart” means, in conversation with Shangri-La

The four characters 世外桃源 walked out of this essay and became the gentlest set phrase in Chinese for a life apart from noise. The phrase flattens the prose. Tao was not describing a resort you can book, or a political programme. The villagers had fled the wars at the end of Qin, and they did not know Han, Wei, or Jin. Once the fisherman left, the marks failed. The force of the piece is that the road cannot be found again. What can be found again is landscape. What cannot is the essay.



Wulingyuan seen from Tianzi Mountain

29.3486° N, 110.5455° E

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2.1 History and geography

Wuling Commandery is a Han foundation. Taoyuan as a county is a Northern Song creation, in the Zhenghe reign, and the county takes its name from the essay. From the Tang and Song on, Li Bai, Liu Yuxi, and Han Yu all left poems

for Wuling and for the Peach Blossom Spring. Poetry carried the commandery's name so far that later travellers sometimes expect every cave in the poems to be holding its door open.

The country of northwest Hunan offers the essay a metaphor you can walk. Wulingyuan at Zhangjiajie is a forest of quartz-sandstone pillars, Jinbian Stream between them, Yuanjiajie and Tianzi Mountain above the cloud. On the Taoyuan side the library is the Yuan, its islands, tea hills, and low switchbacks: the drum-shaped peaks of Yiwangxi, Bailinzhou in the middle of the river, tea rows at Cha'anpu, the Tieryan road coiling into cloud. Fenghuang, Dehang, and Aizhai set an old town, a Miao village, and a gorge on the west. This does not turn the essay into one cave mouth. It says that a person who starts from the water of Wuling will meet a narrow opening, an opening-out, land that can be farmed, and mountains that ask to be looked up to.

The villagers say their forebears came fleeing the end of Qin. Taoyuan leicha keeps another thread in the bowl. When Ma Yuan's Han army was camped in Wuling, the soldiers pounded fresh ginger, raw rice, and fresh tea into a “three-fresh” drink against the damp. That is the story of the bowl. It does not turn a cave into a barracks. Two thousand years on, the tale of flight and the hot bowl are both still on this ground. One is in the mouth. One is in the story.

2.2 The Spring, Utopia, Shangri-La

Three books are often stacked as if they were the same perfect country. They are not. The Spring has fields, chickens, wine, and neighbours who will not leave. Its happiness is ordinary: landscape with a spirit, land that can be tilled, neighbours with feeling, a heart without fear. Utopia is an island that was de - signed. Shangri-La is a valley that a novel hid. What moves a reader in the Spring is that it refuses to be found again, and yet allows a bowl of leicha, a stream, and an arch to go on doing business in the human world.

Three elsewheres

	Peach Blossom Spring	Utopia	Lost Horizon
Author and year	Tao Yuanming, the essay written around 421	Thomas More, 1516	James Hilton, 1933
What it is	A prose. The village lives in the sentences, and later in place-names.	A Latin political fiction. The island is designed.	An English novel. The valley is hidden.
How people live	They farm, kill chickens, drink, and do not know Han.	Property is abolished. Work and housing are assigned.	Time slows in the snow, watched by a lamasery.
How a traveller uses it	Use it to read water, wood, and lamps. Allow the cave in the essay to stay unfound.	Use it as the history of an idea.	Use it as a Western dream of an Eastern valley. This volume's roads are in northwest Hunan.

2.3 The golden triangle

The three towns of this volume are Taohuayuan, Dayong, and Fenghuang. Taohuayuan stands on the east, on the Yuan. It is the spiritual source: an essay become an arch, a stream, an academy, and a bowl of leicha. Dayong stands on the north, on the Li. It is the city gate of the natural wonder: outside the wall are Tianmen Mountain and Wulingyuan. Fenghuang stands on the southwest, on the Tuo. It is the human border town: stilt houses, Shen Congwen, the Miao frontier wall, and one bridge at Aizhai.

The three points are not a straight line. Taoyuan to Dayong, and Dayong to Fenghuang, are mountain roads, the Zhangjiajie – Jishou – Huaihua railway, and a day's strength. Tianmen, Wulingyuan, and Furong Town are the high places inside the triangle, not a fourth old town. The roadbook opens in that order: wet your feet in the essay, then climb, then leave the night beside the Tuo.



Part II · Taoyuan

Taoyuan: six places to know before you move

Where the essay came to earth: arch, stream, fields, tea, river.

