FIRST EDITION

Frommer's China

with in-depth menu & language guides

Frommer's

China

1st Edition

by Peter Neville-Hadley and J. D. Brown, Josh Chin, Sharon Owyang, Beth Reiber, Michelle Sans and Graeme Smith

Here's what the critics say about Frommer's:

"Amazingly easy to use. Very portable, very complete."
—Booklist

"Detailed, accurate, and easy-to-read information for all price ranges."
—Glamour Magazine

"Hotel information is close to encyclopedic."
—Des Moines Sunday Register

"Frommer's Guides have a way of giving you a real feel for a place."
—Knight Ridder Newspapers

Wiley Publishing, Inc.

Wiley Publishing, Inc.
111 River St.
Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774

Copyright © 2004 Wiley Publishing, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, except as permitted under Sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without either the prior written permission of the Publisher, or authorization through payment of the appropriate per-copy fee to the Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, 978/750-8400, fax 978/646-8600. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Legal Department, Wiley Publishing, Inc., 10475 Crosspoint Blvd., Indianapolis, IN 46256, 317/572-3447, fax 317/572-4447, E-Mail: permcoordinator@wiley.com.

Wiley and the Wiley Publishing logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and/or its affiliates. Frommer's is a trademark or registered trademark of Arthur Frommer. Used under license. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Wiley Publishing, Inc. is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

ISBN 0-7645-6755-1

Editors: Peter Neville-Hadley, Lorraine Festa
With special thanks to Ann Feng
Production Editor: M. Faunette Johnston
Cartographers: Roberta Stockwell, Nicholas Trotter
Photo Editor: Richard Fox
Production by Wiley Indianapolis Composition Services

Front cover photo: Fisherman on the Lí River, Guǎngxī Province.
Back cover photo: Section of the Great Wall.

For information on our other products and services or to obtain technical support, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 800/762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317/572-3993 or fax 317/572-4002.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic formats.

Manufactured in the United States of America

5 4 3 2 1

Contents

List of Maps viii

1 The Best of China 1

compiled and edited by Peter Neville-Hadley

1 The Best China Experiences 1
2 The Best Small Towns 3
3 The Best Countryside Trips 3
4 The Best Mansions & Palaces . . .5
5 The Best Museums 6
6 The Best Temples 7
7 The Best Markets 8
8 The Best Festivals 9
9 The Best Up-and-Coming Destinations 9
10 The Best Local Accommodations 10
11 The Best Buys 11
12 The Best Chinese Restaurants 12

2 Planning Your Trip to China 14

by Peter Neville-Hadley

1 The Regions in Brief 14
2 Visitor Information 17
3 Entry Requirements & Customs 18
4 When to Go 24
China Calendar of Events 27
5 Travel Insurance 32
6 Health & Safety 32
7 Specialized Travel Resources . . .35
8 Planning Your Trip Online 36
9 The 21st-Century Traveler 37
Online Traveler's Toolbox 38
10 Getting There 39
11 Packages for the Independent Traveler 42
12 Escorted General-Interest Tours 43
13 Special-Interest Trips 48
14 Getting Around 49
Ten Rules for Taking Taxis Around Town 53
15 Tips on Accommodations 54
16 Tips on Dining 58
17 Suggested Itineraries 58
18 Recommended Reading 59
Fast Facts: China 61

3 Běijīng, with Tiānjīn & Héběi 67

by Josh Chin and Peter Neville-Hadley

1 Orientation 68
Neighborhoods in Brief 72
2 Getting Around 73
Fast Facts: Běijīng 74
3 Where to Stay 76
Airport Hotels 88
4 Where to Dine 88
5 Exploring Běijīng 97
The Big Makeover 101
Walking Tour: The Back Lakes 110
6 Side Trips from Běijīng 113

On the Wild Wall 114
7 Shopping 121
8 Běijīng After Dark 124
9 Chéngdé 128
10 Shānhǎiguān 134
11 Shíjiāzhuāng 137
Walking Tour: The Pagodas of Zhèngdìng 139

4 The Northeast 146

by Josh Chin

1 Shěnyáng 146
Minorities & the Manchu Myth 151
Model Citizens? 155
2 Dāndōng 156
Border Crossing: North Korea & Russia 158
3 Dàlián & Lǚshùn 159
4 Chángchūn 167
5 Jílín City 172
Wild China: Yánbiān 174
6 Chángbái Shān 178
7 Harbin 181
8 Wǔ Dà Liánchí 190
9 Mǎnzhōulǐ 191

5 Along the Yellow River 195

by Michelle Sans

1 Dàtóng 195
2 Hohhot 202
Walking Tour: Hohhot: Temple to Temple 204
3 Yínchuān 211
The (Nearly) Lost Dynasty of the Xī Xià 212
4 Yán'ān 217
5 Píngyáo 220
6 Tàiyuán 224
7 Wǔtái Shān 228

6 The Silk Routes 234

by Graeme Smith

1 Xī'ān 237
2 Huá Shān 255
3 Tiānshuǐ 257
4 Lánzhōu 260
5 Línxià 265
6 Hézuò 266
7 Xiàhé (Labrang) 266
8 Lángmù Sì (Taktsang Lhamo) 269
9 Jiāyùguān 271
10 Dūnhuáng 276
11 Turpan (Tǔlǔfān) 282
12 Ürümqi (Wūlǔmùqí) 288
13 Kuqa (Kùchē) 294
14 Kashgar (Kāshí) 298
15 Tashkurgan (Tǎshíkùěrgān) 306
16 Khotan (Hétián) 307
Wild China: Yīníng (Gulja) 310

7 Eastern Central China 313

by Sharon Owyang

1 Zhèngzhōu 314
2 Dēngfēng & Sōng Shān 320
3 Luòyáng 324
4 Kāifēng 329
Kāifēng's Jews 332
5 Ji'nán 334
6 Tài Shān & Tài'ān 337
The Great Mountain 338
7 Qūfǔ 343
Confucius Says 344
8 Qīngdǎo 350
Wild China: The Funeral Pits of Zībó 358
9 Nánjīng 360
The Tàipíng Heavenly Kingdom 364
The Nánjīng Massacre 368
10 Yángzhōu 373
The Grand Canal 374
Huáiyáng Cuisine 378
11 Wúxī, Tài Hú & Yíxīng 379
Wild China: The Water Village of Tónglǐ 383
Wild China: Xúzhōu 384
12 Héféi 386
13 Huáng Shān 388
14 Túnxī 393
Huīzhōu Architecture 396

8 Shànghǎi 399

by J. D. Brown

1 Orientation 400
Neighborhoods in Brief 402
2 Getting Around 403
Fast Facts: Shànghǎi 404
3 Where to Stay 406
4 Where to Dine 417
5 Exploring Shànghǎi 423
6 Shopping 432
7 Shànghǎi After Dark 434
8 Sūzhōu 435
9 Hángzhōu 438

9 The Southeast 442

by Peter Neville-Hadley

1 Shàoxīng 443
The Straight Story 447
Honk if You Like Calligraphy 449
Walking Tour: Ānchāng Gǔ Zhèn 450
2 Níngbō 455
3 Pǔtuó Shān 459
4 Wēnzhōu 463
5 Fúzhōu 473
6 Wǔyí Shān 476
7 Quánzhōu 480
8 Xiàmén 486
Wild China: The Earth Houses of Yǒngdìng 496
9 Jǐngdézhèn 498
10 Jiǔjiāng 502
11 Guǎngzhōu 505
12 Shēnzhèn 520

10 Hong Kong 525

by Beth Reiber

1 Orientation 525
Neighborhoods in Brief 532
2 Getting Around 533
Fast Facts: Hong Kong 534
3 Where to Stay 536
4 Where to Dine 543
5 Exploring Hong Kong 550
6 Shopping 556
7 Hong Kong After Dark 560
8 A Side Trip to Macau 563

11 The Southwest: Mountains & Minorities 573

by Sharon Owyang

1 Nánníng 576
2 Guìlín 581
3 Yángshuò 588
4 Lóngshèng 595
5 Sānjiāng 597
6 Běihǎi 598
7 Guìyáng 601
8 Kǎilǐ & the Miáo & Dòng Autonomous Prefecture 607
The Miáo 608
The Dòng 612
9 Kūnmíng 615
China's Columbus 626
10 Dàlǐ 628
The Burma Road 630
The Bái 632
11 Lìjiāng 636
The Nàxī 640
12 Xiānggélǐlā (Zhōngdiàn) 648
The Search for Shangri-La? 649
13 Bǎoshān & Téngchōng 652
Crossing into Myanmar 658
14 Jǐnghóng & Xīshuāngbǎnnà 658
The Dǎi 659
15 Jiànshuǐ 664
16 Hǎinán Island 668

12 Yángzǐ & Beyond 673

by Michelle Sans

1 Chéngdū 673
The Ways of Tea 687
2 Éméi Shān 688
A Proper Visit to Éméi Shān 689
3 Lè Shān 691
4 Qīngchéng Shān 693
5 Wòlóng Nature Reserve (Wòlóng Zìrán Bǎohù Qū) 695
6 Jiǔzhài Gōu (Valley of Nine Villages) 697
7 Chóngqìng 700
8 Dàzú (Dàzú Buddhist Grottoes) 708
9 Middle Reaches of the Cháng Jiāng 711
10 Wǔhàn 716
11 Wǔdāng Shān 723
12 Chángshā 724
Máo's Roots 728
13 Nán Yuè Héng Shān 730
14 Wǔlíngyuán/Zhāngjiā Jiè 732

13 **The Tibetan World** 737

by Graeme Smith

1 Xīníng 738
Tsongkapa: Tibet's First Catholic? 743
2 Tóngrén (Repkong) 745
3 Yùshù (Jyekundo) 747
4 Mǎqìn (Dàwū) 750
The Panchen Lama's Letter ...751
5 Golmud (Gé'ěrmù) 753
Highway Robbery 754
Railway on the Roof of the World 755
6 Lhasa (Lāsà) 755
7 Shigatse (Rìkāzé) 767
Where Is the Panchen Lama? 768
8 Gyantse (Jiāngzī) 770
9 Sakya (Sàjiā) 772
10 Lhatse (Lāzī) 773
11 Pelbar (Dìngrì) 774
12 Tingri (Lǎo Dìngrì) 775
Everest Trekking 776
13 Zhāngmù (Dram) 776
Wild China: Mount Kailash & Lake Manasarovar 778

Appendix A: The Chinese Language 780

by Peter Neville-Hadley

1 A Guide to Pīnyīn Pronunciation 782
2 Mandarin Bare Essentials 783
3 Selected Destinations by City 788

Appendix B: The Chinese Menu 803

Index 818

List of Maps

Běijīng, Tiānjīn & Héběi 69
Běijīng Accommodations, Dining & Nightlife 78
Běijīng Attractions 98
Walking Tour—The Back Lakes 111
Chéngdé 129
Dōngběi 147
Shěnyáng 148
Dāndōng 157
Dàlián 161
Chángchūn 168
Jílín City 173
Harbin 183
The Yellow River Region 197
Dàtóng 199
Hohhot 203
Yínchuān 213
Tàiyuán 225
The Silk Routes 235
Xī'ān 238
Lánzhōu 261
Jiāyùguān 273
Dūnhuáng 277
Turpan 283
Ürümqi 289
Kashgar 299
Eastern Central China 315
Zhèngzhōu 317
Kāifēng 331
Tài Shān 339
Qīngdǎo 351
Nánjīng 361
Yángzhōu 375
Huáng Shān 389
Shànghǎi Accommodations & Dining 408
Shànghǎi Attractions 424
The Southeast 443
Shàoxīng 445
Pǔtuó Shān 461
Tàishùn County 469
Quánzhōu 481
Xiàmén 487
Guǎngzhōu 506
Kāipíng 515
Hong Kong 526
Kowloon 537
Central Hong Kong 541
Macau 565
The Southwest Region 575
Nánníng 577
Guìlín 583
Yángshuò 589
Guìyáng 603
Kūnmíng 616
Dàlǐ 629
Ěr Hāi Hú 636
Lìjiāng 637
Téngchōng 655
Jiànshuǐ 665
The Yángzǐ Region 674
Chéngdū 676
Chóngqìng 701
Wǔhàn 717
Chángshā 725
Tibet 739
Xīníng 741
Lhasa 756

About the Authors

Peter Neville-Hadley (development editor) is the author of the Cadogan Guides' *China: The Silk Routes* and *Beijing* and has also updated and edited various China titles for Odyssey Guides. A Mandarin speaker and former resident of Beijing who has been to almost every corner of China, he has written on the country for *Time, The Sunday Times* (U.K.), the *National Post* (Canada), and numerous other magazines and newspapers in Asia and North America. He moderates *The Oriental-List,* an Internet discussion list dealing with travel in China, and can be reached at *pnhpublic@shaw.ca.*

J. D. Brown has lived and worked in China and has written about China as a literary traveler, a travel writer, and a guidebook author. His work has appeared in such diverse publications as the *New York Times,* the *Washington Post,* the *Michigan Quarterly Review, Islands,* and *National Geographic Traveler*. He is also the author of *Frommer's Shanghai* and *Frommer's China: The 50 Most Memorable Trips*. When he is not traveling in the Far East, he lives in Eugene, Oregon.

Josh Chin lived in Beijing for 2½ years, during which time he worked as a freelance journalist and travel writer, and served as copy editor for the government-run *China Daily.* He first visited China in 1991, and studied Mandarin at Peking University in 1998. He has also lived in Utah, Maine, and Hong Kong. This is his first book for Frommer's. He would like to thank Susan and Yang Jingdong in Changchun, and Feng Hua, Corrie Dosh, and Katie Benner in Beijing for their various forms of help.

Sharon Owyang, born in Singapore and a graduate of Harvard University, divides her time between film and television projects in the U.S. and China, and freelance travel writing. She has written about Shanghai, China, Vietnam, and San Diego for Insight Guides, Compact Guides, the *Los Angeles Times,* and several websites. When she's not traveling, she pays her dues in Los Angeles, California.

Beth Reiber worked for several years in Germany as a freelance travel writer writing for major U.S. newspapers and in Tokyo as editor of the *Far East Traveler*. Now a freelance travel writer residing in Lawrence, Kansas, with her two sons, she's the author of several Frommer's guides including *Frommer's Japan* and *Frommer's Tokyo*, and is a contributor to *Frommer's Europe from $70 a Day* and *Frommer's USA.*

For the past 15 years, **Michelle Sans** has studied, taught, and directed academic tours in China. She speaks and reads Mandarin and holds a master's degree in Chinese language and classical literature.

Graeme Smith has traveled through most of China's backwaters over the last 15 years. After almost selling his girlfriend to a truck driver for ¥20 ($2.50) he realized it was time to learn the language properly, and spent 2 years pacing the corridors of Peking and Tsinghua universities in search of enlightenment. He was lured away from the comforts of academic life and a substantial contract with the South Coogee Wanderers Football Club to join our team.

An Invitation to the Reader

In researching this book, we discovered many wonderful places—hotels, restaurants, shops, and more. We're sure you'll find others. Please tell us about them, so we can share the information with your fellow travelers in upcoming editions. If you were disappointed with a recommendation, we'd love to know that, too. Please write to:

Frommer's China, 1st Edition
Wiley Publishing, Inc. • 111 River St. • Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774

An Additional Note

Please be advised that travel information is subject to change at any time—and this is especially true of prices. We therefore suggest that you write or call ahead for confirmation when making your travel plans. The authors, editors, and publisher cannot be held responsible for the experiences of readers while traveling. Your safety is important to us, however, so we encourage you to stay alert and be aware of your surroundings. Keep a close eye on cameras, purses, and wallets, all favorite targets of thieves and pickpockets.

Other Great Guides for Your Trip:

Frommer's China: The 50 Most Memorable Trips
Suzy Gershman's Born to Shop Hong Kong, Shanghai & Beijing
Frommer's Beijing
Frommer's Shanghai
Frommer's Hong Kong

Frommer's Star Ratings, Icons & Abbreviations

Every hotel, restaurant, and attraction listing in this guide has been ranked for quality, value, service, amenities, and special features using a **star-rating system.** In country, state, and regional guides, we also rate towns and regions to help you narrow down your choices and budget your time accordingly. Hotels and restaurants are rated on a scale of zero (recommended) to three stars (exceptional). Attractions, shopping, nightlife, towns, and regions are rated according to the following scale: zero stars (recommended), one star (highly recommended), two stars (very highly recommended), and three stars (must-see).

In addition to the star-rating system, we also use **seven feature icons** that point you to the great deals, in-the-know advice, and unique experiences that separate travelers from tourists. Throughout the book, look for:

Finds	Special finds—those places only insiders know about
Fun Fact	Fun facts—details that make travelers more informed and their trips more fun
Kids	Best bets for kids and advice for the whole family
Moments	Special moments—those experiences that memories are made of
Overrated	Places or experiences not worth your time or money
Tips	Insider tips—great ways to save time and money
Value	Great values—where to get the best deals

The following **abbreviations** are used for credit cards:

AE American Express	DISC Discover	V Visa
DC Diners Club	MC MasterCard	

Frommers.com

Now that you have the guidebook to a great trip, visit our website at **www.frommers.com** for travel information on more than 3,000 destinations. With features updated regularly, we give you instant access to the most current trip-planning information available. At Frommers.com, you'll also find the best prices on airfares, accommodations, and car rentals—and you can even book travel online through our travel booking partners. At Frommers.com, you'll also find the following:

- Online updates to our most popular guidebooks
- Vacation sweepstakes and contest giveaways
- Newsletter highlighting the hottest travel trends
- Online travel message boards with featured travel discussions

1

The Best of China

compiled and edited by Peter Neville-Hadley

It's unfortunate for visitors to China that however impressive the country's sights, they are often dwarfed by the hype surrounding them. The Chinese travel industry is determined to shuttle tour groups around a limited shortlist of both truly magnificent sights and merely wannabe jaw-droppers, selling a highly imaginary picture-book China so over-promoted that it can hardly fail to disappoint. And yet beyond the world of the carefully cropped photograph, the overcharging, and the tourist trap, there is a China where life goes on regardless of your presence, not staged for your pleasure—where you, rather than just your wallet, are welcome.

While the first section below features the best and truly worthwhile of the experiences that figure prominently in the itineraries of both independent and organized trips, many of the remaining recommendations will lead you off regular routes and onto do-it-yourself itineraries to small-town alternatives, regional foods, and small guesthouses in traditional Chinese buildings—to a real China beyond both the brochure hype and the reach of other guidebooks.

1 The Best China Experiences

- **Strolling Past the Old Russian Architecture in Harbin:** At the heart of the Russian-built city, Zhōngyáng Dàjiē's unexpected cupola-topped Art Nouveau mansions are reminders of the 1920s and 1930s, when Harbin was the liveliest stop on the eastern leg of the Trans-Siberian Railroad. See chapter 4.
- **Exploring the Forbidden City's Forgotten Corners** (Běijīng): No one fails to be impressed by the grandeur of the Forbidden City's central axis, which is all most visitors see. But the quieter maze of pavilions, gardens, courtyards, and theaters to either side have the greater charm. See p. 97.
- **Cycling the City Wall in Xī'ān:** The largest city walls in China have been much pierced for modern purposes and can be tackled in a modern way, too, with a breezy, traffic-light-free ride above the rooftops on rented bicycles and tandems. Behold views of remnants of vernacular architecture, clustered around small temples. See chapter 6.
- **Exploring Lìjiāng's Old Town:** Built over 800 years ago and partly rebuilt after a massive 1996 earthquake, Lìjiāng's old town, with its maze of cobblestone streets, gurgling streams, and original and reconstructed traditional Nàxī houses, is one of the most atmospheric places in China, hordes of tourists notwithstanding. Rise before the sun, then watch its golden rays filter through the gray winding streets, lighting up the dark wooden houses. See chapter 11.

- **Walking on the Great Wall from Jīnshānlǐng to Sīmǎtái** (Běijīng): The Great Wall, winding snakelike through the mountains, was meant to be walked. This magnificent 3-hour hike follows China's greatest monument through various states of repair, from freshly restored to thoroughly crumbling, over steep peaks and gentle flats, and through patches of wilderness and rugged farmland, with over two dozen watchtowers along the way. See chapter 3.
- **Riding the Star Ferry** (Hong Kong): There's no better way to acquaint yourself with Hong Kong than to ride the cheapest cruise in China. The century-old green-and-white Star ferries weave between tugs, junks, and ocean-going vessels in a 5-minute harbor crossing. See chapter 10.
- **Cruising the Lí River** (Guìlín): One of the most popular attractions in China, the cruise along the Lí River between Guìlín and Yángshuò is overexposed and overpriced, but the scenery along the way, taking in gently rolling karst mountains, gigantic bamboo sprays, and quaint fishing villages, is still some of the most memorable in the world. See chapter 11.
- **Unwinding in a Sìchuān Teahouse:** One of the great pleasures of being in Sìchuān is drinking tea at a neighborhood teahouse. On any given afternoon at Qīngyáng Gōng in Chéngdū, for instance, seniors can be found playing mahjong with friends while their caged songbirds sit in nearby trees providing ambient music. As patrons eat watermelon seeds, nuts, dried squid, or beef jerky, attendants appear at regular intervals to refill their cups from copper kettles. For an afternoon of perfect relaxation, bring a friend and a deck of cards, or postcards to write, and forget about sightseeing for a few hours. See chapter 12.
- **Strolling in Shànghǎi's French Concession:** The domain of the French community up until 1949 was colonial Shànghǎi's trendiest area, and it remains full of tree-lined boulevards, colonial mansions, and numerous Art Deco masterpieces, now bundled up with phone lines and pole-hung washing. Some of the city's best shopping is also here. Just beyond the former concession is modern Shànghǎi's trendiest area, the megadevelopment of restaurants and shops known as **Xīntiāndì.** See chapter 8.
- **Getting Lost in the Lanes Around Běijīng's Back Lakes:** No other city in the world has anything quite like the *hútòng,* narrow lanes once "as numberless as the hairs on an ox." Now rapidly vanishing, the best-preserved *hútòng* are found around a pair of man-made lakes in the city center. This section of the city is almost the last repository of Old Běijīng's gritty, low-rise charm, dotted with tiny temples, hole-in-the-wall noodle shops, and quiet courtyard houses whose older residents can still be seen walking around in Máo suits. See the walking tour, "The Back Lakes," on p. 110.
- **Dining Táng-style at the Shǎnxī Grand Opera House** (Xī'ān): There are several dinner-theater shows in Xī'ān, but this one combines a more authentic performance by an opera company holding revolutionary credentials, with an imperial banquet of more than 20 kinds of dumplings, all excellent. For booking details, see p. 253.
- **Taking a "Peapod" Boat on Shénnóng Stream** (Yángzǐ River): Best of the Three Gorges cruise excursions, this 2-hour journey

through a long, narrow canyon takes passengers to one of the famous suspended coffins of the Bā people, then returns them downstream in a fraction of the time. Along the way, howler monkeys can sometimes be spotted swinging through the trees, small waterfalls appear from the rocks, and swallows and other small birds flit about. The water in this small tributary is surprisingly clear, and the scenery and silence are thoroughly calming. See chapter 12.

2 The Best Small Towns

- **Xiàhé** (Gānsù): This delightful monastery town nestles in a mountain valley at an elevation of 2,900m (9,500 ft.). It's divided into two sections, primarily Huí (Muslim) and Hàn Chinese at its eastern end, changing abruptly to a Tibetan town as you climb westward to the gorgeous gilded roofs of the vast Labrang Monastery. Bent and walnut-visaged Tibetan pilgrims make you welcome on the 3km (2-mile) circuit around the monastery's perimeter. See p. 266.
- **Mǎnzhōulǐ** (Inner Mongolia): A tiny town of 50,000 on the Russian border, lost in a sea of grass, Mǎnzhōulǐ is the East-meets-Wild West frontier outpost David Carradine should have used as the backdrop to the TV series *Kung Fu.* It stands on the edge of the Hulun Buir, an emerald expanse of grassland shot through with radiant patches of wildflowers. See p. 191.
- **Dàlǐ** (Yúnnán): This home of the Bái people, a backpacker's mecca for over a decade and recently gentrified for large numbers of tourists, remains a retreat from the world. You can hike part of the impressive 19-peak Green Mountains (Cāng Shān) to the west, sail on the cerulean Ěr Hǎi Lake to the east, take a bike ride into any of the nearby Bái villages. See p. 628.
- **Gyantse** (Tibet): Towered over by the spectacular 13th-century fortress of **Gyantse Dzong,** this is the only substantial settlement in Tibet to retain its vernacular architecture of sturdy two- and three-story farmhouses, offering a rare and beautiful glimpse of Tibetan rural life no visitor to Tibet should miss. See p. 770.
- **Yángshuò** (Guǎngxī): Some decry it for being over-commercialized, but this small town on the Lí River, nestled in a cluster of spiny pinnacles, has retained enough of its laid-back charm to be a delightful alternative to Guìlín. See p. 588.
- **Shàoxīng** (Zhèjiāng): The gondolas of this relaxed "Venice" are narrow craft with arched, black-painted woven bamboo awnings, propelled by wiry boatmen acrobatically using both hands and feet to work the oars. The inevitable rebuilding of the city center has at least showed some sense of scale and left intact a few areas of ancient housing, through which the boatmen cruise, passing under Míng-era bridges. See p. 443.

3 The Best Countryside Trips

- **Jiǔzhài Gōu** (Sìchuān): This national park has dense forest, green meadows, rivers, rapids, ribbon lakes in various shades of blue and green, chalky shoals, and waterfalls of every kind—long and

narrow, short and wide, terraced, rushing, and cascading. Of cultural interest are six Tibetan villages of the original nine from which this valley gets its name. See p. 697.

- **Bayan Bulak** (Xīnjiāng): This tiny Mongolian hamlet surrounded by breathtaking grasslands is reached by a spectacular journey through pine forests, waterfalls, and wildflowers. It's also close to vast **Swan Lake,** a breeding ground for elegant black swans. See p. 311.
- **Chángbái Shān** (Jílín): This long-dormant 2,600m (8,500-ft.) high volcano is home to Tiān Chí, a deep, pure, mist-enshrouded crater lake that straddles the China–North Korea border and is sacred to both Koreans and Manchurians. The northern approach to the lake, with its trail that climbs alongside the thundering Chángbái Waterfall, is best in the fall. The western approach is ideal in early summer, when its vast fields of vibrant wildflowers are in full bloom. See p. 178.
- **The Bridges of Tàishùn County** (Zhèjiāng): Within living memory, this mountainous area above Wēnzhōu had no highways other than the winding paths and steep, stone-flagged staircases slithering down slopes to cross fast-moving rivers at extraordinary "centipede bridges"—gorgeous hump-backed and often two-story constructions, with midstream shrines and topped with writhing ceramic dragons. Tàishùn still has many unmetalled roads, and as you follow the original paths through the lush countryside to find some hidden bridge, you pass water buffalo pulling ploughs. See chapter 9.
- **Lángmù Sì** (Gānsù): This Tibetan monastic center is largely unknown to Chinese tourists, and the tranquil mountain village is reminiscent of Lìjiāng before it was "discovered." The town is home to two major Tibetan monasteries, housing around 1,000 monks whose chanting of the scriptures may be heard throughout the day. Ramble through narrow ravines and moraine valleys crowded with wildflowers, or take a horse trek up Flower Cap Mountain to obtain stunning views as far as the holy mountain of Amnye Machen. See p. 269.
- **Amnye Machen** (Qīnghǎi): The route around this holy mountain, for a while believed to be the world's highest, must be clockwise—turning back is sacrilegious. So once you start on the 3-day horse trek, or the 7- to 10-day walk with the aid of a baggage-carrying yak, there's no turning back. But the scenery around the 6,282m (20,605-ft.) peak, and the company of sometimes entire villages of Tibetans, make the trek well worthwhile. See p. 752.
- **Around Lìjiāng** (Yúnnán): This area offers a wide variety of countryside experiences, from riding a chairlift up to the glacier park of the magnificent, snowcapped **Jade Dragon Snow Mountain,** to hiking the sheer-sided **Tiger Leaping Gorge** while the Yángzǐ River rages below, to being rowed in a "pig-trough" boat across the pristine **Lúgū Lake**—China's answer to Lake Tahoe. See p. 636.
- **Wǔlíngyuán & Zhāngjiā Jiè** (Húnán): This scenic area is made up of three adjoining subtropical parklands, with quartzite sandstone peaks and pillars to rival Guìlín's scenery. There are plentiful rare plants and insects, swarms of butterflies, a large cave with calcite deposits, and stunning views

through bamboo, pine, and oak forest. See chapter 12.

- **Everest Base Camp** (Tibet): Whether by 3-hour drive from the village of Pelbar, or by a 3- to 4-day trek from Tingri, the trip to the tented base camp (at 5,150m/16,890 ft.) or to rooms in Rongbuk Monastery (at 4,980m/16,330 ft.) offers unbeatable vistas of the world's toothiest snowcaps set against a startling cobalt sky. See chapter 13.
- **Hulun Buir Grasslands** (Inner Mongolia): Located just outside the remote border town of Mănzhōulǐ, the Hulun Buir's grasslands are the most pristine in China. This expanse of gentle emerald hills, perfectly punctuated with small streams and rocky outcrops, is all the more attractive for how difficult it is to reach. See chapter 4.
- **Great Wall Hike from Jīnshānlǐng to Sīmǎtái** (Héběi): This is the easiest and most complete way to experience the breadth of the Great Wall. See "Best China Experiences," above, and chapter 3.
- **The Leaning Towers of Kāipíng** (Guǎngdōng): This county is littered with extraordinary towers called *diāolóu*—some of them squat brick fortresses dating back to the 17th-century; others bizarre, alien watchtowers mostly built by Chinese who traveled out through the treaty ports and returned wealthy enough to build fortified residences. Up to nine stories high, the towers sprout turrets and loopholes, balconies and cupolas, borrowed from half-understood European styles encountered anywhere from Macau to Manila. *Diāolóu* tower over almost every village and rice paddy in the county. See chapter 9.
- **Rice Terraces** (Yúnnán, Guǎngxī): Some of southwest China's most spectacular vistas are of its terraced rice fields—golden yellow in the fall and sparkling silver in the spring—painstakingly hewn over hundreds of years by various minority groups. See chapter 11.
- **Huáng Shān** (Ānhuī): The most famous mountain in China for scenic beauty, actually a group of 72 peaks, is known for its sea of clouds, strangely shaped rocks, unusual pine trees, and bubbling hot springs—four features that have inspired countless painters and poets for over 1,500 years. See p. 388.

4 The Best Mansions & Palaces

- **Wáng Jiā Dàyuàn** (Píngyáo): It took a century for this vast mansion to grow to 123 courtyards and 1,118 houses; the decorative lattice screens and windows, shaped openings between rooms and courtyards, and undulating walls are exquisite examples of Míng and Qīng vernacular architecture. See p. 223.
- **Potala Palace** (Lhasa): A monastery, a palace, and a prison, the Potala symbolizes the fusion of secular and religious power in Tibet in a vast, slab-sided, red and white agglomeration on a hilltop dominating central Lhasa. Despite the ruination of its surroundings, there's no more haunting sight within China's modern political boundaries, and nothing else which speaks so clearly of the otherness of Tibet. See p. 761.
- **The Forbidden City** (Běijīng): Preeminent among the surviving complexes of ancient buildings in China, the former residence of the emperors needs far more time

than most tours give it. See "The Best China Experiences," earlier in this chapter, and p. 97.

- **Wěi Huáng Gōng** (Chángchūn): Also known as the Puppet Emperor's Palace and best known in the west as the setting for part of Bernardo Bertolucci's film, *The Last Emperor,* this impressive palace complex, opened to visitors after an admirable full-scale restoration in 2002, was the residence of Henry Pǔyí, China's last emperor and subsequently puppet ruler of Japanese-controlled Manchukuo. See p. 170.
- **Prince Gōng's Mansion** (Běijīng): With a garden of elaborate rockeries and peaceful covered pathways framed by the sloping tile roofs and brightly painted beams of its surrounding buildings, this stunning complex is the most impressive imperial residence in Běijīng, outside of the Forbidden City. See p. 109.
- **Qiáo Jiā Dàyuàn** (Píngyáo): One of the loveliest of the several merchant family mansions of this area, this was the set for the film *Raise the Red Lantern.* With six large courtyards, 313 houses, and fine craftsmanship of lattices, lintels, carvings, wooden balustrades, and chimneys throughout, the 18th-century manse takes hours to explore. See p. 222.
- **Bìshǔ Shānzhuāng** (Chéngdé): The imperial summer resort and its surrounding Eight Outer Temples form another of the greatest ancient architectural complexes of China, arranged around a green valley. The temples have bizarre borrowings from a number of minority architectural traditions, and both temples and palace have 18th-century replicas of buildings of which the country is most proud. See p. 130.

5 The Best Museums

- **Hong Kong Museum of History** (Hong Kong): A life-size diorama of a Neolithic settlement, replicas of fishing boats and traditional houses, ethnic clothing, displays of colorful festivals, and whole streets of old shop frontages with their interiors removed piece by piece and rebuilt here, make this the most entertaining museum in China. See p. 551.
- **Shǎnxī Lìshǐ Bówùguǎn** (Xī'ān): If you can visit only one museum in China, this should be it. An unrivalled collection of treasures, many demonstrating Xī'ān's international contacts via the Silk Routes, is more professionally displayed here than almost anywhere else in the mainland. See p. 244.
- **Unit 731 Museum** (Harbin): During World War II, Japan set up a secret facility where it tested biological weapons on thousands of live human subjects. This museum, built on what remains of the Unit 731 testing grounds, presents a gloomy but vivid account of one of the war's most obscure and shocking atrocities. See p. 186.
- **Sānxīng Duī Bówùguǎn** (Chéngdū): An attractive and well-laid-out museum housing items from a group of sacrificial pits, this is one of the most significant finds in 20th-century China. See p. 682.
- **Shànghǎi Bówùguǎn** (Shànghǎi): In terms of display and English labeling, this ultra-modern museum (lights fade as you approach cabinets), loaded with stunning antiquities, is China's most modern and inviting. See p. 427.

- **Nánjīng Dàtúshā Jìniànguǎn** (Nánjīng): The deaths of over 300,000 Chinese, killed over the course of 6 weeks during the 1937 Japanese invasion of Nánjīng, are commemorated here. Photographs and artifacts documenting the Japanese onslaught, the atrocities suffered, and the aftermath, are sobering, grisly, and shockingly effective. See p. 368.
- **Wáng Āntíng Xiǎoxiǎo Zhǎnlǎnguǎn** (Chéngdū): Located in a narrow lane west of the main town square, this small, one-of-a-kind museum contains tens of thousands of Máo pins, Cultural Revolution memorabilia, and vintage photographs. The museum occupies the living room of its devoted proprietor. See p. 681.

6 The Best Temples

- **Kǒng Miào** (Qūfǔ): One of China's greatest classical architectural complexes, this spectacular temple in Confucius's home town is the largest and most magnificent of the hundreds of temples around the country honoring the sage. Greatly enlarged since it was originally built in 478 B.C., it has a series of gates and buildings aligned on a north-south axis and decorated with imperial flourishes like yellow-tiled roofs and dragon-entwined pillars. See p. 346.
- **Màijī Shān Shíkū** (Tiānshuǐ): This haystack-shaped mountain of soft red rock, covered in brilliant green foliage, is China's prettiest cave-temple site, and the only one where statuary has been added to the cave walls rather than carved out of them. Views from the stairs and walkways lacing the cliffs are spectacular (including those straight down). See p. 258.
- **Zhèngdìng** (Héběi): Neither the most spectacular nor the best known of temple groups, but within a short walking distance of each other, are some of China's oldest surviving unimproved temple buildings (one of which houses a 30m/90-ft.) high multi-armed bronze of Guānyīn), and a collection of ancient pagodas so varied it's almost as if they've been set out specifically to surprise you. See p. 139.
- **Jokhang Temple** (Lhasa): The spiritual heart of Tibetan Buddhism, this temple should be visited twice: once to see the intense devotion of pilgrims circumnavigating it by prostrating themselves repeatedly across cobblestones made slippery by centuries of burning yak butter lamps, and rubbing their foreheads against the statuary in the dim, smoky interior; and a second time in the afternoon for a closer look at the ancient images they venerate. See p. 760.
- **Temple of Heaven** (Běijīng): The circular Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests, one of the finest achievements of Míng architecture, is almost as well-known as a symbol of Běijīng as the Tiān'ān Mén, but the three-tiered sacrificial altar of plain stone is thought by many to be the most sublime object of beauty in China. See p. 105.
- **Mògāo Shíkū** (Dūnhuáng): The biggest, best-preserved, and most significant site of Buddhist statuary and frescoes in all China, with the broadest historical range, the Mògāo Caves, in their tranquil desert setting, should be your choice if you can see only one cave site. See p. 279.
- **Yōnghé Gōng** (Běijīng): After the Qīng Yōngzhèng emperor moved into the Forbidden City, his personal residence was converted into

this temple. Several impressive incense burners are scattered throughout the golden-roofed complex, also known as the Lama Temple. A 20m (60-ft.) tall sandalwood statue of Maitreya, the future Buddha, fills the last building. See p. 107.

- **Bǎodǐng Shān** (Dàzú): Artistically among the subtlest and most sophisticated of China's Buddhist grottoes, these Sòng dynasty caves are situated around a horseshoe-shaped cove, at the center of which is lush forest. See p. 709.
- **Lóngmén Shíkū** (Luòyáng): About 2,300 caves and niches with more than 2,800 inscriptions and over 100,000 Buddhist statues are spread across two hills and 400 years in time. See p. 325.
- **Yúngǎng Shíkū** (Shānxī): These are the earliest Buddhist caves carved in China. Most were hollowed out over a 65-year period between 460 and 524. Viewed as a whole, they show a movement from Indian and Central Asian artistic models to greater reliance on Chinese traditions. See p. 198.

See also Chéngdé's Bìshǔ Shānzhuāng and its Eight Outer Temples, in "The Best Mansions & Palaces," above.

7 The Best Markets

- **Kashgar Sunday Bazaar:** The bazaar is now split in two and not quite what it was, but the livestock part of the market, southeast of town, is still well worth visiting. Bearded Uighur men in traditional blue and white garb sharpen their knives and trim their sheep, small boys wearing Inter Milan strip gorge themselves on Hami melons, Kyrgyz in dark fur hats pick up and drop dozens of lambs to test their weight and meatiness before settling deals with vigorous and protracted handshakes. See p. 302.
- **Pānjiāyuán Jiùhuò Shìchǎng** (Běijīng): A vast outdoor market held on weekends, Pānjiāyuán teems with what is very likely the world's best selection of things Chinese: row upon row of everything from reproduction Míng furniture to minority clothing to Máo memorabilia. Most of the antiques are fakes, although experts have made some surprising finds in the bedlam. See p. 122.
- **Kāifēng Night Market** (Kāifēng): Visitors overnight in Kāifēng just so they can attend this famous and festive night market whose mainstay is the wide variety of delicious local snacks on offer, such as five-spice roasted bread, sesame soup, and spicy lamb kabob. See p. 334.
- **Khotan Sunday Bazaar:** This is everything the Kashgar Market once was. Jewelers pore over gemstones, blacksmiths busy themselves shoeing horses and repairing farm tools, blanket makers beat cotton balls, rat-poison sellers proudly demonstrate the efficacy of their products—the sights and smells are overwhelming. Don't miss the horse-riding enclosure towards the north side of the melée, where buyers test the roadworthiness of both beast and attached cart, with frequent spectacular tumbles. See p. 308.
- **Temple Street Night Market** (Hong Kong): Prices here are outrageous compared to those at China's other markets, but the scene at this night market is very entertaining, especially the fortune-tellers and street-side performers singing Chinese opera. See p. 560.

8 The Best Festivals

For dates and contact information, see also the "China Calendar of Events" on p. 27.

- **Saka Dawa,** held throughout the Tibetan world, celebrates the Buddha passing away and thus attaining nirvana. It's held on the 8th to 15th days of the fourth lunar month, with religious dancing, mass chanting and "sunning the Buddha"—the public display of giant sanctified silk portraits. See chapter 13.
- **Ice & Snow Festival** (Harbin): Not so much a festival as an extended citywide exhibition, Harbin's Ice and Snow Festival runs from December to March every year and is without doubt the northeast's top winter attraction. The festival centers around hundreds of elaborate ice and snow sculptures, frosty reproductions of everything from Tiān'ān Mén to Elvis. See chapter 4.
- **Sānyuè Jié** (Dàlǐ): This once-religious festival celebrated by the Bái people in mid-April/early May now features 5 days and nights of considerably more secular singing, dancing, wrestling, horse-racing, and large-scale trading. This is a rare opportunity to see not only the Bái, but a number of Yúnnán's other minorities, gathering together in one of the most beautiful and serene settings in the foothills of the Green Mountains (Cāng Shān). See chapter 11.
- **Kurban Bairam** (Kashgar): Celebrations are held in Muslim communities across China, but in Kashgar they involve feats of tightrope-walking in the main square and wild dancing outside the Idkah Mosque. The 4-day festival is held 70 days after the breaking of the fast of Ramadan, on the 10th day of the 12th month (Dhul-Hijjah) in the Islamic calendar. It falls on February 1, 2004, and annually shifts backwards by 11 days. See chapter 2.
- **Miáo New Year Festival** (Xījiāng, Lángdé): The Miáo celebrate many festivals, but one of the biggest blowouts is the occasion of the Miáo New Year, usually around December. The celebration features songs, dances, bullfights, and *lúshēng* competitions, not to mention Miáo women gorgeously bedecked in silver headdresses engaging in various courtship rituals. See chapter 11.
- **Wéifāng International Kite Festival:** Thousands of kites take to the skies for 2 days in April in one of the world's largest kite-flying galas. You can simply watch, of course, but the Chinese claim the kite as their invention, so there's no better time and place to pick up the end of the string yourself. See chapter 7.

9 The Best Up-and-Coming Destinations

- **Yǒngdìng** (Fújiàn): The magnificent multistory circular **fortresses** of the Hakka minority, known as "earth buildings" and home to hundreds (usually all with the same family name), are the largest and most striking examples of surviving domestic architecture in China. See chapter 9.
- **Yùshù** (Qīnghǎi): Khampa areas within the Tibet "Autonomous Regions" are closed to the individual traveler, but here these fiercely proud Tibetan warriors trade in a traditional market town beneath a stern gray and red monastery. See chapter 13.

- **Jiànshuǐ** (Yúnnán): This small Hàn-dynasty town boasts the third largest Confucian temple in the country, some exquisitely restored traditional Míng and Qīng dynasty residences, and an unusual collection of old-fashioned wells. Jiànshuǐ is also the gateway to some of the most beautiful terrace fields in the country. See chapter 11.
- **Yánbiān** (Jílín): A lush, achingly pretty hilly region perched on China's border with North Korea, parts of which have only recently been opened to tourism, Yánbiān is home to the largest population of ethnic Koreans outside the peninsula itself. Independent-minded travelers have the opportunity to explore one of the few truly bicultural societies in China. See chapter 4.
- **Téngchōng** (Yúnnán): This charming overlooked town on the ancient southern Silk Route is poised to become an important tourist destination in the coming years as tourist authorities gear up to promote travel along the ancient trade route. For now, Téngchōng is still a laid-back, friendly town with a surprisingly large number of attractions that include hot springs, volcanoes, waterfalls, temples, and some absolutely delightful traditional Chinese villages just outside it. See chapter 11.
- **Píngyáo** (Shānxī): Chinese tourists have discovered Píngyáo, but the numbers of Western tourists are still relatively few at what is one of the best-preserved Míng and Qīng towns in China. An intact Míng city wall surrounds clusters of elegant high-walled courtyard residences, some of which are also guesthouses. See chapter 5.
- **Quánzhōu** (Fújiàn): An overnight ferry from Hong Kong, a few days in Xiàmén, and a short bus trip to Quánzhōu combine to make the perfect less-traveled start to a China trip. Quánzhōu's rebuilt city center is more to scale than most, with hints of traditional style. The laid-back town has plenty of interest to see, at a human scale and pace. See chapter 9.

10 The Best Local Accommodations

- **Dūnhuáng Shānzhuāng** (Dūnhuáng): The finest hotel on the Silk Routes, with views of the Míngshā Shān Dunes, this imposing fortress is surrounded by stylishly renovated courtyard houses. See p. 280.
- **Lǔsōng Yuán Bīnguǎn:** Of all Běijīng's traditional courtyard-style hotels, this former imperial residence has the most character, recalling the opulence of China's "feudal" era, but with a more lived-in feel than you'll find elsewhere. See p. 86.
- **Lóngmén Guìbīn Lóu** (Harbin): Built by the Russian-controlled Chinese Eastern Railroad in 1901, the Lóngmén has served as a hospital, the Russian Embassy, and a cheap hostel for migrant workers. In the 1930s and 1940s, it was part of the illustrious Japanese-owned Yamato Hotel chain. The Chinese Railway Bureau renovated the building in 1996, preserving the original Russian woodwork and restoring much of its turn-of-the-20th-century atmosphere. Rooms are palatial and decorated with period furniture. See p. 188.
- **Zhūjiā Huāyuán Kèzhàn** (Jiànshuǐ): A stay at this charming

guesthouse, which occupies several wings of the exquisitely restored, 214-room, 42-courtyard Qīng dynasty mansion, is a delightful step back in time. See p. 667.

- **Sèmǎn Bīnguǎn** (Kashgar): Set on the grounds of the former Russian Consulate, this has merely two government-issued stars and poor service, but standard rooms and suites in the original and beautifully decorated consulate buildings, with their high ceilings and dramatic oil paintings, can be bargained down to low prices. This is the nearest you'll get to experiencing some "Great Game" ambience. See p. 303.
- **Déjū Yuán & Tiān Yuán Kuí** (Píngyáo): These are the top two courtyard guesthouses in a town full of ancient architecture. The Déjū Yuán has rooms decorated with calligraphy and furnished with dark wooden Míng style tables and chairs and traditional heated brick beds. The Tiān Yuán Kuí also offers occasional opera performances on hot summer nights when the guesthouse is full and the performers available. See p. 224.
- **Former Consulates** (Wēnzhōu and Xiàmén): Wēnzhōu's **Jiāngxīn Liáoyǎngyuàn** is a former British Consulate from 1894, set peacefully on an offshore island. There are only six very oddly shaped rooms, the best of which is vast and high-ceilinged with a balcony with a view across the water. Xiàmén's **Jīnquán Bīnguǎn** is more upmarket, a recently converted former U.S. Consulate from 1928 on the island of Gǔlàng Yǔ, with views towards Xiàmén proper. Both former consulates allow modern visitors a whiff of the treaty port past. See p. 466 and 495.

