

# Tourism Mode of Tea Culture Museum in Guizhou: A Case Study of Meitan Modern Tea Culture Museum Settlement

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**Abstract** Since the 14<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan, tea culture has become very popular. However, due to the lack of brand awareness and overall planning, and the mechanical application of the model outside the province and other tourism products, Guizhou Tea Culture Tourism presents a "strong tea, light culture, weak tourism". In view of this, in order to realize the positioning goal of "building a national demonstration zone for the integration of tea culture and tourism" in the 14<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan of Guizhou tea industry, and explore the development mode of integration of tea culture and tourism with Guizhou characteristics, this study takes museum tourism as the breakthrough point, Meitan Tea Museum settlement as the research object, and collects Meitan Tea Museum tourism resources. This paper uses SWOT analysis to evaluate the Meitan Tea Culture Museum Tourism model, and provides some recommendations for the development of tea culture museum tourism in Guizhou Province.

**Key words** Tea culture museum tourism, Meitan in Guizhou Province, Tea culture museum settlement

## 1 Introduction

Driven by the wave of experience economy, culture museum tourism becomes popular. According to data released by the National Cultural Heritage Administration, by 2022, there were 6 565 museums in China, receiving 578 million visitors and more than 10 billion new media views<sup>[1]</sup>. In order to practice the "three teas as a whole" (tea industry, tea culture, and tea technology) and realize the 14<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan tea industry development goal of "building a national demonstration zone for the integration of tea, culture and tourism" in Guizhou, it has become a new trend to explore the development path of the integration of tea and tourism with Guizhou characteristics from the perspective of cultural and exposition tourism. At present, the research of the integration of tea, culture and tourism in China focuses on the development and implementation of tourism strategy, and there are few works on the combination of museum tourism and tea industry. In this study, we took Meitan Modern Tea Culture Museum Settlement as an example to conduct empirical research, to provide new ideas for the development of tea culture tourism in Guizhou.

## 2 Current situation of Meitan tea culture museum tourism resources

**2.1 Meitan tea tourism resources** Meitan County is located

in the hinterland of northern Guizhou. Its tea tourism planning layout mainly focuses on "Seven Ones" (Western Tea City, the World No. 1 Teapot, Guizhou International Tea Culture Festival and Tea Industry Exposition, Guizhou Tea Institute, Central Experimental Tea plantation of the Republic of China, and Hetaoba Village), which is a characteristic tea tourism layout integrating tea production, tea culture, tea science and technology, tea market and tea activities. Now, Meitan Tea Tour has more than 10 representative tea tourist attractions, such as "Tea Sea in Western China", "the World No. 1 Teapot" Meitan Tianhu International Hotel, "Ten Most Beautiful Rural Roads" 27 degrees Tea Sea Road, Tianjiagou Qicaibuluo Village, Taohuajiang Qianbei Residence, Guanzishan Tea Mountain, *etc.*, which have realized the "Dancing Together of Six Tea Products". It has won the title of "Top Ten Demonstration Counties of Tea Tourism Integration in China", shaped the tourism card of Meitan Tea City, and promoted the tourism brand effect of "Colorful Guizhou, Intoxicated in Zunyi, and Tea Sea in Meitan".

**2.2 Meitan tea cultural heritage resources** There are many kinds of Meitan tea cultural heritage resources, and the system is complete. As a key place for the development of modern tea science and technology in China, Meitan has ten "firsts" (or No. 1) in the history of tea (Table 1), which has laid a unique foundation for its tea culture. Its tea cultural heritage resources can be divided into immovable cultural heritage, movable cultural heritage and intangible cultural heritage (Table 2).

**2.3 Meitan Modern Tea Culture Museum Settlement** The Meitan Modern Tea Culture Museum Settlement adopts the mode of "1 + 3 + 2" (one main hall: Guizhou Tea Culture and Ecology Museum; three special museums: China Tea Industry Museum, Memorial Hall of the Central Experimental Tea Plantation of the Republic of China, Exhibition Hall of Dongfanghong Power Station; two branch museums: Xiangshan Tea History Exhibition Hall, Yangchun Baixue Meitan Cuiya Intangible Culture Inheritance

Received: July 23, 2024 Accepted: October 28, 2024

Supported by Guiding Project of Social Science Planning of Guizhou Academy of Agricultural Sciences in 2023 "An Empirical Study on the Tea Culture Museum Tourism Model in Guizhou Province Based in the Context of Rural Revitalization" ([2023]No.11); Youth Science and Technology Fund of Guizhou Academy of Agricultural Sciences "A Comparative Study on the Benefits of Guizhou Tea Science and Technology Promotion Model from the Perspective of Rural Revitalization" ([2022]No.5).

