



A diverse cultural feast at Nanxiang *guochao* gala

Kunqu Opera at Guyi Garden — Zhang Jian

Hu Min and Yu Chao

The 2025 Nanxiang Guochao Festival, which started in the ancient town, presented a cultural feast with diverse activities. This year's opening ceremony strung together cultural landmarks such as Nanxiang Brick Tower and Tanyuan Garden. Through ancient-style markets, old street light shows and cultural performances, tourists encountered traditional Chinese style, enjoyed an immersive tour of the millennium-old town, and experienced a splendid *guochao* (China-chic) cultural feast.

With Nanxiang Brick Tower and Guyi Garden as the main venues, the event echoed the Shanghai Tourism Festival and Shanghai International Light Festival, and four series of intangible cultural heritage activities themed around *guochao* were launched in the ancient town, including night tours and food feasts featuring Shanghai-style *guochao*.

A giant moon lantern illuminated the town. The event featured a gong ceremony to start the "1,000-table & 10,000-person *xiaolongbao* (Shanghai small steamed buns) feast," creating an immersive experience for attendees.

Tourists could not only experience the unique charm of Nanxiang *xiaolongbao* (a national-



Above: The "1,000-table & 10,000-person *xiaolongbao* feast" at Nanxiang Old Street
Left: Traditional singing on the waterways in Nanxiang old town — Zhang Jian

level intangible cultural heritage) but also gain emotional resonance and cultural connection through food.

To allow citizens and tourists

to fully experience the *guochao* charm of Nanxiang, the event focused on four key areas: a light and shadow night tour, intangible cultural heritage food, technology

and diverse arts.

This initiative aimed to integrate both day and night experiences, offering opportunities for viewing and engagement. An exclusive tourist route was introduced for the event.

The lantern fair on Nanxiang Old Street was a standout feature of the event. The main gate building, the surrounding scenery and the lantern riddles, all illuminated by brilliant lights and accompanied by swaying lantern shadows, contributed to a vibrant and festive atmosphere.

The light show at Guyi Garden used technology to revive brick carving patterns, and there are also on-site Kunqu Opera performances in the garden.

The Mid-Autumn limited intangible cultural heritage fish lantern parade brought the atmosphere to a climax as giant fish lanterns walked through the garden, and the lantern light and water scenery blended to present a stunning visual feast.

The event also collaborated with the Power Station of Art to present a special urban art project, showing traditional Mid-Autumn culture through modern art and light and shadow technology.

The Shanghai-style *guochao* food feast combined authentic intangible cultural heritage dishes with a vibrant market atmosphere, offering a delightful experience for both the palate and the senses.

Poly Grand Theater, Fahua Pagoda glow in light festival

Hu Min and Dai Yixin

THE second Shanghai International Light Festival illuminated Jiading from September 28 to October 8, creating a visual feast.

The festival illuminated historic landmarks such as Shanghai Poly Grand Theater and Fahua Pagoda, fostering a connection between old and new towns. All landscape lights in Yuanxiang Lake Park were on, giving visitors a stunning view.

Tianzhu Road and Yuanxianghu Road hosted a light and shadow bonsai art exhibition and an ancient-style market.

Xiyunlou used light and shadow, interactive installations, fireworks, folk song performances and an art exhibition to create a nighttime cultural landmark by illuminating the market.

Digital projection technology created a light and shadow walkway at the Baolong Plaza, hosting pop-up parades, light and shadow art, and



Poly Grand Theater — Dai Yixin

music festivals. Additionally, it applied sky curtain decorations to create a reflective scene with the sky curtain.

A dreamy waterborne light and shadow show was created on Anting Ancient Street using riverbanks, culture and technology. It illuminated Yong'an Pagoda with dramatic light and shadow performances for tourists.



An illuminated wall in Guyi Garden — Dai Yixin

Discover intangible cultural heritage at Guyi Garden

Hu Min and Dai Yixin

SHANGHAI Guyi Garden offers a cultural experience that beautifully blends the refined style of a classical garden with the rich legacy of intangible cultural heritage.

The Shanghai Guyi Garden is hosting the Intangible Cultural Heritage Month until October 19, which integrates digital light and shadow shows, live performances, immersive interactions and contemporary aesthetics.

This event provides visitors with the opportunity to appreciate the literary elegance of Ye Jin, the garden's host, as well as the renewed vitality and warmth associated with intangible cultural heritage techniques.

Guyi Garden participated in the 2025 Shanghai International Light Festival while serving as the main venue for the Nanxiang Guochao (China-chic) Festival

and one of the sites for the 2025 Shanghai Tourism Festival.

Using cutting-edge digital light and shadow technology, the event recreated literary events from Chinese classics that reference the garden.

Animated light and shadow displays blended with cultural relics, such as the brick carvings at the main gate, showcase the garden's beautiful scenery across the four seasons.

Guyi Garden partnered with the Kunshan Kunqu Opera Theater during the National Day Holiday to present an immersive opera experience, allowing visitors to enjoy traditional Chinese operas among the pavilions, terraces, and towers.

Additionally, the garden also offered various intangible cultural heritage master classes and popular science aesthetic education courses,

allowing visitors to immerse themselves in the culture of craftsmanship.

Culturally guided tours led visitors to uncover the garden's mysteries from the host's perspective.

This event features four exhibitions that highlight the garden owner's artistic interests and the elegance of garden design.

The garden-themed embroidery exhibition (Gu embroidery) illustrated the graceful artistic culture of the garden through the four seasons.

The seal carving collection exhibition offered visitors insight into the aesthetic pursuits of ancient literati.

The exhibitions offered diverse interpretations of the profound heritage of Jiangnan culture, creating a visual feast for attendees.

More than 20 activities planned for the Shanghai Confucius Cultural Festival

Hu Min and Yu Chao

THE 2025 Shanghai Confucius Cultural Festival offers a cultural feast for tourists, featuring diversified activities that integrate traditional culture with modern experiences.

The cultural festival will last until the end of October, during which more than 20 series of activities will be launched, including the pop-up cultural activities on Zhouqiao Ancient Street and the traditional Chinese medicine tourism route.

Among these, an international cultural exchange project invited foreign teachers and students to spend traditional festivals together, visit Jiading's landmarks and experience intangible cultural heritage skills, building a

bridge for cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries through experiences and dialogues.

During a garden tour, performers replicated the elegant scene of the four great Confucian scholars Cheng Jiasui, Tang Shisheng, Li Liufang and Lou Jian delivering lectures in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

Outside the Confucius Temple, there is an art installation exhibition of the 10 disciples of Confucius presented in modern design language, showcasing the elegance of Yan Hui, Zigong, Ran You and the other 10 sages among Confucius' disciples.

Parades featuring fluttering clothes and graceful postures take place on Zhouqiao Ancient Street, accompanied by the resonant sounds of Jiangnan *sizhu*, a unique style of traditional Chinese instrumental music from the area south of the lower reaches of the Yangtze River.

Cultural and creative products such as embroidery paintings, Confucian Temple-themed notebooks and Chinese herbal tea stimulated the public's interest.

The "Confucius Culture Challenge" also attracted visitors. The participants completed five interesting tasks, including landmark check-ins and costume-changing experiences, experiencing Chinese traditional culture in the game.



A night market near Yuanxiang Lake — Dai Yixin



A visitor poses in front of the comic image of Ran Bonian, one of Confucius' 10 disciples. — Yu Chao