The **Peace Hotel,** the best of Shànghǎi's historic hotels—built in 1929 as the Cathay Hotel—features a lobby that is an Art Deco masterpiece, and splendid public areas. Rooms have been modernized, but the service has lapsed. Go for lunch or a drink. See also **Yǒngdìng** in "The Best Up-and-Coming Destinations," above. A night in a several-hundred-year-old earthen fortress is as authentic as it gets, but don't expect luxuries (or even necessities).

11 The Best Buys

- **Chén Lú** (Shǎnxī): Seventeen small factories turn out different styles of pottery, and their showrooms have starting prices so low you'll volunteer to pay more. You can also buy original works in the houses of individual artisans. See chapter 6.
- **Hù Xiàn** (Shǎnxī): There's no better place than the source to buy these farmers' paintings with their brilliant colors and scenes of village fairs and peasants harvesting crops or herding geese. See chapter 6.
- **Zhōng Běi Jiùhuò Shìchǎng** (Xī'ān): There are fakes aplenty, as everywhere else, but this bustling antiques market, fed by continuous new discoveries in the surrounding plain, is geared to locals, so asking prices are not as absurd as elsewhere. See chapter 6.
- **Jatson School** (Lhasa): High-quality Tibetan handicrafts, including traditional Tibetan clothing, paper, incense, mandala *thangkas,* yak-hide boots, ceramic dolls, door hangings, bags, and cowboy hats, are all made on-site,

and sold at very fair prices. Your money goes to support poor, orphaned, and children with disabilities. See chapter 13.

- **Name-Brand Clothing & Accessories:** Adequate to near-perfect imitations of items by North Face, Louis Vuitton, Prada, Gucci, Polo, and just about any other expensive label you can think of can be had for a song at several markets in China, especially at Běijīng's Silk Street and Hóngqiáo markets, Shànghǎi's Xiāngyáng Lù market, and Shēnzhèn's Luó Hú Commercial City (not quite as cheaply). See chapters 3, 8, and 9.
- **Khawachen Carpet and Wool Handicraft Co. Ltd** (Lhasa): This U.S.–Tibetan factory's carpets have rich but tasteful shades woven into delightful traditional patterns. Carpets can also be made to order. You'll pay much less here than in New York or even Běijīng. See chapter 13.
- **Qípáo:** Tailors in Běijīng and Shànghǎi will cut a custom-fit *qípáo,* the tight-fitting traditional dress better known by its Cantonese name *cheongsam,* sometimes for hundreds of dollars less than in Hong Kong and the West. A quality tailored dress, lined with silk and finished with handmade buttons, typically costs between $100 and $200. Slightly less fancy versions go for as little as $50. Custom-embroidered fabrics are also available very cheaply. See chapters 3 and 8.

Note: Pearls, antiques, jade, jewelry in general, and objets d'art are fakes or are not worth the asking price (usually both). Unless you are an expert or are happy to have a fake, do not buy these things.

12 The Best Chinese Restaurants

Turn to each chapter's full restaurant reviews for contact information and details of dishes, and use the characters given in "Appendix B: The Chinese Menu" to place your orders. It's easy.

- **Hàn Kèjiā** (Běijīng): This restaurant's stylized mix of stone floors and rough-hewn wood tables, set against the backdrop of one of Běijīng's lakes, is enough to make it noteworthy. But it is the food—a delicate interpretation of little-known Hakka cuisine—that places it among the best restaurants in the country. The sweet "secret recipe" paper-wrapped fish ranks among the most divine seafood entrees anywhere. See p. 95.
- **Shìjì Xīng** (Turpan): Set in grape fields north of town, with a melt-water stream flowing by, this Uighur restaurant is a favorite among locals for carousing late into the night, and features dancers from all over Xīnjiāng. See p. 287.
- **Bāguó Bùyī** (Chéngdū): The artfully rustic surroundings are a pleasure in themselves, but this restaurant is a particular favorite with locals for its delicious local fare made with fresh, natural ingredients. See p. 684.
- **Wúmǎi'ěrhóng Měishí Chéng** (Kuqa): This is the most illustrious restaurant in this charming oasis town. Cheerful Uighur staff serve the tastiest, most filling kabobs in the Xīnjiāng region. See p. 297.
- **Mayke Ame** (Lhasa): Set in the former pleasure palace of Dalai Lama VI, who preferred skirts to sutras, this is the Tibetan capital's most charming restaurant. See p. 764.

- **Dōngfāng Jiǎozi Wāng** (Harbin): This always-busy restaurant on Harbin's celebrated Zhōngyáng Dàjiē produces some of the best *jiǎozi* anywhere, served the way they should be: generously filled and unadorned, with a mouth-watering, make-it-yourself vinegar-and-garlic dipping sauce. See p. 189.
- **Běijīng Dàdǒng Kǎoyā Diàn** (Běijīng): When done properly, roast duck, cooked in a wood-fired oven then sliced and rolled in pancakes with plum sauce and green onion, is one of the finest dining experiences in China. This place does it best. See p. 91.
- **Lǎo Sūn Jiā** (Xī'ān): This is the best place to sample Xī'ān's most celebrated dish, *yángròu pàomó,* a self-assembled lamb stew with coriander, chili, and garlic, thickened with bread you crumble yourself. See p. 252.
- **Míng Yuán** (Nánjīng): Few people have heard of Dīngshān dishes, but locals will tell you that this unusual cuisine, created in Nánjīng over 20 years ago, is guaranteed to refresh and delight even the most jaded of palates with crab steeped for a week in wine, honey, and spices; sautéed Yúnnán mushroom with crab paste; and the restaurant's signature handmade fish noodles. See p. 371.
- **Cūchá Dànfàn** (Wǔhàn): Among the specialties, which rely on local produce, are dishes served in bamboo stalks and hollowed-out melons and squashes. This is a chance to try Húnán dishes with a slight bite, as well as dishes rarely seen in restaurants in the West. See p. 722.
- **Kǒng Yǐjǐ Jiǔlóu** (Běijīng): Decorated to look like a traditional study and named for the drunken scholar-hero of a short story by father of modern Chinese literature Lǔ Xùn, the atmospheric Kǒng Yǐjǐ serves wonderfully executed dishes from the Yangtze River delta where Lǔ was born. See p. 96.
- **Cháng Mǔ Dì Yóumiàn Dà Wáng** (Hohhot): This bustling restaurant, a mix of Mongolian *ger* and prettified farmhouse, specializes in Mongolian pastas and pancakes that you're not likely to find anywhere at home. Try husked-wheat pancakes filled with carrots, potato, and cabbage, rolled up and sliced like Mediterranean levant sandwiches. See p. 209.
- **Luk Yu Tea House** (Hong Kong): First opened in 1933, this is the city's most famous remaining teahouse, a wonderful Art Deco–era Cantonese restaurant with ceiling fans, spittoons, individual wooden booths for couples, marble tabletops, and stained-glass windows. It's one of the best places to try Chinese teas, but it's most famous for its dim sum, served from 7am to 5:30pm. See p. 547.
- **Shāng Palace** (Hángzhōu): This restaurant is expensive, but it deserves its place here as the purveyor of simply the best of the region's delicate Huáiyáng cuisine, using modern techniques to turn "beggar's chicken" into a feast fit for an emperor, and in equally imperial surroundings. See p. 524.

2

Planning Your Trip to China

by Peter Neville-Hadley

Travel in China isn't as hard as you think. If you can manage Paris by yourself without speaking French, you can manage Běijīng without Mandarin. Tens of thousands of visitors travel in China independently each year, making their arrangements as they go, and without more than a guidebook and a phrase book to help them. You can certainly arrange various levels of assistance, either upon arrival or from home, but you can also travel just as freely as you would elsewhere, perhaps using agents to get your tickets, and picking up the odd day tour.

But whether you plan to travel at random, with a pre-planned, pre-booked route, or with a fully escorted tour, it's *vital* that you read this chapter carefully. The way you're used to traveling, even in many other developing nations, doesn't apply in China. Much of the advice out there on travel in China is far from wise. What's good advice in the rest of the world can be the worst advice in China, and without absorbing what's below, some of the rest of this guide may seem inscrutable.

So put down your preconceptions, and read on.

1 The Regions in Brief

BĚIJĪNG, TIĀNJĪN & HÉBĚI

While there's much talk of getting to the Three Gorges on the Yángzǐ River before the area's partial disappearance, the real urgency is to see what little of the old Běijīng is left before preparations for the 2008 Olympics deliver the final *coup de grâce* to what remains of its ancient housing and original Míng dynasty street plan. Whole city blocks can vanish at once, not gradually drowned over a period of years, but felled in the space of a few days, sometimes taking ancient, long-forgotten temples with them (although some of these are occasionally restored and reopened to public view).

But while Běijīng suffers from being communism's showpiece for the outside world and victim of ersatz modernization, it still has far more to offer than several other Chinese cities put together, including some of China's most extravagant monuments, such as the **Forbidden City.** In addition, there's easy access to the surrounding province of **Héběi** with its sinuous sections of the **Great Wall** and vast **tomb complexes.**

THE NORTHEAST

Even if the Chinese no longer believe civilization ends at the Great Wall, most tourists still do. The frigid lands to the northeast, once known as Tartary or Manchuria, represent one of the least-visited and most challenging regions in China, and its last great travel frontier.

Despite industrialization, the provinces of **Liáoníng, Jílín,** and **Hēilóngjiāng,** and the northern section of **Inner Mongolia,** still claim China's largest **natural forest,** its most **pristine grasslands,** and one of its most celebrated lakes **(Tiān Chí).**

What makes the region unique, however, are the architectural remnants of the last 350 years—early **Qīng palaces and tombs,** incongruous **Russian cupolas,** and eerie structures left over from Japan's wartime occupation.

AROUND THE YELLOW RIVER

As covered in this book, this region comprises an area of northern China that includes **Shānxī, Níngxià,** parts of **Shǎnxī** (sometimes spelled Shaanxi), and **Inner Mongolia,** roughly following the central loop of the Yellow River north of Xī'ān.

One of China's "cradles of civilization" and rich in history, the area lays claim to most of the country's oldest surviving **timber-frame buildings** and its oldest carved **Buddhist grottoes,** as well as **Píngyáo,** one of its best-preserved **walled cities.**

THE SILK ROUTES

From the ancient former capital of **Xī'ān,** famed for the modern rediscovery of the **Terracotta Warriors,** trade routes ran in all directions, but most famously (because they were given a clever name in the 19th century) west and northwest through **Gānsù** and **Xīnjiāng,** and on through the Middle East. Under the control of Tibetan, Mongol, Indo-European, and Turkic peoples more than of Chinese, these regions are still populated with Uighurs, Tajiks, Kazakhs, Tibetans, and others, some in tiny oasis communities on the rim of the **Taklamakan Desert** which seem completely remote from China. The Silk Routes are littered with alien monuments and tombs, and with magnificent cave-temple sights such as **Dūnhuáng,** which demonstrate China's import of foreign religions and aesthetics as much as the wealth generated by its exports of silk.

EASTERN CENTRAL CHINA

Eastern central China, between the Yellow River (Huáng Hé) and the Yángzǐ River (Cháng Jiāng), is an area covering the provinces of **Hénán, Shāndōng, Jiāngsū,** and **Ānhuī.** It is the area in which Chinese culture developed and flourished with little dilution or outside influence. **Luòyáng** was the capital of nine dynasties, **Kāifēng** capital of six, and **Nánjīng** capital of eight. The hometown of China's most important philosopher, Confucius, is here, along with several of China's holiest mountains, notably **Tài Shān** and **Huáng Shān,** as well as that watery equivalent of the Great Wall, the **Grand Canal.**

SHÀNGHǍI

Shànghǎi is the city China boosters love to cite as representing the country as a whole, but it in fact represents nothing except itself—the country's wealthiest city, and with (if the government's figures are to be believed) the highest per-capita income. Look closer and you'll see that many of its shiny new towers are incomplete or unoccupied. But the sweep of 19th- and early-20th-century architecture along **The Bund,** which looks as if the town halls of two dozen provincial British cities have been transported to a more exotic setting, and the maze of Art Deco masterpieces in the **French Concession** behind the Bund, make Shànghǎi the mainland's top East-meets-West destination, with the restaurants and a more relaxed and open-minded atmosphere to match. Nearby **Hángzhōu** and **Sūzhōu** offer some of China's most famous scenery.

THE SOUTHEAST

South of Shànghǎi and the Yángzǐ River, the coastal provinces of **Zhèjiāng, Fújiàn,** and **Guǎngdōng** have always been China's most outward-looking. These towns, which boomed under the relatively open Táng dynasty and which were forced to re-open as "treaty ports" by the guns of the British in the 19th century, are

also those most prosperous under the current "reform and opening" policy. But in between the famous names, smaller **Shàoxīng** and **Quánzhōu** have managed to preserve some of their charm. **Xiàmén,** connected to Hong Kong by sea, has a treasure trove of colonial-era shop-houses, and an island covered in foreign-style mansions. A short distance inland, rural life continues much as it did back in the Táng dynasty, and extraordinary collections of **fortress-mansions, corridor bridges,** and **watchtowers** have survived the destruction of the Cultural Revolution. A little further inland, the impoverished pottery-producing province of **Jiāngxī** shows the two-speed nature of China's growth.

HONG KONG & MACAU

Two sets of pencil-slim towers jostle for position on either side of a harbor, close as bristles on a brush. Between them, ponderous ocean-going vessels slide past puttering junks, and century-old ferries waddle and weave across their paths. The mixture of Asia's finest hotels, territory-wide duty-free shopping, incense-filled working temples, and British double-decker buses makes this city-state worth flying to Asia to see in its own right. **Macau,** a little bit of misplaced Mediterranean, is a short ferry ride away.

THE SOUTHWEST

Encompassing the provinces of **Yúnnán, Guìzhōu, Guǎngxī,** and **Hǎinán Island,** this region is home to some of China's most spectacular mountain scenery and three of Asia's mightiest rivers, resulting in some of the most breathtaking gorges and lush river valleys in the country.

Even more appealing is the fact that this region is easily the most ethnically diverse in China. Twenty-six of China's 56 officially recognized ethnic groups can be found in the southwest, from the Mosu in **Lúgū Lake** to the Dǎi in **Xīshuāngbǎnnà,** from the Miáo around **Kǎilǐ** to the Dòng in **Sānjiāng,** each with different architecture, dress, traditions, and colorful festivals.

THE YÁNGZǏ RIVER

In addition to shared borders, the landlocked provinces of **Sìchuān, Húběi,** and **Húnán** and the municipality of **Chóngqìng** have in common the world's third longest river, the Cháng Jiāng ("Long River," aka Yángzǐ or Yangtze). The home of five holy Buddhist and/or Daoist mountains, this area contains some of China's most beautiful scenery, particularly in northern Sìchuān and northern Húnán.

Sìchuān deserves exploration using **Chéngdū** as a base, and the Húnán should be explored from **Chángshā.** If you're taking the **Three Gorges cruise** (available indefinitely despite what you may have heard), try to at least leave yourself a few days on either end to explore **Chóngqìng** and **Wǔhàn.** And a day trip from Chóngqìng to the Buddhist grottoes at **Dàzú** is well worth the time.

THE TIBETAN WORLD

The Tibetan plateau is roughly the size of western Europe, with an average elevation of 4,700m (15,400 ft.). Ringed by vast mountain ranges such as the **Kunlun range** to the north and the **Himalayas,** the region offers towering scenic splendors as well as some of the richest minority culture within modern China's borders. **Lhasa,** former seat of the Dalai Lamas, is dominated physically by the vast **Potala Palace,** and emotionally by the fervor of the pilgrims to the **Jokhang Temple.** Fewer than half of the world's Tibetans now live in what is called Tibet—much Tibetan territory has now been allocated to neighboring Chinese provinces and particularly in **Qīnghǎi,** where the authorities are less watchful and the atmosphere in both monasteries and on the streets more relaxed.

2 Visitor Information

The mainland travel industry is, in general, a quagmire of deception, and provides no truly reliable official sources of information either within China or via its overseas operations. The branches of the China National Tourism Administration in foreign countries are called China National Tourist Offices. Nominally nonprofit, they used to be little more than agents for the state-owned China International Travel Service (CITS), but they now offer links to a variety of operators. Don't expect them to be accurate about even the most basic visa or Customs regulations, or to update their websites, which sometimes give conflicting information and can't even get the names of tour operators right.

Hong Kong and **Macau** have their own tourism agencies, which are vastly more professional. The Hong Kong Tourism Board is a source of endless quantities of free literature, maps, and helpful advice, and its website is comprehensive, accurate, and up to date. The Macau Government Tourism Office is the same on a smaller scale.

CHINA NATIONAL TOURIST OFFICE (WWW.CNTO.ORG)

In the **United States** New York office: 350 Fifth Ave., Suite 6413, Empire State Building, New York, NY 10118 (✆ **212/760-8218/8807/4002;** fax 212/760-8809; ny@cnta.gov.cn). California office: 600 W. Broadway, Suite 320, Glendale, CA 91204 (✆ **818/545-7505;** fax 818/545-7506; la@cnta.gov.cn).

In **Canada** 480 University Ave., Suite 806, Toronto, ONT M5G 1V2 (✆ **416/599-6636;** fax 416/599-6382; www.tourismchina-ca.com).

In the **U.K.** 4 Glentworth St., London NW1 5PG (✆ **020/7935-9787;** fax 020/7487-5842; london@cnta.gov.cn).

In **Australia** Level 19, 44 Market St., Sydney, NSW 2000 (✆ **02/9299-4057;** fax 02/9290-1958; sydney@cnta.gov.cn).

HONG KONG TOURISM BOARD (WWW.DISCOVERHONGKONG.COM)

In the **United States** New York office: 115 E. 54th St., 2nd floor, New York, NY 10022-4512 (✆ **212/421-3382;** fax 212/421-8428; nycwwo@hktb.com). California office: 10940 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 2050, Los Angeles, CA 90024-3915 (✆ **310/208-0233;** fax 310/208-2398; laxwwo@hktb.com).

In **Canada** 3rd floor, 9 Temperance St., Toronto, ONT M5H 1Y6 (✆ **416/366-2389;** fax 416/366-1098; yyzwwo@hktb.com).

In the **U.K.** 6 Grafton St., London W1S 4EQ (✆ **020/7533-7100;** fax 020/7533-7111; lonwwo@hktb.com).

In **Australia** Level 4, Hong Kong House, 80 Druitt St., Sydney, NSW 2000 (✆ **02/9283-3083;** fax 02/9283-3383; sydwwo@hktb.com).

MACAU GOVERNMENT TOURISM OFFICE (WWW.MACAUTOURISM.GOV.MO)

In the **United States** 5757 W. Century Blvd., Suite 660, Los Angeles, CA 90045-6407 (✆ **310/568-0009;** fax 310/338-0708; mgtona@earthlink.net).

In the **U.K.** 1 Battersea Church Rd., London SW11 3LY (✆ **0207/771-7000;** fax 0207/771-7081; sharon bernstein@cibgroup.co.uk).

In **Australia** Level 17, Town Hall House, 456 Kent St., Sydney, NSW 2000 (✆ **02/9264-1488;** fax 02/9267-7717; macau@worldtradetravel.com).

In **New Zealand** Level 5, Ballantyne House, 101 Customs St. E., P.O. Box 3779, Auckland (✆ **09/308-5206;** fax 09/308-5207; macau@aviationandtourism.co.nz).

3 Entry Requirements & Customs

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

MAINLAND CHINA VISAS

All visitors to mainland China must acquire a **visa** in advance. In general, visas are not granted at the border. Visitors to mainland China must have a valid **passport** with at least 6 months' validity and two blank pages remaining (you *may* get away with just one blank page). Visa applications typically take 3 to 5 working days to process, although this can be sped up with the payment of extra fees to as little as 1 day if you apply in person. "L" (tourist) visas are valid for between 1 and 3 months. Usually 1 month is granted unless you request more, which you may or may not get according to events in China at the time. Double-entry tourist visas are also available.

At home you should apply to your nearest consulate, although it's possible to pick up Chinese visas in other countries while on an extended trip. It varies, but typically your visit must *begin* within 90 days of the date of issue. Note that although postal addresses are given below, some consulates (including all those in the U.S. and Canada) will only accept applications in person, and applications by post or courier must go through an agent, with further fees to be paid. Telephone numbers are given, but many systems are automated, and getting a human to speak to can be next to impossible; faxes and e-mail rarely get a reply, and websites are often out of date.

Applying for a visa requires completion of an application form that can be downloaded from many consular websites or acquired by mail. Visas are valid for the whole country, although some small areas require an extra permit from the local police. Temporary restrictions may also be placed, sometimes for years at a time, on areas where there is unrest, and a further permit may be required. This is currently the case with Tibet where, until recently, travelers were required to form groups before entering the region, and to pay a huge price for a tour (but they were not required to actually join it on arrival). For details of Tibet permits, see chapter 13. In general, do not mention Tibet or Xīnjiāng on your visa application, or it may be turned down flat.

Some consulates indicate that sight of an airline ticket or itinerary is required, or that you give proof of sufficient funds, or that you must be traveling with a group, while they happily carry on business with individuals who have none of this supporting documentation. Such statements do provide a face-saving excuse for refusing a visa should there be unrest or political difficulties, or should Tibet or Xīnjiāng appear on the application.

One passport photograph is required, as well as one for any child traveling on a parent's passport.

The visa fees quoted below by country are the current rates for *nationals of that country,* and can change at any time. U.S. citizens applying for a double-entry visa in the U.K. for instance, are charged more than British citizens, but other nationals are charged less. Regulations may also vary: U.S. citizens applying in Australia must submit *two* forms and *two* photos; everyone else just one of each. In addition to the visa fees quoted, there may be supplementary fees for postage, and higher fees can

often be paid for speedier service. Payment must always be in cash or by money order.

Once you're inside China, *single-entry tourist visas only* can usually be extended once for a maximum of 30 days at the Aliens Entry-Exit department of the Public Security Bureau (PSB) in most towns and cities. U.S. citizens pay ¥125 ($16), U.K. citizens ¥160 (£12), Canadians ¥165 (C$28), and Australians ¥100 (A$18).

Extensions within China now typically take 5 working days to process, although you may sometimes be able to cajole offices into faster service.

Consulates in the United States

Single-entry visas are $50; double-entry $75. Visit **www.china-embassy.org**, which has links to all U.S. consular sites and a downloadable application form. Applications must be delivered and collected by hand, or sent via a visa agency. In **Washington, D.C.** (for residents of Delaware, Idaho, Kentucky, Maryland, Montana, Nebraska, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wyoming): Room 110, 2201 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20007 (✆ **202/338-6688;** fax 202/588-9760; faxback 202/265-9809; chnvisa@bellatlantic.net). In **Chicago** (for Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, and Wisconsin): 100 W. Erie St., Chicago, IL 60610 (✆ **312/803-0095;** fax 312/803-0110). In **Houston** (for Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Texas): 3417 Montrose Blvd., Houston, TX 77066 (✆ **713/524-2304;** fax 713/524-8466; automated FAQ 713/524-4311; visa@chinahouston.org); however, its temporary location is at 3400 Montrose Blvd., 7th floor. In **Los Angeles** (for Arizona, Southern California, Hawaii, New Mexico, and Pacific Islands): 443 Shatto Place, Los Angeles, CA 90020 (✆ **213/807-8006;** fax 213/380-1961). In **New York** (for Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont): 520 12th Ave., New York, NY 10036 (✆ **212/330-7409;** fax 212/502-0245). In **San Francisco** (for Alaska, Northern California, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington): 1450 Laguna St., San Francisco, CA 94115 (✆ **415/674-2940;** fax 415/563-4861).

Consulates in Canada

Single-entry visas are C$50; double-entry C$75. Visit **www.chinaembassycanada.org** for an application form. Applications must be delivered and collected by hand, or sent via a visa agency. **Ottawa** (for residents of the Ottawa region, Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island): 515 St. Patrick St., Ottawa K1N 5H3 (✆ **613/789-9586;** fax 613/789-1414). **Toronto** (for Ontario and Manitoba): 240 St. George St., Toronto M5R 2P4 (✆ **416/964-7260;** fax 416/324-6468). **Vancouver** (for British Columbia and Yukon Territory): 288–1338 W. Broadway, Vancouver (✆ **604/734-0704;** fax 604/734-0311). **Calgary** (for Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Northwest Territory): 1011 6th Ave. SW, Suite 100, T2P 0W1 (✆ **403/537-1247;** fax 403/264-6656).

Consulates in the United Kingdom

Single-entry visas are £30; double-entry £45. There's a supplementary charge of £20 for each package dealt with by mail. Visit **www.chinese-embassy.org.uk** for an application. **London:** 31 Portland Place, London, W1B 1QD (✆ **0207/631-1430;** 2–4pm phone service; 24-hr. information at premium rate ✆ 0900/188-0808). **Manchester:** Denison House,

49 Denison Rd., Rusholme, Manchester, M14 5RX (✆ **0161/224-8672**). **Edinburgh:** 55 Corstorphine Rd., Edinburgh, EH12 5QJ (✆ **0131/337-3220;** fax 0131/337-1790).

Consulates in Australia

Single-entry visas are A$30; double-entry A$45. Add A$10 per package dealt with by mail or courier, and a pre-paid return envelope. **Canberra:** 15 Coronation Dr., Yarralumla, ACT 2600 (✆ **02/6273-4783** or 02/6273-4780, ext. 218 or 258; fax 02/6273-9615; www.chinaembassy.org.au). **Sydney:** 539 Elizabeth St., Surrey Hills, NSW 2010 (✆ **02/9699-2216;** fax 02/9699-8258; www.chinaconsulatesyd.org).

Consulates in New Zealand

Single-entry visas are NZ$60; double-entry NZ$90. Add NZ$15 per package dealt with by mail or courier, and a pre-paid return envelope. **Wellington:** 2–6 Glenmore St., P.O. Box 17257, Karori (✆ **04/472-1382,** ext. 600; fax 04/4749632; www.chinaembassy.org.nz). **Auckland** (for Auckland-area residents only): 588 Great South Rd., Greelane; postal address P.O. Box 17123, Greelane, Auckland (✆ **09/525-1588,** ext. 710 or 707; fax 09/525-0733; www.chinaconsulate.org.nz).

Consulates Elsewhere

A complete list of all Chinese embassies and consulates can be found at the Chinese foreign ministry's website: www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng (or various mirror sites around the world). Click on "Missions Overseas."

Buying Visas in Countries Bordering China

Note that the Chinese Consulate in Kathmandu, Nepal, will not sell visas to individual travelers wanting to enter Tibet overland, or they may stamp the visa to prohibit overland entry via the Friendship Highway. The consulate in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, will usually refuse visas to those not holding a fax or telex from a Chinese state-registered travel agency, or they will stamp the visa to prohibit overland entry via the Torugart Pass. Obtaining visas at the consulate in Almaty can also sometimes be difficult for nonresidents of Kazakhstan.

Buying Visas in Hong Kong

The easiest place to apply for a mainland visa is Hong Kong, where there are several China visa options. Single-entry tourist "L" visas valid for 3 months are easily obtainable, as is the (unextendable) double-entry version. Multiple-entry "F" visas are also easy to obtain via visa agents and without the letter of invitation required to obtain them at home. Single-entry visas bought through HK agents typically cost HK$120 to HK$150 ($15–$19), multiple-entry "F" visas around HK$450 ($56). Offices located just a few minutes' walk from the main tourist areas charge less still. See chapter 10, "Hong Kong & Macau," for recommendations.

Entering the Mainland from Hong Kong & Macau

It is possible for all but British citizens to buy a permit at the Lo Wu border crossing from Hong Kong to Shēnzhèn, valid for 72 hours of travel in the Shēnzhèn Special Economic Zone *only.* According to the Guǎngzhōu PSB, tourist visas can be purchased on arrival at Guǎngzhōu East station by direct express railway from Hong Kong, but this has not been tested. It is possible to buy a 3-month "L" visa or 6-month "F" visa from a branch of China Travel Service on the mainland side of the crossing from Macau to Zhūhǎi. See chapter 10 for more details.

HONG KONG VISAS

U.S., Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand citizens, and those of most other developed nations, are granted

90-day stays free on arrival. British citizens are granted 180 days. Passports should be valid for 1 month longer than the planned return date. In theory, proof of sufficient funds and an onward ticket may be demanded, but this request is almost unheard of.

MACAU VISAS

U.S., Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand citizens are granted 30-day stays free on arrival. British and most other EU nationals can stay up to 90 days without a visa. Passports should have at least 30 days of remaining validity upon your arrival.

CUSTOMS

WHAT YOU CAN BRING INTO CHINA

Generally, you can bring into China anything for personal use which you plan to take away with you when you leave, with the usual exceptions of arms and drugs, or plant materials, animals, and foods from diseased areas. There are no problems with cameras or video recorders, GPS equipment, laptops, or any other standard electronic equipment. Two unusual prohibitions are "old/used garments" and "printed matter, magnetic media, films, or photographs which are deemed to be detrimental to the political, economic, cultural and moral interests of China," as the regulations put it. Large quantities of religious literature, overtly political materials, or books on Tibet might cause you difficulties (having a pile of pictures of the Dalai Lama certainly will, if discovered), but in general, small amounts of personal reading matter in non-Chinese languages do not present problems. Customs officers are for the most part easy-going, and foreign visitors are very rarely searched. Customs declaration forms have now vanished from all major points of entry, but if you are importing more than $5,000 in cash, you should declare it, or theoretically you could face difficulties at the time of departure, although once again, this would be highly unlikely. Importing or exporting more than ¥6,000 ($750) in *yuán* is also theoretically prohibited, but again, it's never checked. Chinese currency is anyway best obtained within China (or in Hong Kong), and is of no use once you leave.

WHAT YOU CAN TAKE HOME FROM CHINA

An official seal must be attached to any item created between 1795 and 1949 that is taken out of China; older items cannot be exported. But in fact you are highly unlikely to find any genuine antiques, so this is a moot point (and if the antiques dealer is genuine, then he'll know all about how to get the seal). There are no such prohibitions on exporting items from Hong Kong, which is where you can find reliable dealers with authentic pieces and a willingness to allow thermoluminescence testing to prove it.

CURRENCY

MAINLAND CHINA

Although for most destinations it's usually a good idea to exchange at least some money—just enough to cover airport incidentals and transportation to your hotel—before you leave home so you can avoid the less-favorable rates you'll get at airport currency-exchange desks, **mainland China** is different. **Yuán,** also known as **RMB (Rénmínbì,** or "People's Money"), are not easily obtainable overseas, and rates are worse when they can be found, although rates at *back street* money-changers away from Hong Kong's main shopping areas are often better than in mainland China.

There is no legal private money-changing in mainland China, and rates are fixed to be the same at all outlets nationwide on a daily basis. So change at the airport when you arrive,

and then at larger branches of the Bank of China, or at desks administered by the bank in your hotel or at major department stores in larger cities. If you find a shop offering to change your money at other than a formal Bank of China exchange counter, they are doing so illegally, and you open yourself to shenanigans with rates and fake bills, which are fairly common. Even the meanest hole-in-the-wall restaurant has an ultraviolet note tester. *Do not deal with black-market money-changers.*

Hotel exchange desks will only change money for their guests, but they are open very long hours 7 days a week. **Bank hours** vary from province to province. In some provinces they operate the same hours every day; in others, the exchange counter is open during hours different from those of the rest of the bank and not on weekends; in still others, banks are completely closed on weekends. See "Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs," in the "Fast Facts" section of each destination.

The *yuán* is pegged to the U.S. dollar, trading within ¥8.276 to ¥8.28 to one U.S. dollar, only allowed to move within a band of 0.2%. For all other currencies, strength in comparison to the *yuán* is a matter of strength in comparison to the U.S. dollar. The pound sterling has recently been trading at around $1.56 and ¥12.95, the euro at $1.07 and ¥8.87. The latest rates can be found at **www.xe.com/ucc**.

There are notes for ¥100, ¥50, ¥20, ¥10, ¥5, ¥2, and ¥1, which also appears as a coin. The word *yuán* is rarely spoken, and sums are usually referred to as *kuài qián,* "pieces of money," usually shortened to just *kuài. Sān kuài* is ¥3. Notes carry Arabic numerals as well as numbers in Chinese characters, so there's no fear of confusion. The next unit down, the *jiǎo* (¥0.10), is spoken of as the *máo.* There are notes of a smaller size for ¥0.50, ¥0.20, and ¥0.10, as well as coins for these values. The smallest and almost worthless unit is the *fēn* (both written and spoken) or cent and, unbelievably, when you change money you may be given tiny notes or lightweight coins for ¥0.05, ¥0.02, and ¥0.01, but this is the only time you'll see them except in the bowls of beggars or donation boxes in temples. The most useful note is the ¥10 ($1.25), so keep a good stock. Street stalls, convenience stores, and taxis are often not happy with ¥100 ($13) notes.

Keep receipts when you exchange money, and you can **reconvert** excess ¥RMB into hard currency when you leave China, although sometimes not more than half the total sum for which you can produce receipts, and sometimes these receipts must be not more than 3 months old.

HONG KONG & MACAU

In **Hong Kong** the currency is the **Hong Kong dollar** (HK$), whose notes are issued by a variety of banks, although all coins look the same. It is pegged to the U.S. dollar at around HK$7.80 to US$1. Keep foreign exchange to a minimum at the airport (use the ATMs at departures level) or at other points of entry. Do not change in hotels or banks, but with money-changers, and choose money-changers away from the main streets for a significantly better rate. Banks have limited weekend hours, but money-changers are open every day.

Macau's official currency is the **pataca** (MOP$), pegged to the Hong Kong dollar (and thus to the U.S. dollar) at a rate of MOP$103.20 to HK$100—about MOP$8 to US$1. Hong Kong dollars are accepted everywhere, including both coins and notes (even on buses), but at par. If you arrive in Macau from Hong Kong for a short stay, there's little point in changing money beforehand. But

your change will invariably be in patacas, which are useless in Hong Kong or mainland China.

ATMS

There are many ATMs in China, but with few exceptions as yet, only a selection of Bank of China machines accept foreign cards. Check the back of your ATM card for the logos of the **Cirrus** (www.mastercard.com), **PLUS** (www.visa.com), and **Aeon** (www.americanexpress.com), systems, and then contact the relevant company for a list of working ATM locations in China. Běijīng and Shànghǎi are both fairly well served, and have additional Citibank and Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank machines which take just about any card ever invented. But even some provincial capitals and some major tourist destinations often have no machines accepting foreign cards, even if their screens say they do. Nevertheless, it is possible, as long as you plan ahead, to travel in China relying on ATMs, but be sure to replenish your supplies of cash long before they run out, and have a couple of hundred U.S. dollars in cash as a backup. These can be exchanged in almost any branch of any bank. Some machines have a limit of ¥2,500 ($310) per transaction, but often allow a second transaction the same day. In **Hong Kong** and **Macau** there are ATMs everywhere which are friendly to foreign cards.

TRAVELER'S CHECKS

Traveler's checks are only accepted at selected branches of the Bank of China, at foreign exchange desks in hotels, at international gateways, and at some department stores in the largest cities. In the most popular destinations, checks in any hard currency and from any major company are welcome, but elsewhere, currencies of the larger economies are preferred, and hotels may direct all check-holders to the local head office of the Bank of China. U.S. dollars cash, in contrast, may be exchanged at most branches of almost any Chinese bank, so even if you plan to bring checks, having a few U.S. dollars cash (in good condition) for emergencies is a good idea. Checks attract a marginally better exchange rate than cash, but the .75% commission makes the result slightly worse (worse still if you paid commission when buying them). Occasionally, if the signature you write in front of the teller is not so similar to the one you made when you bought the check that only an electron microscope could tell the difference, it may be rejected. In **Hong Kong** and **Macau,** checks are accepted at banks and money-changers in the usual way.

CREDIT CARDS

Although Visa and MasterCard signs abound, credit cards are of limited use in China—in most cases only the Chinese versions of the cards are accepted. Otherwise, an establishment will accept all of them—American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard, and Visa—or none at all. Many hotels accept foreign cards, but only the most upmarket restaurants outside hotels do so, as do those souvenir shops where you are already paying well over the odds—in fact, if a shop accepts foreign credit cards, that's a good reason to look elsewhere.

You can also obtain cash advances on your MasterCard, Visa, Diners Club, or Amex card from major branches of the Bank of China, with a minimum withdrawal of ¥1,200 ($150) and 4% commission, plus whatever your card issuer charges—a very expensive way to withdraw cash, and for emergencies only. If you do plan to use your card while in China, it's a good idea to call your card issuer and let it know in advance.

All major credit cards are widely accepted in **Hong Kong** and **Macau.**

EMERGENCY CASH

American Express also runs an **emergency check cashing system,** which allows you to use one of your own checks or a counter check (more expensive) to draw money in the currency of your choice from selected banks. This works well in major cities but it can cause confusion in less-visited spots, and the rules on withdrawal limits vary according to the country in which your card was issued. Consult American Express for a list of participating banks before you leave home.

If you're stuck in a province where banks are closed on weekends, you can have money wired from **Western Union** (✆ **800/325-6000;** www.westernunion.com) to many post offices and branches of the Agricultural Bank of China across China, including 49 in Běijīng alone, and 18 in Hong Kong. You must present valid ID to pick up the cash at the Western Union office. In most countries, you can pick up a money transfer even if you don't have valid identification, as long as you can answer a test question provided by the sender. This should work in Hong Kong but might cause difficulties in mainland China. Let the sender know in advance that you don't have ID.

4 When to Go

Weather details are given below, but a far bigger factor in your calculations should be the movement of domestic tourists who, during the longer public holidays, take to the road in the tens or even hundreds of millions, crowding all forms of transportation, booking out hotels, and turning even the quietest tourist sights into litter-strewn bedlam.

PEAK TRAVEL SEASONS

Chinese New Year (Spring Festival): Like many Chinese festivals, this one operates on the lunar calendar. Solar equivalents for the next few years are January 22, 2004; February 9, 2005; January 29, 2006; and February 18, 2007. The effects of this holiday are felt from 2 weeks before the date until 2 weeks after, when anyone who's away from home attempts to get back, including an estimated 150 million migrant workers. Although tens of thousands of extra bus and train services are added, tickets for land transport are very difficult to get, and can command high prices on the black market (official prices also rise on some routes, and on ferries between Hong Kong and the mainland). Air tickets are usually obtainable and may even still be discounted. In the few days immediately around the New Year, traffic on long-distance rail and bus services may be light, but local services may dry up altogether. Most tourist sights stay open, although some shut on the holiday itself or have limited holiday hours.

Labor Day & National Day: In a policy known as "holiday economics," the May 1 and October 1 holidays have now been expanded to 7 days each (including 1 weekend—most people are expected to work through the weekend prior to the holiday to exchange for 2 weekdays, which are added to the official 3 days of holiday). The aim is to draw out some of China's vast savings and get it sloshing around the economy on leisure spending, a policy which has been spectacularly successful. These two holidays now mark the beginning and end of the domestic travel season, and mark the twin peaks of leisure travel, with the remainder of May, early June, and September also busy. Most Chinese avoid traveling in the summer except specifically to cooler high ground or an offshore island, usually on a weekend. The exact dates of each holiday

are not given out until around 2 weeks before each takes place, but it's best, if you're traveling independently, to arrive at a larger destination before the holiday starts, and move on in the middle or after the end. The disposable income to fund travel is more often found in the larger cities, so these tend to become quieter, easier to get around, and less polluted. Noted tourist destinations around the country will be extremely busy, however. In **Hong Kong** and **Macau,** these are only 1- or 2-day holidays introduced in 1997 and 1999 respectively.

University Holidays: Exact term dates are rarely announced far in advance, but train tickets can be difficult to obtain as the student populace moves between home and college. Terms run for 18 weeks with 2 weeks of exams, from the beginning of September to just before Spring Festival, and from just after the Spring Festival to the end of June.

Local Difficulties: China's main international trade fair occupies the last 2 weeks of April and October, and drives up hotel prices in **Guǎngzhōu,** where it's held, and as far away as Hong Kong. In the summer, pleasant temperatures in the **northeast** (slightly cooler than the rest of China) draw students on summer vacation (which makes train tickets hard to acquire), as well as large Chinese tour groups who trample all before them; it may not be the best time for your visit. The northeast's Dàlián is also overbooked during the International Fashion Festival in September (see later). Across China, **mid-week travel** is always better than weekend travel, particularly true at destinations easily tackled in a weekend, such as Wǔtái Shān and Píngyáo (see chapter 5, "Along the Yellow River.") Government-imposed travel restrictions in **Tibet** tend to increase around the Monlam Festival (sometime mid-Jan to mid-Feb), Saka Dawa Festival (mid-May to mid-June), and around the present Dalai Lama's birthday (July 6). The border crossing between Hong Kong and the mainland at **Lo Wu** can take a couple of hours at holiday periods.

CLIMATE

China is the third biggest country in the world, with the second lowest inland depression (Turpan) and some of its highest peaks (Everest and K2 are both partly in China). Its far northeast shares the same weather patterns as Siberia, and its far southwest the same sub-tropical climate as northern Thailand.

In the **north,** early spring and late autumn are the best times to travel, both offering warm, dry days and cool, dry evenings. During March and April winds blow away the pollution but sometimes bring sand from the Gobi and topsoil from high ground to the northeast of Běijīng, increasingly desiccated by the mismanagement of water resources. The sky can at times turn a vivid yellow.

In the **south,** November to February brings a welcome drop both in temperature and in all-pervasive humidity, although in Hong Kong all public interiors and many private houses are air-conditioned to cryogenic temperatures year-round.

Central China, lacking the sea breezes that moderate the coast's summers and make its winters more temperate, has some of the country's most searing summer temperatures and bitterest winters, but it also escapes the worst of the humidity. **Tibet** has spring-like days in the summer but far milder winters than most people expect, at least in Lhasa, made endurable by the dryness of the climate. The **northwest** has perhaps the greatest range of temperatures, with severe summers and winters alike, but it is also largely dry.

Average Temperature Celsius/Fahrenheit

	Běijīng	Shànghǎi	Hong Kong	Xī'ān	Lhasa
Jan	-3/26	4/40	16/62	0/32	-2/28
Feb	0/31	5/42	17/63	2/35	0/33
Mar	6/43	8/48	19/67	8/48	3/38
Apr	13/57	15/59	22/73	14/57	8/47
May	20/68	20/68	26/79	19/66	11/53
June	24/76	23/75	28/83	25/77	15/60
July	26/79	28/83	29/85	27/80	15/60
Aug	25/77	27/82	29/85	25/77	14/59
Sept	20/69	23/75	28/83	19/66	13/56
Oct	13/57	18/66	26/79	14/57	8/48
Nov	5/41	12/55	22/72	7/44	2/37
Dec	-1/30	6/44	18/65	1/33	-1/30

Average Precipitation cm/inches

	Běijīng	Shànghǎi	Hong Kong	Xī'ān	Lhasa
Jan	0/0.2	4/1.8	2/1.1	0/0.3	0/0.1
Feb	0/0.2	6/2.4	4/1.7	1/0.4	1/0.5
Mar	0/0.3	8/3.3	7/2.9	2/0.9	0/0.3
Apr	1/0.7	9/3.7	13/5.5	4/1.8	0/0.2
May	3/1.3	10/4.1	28/11.2	6/2.4	2/1
June	7/3.1	17/6.8	39/15.7	5/2.1	6/2.5
July	22/8.8	14/5.7	36/14.3	9/3.8	12/4.8
Aug	17/6.7	13/5.4	37/14.8	8/3.4	8/3.5
Sept	5/2.3	13/5.4	29/11.7	10/4.2	6/2.6
Oct	1/0.7	6/2.7	11/4.7	5/2.3	1/0.5
Nov	1/0.4	5/2.1	3/1.5	2/1	0/0.1
Dec	0/0.1	3/1.5	2/1	0/0.2	0/0

HOLIDAYS

Public holidays and their effects vary widely between mainland China and the two Special Administrative Regions, Hong Kong and Macau.

Mainland China

A few years ago the Chinese were finally granted a 2-day weekend. Offices close, but stores, restaurants, post offices, transportation, sights and, in some areas, banks, all operate the same services 7 days a week. Most sights, shops, and restaurants are also open on public holidays, but all offices and anything government-related take as much time off as they can.

Although China switched to the Gregorian calendar in 1911, some public holidays (and many festivals—see below) are based on a lunar cycle, their solar dates varying from year to year. Holidays are **New Year's Day** (Jan 1), **Spring Festival** (Chinese New Year and the 2 days following it—see "Peak Travel Seasons," above, for exact dates in coming years), **Labor Day** (May 1 plus up to 4 more weekdays and a weekend), **National Day** (Oct 1 plus extra days, as with Labor Day, above).

Hong Kong

Saturday is officially a working day in Hong Kong, although many offices in

fact take the day off or only open for reduced hours. Weekend ferry sailings and other transport may vary, particularly on Sunday, when many shops are closed and opening hours for attractions may also vary. Hong Kong gets many British holidays, traditional Chinese holidays, plus modern political ones added after 1997, but in shorter forms. Banks, schools, offices, and government departments are all closed on these dates, as are many museums: **New Year's Day** (Jan 1), **Lunar New Year's Day** (for the mainland Spring Festival, but in Hong Kong the day itself plus 2 more, and an extra Fri or Mon if 1 day falls on a Sun); **Ching Ming Festival** (Apr 5), **Good Friday** (usually early Apr, plus the following Sat and **Easter Monday**), **Labor Day** (May 1), **Buddha's Birthday** (1 day in May), **Tuen Ng** (Dragon Boat Festival, 1 day in June), **Hong Kong SAR Establishment Day** (July 1), **Mid-Autumn Festival** (1 day in Sept, usually moved to the nearest Fri or Mon to make a long weekend), **National Day** (Oct 1), **Chung Yeung Festival** (1 day in Oct), **Christmas Day** and **Boxing Day** (Dec 25, and the next weekday if the 26th is a Sat or Sun).

Macau

Macau has the same holidays as Hong Kong except for SAR Establishment Day, and with similar consequences, but with the following variations: **National Day** is 2 days (Oct 1–2), **All Souls' Day** (Nov 2), **Feast of the Immaculate Conception** (Dec 8), **Macau SAR Establishment Day** (Dec 20), **Winter Solstice** (Dec 22), and **Christmas Eve** and **Christmas Day** (Dec 24 and 25).