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Base), is the only tea culture museum group in Guizhou, with a total area of about 3.33 ha and an exhibition hall area of about 10 000 m<sup>2</sup>. It was completed and opened on September 28, 2013. In this study, we focused on analyzing the three most distinctive halls.

Table 1 Ten "No.1" (or first) in the history of Meitan tea

Number	Title	Content
1	The first state-level tea production and scientific research institution in modern China	Central Experimental Tea plantation of the Republic of China
2	China's first large-scale planting demonstration tea garden	Xiangshan Demonstration Tea Garden
3	The first national tea variety garden in China	Tongzipo National Tea Variety Garden
4	The first tea vocational school in Southwest China	Guizhou Provincial Meitan Practical Vocational School
5	The First Poetry Club of Modern Tea Poetry	Meijiang Tea Poetry Club
6	The largest tea plantation in Guizhou	Yongxing ten thousand mu of tea
7	China's first tea technology experiment succeeded	Close planting and no-tillage technology
8	The world largest tea culture landscape	Meitan Tianhu International Hotel
9	The first and largest tea culture ecological museum group in Guizhou	Guizhou Tea Culture and Ecology Museum
10	No.1 of top 100 tea counties in China	Meitan County

Table 2 Meitan tea culture heritage resources

Category	Immovable cultural heritage	Movable cultural heritage	Intangible cultural heritage
Definition	The specific heritages and sites that Meitan ancestors participated in and existed in the process of tea production, tea culture evolution and tea science and technology research serve as supplementary evidence to make up for the lack of written and historical records.	All representative objects related to tea production, research and cultural customs that retain the imprint of the times	As a cultural heritage, Meitan has been handed down from generation to generation in various forms of traditional tea culture
Resources	Former site of Central Experimental Tea plantation of the Republic of China Former site of Guizhou Tea Institute Yiquan Longevity Palace Xiangshan Old Tea Garden in Ming and Qing Dynasties Tongzipo National Tea Variety Garden Eight scenery of Meitan tea plantation	Complete set of wooden black tea processing production line Dongfanghong crawler bulldozer Green tea roller machine Kalopid double-acting kneading machine Tea evaluation and experimental apparatus Specimens of various tea trees, tea fruits and insects Packaging of "Meitan Black Tea" and "Meitan Green Tea" products Collection of Meijiang Tea Poetry Club poems Tea archives, books, manuscripts, drawings, photos Boundary Marker of Central Experimental Tea Plantation	Processing technology of "Meitan Black Tea" and "Meitan Green Tea" Meitan hand-built black tea traditional production process Production process of Meitan Qiangqi tea Production and customs of Meitan oil tea Meitan Tea Lantern (Flower Lantern) Wedding Tea Custom "Tea Ceremony" and "Three-course Tea"
Conservation	Original site protection	China Tea Industry Museum Guizhou Tea Culture and Ecology Museum	Guizhou Tea Culture and Ecology Museum Guizhou Tea Institute Folk circulation and collection

**2.3.1** Guizhou Tea Culture and Ecology Museum is located in Meitan China Tea City, covering an area of more than 2 600 m<sup>2</sup>. It is the core hall of the Meitan Modern Tea Culture Museum Settlement and has been approved to be included into the third batch of national third-level museums and the fourth batch of provincial popular science education bases. The museum area is divided into 10 parts and 43 units, displaying more than 600 pictures and 560 objects of more than 40 key tea-producing areas in Guizhou, and receiving more than 100 000 visitors every year<sup>[2]</sup>. Its characteristics are shown in Table 3.

**2.3.2** China Tea Industry Museum. It is located in the former site of Meitan Tea Farm in Tea City Community of Meijiang Street, covering an area of about 25 300 m<sup>2</sup>, with an exhibition hall area of more than 4 000 m<sup>2</sup>. The museum hall area is divided into four parts: comprehensive exhibition room, tea industry machine hall, black and green tea processing workshop and tea tasting room. The exhibition mainly focuses on the restoration of scenes, and two sets

of well-preserved wooden black tea production lines are the exhibits of the town hall. Located in the core area of tea culture landscape, adjacent to Meitan Office Building of Guizhou Tea Institute, Yangliu Lake, Dongfanghong Power Station Exhibition Hall, *etc.*, the tourism agglomeration effect is remarkable.