Taoyuan: six places to know before you move

The arch



The stone street of Taohuayuan, and the gate at its end

28.7743° N, 111.4261° E

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The town sits against the scenic area, built around a lake, grey brick and dark tile. Wenxing Pagoda is the vertical mark. The north arch is the horizontal one. Shops by day, lamps in the lake by night. The stone of the town lies around sixty-five to eighty metres, with almost no climb. From the arch through Peach Blossom Mountain, Wuliu Lake, and Qingu is about 8.5 kilometres and about 180 metres of climbing. The stone is slick in rain. The workshop on the high street is 洞仙逸景擂茶. The geographical indication on the bowl is 桃源擂茶.

Qinxi and Qingu



Houses on the water at the Peach Garden

28.7811° N, 111.4242° E

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Qinxi is the stream you can sit on. The peaches were planted for the sentence; the fields were already there. Ashore, Qingu's rice, waterwheel, and houses stand beside the essay's open land and ordered roofs. The area opens at 8:30. The route page prints a ticket of ¥128, valid three days, and a shuttle at ¥20. Read those as the figures before you go. If the window has changed them, the window wins.

Bailinzhou



Fishermen on the Yuan River at Changde

29.0320° N, 111.6880° E

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Bailinzhou is one of the islands in the Yuan at Taoyuan, water on every side, and in spring a thousand mu of rape go gold. The flower is a March and April event. When the river rises, parts of the island close. Walk the bunds. A fishing boat on the Yuan is the real profession in the essay: a man of Wuling who fished for a living.

Cha'anpu



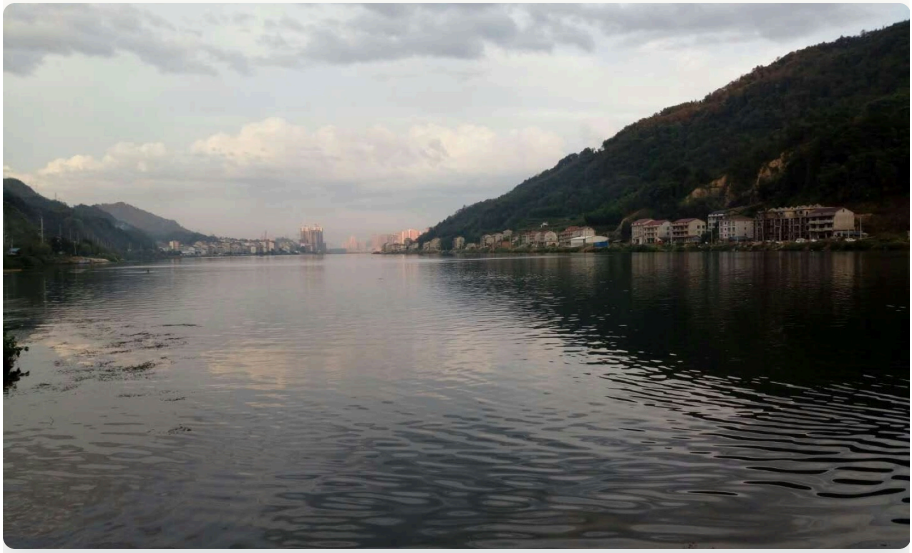
Tea hills, bushes planted in rows along the slope

28.6463° N, 111.1561° E

CC BY-SA 4.0 · 三猎

Cha'anpu calls itself a thousand-year tea township. The leaf is Taoyuan large-leaf. The tea-horse road crosses the town, and Songyun Square, Songyang Lake, the cycle path, and the tea museum turn an industry into a day you can walk. Spring picking runs from March into May. When you buy, look for the words 桃源大叶茶, at the garden or at the company's own counter.

Yiwangxi



The Yuan River in Hunan, the water Yiwangxi joins

28.7537° N, 111.2344° E

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Yiwangxi rises in the hills and joins the Yuan. The water is clear enough to show the stones, which is how it got its name. Drum-shaped peaks line the stream. Shuixinzhai splits the water in two. On clear mornings in spring, au - tumn, and winter a wide fog lifts off it; locally it is called a tide of the south sea. The second day follows the cliffs of the Yuan: Ma Yuan's stone chamber and the Qixing tombs. This is mountain and water, not the garden country of the scenic area.

Leicha



Pounded tea: mortar, pestle, and a bowl made to order

28.7743° N, 111.4261° E

CC BY-SA 4.0 · WEI, WAN-CHEN

A bowl of Taoyuan leicha is fresh rice, ginger, and tea pounded hot in a mor - tar, eaten with puffed rice, peanuts, and fried beans. It is the first act of hospi - tality, and a national geographical indication. The workshop door and the brand on the bowl are separated in chapter 17. Here, remember only this: Cha'anpu grows the leaf. The town makes the bowl.