CHINA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

China's festivals follow the traditional lunar calendar, and to increase confusion, some minority calendars operate according to different traditions. For conversion to solar/Gregorian calendar dates, try the websites www.est-direct.com/china/lunarcal.php, or www.mandarintools.com.

The Chinese tourism industry is increasingly inventing festivals to try to boost business. Unless indicated below, be wary of any festival with the word "tourism" in its name, for instance.

January

Spring Festival (Chūn Jié), or Chinese New Year, is still the occasion for large lion dances and other celebrations in Hong Kong, Macau, and Chinatowns worldwide, but in mainland China it's mainly a time for everyone to return to his or her ancestral home and feast. Fireworks are now banned in larger cities. Temple fairs have been revived in Běijīng, but are mostly fairly low-key shopping opportunities without the color or professional entertainers of old. But in the countryside there's been a gradual revival of stilt-walking and masked processions. Spring Festival is on the day of the first new moon after January 21, and can be no later than February 20.

Monlam Festival is held throughout the Tibetan world (including at Xiàhé and Lángmù Sì). Monasteries are open to all, and there are religious dancing, the offering of *torma* (butter sculptures), and the "sunning of the Buddha" when a silk painting (*tangkha*) is consecrated and becomes the living Buddha in the minds of believers. Typically, the festival culminates in the parading of the Maitreya Buddha through the town. Fourth to 16th days of the first lunar month (Jan 25–Feb 6, 2004; Feb 12–24, 2005). Check dates with Qīnghǎi Mountaineering Association (✆ **0971/823-8922**). In Tibet check with **FIT** (✆ **0891/634-4397;** www.tibet-travel.com/).

Kurban Bairam (Gǔ'ěrbāng Jié), also known as the Festival of Sacrifice, is celebrated by Muslims throughout China. It marks the willingness of the prophet Abraham to sacrifice everything to God, even his son Ishmael. Celebrations in Kashgar involve feats of tightrope-walking in the main square and wild dancing outside the Idkah Mosque. The 4-day festival is held 70 days after the breaking of the fast of Ramadan, on the 10th day of the 12th month (Dhul-Hijjah) in the Islamic calendar. It falls on February 1, 2004, and shifts earlier by 11 days each year.

February

The **Lantern Festival (Dēng Jié)** perhaps reached its peak in the late Qīng dynasty, when temples, stores, and other public places were hung with fantastically shaped and decorated lanterns, some with figures animated by ingenious mechanisms involving the flow of sand. Many people paraded through the streets with lightweight lanterns in the shapes of fish, sheep, and so on, and hung lanterns outside their houses, often decorated with riddles. There are some signs of the festival's revival, including at Píngyáo in Shānxī Province, and at Quánzhōu in Fújiàn. The festival always falls 15 days after Spring Festival.

March

Hong Kong Sevens Rugby Tournament, Hong Kong. Known as "The Sevens," this is one of Hong Kong's most popular and one of Asia's largest sporting events, with more than 20 teams from around the world competing for the Cup Championship. A 3-day pass costs HK$750 ($97). Contact the **Hong Kong Rugby Football Union** at ✆ **852/2504 8311** or www.hksevens.com.hk. Fourth weekend in March.

April

Tomb-Sweeping Festival (Qīngmíng) is still a public holiday in Hong Kong and Macau, frequently observed in Chinese communities overseas, and celebrated in more rural areas of China, as a family outing on a free day near the festival date. It's a day to honor ancestors by visiting and tidying their graves and making offerings of snacks and alcohol, which often turns into a picnic. April 5.

Sisters' Meal Festival (Zǐmèifàn Jié), Táijiāng, Shīdòng (Guìzhōu). Celebrated with *lúshēng* (wind-instrument music) dances and antiphonal singing, this is one of the prime occasions for young Miáo men and women to socialize and find marriage partners. Elaborately dressed Miáo women prepare packets of berry-stained glutinous rice to present to suitors. For exact dates, check with **CITS** Kǎilǐ (✆ **0855/822-2506;** www.qdncits.com). 15th day of the third lunar month (usually Apr).

Water-Splashing Festival (Pōshuǐ Jié), Jǐnghóng, Xīshuāngbǎnnà. Extremely popular with Chinese tourists, the festive Dǎi New Year is ushered in with a large market on the first day, dragon-boat races on the second, and copious amounts of water-splashing on the third. Be prepared to get doused, but take heart because the wetter you are, the more luck you'll have. April 13 to 15.

Luòyáng Peony Festival, Luòyáng. Over 300 varieties of China's best peonies, first cultivated in Luòyáng 1,400 years ago, are on display at the Wángchéng Park (Wángchéng Gōngyuán), which is awash in a riot of colors from red to violet and every shade in between. April 15 to 25.

Wéifāng International Kite Festival, Wéifāng. The kite capital of the

world hosts the largest kite-flying gala in China, as hundreds of thousands of kite lovers from around the world take over the town for several days of competition and demonstrations. April 20.

Hong Kong International Film Festival, Hong Kong. More than 200 films from more than 40 countries are featured at this 2-week event, including new releases, documentaries, and archival films. Tickets cost HK$55 ($7.15). For more information, call ✆ **852/2734 2903** or 852/27349009; or check www.hkiff.org.hk. 2 weeks in April.

Sānyuè Jié (Third Month Fair), Dàlǐ. This biggest festival of the Bái people had its origins over a thousand years ago when Buddhist monks and adherents gathered to celebrate the appearance of Guānyīn (the Goddess of Mercy) to the Bái. Today's festival has become more secular as the Bái and other minorities from elsewhere in Yúnnán gather in the foothills of the Green Mountains (Cāng Shān) for 5 days and nights of singing, dancing, wrestling, horse racing, and large-scale trading. Ask **CITS** for more information on the precise dates (✆ **0872/219-1985**). Fifteenth day of the third lunar month (usually mid-Apr or early May).

Cheung Chau Bun Festival, Hong Kong. This weeklong affair on Cheung Chau island is thought to appease restless ghosts and spirits. Originally held to placate the unfortunate souls of those murdered by pirates, it features a street parade of lions and dragons and Chinese opera, as well as floats with children seemingly suspended in the air, held up by cleverly concealed wires. The end of the festival is heralded by three bun-covered scaffolds erected in front of the Pak Tai Temple. These buns supposedly bring good luck to those who receive them. **HKTB** organizes tours of the parade; call ✆ **852/2508 1234.** Usually late April or early May, but the exact date is chosen by divination.

May

Saka Dawa festival is held throughout the Tibetan world, celebrating the Buddha passing away and thus attaining nirvana. *Koras* (circuits) of holy lakes, mountains, and buildings are undertaken by the faithful. See the contact info for the Monlam Festival (Jan), above. Eighth to 15th days of the 4th lunar month (May 26–June 2, 2004; Jun 15–22, 2005).

Western Journey Festival (Xīqiān Jié) marks the day in 1764 when the Qiánlóng emperor forced the Xībó people to move from their homeland in Manchuria to Qapqal County (southwest of Yīníng). Celebrations are marked by the devouring of a whole sheep cooked with coriander, preserved vegetables, and onions. Wrestling, horse riding, and archery contests evoke the Xībó's warrior ancestry. The festival is held on the 18th day of the 4th lunar month (late May to mid-June).

June

Dragon Boat Festival (Lóngzhōu Jié), Shīdòng. With over 40,000 celebrants, this Miáo minority festival, which bears no relation to the Hàn Dragon Boat Festival, commemorates the killing of a dragon whose body was divided among several Miáo villages. Over the course of 3 days, dragon boat races are held in Shīdòng and nearby Píngzhāi and Tánglóng. For exact dates, check with **CITS** Kǎilǐ (✆ **0855/822-2506;** www.qdncits.com). Twenty-fourth to 27th day of the fifth lunar month (usually June or early July).

Dragon Boat Races (Tuen Ng Festival), Hong Kong. Races of long,

narrow boats, gaily painted and powered by oarsmen who row to the beat of drums, originated in ancient China, where legend held that Qū Yuán, an imperial adviser, drowned himself in a Húnán river to protest government corruption. His faithful followers, wishing to recover his body, supposedly raced out into the river in boats, beating their paddles on the surface of the water and throwing rice to distract water creatures from his body. There are two different races: The biggest is an international competition with approximately 30 teams, held along the waterfront in Tsimshatsui East; the following weekend, approximately 500 local Hong Kong teams compete, with races held at Stanley, Aberdeen, Chai Wan, Yaumatei, Tai Po, and outlying islands. Contact **HKTB** at ✆ **852/2508 1234.** Fifth day of the fifth moon (June 22, 2004) for international races. On the **mainland,** the festival is still celebrated at places connected with Qū Yuán, such as Zíguī, Yíchāng, and Chángshā.

July

Jyekundo Horse Festival, south of Yùshu, Qīnghǎi. Khampa nomads gather for a spectacular 10-day celebration involving racing, exhibitions of equestrian skill, and horse-trading. Starts on July 25.

International Motorcycle Tourism Festival, Yínchuān. People from China and abroad ride/transport their motorcycles to Yínchuān. Motorcycle stunts and contests, exhibitions, and tourism activities (beware the last) make up the core activities of the festival. Visit www.ycmtf.org/english/about_us.htm for details. Held between June and August.

Lurol Festival, Tóngrén (Repkong). This marks the Sino-Tibetan peace treaty, signed in A.D. 822, with fertility dances and body piercing in honor of a local mountain deity, and has a pagan feel. Check with **Qīnghǎi Mountaineering Association,** ✆ **0971/823-8922**. The 16th day of the sixth lunar month (Aug 1, 2004; July 21, 2005).

August

Naadam, across Inner Mongolia, including Hohhot (at the racetrack, Sàimǎ Chǎng, and the Hulun Buir Grasslands, outside Mǎnzhōlǐ). The festival features Mongolian wrestling, archery, and horse and camel racing, and occurs when the grasslands turn green. That's usually mid-August, but can be as early as July. Dates differ from place to place, and they don't coincide with (the People's Republic of) Mongolia's Naadam festival, which is tied to their National Day and always occurs from July 11 to 13. For dates and exact locations outside Mǎnzhōulǐ, call **CITS** (✆ **0470/622-2988**).

Qīngdǎo International Beer Festival, Qīngdǎo. Over a million visitors descend on this seaside resort for its famous annual Bavarian bacchanal, which features everything from beer tasting and drinking contests for adults, to amusement-park rides for kids, to go-karting for the kid in the adult. Last 2 weeks of August (proceeding to the 1st Sun in Sept).

September

International Shàolín Martial Arts Festival, Sōng Shān. Some patience, Grasshopper, may be necessary to negotiate the crowds of serious pugilists and Bruce Lee–wannabes who show up to trade fists and demonstrate some truly jaw-dropping, gravity-defying martial arts skills. For details, call **CITS** (✆ **0371/288-3442**). Second week of September.

Mid-Autumn Festival (Tuányuán Jié) is widely celebrated in Hong

Kong, Macau, and Chinese communities overseas, but in mainland China the last remnant of the festival except among literary-minded students is the giving and eating of *yuèbǐng* (moon cakes), circular pies with sweet and extremely fattening fillings. Traditionally it's a time to sit and read poetry under the full moon, but pollution in many areas has made the moon largely invisible. The 15th day of the 8th lunar month (usually Sept).

International Fashion Festival, Dàlián. China's most famous fashion event is the Dàlián Guójì Fúzhuāng Jié. The 2-week gathering of mostly Asian garment producers offers an opening parade, a series of glamorous fashion shows held in the city's best hotels, and the sight of leggy models strutting downtown streets, making it worthwhile for non-industry visitors, too. Mid-September.

Confucius's Birthday, Qūfǔ. China's Great Sage is honored with parades, exhibitions, and musical and dance performances that re-enact some of the rites mentioned in the *Analects (Lún Yǔ)*. If you wish to stay over during this time, book your hotel well in advance; decent accommodations are hard to come by then. September 28.

October

Tsongkapa's birthday is celebrated throughout the Tibetan world. The birthplace of the founder of the Geluk order of Tibetan Buddhism, **Kumbum Tǎ'ěr Sì** (south of **Xīníng**) sees the liveliest festival. Religious dancing, mass chanting, and "sunning the Buddha" can be seen. Check with Kumbum (Tǎ'ěr Sì; ✆ **0971/223-1357**). 20th to 26th days of the ninth lunar month (late Oct to early Nov).

November

International Festival of Folk Songs and Folk Arts, Nánníng. Many of Guǎngxī's minorities, including the Zhuàng, the Miáo, and the Dòng, gather for a colorful week of ethnic song and dance performances that some have criticized as being mere "urban re-enactments." A visit to a village to see the minorities in their own environment is highly recommended, but if you're short on time, this explosion of song and dance will have to suffice. Check with **CITS** (✆ **0851/690-1660;** fax 0851/690-1600; gzcits@china.com) for exact dates. First half of November.

Rozi Heyt (Ròuzī Jié or **Kāizhāi Jié)** marks the end of the month-long Fast of Ramadan, and believers are keen for a feast. Presents are exchanged and alms are given to the poor. In Kazakh and Tajik areas this is often celebrated with a "lamb snatching" competition. A dead lamb is contested by two teams mounted on horses or yaks; the winning team succeeds in spiriting the lamb out of reach of their rivals. The festival is held for 4 days after the first sighting of the new moon in the 10th month (Shawwal) of the Islamic calendar. November 25 in 2003, moving backwards by 11 days each year.

December

Miáo New Year Festival, Xījiāng, Lángdé (Guìzhōu). The Miáo New Year is celebrated with songs, dances, bullfights, and *lúshēng* competitions. For exact dates check with **CITS** Kǎilǐ (✆ **0855/822-2506;** www.qdncits.com). End of the 10th lunar month (usually Dec).

Ice and Snow Festival, Harbin. Every year, tens of thousands of people travel from as far south as Guǎngdōng and brave freezing cold to see the Hā'ěrbīn Bīngxuě Jié. The city's streets come alive with elaborate ice sculptures equipped with internal wires that blaze to life at night. Most impressive is the Ice

and Snow Palace, a life-size frozen-water mansion with multiple levels erected every year on the banks of the Sungari River. From late December to whenever the ice begins to melt (usually late Feb).

5 Travel Insurance

Check your existing insurance policies and credit-card coverage before you buy travel insurance. You may already be covered for lost luggage, canceled tickets, or medical expenses. The cost of travel insurance varies widely, depending on the cost and length of your trip, your age, your health, and the type of trip you're taking.

Purchase insurance from a broker, or directly from an online or telephone-based insurer, as it is invariably considerably cheaper than that sold by travel agents, banks, foreign exchange operations, or insurers at the airport.

TRIP-CANCELLATION INSURANCE Trip-cancellation insurance helps you get your money back if you have to back out of a trip, if you have to go home early, or if your travel supplier goes bankrupt. Acceptable reasons for cancellation can range from sickness to natural disasters to a government department declaring your destination unsafe for travel. Insurers usually won't cover vague fears, though, and in 2003 SARS wrong-footed many travelers.

MEDICAL INSURANCE For China, purchase travel insurance with air ambulance or scheduled airline repatriation built in. Be clear on the terms and conditions—is repatriation limited to life-threatening illnesses, for instance? While there are advanced facilities staffed by foreign doctors in Běijīng and Shànghǎi, and excellent facilities in Hong Kong, in most of China a hospital visit is to be avoided, if possible. Foreigners unfortunate enough to end up in provincial facilities do tend to get special treatment, but you are unlikely to consider it special enough. You may also face a substantial bill, and you will not be allowed to leave until you pay it *in cash.* You must claim back the expense when you return home, so make sure you have adequate proof of payment.

LOST-LUGGAGE INSURANCE On U.S. domestic flights, checked baggage is covered up to $2,500 per ticketed passenger. On international flights (including U.S. portions of international trips), baggage is limited to approximately $9 per pound, up to approximately $635 per checked bag. If you plan to check items more valuable than the standard liability, see if your valuables are covered by your homeowner's policy, or get baggage insurance as part of your comprehensive travel-insurance package. Read the policy carefully—some valuables are effectively uninsurable, and others have such high excess charges that the insurance is not worth buying.

If your luggage is lost, immediately file a lost-luggage claim at the airport. For most airlines, you must report delayed, damaged, or lost baggage within 4 hours of arrival. The airlines are required to deliver your luggage, once it's found, directly to your house or destination free of charge, although don't expect that necessarily to work with domestic Chinese airlines.

6 Health & Safety

STAYING HEALTHY

GREATEST RISKS

The greatest risk to the enjoyment of a holiday in China is one of **stomach upsets** or more serious illnesses arising from low hygiene standards. Keep your hands frequently washed and away from your mouth. Only eat freshly cooked hot food, and fruit you can peel yourself. Avoid touching the

part to be eaten once it's been peeled. Drink only boiled or bottled water. *Never* drink from the tap. Use bottled water for brushing your teeth.

The second most common cause of discomfort is the upper respiratory tract infection or cold-or flu-like symptoms in fact caused by **heavy pollution.** Many standard Western remedies or sources of relief (and occasionally fake versions of these) are available over the counter, but bring a supply of whatever you are used to. If you have sensitive eyes, you may wish to bring an eye bath and solution.

If you regularly take a nonprescription medication, bring a plentiful supply with you and don't rely on finding it in China. Feminine hygiene products such as panty-liners are widely available, but tampons are found mainly in Hong Kong.

GENERAL AVAILABILITY OF HEALTH CARE

While the names and addresses of reliable (and very expensive) clinics with up-to-date equipment and English-speaking foreign doctors are given in this guide where available, in most cases they are not. So should you begin to feel unwell in China, your first contact should be with your hotel reception. Many major hotels have doctors on staff who will give a first diagnosis and treatment for minor problems, and who will be aware of the best place to send foreigners for further treatment.

Be very cautious about what is prescribed for you. Doctors are poorly paid, and many earn kickbacks from pharmaceutical companies for prescribing expensive medicines. Antibiotics are handed out like candy, and indeed, dangerous and powerful drugs of all kinds can be bought over the counter at pharmacies. Mis-prescription is now a significant cause of death in China, including the habit of prescribing a combination of Western drugs and Chinese traditional "medicines" which react badly with each other. In general, the best policy is to stay as far away from Chinese health care as possible. Much of it is not good for your health.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

Plan well ahead. While a trip to Hong Kong or Macau can be made with little extra protection, a trip to mainland China, depending on its duration and time spent outside larger cities, may require a few new inoculations, especially if you haven't traveled much in the less developed world before. Some of these are expensive, some need multiple shots separated by a month or two, and some should not be given at the same time. So start work on this 3 or 4 months before your trip.

For the latest information on infectious diseases and travel risks, and particularly on the constantly changing situation with malaria, consult the **World Heath Organization** (www.who.int) and the **Centers for Disease Control** in Atlanta (www.cdc.gov). Look in particular for the latest information on SARS, which may continue long after the media has become bored with reporting it. Note that family doctors are rarely up to date with vaccination requirements, so when looking for advice at home, contact a specialist travel clinic.

To begin with, your standard inoculations, typically for **polio, diphtheria,** and **tetanus,** should be up to date. You may also need inoculations against **typhoid fever, meningococcal meningitis, cholera, hepatitis A and B,** and **Japanese B encephalitis.** If you will be arriving in mainland China from a country with **yellow fever,** you may be asked for proof of vaccination, although border health inspections are cursory at best. See also advice on **malaria,** below.

WHILE YOU ARE THERE

Mosquito-born **malaria** comes in various forms, and you may need to take two different prophylactic drugs,

depending upon the time you travel, whether you venture into rural areas, and which areas they are. You must begin to take these drugs 1 week *before* you enter an affected area, and *for 4 weeks after you leave it, sometimes longer.* For urban tours, prophylaxis is usually unnecessary.

If you visit Tibet, you may be at risk from **altitude sickness,** usually marked by throbbing headache, loss of appetite, and overwhelming lethargy. Other than retreating to a lower altitude, avoiding alcohol, and drinking plenty of water, many find a drug called Diamox to be effective, if used with caution. For most, 1 sleepless night is all you will have to endure.

Standard precautions should be taken against exposure to **strong summer sun,** its brightness often dimmed by pollution but its power to burn undiminished.

The Chinese are phenomenally ignorant about **sexually transmitted diseases,** which are rife. As with the respiratory disease SARS, the government denied there was any AIDS problem in China until it grew too large to be contained, and it still issues estimates of the spread of infection which are highly conservative. In short, even more than at home, you should not undertake intimate activities without protection. Condoms are widely available, including Western brands in bigger cities.

STAYING SAFE

China is one of Asia's safest destinations. You must still be cautious about theft in the same places as anywhere else in the world—crowded markets, popular tourist sights, bus and railway stations, and airports. The main danger of walking the ill-lit streets at night is of falling down an uncovered manhole or walking into a phone or power wire strung at neck height. Take standard precautions against pickpockets (distribute your valuables around your person, and wear a money belt inside your clothes). There's no need to be concerned about dressing down or not flashing valuables—it's automatically assumed that all foreigners are astonishingly rich anyway, even the scruffiest backpackers, and the average Chinese cannot tell a Cartier from any other shiny watch. If you are a victim of theft, make a police report (go to the same addresses given for visa extensions in each city, where you are most likely to find an English-speaking policeman). But don't necessarily expect sympathy, cooperation, or action. The main purpose is to get a theft report to give to your insurers for compensation.

Harassment of **solo female travelers** is slightly more likely if they appear to be of Chinese descent, but is very rare.

Traffic is a major hazard for the cautious and incautious alike. In Hong Kong and Macau, driving is on the left, and road signs and traffic lights are obeyed. In mainland China, driving is on the right, at least occasionally. The rules of the road are routinely overridden by one rule: "I'm bigger than you, so get out of my way," and pedestrians are at the bottom of the pecking order. Cyclists ride along the sidewalks, and cars also mount sidewalks right in front of you and park across your path as if you don't exist. Cyclists go in both directions along the bike lane at the side of the road, which is also invaded by cars looking to park. The edges of the main lanes also usually have cyclists going in both directions. The vehicle drivers are gladiators, competing for any way to move into the space ahead, constantly changing lanes, and crossing each others' paths. Pedestrians are matadors pausing between lanes as cars sweep by to either side of them. In cities they tend to group together and edge out into the traffic together, causing it to swing ever further out away from them, often into the path of oncoming vehicles, until eventually the traffic parts and flows to either

side, and the process is repeated for the next lane. Whether it's more hair-raising to be in the vehicle or on the street is an open question.

Visitors should be cautious of various **scams,** especially in areas of high tourist traffic, and of Chinese who approach and speak in English: "Hello friend! Welcome to China!" or similar. Those who want to practice their English and who suggest moving to some local haunt may leave you with a bill which has two zeros more on it than it should, and there's trouble should you decline to pay. "Art students" are a pest: They approach you with a story about raising funds for a show overseas, but in fact are merely enticing you into a shop where you will be lied to extravagantly about the authenticity, uniqueness, originality, and true cost of various paintings, which you will be pressured into buying for dozens of times their actual value. The man who is foolish enough to accept an invitation from pretty girls to sing karaoke deserves all the hot water in which he will find himself, up to being forced by large, well-muscled gentlemen to visit an ATM and withdraw large sums to pay for services not actually provided.

DEALING WITH DISCRIMINATION

In mainland China, in casual encounters, non-Chinese are treated as something between a cute pet and a bull in a china shop, and sometimes with pitying condescension because they are too stupid to speak Chinese. At some sights, out-of-town Chinese tourists may ask to have their picture taken with you, which will be fun to show friends in their foreigner-free hometowns. ("Look! Here's me with the Elephant Man!") Unless you are of Chinese descent, your foreignness is constantly thrust in your face with catcalls of *"lǎowài,"* a not particularly courteous term for "foreigner," and a bit like shouting "Chinky" at every Chinese you encounter at home. Mocking, and usually falsetto, calls of "Hellooooooo" are not greetings but similar to saying "Pretty Polly!" to a parrot. Whether acknowledged or not (and all this is best just ignored), these calls are usually followed by giggles. But there's little other overt discrimination, other than persistent overcharging wherever it can possibly be arranged. Indeed, in general, foreigners get better treatment from Chinese, both officials and the general public, than the Chinese give each other, once some sort of communication is established. People with darker skin do have a harder time than whites, but those with no Mandarin will probably not notice. Hong Kong and Macau are both more tolerant, although souvenir shops and markets will overcharge wherever possible. Hong Kongers married to foreigners know to leave their spouses at home when they shop for dinner.

7 Specialized Travel Resources

TRAVELERS WITH DISABILITIES

China should not be your first choice of destination, and if it is, you should travel in a specialist group (although such tours to China are very rare) or with those who are fully familiar with giving you whatever assistance you may need.

China is difficult for those with limited mobility. The sidewalks are very uneven, and there are almost always stairs to public buildings, sights, and hotels with no alternative ramps. In theory, some major hotels in the largest cities have wheelchair-accessible rooms, but rarely are they properly executed—the door to the bathroom may be wider, or the bathroom suite lower, but not both, and other switches and controls may be out of reach. Metro stations do not

have lifts, and any escalators are most usually up only.

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELERS

China is still in denial. Even Běijīng boasts only a single gay bar of any note, but it is not permitted to describe it in print as such, and there's less still for lesbians. You don't travel to China for the gay scene any more than you'd travel to Mexico for the icebergs. Only Hong Kong and Macau are well supplied with openly gay bars and clubs. Other Asian countries have much more to offer. Even **The International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association** (**IGLTA; ✆ 800/448-8550** or 954/776-2626; www.iglta.org) lists no gay-friendly organizations dealing with in-bound visitors to China. ***Out and About*** (**✆ 800/929-2268** or 415/644-8044; www.outandabout.com), which offers gay guidebooks, has a Hong Kong title (". . . no other city is better equipped for the #1 gay sport: shopping!") but nothing for the mainland.

SENIOR TRAVEL

There are no special arrangements or discounts for seniors in China, with the exception of some familiar foreign brand-name hotels that may offer senior rates if you book in advance (although you'll usually beat those prices simply by showing up in person, if there are rooms available).

FAMILY TRAVEL

China accepts children traveling on a parent's passport, although the child's photo must be submitted along with the parent's when a visa application is made.

Mainland China, however, is not the place to make your first experiment in traveling with small children, unless you are already very familiar with third world travel or with China in particular. Your biggest challenges will be the long journeys between destinations (certainly if you travel by land), the lack of services or entertainment aimed at children, the lack of familiar foods (unless your children have been brought up with Chinese food), and hygiene.

In general, the Chinese will be fascinated by your child, especially if he or she has anything other than black hair and is not of Asian descent. Some children find Chinese strangers a little too hands-on, and may tire of forced encounters (and photo sessions) with Chinese children met on the street. But the Chinese put their children firmly first, and stand up on buses while the children sit.

STUDENTS

There are no particular benefits or discounts available to foreign students traveling in China unless you're registered at a Chinese educational institution (and then not many), but an International Student Identity Card can occasionally be useful in Hong Kong, mostly for reduced-price museum entrance.

8 Planning Your Trip Online

SURFING FOR AIRFARES

The "big three" online travel agencies, **Expedia.com**, **Travelocity.com**, and **Orbitz.com**, sell most of the air tickets bought on the Internet. (Canadian travelers should try expedia.ca and Travelocity.ca; U.K. residents try expedia.co.uk and opodo.co.uk.) Also remember to check **airline websites** for Web-only specials. For the websites of airlines that fly to and from your destination, check "Getting There," later in this chapter. For last-minute trips, **site59.com** in the U.S. and **lastminute.com** in Europe often have better deals than the big-name sites. Do *not* buy domestic travel

online from English-language sites. Markups are horrendous.

SURFING FOR HOTELS

Booking hotel rooms online in China is not a good idea, unless money is no object, or unless you absolutely must stay at a specific hotel at a very busy time of the year. There are no online services offering Chinese hotel rooms at discounts lower than you can get for yourself, whatever they may tell you. See "Saving on Your Hotel Room," under "Tips on Accommodations," later in this chapter.

9 The 21st-Century Traveler

INTERNET ACCESS AWAY FROM HOME

Despite highly publicized clampdowns on Internet cafes, monitoring of traffic, and blocking of websites, China remains one of the easiest countries in the world in which to get online.

WITHOUT YOUR OWN COMPUTER

Almost any hotel with a business center, right down to Chinese government-rated two-star level, offers expensive Internet access, and almost every town has a few Internet cafes *(wǎngbā)*, with rates typically ¥2 to ¥3 (25¢–40¢) per hour, many open 24 hours a day. Locations of cafes are given for most cities in this guide, but they come and go very rapidly. Keep your eyes open for the *wǎngbā* characters given in "Appendix A: The Chinese Language." In **Hong Kong** many coffee bars have a free terminal or two.

Many media websites and those with financial information or any data whatsoever on China which disagrees with the usually mendacious Party line are blocked from mainland China, as are even some search engines.

WITH YOUR OWN COMPUTER

It's just possible that your ISP has a low-cost local access number in China, but that's unlikely. Never mind, because there's free, **anonymous dial-up access** across most of China. When, in the "Fast Facts" section of a city in this book, you see "Dial-up is . . . ," you can connect by using the number we've provided, and by making the account name and password the same as the dial-up number. Speeds vary but are usually fine for checking e-mail directly, although they're variable for checking mail via a Web interface. The service is paid for through a tiny increment in the low cost of a local phone call. Many hotels advertising "free Internet" simply mean that they don't charge you at all for calls to these numbers.

Another option in larger cities is to buy an **Internet access card** *(wǎngkǎ)*. These are on sale at newspaper kiosks, phone stores, convenience stores, and department stores, and usually allow more rapid connection speeds. The back of the card (always bought for less than its face value—bargain the price well down) has instructions in English. Scratch off the panel on the back of the card, call the administration number provided, and give the card number, a contact phone number (any hotel will do), and your passport number; English is usually spoken but get hotel desk staff to assist just in case. Use the dial-up number and account number on the back of the card, and the password from behind the scratch-off panel. Online time usually costs well under ¥1 (15¢) an hour. ***Warning:*** Many cards are only usable in the city where they are purchased.

Mainland China uses the standard U.S.–style RJ11 telephone jack also used as the port for laptops worldwide. Cables with RJ11 jacks at both ends can be picked up for around $1

Online Traveler's Toolbox

- **The Oriental-List.** A noncommercial mailing list dedicated solely to the discussion of travel in China, moderated to keep it on-topic and spam-free by the developer and co-author of this book, offering swift answers to just about any China travel question not already dealt with in these pages. Send e-mail to subscribe-oriental-list@list.xianzai.com.
- **On-line Chinese Tools** (www.mandarintools.com). Dictionaries for Mac and Windows, facilities for finding yourself a Chinese name, Chinese calendars for conversion between the solar and lunar calendars (on which most Chinese festivals are based), and more.
- **Zhongwen.com** (www.zhongwen.com). Online dictionary with look-up of English and Chinese and explanations of Chinese etymology using a system of family trees.
- **Xianzai.com** (www.xianzai.com). Order free e-mail bulletins of entertainment listings for Běijīng, Shànghǎi, Guǎngdōng, and Dàlián, which include special offers for hotels and air tickets from China.
- **Visa ATM Locator** (www.visa.com), for locations of PLUS ATMs worldwide; or **MasterCard ATM Locator** (www.mastercard.com), for locations of Cirrus ATMs worldwide.
- **Weatherbase** (www.weatherbase.com) gives month-by-month averages for temperature and rainfall in individual cities in China. **Intellicast** (www.intellicast.com) and **Weather.com** (www.weather.com) give weather forecasts for cities around the world.
- **Universal Currency Converter** (www.xe.com/ucc). Latest exchange rates of any currency against the ¥RMB, HK$, and MOP$.
- **Travel Warnings** See http://travel.state.gov/travel_warnings.html, www.fco.gov.uk/travel, and www.voyage.gc.ca, www.dfat.gov.au/consular/advice.

in department stores and electrical shops without difficulty. In Hong Kong and Macau, however, phone connections are often to U.K. standards, although in better hotels an RJ11 socket is provided. Standard electrical voltage across China is 220v, 50Hz, which most laptops can deal with, but North American users in particular should check. For power socket information, see "Fast Facts," later in this chapter.

Those with on-board Ethernet can take advantage of broadband services in major hotels in China, which are sometimes free. Ethernet cables are often provided but it's best to bring your own. Details are given under each hotel listing. Occasionally Internet access is provided via the TV and a keyboard with an infra-red link, but this is slow and clumsy. At least one Běijīng hotel (the Kempinski) and some Hong Kong hotels now have wireless access in public areas for those with a wireless card installed.

USING A CELLPHONE IN CHINA

All Europeans, most Australians, and many North Americans use GSM (Global System for Mobiles). But while everyone else can take a regular GSM phone to China, North Americans,

who operate on a different frequency, need to have a more expensive tri-band model.

International roaming charges can be horrendously expensive. It's far cheaper to buy a pre-paid chip with a new number in China or Hong Kong (but you'll need a different chip for each destination). You may need to call your cellular operator to "unlock" your phone in order to use it with a local provider.

Renting a phone is an expensive alternative, best done from home, since such services are not widely available in China. That way you can give out your new number, and make sure the phone works. You'll usually pay $40 to $50 per week, plus air-time fees of at least a dollar a minute. In the U.S., two good wireless rental companies are **InTouch USA** (✆ **800/872-7626;** www.intouchglobal.com) and **RoadPost** (✆ **888/290-1606** or 905/272-5665; www.roadpost.com).

In mainland China, **buying a phone** is the best option. Last year's now unfashionable model can be bought, with chip and ¥100 ($13) of pre-paid air time, for often around ¥800 ($100); less if a Chinese model is chosen. Europeans taking their GSM phones, and North Americans with tri-band phones, can buy chips *(quán-qiútōng)* for about ¥100 ($13). Mainland chips do not work in Hong Kong, or vice versa. Recharge cards *(shénzhōuxíng)* are available at post offices and the mobile phone shops which seem to occupy about 50% of all retail space. Call rates are very low, although those receiving calls pay part of the cost; and if the phone is taken to another province, that cost increases, making the use of ordinary phones a better deal for dialing out. In **Hong Kong** recharge cards are widely available at convenience stores and mobile-phone shops, and chips are included free with the cost of initial charge value.

10 Getting There

BY PLANE

On direct, nonstop flights, China's own international airlines always offer rates slightly lower than those of foreign carriers. Cabin staff try to be helpful but are never quite sure how, and the in-flight movies may be 40 years old. Air China only recently suffered its first and only fatal accident, and it should not be confused with China Airlines from Táiwān, at quite the other end of the scale.

Cathay Pacific Airlines, Hong Kong's main international carrier, is effortlessly superior to North American airlines in service standards, and should be the first choice for direct flights to Hong Kong where available.

In recent years, a program of building and modernization has left even the airports of small provincial towns often shinier, more modern, and more efficient than those of similar-size cities in North America or Europe. Flying indirectly with the airlines of other Asian nations opens up a choice of other smaller, less crowded mainland gateways, whose airports may be much closer to the center of town and which provide a gentler introduction to China.

Note that when you leave the country there's a **departure tax,** currently ¥90 ($11), payable only in cash. Departure tax on domestic flights is ¥50 ($6.25), but note that flights between the mainland and Hong Kong and Macau are treated *as international flights.* **Hong Kong's** taxes and fees are usually included in ticket prices, but **Macau's** are not. See the chapter on Hong Kong and Macau.

FROM NORTH AMERICA

Among North American airlines, Air Canada (www.aircanada.com) flies to Běijīng and Shànghǎi, **Northwest**

Airlines (www.nwa.com) to Běijīng via Tokyo, and **United Airlines** (www.ual.com) to Běijīng and Shànghǎi.

Japan Airlines (www.jal.co.jp) flies via Tokyo to Běijīng and Shànghǎi, but also to Dàlián, Qīngdǎo, and Xiàmén. **All Nippon Airways** (www.ana.co.jp) flies to Běijīng, Dàlián, Qīngdǎo, Shànghǎi, Shěnyáng, Tiānjīn, and Xiàmén. **Korean Air** (www.koreanair.com) flies via Seoul to Běijīng, Qīngdǎo, and Shěnyáng; and **Asiana Airlines** (us.flyasiana.com) via Seoul to Běijīng, Chángchūn, Chéngdū, Chóngqìng, Guǎngzhōu, Guìlín, Harbin, Nánjīng, Shànghǎi, Xī'ān, and Yāntái.

Hong Kong is served by Air Canada (www.aircanada.com), American Airlines (www.aa.com), Continental Airlines (www.continental.com), Delta Airlines (www.delta.com), Northwest Airlines (www.nwa.com), US Airways (www.usairways.com), and United Airlines (www.ual.com), as well as Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific Airlines (www.cathaypacific.com). Indirect routes are offered by All Nippon Airways (www.ana.co.jp), Asiana Airlines (us.flyasiana.com), China Airlines (via Taipei; www.china-airlines.com), Eva Airways (excellent value, also via Taipei; www.evaair.com.tw), Korean Air (www.koreanair.com), and Japan Airlines (www.jal.co.jp).

FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM British Airways (www.britishairways.com) flies to Běijīng and Hong Kong, and Virgin Airlines to Shànghǎi and Hong Kong (www.virgin-atlantic.com). Cathay Pacific (www.cathaypacific.com) also flies directly to Hong Kong. Fares with KLM Royal Dutch Airlines (www.klm.com) via Amsterdam, with Lufthansa (www.lufthansa.com) via Frankfurt, and with Finnair (www.finnair.com) via Helsinki, can often be considerably cheaper. Fares with eastern European airlines such as Tarom Romanian Air Transport (www.tarom.ru) via Bucharest, and with Aeroflot (www.aeroflot.com) via Moscow, or with Asian airlines such as Pakistan International Airlines (www.piac.com.hk) via Islamabad or Karachi, Malaysia Airlines (www.mas.com.my) via Kuala Lumpur, or Singapore Airlines (www.singaporeair.com) via Singapore, can be cheaper still. There are even more creative route possibilities via Ethiopia or the Gulf States.

FROM AUSTRALASIA There's not much choice to the mainland from down under, although Sydney is served by China Eastern and Air China to Běijīng and Shànghǎi, and by Air China and China Southern to Guǎngzhōu. Qantas (www.qantas.com.au) and Air New Zealand (www.airnewzealand.com) fly to Hong Kong, and there are possible indirect routes with Philippine Airlines (www.pal.com.ph) via Manila, and with Garuda Indonesia (www.garuda-indonesia.com) via Jakarta. Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific (www.cathaypacific.com) flies directly from six Australian cities and Auckland.

FLYING FOR LESS: TIPS FOR GETTING THE BEST AIRFARE

Passengers sharing the same airplane cabin rarely pay the same fare. Travelers who need to purchase tickets at the last minute, change their itinerary at a moment's notice, or fly one-way, often get stuck paying the premium rate. Here are some ways to keep your airfare costs down.

- Passengers who can book their ticket **long in advance,** who **stay over Saturday night,** or who **fly midweek** or at **less-trafficked hours** will pay less. If your schedule is flexible, say so, and ask if you can secure a cheaper fare by changing your flight plans.
- Fly via an **intermediate country** rather than direct. In Europe, considerable discounts can be obtained just by using even a

neighboring nation's airline and changing planes once. But North Americans can save by changing planes in Tokyo, Seoul, or Taipei, and Europeans save even more by picking eastern European airlines or those of intermediate Asian nations such as Malaysia, India, and Pakistan. Stopovers in one direction are often free or allowable at minimum cost, giving you a chance to see two nations for the price of one ticket.

- Fly with one of **China's carriers,** such as Air China, China Eastern, or China Southern. These undercut the prices of your own country's airlines.
- Fly with a carrier such as Japan Airlines, serving **smaller regional airports.**
- Search the **Internet** for cheap fares (see "Planning Your Trip Online," above).
- **Consolidators,** also known as bucket shops, are the best sources for international tickets. Start by looking in Sunday newspaper travel sections and in "what's on" magazines. Small travel agents in your local Chinatown often have the best deals. ***Beware:*** Bucket shop tickets are usually nonrefundable or rigged with stiff cancellation penalties. Several reliable consolidators are worldwide and available on the Net. **STA Travel** (www.sta.com) offers competitive fares for travelers of all ages, as does **TravelCUTS** of Canada and the U.K. (www.travelcuts.com). **Flight Centre** guarantees to beat the lowest written quote you can get elsewhere, and has offices all over Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, the U.K, and the U.S. (www.flightcentre.com).

BY ROAD

Foreign visitors are not freely permitted to drive their own vehicles into China, unless arrangements are made far in advance with a state-recognized travel agency for a specific itinerary. The agency will provide a guide who will travel in your vehicle and make sure you stick to the itinerary, or who will travel in a second vehicle with a driver. You will have to cover all the (marked-up) costs of guide, driver, and extra vehicle if needed, and of Chinese plates for your vehicle. The agency will book and overcharge you for all your hotels and as many excursions as it can. Forget it.

There are **bus services** between Sost in Pakistan and Kashgar, between Almaty in Kazakhstan and Ürümqi, and between Hong Kong and Macau and various points in the mainland. The Torugart Pass between Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan and Kashgar can be crossed if pre-arranged transport is waiting to collect you on the Chinese side. It's also possible to cross various borders on foot, including from Mongolia on the route from Ulaan Baatar to Běijīng, from Vietnam to Yúnnán and Guǎngxī provinces, from Laos to Yúnnán, and from Macau and Hong Kong to Guǎngdōng Province.

BY TRAIN

From Hung Hom station in Kowloon (Hong Kong), expresses run directly to Guǎngzhōu, Běijīng, and Shànghǎi (see www.kcrc.com for schedules and fares). From Hanoi in Vietnam, there are trains to Kūnmíng in Yúnnán Province, Nánníng in Guǎngxī Province, and on via Guìlín to Běijīng (see www.vr.com.vn/English/banggiotau_lveng.htm for an English timetable). From Almaty in Kazakhstan there are trains to Ürümqi in Xīnjiāng. From Moscow there are trains via Ulaan Baatar in Mongolia to Běijīng, and via a more easterly route directly to Harbin in China's northeast and down to Běijīng. There are also services which start in Ulaan Baatar and run via Dàtóng to Běijīng. There is a service

between Běijīng and Pyongyang in North Korea.

BY SHIP

There are ferry connections from Incheon in South Korea and from Shimonoseki and Kobe (www.celkobe.co.jp) in Japan to Tiānjīn; from Incheon and Shimonoseki (www.orientferry.co.jp) to Qīngdǎo; from Incheon to Wēihǎi; from Incheon to Dàlián; from Osaka and Kobe in Japan to Shànghǎi (www.fune.co.jp/chinjif and www.shanghai-ferry.co.jp); from Incheon and Busan in Korea to Yāntái; and from Hong Kong and Macau to various points around Guǎngzhōu (www.turbocat.com and www.cksp.com.hk) and Fújiàn provinces, notably Xiàmén (www.cruise-ferries.com.hk). For details of service between China and South Korea, see http://english.tour2korea.com/coming/getting/bysea.asp.

11 Packages for the Independent Traveler

Since China reopened to foreign tourism in the early 1980s, all foreign tour operators have been required to use official state-registered travel companies as ground handlers. All arrangements in China were usually put together by one of three companies: China International Travel Service (CITS), China Travel Service (CTS), or China Youth Travel Service (CYTS). Controls are now loosening, foreign tour companies are now allowed some limited activities in China, and the range of possible Chinese partners has increased, but in effect, CITS and the like are the only companies with nationwide networks of offices, and most foreign tour companies still turn to them. They work out the schedule at the highest possible prices and send the costs to the foreign package company, which then adds its own administration charges and profit margins and hands the resulting quote to you. You could get the same price yourself by dealing with CITS (which has many offices overseas) directly. But you can get far better prices by organizing things yourself as you go along so, other than convenience, there's little benefit and a great deal of unnecessary cost to buying a package. Just about any tour operator will offer to tailor an itinerary to your needs, which means it will usually simply pass on the request to one of the state monoliths, and pass the result back to you. The benefit of dealing with the Chinese travel company directly is that you cut out the middleman, but if things go wrong, you will be unlikely to obtain any compensation whatsoever. If you book through a home tour operator, you can expect to obtain refunds and compensation if this becomes appropriate. In general, however, when organized through CITS, rail or air tickets for your next leg are reliably delivered to each hotel as you go. *Never book directly over the Web with a China-based travel service or "private" tour guide.* Many are not licensed to do business with foreigners, have not been licensed as guides, or will hugely overcharge and frequently mislead you (in the most charming way possible), and you will have no come-back at all.

If money is no object, then start with the list of tour companies below, nearly all of whom will arrange individual itineraries; or contact the **CNTO** (addresses on p. 17, earlier in this chapter) to find properly registered Chinese agencies who may help you. The **Hong Kong Tourism Board** and the **Macau Government Tourism Office,** in whose territories the tourism industry is well-regulated, can point you towards reputable operators and talented licensed private guides.

12 Escorted General-Interest Tours

Escorted tours are structured group tours with a group leader. The price usually includes everything from airfare to hotels, meals, tours, admission costs, and local transportation, but usually not domestic or international departure taxes.

Again, due to the distorted nature of the Chinese industry, escorted tours do not usually represent savings, but rather a significant increase in costs over what you can arrange for yourself. Foreign tour companies are for now required to work with state-owned ground handlers, although some do book as much as they can directly, and some work discreetly with private operators they trust. But even as markets become freer, most deals will continue to be made with the official state operators, if only for convenience. Tours are very attractive if you wish to see a large amount of the country very swiftly. Please read the brochures with as much skepticism as you would read a realtor's (one man's "scenic splendor" is another's "heavily polluted"), and read the following notes carefully.

Most tour companies peddle the same list of mainstream "must-sees,"—not all of which can hope to live up to the towering hype—featuring Běijīng, Xī'ān, Shànghǎi, Guìlín, and the Yángzǐ River, with some alternative trips to Tibet, Yúnnán Province, or the Silk Routes.

As with package tours, the arrangements within China itself are almost always managed by a handful of local companies, whose cupidity often induces them to lead both you and your tour company astray. Various costs, which should be included in the tour fee, can appear as extras; itineraries are altered to suit the pocket of the ground handler (local operator); and there are all sorts of shenanigans to separate the hapless tourist from extra cash at every turn, usually at whatever point the tour staff appears to be most helpful. (The driver has bottles of water for sale on the bus each day? You're paying three times the shop price.)

