



Peregrine Travel Group

Issue 2

December 2008

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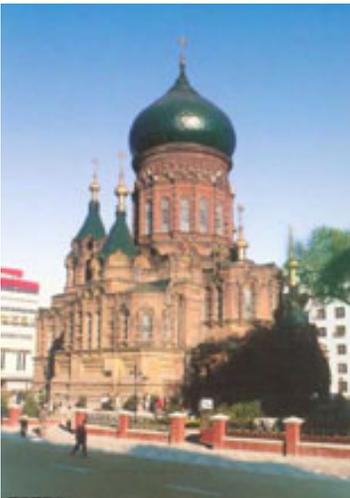
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Travel to Harbin, Ice and Snow World

Christmas is just around the corner, so start planning that winter break now. We have fantastic specials for our clients to visit Harbin, a winter wonderland of China.

Harbin, capital of Heilongjiang province, is a major city in northeast of China. It is often referred to as "Oriental Moscow" for its mix of Western and Chinese culture. Russia, the neighboring country has a deep influence on Harbin. You will see many Russian-style architectures there. St. Sofia Church is a typical example. This city is also famous for its moderate weather in the summer and its abundance of ice and snow in winter. The extreme freezing temperature makes it an ideal ski resort in China, Yabuli Ski Resort. Even though the weather can be very cold, the annual ice lantern festival and the multicultural influence in this city make it a fascinating place to visit, attracting tourists all over the world. [See more: >>](#)

Samples of Western and Russian-influnced Architectures



Saint Sofia Church

Saint Sofia is the largest Russian Orthodox Church in Far East Asia. It is built in the Byzantine style. It occupies a floor space of 721 square meters and measures 53.35 meters in height. The huge dome stands 48.55 meters high and is 10 meters in diameter. This church was closed down after liberation. Later, it was used as a warehouse. It was not until May 1997 that the municipal government of Harbin decided to renovate the church. It took 80 days to restore the church. Around the church 6648 square meters of space was made into a Square. Benches, rails and lamps were all designed in European style in conformity with the church. Today concerts are often held in the Square for people to enjoy.



Center Street

Center Street literally means "Central Avenue". This cobblestone lined street is a pedestrian only street that could serve as a perfect remnant of the bustling international business activities at the turn of the 20th century. The 1.4-km long street is a veritable museum of European architectural style, including Baroque and Byzantine facades, Jewish architectural wonders, little Russian bakeries, French fashion houses, American snack food outlets, and Japanese restaurants.

Yabuli International Ski Resort



Yabuli International Ski Resort, the biggest and best ski resort in China, is 200 kilometers (124 Miles) east of Harbin and 120 kilometers (75 miles) west of Mudanjiang in Shangzhi City, Heilongjiang Province. The resort provides great skiing with high mountains and good snow. The lowest temperature is -47.2°F . Because of the high elevation, snow falls for a long period of about 170 days. The ski resort includes two distinctive areas: the competitive section and the leisure skiing section. The alpine competitive skiing section reaches an altitude of 1,374 meters (approx. 4,508 feet). Built according to international standard, this section provides an excellent environment for professional skiers. In the leisure skiing section, the highest altitude is only about 1,000 meters (approx. 3,281 feet), and the area provides a comparatively safe environment for leisure skiing.

Harbin International Ice and Snow Sculpture Festival

The annual **Harbin International Ice and Snow Sculpture Festival** has been held since 1963. It had been interrupted for a number of years during the Cultural Revolution until it was resumed in 1985. It starts officially from January 5 and lasts for over one month. However the exhibitions often open earlier and last longer if weather permits. Each year the best collections of ice and snow artworks are exhibited in the following five main places: The Sun Island Scenic Area, Harbin Ice and Snow World, Yabuli International Ski Resort, The Ice Lantern Garden Party, and Zhaolin Park. Ice sculpture decorations range from modern technology lasers to traditional ice lanterns. Traditional ice lanterns were first made in the Qing Dynasty (1644 - 1911) by local peasants and fishermen and used as jack-lights during the winter months. These first ice lanterns were made by pouring water into buckets and left out in the open to freeze. Each bucket-shaped ice was pulled out before the water froze completely. A hole was chiseled on the top of the bucket-shaped ice so the remaining water inside could be poured out, creating a hollow vessel. Finally a candle was placed inside the hollow vessel resulting in a windproof ice lantern that gained great popularity in the region around Harbin. From then on, people made ice lanterns and put them outside their houses or gave them to children to play with during some of the traditional festivals. Thus began the long history of the