**2.3.3** Characteristics of Yangchun Baixue Meitan Cuiya intangible cultural heritage inheritance training base. Located in the factory area of Guizhou Yangchun Baixue Tea Company in Meitan Green Food Industrial Park, it is a branch of Guizhou Tea Culture and Ecology Museum, covering an area of 4 320 m<sup>2</sup>. The museum area is divided into 7 themes and 11 exhibition areas, displaying more than 100 objects. The theme introduces the development history of Meitan Cuiya and its 21 processes. Outside the museum, there is a 100 m long Tea Blessing China tea culture corridor. Nine bronze sculptures are used to show the evolution of Meitan tea history. It receives up to 100 000 visitors annually. Its characteristics are detailed in Table 5.

Table 3 Characteristics of Guizhou tea culture ecological museum

Category	Characteristic	Specific contents
Collections and exhibitions	Clear exhibition line	From the origin of tea tree to the changes of tea history in past dynasties , to the beginning of modern tea science and technology , and then to the development of modern tea industry
	Perfect content design	Covering tea culture , tea history and tea science and technology , covering five major tea-producing areas in Guizhou.
	Rare and precious cultural relics	A series of precious cultural relics in the collection , represented by replicas of fossil tea seeds
	Reproduced ecological concept	Restoring the original ecological appearance of tea production , tea ceremony , tea custom and daily tea drinking
Research and protection	Abundant research results	Published more than 20 monographs on tea culture and more than 100 tea-related documents
	Protection and planning in a project-based manner	Promoting the protection of tea culture heritage in the form of projects , special tea culture plans such as " Meitan Tea Culture Development Plan" , " Xiangshan Tea Museum Tea Culture Construction Plan" and " Meitan County Ancient Tea Resources Protection and Utilization Plan" have been completed
Science popularization and publicity	Taking advantage of important festivals	Using the National Science Popularization Day , Science and Technology Week , International Museum Day , Natural and Cultural Heritage Day , Tea Expo and other important festivals to carry out large-scale tours , tea culture lectures and tea art skills training.
	Promoting the " Seven Entries " of tea culture	Sending tea culture to schools , government organs , enterprises , communities , villages , hotels , and military camps
	Strengthening the popularization of tea science among the whole people	Carrying out popular science education activities with tea culture as the theme in various forms , high density and low threshold

Table 4 Eight scenic spots of Meitan and the eight scenic spots of Meitan tea plantation

Category	Content of eight scenic spots
Old eight scenic spots of Meitan	Chaoyang Ancient Cave, Houxi Fish Shadow, Xuge Dusk Haze, Zexi Lanchui, Shuiyuan Cave, Hantan Mirroring the Moon, Yushan Phoenix Flying, Shici Xiaozhong Bell
New eight scenic spots of Meitan	Qingxu Ancient Cave, Buddhist Bell on the Top of the Buddha, Matou Mountain Moon, Meishui Rainbow, Juexian Ancient Temple, Huashui Qipa, Pingling Bamboo, Wenliu Flying Squirrel
Eight scenic spots of Meitan tea plantation	Taking Green Across the River, Sunset Glow over Rainbow Bridge, Listing Spring in the Bamboo Dock, Fishing in the Shade of Willows, Leaning on the Tung and Waiting for the Moon, A Fir Path under Noon Shade, Ziwei Mountain Hotel, Lotus Terrace beside Willow Waves

Table 5 Characteristics of Yangchun Baixue Meitan Cuiya intangible cultural heritage inheritance training base

Category	Characteristic	Specific contents
Museum concept	Highlighting the theme of tea brand	Focusing on the development history and production process of " Meitan Cuiya" , focusing on 21 processes of popular science Meitan Cuiya , creating immersive visits by means of illustration , projection , operation and experience
	Cultural presentation in production environment	Building a 100 m long "Tea Blessing Chinese Tea Culture Corridor" , with the historical events of Meitan Tea as the clue , the "Ming and Qing Tribute Tea Garden" as the core , and the sculpture as the means
Popularization of science education	Relying on the museum area to inherit intangible cultural heritage	Applying for Yungui Mountain , the core origin of its tea , as a key cultural relic protection unit , the company was awarded the title of " inheritor" and "tea king" of Meitan Cuiya , and the traditional production techniques of Meitan Cuiya tea were approved to enter the list of " intangible cultural heritage of Guizhou Province"
	" Activity + experience" is passed on from generation to generation.	Undertake a large number of research and visits , carrying out free skills training , and using festivals and holidays to teach the public the traditional production skills of Meitan Cuiya tea
	Cultural science popularization drives the development of enterprises.	The company started late , and after the introduction of the tea travel model in 2014 , it has been selected as the "Top 100 Enterprises in the Tea Industry" by the China Tea Marketing Association for six consecutive years.