When choosing a tour company for China, you must, of course, consider cost, what's included, the itinerary, the likely age and interests of other tour group members, the physical ability required, and the payment and cancellation policies, as you would for any other destination. But you should also investigate the following:

SHOPPING STOPS These are the bane of any tour in China, designed to line the pockets of tour guides, drivers, and sometimes the ground handling company itself. A stop at the Great Wall may be limited to only an hour so as to allow an hour at a cloisonné factory. In some cases the local government owns the shop in question and makes a regulation requiring all tours to stop there. The better foreign tour operators design their own itineraries and have instituted strict contractual controls to keep these stops to a minimum, but they are often unable to do away with them altogether, and tour guides will introduce extra stops whenever they think they can get away with it. Other companies, particularly those companies that do not specialize in China, just take the package from the Chinese ground handler, put it together with flights, and pass it on uncritically. At shopping stops, you should never ask or accept your tour guide's advice on what is the "right price." You are shopping at the wrong place to start with, where prices will often be 10 to 15 times higher than they should be. Your driver gets a tip, and your guide gets 40% of sales. The "discount" card you are given marks you for yet higher initial prices and tells the seller to

which guide commission is owed. So ask your tour company how many of these stops are included, and simply sit out those you cannot avoid.

TIPPING There is ***no*** tipping in mainland China. If your tour company advises you to bring payments for guides and drivers, some costs which should be included in your total tour cost are being passed on to you through the back door. Ask what the company's tipping policy is and add that sum to the tour price to make true comparisons. Some tour guides make as much as *four hundred times* what an ordinary factory worker or shop assistant makes, mostly from kickbacks from sights, restaurants, and shops, all at your expense, and from misguided tipping. Some tour operators say that if they cut out the shopping stops, they have to find other ways to pad the tour guides' income or there would be no tour guide. Shopping-free trips are nearly always accompanied by a higher price or a higher tip recommendation (which is the same thing). The guides are doing so well now that in some cases, rather than receive a salary from the ground handling company, they have to *pay* for the privilege of fleecing you. The best tour companies know how China works, make what arrangements they find unavoidable, and leave you out of it. Some take the middle path of collecting a small sum from each tour member, putting it into a central kitty, and disbursing as they must, but only for truly exceptional service, and at a proper local scale which short-time visitors from developed nations are incapable of assessing. Foreign tour leaders can be tipped according to the customs of their country of origin, and most companies issue guidelines for this.

GUIDES Another problem with mainland guides is that they rarely know what they are talking about, although they won't miss a beat while answering your questions. What they will have on the tip of their tongue is an impressive array of unverifiable statistics, little stories of dubious authenticity but which will amuse you, and a detailed knowledge of the official history of a place which may bear only the faintest resemblance to the truth. The guides' main concern is to tell foreigners what they want to hear, and to impress them with the greatness of China. So you may be told that the Great Wall can be seen from outer space (silly), that China has 5,000 years of culture (what does this actually mean?), that one million people worked on building the Forbidden City (it was only 100,000 on last year's trip), and that the little old lady you've just met in a village has never seen a foreigner before or heard of the United States (she tells every group the same thing).

Ask your tour company if it will be sending a guide or tour manager from your home country to accompany the trip members all the way through and to supplement local guides. This is worth paying more for, as it ensures a smoother trip all around, and it helps you get more authoritative information. Otherwise, you're better off bringing background reading from home written by independent authorities. Guides in **Hong Kong** and **Macau,** however, are often extremely knowledgeable and both objective and accurate with their histories.

TOUR COMPANIES

Between them, the following tour companies (a tiny selection of what's available) cater to just about all budgets and interests (contact them directly for specific itineraries and pricing). The companies are from the U.S., Canada, the U.K., and Australia, but many have representatives globally, and you can anyway just buy the ground portion and fly in from wherever you like.

Abercrombie and Kent (U.S.): Group size is typically 12 to 18 participants (with a maximum of 24 persons), ranging in age from 35 to 70 (although a "China Family Holiday" can accommodate children ages 8 and older). The company maintains offices in Hong Kong and Běijīng and books many services directly. Tour leaders include Mandarin-speaking Westerners and Chinese, and local specialist guides. There are no compulsory shopping stops, but assistance is given to those who wish to shop on their own in their free time. Tipping is included in prices, with the exception of tips for the main tour escort, who typically receives $10 per person per day. Tours have a historical and cultural focus and are upmarket, using China's very best hotels and direct contact with local artists, archaeologists, and colorful personalities. In the United States: ✆ **800/323-7308;** fax 630/954-3324; www.abercrombiekent.com. In the U.K.: ✆ **08450/700610;** fax 08450/700608; www.abercrombiekent.co.uk. In Australia: ✆ **1300/851-800;** www.abercrombiekent.com.au. In New Zealand: ✆ **0800/441-638;** www.abercrombiekent.com.au.

Academic Travel Abroad (U.S.): Groups are typically of 20 to 30 people, in their 40s to 70s (one Yángzǐ River trip requires 100 participants so that an entire cruise ship can be chartered for a special itinerary). The company works with local non-CITS ground handlers. A subsidiary maintains offices in Běijīng and Harbin. Tour leaders are Mandarin-speaking Americans, with additional specialty study leaders. There is one noncompulsory shopping stop per city (on some tours none at all), and those not interested are taken to their hotel. All tips are included in the tour price. The company has been operating tours to China since 1979, with seven Mandarin speakers in the office and more in China, and operates educational and cultural tours in China for The Smithsonian (educational, cultural) and National Geographic Expeditions (natural history, soft adventure) on fairly mainstream itineraries, but with some surprises. For more information, check the website at www.academictravel.com, but book through individual sponsors. The Smithsonian: ✆ **877/EDU-TOUR;** fax 202/633-9250; http://smithsonianjourneys.org. National Geographic: ✆ **888/966-8687;** fax 202/342-0317; www.nationalgeographic.org/ngexpeditions.

Adventure Center (U.S.): The maximum group size is 18 (typically 12); most participants are between ages 30 and 45. Local ground handlers with an understanding of small-group adventure travel are selected, and some services are contracted directly by regional managers based in China. Both foreign and local tour leaders are used, as well as local guides. The company favors local shopping over organized tourist stops, with only one or two brief stops in a 15-day trip. A 10% tip is recommended in restaurants, and $1 per day for local guides and drivers, with no obligation to tip. The company aims to please those who usually travel independently but want the convenience of a small group tour in China. Itineraries are a little more adventurous than the mainstream, and include walks on stretches of the Great Wall, the Eastern Qīng Tombs, and Chéngdé. ✆ **800/227-8747** (U.S.), 888/456-3522 (Canada). Representatives can also be contacted in Australia and New Zealand. See www.adventurecenter.com.

China Focus (U.S.): Group sizes are between 6 and 50 persons (typically about 30); most participants are over 40 years old. Ground handling service companies are hand-picked in each region. Groups of 10 or more are accompanied by a Chinese national throughout the tour, which will

include four to five shopping stops in 15 days. Tipping is recommended at $4 per day. Itineraries (such as "Tibet and the Best of China") deal mostly with mainstream sights, covering a lot of ground quickly. They're very competitively priced, but you pay in other ways. ✆ **800/868-8660** or 415/788-8660; fax 415/788-8665; www.chinafocustravel.com.

Elderhostel (U.S.): Group size ranges from 33 to 40 participants in their 50s to 80s, with an average age of 72. Tours are developed in cooperation with Chinese educational institutions, and partly based in them. Excursions and activities supplement the educational theme of each course, not shopping. Gratuities are included in program costs. Elderhostel has been operating its educational programs in China since 1986, which include working holidays, and an opportunity to teach English in Xī'ān. ✆ **877/426-8056;** www.elderhostel.org.

Gecko's Adventures (Australia): Group sizes are 6 to 14 participants (typically 10). The tours are aimed at a younger, 20s-to-40s age group. The ground handler is a small local company. Tour leaders are locals with Gecko's training. Shopping tours are avoided (not least because tours use public transport as much as possible), but one in 15 days may be unavoidable. A tipping kitty is organized for local guides, and a tip of $1 per person per day for the tour leader is recommended. Itineraries stick mainly but not entirely to the highlights, but these are more down-to-earth budget tours using smaller guesthouses, local restaurants, and public transport. Branches across Australia: ✆ **03/9662-2700;** fax 03/9662-2422. For representatives worldwide, see www.geckosadventures.com.

Intrepid Travel (Australia): Tour groups are limited to a maximum of 12 people drawn from all over the world; ages range from 17 to 75. These trips are for more adventurous travelers. CITS is used for ticketing, but smaller local operators are used wherever possible. A directly employed tour leader accompanies all groups; some are Chinese nationals. Shopping stops are specifically avoided. Tipping is encouraged but is entirely left to each traveler's discretion. Trips are graded for physical requirements and culture shock, ranging from relaxed holidays to those requiring more strenuous effort. Small local guesthouses are used rather than big hotels. Itineraries are a deft mix of popular destinations and the less visited. There's also an interesting route from Hong Kong to Hanoi, and a gourmet tour. ✆ **613/9478-2626,** 877/448-1616 in the U.S.; fax 613/9419-4426; www.intrepidtravel.com.

Laurus Travel (Canada): Group sizes range from 10 to 20 people (typically 16); ages range from 50 to 70. Ground handlers are personally known to the owner (who used to be a CITS guide) and hand-picked from smaller operations. The company is setting up its own representative office in China, and directly books its own hotels. Tour guides are also hand-picked (because the owner understands that "their priorities are misplaced"). A tour leader accompanies the tour from Canadian departure or from arrival in China. Shopping stops are limited to three per trip. Around $3 per person per day is collected for local guides and drivers, but guests may ask for refunds if they feel service has been under par. Three dollars per day is recommended for the tour leader. Laurus is a China-only specialist, but itineraries are mainstream. ✆ **604/438-7718;** fax 604/438-7715; www.laurustravel.com.

Pacific Delight (U.S.): Four grades of tours offer group sizes of up to 16, up to 25, and up to 32 people. On longer tours, the age is 45+, but shorter tours have a broader range of

ages, and there are special tours for families with children. Ground handling is by CITS but is closely monitored—the company has its own office in Běijīng. Top-range tours are accompanied by a bilingual tour manager from the West Coast onwards; some other tours are locally hosted. There are typically four shopping stops in 15 days, one per city. Recommended tipping is $6 to $9 per person per day, plus $4 to $7 for the American tour director. Pacific Delight was the first U.S. company to offer tours after the normalization of relations. It offers a large variety of mainstream trips, with endless permutations for different time scales and budgets, but with a heavy Yángzǐ River content, including one of the longest river trips. ✆ **800/221-7179;** www.pacificdelighttours.com.

Peregrine Adventures (Australia): Group sizes range from 4 to 15 people (typically 10–12). The company designs its own programs and uses closely monitored major ground handlers to book them. Tour leaders are locals, selected and trained by the company. Shopping stops are kept to a minimum: typically two in 15 days. A tipping kitty is recommended, running to no more than $1 to $2 per participant per day in total, which is disbursed by the tour leader to local guides, drivers, and consultants. Trips include visits to private houses and smaller restaurants frequented by locals, and can include walks and bike rides. But good-quality, centrally located accommodations are used. This is the slightly more upmarket version of Gecko's. ✆ **03/9663-8611;** 800/227-8747 in the U.S.; fax 03/9663-8618; www.peregrineadventures.com.

R. Crusoe & Son (U.S.): Tour groups never have more than 24 participants (typically 18). The company uses a local Hong Kong operator with incentive travel experience and the CITS head office in order to get special access. Groups are accompanied by a Hong Kong Chinese or occasionally by a hand-picked Chinese national, joined by local guides at each stop. Time is left at museums, for instance, for optional browsing in their shops, but factory shopping stops are kept to a minimum and are limited to 45 minutes. A sample 19-day tour includes only two shopping trips, and one optional evening shopping trip. Tours include extras such as a visit to an area of the Forbidden City which is usually closed to the public, a cooking demonstration dinner in Shànghǎi, and a view of Xī'ān's Terracotta Warriors at eye level, rather than just from the viewing gallery. ✆ **888/490-8045;** www.rcrusoe.com.

Ritz Tours (U.S.): Groups range in size from 10 to 40 people, and ages range widely; parents often bring children. Ritz's own Shànghǎi office organizes the selection of local ground handlers—a mixture of large and small companies, with a preference for those providing good English- speaking guides. Tour leaders are Chinese nationals. Shopping stops are limited to one in each city. Tipping consists of $2 per day for the guide accompanying the group throughout the tour, $1 per day for local guides, and $1 per day for the driver. Ritz is the number-one U.S. tour operator to China in terms of volume, and took over 20,000 visitors in 2002. It maintains offices in Shànghǎi and Hong Kong. Itineraries are mainstream, with a concentration on the Yángzǐ River. ✆ **800/900-2446;** www.ritztours.com.

Steppes East (U.K.): Group size is usually no more than 16 persons, and participants are ages 45 to 80. Ground handlers are hand-picked operations with decent pan-China networks. Tour groups are accompanied from the U.K. by a British tour leader. There are no shopping stops, but leaders are happy to advise those who want

to use free time to shop. The company regards tipping as now unavoidable, and simply gives guests a guideline, with an emphasis on not over-tipping. Tours are organized to very high standards, and most business is from referrals by previous satisfied clients. The company is strong on the Silk Routes and Tibet, and its itineraries are merely suggestions that it will happily adapt to produce exactly the trip you want. ✆ **01285/651010;** fax 01285/8858888; www.steppeseast.co.uk.

13 Special-Interest Trips

Audubon Nature Odysseys (U.S.): The Audubon Society has just started to experiment with **bird-watching tours** in China, and works through a specialist U.S. company with a Sino-American operator based in Kūnmíng. The tour leader is a bird specialist from overseas, the tour is joined by local birding experts, and the local operator provides a bilingual guide. The only shopping stop is at Stanley Market in Hong Kong. Tips are included in the program cost. The itinerary is a clever combination of mainstream sightseeing and visits to out-of-the-way bird-watching areas from mountainous Yúnnán Province to coastal migratory areas in Héběi. ✆ **800/967-7425;** www.audubon.org.

See MacKinnon and Phillipps' *A Field Guide to the Birds of China* (Oxford) for a sample of what you might see. Bird-watchers visiting **Hong Kong** should see the Hong Kong Bird-Watching Society site at **www.hkbws.org.hk**, and First Step Nature Tours at **www.firststepnt.com**.

Bike China Adventures (U.S., based in China): **Cycling** group sizes range from one to eight participants, who have ranged in age from 18 to 86. The company is based in Chéngdū and organizes its own ground handling, sometimes using local owner-operator transportation. Tours are accompanied by a bilingual local or foreign guide. Shopping stops only occur if especially requested, and there is no tipping. Tours operate both around the company's Sìchuān base, in neighboring provinces, and as far away as Héběi, always using local guesthouses and restaurants so there's no camping or cooking. There are trips for beginners as well as for the obsessed cyclist. www.bikechina.com.

Mongol Global Tour Co. (U.S.): Offers specialized tours for **artists, golfers, choirs,** and more, as well as tours with subjects such as **traditional costume** or **photography,** so groups vary widely in size and age range. The company's own representative in China books services. A local guide accompanies tours of 10 or more people, and a specialist foreign guide accompanies the specialized tours. Obligatory shopping stops are limited and are not allowed to interfere with time at main tour sites. The company alerts clients to those occasions when tipping is not necessary in China, but recommends a range of tips per day for guides and drivers depending on how well they did. ✆ **714/220-2579;** www.mongolglobaltours.com.

Myths and Mountains (U.S.): Tours focus on **cultures, crafts, religious and pilgrimage sites, natural healing** and **traditional medicines,** and the **environment** and how people interact with it. Group sizes are of no more than 15 participants. Ground handling is by hand-picked local operators with an interest in a tour's theme. Tour leaders are local hand-picked specialists, often from ethnic minority groups. There are no shopping stops unless specifically requested, but for small groups the recommended tip is $10 per day for the guide, and $5 to $7 per day for the driver. The company is particularly

strong on Yúnnán and Tibet. ✆ **800/670-6894** or 775/832-5454; fax 775/832-4454; www.mythsandmountains.com.

Trains Unlimited, Tours (U.S.): Group sizes vary, and ages range from 25 to 85. CITS is the ground handler, particularly the Jílín branch which is practically run by **Railfans.** Tours are escorted from the U.S. by an American expert guide and joined by two Chinese guides who speak both Mandarin and local dialects. A little general sightseeing is squeezed between steam locomotive–related activities, along with about 10 shopping stops, in a 15-day tour. The company advises against tipping directly. Steam will probably die out in China in 2006, and the last steam-worked main line before that. Much tour time is spent in steelyards, at mines, and at workshops, in admiration of these doomed engines. ✆ **800/359-4870** (U.S.); ✆ **800/752-1836** (Canada) and fax 530/836-1748; ✆ **0161/928-9410** (U.K.) and fax 0161/941-6101; www.trainsunltdtours.com.

14 Getting Around

The first thing to do upon arrival at any Chinese destination is to buy a **map** for ¥5 (65¢) or less. Even though few of these are bilingual, and most are inaccurate, they're essential for navigation. Your hotel staff can mark on them where you want to go, and you can show the characters to the taxi driver or bus conductor. Although building numbers are given in this book, they're useless for directions. Everyone navigates by street names and landmarks.

BY PLANE

In 2003 the announcement by the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) that it would allow the permitted maximum discount on airline tickets to reach 40% was greeted with derision by Chinese travelers, who had been obtaining such discounts, and greater, for some time.

Booking domestic flights before you arrive in China is expensive and unnecessary. The only Chinese airlines offering flights on internationally accessible ticketing systems are those who also have international routes: principally China Southern, China Eastern, and Air China. The only way to book domestic tickets before you leave home is through CITS offices (other agencies will go to CITS, too), or through online websites. In either case, you'll usually be asked to pay full fare (or more), which might be, for example, ¥1,200 ($150) one-way plus perhaps a booking fee on the Běijīng-to-Shànghǎi route. Yet you could pay ¥800 ($100) or less with no booking fee by buying over the counter from an agent in China, depending on seasonal demand. Some ticketing websites even have full fares on their English pages and discounted fares on their Chinese-language ones. So avoid them.

Much flying in China is on a walk-in basis, especially on the most popular routes. It makes sense to book a few days ahead to get the best price, but for most of the time, on most routes, there is an oversupply of seats.

While you can buy tickets between any two destinations served by Air China at any Air China office, you'll usually get a much better price from agents in the town from which you plan to depart. Prices are always better from agents than from the airline, even if they are next door to each other, and you can and should bargain for a lower price, and shop around. No agent with an online terminal connected to the Chinese domestic aviation system charges a booking fee. Agents sitting in four-star and five-star hotels will not offer you the discounts they could, however. You need to look

out in the street away from your hotel. You usually *cannot* get a refund on an unused ticket from anywhere except the agent where you bought it.

BY TRAIN

Take the frequencies and timings given in this book as general guidelines, but expect any changes to be for the better.

Though in backwater areas, slow trains can be primitive, intercity trains are universally air-conditioned and mostly kept very clean. Nor is the system in general backward, with a computerized signaling system and a good safety record. There are 200-kmph (125mph) trains between Shēnzhèn and Guǎngzhōu, 300kmph (188mph) trains and tilting trains using British technology under trial; the world's highest line is under construction to Lhasa; and the world's first commercial maglev (magnetic levitation) line runs from Shànghǎi to the Pǔdōng airport.

SEAT CLASSES Given China's size, most intercity services are overnight (or sometimes over 2 nights), so sleeper accommodation is the most common. The best choice is **soft sleeper** *(ruǎn wò),* consisting of four beds in a lockable compartment, the two upper berths slightly cheaper than the lower ones. Berths have individual reading lights and there's a volume control for the P.A. system. **Hard sleeper** *(yìng wò)* has couchettes, separated into groups of six by partitions, but open to the corridor. Berths are provided in columns of three and are cheaper as they get further from the floor. Lights go off at about 10pm and on again at 6am. Thermoses of boiled water are in each compartment and group of berths, refilled either by the attendants or by yourself from a boiler at the end of each car. Compartments often have cups, but it's best to take your own. Bed linens are provided in both classes. More modern trains have a mixture of Western and Chinese squat toilets. Washing facilities are limited, and except on the highest quality trains, there's cold water only (and this may sometimes run out). On the very best trains there's hot water, free toothbrush and toothpaste hotel-style, and even electric hand dryers and shaver sockets. But this is rare. A tiny handful of trains have deluxe soft sleeper *(gāojí ruǎn wò),* with two berths in a compartment (Kowloon–Shànghǎi and Kowloon–Běijīng, for instance), and in the case of some trains on the Běijīng-to-Shànghǎi run, these compartments have private bathrooms.

Almost all trains also have a **hard seat** class *(yìng zuò),* which on many major routes is now far from hard, although sometimes still bench-like and not the way to spend the night. **Soft seat** *(ruǎn zuò)* appears on daytime expresses only, is less crowded, and is now often in two-deck form, giving excellent views.

REFRESHMENTS Attendants push trolleys with soft drinks, beer, mineral water, instant-noodle packages, and occasional instant coffee through all classes at regular intervals. Separate trolleys bring through *kuài cān* (fast food) in cardboard boxes. This is usually dreadful, and costs ¥15 ($1.90). Licensed carts on platforms often sell freshly cooked local dishes which are slightly better, and they also offer fresh fruit in season. All overnight trains have dining cars, but the food is usually overpriced and very poor in quality. It's best to bring a supply of what pleases you, bought in convenience stores, supermarkets, and bakeries.

TYPES OF TRAIN Where possible, choose a train with a T prefix. These ***tèkuài*** (especially fast) trains are the expresses, and come with the highest levels of accommodation and service. Staff may be uniformed and

coiffed like flight attendants, willing and helpful. K trains (***kuàisù***—"quick speed") are more common, and nearly as good. Occasionally Y trains (***lǚyóu,*** services for tourists) and L trains (***línshí,*** temporary additional services, particularly at Spring Festival), can be found. The remaining services with no letter prefixes vary widely in quality across the country, from accommodation as good as that on K trains but at slower speeds, to doddering rolling stock on winding, out-of-the-way lines and with cockroaches and mice for company (no extra charge).

TIMETABLE A national railway timetable can be found on sale at stations in larger cities, updated twice a year, and some regional bureaus produce their own, or smaller summaries of the most important trains. All are in Chinese only, and most are so poorly organized that they are initially incomprehensible even to most Chinese. Rail enthusiast Duncan Peattie produces an annual **English translation** of the October edition of the national timetable. Originally aimed at rail fans, it doesn't include every single train or every station of interest to the ordinary visitor, but it covers all major services and reorders them into an easy-to-follow format. At $15 for the PDF format (more a for comb-bound version), it costs 15 times the Chinese version, but it will be more than 15 times as helpful to many travelers, especially those sketching out a route for yourselves before leaving home. Write **chinatt@eudoramail.com** for more information.

Timetables for a particular station are posted in its ticket office, and can be read by comparing the characters for a destination given in this book with what's on the wall.

TICKETS Rail ticket prices are fixed by a complicated formula involving a tiny sum per kilometer, and supplements for air-conditioning, speed, and higher classes of berth (soft sleepers are typically 50% more expensive than hard sleepers). Prices, samples of which are given throughout this book, are not open to negotiation. Round-trip tickets are available only between a handful of destinations.

Ticket offices always have a separate entrance from the main railway station entrance. In a few larger cities, there are separate offices for VIPs and foreign guests, or just for booking sleepers. Payment is only in cash. In most cases bookings can be made only 4 days in advance, including the day of travel. But increasingly in larger cities, this is expanding to as many as 12 days, and the same or longer for advance telephone bookings (in Mandarin only, like almost every other telephone service in China).

Most seats on an individual train are sold at its point of departure, with only limited allocations kept for intermediate stops depending on their size and importance. Your best choice of train is always one that is setting off from where you are. If you can only obtain a hard sleeper ticket but want soft sleeper, you can attempt to upgrade on the train. There is a desk for this purpose in the middle of the train, usually around car nos. 10 to 12.

The simplest way to book tickets is via a travel agent. The few with terminals accessing the railway system charge ¥5 (65¢) commission. Most others charge around ¥20 ($2.50), which should include delivery to your hotel. Agents within hotels often try to charge more. It's best to give agents a choice of trains and berth. You pay up front, but the exact ticket price, printed clearly on the ticket, will depend on the train and berth obtained.

With the exception of public holidays, tickets are now rarely difficult to obtain. Ticket prices are hiked on some routes during Spring Festival.

Advance booking from overseas is possible through CITS and some other agents at large markups, and so are not advised. Contact your local China National Tourist Office to find agents (see "Visitor Information," earlier in this chapter) if you must. In **Hong Kong,** China Travel Service sells tickets for the expresses from Kowloon to Guǎngzhōu, Běijīng, and Shànghǎi with no commission, and tickets for a selection of trains between other Chinese cities for a reasonable markup. Never use online agents, either Hong Kong- or mainland-based, as they charge up to *70% more* than they should.

You'll need your ticket to get to the platform, which will only open a few minutes before or after the train's arrival (if you buy a soft sleeper ticket, you can use the VIP *guì bīn* waiting room and board first). On the train, the attendant will swap your ticket for a token with your berth number. Shortly before arrival, she will return to re-exchange it (you never miss your stop in China). Keep the ticket ready, as it will be checked again as you leave the station.

BY BUS

China's highway system, nonexistent 20 years ago, is growing rapidly, and journey times by road between many cities have been dramatically cut to the point where on a few routes, buses are now faster than trains. Although most buses are fairly battered, in some areas they offer a remarkable level of luxury—particularly on the east coast, where there are the funds to pay for a higher quality of travel. Some buses even have on-board toilets and free bottled water.

Many bus stations now offer a variety of services. At the top end are *kōngtiáo* (air-conditioned) *gāosù* (high-speed, usually meaning that toll expressways are used) *háohuá* (luxury) buses, on which smoking is usually forbidden and that rule is largely enforced. These tickets are usually easy to obtain at the bus station, and prices are clearly displayed and written on the ticket. There are no extra charges for baggage, which in smaller and older buses is typically piled up on the cover over the engine next to the driver. It's worth booking a day ahead to get a seat at the front, which may have more legroom and better views.

Buses usually depart punctually, pause at a checking station where the number of passengers is compared with the number of tickets sold in advance, then dither while empty seats are filled with groups waiting at the roadside who bargain for a lower fare.

Sleeper buses, although cheaper, should generally be avoided when an overnight train is an alternative. Usually they have three rows of two-tier berths, which are extremely narrow and do not recline fully.

Transport can vary widely in quality in rural and remoter areas, but it is usually dirty and decrepit, and may be shared with livestock.

BY CAR (TAXI)

While foreign residents of China go through the necessary paperwork, with the exception of one hire operation at Běijīng's Capital Airport, self-drive for foreign visitors is not possible, and without previous experience, the no-holds-barred driving style of China is nothing you want to tackle. Renting a vehicle is nevertheless commonplace, but it comes with a driver. **Hong Kong** and **Macau** are so small that there's simply no point in hiring a car and facing navigational and parking difficulties, when there are plentiful, well-regulated taxis available.

All larger mainland hotels have transport departments, but book a vehicle from a five-star Běijīng hotel to take you to the Eastern Qīng Tombs, for instance, and you may be asked for ¥1,200 ($150). Walk outside

Ten Rules for Taking Taxis Around Town

1. ***Never*** go with a driver who approaches you at an airport. Leave the building and head for the rank. As they are everywhere else in the world, airport taxis are the most likely to cause trouble, but drivers who approach you are usually *hēi chē*—illegal and meterless "black cabs."

2. Cabs waiting for business outside major tourist sights, especially those with drivers who call out to foreigners, should generally be avoided, as should cabs whose drivers ask you where you want to go even before you get in. Always flag down a passing cab, and 9 times in 10 the precautions listed here will be unnecessary.

3. If you're staying in an upmarket hotel, do not go with taxis called by the doorman or waiting in line outside. Even at some famous hotels, drivers pay kickbacks to the doormen to allow them to join the line on the forecourt. Some cabs are merely waiting because many guests, Chinese and foreign alike, will be out-of-town people who can be easily misled. Instead, just walk out of the hotel and flag down a passing cab for yourself. Take the hotel's business card to show to a taxi driver when you want to get back.

4. Better hotels give you a piece of paper with the taxi registration number on it as you board or alight, so that you can complain if something goes wrong. Often you won't know if it has, of course, and there's no guarantee that anything will happen if you complain to the hotel.

5. Look to see if the supervision card, usually with a photo of the driver and a telephone number, is prominently displayed. If it isn't, you may have problems. Choose another cab.

6. Can you clearly see the meter? If it's recessed behind the gear stick, partly hidden by the artfully folded face cloth on top, choose another cab.

7. Always make sure you see the meter reset. If you didn't actually see the flag pushed down, which shouldn't happen until you actually move off, then you may end up paying for the time the cab was in the rank.

8. If you are by yourself, sit in the front seat. Have a map with you and look as if you know where you are going (even if you don't).

9. Rates per kilometer are usually clearly posted on the side of the cab. They vary widely from place to place, as well as by vehicle type. Flagfall, not usually more than ¥10 ($1.25), includes a few kilometers; then the standard kilometer rate begins. But in most towns, after a few more kilometers, the rate jumps by 50% if the driver has pushed a button on the front of the meter. This is for one-way trips out of town, and the button usually should not be pushed, but it always is. As a result, it's rarely worthwhile to have a cab wait for you and take you back.

10. Pay what's on the meter, and don't tip—the driver will insist on giving change. Always ask for a receipt. Should you leave something in a cab, there's a remarkably high success rate at getting even valuable items back if the number on the receipt is called, and the details on it provided.

and flag down a taxi (not those waiting outside), and you can achieve the same thing by taxi for around ¥300 ($37). Branches of CITS and other travel agencies will also be happy to arrange cars for you, but at a hugely marked-up price.

Despite the language barrier, bargaining with taxi drivers is more straightforward than you might expect. In most areas there are far more taxis than there is business, and half-day and day-long hires are very welcome. To take Běijīng as an example, about 67,500 taxis are cruising around empty for much of the time, the drivers typically taking in around ¥300 ($37) for a 12-hour day (the drivers of cheaper taxis earn more, not less); most are glad to have a change and a day's guaranteed employment. Start flagging down cabs the day before you want to travel, and negotiate an all-in price, using characters from this book (for your destination), those written down for you by your hotel receptionist (times, pick-up point, and other details), and a pen and paper (or calculator) to bargain prices. Avoid giving an exact kilometer distance, since if you overrun it (and with China's poor road signage and the drivers' lack of experience outside their own town centers, you're bound to get lost at least once), there will be attempts to renegotiate. For the same reason, it's best to avoid being precise to the minute about a return time, but note that especially in big cities drivers sometimes have to be back in time to hand the car to the man who will drive it through the night. Be prepared to pay road tolls, and ensure that the driver gets lunch. If you find a driver who is pleasant and helpful, take his mobile phone number and employ him on subsequent days and for any airport trip.

15 Tips on Accommodations

CHOOSING A HOTEL IN CHINA

China is not a resort or honeymoon destination, at least not for the average romantic. Mainland China has no hotels so special that they are worth flying all that way to sample (although Hong Kong and Macau do).

There are two types of hotel in mainland China: the **Sino-foreign joint-venture** hotels with familiar brand-names, and **Chinese-owned and -managed** hotels. At the government-issued four- and five-star Chinese properties, they want you to think that they are at the same level as the joint-ventures; at lower levels, the accommodations can range from indescribably battered and grubby, to friendly and comfortable.

Your **first choice** at the four- or five-star level should be a familiar brand-name or a property from one of the Asian luxury chains. In most cases the buildings are Chinese-owned, and the foreign part of the venture is the management company, which provides senior management and trains the staff, ensures conformity with their standards (never entirely possible), does worldwide marketing, and generally provides up to 90% of what you'd expect from the same brand at home. There are Grand Hyatts in Běijīng and Shànghǎi, and a Park Hyatt on the way. The Starwood group's St. Regis, Sheraton, and Westin brands are here, as well as Six Continents' Crowne Plaza and Holiday Inn; so are Hilton, Marriott, Ramada, Best Western, and more, although all are concentrated in China's largest cities. The Hong Kong Shangri-La group's hotels are among China's best, and they are notably successful in extracting the best from local staff. The Marco Polo and Harbour Plaza luxury brands are also in China (the Běijīng Marco Polo in particular should not be overlooked). The

Palace Hotel in Běijīng is managed by the same company that manages the legendary Peninsula Hotel in Hong Kong (also Bangkok, New York, and other cities).

Your **second choice** should be a wholly Chinese hotel with foreigners in senior management, whose main purpose is simply to be there and make sure that things actually happen. But in this type of hotel and in the joint-venture, the general manager may be ignorant as to what's actually going on: Perhaps the transport department uses hotel vehicles for private hires to make money on the side; the human resources manager rejects applicants whose experience may be threatening and make a good income from bribes to ensure that the housekeeper's nephew gets a job in security; the front office manager institutes a system of fines, and pockets them himself; or the doormen charge taxis to be allowed to wait in the rank.

Entirely **Chinese-owned and -operated** hotels at government-issued four- and five-star levels usually have one thing in common with their counterparts—they charge the same (or, at least, attempt to), but you certainly won't get value for your money. At four-star level and below, the best choice is almost always the newest—teething troubles aside, most things will work, staff will be eager to please (if not quite sure how), rooms will be spotless, and rates will be easily bargained down, since few hotels spend any money on advertising their existence. The aim is to find sweetly inept but willing service rather than the sour leftovers of the *tiěfànwǎn* (iron rice bowl) era of guaranteed employment, for whom everything is too much effort.

A drawback for all hoteliers is that the government requires them to employ far more people than they need, and it's nearly impossible to obtain staff with any experience in hotel work. The joint-venture hotels are the training institutions for the rest of the Chinese hotel industry, which steals their local staff as soon as possible. Lower-level hotels are run on half-understood rules, with which there's half-compliance, half the time. You may stay in a three-star which has perhaps a dozen foreign guests a year, but whenever they knock on a door, housekeeping staff may announce themselves in English ("Housekeeping!") although that's the only English word they know, and 99% of their guests won't know even that. But it's written down in a manual somewhere. A hotel may have designated non-smoking rooms, but that doesn't mean they don't have ashtrays.

Until recently throughout China, only hotels with **special licenses** were allowed to take foreign guests. This requirement has already vanished in Yúnnán and Běijīng, and may eventually disappear elsewhere. In theory, all hotels with such licenses have at least one English speaker, usually of modest ability, shouted for by nervous, giggling staff as soon as you walk in.

The Chinese **star-rating system** is meaningless. Five-star ratings are awarded from Běijīng authorities, but four-star and lower depend upon provincial concerns. In some areas a four-star hotel must have a pool, in others a bowling alley, and in others a tennis court. The Jacuzzi may have more rings than a sequoia, the bowling alley be permanently out of order, and the tennis court be used for barbecues (because although it's a required feature, China simply doesn't have enough tennis players), but the hotel will retain its four stars, as long as it banquets the inspectors adequately. In general, Chinese hotels receive almost no maintenance once they open. There are "five-star" hotels in Běijīng which have gone a decade without proper redecoration or refurbishment. Foreign managements force the issue with building owners, but it's

rare elsewhere that standards are maintained. A new three-star will usually be better than an old four-star.

Outside of joint-venture hotels, don't rely on the **extras,** many of which we do not even list, and even if we do, it's no guarantee that you'll find them fit to use. Salons, massage rooms, nightclubs, and karaoke rooms are often merely bases for other kinds of illegal entertainment (for men). Fitness equipment may be broken and inadequately supervised, and pool hygiene poor, so proceed with care.

You may receive unexpected **phone calls.** If you are female, the phone may be put down without anything being said, as it may be if you are male and answer in English. But if the caller persists and is female, and you hear the word *ànmō* (massage), then what is being offered probably needs no further explanation, but a massage is only the beginning. Unplug the phone when you go to sleep.

Almost all rooms in China, however basic, have the following: a telephone whose line can usually be unplugged for use in a laptop; air-conditioning, which is either central with a wall-mounted control, or individual to the room with a remote control, and which may double as a heater; a television, usually with no English channels except CCTV 9 (to which no buttons may be tuned) and possibly an in-house movie channel using pirated DVDs or VCDs; and a thermos of boiled water or a kettle to boil your own, usually with cups (which you should wash before using) and free bags of green tea. In a cupboard somewhere there will be a quilt. Between the beds (most rooms still have twin beds) will be an array of switches, which may or may not actually control what they say they control. In the bathroom there are free soap and shampoo, and in better hotels a shower cap, toothbrush/toothpaste package (but bring your own).

Ordinary Chinese hotels usually speak of a *biāozhǔn jiān,* or **standard room,** which usually means a room with twin beds, occasionally with a double bed, and with a private bathroom. Often double beds have only recently been installed in a few rooms, which are now referred to as *dān rén jiān* or single rooms. Nevertheless, two people can stay there, but the price is lower than that of a twin room. In older hotels, genuine single rooms are available, and in many hotels below four-star level there are triple rooms and quads, which can also serve as dorms shared with strangers.

Foreign **credit cards** are increasingly accepted in three-star hotels upwards, but never rely on this. Most hotels accepting foreigners have foreign exchange facilities on the premises, although some may send you elsewhere to exchange checks. Almost all require **payment in advance,** plus a deposit *(yājīn),* which is refundable when you leave. Keep all receipts you are given, as you may need to show one to floor staff to get your key, and you may in fact need to hand the key back and retrieve the receipt again before you can leave. To get your deposit back, you'll need to hand over the receipt for that when you check out, and since staff occasionally forget to enter payments in computer or ledger, you may need receipts to prevent yourself from being charged twice.

To **check in,** you'll need your passport and you'll have to complete a registration form (which will usually be in English). Always inspect the room before checking in. You'll be asked how many nights you want to stay, and you should always say just 1, because if you say 4, you'll be asked for the 4 nights' fee in advance (plus a deposit), and because it may turn out that the hot water isn't hot enough, the karaoke rooms are over your head,

or a building site behind the hotel starts work at 8am sharp. Once you've tried 1 night, you can pay for more.

When you **check out,** the floor staff will be called to make sure you haven't stolen anything; this may not happen speedily, so allow a little extra time.

Children 12 and under stay for free in their parent's room. Hotels will add an extra bed to your room for a small charge, which you can negotiate.

SAVING ON YOUR HOTEL ROOM

The **rack rate** is the maximum rate that a hotel charges for a room. In China these rates are nothing more than the first bid in a bargaining discussion, designed to keep the final price you will actually pay as high as possible. You'll almost never pay more than 90%, usually not more than 70%, frequently not more than 50%, and sometimes as little as 30% of this first asking price. Guidelines on discounts are given for each city. Here are some tips to lower the cost of your room:

- **Do not book ahead.** Just show up and bargain. In China this applies as much to the top-class joint-venture names as to all the others. The best price is available over the counter, as long as there's room. For most of the year, across China, there are far more rooms than customers at every level. For ordinary Chinese hotels you may well pay double by booking ahead, and there's no guarantee your reservation will be honored if the hotel fills up or if someone else arrives before you, cash in hand. E-mail is almost never replied to, and faxes get ignored. Most Chinese just show up and bargain.
- **Book online.** If you want to be absolutely certain of a particular joint-venture hotel at a busy period, look at its website for rates. Major hotel chains operating in China often have their best *published* rate on their own websites. However, these rates fluctuate constantly according to demand, and are sometimes directly linked to computerized inventory which alters prices at frequent intervals, sometimes hourly. Prices for any time of year booked a long way ahead will always look uninviting. They'll be much cheaper nearer the time, unless some major event is taking place. Ordinary hotels, if they have a website at all, will just quote rack rates.
- **Dial any central booking number.** Contrary to popular wisdom, as the better hotels manage their rates with increasing care, the central booking number is likely to have a rate as good as or better than the rate you can get by calling the hotel directly, and the call is usually toll-free.
- **Avoid Chinese online agencies.** Avoid booking through Chinese hotel agencies and websites specializing in Chinese hotels. The discounts they offer are precisely what you can get for yourself, and you can in fact beat them because you won't be paying their markup. Many of these have no allocations at all, and simply jump on the phone to book a room as soon as they hear from you.

IN HONG KONG & MACAU

Hong Kong in particular is well stocked with hotels that regularly make their way onto lists of the world's best. Service is second to none, and they are worth flying halfway around the world to stay in. None of what's said about mainland hotels above applies.

16 Tips on Dining

See "Appendix B: The Chinese Menu," for hints on dining, and a city-by-city list of recommended dishes, complete with the characters to help you order them.

17 Suggested Itineraries

Mainstream tour companies almost all tackle Běijīng, Xī'ān, Shànghǎi, Guìlín, and the overrated Yángzǐ (Yangtze) River cruise. Here are a few alternatives, most of which are not too far off the main routes, that you can do on your own.

ANCIENT TOWNS & TEMPLES TOUR

For complete details, see chapter 5

Focus: Touring Píngyáo and the ancient temples, pagodas, and mansions concentrated in the area between Dàtóng and Píngyáo

Length: 10 to 14 days

Highlights: Yúngǎng Buddhist Grottoes, the cliff-side Hanging Temple; some of China's earliest surviving wooden buildings—the Yīng Xiàn Wooden Pagoda, and the Nánchán and Fóguāng Temples outside Wǔtái Shān; the ancient Jìn Cí temple outside Tàiyuán; the sprawling Qiáo Family and Wáng Family Courtyard Mansions outside the walled city of Píngyáo

Route & major stops: Start in Dàtóng (1–2 days). Head south, stopping in Yīng Xiàn (1 day), Wǔtái Shān (2–4 days), Tàiyuán (1–2 days), and Píngyáo (4–5 days).

LOST BUDDHIST CIVILIZATIONS TOUR

For complete details, see chapter 6

Focus: Touring the abandoned Buddhist grottoes of the Silk Routes

Length: 14 days

Highlights: The scenic haystack mountain and diverse statuary of Màijī Shān Shíkū; the peerless Mògāo Shíkū cave-temple complex outside Dūnhuáng; the abandoned kingdoms of Gāochāng and Jiāohé outside the relaxed, grape-trellised oasis town of Turpan; the dramatic but seldom-visited Kizil Thousand Buddha Caves, near the Uighur oasis settlement of Kuqa

Route & major stops: Spend days 1 and 2 exploring Xī'ān; on day 3 travel to Tiānshuǐ; on day 4 explore Màijī Shān Shíkū, then take an evening train to Dūnhuáng; on day 6 arrive at Dūnhuáng; on day 7 explore the Mògāo caves; on day 8 take an evening train to Turpan; on day 9, after an early-morning arrival in Turpan, explore Gāochāng, with an optional side trip to the Uighur town of Tuyoq; on day 10 explore nearby Jiāohé, then take an afternoon train to Kuqa; on day 11, after arriving in Kuqa early in the morning, explore the markets and mosques of old town; on day 12 visit Kizil Thousand Buddha Caves; on day 13 take a very early train to Kashgar; on day 14 explore Kashgar old town (if possible, arrive on Sun for the bazaar).

SACRED MOUNTAINS OF SÌCHUĀN TOUR

For complete details, see chapter 12

Focus: Climbing the most famous religious mountains of Sìchuān

Length: 6 days

Highlights: Climbing through the cloud sea at Éméi Shān, the 71m (233-ft.) Great Buddha at Lè Shān, the solitary climb to 16 monasteries at Qīngchéng Shān

Route & major stops: From Chéngdū, take a bus to Éméi Shān (stay 3 days), then to Lè Shān (1 day), and on to Qīngchéng Shān (2 days), stopping for a break in Chéngdū, if desired.

SHANGHAI–BĚIJĪNG CORRIDOR

For complete details, see chapter 7

Focus: Roughly follow the route of the Grand Canal from Shànghǎi/Hángzhōu to Běijīng, taking in Confucius's birthplace and two of China's most famous mountains along the way. Tour can be reversed.

Length: 7 to 14 days depending on number of detours or optional side trips

Highlights: Optional detour to Huáng Shān; Nánjīng's tombs; optional side trip to Yángzhōu (delightful town, gardens, tombs); Qūfù (Confucius temple, tomb, mansion); Tài Shān, most sacred of Daoist mountains; optional buried horse chariots in Zībó, and German town and beaches in Qīngdǎo

Route: Start from Shànghǎi (or Hángzhōu or Sūzhōu), take a detour south to Huáng Shān and Túnxī (3 days); take a train to Nánjīng, or bypass Huáng Shān and go directly to Nánjīng (2 days with option of day trip to Yángzhōu); take a train to Qūfù (1–2 days); take a bus to Tài'ān/Tài Shān (1 day for those who take the cable car; 2 if you want to stay over on the mountain); take the train straight to Běijīng or bus/train to Jī'nán, and make day trips to Zībó (1 day) or Wéifāng (1 day); from Jī'nán, make a possible detour to Qīngdǎo (2–3 days). Fly or take a train from Qīngdǎo to Běijīng.

SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST

For complete details, see chapter 11

Focus: Journey from Hong Kong to Kūnmíng overland via China's most beautiful karst mountain scenery and many colorful minority villages

Length: At least 14 days

Highlights: Guìlín karst peaks and caves, Lí River, Yángshuò (more karst scenery and pretty town), optional detour to minority villages of Lóngshèng (with rice terraces) and Sānjiāng; Kūnmíng's Stone Forest; the old towns of Dàlǐ and Lìjiāng

Route & major stops: Take a Hong Kong bus to Guìlín/Yángshuò (3 days); take a bus to Lóngshèng, Sānjiāng, and on to Zhàoxīng in Guìzhōu (3 days); take a bus to Kǎilǐ (2–3 days); take a bus to Guìyáng (1–2 days); take a train (or fly) to Kūnmíng (2 days); take a bus to Dàlǐ (1–2 days); take a bus to Lìjiāng (2–3 days).

MANCHUKUO TOUR

For complete details, see chapter 4

Focus: The highs and lows of Japanese Manchuria

Length: 12 days

Highlights: The Last Emperor's palace; the grim Unit 731 biological weapons testing museum; the extravagant former Yamato Hotel in Harbin

Route & major stops: Divide your time among Dàlián (Lǚshùn naval base, Japanese architecture in downtown Dàlián), Shěnyáng (9.18 Museum of the Japanese occupation, Zhāng warlords' courtyard residence), Chángchūn (Old Manchukuo Buildings, the Puppet Emperor's Palace), and Harbin (Unit 731). Bonus: You can stay in elegant former Yamato Hotels the entire time (although the one in Chángchūn is best avoided).

