

Happiness--On the Way to Jinguashi

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In recent years, there is a trend of "working for staying overnight" promoted by private guesthouses in Jinguashi. Because many local youth have moved out to make a living, owners of such guesthouses hope to attract young people to come clean the environment for two days in exchange for staying one night free of charge. At first I thought this must be a hard work, but later on I found out that this brings tourists great happiness. Let's set out for a joyful trip!

(Photo 1) Jinguash, a beautiful mountain town, is a shangrila for city residents

Stop 1 of the joyful trip: exploring the road to happiness

I open the map drawn by the guesthouse owner to find many roads with beautiful names, such as Happy Road, Slowdown Road, and Romantic Road. What he suggests is: every scenic spot in Jinguahsi will lead to happiness, relaxation and romance.

When walking in the streets of this mountain town, you will be accompanied by many flowers and birds. Making a turn, you may see mountains combining with the sea. And along the road there stand old houses built during the Japanese occupation period (1895-1945). Just enjoy the scenery in a relaxed mood! With the help of gold mine history and rising eco-tourism, this fascinating town is regaining her charm.

(Photo 2) Making a turn, you will see mountains combining with the sea.

(Photo 3) Slowdown Road

Stop 2 of the joyful trip: mining in the Secret Garden of an old miner

When learning of going to Jinguashi for gold mining, particularly at a time when gold price is in historical high, everyone shows great interest. And our guide is Mr. Chen Shih-cheng, who is regarded by locals as the most active veteran miner. He is able to answer all kinds of questions about gold mining and the past stories of Jinguashi.

Chen started his gold mining career at 16, when he mined in the stream, and two years later he was recruited into Taiwan Metal Mining Company from which he

retired at 60. A few years ago, he served as a volunteer guide at the Gold Ecological Park. When asked about the reason why he has continuous interest in helping people to know gold mining life, he replied that because he had spent most of his lifetime in gold mining and gold plays an important role in our daily life, including marriage, decoration and art work. To him, gold is much more than the money it is worth; gold is so important in life.

He initiated the “Old miner’s Secret Garden” activity by taking tourists to mine gold in the Waijioufen Stream. He built this “Secret Garden” with the help of local volunteers to make the facilities more user-friendly.

(Photo 4) Chen Shih-cheng demonstrates gold mining process.

According to Chen, ever since a dam was built upstream, gold ores in the downstream had decreased. However, the current ore quantity was enough to meet the needs of gold-mining tourists. First of all, blanket will be used for screening so that gold ores can be kept on the blanket. Then a trough needs to be shaken by hand. Tourists take part mainly in this step. Chen shovels the sands from the stream bottom and put them into the trough and then shook it. The gold ores, which are heavier, will stay and shine under the sun. But don’t show hasty optimism. The sands that glitter are simply yellow metals or the so-called fools’ gold. The real gold ores are less yellowish.

(Photo 5) After screening process, you can see glittering sands.

Chen’s forefathers passed down the gold mining techniques. But he made many mining tools by himself. Even some of the tools displayed in the Gold Ecological Park are his works. Moreover, he kept a mineral rock, which contains the highest level of gold ever recorded in Jinguashi area. In his house, there are also gold pieces forged by himself, gold mineral rocks got from Jioufen, a quartz rock in the shape of Taiwan, as well as many old photos. It seems the good old days of Jinguashi are still kept in his house.

(photo 6) A big mineral rock from Jinguashi.

Stop 3 of the joyful trip: Lily Park

After taking a turn, crossing hill ditch and passing through high bushes, we came to the Lily Park where only the local people know. Lilies blossom in April and May.

The local people said that there had been no lilies here in the earlier years. But after someone attempted to steal rocks away but was stopped, lilies just came out of earth. Since then, this park with naturally grown lilies have been well protected by local residents. Because it is located in a remote place, tourists are advised to go there with a guide from their guesthouse. And please don't pick any flower. It is also worth mentioning that from this park you can see very clearly the road section of hairpin curves.

(Photo 7) A bird's view of the most beautiful road curves in Jinguashi.

Stop 4 of the joyful trip: Stay overnight at a local guesthouse and sleep with nature

When was your last sound sleep in a tranquil environment? Without the noise of cars and people, Jinguashi is surrounded by the sound of nature. In the early morning, when you take a stroll in mountain trails, singing birds touch your heart.

There are quite a few guesthouses at Jinguashi. I entered the one named "Slowdown." A housekeeper served me from the moment I stepped in. It was considerate enough to allow guests to decide their room by choosing a book and decide their favorite scent. And when entering my room, I found that the book I chose was already on the bed, while shower gel and cleansing cream were of the scent I just chose.

(Photo 8) In Slowdown Guesthouse, chimneys are installed as decoration in every room to create a feeling of mine pit.

Tree-house Guesthouse preserves a primitive architectural style with old trees, old houses and old doors, making tourists at home. Beside the living room there is a small study, and cooking facilities, snacks, tea leaves, and tea set are all available. Obviously the owner is a very thoughtful person.

(Photo 9) "Tree-house" preserves the flavor of old houses in Jinguashi and creates a warm atmosphere.

"Our Home" is owned by Mr. Guo Zheng-wen, who is a retired teacher choosing to move to Jinguashi. The ceramics, paintings, and mosaic arts here are his works. As he himself puts it, this is a hand-made guesthouse. There are five rooms in different styles, including mysterious oriental and romantic Greek ones, revealing exotic flavors.

(Photo 10) Sunlight comes down to the music score holder, thus creating a

unique scene.

(Photo 11) The guest room in mysterious oriental style.

Guesthouse information:

1. “Gold Mining Experience”

Add: Jinguashi’s Secret Garden

Tel: Mr. Chen Shih-cheng 0919-279-231

2. “Slowdown”

Add: 93-1, Sanjian Rd., Shih-san Borough, Jinguashi, Rueifang District, New Taipei
City

Tel: (02) 2496-1111

Web: www.theadagio.com.tw

3. “Tree-house”

Add: 137, Sanjian Rd., Shih-san Borough, Jinguashi, Rueifang District, New Taipei
City

Tel: Mr. Wu Chien-zheng 0910-211-846

Web: www.itour.com.tw

4. “Our Home”

Add: 187, Sanjian Rd., Jinguashi, Rueifang District, New Taipei City

Tel: (02) 2496-2628 (reservation by only phone)

Web: www.ourhome087.com.tw