### 3 SWOT analysis of Meitan tea culture museum tourism model

**3.1 Strengths (S)** The Meitan Modern Tea Culture Museum Settlement mainly focuses on the core concept of modern tea science and technology, and strengthens the highly recognizable themes such as "the western migration of Zhejiang University", "the central experimental tea plantation of the Republic of China", "the Meijiang Tea Poetry Club" "of tea garden farming and reclamation". Museum tourism drives consumers to gain cultural identity and strengthen cultural self-confidence<sup>[3]</sup>. It has created a unique image of tea city, effectively promoted local economic development, created culture museum tourism as a whole in the settlement mode, formed a joint force for development, and integrated cultural and tourism resources. It continue to promote the "Seven Entries" of tea culture, organically integrate popular science research, popularization and promotion of tea culture, and party building theme education activities, consolidate the cultural matrix of Guizhou's tea industry, promote the protection of tea cultural heritage, and realize the transformation of text culture into ecological culture<sup>[4]</sup>. It innovates and integrates the development model, injects cultural momentum into enterprises, and actively promotes the construction of local public brands.

**3.2 Weaknesses (W)** The concentration of museum settlement management is not enough, and some branch museums outsourced for operation are out of control due to low actual income. The source of funds is full financial allocation, its blood-making function is not strong, and the funding channels for expanding the development of settlements and upgrading hardware facilities are quite limited. The number of staff does not match the workload, there is a certain conflict between the talent evaluation system and the actual work, employees are slack in work, the cost of external talent is high, and the management is difficult. Brand development thinking has not yet been formed, and there is a lack of distinctive creative tourism products.

**3.3 Opportunities (O)** In June 2021, the *Rural Revitalization Promotion Law* came into force, providing legal support for the development of tea culture museum tourism in Meitan. The 14<sup>th</sup> Five-Year development plan of Guizhou tea industry clearly points out that "tea culture facilities such as Meitan Guizhou Tea Culture and Ecology Museum Group should be improved and the protection of tea industry sites should be strengthened", which points out the direction for the continued development of tea culture museum tourism. In May 2022, the Guizhou Provincial Party Committee and Provincial Government proposed to build Meitan into a "pilgrimage site for tea lovers", which clarified the road for strengthening the construction of museum settlements and gave policy and funding possibilities.

**3.4 Threats (T)** The development model of "tea + museum + tourism" has attracted more and more attention from local governments and enterprises in the province, and various places have started to imitate. For example, in September 2020, the Shuicheng Museum of Guizhou Tea Culture Museum was built and opened in Shuicheng. In March 2023, Shennong Cultural Square, the world's tea source, and China Qinglong Tea Culture Multimedia Digital

Exhibition Hall were completed in Shazi Town, Qinglong County. Compared with Meitan, tea culture museum tourism in various parts of the province has further explored the sale of local brand tourism products, the informationization of museum technology, the construction of national theme characteristics, and the contention of the origin of tea trees. This has intensified the competition of tea culture museum tourism in various places, and to a certain extent, there is a risk of homogenization, which will continue to deepen the Meitan Modern Tea Culture Museum Settlement. New requirements have been put forward in terms of new plans for future development.

### 4 Recommendations for the development path of tea culture museum tourism in Guizhou

**4.1 Continuing to dig deep into local tea culture and enrich the form of characteristic exhibition halls** The key to the success of the Meitan Modern Tea Culture Museum Settlement model is to make the work "the origin of modern tea science and technology in China" much deeper. The development of tea culture museum tourism should not be "one-size-fits-all", but should start from the early collation of tea history documents and cultural relics, the application and protection of tea cultural heritage, and the refinement of the core of local tea culture. Only when the "soul" of tea culture is established, can later museum construction and tourism development keep up with it. The directions of Guizhou tea culture that can be excavated include but are not limited to the history of the ancient tea-horse road, the ancient tea-salt road, the famous tea tribute tea of past dynasties, the anecdotes of tea lovers of past dynasties, the tea poetry and its ideas, the folk tea custom skills, the inheritors of intangible cultural heritage of tea and their educational ideas, and the development history of local famous tea brands. The development of tea culture museum tourism in Guizhou should break the single government behavior, call on enterprises, social organizations and individuals to actively run museums, and the content of the exhibition hall can seek a breakthrough from the fields of tea grower technical training, and the display form should be combined with local cultural characteristics to break through the shackles of space.