18 Recommended Reading

There's enough entertaining reading on China to fill a library, so here are just a few pointers to get you started:

Readable modern novelists easily purchased in translation at home include Ha Jin, whose stories tend to be remarkably inconclusive and so all the more true to life, derived from his experiences living in the northeast. *Ocean of Words* (Vintage, 2000) *Waiting* (Vintage, 2001), and the collection of short stories *The Bridegroom* (Vintage, 2001), lift the lids on many things not obvious to the casual visitor.

Soul Mountain (Harper Collins, 2000), by Gāo Xíngjiàn, China's first winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature (although the Chinese populace is kept in ignorance of this), is the tale of a man who embarks on a journey through the wilds of Sìchuān and Yúnnán in search of his own elusive *líng shān* (soul mountain). *The Republic of Wine* (Arcade, 2001), Mò Yán's graphic satire about a doomed detective investigating a case of gourmand-officials eating baby tenderloin, is at once entertaining and disturbing. His *The Garlic Ballads* (Viking, 1995) is an unsettling epic of family conflict, doomed love, and government corruption in a small town dependent on the garlic market.

First-class travel books include Peter Fleming's *News from Tartary* (Northwestern University Press, 1999), originally published in 1936, and still the best travel book ever written about China. Fleming's perceptive account of a hazardous expedition along the southern Silk Route, from Běijīng to northern India, is a masterpiece of dry wit. Peter Hessler's *River Town: Two Years on the Yangtze* (Perennial, 2001) is the best of more recent efforts. He recounts with humor his experience as a Peace Corps volunteer in Fúlíng, one of the now flooded towns along the Three Gorges area. The best Chinese effort in this genre is Mǎ Jiàn's *Red Dust* (Chatto and Windus, 2001), a sharp-eyed and disturbing account of 3 years on the road in the early 1980s, around a China now as vanished as that of Fleming in the 1930s.

Handy specialist guides to complement this book include Joanna Capon's very useful *Guide to Museums in China* (Orientations Magazine), a slim volume providing the detailed English explanations missing in most Chinese museums, as well as a list of dynasties and a useful glossary (contact omag@netvigator.com to find your nearest supplier). *Collecting Chinese Antiquities in Hong Kong* by Victor Choi (Dragon Culture, 2001) is a beautifully illustrated and essential pocket guide, whether you intend to spend thousands or just $100 on something small but a thousand years old. The guide is available via the Web (www.dragonculture.com.hk). *A Field Guide to the Birds of China,* by John MacKinnon and Karen Phillipps (Oxford, 2000), is the best wildlife guide.

For good general background reading, there are a few authors and publishers who turn out so much excellent and readable work that you should start by having a look at what they've done recently. Jonathan Spence writes the most readable histories of China, not just the weighty *The Search for Modern China* (W W Norton, 2001), but gripping and very personal histories such as *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (Viking, 1994) on the clever self-marketing of the first Jesuit to be allowed to reside in Běijīng, *God's Chinese Son* (W W Norton, 1997) on the leader of the Tàipíng Rebellion who thought he was the younger brother of Jesus Christ, and *The Question of Hu* (Vintage, 1989) on the misfortunes of an early Chinese visitor to Europe.

The Hong Kong branch of Oxford University Press (www.oupchina.com.hk) reprints early travel accounts and entertaining anthologies, such as Chris Elder's *Old Peking: City of the Ruler of the World* (1997), *China's Treaty Ports: Half Love and Half Hate* (1999), and the series *Images of Asia*—small, slender, illustrated hardbacks on specific aspects of Chinese culture, such as *Chinese Dragon Robes, China's Muslims,* and *Chinese Classical Furniture.*

Several of these small hardbacks *(China's Walled Cities, Chinese Bridges, Chinese Houses)* have been contributed by Ronald G. Knapp, who also writes excellent books on Chinese architecture for the University of Hawai'i Press, including *China's Old Dwellings* (2000), an essential introduction to all

of China's ancient dwellings, from the courtyard houses of Běijīng to the "earth building" fortresses of Fújiàn Province. Hawai'i (www.uhpress.hawaii.edu) also has an astonishing range of 20th-century Chinese fiction in translation, and the site is well worth browsing for ideas. Dover Publications (http://store.doverpublications.com) reprints handy guides to Chinese history and culture, as well as oddities such as Robert Van Gulik's versions of 18th-century Chinese detective stories featuring a Táng dynasty detective-judge, such as *The Haunted Monastery and the Chinese Maze Murders* (1977). Dover's two-volume reprint of the 1903 edition of *The Travels of Marco Polo* (1993) is the only edition to have—more than half is footnotes from famous explorers and geographers trying to make sense of Polo's route, corroborating his observations or puzzling why he goes so astray, and providing fascinating trivia about China far more interesting than the original account.

FAST FACTS: China

American Express Běijīng: Room 2101, China World Tower, China World Trade Center; ✆ 010/6505-2639. Shànghǎi: Room 206, Retail Plaza, Shànghǎi Center; ✆ 021/6279-8082. Guǎngzhōu: Room 806, GITIC Plaza Hotel; ✆ 020/8331-1771. Xiàmén: Room 212, Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza; ✆ 0592/212-0268. Amex offices are open Monday through Friday from 9:30am to 5:30pm. After hours: U.S. hot line ✆ 001336/393-1111; HK hot line ✆ 00852/2885-9377. Emergency card replacement: ✆ 00852/2277-1010. Stolen checks: ✆ 010800/610-0276, toll-free.

ATM Networks See "ATMs," under "Entry Regulations & Customs," earlier in this chapter.

Business Hours Offices are generally open from 9am to 6pm but are closed Saturday and Sunday. All shops, sights, restaurants, and transport systems offer the same service 7 days a week. Shops are typically open at least from 8am to 8pm. Bank opening hours vary widely (see "Currency," earlier in this chapter, and the "Fast Facts" sections for individual destinations). In **Hong Kong** most offices are open Monday through Friday from 9am to 5pm, with lunch hour from 1 to 2pm; Saturday business hours are generally 9am to 1pm. Most Hong Kong shops are open 7 days a week, from 10am to at least 7pm.

Car Rentals Rental is only possible with a Chinese driver, except in Hong Kong and Macau. See "Getting Around," earlier in this chapter.

Currency See p. 21.

Doctors & Dentists Many hotels have medical clinics with registered nurses, as well as doctors on duty at specified hours or on call 24 hours. Otherwise, your concierge or consulate can refer you to a doctor or dentist. If it's an emergency, get a Mandarin speaker to dial 120 in mainland China, or dial 999 in Hong Kong or Macau.

Driving Rules "I'm bigger than you, so get out of my way," sums it up. But you won't be driving anyway. When you cross a road, assume that the drivers are all out to get you. Driving is on the right. **Hong Kong** and **Macau** are far more law-abiding, and driving is on the left. See "Getting Around," earlier in this chapter.

Drugstores Bring supplies of your favorite over-the-counter medicines with you, since supplies of well-known Western brands are unreliable and sometimes fake. All familiar brands are available in **Hong Kong.**

Electricity The electricity used in all parts of China is 220 volts, alternating current (AC), 50 cycles. Most devices from North America, therefore, cannot be used without a transformer. The most common outlet takes the North American two-flat-pin plug (but not the three-pin version, or those with one pin broader than the other). Nearly as common are outlets for the two-round-pin plugs common in Europe. Outlets for the three-flat-pin (two pins at an angle) used in Australia, for instance, are also frequently seen. Most hotel rooms have all three, and indeed many outlets are designed to take all three plugs. Adapters are available for only ¥8 to ¥16 ($1–$2) in department stores. Shaver sockets are common in bathrooms of hotels from three stars upwards. In **Hong Kong** and **Macau,** the British-style three-chunky-pin plugs are standard, and these also often appear in mainland joint-venture hotels built with Hong Kong assistance.

Embassies & Consulates Most countries maintain embassies in Běijīng and consulates in Hong Kong. Australia also has consulates in Guǎngzhōu and Shànghǎi; Canada and the U.K. in Chóngqìng, Guǎngzhōu, and Shànghǎi; New Zealand in Shànghǎi; and the U.S. in Chéngdū, Guǎngzhōu, Shànghǎi, and Shěnyáng.

Emergencies No one speaks English at emergency numbers in China, although your best bet will be ✆ **110.** Find help nearer at hand. In **Hong Kong** dial ✆ **999** for police, fire, or ambulance. In **Macau** dial ✆ 999 for medical emergencies, ✆ 573-333 for the police, and ✆ 572-222 for the fire department.

Holidays See "China Calendar of Events," earlier in this chapter.

Hot Lines Hot lines and all kinds of telephone booking and information numbers are given throughout this guide. But in almost no cases whatsoever will English be spoken at the other end. Ask English-speaking staff at your hotel to find answers to your queries and to make any necessary calls on your behalf.

Information See "Visitor Information," earlier in this chapter.

Internet Access Internet access through anonymous dial-up is widely available, as are Internet cafes. See "The 21st-Century Traveler," earlier in this chapter.

Language English is widely spoken in Hong Kong, fairly common in Macau, and rare in the mainland, although there will be someone who speaks a little English at your hotel. Ask that person to help you with phone calls and bookings. Almost no information, booking, complaint, or emergency lines in the mainland have anyone who speaks English.

Legal Aid If you get on the wrong side of what passes for the law in China, contact your consulate immediately.

Liquor Laws With the exception of some minor local regulations, there are no liquor laws in China. Alcohol can be bought in any convenience store, supermarket, restaurant, bar, hotel, or club, 7 days a week, and may be drunk anywhere you feel like drinking it. If the shop is open 24 hours, then the alcohol is available 24 hours, too. Closing times for bars

and clubs vary according to demand, but typically it's all over by 3am. In **Hong Kong,** liquor laws largely follow the U.K. model; restaurants, bars, and clubs must obtain licenses to sell alcohol for consumption on the premises, and shops must have licenses to sell it for consumption off the premises. In either case, licenses prohibit sale of alcohol to persons under 18. Licensing hours vary from area to area.

Lost & Found Be sure to alert all of your credit card companies the minute you discover your wallet has been lost or stolen. Your credit card company or insurer may require a police report number or record of the loss, although many Public Security Bureau offices (police stations) will be reluctant to do anything as energetic as lift a pen. Most credit card companies have an emergency toll-free number to call if your card is lost or stolen: In **mainland China,** Visa's emergency number is ✆ 010/800-440-0027; American Express cardholders and traveler's check holders should call ✆ 010/800-610-0277; MasterCard holders should call ✆ 010/800-110-7309; and Diners Club members should call Hong Kong at ✆ 852/2860-1800, or call the U.S. collect at ✆ 416/369-6313. From within **Hong Kong,** Visa's telephone number is ✆ 800/900-872, MasterCard's ✆ 800/966-677, Diners Club's ✆ 2860-1888, and Amex's ✆ 800/962-403. Visa also has a phone number for within **Macau:** ✆ 300-28561. Keeping a separate list of the serial numbers of your traveler's checks will speed up their replacement. Also see "Emergency Cash," under "Entry Requirements & Customs," earlier in this chapter.

Mail Sending mail from China is remarkably reliable, although sending it to private addresses within China is not. Take the mail to post offices rather than use mailboxes. Some larger hotels have postal services on-site. It helps if mail sent out of the country has its country of destination written in characters, but this is not essential, although hotel staff will often help. Letters and cards written in red ink will occasionally be rejected, as this carries extremely negative overtones. Overseas mail: **postcards** ¥4.20 (50¢), **letters under 10 grams** ¥5.40 (70¢), **letters under 20 grams** ¥6.50 (80¢). EMS (**express parcels** under 500g): to the U.S.: ¥180 to ¥240 ($23–$30); to Europe ¥220 to ¥280 ($28–$35); to Australia ¥160 to ¥210 ($20–$26). **Normal parcels** up to 1 kilogram (2¼ lb.): to the **U.S.** by air ¥95) to ¥159 ($12–$20), by sea ¥20) to ¥84 ($2.50–$14); to the **U.K.** by air ¥77 to ¥162 ($9.50–$20), by sea ¥22 to ¥108 ($11–$14); to **Australia** by air ¥70 to ¥144 ($8.75–$18), by sea ¥15 to ¥89 ($1.90–$11). Letters and parcels can be registered for a small extra charge. Registration forms and Customs declaration forms are in Chinese and French. The post offices of **Hong Kong** and **Macau** are entirely reliable, but both have their own stamps and rates.

Maps Purchasing city maps as you go is absolutely essential, even though few are bilingual. These are available at bus and railway stations and at airports for under ¥5 (65¢). Get your hotel staff to circle the characters of your hotel and the main sights you plan to see, and note which is which. Now you can jump in a taxi at any point, show the driver the characters for where you want to go, and keep an eye on the route he takes. Map keys in this book have Chinese characters for the same purpose, as do "Selected Destinations by City" in Appendix A. The tourist boards of **Hong Kong** and **Macau** are liberal with bilingual and trilingual free maps.

Newspapers & Magazines Sino-foreign joint-venture hotels in the bigger cities have a selection of foreign newspapers and magazines available, but these are otherwise not on sale. The government distributes a propaganda sheet called *China Daily,* usually free at hotels, and there are occasional local variations. Cities with larger populations support a number of self-censoring entertainment magazines usually produced by resident foreigners and only slightly more bland when produced by Chinese aiming at the same market. Nevertheless, these do have intermittently accurate entertainment listings and restaurant reviews. A vast range of English publications is easily available in **Hong Kong** and **Macau,** as well as local newspapers such as the *South China Morning Post.*

Police Known to foreigners as the **PSB** (**Public Security Bureau,** *gōng'ān jú*), although these represent only one of several different types of officer in mainland China, the police *(jǐngchá)* are quite simply best avoided. Since they are keen to avoid doing any work, you have the same interests at heart. If you must see them for some reason, then approach your hotel for assistance first, and visit the PSB offices listed in this guide as dealing with visa extensions, since these are almost the only places you are likely to find an English speaker of sorts. In **Hong Kong** and **Macau,** however, you can usually ask policemen for directions and expect them to be generally helpful.

Restrooms Street-level public toilets in China are common, many detectable by the nose before they are seen. There's often an entrance fee of ¥.20, but not necessarily running water. In many cases you merely squat over a trough. So, use the standard Western equipment in your hotel room, in department stores and malls, and in branches of foreign fast-food chains. In Hong Kong and Macau, facilities are far more hygienic.

Safety See the sections on "Travel Insurance" and "Health & Safety," earlier in this chapter.

Smoking The government of China is the world's biggest cigarette manufacturer. China is home to 20% of the world's population but 30% of the world's cigarettes. About one million people a year in China die of smoking-related illnesses, as do about a third of middle-aged men in Hong Kong. In the mainland, nonsmoking tables in restaurants are almost unheard of, and nonsmoking signs are favorite places beneath which to sit and smoke. Smokers are generally sent to the spaces between the cars on trains, but they won't bother to do so if no one protests. Similarly on air-conditioned buses, where some will light up to see if they can get away with it (but usually they'll be told to put it out).

Taxes In **mainland China,** occasional bed taxes are added to hotel bills, but these are minor and usually included in the room rate. Service charges appear mostly in joint-venture hotels, and range from 10% to 15%. Many Chinese hotels list service charges in their literature, but few have the nerve to add them to room rates unless the hotel is very full. However, restaurants may add the service charge. Departure taxes must be paid in cash at the airport before flying: domestic ¥50 ($6.25), international (including flights to Hong Kong and Macau) ¥90 ($11). There are also lesser taxes for international ferry departures at some ports. In **Hong Kong,** better hotels will add a 10% service charge and a 3% government

tax to your bill. Better restaurants and bars will automatically add a 10% service charge. Included in your ticket price are an airport departure tax of HK$80 ($10) for adults and children older than 12, or a marine departure tax if you depart by sea. In **Macau,** better hotels charge 10% for service as well as a 5% tax. Marine departure taxes are included in ticket prices. Airport passenger tax for flights to China are MOP$80 (US$10) adults and MOP$50 (US$6.25) children ages 2 to 12; for other destinations the tax is MOP$130 (US$16) adults and MOP$80 (US$10) for children. Transit passengers who continue their journey within 24 hours of arrival are exempted from passenger tax.

Telephone The international country code for mainland China is 86, for Hong Kong 852, and for Macau 853.

To call China, Hong Kong, or Macau:

1. Dial the international access code: (011 in the U.S., 00 in the U.K).
2. Dial the country code: 86 for China, 852 for Hong Kong, 853 for Macau.
3. For China, dial the city code, omitting the leading zero, and then the number. Hong Kong and Macau have no city codes, so after the country code, simply dial the remainder of the number.

To call within China: For calls within the same city, omit the city code, which always begins with a zero when used (010 for Běijīng, 020 for Guǎngzhōu, and so on). All hotel phones have direct dialing, and most have international dialing. Hotels are only allowed to add a service charge of up to 15% to the cost of the call, and even long-distance rates within China are very low. To use a public telephone you'll need an IC (integrated circuit) card *(àicēi kǎ),* available in values from ¥20 ($2.50). You can buy them at post offices, convenience stores, street stalls, or wherever you can make out the letters "IC" among the Chinese characters. A brief local call is typically ¥.30 (5¢). Phones show you the value remaining on the card when you insert it, and count down as you talk. **To call within Hong Kong:** In Hong Kong, local calls made from homes, offices, shops, and other establishments are free, so don't feel shy about asking to use the phone. From hotel lobbies and public phone booths, a local call costs HK$1 (15¢) for each 5 minutes; from hotel rooms, about HK$4 to HK$5 (50¢–65¢). **To call within Macau:** Local calls from private phones are free, and from call boxes cost MOP$1 (12¢).

To make international calls: From **mainland China** or **Macau,** first dial 00 and then the country code (U.S. or Canada 1, U.K. 44, Ireland 353, Australia 61, New Zealand 64). Next, dial the area or city code, omitting any leading zero, and then the number. For example, if you want to call the British Embassy in Washington, D.C., you would dial ✆ 00-1-202-588-7800. Forget taking access numbers for your local phone company with you—you can call internationally for a fraction of the cost by using an IP (Internet protocol) card, *àiìpì kǎ,* purchased from department stores and other establishments—wherever you see the letters "IP." Instructions for use are on the back, but you simply dial the access number given, choose English from the menu, and follow the instructions to dial in the number behind a scratch-off panel. Depending on where you call, ¥50 ($6.25) can give you an hour of talking, and you should anyway bargain to pay less than the

face value of the card—as little as ¥70 ($8.75) for a ¥100 ($13) card from street vendors. To use a public phone, you'll need an IC card (see above) to make the local call. In emergencies, dial 108 to negotiate a collect call, but again, in most towns you'll need help from a Mandarin speaker. From **Hong Kong** dial 001, 0080, or 009, depending on which of several competing phone companies you are using. Follow with the country code and continue as for calling from China or Macau. It's much cheaper to use one of several competing phone cards, such as *Talk Talk,* which come in denominations ranging from HK$50 to HK$300 ($6.50–$39) and are available at HKTB information offices, convenience stores, and other places.

For directory assistance: In **mainland China** dial 114. No English is spoken, and only local numbers are available. If you want other cities, dial the city code followed by 114—a long-distance call. In **Hong Kong** dial 1081 for a local number, and 10013 for international ones. In **Macau** dial 181 for domestic numbers, and 101 for international ones.

For operator assistance: If in **mainland China** if you need operator assistance in making a call, just ask for help at your hotel. In Hong Kong dial 10010 for domestic assistance, 10013 for international assistance.

Toll-free numbers: Numbers beginning with 800 within China are toll-free, but calling a 1-800 number in the States from China is a full-tariff international call, as is calling one in Hong Kong from mainland China, or vice versa.

Time Zone The whole of China is on Běijīng time—8 hours ahead of GMT (and therefore of London), 13 hours ahead of New York, 14 hours ahead of Chicago, and 16 hours ahead of Los Angeles. There's no daylight savings time (summer time), so subtract 1 hour in the summer.

Tipping In **mainland China,** as in many other countries, there is ***no tipping,*** despite what tour companies may tell you (although if you have a tour leader who accompanies you from home, home rules apply). Until recently, tipping was expressly forbidden, and some hotels still carry signs requesting you not to tip. Foreigners, especially those on tours, are overcharged at every turn, and it bemuses Chinese that they hand out free money in addition. Chinese never do it themselves; in fact, if a bellhop or other hotel employee hints that a tip would be welcome, he or she is likely to be fired.

In **Hong Kong** and **Macau,** even though restaurants and bars will automatically add a 10% service charge to your bill, you're still expected to leave small change for the waiter, up to a few dollars in the very best restaurants. You're also expected to tip taxi drivers, bellhops, barbers, and beauticians. For taxi drivers, simply round up your bill to the nearest HK$1 or add a HK$1 (15¢) tip. Tip people who cut your hair 5% or 10%, and give bellhops HK$10 to HK$20 ($1.30–$2.60), depending on the number of your bags. If you use a public restroom that has an attendant, you may be expected to leave a small gratuity—HK$2 (25¢) should be enough.

Water Tap water in mainland China is not drinkable, and should not even be used for brushing your teeth. Use bottled water, widely available on every street, and provided for free in all the better hotels. Tap water is drinkable in Hong Kong, but bottled water tastes better.

3

Běijīng, with Tiānjīn & Héběi

by Josh Chin and Peter Neville-Hadley

Běijīng strikes most first-time visitors as ugly. Its rivers of concrete and rows of tenements, its pollution, its homely populace, and its oppressive grayness are not what anyone would expect at the heart of such an otherwise vivid nation. And yet, no other city in the nation attracts more travelers.

Visitors accept Běijīng's pallor because it is China's political and cultural capital, and because it offers the country's most staggering array of attractions. Best known among these are the Forbidden City, the Temple of Heaven, Tiān'ān Mén Square, and the Great Wall—bedazzling and symbolic structures without which no trip to the country would be complete.

But grandiose emblems are not the only reason to visit Běijīng. Scattered through the city's sprawl are a number of temples, museums, gardens, and other attractions that only grow in charm as they decrease in size. This principle culminates in the *hútòng,* narrow lanes that twist through older sections and form an open-air museum where you can happily wander for hours without aim.

Běijīng lies 120km (70 miles) west of the Bó Hǎi (sea), on a sandblasted plain that once separated Hàn Chinese–dominated territory in the south from the non-Chinese "barbarian" lands to the north. Human settlement in the area dates back to the Zhōu period (1066 B.C.–221 B.C.), but the first of the four capitals to occupy space here did not appear until A.D. 936, when the Mongolian-speaking Khitan built Yānjīng (Capital of Swallows), southern base of power for the Liáo Empire (907–1125).

The city's grid pattern and original walls were first laid down in the 13th century, when it was called Khanbalik ("Dàdū" in Mandarin) and served as eastern capital of the Mongolian Empire, referred to in China as the Yuán dynasty (1279–1368). The city was razed, rebuilt, and renamed Běijīng by Hàn Chinese rulers of the subsequent Míng dynasty (1368–1644), who added the Forbidden City and several other of the city's most impressive structures. Manchurian horsemen of the final Qīng dynasty (1636–1912) skirted the Great Wall and established themselves in the Forbidden City in 1644. Despite their nomadic origins, Qīng leaders found the Chinese system of bureaucratic rule useful in managing their new empire, a strategy mirrored in the relatively few changes they made to the city.

Some of the greatest damage to Běijīng has occurred in the last 150 years. Invasions by foreign armies, rebellions, war with Japan, and the struggle between Communists and Nationalists in the 1930s and 1940s have altered the face of the city more than any events since the 14th century. Particularly severe was the ruin that took place in the decade after the Communist victory in 1949, when Máo, in a desire to put the stamp of his own dynasty on Běijīng, leveled the city walls and the old Imperial Way and paved over both.

Present-day Běijīng is a vast municipality with a population of roughly 11 million. Economic reform and preparations for the 2008 Olympics have accelerated the pace and scale of change and outfitted the city with a semblance of modernity (or at least the Chinese perception of it). Roads that once swarmed with bicycles have been taken over by automobiles. Swaths of *hútòng* have been leveled to make way for office towers. And children whose parents hid tapes of Beethoven during the Cultural Revolution now have easy access to DVDs, double tall lattes, plastic surgery, and other previously unthinkable bourgeois luxuries.

It is easy, however, to overemphasize the transformations of the past few decades in a city with so many centuries under its belt. To many observers, Běijīng has hardly changed at all. The gaze of government looms as large now as it did during the Míng. Outsiders are still Philistines. People smoke in elevators, spit in the streets (despite the SARS scare), fly kites, and practice tai chi *(tàijíquán)* in the mornings, just as they always have. And perhaps most importantly, the Great Wall continues to snake along the city's northern border while the Forbidden City gleams at its center.

Běijīng shares the same latitude as New York (roughly 40°N) and suffers the same weather: hot, humid summers and bitter winters. Fall, typically mid-September to mid-November, is the nicest season, with mild temperatures and relatively clear skies—by far the best time to visit. Spring brings thoroughly unpleasant sandstorms that blow down from the Mongolian steppe and coat literally everything in a layer of fine dust. There is little precipitation, and even less of late.

Note: Unless noted otherwise, hours listed in this chapter are the same every day.

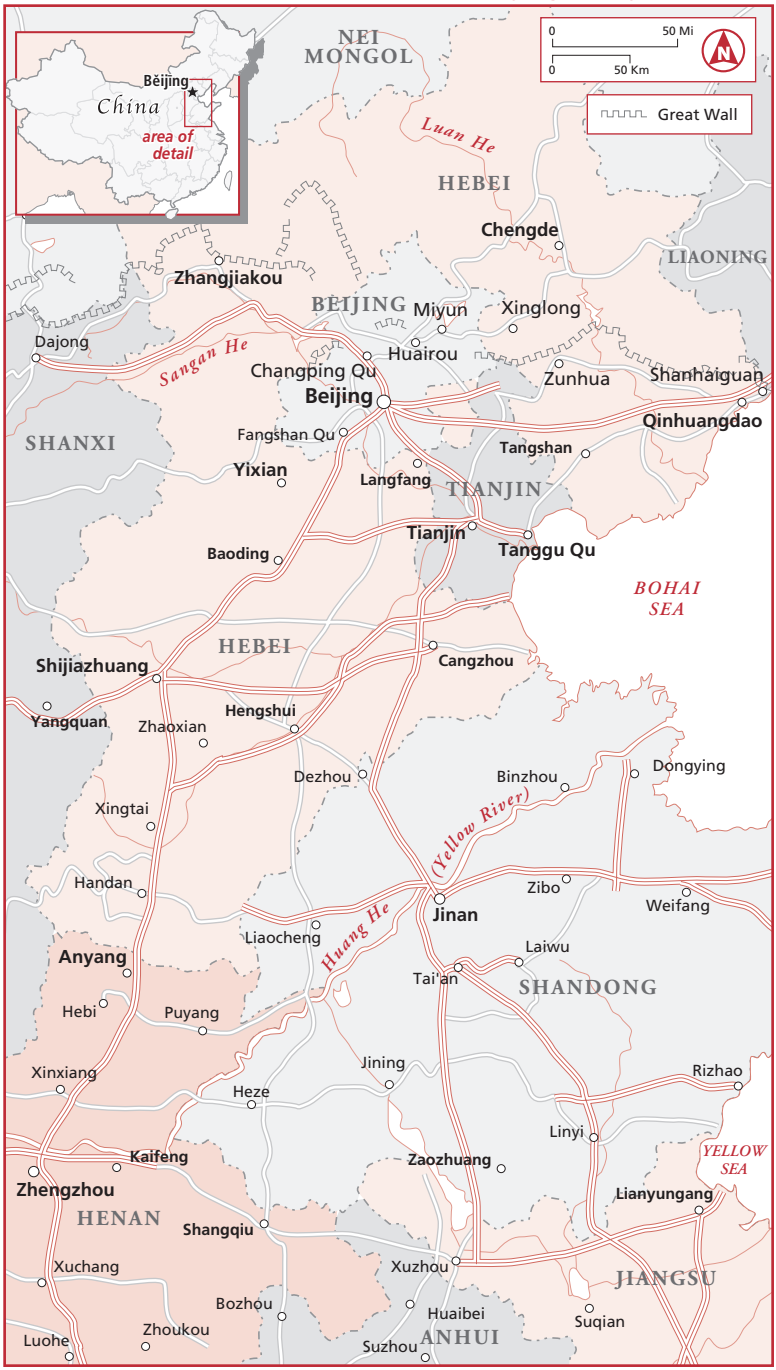
1 Orientation

GETTING THERE & AWAY

BY PLANE

Běijīng's **Capital Airport** (Shǒudū Jīchǎng; information: ✆ **010/962-580** or 010/6457-1666, Mandarin only; domestic ticketing: ✆ **010/6601-3336;** international ticketing: ✆ **010/6601-6667**), is 25km (16 miles) northeast of the city center. Arrivals are on the first floor; departures are on the second. Change money at one of the handful of **exchange counters** on either floor upon arrival (open 24 hr.), as taxi drivers and shuttle buses will not accept foreign currency. There are also ATM and automatic exchange machines on both floors. Rates are the same across China, so get what you need now.

Taxis queue outside the international arrivals gate and take 30 minutes to an hour to reach the city center (¥60–¥100/$8–$12, including ¥10/$1 toll), depending on traffic. Bypass any drivers who approach you inside the airport, and head for the rank instead. Insist on using the meter. Air-conditioned **airport shuttle buses,** the cheapest way to get into the city, leave from in front of the domestic arrivals area. The most useful line (A) runs 24 hours a day (departs every 15 min., 8am–10pm; less frequently at other times; ¥16/$2). Destinations include Sānyuán Qiáo (near the Hilton and Renaissance hotels), the Dōng Zhí Mén and Dōng Sì Shítiáo metro stations, Běijīng Railway Station, the CAAC ticket office in Xī Dān, Háng Tiān Qiáo (near the Marriott West), and the International Hotel. Air-conditioned Iveco **buses to Tiānjīn** (9am–10pm; 2¼ hr.; ¥70/$9) leave from just inside the parking garage opposite door 9 in the domestic arrivals section.


China
Běijing
area of detail
0
50 Mi
0
50 Km
N
Great Wall
NEI MONGOL
Luan He
HEBEI
Chengde
LIAONING
Zhangjiakou
BEIJING
Miyun
Xinglong
Dajong
Sangan He
Huairou
Changping Qu
Beijing
Zunhua
Shanhaiguan
Qinhuangdao
SHANXI
Fangshan Qu
Tangshan
Yixian
Langfang
TIANJIN
Tianjin
Tanggu Qu
Baoding
BOHAI SEA
HEBEI
Cangzhou
Shijiazhuang
Yangquan
Hengshui
Zhaoxian
Dongying
Dezhou
Binzhou
Xingtai
Yellow River
Handan
Zibo
Weifang
Jinan
Huang He
Liaocheng
Laiwu
Anyang
Tai'an
SHANDONG
Hebi
Puyang
Jining
Rizhao
Xinxiang
Heze
Linyi
YELLOW SEA
Kaifeng
Zaozhuang
Zhengzhou
Lianyungang
HENAN
Shangqiu
Xuchang
Xuzhou
JIANGSU
Bozhou
Huaibei
Suqian
Zhoukou
ANHUI
Luohe
Suzhou

Tickets for domestic flights and international flights on Chinese airlines are best purchased either through a reliable agent (see below) or in one of two main ticketing halls: the Aviation Building (Mínháng Dàlóu; ✆ **010/6601-7755;** fax 010/6601-7585; 24 hr.) at Xī Chán'ān Jiē 15, just east of the Xī Dān metro station; or at the Airlines Ticketing Hall (Mínháng Yíngyè Dà Tīng; ✆ **010/8402-8198;** fax 010/6401-5307; 8am–5pm), opposite the north end of Wángfǔjǐng Dàjiē at Dōngsì Xī Dàjiē 155. Both accept credit cards and offer discounts similar to those you'll get with an agent. There are daily direct flights from the Capital Airport to nearly every major Chinese city, including Shànghǎi, Guǎngzhōu, Xī'ān, Chéngdū, and Lhasa.

Most hotels can arrange tickets for flights on **foreign airlines,** but they tend to levy hefty service fees. Reliable booking agents, such as **Airtrans** (next to the Jiànguó Hotel; ✆ **010/6595-2255**), are often the cheapest option, but also check directly with the airlines themselves, if only to get an idea of standard prices. Most major international airlines have offices in Běijīng; check websites for contact information.

BY TRAIN

Běijīng's two most important railway stations are the Soviet-style Běijīng Zhàn, southeast of Tiān'ān Mén Square, and the newer Xī Kè Zhàn (West Station), between the western Second and Third ring roads. Tickets can be purchased at both stations for any train leaving Běijīng up to 4 days in advance. It is now possible to buy **round-trip tickets** *(fǎnchéng piào)* to major destinations like Shànghǎi or Xī'ān up to 12 days in advance, subject to availability. **Satellite ticket offices** *(tiělù shòupiào chù)* scattered throughout the city charge a negligible ¥5 (65¢) service fee; convenient branches are just inside the main entrance of the Sānhé Bǎihuò (department store), south of the Xīn (Sun) Dōng Ān Plaza on Wángfǔjǐng Dàjiē (9am–9pm; ✆ **010/9511-4669**); and at the Shātān shòupiào chù (ticket sales office) further north at Píng'ān Dàdào 45, west of Jiāodàokǒu Nán Dàjiē (8am–6pm; ✆ **010/6403-6803**). Mandarin speakers can check schedules and book tickets by calling ✆ **010/6321-7188,** 010/5182-7188, or the station numbers below.

Běijīng Zhàn (**Běijīng Railway Station;** ✆ **010/5183-4122**) is the easiest to reach of Běijīng's two major stations, close to the city center and with its own metro station. The best place to pick up tickets is at the "ticket office for foreigners" inside the soft-berth waiting room on the ground floor of the main hall, in the far left corner (5:30am–11pm). This is the station for trains to Shànghǎi (4 per day; 14 hr.; ¥317/$39) and cities in the northeast. Purchase tickets for **Tiānjīn** (16 trains per day; 1¼ hr.; ¥22/$3) at windows 41 and 42 outside. Both versions of the **Trans-Siberian,** the original Russian T19 via Manchuria (Sat 10:50pm) and the T3 via Mongolia (Wed 7:40am) leave from here, but you have to purchase tickets at the CITS ticket counter inside the International Hotel (Mon–Fri 8:30am–noon and 1:30–5pm, weekends 9am–noon and 1:30–4pm; ✆ **010/6512-0507**), due north of the station on Jiànguó Mén Nèi Dàjiē. Both trains travel to Moscow (¥2,360/$295 fare for a soft sleeper) but only the T3 stops in Ulaan Baatar (¥778/$97 soft sleeper); there's a separate Saturday train to Ulaan Baatar as well. The International Hotel is also the nearest spot for picking up the **airport shuttle bus** (see above).

West Station (**Xī Kè Zhàn;** schedule information ✆ **010/5182-6253**), designed as a grotesquely exaggerated paean to the old city gates, is a 10-minute walk south of the Jūnshì Bówùguǎn metro station at the end of Yángfángdiàn Lù. As with Běijīng Zhàn, the best regular ticket outlet here is not the main

ticket hall but a second office inside the main building, on the second floor to the left of the elevators; this is also where you go to purchase tickets for the **T97 express to Kowloon/Jiǔlóng** (departs 10:05am; 27 hr.; ¥1,028/$129 soft sleeper, ¥662/$83 hard). The West Station is also the starting point for **trains to Hanoi,** but you have to buy a ticket (¥1,023/$128 soft sleeper only) at a "travel service" booth, open from 9am to 4:30pm (✆ **010/6398-9485**), inside the Construction Bank on the east side of the station complex. Trains leave from here for Guǎngzhōu (4 per day; 23 hr.; ¥443/$55); trains also leave for Xī'ān (twice daily; 14 hr.; ¥265/$33) and other points west. The nearest **airport shuttle** stops at the Aviation Building in Xī Dān (see above), reached by bus no. 52 from the station's east side. Catch taxis on the second floor.

BY BUS

There is no central station here but rather a series of region-specific stations spread around the outskirts. The almost airport-like **Zhàogōngkǒu Chángtú Kèyùn Qìchē Zhàn** (✆ **010/6732-7328**), on the South Third Ring Road directly south of the Temple of Heaven (take bus no. 17 from the Qiánmén metro stop), is the place for regular buses to **Tiānjīn** (7am–6pm; 2 hr.; ¥26/$3). The **Lìzé Qiáo Chángtú Kèyùn Zhàn** (✆ **010/6347-0828**), on the southwest corner of the Third Ring Road (Gōngzhǔfén metro, then bus no. 901) has air-conditioned Ivecos to **Tàiyuán** (6 hr.; ¥121/$15) and comfortable minibuses to **Shíjiāzhuāng** (3½ hr.; ¥51/$6). The **Xī Zhí Mén Chángtú Qìchē Kèyùn Zhàn** (✆ **010/6217-3556**), northwest of the Xī Zhí Mén metro stop on Gāoliáng Qiáo Lù (walk past Line 13 station, take 1st right), is the best choice for luxury buses to **Chéngdé** (every 20 min.; 3½ hr.; ¥31/$4), **Shěnyáng** (8 hr.; ¥189/$24), and **Qínhuángdǎo** (twice daily; 3½ hr.; ¥60/$7.50). Numerous buses from other cities arrive at the **Dōng Zhí Mén Chángtú Qìchē Zhàn** (✆ **010/6467-4995**), next to the Dōng Zhí Mén metro station, but few are useful to visitors except the occasional Chéngdé service.

VISITOR INFORMATION

For the most current information on life in Běijīng, particularly nightlife, see listings in the free English-language twice-monthly *City Weekend* or the monthly *that's Beijing,* available in hotel lobbies and at bars in the major drinking districts (see "Běijīng After Dark," p. 124). Online, *City Weekend* manages to update its website (www.cityweekend.com) regularly. The e-mail newsletter *Xiànzài Běijīng* (see www.xianzai.com for more information) provides a weekly list of events, plus special hotel, air ticket, and restaurant offers.

The Běijīng Tourism Administration (BTA) maintains a **tourist information hot line** (some English spoken) at ✆ **010/6513-0828.** More likely to be of help are the new BTA-managed **Běijīng Tourist Information Centers (Běijīng Shì Lǚyóu Zīxún Fúwù Zhōngxīn)** located in each district and all marked with aqua-blue signs. The most competent branch is in Cháoyáng District, on Gōngtǐ Běi Lù across from the City Hotel and next to the KFC (10am–6pm; ✆ **010/6417-6627;** fax 010/6417-6656; chaoyang@bta.gov.cn). Free simple maps are available at the door, and staff will sometimes make phone calls for you. Ignore the extortionist travel service, attached.

CITY LAYOUT

Běijīng is bordered to the north and west by mountains, the closest of which are occasionally visible through the haze. The city center, known to foreigners in the Qīng period (1644–1911) as the Tartar City, was originally surrounded by a

complex of walls and gates destroyed in 1958 to make way for the **Second Ring Road (Èr Huán).** The city center is organized along a grid with major streets running to the compass points. The Third, Fourth, and Fifth ring roads (Sān Huán, Sì Huán, and Wǔ Huán, respectively) run concentrically ever wider out. At the center of all this is the seldom-referred-to First Ring Road (encircling Tiān'ān Mén Sq.) and **the Forbidden City,** its own internal grid a miniature of the sprawl that surrounds it.

MAJOR STREETS

Streets in Běijīng change names like high-school students change identities. Be sure to pick up a city map on arrival (see "Fast Facts," p. 74). The best example of this is the city's main east–west artery. **Cháng'ān Dàjiē,** which runs between Tiān'ān Mén Square and the Forbidden City, is known (east to west) as Jiànguó Mén Wài Dàjiē, Jiànguó Mén Nèi Dàjiē, Dōng (East) Cháng'ān Dàjiē, Xī (West) Cháng'ān Dàjiē, Fùxīng Mén Nèi Dàjiē, and Fùxīng Mén Wài Dàjiē. **Píng'ān Dàdào,** a major avenue to the north that runs across the back of Běi Hǎi Park, has a similar diversity of monikers. Among important north–south streets, **Wángfǔjǐng Dàjiē** (2 long blocks east of the Forbidden City) is the Běijīng consumer equivalent of Chicago's Magnificent Mile. **Qián Mén Dàjiē** extends down from the southern end of Tiān'ān Mén Square.

NEIGHBORHOODS IN BRIEF

Citywide architectural uniformity means Běijīng's neighborhoods are defined more by feel than by appearance. In many cases, but not all, they correspond to districts *(qū).*

Dóngchéng District Dóngchéng (East City) occupies the eastern half of the city center, generally defined as everything inside the Second Ring Road and north of Cháng'ān Dàjiē. This is where Tiān'ān Mén Square, the Forbidden City, Wángfǔjǐng Dàjiē, Jǐng Shān Gōngyuán, and Yōnghé Gōng (the Lama Temple) are located.

Xīchéng District The western half of the city center is home to Zhōng Nán Hǎi, the off-limits central government compound otherwise known as the new Forbidden City, Běi Hǎi Gōngyuán, and Bái Tǎ Sì (White Dagoba Temple).

The Back Lakes (Shíchà Hǎi) & Dì'ān Mén This area, with its sublime public lakes and well-preserved *hútòng,* is where the last fading ghosts of Old (pre-1949) Běijīng reside. It's popular among writers, musicians, English-language teachers, and other hipsters in the expatriate community, and their presence has helped spawn a bevy of bars and cafes (see "Běijīng After Dark," later in this chapter). Several minor sights here provide excuses for a nice day of wandering (see "Walking Tour: The Back Lakes," p. 110).

Cháoyáng District A gargantuan district that encompasses almost all of eastern and northeastern Běijīng outside the Second Ring Road, Cháoyáng is home to the two main diplomatic areas, the Sānlǐtún and Cháoyáng drinking districts, and the Central Business District (CBD) around the China World Trade Center. This is the richest district in Běijīng, the result, according to some, of the district's good *fēngshuǐ.*

The South If Cháoyáng has Běijīng's best *fēngshuǐ,* the south part of the city—composed of Chóngwén, Xuānwǔ, and Fēngtái districts—has the worst. Squalid

since the city's founding, this is where you'll find the city's grittiest *hútòng* and some of its best bargains on fake antiques. This is also where you'll find the Temple of Heaven (Tiāntán).

Hǎidiàn District Occupying the northwest, this is the university and high-tech district, referred to in local media as "China's Silicon Valley." There is hiking in the hills in more distant parts.

2 Getting Around

BY METRO The Běijīng Metro underwent a systemwide revamp in late 2002—new English signs, detailed maps, numbered stations—and is now the easiest and often fastest way to move around. Trains run from 5am to 11pm on two underground lines *(dìtiě)* and one new light-rail line *(chéngtiě)*. **Line 1** runs east–west past Tiān'ān Mén and the Forbidden City. **Line 2,** or the Loop Line, is a closed circle that roughly follows the path of the old Tartar City wall. The light-rail **Line 13,** connected to Line 2 at Xī Zhí Mén (201) and Dōng Zhí Mén (214) stations, swings far into the northern suburbs. Several other lines, such as north–south Line 5, and one to the airport, will be completed by 2008.

At present, paper **tickets,** purchased at booths in each station, cost ¥3 (45¢) for a ride to anywhere along lines 1 and 2 (free interchange). A combined ticket *(huànchéng piào)* for lines 2 and 13 costs ¥5 (60¢). Payment is supposed to switch to an automated IC (integrated circuit) card system at the end of 2003. The system will supposedly charge ¥2 (30¢) for the first three stops on any line, and ¥1 (15¢) for every three stops after that. See Metro map on the inside back cover.

BY TAXI For now, small, Chinese-produced Xiàlì are the cheapest taxis (¥10/$1.20 for the 1st 3km/2 miles, then ¥1.20/15¢ per km), but these will be phased out before 2008. Larger Fùkāng (Citroën) hatchbacks and VW Jettas are the next level up (¥10/$1.20 for the 1st 3km/2 miles, then ¥1.60/20¢ per km), followed by full-size VW Santanas and foreign imports (¥12/$1.40 for the 1st 3km/2 miles, then ¥2/25¢ per km). Rates per kilometer jump by 50% after 15km (9 miles). Always insist on using the meter unless negotiating for journeys out of town, in which case be clear about the price beforehand and withhold payment until your return. Register complaints with the Bureau of Communications (✆ **010/6835-1150,** in English). Call a cab at ✆ **010/6837-3399** (no English), but this is usually unnecessary since there are so many on the street.

BY BUS This is how the vast majority of the city's residents move around, and riding with them is as close (literally shoulder-to-chest) as you can get to understanding the authentic Běijīng. City buses and trolleys (nos. less than 124) charge a flat fare of ¥1 (15¢). Longer rides on air-conditioned coaches (nos. 800–900) can cost ¥4 (50¢) or more. Most buses run between 5am and 11pm (specific times are posted at the stops).

BY BICYCLE A bike is the best way to stay in touch with the city between sights, and faster than a taxi when traffic is bad, but you'll have to pay attention to the cars and other riders, both of which pose risks to the unwary. Simple bikes are available for rent at a number of hotels, usually for between ¥10 ($1) and ¥30 ($4) per day. ***Warning:*** Avoid the three-wheel pedicabs *(sānlúnchē)*—a ride almost always ends in an argument over price, and there's no such thing as a good deal.

ON FOOT Běijīng is no friend of the pedestrian. The city's sights are scattered and most of its roads are broad rivers of unlovely gray with few channels

for safe crossing. The only parts of the city where walking is practical are the few remaining *hútòng* neighborhoods, where the stroll is the point. Otherwise, use a vehicle.

FAST FACTS: Běijīng

American Express Emergency check-cashing is available to American Express cardholders at major branches of the Bank of China (including one in the basement of Tower 2 at the China World Trade Center) and at the CITIC Industrial Bank inside the CITIC building (Guójì Dàshà) on Jiànguó Mén Wài Dàjiē, west of the Friendship Store. For a full list of check-cashing banks, and for emergency card replacement, visit the American Express office at the China World Trade Center, Room 2101 in Tower 1, Jiànguó Mén Dàjiē 1 (Mon–Fri 9am–5:30pm, Sat 9am–noon; ✆ **010/6505-2888**). American Express travel services are handled in Room 417 in the CITS Building at Fùxīng Mén Dàjiē 103 (Mon–Fri 8:30am–5:30pm; ✆ **010/6607-1575**).

