Situated in the river valley along the lower reaches of the Xiang River, Changsha is the capital city of Hunan Province. The recorded history of Changsha can be traced back 3,000 years. Tomb relics from the primitive periods witnessing the earliest human activities have been discovered in this region. During the Spring and Autumn Period (770 B.C. - 476 B.C.), the area developed into an important town within the State of Chu, (one of the seven warring states that existed before China's unification by Emperor Qin). After Emperor Qin (the first feudal emperor in China's history) unified the country, the town was set up as a county and later became the capital city of a state in the early Han Dynasty (206 B.C. - 220). The tomb excavation site of Mawangdui found in the eastern suburb of the city is a family graveyard from that period. The most fantastic historical relic should be the well-preserved mummified remains of a Western Han Dynasty woman excavated from the tombs. Some of thousands of relics unearthed include silk products, paintings, lacquer works, potteries, bamboo slips used for writing, weapons and herbs, all of which are exhibited in Hunan Provincial Museum.

In the dynasties that followed, the city experienced several expansions and during China's Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), it has developed into the political, economic and cultural center of Hunan Province.

Although not as ancient a capital city as Beijing, Nanjing or Xian, Changsha also has rich historical heritages including old wall remains, tomb sites, religious temples and buildings. What earns the city its reputation among tourists are two things. One is a great man in China's recent history, Chairman Mao Zedong and the other is Yuelu Academy, a time-honored academic school perched on the scenic Yuelu Mountain. Originally built in 976 during the Song Dynasty, the academy school survived through the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties and is considered to be the cradle of Huxiang Culture. (simply means the culture school in Hunan Province)

The village of Shaoshan, about 130 kilometers south-west of Changsha is the hometown of Chairman Mao Zedong. Today, the village has become a memorial place for Chinese people to remember this extraordinary man. People erected a statue of the Chairman and have preserved the houses he lived as a tourist site. A museum and other memorial spots in the scenic area create a kind of solemn atmosphere. Many Chinese come to pay respect and visit here during the memorial days.

In addition, the city was home to other revolutionary leaders including Liu Shaoqi, Huyaobang and former Chinese prime minister, Zhu Rongji. Therefore, it acts as a good place to learn more about China's recent history.
Changsha people boast to be the best gourmand of China and here people spend a lot of time eating. Xiang Cuisine is one of the Eight Cuisines in China and has a fine and delicate appearance and a hot & sour taste and the heavy and hot taste is an equal competitor to the spicy food of Sichuan. Street dining and restaurants in the city make every visitor's mouth hot. No matter the featured snacks - 'Stinky Tofu' and 'Sisters' Rice Balls' in Huogongdian (Fire Palace) or the famous spicy shrimps at Nanmenkou, the many types of delicious local food will not disappoint any guests.

Changsha people are also renowned for their acting and have created various traditional folk art performances of their own including the local operas, storytelling, drum opera, acrobatics and other dramatic styles. Everyone can feel their hospitalities and enthusiasm by their vigorous dances. Today, most of the entertainment houses in the city present dynamic and entertaining performances featuring a blend of the traditional essence and the modern flare. The neon lights of KTV squares, disco parlors, clubs and dancing squares illuminate the city at night. Dotted with all sorts of bars and pubs, Jiefang Xilu, although not as prosperous as Sanlitun Pub Street in Beijing, has its own styles. Romantic and quiet bars, dynamic show bars, teahouses, western style restaurants...People of all ages can find their ideal place to spend their leisure time.