**4.2 Deepening the exploration of settlement co-construction mode and strengthening long-term management** Museum settlement mode has a good effect of "1 + 1 > 2" on the series of tea culture tours, giving full play to the advantages of resource integration, forming a complete tour chain, and strengthening the experience of tourists. The co-construction of museum settlements should be coordinated by the government, and the member units of each branch should work together in terms of resource scheduling, inter-museum collaboration, and information sharing, so as to jointly explore effective management and operation mechanisms for travel<sup>[5]</sup>. According to Article 17 of Chapter III of the *Regulations on Museums*, "museums shall improve the corporate governance structure and establish and improve the relevant organizational management system". Tea-producing areas in Guizhou can rely on local tea culture associations, tea enterprise alliances and other organizations, adopt the management mechanism of the council, formulate man-

agement regulations, and integrate local tea culture centers, science and technology museums, exhibition halls, *etc.* to form settlements, so as to provide long-term organizational, financial and market guarantees for the sustainable development of tea culture museum tourism.

**4.3 Improving the settlement brand construction project and extending the cultural and creative industry chain** The continuous fever of culture museum travel in China is inseparable from the successful brand engineering construction. The brand building of museum settlements should be a systematic, professional, service-oriented, competitive, and educational brand system of cultural institutions with complete systematization, such as cultural protection and education communication functionalization, hardware environment construction, visual image identity construction, digital construction, and comprehensive service capacity improvement<sup>[6]</sup>. The brand construction of tea culture museum tourism in Guizhou should refine the core of local tea culture, carry out visual design of brand IP, develop tourism projects of the brand, polish brand characteristics and create brand differences. Cultural and creative products are an important starting point for the construction of culture museum and tourism brand projects. The development of tea culture museum tourism creative products in Guizhou should go out of the simple thinking pattern of tea products, combine with local history and humanities, boldly try to create jointly, innovate the original product packaging, develop more daily and creative life products, take into account the consumption psychology and needs of tourists, expand online sales channels, and create new products, so as to make creative products become the key to lighting up the brand of tea culture museum tourism.

**4.4 Developing multiple income-generating channels to stimulate the vitality of culture museum tourism** In order to cope with the increasingly fierce market competition, the development of tea culture museum tourism should effectively balance the relationship between public science popularization and market operation<sup>[7]</sup>. Article 5 of Chapter 1 of the *Regulations on Museums* stipulates that the State encourages the establishment of public welfare funds to fund museums, and encourages museums to raise funds through multiple channels to promote their own development. Developing multiple income-generating channels is the material prerequisite for activating tea culture museum tourism. (i) It is recommended to strengthen government guidance, strive for social funds according to the actual development of museums, appropriately introduce and learn from the business models of modern enterprises, encourage organizations or individuals to make donations, innovate the conditions for outsourcing enterprises to cooperate and benefit from them, and improve the enthusiasm of enterprises for long-term investment<sup>[7]</sup>. (ii) It is recommended to carry out tea activities with high academic value and great public influence, unite industry associations and social organizations, rely on projects, set up appropriate fee items, stimulate tourists' consumption, and improve the tourists' sense of access.

**4.5 Improving the staff evaluation mechanism and training the professional team** Talents are important resources for the development of tea culture museum tourism, and a scientific talent evaluation mechanism should be established and improved for the

development of tea culture museum tourism. Firstly, it is recommended to improve the differentiated post evaluation mechanism, carry out quantitative evaluation according to different post attributes, implement economic incentives for outstanding talents, and stimulate their innovative potential<sup>[7]</sup>. Secondly, it is necessary to strengthen the training of tea professional knowledge and skills of employees, including basic knowledge of tea science, general knowledge of tea culture, history of Guizhou tea, tea art and tea evaluation skills, so that employees can master the work of explaining, receiving and training smoothly. Thirdly, it is recommended to cultivate employees' love for Guizhou tea culture and local culture, stimulate employees' enthusiasm for work<sup>[7]</sup>, and avoid brain drain caused by negative emotions. Fourthly, it is recommended to encourage local tea growers and tea lovers to participate in tea culture museum tourism, and strengthen the dissemination effectiveness of tea culture museum tourism.

## 5 Conclusions

The Meitan Modern Tea Culture Museum Settlement has provided an excellent model for Guizhou to try to develop tea culture museum tourism, and its development model has created a unique image of Meitan Tea City and extended the tea industry chain. It has promoted the popularity and influence of the county, promoted the sales of local tea brands represented by Meitan Cuiya tea, and promoted tourism by culture and production by tourism. Under the exemplary role of Meitan model, all areas of Guizhou Province have been exploring the development of tea culture museum tourism. With the opportunity of "colorful Guizhou" global tourism, tea culture museum tourism will become another representative cultural tourism brand of Guizhou.

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