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs Larger branches of the **Bank of China** typically exchange cash and traveler's checks on weekdays only, from 9am to 4pm, occasionally with a break for lunch (11:30am–1:30pm). Most central is the branch at the bottom of Wángfǔjǐng Dàjiē, next to the Oriental Plaza, with forex and credit-card cash advances handled at windows 5 to 11 (until 5pm). Other useful branches include those at Fùchéng Mén Nèi Dàjiē 410; on Jiànguó Mén Wàl Dàjiē, west of the Scitech Building; in the Lufthansa Center, next to the Kempinski Hotel; and in Tower 1 of the China World Trade Center. One other bank that offers forex is the **CITIC Industrial Bank** (see "American Express," above). Outside the airport, Bank of China **ATMs** accepting international cards include those outside the Wángfǔjǐng Dàjiē branch mentioned above. Others exist further north on Wángfǔjǐng Dàjiē, outside the Xīn (Sun) Dōng'ān Plaza (24 hr.); on the left just inside the Pacific Century Plaza on Gōngtǐ Běi Lù east of Sānlǐtún (9am–9pm); and adjacent to the Bank of China branch next to the Scitech Building (see above; also 24 hr.). The Citibank ATM east of the International Hotel and the HSBC machine at the entrance to COFCO Plaza, roughly opposite each other on Jiànguó Mén Nèi Dàjiē, are very useful.

Doctors & Dentists For comprehensive care the best choice is **Běijīng United Family Hospital (Hémùjiā Yīyuàn;** ✆ **010/6433-3960**) at Jiàngtái Lù (2 blocks southeast of the Holiday Inn Lido); it is open 24 hours, is staffed with foreign-trained doctors, and has a pharmacy, dental clinic, in- and out-patient care, and ambulance service (see "Emergencies," below). Other reputable health-service providers, both with 24-hour ambulance services, are the **International Medical Center** (✆ **010/6456-1561**), inside the Lufthansa Center; and **International SOS Clinic and Alarm Center** (✆ **010/6492-9111**), in Building C of the BITIC Leasing Center (Xìng Fú Sān Cūn, Běi Lù 1).

Embassies & Consulates Běijīng has two main embassy areas—one surrounding Rìtán Gōngyuán north of Jiànguó Mén Wài Dàjiē, and another in Sānlǐtún north of Gōngtǐ Běi Lù. A third district, future home of the new U.S. Embassy, has sprouted up next to the Hilton Hotel outside the north

section of the East Third Ring Road. Embassies are typically open Monday through Friday from 9am to between 4 and 5pm, with a lunch break from noon to 1:30pm. The **U.S. Embassy** is in Rìtán at Xiùshuǐ Dōng Jiē 2 (American Citizen Services: ✆ **010/6532-3431,** ext. 5344 or, after hours, 010/6532-1910; fax 010/6532-4153). The **Canadian Embassy** is at Dōng Zhí Mén Wài Dàjiē 19 (✆ **010/6532-3536;** beijing-cs@dfait-maeci.gc.ca). The **British Embassy** consular section is in Rìtán at Guānghuá Lù 1 (✆ **010/8593-6076;** fax 010/8529-6081). The **Australian Embassy** is in Sānlǐtún at Dōng Zhí Mén Wài Dàjiē 21 (✆ **010/6532-2331;** fax 010/6532-4605). The **New Zealand Embassy** is in Rìtán at Dōng Èr Jiē 11 (✆ **010/6532-2731,** ext. 220; fax 010/6532-4317).

For onward visas: the **Cambodian Embassy** (in Sānlǐtún at Dōng Zhí Mén Wài Dàjiē; ✆ **010/6532-2790**) offers 1-month visas for ¥300 ($38), processed in 1 to 3 days; the **Laotian Embassy** (in Sānlǐtún at Dōngsì Jiē 11; ✆ **010/6532-1224**) charges U.S. citizens ¥280 ($35) and Canadian citizens ¥336 (C$57) for a 15-day visa, processed in 3 days; the **Mongolian Embassy** (in Rìtán at Xiùshuǐ Běli Jiē 2; ✆ **010/6532-1203**) charges ¥320 ($40) for a 1-month visa, processed in 4 days (but U.S. citizens don't need a visa); and the **Vietnamese Embassy** (in Rìtán at Guānghuá Lù 32; ✆ **010/6532-5415**) charges ¥520 ($65) for a single-entry 1-month visa and ¥1,200 ($150) for a multiple-entry 3-month visa, both taking 3 to 5 days to process. Obtaining a visa at the **Russian Embassy** (in Sānlǐtún at Dōng Zhí Mén Běi Zhōng Jiē 4; ✆ **010/6532-1381**) is notoriously difficult; they now claim you must have a "voucher" from a travel agency (*not* a hotel) in order to be granted a 1-month tourist visa (¥560/$70 for U.S. citizens; ¥400/$50 for everyone else; 5 days to process). Also, in retaliation for new U.S. immigration policies, U.S. citizens now have to fill out an extra interrogation-style form when applying. If you have problems, contact the Běijīng office of **Aeroflot** (1st floor Jīnglún Hotel; ✆ **010/6500-2412**) for help.

Emergencies For medical emergencies and ambulance service 24 hours a day, call the United Family Health Center emergency number at ✆ **010/6433-2345** or the International SOS Alarm Center (✆ **010/6492-9100**).

Internet Access Internet bars in Běijīng are subject to numerous regulations (no one under 18, no smoking, and so on) and are restricted in number. The best bet for affordable Internet access is inside any of the city's various **youth hostels;** the cost is usually ¥10 ($1) per hour. There are two conveniently located Internet bars on the third floor of the Lǎo Chē Zhàn (Old Train Station) shopping center next to Qián Mén. **Qiányì Wǎngluò Kāfēiwū** is open from 9am to 11pm and charges ¥20 ($2.50) per hour in a cafe setting with a full coffee menu. A simpler, nameless place next door, open from 9am to midnight, charges ¥6 (80¢) per hour. The fastest in-room **dial-up** service is **95962** (user name and password 263).

Maps & Books Maps with Chinese characters, English, and/or pinyin can be purchased cheaply (¥5/60¢) from vendors near major sights and in hotel lobbies and bookstores. The best selection can be found inside and immediately to the left at the **Wángfǔjǐng Bookstore** (9am–9pm) at Wángfǔjǐng Dàjiē 218, north of the Oriental Plaza's west entrance.

The best selection of English-language books in Běijīng can be found at the clearly marked **Foreign Languages Bookstore (Wàiwén Shūdiàn;**

9am–8:30pm) at Wángfǔjǐng Dàjiē 235, opposite the Xīn (Sun) Dōng'ān Plaza. Look on the right side of the first floor for China-related nonfiction, glossy *hútòng* photo books, cookbooks, and the full range of Asiapac's cartoon renditions of Chinese classics. Cheap paperback versions of a huge chunk of the English canon, as well as a number of contemporary works, are sold on the third floor. The newsstand on the first floor of the **Friendship Store,** at Jiànguó Mén Wài 17, carries a respectable selection of foreign magazines and newspapers, also available in many five-star hotel lobbies. ***Warning:*** Nearly everything mentioned above is wildly overpriced.

Pharmacies Simple Western remedies are most likely to be found in the lobbies of international five-star hotels and at branches of **Watson's** (on the 1st floor of Full Link Plaza at Cháoyáng Mén Wài Dàjiē 19, and in the basement of the Oriental Plaza at the bottom of Wángfǔjǐng Dàjiē 1; 10am–9pm). For more specific drugs, try the pharmacy in the Běijīng United Family Hospital (see "Doctors & Dentists," above).

Post Office There are numerous post offices across the city, including one a long block north of the Jiànguó Mén metro station on the east side of Jiànguó Mén Běi Dàjiē (8am–6:30pm), one inside the Landmark Tower (next to the Great Wall Sheraton), one next to the Friendship Store on Jiànguó Mén Wài Dàjiē, one on Gōngtǐ Bēi Lù (opposite the Worker's Stadium), and the EMS Post Office (Běijīng Yóuzhèng Sùdì Jú) at the corner of Qián Mén Dōng Dàjiē and Zhèngyì Lù. There is a **FedEx** office at the Oriental Plaza (intersection of Wángfǔjǐng Dàjiē and Cháng'ān Dōng Dàjiē), in Room 107, No. 1 Office Building. **DHL-Sinotrans** has a branch in the Lufthansa Center, and **UPS** is at Guānghuá Lù 12A.

Visa Extensions One-time 30-day extensions of tourist visas are available at the PSB Exit/Entry Division office (✆ **010/8401-5292**) on the south side of the eastern North Third Ring Road, just east of Xiǎojiē Qiáo. The office is open Monday through Saturday from 8:30am to 4:30pm. Extensions take 4 working days to process; bring your passport and two passport photos (these can be taken at the office for ¥30/$4).

Weather For daily weather forecasts, check *China Daily* or CCTV 9, China Central Television's English channel (broadcast in most hotels). There is also a weather hot line (✆ **121**); dial 6 after a minute or so for the report in English (¥3/45¢ per min.).

3 Where to Stay

No other city in mainland China offers the range of accommodations Běijīng does. And with the municipal government's decision in early 2003 to scrap the antiquated foreigner-approved hotel system, the range has expanded even further. The high season in Běijīng is not well-defined, but you should generally expect lower availability and higher rates from mid-May to National Day (Oct 1) and around Chinese New Year (usually late Jan or early Feb). It is usually possible to wrangle discounts of anywhere between 10% and 50% off the rack rate even at these times, although some of the new boutique hotels located in *hútòng* courtyards *(sìhéyuàn)* will refuse to bargain except in the dead of winter.

On short visits the best option is to stay within walking distance of the Forbidden City and Tiān'ān Mén Square, on Wángfǔjǐng Dàjiē or nearby. The

greatest luxury and highest standards of service can be found in the Cháoyáng District. For budget travelers, the new obvious choice is the expanding range of comfortable but affordable hostels buried in the labyrinth of *hútòng* south and west of Qián Mén, with convenient metro and bus access.

Note: The city construction fee (¥6/80¢ per person per day) once levied on all hotel rooms was scrapped in early 2003. Some hotels still seem (or pretend) not to know, so scan your bill carefully upon checkout.

NEAR THE FORBIDDEN CITY & QIÁN MÉN

VERY EXPENSIVE

Běijīng Hotel (Běijīng Fàndiàn) *Overrated* This patchwork behemoth at the bottom of Wángfǔjǐng Dàjiē claims a history of over 100 years, but the main structure wasn't built until 1974, and all charm died with a modern renovation in 2000. The old rooms have now been replaced with spacious but lackluster units offering the same bland brand of luxury found in most government-affiliated hotels. You can get better value for your money up the street at the Grand Hotel.

Dōng Cháng'ān Dàjiē 33, Dōngchéng District. ✆ **010/6513-7766.** Fax 010/6513-7307. business@chinabeijinghotel.com.cn. AE, DC, MC, V. 891 units. ¥2,100 ($263) standard twin (summer discount rate around ¥1,250/$156), plus 15% service charge. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; bar; indoor pool; indoor and outdoor tennis courts; squash courts; exercise room; Jacuzzi; sauna; concierge; tour desk; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Grand Hotel (Běijīng Gùibīnlóu Fàndiàn) The Grand Hotel is a separately managed 10-story 1990 addition to the west end of the Běijīng Hotel complex with marginally better service and a pleasant central atrium beginning on the third floor. Decently sized rooms on the west side offer good views of the Forbidden City, and the location is tough to beat, but as with the Běijīng Hotel, your money is better spent elsewhere.

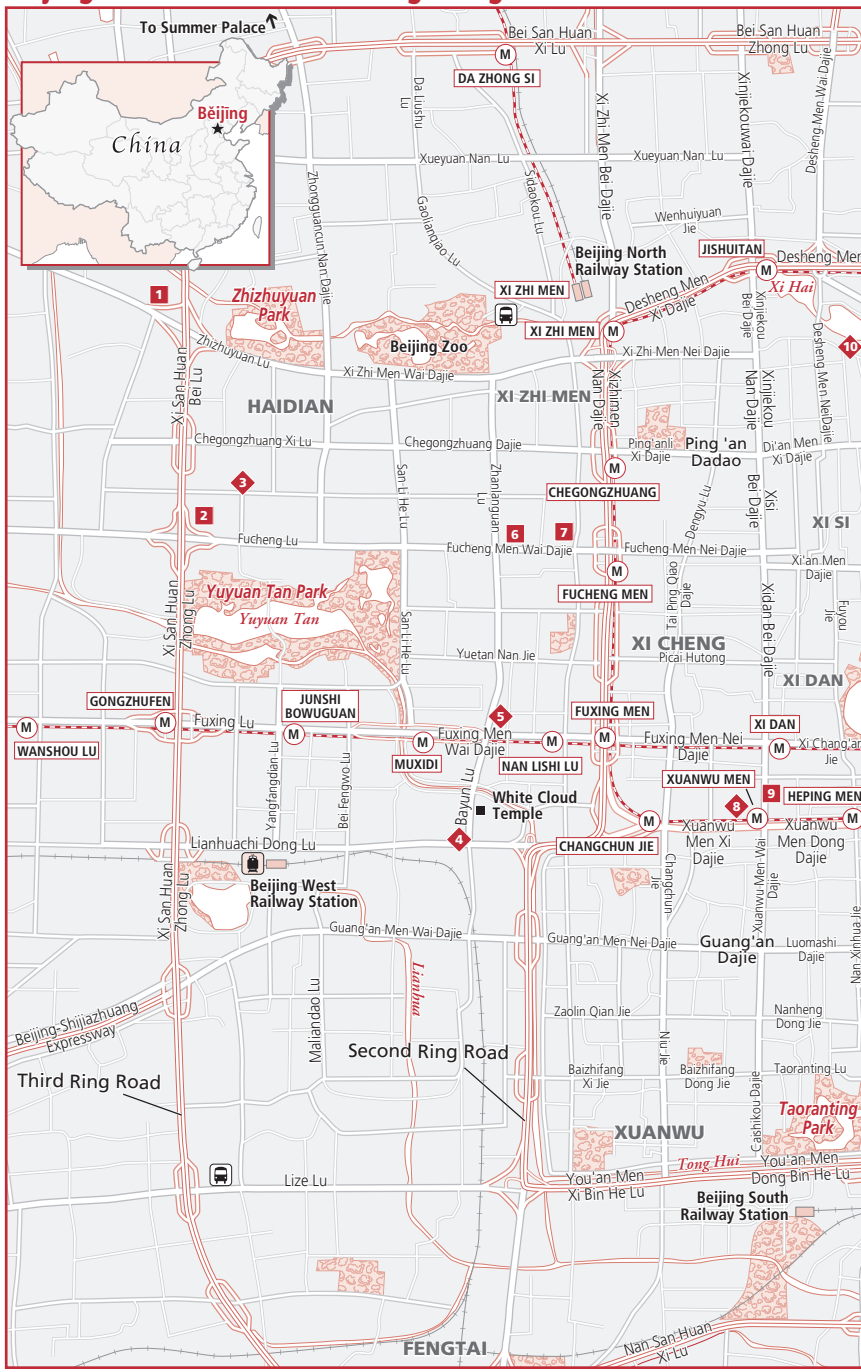
Dōng Cháng'ān Dàjiē 35, Dōngchéng District (at Nánhé Yán). ✆ **010/6513-7788.** Fax 010/6513-0048. www.grandhotelbeijing.com.cn. AE, DC, MC, V. ¥2,200–¥2,400 ($275–$300) standard twin (summer discount rate around ¥1,700/$212), plus 15% service charge. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; 2 bars; indoor pool; exercise room; Jacuzzi; sauna; concierge; tour desk; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; 24-hr. room service, same-day dry cleaning/laundry; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, free broadband Internet access, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

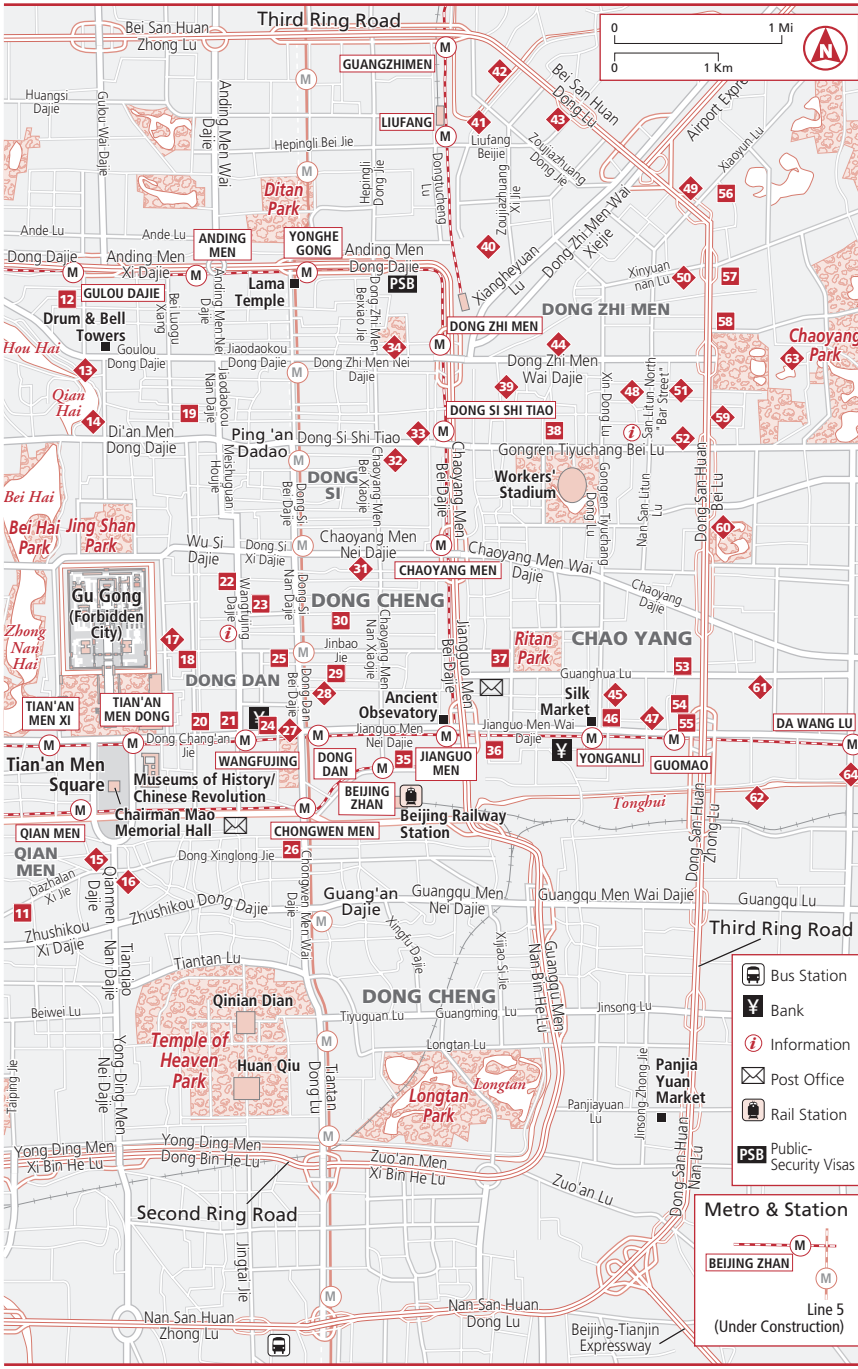
Grand Hyatt (Běijīng Dōngfāng Jūnyùe) ★★ *Kids* The newest luxury hotel in the city also has an excellent location directly over the Wǎngfǔjǐng metro station, at the foot of the capital's most famous shopping street, and within walking distance of the Forbidden City. The palatial curved lobby is theatrically lit and boasts both live music and Běijīng's best chocolate shop. Rooms have the signature Grand Hyatt comfortable modernity, with convenient desktop dataports and free broadband Internet access. Well-equipped bathrooms have separate shower cubicles. Kids and adults alike will have fun with the vast un-Hyatt-like swimming pool, buried among mock-tropical decor under a ceiling of electric stars.

Dōng Cháng'ān Jiē 1, Dōngchéng District (in the Oriental Plaza complex). ✆ **010/8518-1234.** Fax 010/6512-9050. http://beijing.grand.hyatt.com. 531 units. AE, DC, MC, V. ¥2,400 ($300) standard twin. (discount rates around ¥1,760/$220), plus 15% service charge. **Amenities:** 5 restaurants; bar; indoor and children's pools; fitness center; Jacuzzi; sauna; solarium; children's playroom; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; nonsmoking rooms; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, free broadband Internet access, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Palace Hotel (Wángfǔ Fàndiàn) ★★ No other hotel in mainland China can send a Rolls-Royce to collect you from the airport and whisk you to its very

Běijīng Accommodations, Dining & Nightlife




Third Ring Road
Bei San Huan Zhong Lu
GUANGZHIMEN
LIUFANG
Huangsi Dajie
Gulou Wai Dajie
Anding Men Wai Dajie
Hepingli Bei Jie
Hepingli Dong Jie
Dongtucheng Lu
Liufang Beijie
Zoujiazhuang Dong Jie
Zoujiazhuang Xi Jie
Bei San Huan Dong Lu
Airport Expressway
Xiaoyun Lu
Ditan Park
Ande Lu
ANDING MEN
YONGHE GONG
Dong Dajie
Anding Men Xi Dajie
Anding Men Dong Dajie
Xiangheyuan Lu
Dong Zhi Men Wai Xiejie
Xinyuan nan Lu
GULOU DAJIE
Lama Temple
PSB
Drum & Bell Towers
Bei Luogu Xiang
Anding Men Nei Dajie
Beixiao Jie
Dong Zhi Men Nei Dajie
DONG ZHI MEN
Chaoyang Park
Hou Hai
Goulou Dong Dajie
Jiaodaokou Dong Dajie
Jiaodaokou Nan Dajie
Dong Zhi Men Nei Dajie
Dong Zhi Men Wai Dajie
Xin Dong Lu
San Litun North "Bar Street"
Qian Hai
Di'an Men Dong Dajie
DONG SI SHI TIAO
Ping 'an Dadao
Dong Si Shi Tiao
Gongren Tiyuchang Bei Lu
Gongren Tiyuchang Dong Lu
Nan San Litun Lu
Dong San Huan Bei Lu
Bei Hai
Bei Hai Park
Jing Shan Park
Meishuguan Houjie
DONG SI
Chaoyang Men Nei Dajie
Chaoyang Men Bei Dajie
Workers' Stadium
Wu Si Dajie
Dong Si Xi Dajie
Dong Si Nan Dajie
Dong Si Bei Dajie
Chaoyang Men Nei Dajie
CHAOYANG MEN
Chaoyang Men Wai Dajie
Chaoyang Dajie
Gu Gong (Forbidden City)
Wangfujing Dajie
DONG CHENG
Jinbao Jie
Chaoyang Men Nan Xiaojie
Jianguo Men Bei Dajie
Ritan Park
CHAO YANG
Guanghua Lu
Zhong Nan Hai
DONG DAN
Ancient Obsevatory
Silk Market
TIAN'AN MEN XI
TIAN'AN MEN DONG
Dong Chang'an Jie
Jianguo Men Nei Dajie
Jianguo Men Wai Dajie
DA WANG LU
Tian'an Men Square
Museums of History/ Chinese Revolution
Chairman Mao Memorial Hall
WANGFUJING
DONG DAN
JIANGUO MEN
YONGANLI
GUOMAO
BEIJING ZHAN
Beijing Railway Station
Tonghui
Dong San Huan Zhong Lu
QIAN MEN
CHONGWEN MEN
Dong Xinglong Jie
Chongwen Men Wai Dajie
Guang'an Dajie
Guangqu Men Nei Dajie
Guangqu Men Wai Dajie
Guangqu Lu
Dazhalan Xi Jie
Qianmen Nan Dajie
Zhushikou Dong Dajie
Zhushikou Xi Dajie
Tiantan Lu
Tiandiao Nan Dajie
Xinglu Dajie
Xiao Si Jie
Guangqu Men Nan Bin He Lu
Third Ring Road
Qinian Dian
DONG CHENG
Tiyuguan Lu
Guangming Lu
Jinsong Lu
Beiwei Lu
Temple of Heaven Park
Huan Qiu
Tiantan Dong Lu
Longtan Lu
Longtan
Longtan Park
Panjia Yuan Market
Panjiayuan Lu
Jinsong Zhong Jie
Taiping Jie
Yong Ding Men Nei Dajie
Yong Ding Men Xi Bin He Lu
Yong Ding Men Dong Bin He Lu
Zuo'an Men Xi Bin He Lu
Zuo'an Lu
Dong San Huan Nan Lu
Second Ring Road
Jingtai Jie
Nan San Huan Zhong Lu
Nan San Huan Dong Lu
Beijing-Tianjin Expressway
0
1 Mi
0
1 Km
Bus Station
Bank
Information
Post Office
Rail Station
PSB Public-Security Visas
Metro & Station
BEIJING ZHAN
Line 5 (Under Construction)

Běijīng Accommodations, Dining & Nightlife Key

ACCOMMODATIONS

Bamboo Garden Hotel (Zhú Yuán Bīnguán) **12**
竹园宾馆

Běijīng Hotel (Běijīng Fàndiàn) **21**
北京饭店

Běijīng Marriott West (Běijīng Jīnyù Wànháo Fàndiàn) **2**
北京金域万豪酒店

China World Hotel (Zhōngguó Dàfàndiàn) **55**
中国大饭店

Crowne Plaza Běijīng (Běijīng Yīyuàn Huángguān Jiàrì Fàndiàn) **23**
北京艺苑皇冠假日饭店

Cuìmíng Zhuāng Bīnguǎn **18**
翠明庄宾馆

Far East Youth Hostel (Yuán Dōng Qīngnián Lǚshè) **11**
远东青年旅社

Grand Hotel (Běijīng Gùibīnlóu Fàndiàn) **20**
北京贵宾楼饭店

Grand Hyatt (Běijīng Dōngfáng Jūnyùe Dàjiǔdiàn) **24**
北京东方君悦大酒店

Great Wall Sheraton (Cháng Chéng Fàndiàn) **58**
长城饭店

Hǎoyuán Bīnguǎn **29**
好园宾馆

Hotel New Otani (Chángfù Gōng Fàndiàn) **36**
长富宫饭店

Howard Johnson Paragon (Bǎochén Fàndiàn) **35**
宝辰饭店

International Exchange Center (Wàijiāo Xuéyuán Guójì Jiāoliú Zhōngxīn) **6**
外交学院国际交流中心

Jiànguó Hotel (Jiànguó Fàndiàn) **46**
建国饭店

Kempinski Hotel (Kǎibīnsījī Fàndiàn) **57**
凯宾斯基饭店

Kerry Centre Hotel (Jiālǐ Zhōngxīn Fàndiàn) **53**
嘉里中心饭店

Lǐshì Bīnguǎn **30**
礼士宾馆

Lǚsōng Yuán Bīnguǎn **19**
侣松园宾馆

Marco Polo (Mǎgē Bóluó Jiǔdiàn) **9**
玛可脖罗酒店

New World Courtyard Běijīng (Běijīng Xīnshìjiè Wànyí Jiǔdiàn) **26**
北京新世界万怡酒店

Palace Hotel (Wángfǔ Fàndiàn) **25**
王府饭店

Red House (Ruìxiù Bīngǔn) **38**
瑞秀宾馆

Renaissance Běijīng (Guóháng Wànlì Jiǔdiàn) **56**
国航万丽酒店

Shangri-la Běijīng (Běijīng Xiāngélǐlā Fàndiàn) **1**
北京香格里拉饭店

St. Regis Běijīng (Guójì Júlèbù Fàndiàn) **37**
国际俱乐部饭店

State Guest House Presidential Plaza (Guóbīn Jiǔdiàn) **7**
国宾酒店

Traders Hotel Běijīng (Běijīng Guómào Fàndiàn) **54**
北京国贸饭店

Wángfǔjǐng Grand (Wángfǔjǐng Dàjiǔdiàn) **22**
王府井大酒店

RESTAURANTS

Āndiē Ānniáng **63**
俺爹俺娘

Afunti (Āfántí) **31**
阿凡提

Annie's Café (Ānnī Yìdàlì Cāntīng) **63**
安妮意大利餐厅

Běijīng Dàdōng Kǎoyādiàn **60**
北京大董烤鸭店

Be There or Be Square (Bùjiàn Bùsàn) **27**
不见不散

The Courtyard (Sìhéyuàn) **17**
四合院

Chingari (Xíngélǐ) **44**
鑫格里

Danieli's (Dānní'àilì) **37**
丹尼艾丽

Dào Jiā Cháng **42**
到家尝

Dǐng Dǐng Xiāng **39**
鼎鼎香

Flo (Fúlóu) **59**
福楼

Fújiālóu **33**
福家楼

Gǒubùlǐ Bāozi Diàn **15**
够不里包子店

Hàn Kèjiā **14**
汉客家

Hatsune (Yínquán) **61**
隐泉

Hóngjīng Yú **41**
红京鱼

Horizon (Hǎitiāng Gé) **53**
海天阁

Huājiā Yíyuán **34**
花家怡园

Huángchéng Lǎomǎ **62**
皇城老妈

Hùjiāng Xiāngmǎnlóu **32**
沪江香满楼

Lotus in Moonlight (Hètáng Yuèsè Sùshí) **40**
荷塘月色素食

Jing (Jīng) **25**
京

Jiǔhuā Shān **3**
九花山

Justine's (Jiésītīng) **46**
杰斯汀

Kǒng Yǐjǐ Jiǔlóu **10**
孔乙己酒楼

Middle 8th (Zhōng Bā Lóu) **51**
中八楼

Noodle Loft **64**

Nuage (Qìng Yún Lóu) **13**
庆云楼

Old Character Hakka (Lǎo Hànzi Kèjiā Càiguǎn) **48**
老汉字客家菜馆

1001 Nights (Yīqiāyī Yè Cāntīng) **52**
一千一夜餐厅

Otto's Restaurant (Rìchǎng Chá Cāntīng) **28**
日昌茶餐厅

Pamer (Pàmǐ'ěr Shífǔ) **4**
帕米尔食府

Quánjùdé **16**
全聚德

Red Basil (Zǐtiān Jiāo Tàishì Cāntīng) **43**
紫天椒泰式餐厅

Sān Gè Gùizhōrén **45**
三个贵州人

Shànghǎi Fēnwèi Cāntīng **50**
上海风味餐厅

Sìhéxuàn **47**
四和轩

Tàipó Tiānfǔ Shānzhēn **5**
太婆天府山珍

Tiānjīn Báijiǎoyuán **8**
天津百饺园

Yúxiāng Rén Jiā **49**
愉乡人家

central location—the Palace is run by the same people who run Hong Kong's legendary Peninsula Hotel. While not quite as charismatic, the Palace features many of the same luxuries and the same attention to guest comfort, such as bedside controls for almost everything in the room. Deluxe marble bathrooms have separate faucets with sterilized drinking water. The hotel sits at the heart of Běijīng's principal shopping district.

Jīnyú Hútòng 8, Dōngchéng District (at intersection with Dōngdān Běi Dàjiē). ✆ **0800/262-9467** or 010/6512-8899. Fax 010/6512-9050. www.peninsula.com. 530 units. AE, DC, MC, V. ¥2,560 ($340) standard twin (discount rates around ¥1,160/$145), plus 15% service charge. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; indoor pool; fully equipped fitness center; sauna; concierge; tour desk; business center; forex; extensive shopping arcade; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; nonsmoking rooms; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

EXPENSIVE

Crowne Plaza Běijīng (Guójì Yìyuàn Huángguān Fàndiàn) This Wángfǔjǐng institution spawned a litter of imitators in the mid-1990s but feels tired after 12 years of operation. The spacious central atrium underwent a much-needed renovation in mid-2003; management will soon need to do the same for the rooms, comfortable enough but falling apart. A small gallery on the first floor and weekly events in the "art salon" on the mezzanine floor give the hotel a certain credibility with the art world, and its location, close to but sheltered from the commercial madness of Běijīng's central shopping district, is among the best in the city.

Wángfǔjǐng Dàjiē 48, Dōngchéng District (at Dēngshìkǒu Dàjiē). ✆ **010/6513-3388.** Fax 010/6513-2513. www.crowneplaza.com. 382 units. AE, DC, MC, V. ¥1,600 ($200) standard twin (summer discounts around ¥950/$120), plus 15% service charge. Most rates include breakfast. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; tiny indoor swimming pool; small health club with new equipment, sauna, solarium, and underwhelming Jacuzzi; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Hǎoyuán Bīnguǎn Tiny and exclusive, the Hǎoyuán is located in a Qīng-era courtyard house once occupied by Huà Guófēng, Máo's successor as Communist Party chairman. Rooms in the front courtyard are cramped, but those in the sublime rear courtyard (decorated with tree-shaded stone chess tables) are spacious with canopy beds and custom Míng reproduction furniture. The hotel is located on a lane running east off one of the city's trendier shopping streets.

Shǐjiā Hútòng 53, Dōngchéng District (blue sign points way on Dōngdān Běi Dàjiē). ✆ **010/6512-5557.** Fax 010/6525-3179. 19 units. AE, DC, MC, V. ¥585–¥715 ($73–$89) standard twin (discounts extremely rare, even in winter). **Amenities:** Restaurant; bike rental; travel service; Internet room; laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, fridge, hair dryer.

Wángfǔjǐng Grand (Wángfǔjǐng Dàjiǔdiàn) This is one of the better city-center hotels at this price level, with views of the Forbidden City and fresh "superior"-level rooms available for roughly the same rate as a standard room at the Crowne Plaza. Prices are the same on both sides of the hotel; ask for a west-facing unit on one of the higher floors if you want to see the Forbidden City. Standard rooms are usually only ¥50 ($6) cheaper and less recently refurbished. Go for the upgrade.

Wángfǔjǐng Dàjiē 57, Dōngchéng District (south of Cháoyáng Mén Nèi Dàjiē intersection, west side of street). ✆ **010/6522-1188.** Fax 010/6522-3816. www.WangfujingHotel.com. 428 units. AE, DC, MC, V. ¥1,490 ($186) superior twin (summer discount rate around ¥950/$118), plus 15% service charge. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; small indoor pool; exercise room; sauna; concierge; tour desk; business center; forex; salon; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, free broadband Internet access, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Finds In the Red Lantern District

Southwest of Qián Mén, past the mercantile madness of Dà Zhàlán in the *hútòng* that never dreamed of pedicab tour salvation, is where you'll find the **Shǎnxī Xiàng Dì'èr Bīnguǎn** (✆ **010/6303-4609**)—one of Běijīng's most luridly compelling budget hotels. The hotel sits at the north end of Shǎnxī Xiàng (a poorly marked and malodorous lane once at the center of the city's brothel district), and was formerly one of several houses where men of means would go to taste the pleasures of "clouds and rain" prior to 1949. Rooms are arranged on two floors around a central covered courtyard, restored to its original appearance with red columns and walls supporting colorfully painted banisters and roof beams, the latter hung with traditional lanterns. The rooms themselves are tiny and windowless, as befits their original purpose, but they now have air-conditioning, TVs, and bathrooms at a rate of ¥100 ($12) per night. To reach the hotel, walk east from Far East Youth Hostel (see below) and turn left down the second *hútòng* on the right.

MODERATE

Cuìmíng Zhuāng Bīnguǎn This sleepy little three-star, built inside a Republican-era government complex west of Wángfǔjǐng Dàjiē, is just a 10-minute walk east of the Forbidden City. Rooms are smallish, simply but comfortably furnished, and kept very clean. Staff is kinder than in other state-run hotels of this kind.

Nánhé Yán 1, Dōngchéng District (at intersection with Dōng'ān Mén Jiē). ✆ **010/6513-6622.** Fax 010/6525-7387. 134 units. AE, DC, MC, V. ¥600 ($75) standard twin (summer discount rates around ¥480/$60). **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; exercise room; business center; forex; laundry. *In room:* AC, satellite TV, fridge, safe.

INEXPENSIVE

Far East Youth Hostel (Yuǎndōng Qīngnián Lǚshè) ★★ *Finds* The best budget option in Běijīng, bar none. Buried deep inside one of the city's most interesting *hútòng* neighborhoods, and close to the Qián Mén (208) metro station, the Far East gave itself a full makeover in 2002 and now offers comfortable rooms with sparkling new everything at unbeatable rates. The hostel maintains cheaper dorms behind a courtyard house across the street, but units in the main building are far better. A good choice even if you usually stay at mid-range places.

Tiěshù Xié Jiē 113, Xuānwǔ District (follow Dà Zhàlán Jiē west; turn left at fork). ✆ **010/6301-8811,** ext. 3118. Fax 010/6301-8233. 110 units. ¥298 ($37) standard twin (often discounted to ¥200/$25); ¥60–¥75 ($8–$10) dorm. **Amenities:** Restaurant; kitchen; bike rental; travel service; Internet access; self-service laundry. *In room:* AC, TV, fridge.

CHÁOYÁNG DISTRICT (EMBASSY AREAS)

VERY EXPENSIVE

China World Hotel (Zhōngguó Dàfàndiàn) ★★ Already one of the top business hotels in Běijīng, the China World is now among the best Běijīng hotels altogether thanks to a recent top-to-bottom renovation. Refurbished standard rooms are luxuriously modern but somewhat narrow with vaguely objets d'art on display. Service is impeccable, the hotel boasts one of the city's finest fusion restaurants (Aria), and there's a stunning health club with a new oxygen chamber in the basement. The hotel is far from the major sights but has its own metro stop.

Jiànguómén Wài Dàjiē 1, Cháoyáng District. ✆ **010/6405-2266.** Fax 010/6505–0828. www.shangri-la.com. 716 units. AE, DC, MC, V. ¥2,400 ($300) standard twin (discount rates down to ¥1,240/$155), plus 15% service charge. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants plus several more in attached mall; 25m (82-ft.) indoor pool; golf simulator; 3 indoor tennis courts; health club and spa; concierge; business center; forex; salon; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; nonsmoking rooms; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, free broadband Internet access, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Jiànguó Hotel (Jiànguó Fàndiàn) ★ Běijīng's first international four-star, the Jiànguó is considered ancient at 22 years old, but rigorous maintenance and good foreign management have enabled it to continue to compete. Service is competent, rooms are well maintained and comfortable, and there is convenient access to the sights with a metro stop (Yǒng'ān Lǐ) next door. The best rooms are on the ground floor, where French windows open onto small patios and goldfish-stocked pools—relief from Běijīng's bustle. Justine's, just off the lobby, is the city's most elegant French restaurant.

Jiànguó Mén Wài Dàjiē 5, Cháoyáng District (east of Silk St. Market). ✆ **010/6500-2233.** Fax 010/6500-2871. 399 units. AE, DC, MC, V. ¥1,520 ($190) standard twin (summer discount rates around ¥1,080/$135), plus 15% service charge. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; indoor swimming pool; fitness center; Jacuzzi; sauna; concierge; tour desk; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Kempinski Hotel (Kǎibīnsījī Fàndiàn) ★★ The Kempinski's recently refurbished rooms are large, fresh, and comfortable, but the hotel's most attractive feature is the attached Lufthansa Center—a shopping, office, and apartment complex that offers every imaginable service a foreigner could need, including a specialist wine store, medical and dental clinics, and a department store. Expensive but well run, the hotel anchors northern Cháoyáng District and sits at the center of foreign life in the eastern part of the city. Hands-down the best choice for business travelers.

Liàngmǎ Qiáo Lù 50, Cháoyáng District (east of N. Third Ring Rd., near airport expressway junction). ✆ **010/6465-3388.** Fax 010/6465-3366. 486 units. AE, DC, MC, V. ¥2,000 ($270) standard twin (discount rates around ¥1,280/$160), plus 15% service charge. **Amenities:** 8 restaurants; indoor pool; outdoor tennis court; squash courts; fitness center; Jacuzzi; sauna; concierge; free shuttle to airport and city center; Regus business center; forex; extensive shops; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; nonsmoking rooms; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, free broadband Internet access, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Kerry Centre Hotel (Běijīng Jiālǐ Zhōngxīn Fàndiàn) ★★ *Kids* The latest addition to Shangri-La's formidable Běijīng stable, the Kerry Centre is also the most trendy, with a clean, stylish, very modern design to its warm, comfortable, and unusually high-ceilinged rooms. Full facilities, such as proper shower cubicles in bathrooms, free in-room broadband Internet access, and particularly attentive staff, have all helped make the Kerry one of the city's most successful hotels. The playground and ample sports courts make it a good choice for children.

Guānghuá Lù 1, Cháoyáng District (on west side of Kerry Centre complex, north of Guómào metro station). ✆ **010/8529-6999.** Fax 010/8529-6333. www.shangri-la.com. 487 units. ¥1,760 ($220) standard twin, plus 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; indoor 25m (82-ft.) pool; indoor basketball/tennis/badminton courts; fitness center; roof-top track for running and in-line skating; children's play area; concierge; tour desk; business center; forex; extensive shops; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; nonsmoking rooms; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, free broadband Internet access, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Renaissance Běijīng (Guóháng Wànlì Jiǔdiàn) ★ Opened just north of Sānyuán Qiáo in 2003, the Renaissance is understated but elegant in the St. Regis mold (see below) and destined to steal a fair amount of business from

surrounding hotels. Rooms are palatial, but restrained enough not to suffocate. Association with Air China (which owns the building) means guests can check flight schedules on your TVs and, if you're flying with Air China, check in at the hotel desk.

Xiāoyún Lù 36, Cháoyáng District (behind Air China Building, east of Sānyuán Qiáo). ✆ **0800/852-0469** or 010/6468-9999. Fax 010/6468-9913. www.renaissancehotels.com. 212 units. ¥2,080 ($260) standard twin (discount rates in summer ¥960–¥1,320/$120–$165), plus 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; indoor pool; sauna; concierge; business center; forex; salon; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, broadband/dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

St. Regis Běijīng (Běijīng Guójì Jùlèbù Fàndiàn) ★★★ The variety of fine hotels in Běijīng is too wide now to label any one the unequivocal best, but if a choice has to be made, it's still the St. Regis. The lobby, with its white marble and towering palms, is the city's most elegant, the health club is world class, and extremely personalized service is as close to perfect as you'll find in China. If there's a complaint, it's the smallness of the rooms, but all are beautifully appointed with a few pieces of traditional Chinese furniture, Běijīng's deepest bathtubs, and the full range of extras. World leaders and other very important visitors stay here almost exclusively.

Jiànguó Mén Wài Dàjiē 21, Cháoyáng District (west side of Rìtán Park). ✆ **010/6460-6688.** Fax 010/6460–3299. www.stregis.com/beijing. 273 units. AE, DC, MC, V. ¥2,720 ($340) standard twin (summer discount rates ¥1,400–¥1,600/$180–$200), plus 15% service charge. **Amenities:** 5 restaurants; bar; cigar and wine-tasting rooms; gorgeous indoor pool (25m/82 ft.); putting green and driving area; squash courts; exercise room; full-service spa; billiards room; bowling alley; concierge; business center; forex; salon; 24-hr. "butler" service; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, DVD player, broadband/dataport; minibar, hair dryer, safe.

EXPENSIVE

Great Wall Sheraton (Chángchéng Fàndiàn) Běijīng's first international five-star is a dinosaur. Built in 1984 and the largest hotel in the city, it has fallen behind its younger and more agile competition with little hope of catching up. However, it continues to try, with gradual room refurbishment and an admirable renovation of the 21st Floor Restaurant, now one of the finest settings for a Chinese meal in Běijīng. Standard rooms mostly go to tour groups. Deluxe rooms suffer ho-hum decor but are otherwise bright and comfortable.

Běi SānHuán 10, Cháoyáng District (south of Lufthansa Center). ✆ **010/6590–5566** or 0800/810-3088 (toll-free in China only). Fax 010/6590–5938. www.starwood.com. 1,007 units. AE, DC, MC, V. ¥1,920 ($240) standard twin (summer discounts around ¥800/$100), plus 15% service charge. Most rates include breakfast. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; small indoor pool with sun deck; 2 outdoor tennis courts; aging exercise room; Jacuzzi; sauna; concierge; tour desk; business center; forex; shops; salon; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; executive-level rooms. *In room* (deluxe): A/C, satellite TV, broadband/dataport; minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Traders Hotel Běijīng (Běijīng Guómào Fàndiàn) ★ *Value* Crisp service, well-equipped rooms, and free access to the China World Hotel health center, plus rates that are really far too low for all this, combine to make Traders one of Běijīng's best deals. Standard rooms are small and straightforward, designed for the businesspeople who fill the hotel to near capacity all year, but still very comfortable. The only drawback is the tiny size of the bathrooms.

Jiànguó Mén Wài Dàjiē 1 (behind China World Hotel). ✆ **010/6505-2277.** Fax 010/6505–0818. www.shangri-la.com. 552 units. AE, DC, MC, V. ¥1,360 ($170) standard twin (discount rates around ¥820/$102). **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; exercise room; concierge; business center; forex; salon; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; nonsmoking rooms; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C; satellite TV; free broadband Internet access; minibar, hair dryer; safe.

MODERATE

Red House (Ruìxiù Bīnguǎn) ★ *Value* This is the best choice for long stays. Each spacious apartment, partially refurbished in late 2002, comes with bedroom, small kitchen, and large sitting room now with faux hardwood floors and a new couch. Bathrooms are shower-only. Affordable 12-person dorms are a bit crowded but have in-room bathroom and extra sinks.

Chūnxiù Lù 10, Cháoyáng District (block south of Pizza Hut on Dōng Zhí Mén Wài Dàjiē). ✆ **010/6416-7810.** www.redhouse.com.cn. 36 units. AE MC V. ¥500 ($63) 1-bedroom apt (discount rates around ¥300/$38 for long stay). Rates include breakfast. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge.

AROUND THE BACK LAKES

MODERATE

Bamboo Garden Hotel (Zhú Yuán Bīnguǎn) ★★ This is the first major courtyard-style hotel in Běijīng and still one of the most beautiful. Rooms border three courtyards, each filled with rockeries, clusters of bamboo, and covered corridors. Standard rooms in two multistory buildings on opposite ends of the complex are decorated throughout with Míng-style furniture and traditional lamps that cast pleasant shadows on the high ceilings. A restaurant overlooks the rear courtyard; next door is a pleasant bar with a glass-covered fishpond as part of the floor. Slightly more luxurious than the Lǔsōng Yuán (below), but with less character.