TY-D01

Taoyuan day · the town, Qinxi, and Peach Blossom Mountain

Distance	Time	Elevation	Route
About 8.5 km	One day	About 180 m of climbing	TY-D01



The stone street of Taohuayuan, and the gate at its end

28.7743° N, 111.4261° E

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Houses on the water at the Peach Garden 28.7811° N, 111.4242° E

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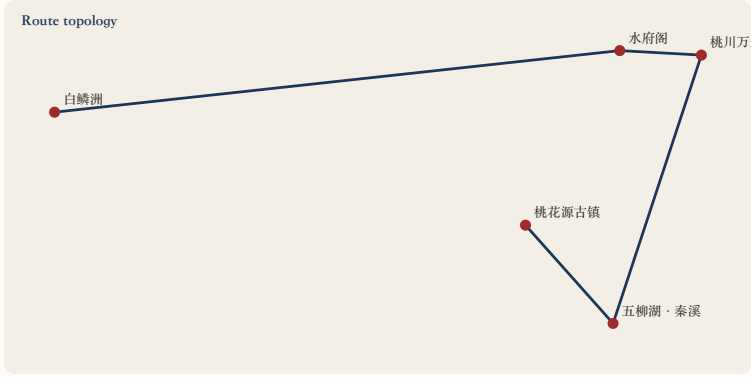
Morning: the north arch, then the Qinxi boat, where fields come down to the water. Ashore in Qingu, rice, a waterwheel, and the open land of the essay. After lunch, the stele corridor and the pines. If you still have legs, Shuifu Pavilion for the last light on the Yuan. Evening in the town; the landscape performance of the essay is a separate ticket, about ¥298, and the lake walk is the quieter ending.

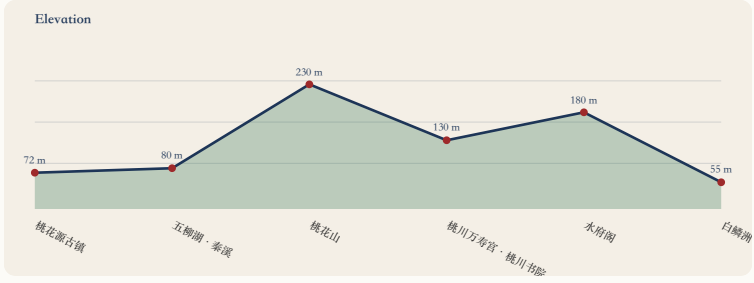
The shape of the day

Hour	This stretch
08:30	North arch, while the stone is still cool.
09:10	The Qinxi landing. Fields on both banks.
10:40	Ashore in Qingu: fields, a waterwheel, houses.
12:10	Lunch in the valley or back in town. Leicha may open the meal.
13:30	The stele walk and old pines on Peach Blossom Mountain.
16:00	Shuifu Pavilion and the light on the Yuan. Stop here if legs are done.
18:10	Back to town. The lake goes dark, then the lamps come on.
20:00	The evening telling of the essay, or a last walk by the lake.

Frames and missteps

Shoot the arch from below, eaves against sky or peach branches. On the boat, use the gunwale as a foreground. Steles want side light.





Roadbook

This is the shortest way to read the four characters 世外桃源 on the ground. Leave Taohuayuan Ancient Town for the scenic area, take a boat along Qinxi, walk the fields of Qingu, and climb Peach Blossom Mountain for the steles and the old pines. The town is home for the night.

Morning: the north arch, then the Qinxi boat, where fields come down to the water. Ashore in Qingu, rice, a waterwheel, and the open land of the essay. After lunch, the stele corridor and the pines. If you still have legs, Shuifu Pavilion for the last light on the Yuan. Evening in the town; the landscape performance of the essay is a separate ticket, about ¥298, and the lake walk is the quieter ending.

On the living page

The code opens this route's living page. Boats, tickets, and the day's notice are there. The paper keeps the rhythm.

TY-D01 · TY-1DAY-01

Unlock the full dossier

Unlock the full dossier: twenty chapters, the hour-by-hour roadbook, the ele - vation profiles, Taoyuan leicha, and the bilingual order card, with one month of rollover membership and one hundred route passes.

https://www.taocross.world/dossiers