development of the ice lantern. In today's modern world, ice lantern refers to a series of plastic arts using ice and snow as raw material combining ice artworks with colored lights and splendid music. The specific patterns of ice lantern include ice and snow sculptures, ice flowers, ice architectures, etc.

The Harbin Ice and Snow Festival is one of the world's four largest ice and snow festivals, along with Japan's Sapporo Snow Festival, Canada's Quebec City Winter Carnival and Norway's Ski Festival. It is not only an exposition of ice and snow art, but also an annual cultural event for international exchange. Many talented and professional ice sculpture experts, artists and fans from America, Canada, Japan, Singapore, Russia, China, etc. gathering in Harbin to participate ice sculpting competitions and to communicate and share with each other in the world of ice and snow art. During the festival, many sporting competitions are also popular including speed skating, Yabuli alpine skiing, sledding, ice hockey, winter-swimming in Songhua River just to name a few.



Despite Harbin's plentiful snowfall, the snow used at the festival is man-made to keep it clean and consistent. Once the snow-making machines in the park have churned out a small mountain, that snow is shoveled onto the back of a truck and taken to where the sculpture will rest. Workers then tie together four walls of wooden boards and fill the resulting box with snow, allowing it to settle and form a block as shown on the left. To make the block taller, they tie together a second group of walls on top of the first and fill that with snow as well. On this day, blocks of snow were being prepared for a snow-sculpting competition. Each team of competitors would start with a block about four meters tall and three meters on a side. Here, workers put the finishing touches on a block, having just completed another one behind them.



And what about the ice? Preparing those structures for the festival takes much more work. Nature provides the ice-making machine in the form of nearby Songhua River, which remains frozen nearly half the year. Huge saws cut thick blocks of ice from the river, and the blocks are then brought to Sun Island Park just north of the river by truck. Forklifts are required to move the heavy blocks around.



The ice blocks are then stacked nearby for later use. Eventually they will be carved into sculptures, or cut into smaller blocks and used to create giant structures either at the Snow Sculpture Art Fair or at the Ice and Snow World event nearby. Because the temperature will stay below freezing for at least two more months, the blocks can be left outdoors.



The Snow Fair is a name for art, while the Ice Festival is a mirror for architecture.



The most impressive ice work last year was the ice sculpture of Summer Palace, how about this year? Well, we'll have to wait for the result.



Despite the numerous ice and snow sculptures displays, diversity of interesting activities is also necessary in the festival. Visitors can slide down with high speed along a wall which is also an ice-skating rink. But the most popular activity in the festival is climbing on the large ice wall.

Reserve early with Peregrine Travel Group for your
Harbin Ice and Snow Festival Tour

For more information, please go to our website: www.peregrinetravelgroup.com or

Email us at: peregrinetravelgroup@earthlink.net

Peregrine Travel's Upcoming Groups:

Chinese New Year Hong Kong January 2009

7-Day Tour, 10-Day & 15 Day Tours (incl. China)

Lt. Governor John Garamendi California

Delegation China Trip February 18-28, 2009

Taiwan Global Sourcing Fair April 2009

Yiwu Trade Fair July 2009

Testimonials:

Our tour guide was very knowledgeable and kind. We got to see a lot of places and a big variety of attractions. Also our driver was very nice. Everything was much better than we thought it would be. K.H.S

Tour was very organized and very good service. Lily was so good and knowledgeable! T.B.

We were most impressed about our tour and tour guide, Tina. A.S.