Xiǎoshí Qiáo Hútòng 24, Xīchéng District (6th *hútòng* on left walking north on Jiùgǔlóu Dàjiē, west of Drum Tower). ✆ **010/6403-2229.** Fax 010/6401-2633. www.bbgh.com. 40 units. AE, DC, MC, V. ¥480–¥580 ($60–$72) standard twin (discounts rare). **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; concierge; travel service; business center; forex; salon; laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, fridge, free bottled water.

Lǔsōng Yuán Bīnguǎn ★★★ The Lǔsōng Yuán, situated inside a former imperial house down a quaint *hútòng* north of Píng'ān Dàdào and nicely renovated in 2001, is for now the most charming courtyard hotel in Běijīng. Smaller and more intimate than the Bamboo Garden, its rooms have an older feel (despite the renovations) and are fully outfitted with traditional furniture. Comfortable dorms are available in the basement and there's a teahouse next to the lobby.

Bǎnchǎng Hútòng 22, Dōngchéng District (2nd *hútòng* on the left, north of Di'ān Mén Dōng Dàjiē). ✆ **010/6404-0436.** Fax 010/6403-0418. www.the-silk-road.com. 59 units AE, DC, MC, V. ¥480–¥600 ($60–$75) standard twin (summer discounts rare, 40% discounts in winter). **Amenities:** Restaurant (skip the Western breakfast); bike rental; business center with Internet access; laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV.

WEST SECOND RING & BEYOND

EXPENSIVE

Běijīng Marriott West (Běijīng Jīnyù Wànháo Jiǔdiàn) ★ *Value* This is the first full-fledged Marriott in Běijīng, the second in China after the Shěnyáng Marriott, and both are among the country's most opulent hotels. The structure was an apartment building before the Marriott Group took over, so rooms are immense. Eighty percent have Jacuzzi tubs, and all are furnished with sumptuous beds and overstuffed chairs. Guests have free access to the attached Bally fitness center. Good value after the discount, but far from the major sights.

Xī Sān Huán Běi Lù 98, Xīchéng District (in Jīnyù Dàshà, at intersection with Fùchéng Lù). ✆ **010/6872-6699.** Fax 010/6872-7302. www.marriotthotels.com/bjsmc. 155 units. AE, DC, MC, V. ¥2,080 ($260) standard twin (summer discount rates ¥700–¥800/$88–$100), plus 15% service charge. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; health club with indoor pool and tennis courts; bowling center; concierge; business center; forex; salon; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; nonsmoking rooms; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Shangri-La Běijīng (Xiānggélǐlā Fàndiàn) ★ While not as modern, fashionable, or well located as its sister hotels, Běijīng's first Shangri-La property boasts the same high-level anticipated service plus a lush traditional garden and easy access to the Summer Palace. The hotel has undergone a few renovations since its 1987 opening but it's due for another soon. The large rooms are somewhat outdated with very standard furnishings and bathrooms.

Zīzhú Yuàn Lù 29, Hǎidiàn District (northwest corner of Third Ring Rd.). ✆ **010/6841-2211.** Fax 010/6841-8002. www.shangri-la.com. 657 units. AE, DC, MC, V. ¥1,520 ($190) standard twin (discounted rates around ¥910/$114), plus 15% service charge. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; indoor pool; indoor tennis courts; squash courts; indoor basketball court; recently renovated health club with sauna, solarium, exercise room; concierge; tour desk; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; nonsmoking rooms; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, broadband/dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

State Guest Hotel Presidential Plaza (Guóbīn Jiǔdiàn) *Value* Since it was only decided to make the building a hotel partway through construction, it has more than 30 room types, some with odd but interesting arrangements, but all luxuriously appointed with a few pieces of traditional Chinese furniture and spacious, marble-heavy bathrooms. Proximity to the Fùchéng Mén metro station means convenient access to the major sights, but the surrounding neighborhood is a bore. A good choice for the money.

Fùchéng Mén Wài Dàjiē 9, Xīchéng District (block west of Fùchéng Mén metro). ✆ **010/6800-5588.** Fax 010/6800-5888. www.stateguesthotel.com. 500 units. AE, DC, MC, V. ¥1,400 ($175) standard twin (summer discount rates around ¥960/$120), plus 15% service charge. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; indoor pool; exercise room; Jacuzzi; sauna; concierge; business center; forex; salon; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

INEXPENSIVE

International Exchange Center (Wàijiāo Xuéyuàn Guójì Jiāoliú Zhōngxīn) ★ *Finds* This seldom-exploited international students' building on the Foreign Affairs College campus offers freshly refurbished dorm-style twins and large apartments at reasonable daily rates. The apartments have kitchens and washing machines, and regular rooms come with sparkling private bathrooms. There's a well-equipped self-catering kitchen on each floor. The building is located on several useful bus routes.

Zhǎnlǎnguǎn Lù 24, Xīchéng District (in newish gray concrete apt structure behind main campus building). ✆ **010/6832-3000.** Fax 010/6832-2900. faciec@mx.cei.gov.cn. 170 units. ¥195 ($24) standard twin; ¥500 ($63) large apartment (discounts for long stay). *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, fridge upon request.

BĚIJĪNG STATION & SOUTH

EXPENSIVE

The Marco Polo (Mǎgē Bóluó Jiǔdiàn) ★★ *Value* Newly opened with a lavish marble lobby and an art-filled main stairwell, the Marco Polo is midsize but has the flavor of a boutique hotel. Rooms are among the city's largest, similar in style to rooms at the St. Regis but at much lower prices. The hotel is quiet, yet it's conveniently located in the southeastern corner of Xīchéng District, within walking distance of the Xī Dān and Xuānwǔ Mén metro stations.

Xuānwǔ Mén Nèi Dàjiē 6, Xīchéng District (just south of Xī Dān metro stop). ✆ **010/6603-6688.** Fax 010/6603-1488. www.marcopolohotels.com. 296 units. AE, DC, MC, V. ¥1,360 ($170) standard twin (discount rates ¥820/$102), plus 15% service charge. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; indoor pool; fitness center; concierge; tour desk; business center; forex; shops; salon; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, broadband/dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Airport Hotels

There are plenty of options here, all with free shuttle services. The most pleasant choice is the **Sino-Swiss Hotel** ★ (Guódū Dàfàndiàn; ✆ **010/6456-5588;** fax 010/6456-1588; www.sino-swisshotel.com), formerly a Mövenpick, with large rooms and queen beds for around ¥830 ($104) after discount. Guests have free access to a pleasant resort-style pool complex, and regular shuttles go the airport (10 min.) and downtown. Just south of the airport and almost within walking distance is the very basic **Air China Hotel** (Guóháng Bīnguǎn; ✆ **010/6456-3440;** standard twins ¥260–¥320/$33–$40). The **Kempinski Hotel** (see above), near the Third Ring Road, also has free shuttle service to the airport.

New World Courtyard Běijīng (Běijīng Xīnshìjiè Wànyí Jiǔdiàn) *Kids*
This four-star Marriott-managed hotel opened in 1998 and is still among the better options in the southern part of the city, though that isn't saying much. Rooms are plainly furnished but comfortable, and higher units on the northwest side have partial views of the Forbidden City. Service is competent. The Chóngwén Mén metro stop is conveniently nearby. Children will enjoy the pool, rooftop garden, and playground.

Chóngwén Mén Wài Dàjiē 3C, Chóngwén District (behind New World Shopping center). ✆ **010/6708-8031.** Fax 010/6708-1808. www.courtyard.com/BJSCY. 293 units. AE, DC, MC, V. ¥1,580 ($198) "deluxe" twin (summer promotions at ¥720/$90 w/free breakfast), plus 15% service charge. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; small bakery; bar; indoor pool; exercise room; sauna; children's playground; concierge; business center; forex; salon; 24-hr. room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

MODERATE

Howard Johnson Paragon Hotel (Bǎochén Fàndiàn) Already the nicest hotel near the Běijīng Railway Station, the Paragon had a minor refurbishment when HoJo took over and is now somewhat better equipped. Standard rooms are small and simply furnished (but outdated); still, it's pleasant enough for the price. Deals are possible on executive-level rooms.

Jiànguó Mén Nèi Dàjiē (Jiǎ) 18, Dōngchéng District (north of eastern Běijīng Zhàn footbridge). ✆ **010/6526-6688.** Fax 010/6527-4060. www.hojochina.com. 280 units. AE, DC, MC, V. ¥656 ($82) standard twin (summer discounts 10%–20%), plus 15% service charge. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; outdoor tennis court; exercise room; sauna; bowling center; children's play room; concierge; business center; forex; salon; room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV w/pay movies, broadband (6th floor and up), minibar, hair dryer, safe.

4 Where to Dine

Too many of Běijīng's restaurants open and close in any given month to offer an accurate count, but it is difficult to imagine a city with more eateries per square mile, or a more exhaustive variety of Chinese cuisines.

The short life span of the average restaurant in Běijīng can create headaches (for guidebook writers, in particular), but the upside is a dynamic culinary environment where establishments that manage to stick around have generally earned the right to exist.

Food trends sweep through the city like tornadoes through Kansas. A few years ago it was Cultural Revolution nostalgia dishes, then fish and sweet sauces

from Shànghǎi, and now yuppified minority food from Yúnnán. Tomorrow it will be something else. See the expatriate periodicals—*City Weekend* and *that's Beijing*—for notes on the latest craze.

Proper foreign food is now widely available at generally reasonable prices, so there's no reason to rely on your hotel for something non-Chinese. Foreign **fast-food** and other well-known food and beverage chains, most of them American, blanket the city (if you're desperately hungry and too tired to find anything else). KFC and McDonald's are ubiquitous, and a stable of Délifrance outlets (one each in Xīn Dōng'ān Plaza and Lufthansa Center) are convenient for breakfast. For cheap sandwiches, there are numerous Subway chains, Schlotsky's Delis (in the Oriental Plaza and China World Trade Center), the highly recommended Super 24 (halfway up Sānlǐtún North Bar St.), and Sammie's (next to the Silk St. Market). Among sit-down options are Pizza Hut, TGI Friday's, Henry J. Beans, and the Běijīng Hard Rock Cafe (check *City Weekend* for location details).

You can buy basic **groceries** and Chinese-style **snacks** at local markets and at the *xiǎomàibù* ("little-things-to-buy units") found nearly everywhere. Several fully stocked **supermarkets** and a handful of smaller grocers now carry imported wine and cheese, junk food, Newcastle Brown Ale, and just about anything else you could want, albeit at inflated prices. Supermarkets include one in the basement of the Lufthansa Center, and the CRC in the basement of the China World Trade Center. The Hépíng Market, in the first major alley on the left as you walk up Sānlǐtún Bar Street, has sliced meats, rare Western vegetables, and a full selection of familiar breakfast cereals; much the same can be found at Jenny Lou's near Cháoyáng Park west gate. Among **delis and bakeries,** one of the best is the Kempi Deli (inside the Lufthansa Center) with good crusty-bread sandwiches; also try Charlotte's Butchery and Delicatessen (Cháoyáng Park west gate).

Tour groups and those visiting expat friends tend to get trotted to restaurants with absurd prices and unappetizing food, such as those supposedly specializing in "imperial" cuisine. Fresher, better choices are set out below, but information on all the showpiece eateries (Fǎngshàn, Lì Family Restaurant, Red Capital Club) can be found in the expat magazines. For restaurant locations, see the map on p. 78.

AROUND WÁNGFǓJǏNG DÀJIĒ

VERY EXPENSIVE

The Courtyard (Sìhéyuàn) ★★ FUSION The Courtyard wins points for its setting in a restored courtyard-style house next to the Forbidden City, with a bright modern interior that doubles as an art gallery. Try the signature cashew-crusted lamb chops or the grilled chicken breast in lemon-grass curry coconut sauce. The wine list is the most comprehensive this side of Hong Kong, and there's an intimate cigar lounge upstairs, with views across the Forbidden City moat. Sunday brunch is a deal at ¥150 ($19) for three courses.

Dōnghuá Mén Lù 95, on north side of street. ✆ **010/6526-8883.** Reservations recommended on weekends. Main courses ¥160–¥320 ($20–$40). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 6–10:30pm; Sun 11am–2pm.

Jing ★★ FUSION With the most stylish interior of any restaurant in Běijīng, Jing has plenty of visual entertainment—a glass staircase, semi-private rooms surrounded by circular curtains of chains, wide-open kitchens, and a video art installation that shows snatches of Běijīng life. Nicely crafted fusion dishes lean more to the Asian side than those at the Courtyard (see above). The tandoor sampler (lamb, chicken, and swordfish) is a must. Also try the Vietnamese prawns served with spiced nan bread and the smoked salmon with bonito-crusted green beans.

Jīnyú Hútòng 8, in Palace Hotel basement. ✆ **010/6523-0175.** Meal for 2 ¥400–¥600 ($50–$75). AE, DC, MC, V. 5:30–11:30pm.

EXPENSIVE

Quánjùdé *Overrated* BĚIJĪNG Běijīng's most famous purveyor of roast duck opened in 1864, and it must have been good at one time to survive so long. Every important state guest from Castro to Yanni has been dragged here, but regular visitors can find better, cheaper duck elsewhere (see "Běijīng Dàdǒng Kǎoyā Diàn," below). Whatever you do, avoid the awful carry-out fast-food duck now dispensed at the front.

Qián Mén Dàjiē 32. ✆ **010/6511-2418.** Duck sets (with pancakes, condiments, and soup) ¥168 ($21) and up. No credit cards. 11am–1:30pm and 4:45–8pm.

MODERATE

Be There or Be Square (Bújiàn Búsàn) HONG KONG This trendy Hong Kong–style cafe with hip warehouse-style decor serves all the Westernized Cantonese classics: BBQ pork with rice, black bean spare ribs, beef with rice noodles, and many, many others. There's also a selection of vaguely Western breakfast items. Another branch in the Henderson Center (north of Běijīng Zhàn) is open 24 hours a day.

Basement of Oriental Plaza, at far eastern end. ✆ **010/8518-6518.** Main courses ¥20–¥40 ($3–$5). No credit cards. 9am–9pm.

Otto's Restaurant (Rìchāng Chá Cāntīng) ★ HONG KONG Otto's is authentic Hong Kong prole dining, down to the shouts, smoke, and indecipherable wall-mounted menu. The environment may be jarring and the staff too busy to care, but the food is tremendous, especially the range of *bāozǎi* (clay pot) rice dishes; try the *làwèi huájī bāozǎifàn,* a mix of salty-sweet sausage and chicken. Also good, but messy, are the *suànxiāng jīchì* (paper-wrapped garlic chicken wings). A second, sterilized branch with limited hours has opened at the west gate of Cháoyáng Park, but this is the one that draws around-the-clock crowds.

Dōng Dān Dàjiē 72 (just inside small alley past a movie theater on east side of street). ✆ **010/6525-1783.** Meal for 2 ¥60–¥80 ($8–$10). No credit cards. Open 24 hr.

Value Chinese on the Cheap

Affordable Chinese food is everywhere in Běijīng, and not all of the places that provide it are an offense to Western hygiene standards. Adequately clean **Chinese fast-food** restaurants include Yǒnghé Dàwáng (with KFC-style sign) and Mǎlán noodle outlets (marked with a Chicago Bulls–style graphic). A better option is the **point-to-order food courts** on the top or bottom floors of almost every large shopping center. The food court in the basement of the Oriental Plaza, requiring purchase of a pre-paid card which you use to pay for food at each stall, is the most extensive. For late-night dining, a favorite Běijīng pastime, try one of the **night markets** at Dōnghuá Mén (just off Wángfǔjǐng Dàjiē opposite the Xīn Dōng'ān Plaza) and on Lóngfú Sì Jiē (north of Wángfǔjǐng Dàjiē next to the Airlines Ticketing Hall). The famous 24-hour food street on Dōng Zhí Mén Nèi Dàjiē, locally known as **Ghost Street (Guǐ Jiē),** is now much reduced, but dozens of eateries still offer hot pot, *málà lóngxiā* (spicy crayfish), and home-style fare through the lantern-lit night.

CHÁOYÁNG DISTRICT (NORTH)

EXPENSIVE

Chingari (Xīngélǐ) INDIAN If it weren't for the half-hearted decor and dance-club pretensions, Chingari would easily be the best Indian restaurant in town. This is where Běijīng's Indian residents come to eat. The tandoori chicken is as tender and flavorful as it comes this far north of India. The band starts playing at 8:30pm. Get here well before then.

Dōng Zhí Mén Wài Dàjiē 27 (at intersection with Liàngmǎhé Nán Lù), 4th floor, above Pizza Hut. ✆ **010/8448-3690** or 010/8448-3691. Meal for 2 ¥180–¥250 ($23–$31). No credit cards. 11:30am–2:30pm and 5:30–10:30pm (closes at midnight Fri).

Flo (Fúlóu) ★ *Value* FRENCH Flo occupies the front of a rather flashy building, all balustrades and staircases, with an (inaudible) nightclub at the rear. The menu is straightforward French favorites all done well: smoked salmon salad with poached egg, pan-fried rib short loin veal with mushrooms, and the chef's specialty hot goose liver with apple. This place is reliable and offers good value.

Dōng Sān Huán Běi Lù 12 (south of the Great Wall Sheraton). ✆ **010/6595-5139.** Main courses ¥110–¥140 ($11–$14). Set lunch ¥88 ($11). AE, DC, MC, V. 11am–2.30pm and 5.30–10pm.

1001 Nights (Yìqiānlíngyī Yè) MIDDLE EASTERN This may no longer be the only Middle Eastern restaurant in Běijīng, but it's still the best. Fresh-baked pita bread goes nicely with plates of baba ghanouj and hummus. Outdoor seating is pleasant on summer nights, and puts you out of range of the ear-bursting music that accompanies the nightly belly-dancing shows.

East end of Gōngtǐ Běi Lù, opposite Great Dragon Hotel. ✆ **010/6532-4050.** Meal for 2 ¥200–¥250 ($25–$31). No credit cards. 11am–2am.

MODERATE

Annie's Café (Ānnī Yìdàlì Cāntīng) ★ *Value* ITALIAN Casual, cozy, and tremendously welcoming, Annie's is the hands-down favorite for affordable Italian fare in Běijīng. Wood-fired pizzas are the most popular item, but also try the baked *gnocchi gratinate* with tomato and broccoli, or the chicken ravioli. The staff is the city's friendliest.

Cháoyáng Gōngyuán Xī Mén. ✆ **010/6591-1931.** AE, DC, MC, V. Main courses ¥40–¥80 ($5–$10). No credit cards. 11:30am–11pm.

Ānyuán No. 5 (Ānyuán Wǔ Hào Cāntīng) YÚNNÁN With its minimalist decor and remote location, this is the height (or nadir) of the überhip minority food trend that has dominated Běijīng of late. Food is inconsistent but colorful and beautifully presented. The best dish is the *mǐlà luófěi yú,* a mix of diced deep-fried fish, green onion, garlic, and Yúnnán red peppers.

In Yàyùn Cūn, 2nd floor of Ānyuán Běilǐ 5 (50m/164 ft. north of intersection with Huìzhōng Běi Lù). ✆ **010/6497-9173.** Meal for 2 ¥100–¥120 ($12–$15). No credit cards. 11am–10pm.

Běijīng Dàdǒng Kǎoyā Diàn ★★ BĚIJĪNG This restaurant claims to use a special method to reduce the amount of fat in its birds, although it seems unlikely that duck this flavorful could possibly be good for you. Whole (¥98/$12) and half (¥49/$5) ducks both come with a nice plain broth soup made from the parts you don't eat. The place is clean and classy, and has a separate nonsmoking room.

Tuánjié Hú Běikǒu 3, on east side of E. Third Ring Rd. (north of Tuánjié Hú Park). ✆ **010/6582-2892.** English menu. Meal for 2 (including half duck) ¥80–¥100 ($10–$12). No credit cards. 8am–noon and 1:30–5pm.

Hóngjīng Yú *Finds* SÌCHUĀN This hard-to-find, consistently crowded shack of a Sìchuān restaurant serves Běijīng's best *shuǐzhǔ yú* (slices of tender grass carp boiled in a spicy broth with numbing black peppercorns and hot peppers). Heaven if you like spice.

In Xībàhé area (50m/164 ft. to left of Běijīng Chóngqìng Fàndiàn). ✆ **010/6402-4776.** Meal for 2 ¥60–¥80 ($8–$10). No credit cards. 11am–10:30pm. Head northwest on Zuǒjiāzhuāng Dōng Jiē; take the 1st left after bridge.

Lotus in Moonlight (Hétáng Yuèsè Sùshí) ★ VEGETARIAN Lotus in Moonlight's well-prepared, honest vegetable and tofu dishes are a nice departure from the imitation meat offerings that previously defined vegetarian Chinese cuisine in the city. Fake chicken and fish, engineered from combinations of soy and taro, are still available here, but with less oil and more flavor than in other meat-free restaurants.

Building 12, Liǔfāng Nán Lǐ, in Dōng Zhí Mén Wài area (just outside Second Ring Rd.). ✆ **010/6465-3299.** Meal for 2 ¥80–¥120 ($10–$15). No credit cards. 11am–2pm and 5–9pm.

Middle 8th (Zhōng Bā Lóu) YÚNNÁN This is another posh Yúnnán restaurant, less stylish than Ānyuán No. 5 (see above), but more conveniently located in the Sānlǐtún bar district. Once again, the attraction is visual, with spicy red dishes on black glazed plates setting off the green tablecloths. Try the tender braised spare ribs in hot pepper sauce, or the stewed chicken and papaya, a pleasant mix of spicy and sour.

Dōng Sānlǐtún Zhōng Jiē 8, east off North Bar St. ✆ **010/6413-0629.** Meal for 2 ¥80–¥100 ($10–$12). No credit cards. 11am–2pm and 5–10pm.

Old Character Hakka (LǎoHànzì Kèjiā Càiguǎn) ★★★ HAKKA This is the original of a pair of nearly identical restaurants whose art-rustic interiors and deft kitchens have taken a traditionally marginal cuisine and made it the center of food fashion in Běijīng. Hakka cuisine is hard to define vis-à-vis other styles, but ask regular patrons of these restaurants to explain the difference and most will give a quick answer: It's better. The *yánjú xiā* (shrimp skewers served in rock salt) and *lǎncài sìjìdòu* (diced green beans with ground pork) are both divine. The one dish you'll find on every table is *mìzhì zhǐbāo lúyú,* "secret recipe paper-wrapped fish"—tender and nearly boneless, in a sweet sauce you'll want to drink.

Sānlǐtún Běi Jiē (walking north on North Bar St., take 2nd left, then 1st right). ✆ **010/6415-3376.** Meal for 2 ¥80–¥100 ($10–$12). No credit cards. 11:30am–2pm and 5:30–11pm.

Yúxiāng Rénjiā SÌCHUĀN This chain of busy restaurants has a mock-village decor and a comprehensive selection of real Sìchuān dishes, slightly heavy on the oil but as flavorful as anything found outside Sìchuān itself. Spicy familiars are all here and all nicely done, but also try at least one of the chain's worthwhile signatures—smoked duck *(zhāngchá yā)* or "stewed chicken with Grandma's sauce" *(lǎogānmā shāo jī).*

Branches: On east side of northeast Third Ring Rd., near intersection with Xiāoyún Lù (✆ **010/8451-0380;** 11am–3pm and 5:30–10pm); on 5th floor of the Liánhé Dàshà, behind the Foreign Ministry Building just off Third Ring Rd. at Cháoyáng Mén Wài Dàjiē 20 (✆ 010/6588-3841; 11am–10:30pm). Meal for 2 ¥80–¥100 ($10–$12). No credit cards.

INEXPENSIVE

Āndiē Ānniáng *Finds* HOME-STYLE This charming little restaurant is justifiably famous for its immense *bāozi* (stuffed buns): Try the *zhūròu báicài bāozi* (pork and cabbage filling) and pair it with some of the infused vinegar *(làbā cù)*

from the pots of preserved garlic that line the walls. The meat pies *(ròudīng báicài xiànbǐng)* are also worth a try.

Cháoyáng Gōngyuán Xī Mén (next to Cháoyáng Park ticket booth). ✆ **010/6591-0231.** Meal for 2 ¥40–¥60 ($5–$8). No credit cards. 10am–2am.

Dào Jiā Cháng ★ BĚIJĪNG Chaos. Dào Jiā Cháng is a bit too hyperbolic to be called authentic Běijīng dining, but it comes close. The best part is the servers, who rush about like madmen in their traditional smocks, pouring tea and clearing tables with controlled, smiling fury. Try the city's choicest *jīngjiàng ròusī* (shredded pork rolled in tofu skin with scallion) and a respectable *jiàngshāo qiézi* (diced eggplant in soy-based sauce). If you think you're up to *real* Běijīng food, try the pungent *yángróu má dòufu,* a mound of mashed tofu and whole soybeans drizzled in "lamb oil."

Guāngxī Mén Běilǐ 20, in Xībāhé area northeast of the Chóngqìng Fàndiàn (look for plaster Old Běijīng couple in window). ✆ **010/6422-1078.** Meal for 2 ¥40–¥60 ($5–$8). No credit cards. 10:30am–2pm and 4:30–9pm.

CHÁOYÁNG DISTRICT (SOUTH)

VERY EXPENSIVE

Aria (Ālìyǎ) ★★★ FUSION This is one of the most thoroughly satisfying dining experiences in Běijīng, from *amuse-bouche* to dessert. The dining room, reached by spiral wooden staircase from a bustling bar, has a comforting clubby atmosphere. All courses come with convenient suggestions for accompanying wines, available by the glass. Highly recommended specialties include a melt-in-the-mouth braised pig cheek, and truffle polenta with Turkish fig jam and sherry vinegar jus.

Jiànguó Mén Wài Dàjiē, inside the China World Hotel. ✆ **010/6505-2266.** Reservations recommended on weekends. Main courses ¥80–¥200 ($10–$25). AE, DC, MC, V. 11am–midnight.

Danieli's (Dānní'àilì) ★★ ITALIAN This is potentially Běijīng's finest Italian restaurant. An extensive menu borrows elements from all parts of the boot, with the emphasis on authenticity rather than innovation. Highlights are the tomato and artichoke risotto with a generous sprinkling of truffle oil, and the tender and very flavorful rack of lamb seasoned with fresh thyme. Food, service, and decor all sit somewhat uncomfortably between casual bistro and something more formal—this place will be even better once it decides what it wants to be. The wine list is among the city's best.

Jiànguó Mén Wài Dàjiē 21, on 2nd floor of St. Regis Hotel. ✆ **010/6460-6688,** ext. 2441 or 1440. Main courses ¥100–¥250 ($12–$31). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:30am–2pm and 6–10pm; Sat–Sun 6–10pm only.

Justine's (Jiésītīng) ★★ FRENCH Justine's is the oldest and most elegant French restaurant in Běijīng, with fully set tables that glitter in the soft light of low-hanging chandeliers. Don't miss the silky-smooth goose liver terrine or the fricassee of Bresse chicken with wild rice, tender and flavorful in a sauce made from Lìjiāng morel mushrooms. Service is nearly impeccable and there's a generously stocked by-the-glass wine cart. The set-menu "business lunch" is an incredible steal at ¥138 ($17). Otherwise, expect to pay dearly.

Jiànguó Mén Wài Dàjiē 5 (inside the Jiànguó Hotel). ✆ **010/6500-2233,** ext. 8039. Main courses ¥120–¥230 ($15–$29). AE, DC, MC, V. 6:30–9:30am, noon–2:30pm, and 6–10:30pm.

Shànghǎi Fēngwèi Cāntīng ★★ SHÀNGHǍI This is one of the most authentic and lavish Shànghǎi restaurants in Běijīng, set inside an elaborate faux-forest interior with waterfalls and private dining nooks. The chef specializes in

hairy crab (July–Dec) and light, flavorful stir-fried vegetables. Dishes aren't really worth the price, but the setting is. Book a table downstairs well in advance.

Xīnyuán Nán Lù 2, inside the Kūnlún Hotel (block west of E. Third Ring Rd.). ✆ **010/6590-3388.** Reservations essential. Meal for 2 ¥400–¥480 ($50–$60). AE, DC, MC, V. 11:30am–2pm and 5:30–9:30pm.

EXPENSIVE

Hatsune (Yīnquán) ★★ JAPANESE Hatsune is sushi sacrilege via Northern California, with stylish glass-and-sand decor and a list of innovative rolls long and elaborate enough to drive serious raw fish traditionalists to ritual suicide. Nearly every roll is a delight, particularly the 119 Roll—spicy-sweet with bright red tuna inside and out. Avoid the Běijīng Roll, a roast duck and "special" sauce gimmick.

Guānghuá Dōng Lù, Héqiáo Dàshà C (4 blocks east of Kerry Centre, opposite Petro China building). ✆ **010/6581-3939.** Meal for 2 ¥200–¥250 ($25–$31). Mon–Fri lunch set meals ¥65 ($8); weekend lunch buffet ¥150 ($19). No credit cards. 11:30am–2pm and 5–10pm.

Horizon (Hǎitiān Gé) *Value* CANTONESE Horizon is one of the finest and more sumptuously decorated Cantonese restaurants in Běijīng, with surprisingly reasonable prices and the city's best deal on dim sum. Shark's fin is available for those looking to impress business partners, but there are many cheaper and tastier dishes. Recommended are the stewed beef and tofu in XO sauce, a nicely presented fried mandarin fish, and the subtle sweet-corn soup with crab. The weekend all-you-can-eat dim sum lunch is only ¥98 ($12) for two.

Inside Kerry Centre Mall, near rear entrance of Kerry Centre Hotel. ✆ **010/8529-6999.** Meal for 2 ¥200–¥300 ($25–$38). AE, DC, MC, V. 11:30am–2:30pm and 5:30–10pm.

Huángchéng Lǎomā ★ HOT POT This is among Běijīng's largest and most agreeably decorated hot-pot restaurants, and the only one that can reasonably charge such upmarket rates. Their special ingredient is "Lǎo Mā's beef," a magical meat that stays tender no matter how long you boil it. Order the split *yuānyāng* pot, with both spicy broth and mild *wǔyútáng* (five fish soup) in different compartments, or risk overheating your tongue.

Dàběiyáo Nán Qìngfēngzhá Hòu Jiē 39, south of China World Trade Center and Motorola building (walk south along E. Third Ring Rd. and turn left after crossing river). ✆ **010/6779-3369.** English menu. Meal for 2 ¥180–¥200 ($22–$25). No credit cards. 10am–11pm.

MODERATE

Dǐng Dǐng Xiāng *Finds* HOT POT This Mongolian-style mutton hot-pot restaurant is tremendously and justifiably popular for its dipping sauce *(jīnpái tiáoliào),* a flavorful sesame sauce so thick they have to dish it out with ice cream scoops. Large plates of fresh sliced lamb *(yángròu)* are surprisingly cheap; other options include beef *(niú ròu),* spinach *(bōcài),* and sliced winter melon *(dōngguā piàn).*

Dōng Zhí Mén Wài Dōng Jiē 14, opposite Dōnghuán Guǎngchǎng (in alley across from Guǎngdōng Development Bank). ✆ **010/6417-2546.** Meal for 2 ¥80–¥100 ($10–$12). No credit cards. 11am–10pm.

Noodle Loft (Miànkù Shānxī Shíyì) ★ SHĀNXĪ Genuine Shānxī cuisine—defined by a liberal use of vinegar and a wide, somewhat strange variety of noodles—is seldom found outside Shānxī Province itself, and never in such ultramodern surroundings. Highlights include *yī bǎ zhuā* (fried wheat cakes with chives) and *qiáo miàn māo ěrduo* (cat's ear–shaped pasta stir-fried with chopped meat).

Dàwàng Lù 20, in the new Soho District (east of China World Trade Center). ✆ **010/6774-9950.** English menu. Meal for 2 ¥80–¥100 ($10–$12). No credit cards. 11am–2:30pm and 5:30–10:30pm.

Sān Gè Guìzhōurén GUÌZHŌU Slightly yuppified Miáo minority food is served in a bright minimalist Chinese setting. Dishes tend to be spicy and colorful, with an interesting roughness. Try the Miáo-style peppermint lamb in table-top hot pot (highly recommended), or the "sour and wot meat luinere vegerable[sic]," a mix of jalapeño-like peppers and dried chilies stir-fried with sliced pork—not as spicy as it sounds. ***Note:*** Items listed on the menu as "vegetarian" are not.

Guānghuá Xī Lù 3 (take a left down alley north of Mexican Wave, look for blue sign). ✆ **010/6507-4761.** Meal for 2 ¥80–¥100 ($10–$12). No credit cards. 10:30am–2:30pm and 5:30–10:30pm.

Sìhéxuān BĚIJĪNG This cluttered little restaurant has a slightly more than token Old Běijīng interior and a wide, constantly changing range of typical Běijīng snacks. Some items are listed on the English menu, while others are rolled through the restaurant dim sum–style on a cart. This is the best way to sample street food without fretting over hygiene.

Jiànguó Mén Wài Dàjiē 3, 4th floor of Jīnglún Hotel. ✆ **010/6500-2266,** ext. 8116. Meal for 2 ¥50–¥100 ($6–$12). AE, DC, MC, V. 11:30am–2pm and 5:30–10pm.

BACK LAKES & DŌNG CHÉNG

EXPENSIVE

Afunti (Āfántí) UIGHUR Afunti is now more tourist attraction than restaurant, famous for its post-dinner music shows—sometimes Uighur, sometimes Latin—which almost invariably lead to restaurant-wide table dancing. The food is still good, although now very overpriced. Try the roasted chicken skewers and any number of hearty noodle dishes. Get there early or risk having your food stomped.

Hòuguǎibàng Hútòng 2A, just off Cháoyáng Mén Nèi Dàjiē (west of Cháoyáng Mén Xiǎo Jiē intersection). ✆ **010/6527-2288.** Reservations recommended on weekends. English menu. Meal for 2 ¥200–¥250 ($25–$31). AE, MC, V. 11am–midnight (later on weekends).

Nuage (Qìng Yún Lóu) ★★ VIETNAMESE Lake views from this restaurant's upstairs windows are matched only by its hallucinatory Hanoi-inspired interior, with red lanterns, reed curtains, and a long silver dragon snaking up the rear staircase. Food is almost as impressive: The *xiāngcǎo cuìlà yú* (crispy-skin fish with lemon grass and hot pepper) has to be among the city's best fish dishes; and the *phô* (Vietnamese beef noodles in soup) is deliciously authentic, if overpriced. An attached dance club is coming soon.

Qián Hǎi Dōng Yán 22, east of the Yínding Bridge (at the intersection of Qián Hǎi and Hòu Hǎi). ✆ **010/6401-9591.** Reservations essential. Meal for 2 ¥200–¥300 ($25–$38). AE, DC, MC, V. noon–2pm and 6–10pm.

MODERATE

Hàn Kèjiā ★★★ HAKKA This sequel to Old Character Hakka (see above) has the same artist-owner. This one is larger and more quaintly located but otherwise identical, with the same stone and rough wood decor and the same heavenly food.

East bank of Qián Hǎi, 50m (164 ft.) north of Běi Hǎi Park north entrance. ✆ **010/6404-2259.** English menu. Meal for 2 ¥80–¥100 ($10–$12). No credit cards. 11am–2pm and 5–10pm.

Huājiā Yíyuán HOME-STYLE Another popular restaurant pair, these are located in separate courtyard-style compounds and serve nice pan-Chinese fare. Locals prefer the original branch, a lively gathering spot during the Ghost Street golden era (see "Chinese on the Cheap," earlier in this section), where they can

Moments Candlelit Dinner on the Lakes

For roughly ¥400 ($50) plus the cost of food, Běijīng's ancient roasted meats restaurant, Kǎoròujì, now arranges one of the most completely enjoyable dining experiences in the city: a meal for up to eight people served aboard a narrow **canopied flat-bottom boat** ★★, staffed by a lone oarsman who guides the craft in a gentle arc around the man-made serenity of Qián Hǎi and Hòu Hǎi. The entire trip takes roughly 2 hours. A few extra yuán buy live music and the opportunity to float candles in the lakes after dark falls—doomed to become a cliché, but who cares? The restaurant is located next to Nuage (see above) at Qián Hǎi Dōng Yán 14 (11am–2pm and 5–9pm; meal for 2: ¥120–¥160/$15–$20). To make boat arrangements, call ✆ **010/6612-5719** or 010/6404-2554. ***Note:*** Boat rental prices vary from season to season, and will probably increase.

crowd around outdoor tables at night to devour plates heaped with spicy crayfish *(málà lóngxiā).* The newer branch is less raucous but more charmingly located among the remains of Ghost Street. Try the *làròu dòuyá juǎnbǐng,* similar to Běijīng roast duck but with spicy bacon and bean sprouts.

Original at Dōng Zhí Mén Nèi Dàjiē 99 (now surrounded by an immense housing project); ✆ **010/6403-0677.** New location a few blocks west at Dōng Zhí Mén Nèi Dàjiē 235; ✆ 010/6405-1908. English menu. Meal for 2 ¥100–¥120 ($12–$15). No credit cards. Both open 24 hr.

Kǒng Yǐjǐ Jiǔlóu ★★ HUÁIYÁNG This extremely popular restaurant is named for the alcoholic scholar-bum protagonist of a Lǔ Xùn short story (see Shàoxīng, p. 447). It's set in a traditional space pleasingly outfitted with calligraphy scrolls, traditional bookshelves, and other trappings of Chinese scholarship. Highly recommended are the *mìzhī lúyú,* paper-wrapped fish remarkably similar to the ones found at Old Character Hakka (see above), and *yóutiáo niúròu,* savory slices of beef mixed with pieces of fried dough. Fans of Lǔ's story will appreciate the wide selection of *huángjiǔ,* a sweet "yellow" rice wine aged for several years and traditionally served warm.

Dénèi Dàjiē, next to the octagonal Teahouse of Family Fu on the south bank of Hòu Hǎi. ✆ **010/6618-4917.** Reservations strongly recommended. Meal for 2 ¥100–¥140 ($12–$18). No credit cards. 10am–2pm and 4:30–10pm.

WESTERN BĚIJĪNG

Jiǔhuā Shān ★ BĚIJĪNG Another fine roast duck eatery, this place is not quite as pleasant as the Běijīng Dàdǒng Kǎoyā Diàn (p. 91), but it's more conveniently located for people staying on the west side of the city. Whole crispy ducks, relatively low on fat, are reasonable at ¥88 ($11). Sesame buns make a nice alternative to traditional pancakes. They only roast 200 birds a day, so get there early.

Zhèngguāng Lù 55, behind the Zǐyù Hotel. ✆ **010/6848-3481.** Meal for 2 (including half duck) ¥100–¥140 ($12–$18). No credit cards. 11am–2pm and 5–9pm.

Pamer (Pàmǐ'ěr Shífǔ) ★★ *Finds* UIGHUR Běijīng's best Uighur restaurant isn't much to look at, but it is far cleaner than others of its ilk, and the food it serves is cheaper and better than anything at the more famous Afunti. Cumin-spiced lamb skewers *(yángròu chuàn)* are immense. Also not to be missed are the *dà pán jī* (diced chicken, peppers, potatoes, and thick noodles in tomato sauce) and *shǒubā fàn* (rice with lamb and raisins).

Liánhuā Chí Dōng Lù 3, north side of Báiyún Qiáo (large sign depicts dancing silhouettes). ✆ **010/6326-3635.** Meal for 2 ¥60–¥100 ($8–$12). No credit cards. 11am–2pm and 5–9:30pm.

Tàipó Tiánfǔ Shānzhēn ★★ MUSHROOM HOT POT The broth for this mouthwatering hot pot is made by stewing a whole black-skinned chicken with 32 different kinds of mushrooms and letting the mixture reduce for hours. Already a fine meal on its own, it gets even better as you add ingredients—lamb *(yángròu),* beef *(niúròu),* lotus root *(ǒupiàn),* spinach *(bōcài)* or, best of all, more mushrooms.

At south end of Èrqī Jùchǎng Lù, behind the east side of the Cháng'ān Shāngchǎng (4 blocks west of the Fùxīng Mén metro stop). ✆ **010/6801-9641.** Meal for 2 ¥120–¥140 ($15–$18). No credit cards. 11am–11pm.

Tiānjīn Bǎijiǎoyuán JIǍOZI/SÌCHUĀN No restaurant has managed to fill the vacuum left by the inexplicable closing of Gold Cat, once Běijīng's most charming outlet for *jiǎozi* (ravioli-like dumplings), but Tiānjīn Bǎijiǎoyuán comes closest. The clichéd red-and-gold interior can't match Gold Cat's old courtyard setting, but the *jiǎozi* are just as delicious. The *xièsānxiān shuǐjiǎo* (dumplings with shrimp, crab, and mushroom filling) are a treasure.

Xīn Wénhuà Jiē 12A, in alley opposite the Marco Polo (see above). ✆ **010/6605-9371.** Photo menu. Meal for 2 ¥30–¥60 ($4–$8). No credit cards. 10am–2:30pm and 4:30–9:30pm.

5 Exploring Běijīng

No other city in China, and few other cities in the world, offer so many must-see attractions, or such a likelihood of missed opportunity. It is technically possible to see the big names—the Forbidden City, Temple of Heaven, Summer Palace, and Great Wall—in as little as 3 days, but you'll need at least a week to get any sort of feel for the city. People spend years here and still fail to see everything they should.

Note: Most major sights now charge admission according to the season. The summer high season officially runs from April 1 to October 31 and the winter low season from November 1 to March 31.

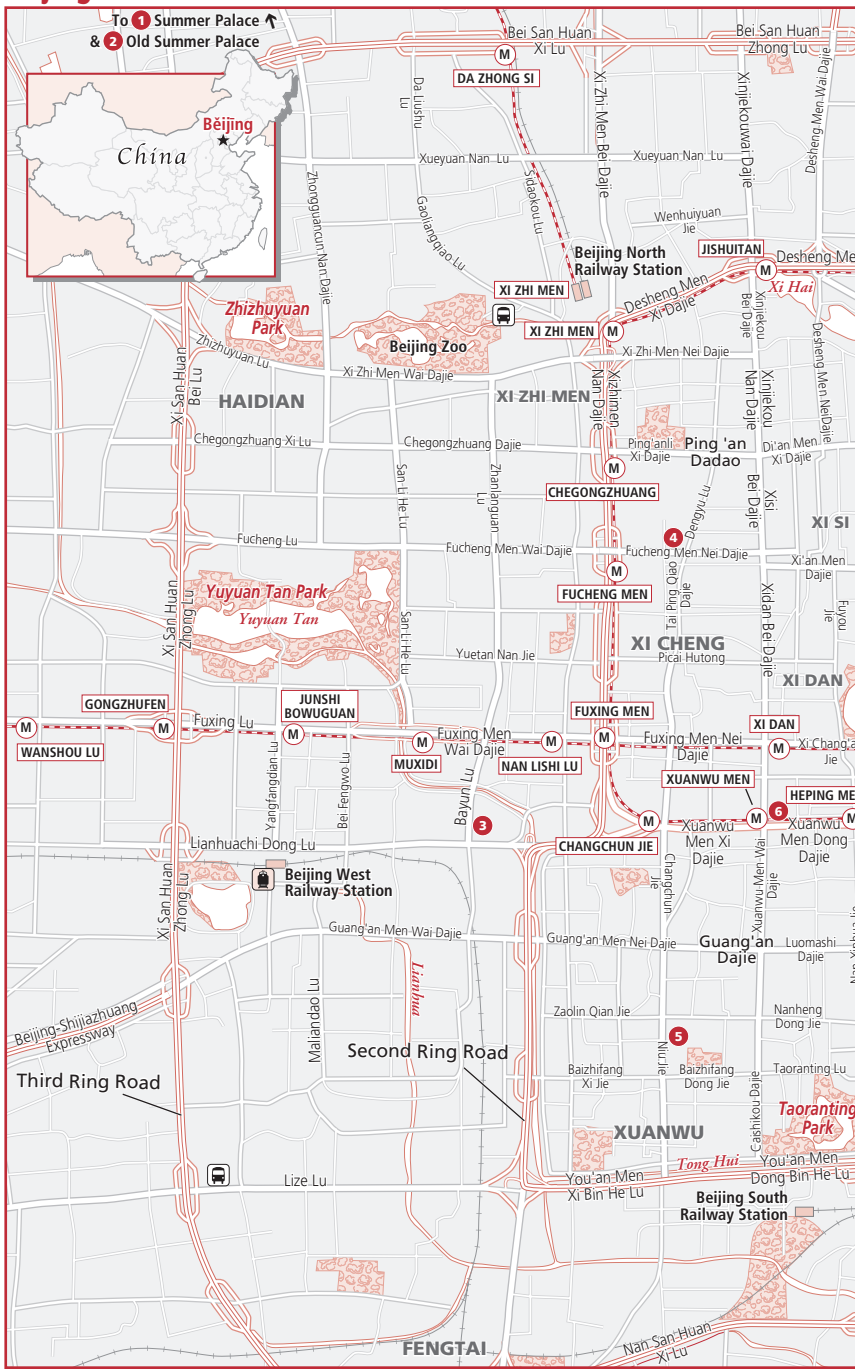
THE FORBIDDEN CITY (GÙGŌNG)

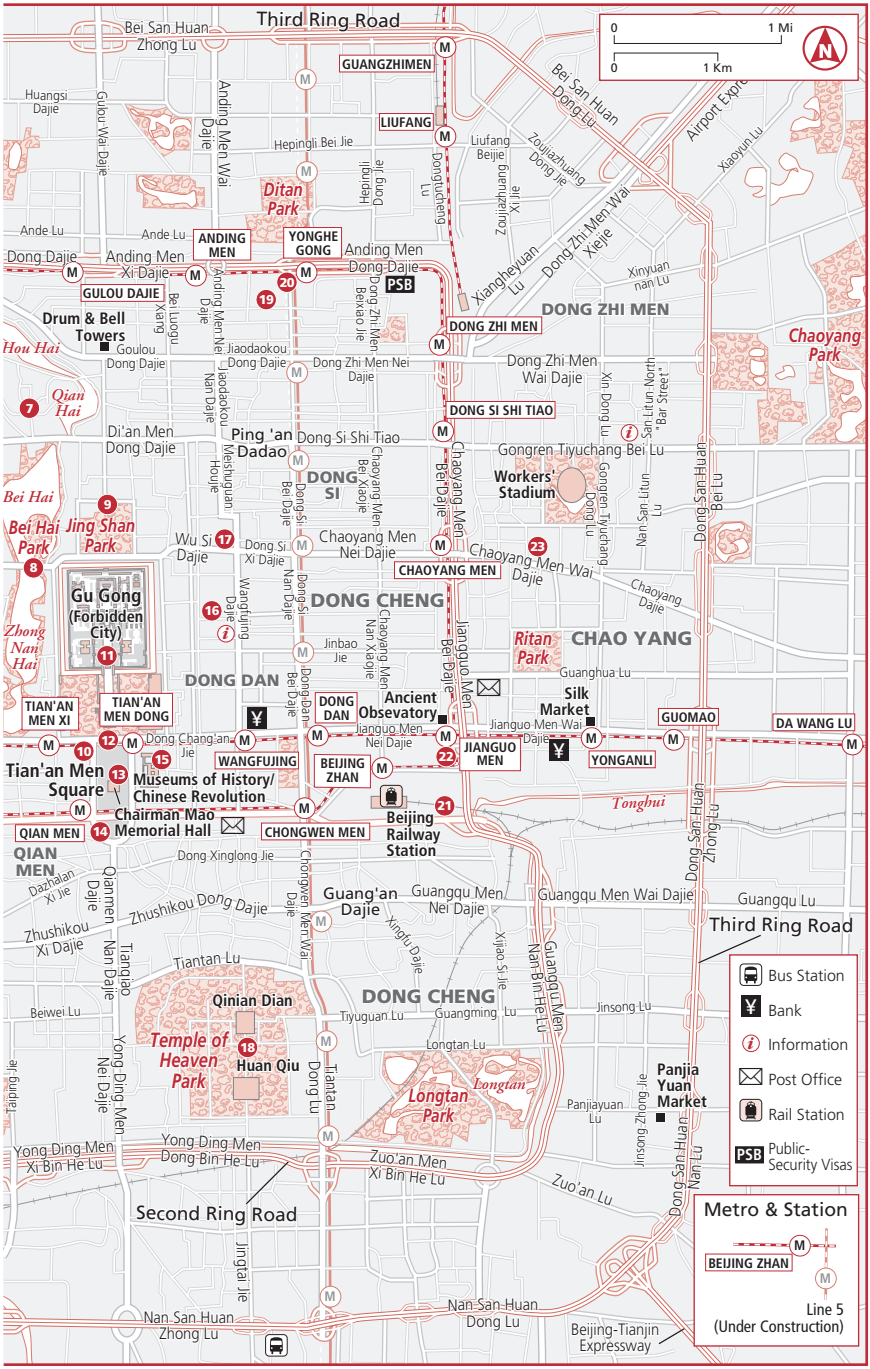
The universally accepted symbol for the length and grandeur of Chinese civilization is undoubtedly the Great Wall, but the Forbidden City is more immediately impressive. A 720,000-sq.-m (861,120-sq.-yd.) complex of red-walled buildings and pavilions topped by a sea of glazed vermilion tile, it dwarfs nearby Tiān'ān Mén Square and is by far the largest and most intricate imperial palace in China. The palace receives more visitors than any other attraction in the country (over seven million a year, the government says), and has been praised in Western travel literature ever since the first Europeans laid eyes on it in the late 1500s. Yet despite the flood of superlatives and exaggerated statistics that inevitably go into its description, it is impervious to an excess of hype and is large and compelling enough to draw repeat visits from even the most jaded travelers. Make more time for it than you think you'll need.

ESSENTIALS

The palace, most commonly referred to in Chinese as Gù Gōng (short for Palace Museum), is on the north side of Tiān'ān Mén Square across Cháng'ān Dàjiē (✆ **010/6513-2255,** ext. 615). It is best approached on foot or via metro (Tiān'ān Mén East, 117), as taxis are not allowed to stop in front. The palace is

Běijīng Attractions




Third Ring Road
Bei San Huan Zhong Lu
GUANGZHIMEN
LIUFANG
Ditan Park
ANDING MEN
YONGHE GONG
GULOU DAJIE
PSB
DONG ZHI MEN
Drum & Bell Towers
Hou Hai
Qian Hai
Chaoyang Park
DONG SI SHI TIAO
Ping 'an Dadao
Di'an Men Dong Dajie
Gongren Tiyuchang Bei Lu
Workers' Stadium
Bei Hai
Bei Hai Park
Jing Shan Park
DONG SI
Wu Si Dajie
Chaoyang Men Nei Dajie
CHAOYANG MEN
Chaoyang Men Wai Dajie
Gu Gong (Forbidden City)
DONG CHENG
Zhong Nan Hai
Ritan Park
CHAO YANG
DONG DAN
Ancient Obsevatory
Silk Market
TIAN'AN MEN XI
TIAN'AN MEN DONG
GUOMAO
DA WANG LU
JIANGUO MEN
YONGANLI
WANGFUJING
BEIJING ZHAN
Tian'an Men Square
Museums of History/ Chinese Revolution
Chairman Mao Memorial Hall
Tonghui
QIAN MEN
CHONGWEN MEN
Beijing Railway Station
QIAN MEN
Guang'an Dajie
Guangqu Men Nei Dajie
Guangqu Men Wai Dajie
Guangqu Lu
Third Ring Road
Qianmen Nan Dajie
Zhushikou Dong Dajie
Zhushikou Xi Dajie
Tiantan Lu
Qinian Dian
DONG CHENG
Temple of Heaven Park
Huan Qiu
Longtan
Longtan Park
Panjia Yuan Market
Yong Ding Men Nei Dajie
Yong Ding Men Xi Bin He Lu
Yong Ding Men Dong Bin He Lu
Zuo'an Men Xi Bin He Lu
Zuo'an Lu
Second Ring Road
Nan San Huan Zhong Lu
Nan San Huan Dong Lu
Beijing-Tianjin Expressway
0 1 Mi
0 1 Km
Bus Station
Bank
Information
Post Office
Rail Station
PSB Public-Security Visas
Metro & Station
BEIJING ZHAN
Line 5 (Under Construction)

Běijīng Attractions Key

Ancient Observatory (Gù Guānxiàng Tái) **21**
故观象台

Bái Tǎ Sì (White Dagoba Temple) **4**
白塔寺

Bái Yún Guàn (White Cloud Temple) **3**
白云观

Běi hǎi Park (Běihǎi Gōngyuán) **8**
北海公园

Chairman Mao's Mausoleum (Máo Zhǔxi Jìniàn Guǎn) **13**
毛主席纪念馆

China National Art Gallery (Zhōngguó Měishùguǎn) **17**
中国美术馆

Dōngyuè Miào **23**
东岳庙

Forbidden City (Gù Gōng) **11**
故宫

Former Residence of Lǎo Shě (Lǎo Shě Jìniàn Guǎn) **12**
老舍纪念馆

Great Hall of the People (Rénmín Dàhùi Táng) **10**
人民大会堂

Guózijiàn and Běijīng Kǒng Miáo **19**
国子监和北京孔庙

Jǐngshān Park (Jǐngshāng Gōngyuán) **9**
景山公园

Míng Chéng Qiáng Gōngyuán (Míng City Wall Park) **21**
明城墙公园

Museums of Chinese History and Revolution (Zhōngguó Lìshǐ Gémíng Bówùguǎn) **15**
中国历史革命博物馆

Ox Street Mosque (Niú Jiē Qīngzhēn Sì) **5**
牛街清真寺

Prince Gong's Mansion (Gōng Wáng Fǔ) **7**
恭王府

Qián Mén **14**
前门

Summer Palace (Yíhé Yuán) **1**
颐和园

South Cathedral (Nán Táng) **6**
南堂

Temple of Heaven (Tiān Tán) **18**
天坛

Tiān'an Mén (Gate of Heavenly Peace) **12**
天安门

Yōnghé Gōng (Lama Temple) **20**
雍和宫

Yuán Míng Yuán (Old Summer Palace) **2**
圆明园

OTHER ATTRACTIONS (not on map)

Eastern Qīng Tombs (Qīng Dōng Líng)
青东陵

Great Wall at Bādálǐng (Bādálǐng Chángchéng)
八达岭长城

Great Wall at Mùtiányù (Mùtiányù Chángchéng)
幕田峪长城

Great Wall at Sīmǎtái (Sīmǎtái Chángchéng)
司马台长城

Jiétái Sì (Temple of the Ordination Platform)
结台寺

Míng Tombs (Shísāng Líng)
十三陵

Tánzhè Sí (Temple of the Pool and Wild Mulberry)
潭柘寺

Western Qīng Tombs (Qīng Xī Líng)
青西陵

open from 8:30am to 5pm during summer and from 8:30am to 4:30pm in winter. Regular admission *(mén piào)* in summer costs ¥60 ($8), dropping to ¥40 ($5) in winter; last tickets are sold 1 hour before the doors close. Various exhibition halls and gardens inside the palace charge an additional ¥10 ($1). All-inclusive tickets *(lián piào)* had been discontinued at press time, perhaps in an effort to increase revenues (see "The Big Makeover," below), but it's always possible these will be reinstated.

Enter through the Wǔ Mén (Meridian Gate), a short walk north of Cháng'ān Dàjiē via Tiān'ān Mén (see below). Ticket counters are clearly marked on either side as you approach. **Audio tours** in several languages, including English (¥40/$5 plus ¥500/$63 deposit), are available at the gate itself, through the door to the right. Those looking to spend more money can hire **"English"-speaking tour guides** on the other side of the gate (¥200–¥350/$25–$44 per person, depending on length of tour). The tour guide booth also rents **wheelchairs** and **strollers** at reasonable rates. ***Note:*** Only the central route through the palace is wheelchair-accessible, and steeply so.

BACKGROUND & LAYOUT

Construction of the original palace buildings began in 1406, during the reign of the Míng's third Yǒnglè emperor, and took an army of workers 14 years to complete. It is surrounded by a single moat, 52m (171 ft.) wide and nearly 4km (2½ miles) long. Between 1420 and 1923, the palace was home to 24 emperors of the Míng and Qīng dynasties. The last of these was Aisin-Gioro Pǔyí, who was forced to abdicate in 1912 but was allowed to remain in the palace for several years afterwards (see "Wěi Huáng Gōng," p. 170).

The Big Makeover

Běijīng recently launched an immense $75-million renovation of the Forbidden City, the largest in 90 years, to be completed in two phases (the 1st by 2008, the 2nd by 2020). Work started on halls and gardens in the closed **western sections of the palace** in 2002, with the most effort concentrated on opening the Wǔyīng Diàn (Hall of Valiance and Heroism) in the southwest corner of the palace, followed by Cíníng Huāyuán (Garden of Love and Tranquility) next to the Tàihé Diàn. No one can say exactly when visitors will be allowed in; all you can do for now is peer through door cracks on the left side of the outer court. Plans also call for the construction of new temperature-controlled buildings to house and exhibit what is claimed to be a collection of **930,000 Míng and Qīng imperial relics,** most now stored underground.

Welcome as the project is, China's track record of tacky restorations has made many people nervous. Shortly after the plans were announced, the *China Youth Daily* launched a **call for public hearings** to approve the details, claiming in typical language that any changes to the complex "will have psychological influences on all Chinese people." The suggestion was politely rejected, but an incongruous coat of bright red paint recently slapped over parts of the palace's Gate of Heavenly Purity indicates that more input might not be a bad thing.

The Forbidden City is arranged along the compass points, with most major halls opening to the south (the direction associated with imperial rule). Farthest south and in the center is the perfectly symmetrical **outer court,** dominated by the immense ceremonial halls where the emperor conducted official business. Beyond the outer court and on both sides is the **inner court,** a series of smaller buildings and gardens that served as living quarters.

The palace has been ransacked and parts destroyed by fire several times over the centuries, so most of the existing buildings date from the Qīng rather than the Míng. Many of the roofs are trimmed in blue or green tile, which some scholars say reminded the Qīng's Manchu rulers of the grasslands and fertile fields they had left behind. Only half of the complex is open to visitors (expected to increase to 70% after repairs are completed in 2020; see "The Big Makeover," above), but this still leaves plenty to see.

Tiān'ān Mén (Gate of Heavenly Peace) ★★ This gate is the largest in what was once known as the Imperial City and the most emblematic of Chinese government grandeur. Above the central door, once reserved almost exclusively for the emperor, now hangs the famous **portrait of Máo,** flanked by inscriptions that read: LONG LIVE THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA (left) and LONG LIVE THE GREAT UNITY OF THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD (right). Máo declared the founding of the People's Republic from atop the gate on October 1, 1949. There is no charge to walk through the gate, but tickets are required if you want to ascend to **the upper platform** for worthwhile views of Tiān'ān Mén Square. The ticket office is in the second of two small red shacks, on the left after you pass through.

North of Tiān'ān Mén Sq. Admission ¥20 ($3) in summer, ¥15 ($2) in winter. 8am–4:30pm in summer, 8:30am–4pm in winter. Mandatory bag storage (¥2–¥6/30¢–75¢) behind and to left of ticket booth; cameras allowed.

The Outer Court The intimidating **Wǔ Mén (Meridian Gate),** built in 1420 and last restored in 1801, is the actual entrance to the Forbidden City. The emperor would come here to receive prisoners of war, issue proclamations, and supervise the punishment of troublesome officials. Beyond the gate, across a vast stone-paved courtyard bisected by the balustraded Jīn Shǔ (Golden River), is the **Tàihé Mén (Gate of Supreme Harmony),** which marks the official beginning of the outer court.

The first of the outer courts' "Three Great Halls" (Sān Dà Diàn) is the **Tàihé Diàn (Hall of Supreme Harmony)** ★. Located beyond the Tàihé Mén and across an even grander stone courtyard, it is an imposing double-roofed structure mounted atop a three-tiered marble terrace with elaborately carved balustrades. This is the largest wooden hall in China, and the most elaborate and prestigious of the palaces' throne halls; it was therefore rarely used. Emperors came here to mark the new year and winter solstice.

Immediately behind it is the **Zhōnghé Diàn (Hall of Perfect Harmony),** and farther on lies the **Bǎohé Diàn (Hall of Preserving Harmony).** This last hall, supported by only a few columns, is where the highest levels of imperial examinations were held. At the rear of the hall is a carved marble slab weighing over 200 tons; 20,000 men supposedly spent 28 days dragging it to this position from a mountain roughly 50km (31 miles) away.

The Inner Court Only the emperor, his family, his concubines, and the palace eunuchs (who numbered 1,500 at the end of the Qīng dynasty) were allowed in this section, sometimes described as the truly forbidden city. It begins

with the **Qiánqīng Mén (Gate of Heavenly Purity),** directly north of the Bǎohé Diàn, beyond which are three palaces designed to mirror the three halls of the outer court.

The first of these is the **Qiánqīng Gōng (Palace of Heavenly Purity),** where the emperors lived until Yōngzhèng decided to move to another part of the city in the 1720s. Beyond are the rather boring **Jiāotài Diàn (Hall of Union),** containing the throne of the empress; and the rather more interesting **Kūnníng Gōng (Palace of Earthly Tranquility),** a Manchu-style bed chamber where a nervous Pǔyí (China's last emperor) was expected to spend his wedding night before he fled to more comfortable rooms elsewhere.

At the rear of the inner court is the elaborate **Yù Huāyuán (Imperial Garden)** ★, a marvelous scattering of ancient conifers, rockeries, and pavilions said to be largely unchanged since it was built in the Míng dynasty. Pǔyí's famous British tutor, Reginald Fleming Johnston, lived in the **Yǎngxīn Zhāi,** the first building on the west side of the garden (now a tea shop).

From behind the mountain, you can exit the palace through the **Shénwǔ Mén (Gate of Martial Spirit)** and continue on to Jǐng Shān and/or Běi Hǎi Park. Those with time to spare, however, should explore less-visited sections on either side of the central path.

Western Axis Most of this area is in a state of heavy disrepair, but a few buildings have been restored and are open to visitors. Most notable among these is the **Yǎngxīn Diàn (Hall of Mental Cultivation),** southwest of the Imperial Garden. The reviled Empress Dowager Cíxǐ, who ruled China for much of the late Qīng period, made decisions on behalf of her infant nephew Guāngxù from behind a screen in the east room. This is also where emperors lived after Yōngzhèng moved out of the Qiánqīng Gōng.

Eastern Axis ★ This side tends to be peaceful and quiet even when other sections are teeming. Entrance costs ¥10 ($1) and requires purchase of essentially useless over-shoe slippers for ¥2 (30¢). The most convenient ticket booth is a 5-minute walk southwest of the Qiánqīng Mén, opposite the **Jiǔlong Bì (Nine Dragon Screen),** a 3.5m (12-ft.) high wall covered in striking glazed-tile dragons depicted frolicking above a frothing sea.

One of the highlights here is the secluded **Níngshòu Gōng Huāyuán,** behind the Zhēnbǎo Guǎn (Hall of Jewelry) north of the ticket booth. The Qīng dynasty Qiánlóng emperor spent his retirement here, composing poems and drinking from cups of wine he floated in a snake-like water-filled trough carved in the floor of the main pavilion. East of the garden is the **Chàngyīn Gé,** sometimes called Cíxǐ's Theater, an elaborate three-tiered structure with trapdoors and hidden passageways to allow movement between stages. In the far northeastern corner is the **Zhēnfēi Jǐng (Well of the Pearl Concubine),** a narrow hole covered by a large circle of stone, slightly askance. The Pearl Concubine, one of the Guāngxù emperor's favorites, was 25 when Cíxǐ had her stuffed down the well as they were fleeing in the aftermath of the Boxer Rebellion. According to most accounts, Cíxǐ was miffed at the girl's insistence that Guāngxù stay and take responsibility for the imperial family's support of the Boxers.

Also worth seeing is the **Hall of Clocks (Zhōngbiǎo Guǎn),** a collection of elaborate timepieces, many of them gifts to the emperors from European envoys. The exhibit costs ¥10 ($1) and at press time was temporarily relocated in a hall to the right (east) of the Bǎohé Diàn while the original Hall of Clocks is restored.

TIĀN'ĀN MÉN SQUARE (TIĀN'ĀN MÉN GUĂNGCHĂNG)

This is the world's largest public square, the size of 90 American football fields (40 ha/99 acres), with standing room for 300,000. It is surrounded by the Forbidden City to the north, the Great Hall of the People to the west, and the museums of Chinese History and Chinese Revolution to the east. In the center of the square stands the **Monument to the People's Heroes (Rénmín Yīngxióng Jìniàn Bēi),** a 37m (124-ft.) granite obelisk engraved with scenes from famous uprisings and bearing a central inscription (in Máo's handwriting): THE PEOPLE'S HEROES ARE IMMORTAL.

The area on which the obelisk stands was originally occupied by the **Imperial Way**—a central road that stretched from the Gate of Heavenly Peace south to Qián Mén, the still extant main entrance to the Tartar City (see below). This road, lined on either side with imperial government ministries, was the site of the pivotal May Fourth movement (1919), in which thousands of university students gathered to protest the weakness and corruption of China's then Republican government. Máo ordered destruction of the old ministries and paved over the rubble in 1959, replacing them with the vast but largely empty **Great Hall of the People** to the west and the equally vast but unimpressive **museums** to the east, as part of a spate of construction to celebrate 10 years of communist rule. But the site has remained a magnet for politically charged assemblies. The most famous of these was the gathering of **student pro-democracy protestors** in late spring of 1989. That movement and the government's violent suppression of it still define the square in most minds, Chinese as well as foreign. All physical traces of the crackdown disappeared after the square received a face-lift in 1999, just in time to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic, but reminders remain in the stiff-backed soldiers and video cameras since put in place to ensure order is maintained.

There isn't much to do in the square, but early risers can line up in front of Tiān'ān Mén at dawn to watch the **flag-raising ceremony,** a unique suffocation-in-the-throng experience on National Day (Oct 1), when what seems like the entire Chinese population arrives to jostle for the best view.

Chairman Máo's Mausoleum (Máo Zhŭxí Jìniàn Guăn) This is one of the eeriest experiences in Běijīng. The decision to preserve Máo's body was made hours after his death in 1976. Panicked and inexperienced, his doctors reportedly pumped him so full of formaldehyde that his face and body swelled almost beyond recognition. They drained the corpse and managed to get it back into acceptable shape, but they also created a wax model of the Great Helmsman just in case. There's no telling which version is on display at any given time. The mausoleum itself was built in 1977, near the center of Tiān'ān Mén Square. However much Máo may be mocked outside his tomb (earnest arguments about whether he was 70% right or 60% right are perhaps the biggest joke), he still commands a terrifying sort of respect inside it. This is not quite the kitsch experience some expect. The tour is free and fast, with no stopping or photos and no bags allowed inside.

South end of Tiān'ān Mén Sq. Free admission. Mon–Sat 8–11:30am, sometimes also 2–4pm (usually Mon, Wed, Fri). Bag storage in building across the street, directly west: ¥10 ($1) per piece. Metro: Qiánmén (208).

Qián Mén The phrase Qián Mén (Front Gate) is actually a reference to two separate towers on the south side of the square which together formed the main entrance to the Tartar (or Inner) City. The southernmost Arrow Tower (Jiàn Lóu) is no longer open to the public. You can, however, still climb the interior of the rear building (Zhèngyáng Mén), where a photo exhibition depicts life in Běijīng's pre-1949 markets, temples, and *hútòng.*

Tiān'ān Mén Square. Admission ¥10 ($1.25). 8:30am–4pm. Metro: Qiánmén (208).

THE TEMPLE OF HEAVEN (TIĀN TÁN)

At the same time Yǒnglè built the Forbidden City, he also oversaw construction of this enormous park and altar to heaven to the south. Each winter solstice, the Míng and Qīng emperors would lead a procession here to perform rites and make sacrifices designed to promote the next year's crops and curry favor from heaven for the general health of the empire. The park is square (symbolizing Earth) in the south and rounded (Heaven) in the north.

ESSENTIALS

Temple of Heaven Park (Tiān Tán Gōngyuán; ✆ **010/6702-8866**) is south of Tiān'ān Mén Square, on the east side of Qián Mén Dàjiē. It's open from 5am to 9:30pm (6am–8pm in winter), but the ticket offices and major sights are only open from 8:30am to 4:30pm. All-inclusive tickets *(lián piào)* cost ¥35 ($4.50) in summer and ¥30 ($4) in winter; simple park admission costs ¥15 ($2). The best approach is from the south gate *(nán mén),* the natural starting point for a walk that culminates in the magnificent Hall of Prayer.

HIGHLIGHTS

Circular Altar (Yuán Qiū) This three-tiered marble terrace is the first major structure you'll see if you're coming from the south. It was built in 1530 and enlarged in 1749, with all of its stones and balustrades organized in multiples of nine (considered a lucky number by northern Chinese).

Imperial Vault of Heaven (Huáng Qióng Yǔ) Directly north of the Circular Altar, this smaller version of the Hall of Prayer was built to store ceremonial stone tablets. The vault is surrounded by the circular **Echo Wall (Huíyīn Bì).** In years past, when crowds were smaller and before the railing was installed, it was possible for two people on opposite sides of the enclosure to send whispered messages to each other along the wall with remarkable clarity—one of my most vivid memories from a childhood trip to Běijīng.

Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests (Qǐnián Diàn) ★★ This circular wooden hall, with its triple-eaved cylindrical blue-tiled roof, is perhaps the most recognizable emblem of Chinese imperial architecture outside the Forbidden City. Completed in 1420, the original hall burned to the ground in 1889, but a near-perfect replica (this one) was built the following year. It stands 38m (125 ft.) high and is 29m (98 ft.) in diameter, and is constructed without a single nail. The 28 massive pillars inside, made of fir imported from Oregon, are arranged to symbolize divisions of time: The central four represent the seasons, the next 12 represent the months of the year, and the outer 12 represent traditional divisions of a single day. The hall's most striking feature is its ceiling, a kaleidoscope of painted brackets and gilded panels as intricate as anything in the country.

THE SUMMER PALACE (YÍHÉ YUÁN)

This expanse of elaborate Qīng-style pavilions, bridges, walkways, and gardens, scattered along the shores of immense Kūnmíng Lake, is the grandest imperial playground in China; it was constructed from 1749 to 1764. Between 1860 and 1903, it was twice leveled by foreign armies and rebuilt. The palace is most often associated with the Empress Dowager Cíxǐ, who made it her full-time residence.

ESSENTIALS

The Summer Palace (✆ **010/6288-1144**) is 12km (7 miles) northwest of the city center in the Hǎidiàn District. Bus no. 808 travels here from the Qián Mén

(208) and Xī Dān (115) metro stations; the bus trip takes 40 minutes to an hour and costs ¥4 (40¢). By taxi, it's a 20- to 30-minute ride costing ¥60 ($8). A more pleasant option is to travel here **by boat** along the renovated canal system; slightly rusty "imperial yachts" leave from the Hòuhú Mǎtóu (✆ **010/8836-3576**), behind the Běijīng Exhibition Center northeast of the zoo. The boat trip takes 50 minutes and costs ¥40 ($5) one-way or ¥70 ($9) round-trip. The Summer Palace gates open at 7am; no tickets are sold after 5pm in summer and 4pm in winter. Admission is ¥10 ($1) for entry to the grounds or ¥30 ($4) for the all-inclusive *lián piào.* The easiest entrance is at the east gate (Dōng Gōng Mén). Go early and allow at least 4 hours to tour the major sites on your own. Overpriced **imperial-style food** in a pleasant setting is available at the Tīnglí Guǎn Restaurant, at the western end of the Long Corridor (see below). Spots around the lake are perfect for picnics.

EXPLORING THE SUMMER PALACE

This park covers roughly 290 hectares (716 acres), with **Kūnmíng Lake** in the south and **Longevity Hill (Wànshòu Shān)** in the north. The lake's northern shore boasts most of the buildings and other attractions and is the most popular area for strolls, although it is more pleasant to walk around the smaller lakes behind Longevity Hill. The hill itself has a number of temples as well as **Bǎoyún Gé (Precious Clouds Pavilion),** one of the few structures in the palace to escape destruction by foreign forces. There are dozens of pavilions and a number of bridges on all sides of the lake, enough to make a full day of exploration, if you so choose.

Rénshòu Diàn (Hall of Benevolence and Longevity) Located directly across the courtyard from the east gate entrance, Rénshòu Diàn is the palace's main hall. This is where the empress dowager received members of the court, first from behind a screen and later from the Dragon Throne itself. North of the hall is Cíxǐ's private theater, now a museum that contains an old Mercedes-Benz—the first car imported into China.

Long Corridor (Cháng Láng) ★ Among the more memorable attractions in Běijīng, this covered wooden promenade stretches 700m (nearly half a mile) along the northern shore of Kūnmíng Lake. Each crossbeam, ceiling, and pillar is painted with a different scene taken from Chinese history, literature, myth, and geography (roughly 10,000 in all).

Seventeen-Arch Bridge (Shíqī Kǒng Qiáo) ★ This 150m (490-ft.) long marble bridge connects South Lake Island (Nán Hú Dǎo) to the east shore of Kūnmíng Lake. There is a rather striking life-size bronze ox near the eastern foot of the bridge.

OTHER SIGHTS IN BĚIJĪNG

TEMPLES, MOSQUES & CHURCHES

Bái Tǎ Sì (White Dagoba Temple) The 51m (170-ft.) Tibetan-style *dagoba* (stupa) from which this temple gets its name is the oldest and largest of its kind in the city. It was constructed between 1271 and 1279 by a Nepalese architect and has been renovated several times since. The large hall at the back of the temple, supposedly left the way it was at the end of the Qīng dynasty, contains statues of Buddhas from each of the three periods—Bhaisajya (past, also known as the Medicine Buddha), Sakyamuni (present), and Maitreya (future).

Fùchéng Mén Nèi Dàjiē 171, north side of street. Admission ¥10 ($1). 8:30am–5pm. Metro: Fùchéng Mén (walk east 1 block).

Bái Yún Guàn If the incense here smells authentic, it's because this sprawling complex, said to have been built in 739, is the most active of Běijīng's daoist temples. Chinese visitors seem intent on actual worship rather than on tourism, and the blue-frocked monks wear their hair in the rarely seen traditional manner—long and tied in a bun at the top of the head. One notable structure is the Lōlǜ Táng, a large hall in the third courtyard built in 1228, now used for teaching and ceremonies.

On Báiyún Guàn Lù, east of the intersection with Báiyún Lù (take the 1st right as you walk north from Báiyún Qiáo). Admission ¥8 ($1). 8:30am–4:30pm. Metro: Chángchūnjiē (205), then switch to bus no. 821 (get off at Báiyún Qiáo).

Dōngyuè Miào ★ This daoist temple, built in 1322 and beautifully restored a few years ago, is most famous for a series of 76 stalls ("heavenly departments") that surround its main courtyard. Garishly painted divine judges in each stall can offer relief from practically every ill—for a price. The most popular stall, not surprisingly, is the Department of Bestowing Material Happiness. English signs explain each department's function.

North side of Cháoyáng Mén Wài Dàjiē (diagonally across from Full Link Plaza). Admission ¥10 ($1). 6am–7pm. Metro: Cháoyáng Mén (212).

Guózǐjiàn and Kǒng Miào This classic temple-school compound, buried down a tree-shaded street east of the Lama Temple (see below), is still in use. The Kǒng Miào, China's second largest Confucian Temple, is on the right, and the Guózǐjiàn (the Imperial College) is on the left, both originally built in 1306. The front courtyard of the temple contains several dozen stelae inscribed with the names of the last successful candidates in the *jìnshì* (highest level) imperial examinations. The college, imperial China's highest educational institution, contains a striking glazed-tile gate with elaborately carved stone arches.

Kǒng Miào at Guózǐjiàn Jiē 13. Admission ¥10 ($1). 8:30am–4:30pm. Guózǐjiàn next door; admission ¥6 ($1); 9am–5pm. Metro: Yōnghé Gōng/Lama Temple (215). Walk south from station along west side of temple, then turn right onto street marked with arch.

Ox Street Mosque (Niú Jiē Qīngzhēn Sì) This is Běijīng's largest mosque and the spiritual center for the city's estimated 200,000 Muslims. Built in 996, the complex looks more Eastern than Middle Eastern, with sloping tile roofs similar to those found on Buddhist temples. Halls are noticeably free of idols, however. A small courtyard on the south side contains the tombs and original gravestones of two Arab imams who lived here in the late 13th century.

Niú Jiē 88, due south of Chángchūn Jiē metro stop, on street's east side. Admission ¥10 ($1). 8am–7pm. Metro: Chángchūn Jiē (205), then switch to bus no. 10 (get off at Lǐbài Sì stop).

Yōnghé Gōng (Lama Temple) ★★ If you visit only one temple after the Temple of Heaven, this should be it. A complex of progressively larger buildings topped with ornate yellow-tiled roofs, Yōnghé Gōng was built in 1694 and originally belonged to the Qīng prince who would become the Yōngzhèng emperor. As was the custom, the complex was converted to a temple after Yōngzhèng's move to the Forbidden City in 1744. The temple is home to several beautiful **incense burners,** including a particularly ornate one in the second courtyard that dates back to 1746. The Fǎlún Diàn (Hall of the Wheel of Law), second to last of the major buildings, contains a 6m (20-ft.) tall bronze statue of Tsongkapa (1357–1419), the first Dalai Lama and founder of the Yellow Hat sect of Tibetan Buddhism. The final of the five central halls, the Wànfú Gé (Tower of Ten Thousand Happinesses), houses the temple's prize

possession—an ominous Tibetan-style **statue of Maitreya** (the future Buddha), 18m (60 ft.) tall, carved from a single piece of white sandalwood.

South of the N. Second Ring Rd. on Yōnghé Gōng Dàjiē; entrance on the south end of the complex. 9am–4pm. Admission ¥25 ($3); audio tours in English ¥25 ($3). Subway: Lama Temple (215).

PARKS & GARDENS

Běihǎi Park (Běihǎi Gōngyuán) ★★ This is Běijīng's oldest imperial garden, roughly 800 years old, and the one city park you should not miss. Most of the park is actually a man-made lake, **Běi Hǎi (North Sea),** part of a series of lakes that run north along the eastern edge of the Forbidden City. The central feature is a 36m (118-ft.) Tibetan-style **White Dagoba (Bái Tǎ),** similar to the one at Bái Tǎ Sì, built in 1651 to commemorate a visit by the Dalai Lama. The pagoda stands atop the artificial hill that dominates Qiónghuá Dǎo (Hortensia Island), also known as the **Jade Islet.** A hike around the island, and around the shore of Běi Hǎi, will take you past several beautiful pavilions and gardens. The **Round City (Tuán Chéng),** located just outside the south entrance of the park, stands on the site where Kublai Khan built his palace after establishing the Yuán dynasty (1279–1368). It contains a massive jade bowl that once belonged to him, and a 3m (10-ft.) Buddha of white jade.

Wénjīn Jiē 1, directly northwest of the Forbidden City. Admission ¥5 (60¢) for the park; ¥10 ($1) for access to Jade Islet; ¥5 (60¢) extra for Round City. 6am–10pm in summer and 6:30am–8pm in winter; temples and other buildings 9am–4pm.

Jǐng Shān Park (Jǐng Shān Gōngyuán) If you want a clear aerial view of the Forbidden City, this is where you'll find it. The park's central hill—known both as Jíng Shān (Prospect Hill) and Méi Shān (Coal Hill)—was created using earth left over from the digging of the imperial moat and was the highest point in the city during the Míng dynasty. A locust tree on the east side of the hill marks the spot where the last Míng dynasty Chóngzhēn emperor hanged himself in 1644, just before Manchu and rebel armies overran the city.

Opposite the Forbidden City north gate. Admission ¥2 (25¢). 6am–10pm in summer and 6:30am–8pm in winter.

Yuán Míng Yuán ★ *Kids* This imperial garden is sometimes called the Old Summer Palace, not because it predates the "New" Summer Palace to the west (p. 105), but because it was never rebuilt after French and British troops all but razed it during the Second Opium War in 1860. The ruins create a ghostly and oddly enjoyable scene, beloved for years as a picnic spot. Plans to restore Yuán Míng Yuán have met with fierce protest from Chinese who've grown to appreciate its mangled state. A few restorations have nevertheless begun, starting with the **Wànhuā Zhèn (10,000 Flowers Maze),** a rather nicely reconstructed labyrinth in the **Chángchūn Yuán (Garden of Eternal Spring),** both in the northwest section.

Qīnghuá Xī Lù 28, north of Peking University. Admission ¥10 ($1). 7am–6pm in summer and 7am–5pm in winter.

MORE MUSEUMS

Ancient Observatory (Gǔ Guānxiàng Tái) *Kids* Most of the large bronze astronomical instruments on display here—mystifying combinations of hoops, slides, and rulers stylishly embellished with dragons and clouds—were built by the Jesuits in the 17th and 18th centuries. You can play with reproductions in the courtyard below.

Southwest side of Jiànguó Mén intersection, just outside south metro exit. Admission ¥10 ($1). 9am–5pm. Metro: Jiànguó Mén interchange.

Former Residence of Lǎo Shě (Lǎo Shě Jìniànguǎn) ★ *Finds* Lǎo Shě (1899–1966) was one of China's greatest 20th-century writers, lauded by early Communists for his use of satire in novels like *Teahouse* and *Rickshaw Boy* (or *Camel Xiángzi*) and persecuted for the same books during the Cultural Revolution. He is said to have committed suicide but might instead have been murdered by Red Guards. The rooms contain photos, copies of his books, and his own library (Hemingway, Dickens, Graham Greene). Most interesting is his study, supposedly preserved the way he left it, with a game of solitaire laid out on the bed and the calendar turned to August 24, 1966—the day he disappeared.

Fēngfù Hútòng 19. Admission ¥5 ($1). 9am–6pm. Metro: Wángfǔjǐng (118); walk up Wángfǔjǐng Dàjiē, then turn left onto Dēngshikǒu Xī Jiē; the alley is over a block west on the street's north side.

Museum of Chinese History (Zhōngguó Lìshǐ Bówùguǎn) ★ This poorly lit but still impressive museum contains China's largest collection of historical artifacts, although many are copies. Some effort has been made to spruce things up, and English captions have been added to a number of the displays. Exhibits have also been reorganized and now require separate tickets, but a *tōng piào* (all-in-one ticket) allows access to all exhibits for a single price. It occupies the southern wing of the massive building that also houses the Museum of the Chinese Revolution.

East side of Tiān'ān Mén Sq. Admission ¥30 ($4) for *tōng piào,* or ¥10–¥20 ($1–$3) for each individual exhibit. Audio tours in English ¥30 ($4). 9am–4:30pm. Last ticket sold at 3:30pm; ticket booth at top of far right stairs. Metro: Tiān'ān Mén East (117).

Museum of the Chinese Revolution (Zhōnguó Gémìng Bówùgǔan) On the north side of the Museum of Chinese History, this museum (no surprise) is quite a bit less interesting. The main exhibition covers an idealized history of the Chinese Communist Party from 1919 to 1949.

East side of Tiān'ān Mén Sq. Admission ¥30 ($4) for *tào piào,* or ¥5–¥20 ($1–$3) for individual exhibits. Tues–Sun 8:30am–4:30pm. Last tickets sold before 3:30pm; ticket office at top of far left stairs. Metro: Tiān'ān Mén East (117).

Prince Gōng's Mansion (Gōng Wáng Fǔ) ★ This splendid imperial residence belonged to several people, including the sixth son of the Guāngxù emperor (Prince Gōng), and is thought to have been the inspiration behind the lushly described mansion in Cáo Xuěqín's canonical 18th-century work, *Dream of the Red Chamber.* Only the garden is open to visitors, but its labyrinthine combination of rockeries and pavilions offers plenty to see.

Liǔyīn Jiē 17. Admission ¥5 ($1). 8:30am–4:30pm. Signposted in English at top of Qián Hǎi Xī Dàjiē (running north off Píng'ān Dàdào opposite north gate of Běi Hǎi Park); turn left at sign and follow alley past large parking lot. Entrance is marked with huge red lanterns.

Míng Chéng Qiáng Gōngyuán (Míng City Wall Park) ★ The section of wall presented here, running a mile east-to-west from Dōngbiàn Mén to Chóngwén Mén, was originally built in the Yuán dynasty (1279–1368) and reconstructed in the mid-1500s by the Míng. Restoration work on the section began in 2002 and is still in progress, using bricks from the original Míng reconstruction collected from nearby residents. A pleasant park runs east along the length of the wall to the dramatic Dōngnán Jiǎo Lóu (Southeast Corner Tower), with its dozens of arrow slots; a contemporary art gallery and interesting exhibition on the history of Chóngwén District are inside. The tower is open from 9am to 5pm; admission is ¥10 ($1).

Directly south of Běijīng Railway Station, east of Chóngwén Mén metro station. Open 24 hr. Access via Chóngwén Mén metro (208) or by walking south from Jiànguó Mén interchange.

THE HÚTÒNG

As distinct as Běijīng's palaces, temples, and parks may be, it is the ***hútòng*** that ultimately set the city apart. Prior to the 20th century, when cars and the Communist love of grandeur made them impractical, these narrow and often winding lanes were the city's dominant passageways. Old maps of Běijīng show the city to be an immense and intricate maze composed almost entirely of *hútòng,* most no wider than 10m (30 ft.) and some as narrow as 50cm (20 in.).

Běijīng's other famous feature is the ***sìhéyuàn*** (courtyard house)— traditional dwellings typically composed of four single-story rectangular buildings arranged around a central courtyard with a door at one corner (ideally facing south). Originally designed to house a single family, each one now houses up to five or six families. Until recently, as much as half of Běijīng's population lived in some form of *sìhéyuàn,* but large-scale bulldozing of the *hútòng* has resulted in significant migration into modern apartment buildings. Foreign visitors charmed by the quaintness of the old houses often assume this migration is forced, and it often is. But many who move do so willingly, eager for central heating and indoor plumbing (both rare in the *hútòng* neighborhoods).

The *hútòng* are being leveled so rapidly that the term "fast-disappearing" is now a permanent part of their description. The best-preserved *hútòng,* and the ones most likely to survive because of their popularity with tourists, are those found in the Back Lakes (Shíchà Hǎi) and nearby Dì'ān Mén. But even these may not be safe, as reports claim that the city plans to demolish a swath of nearby "protected" *hútòng* to make way for an expansion of Qián Hǎi. Pedicab tour companies offer to bike you around this area and take you inside a couple of courtyards, but they all charge absurd rates. It's much cheaper, and far more enjoyable, to walk around on your own (see "Walking Tour: The Back Lakes," below). If you must, the **Běijīng Hútòng Tourist Agency** (✆ **010/6615-9097**) offers tours in English for ¥240 ($30).

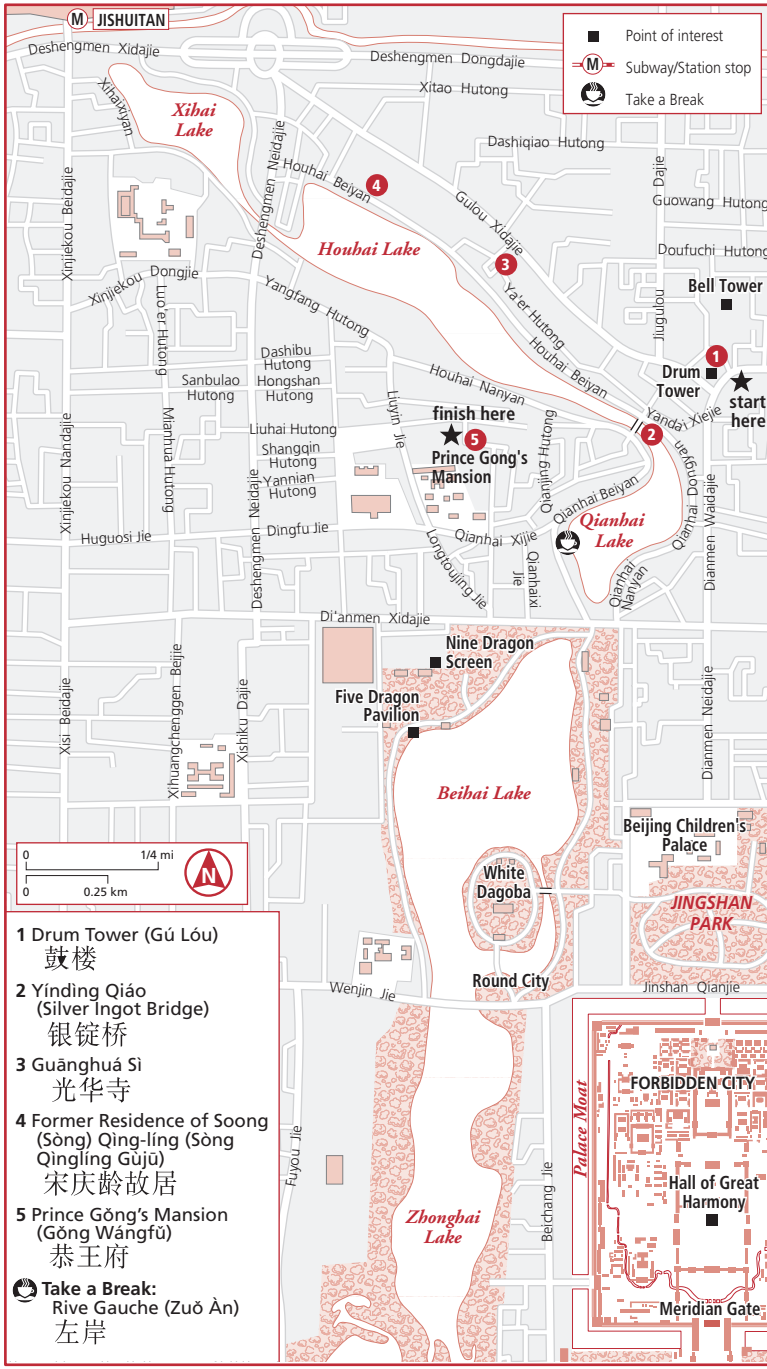
WALKING TOUR THE BACK LAKES

Start:	**Drum Tower (Gǔ Lóu), north end of Di'ān Mén Wài Dàjiē**
Finish:	**Prince Gōng's Palace (Gōng Wáng Fǔ), west side of Qián Hǎi**
Time:	**Approximately 3 hours**
Best Times:	**Morning (9am) or just after lunch, no later than 1:30pm (or you risk getting locked out of Prince Gōng's Palace).**

There is, quite simply, no finer place to walk in Běijīng. The Back Lakes area (Shíchà Hǎi) is composed of two idyllic lakes—Qián Hǎi (Front Sea) and Hòu Hǎi (Back Sea)—and the tree-shaded neighborhoods that surround them. Combined with other man-made pools to the south, these lakes were once part of a system used to transport grain by barge from the Grand Canal to the Forbidden City. Prior to 1911, this was an exclusive area, and only people with connections to the imperial family were permitted to maintain houses here (a situation that seems destined to return). A profusion of bars and cafes has sprung up around the lakes in recent years, providing ample opportunities to take breaks from your walk.

Beyond the lakes, stretching out in all directions, is the city's best-maintained network of *hútòng.* Many families have lived in these lanes for generations, their insular communities a last link to Old Běijīng.

Walking Tour—The Back Lakes



1 Drum Tower (Gú Lóu)
鼓楼

2 Yíndìng Qiáo (Silver Ingot Bridge)
银锭桥

3 Guānghuá Sì
光华寺

4 Former Residence of Soong (Sòng) Qìng-líng (Sòng Qìnglíng Gùjū)
宋庆龄故居

5 Prince Gōng's Mansion (Gōng Wángfǔ)
恭王府

Take a Break: Rive Gauche (Zuǒ Àn)
左岸

Start at:

❶ Drum Tower (Gǔ Lóu)

This vaguely trapezoidal building with its bright yellow-tile roof is the most conspicuous structure north of the old Imperial City. Skip the "free Tibetan Culture Exhibit" on the first floor (essentially an overpriced fake antiques market) and go around back to the steep set of stairs that leads to an upper chamber. From here you can survey the Back Lakes and take in tremendous views of the old Tartar City, set against the jagged-tooth backdrop of urban Běijīng. Open 9am–4:30pm. Admission ¥20 ($3).

Walk south on Di'ān Mén Wài Dàjiē, take the first right onto Yāndài Xiéjiē, and bear left until you reach the:

❷ Yíndìng Qiáo (Silver Ingot Bridge)

This white marble bridge, which marks the boundary between Hòu Hǎi and Qián Hǎi, has stood here for centuries, although the latest version is the work of modern masons (1984). On a clear day you can see as far as the Western Hills from the bridge—one of the Eight Great Views of Běijīng, as enumerated by the Qiánlóng emperor in the 18th century.

Walk back towards Yāndài Xiéjiē, take the first left onto Yā'er Hútòng, and head north to:

❸ Guānghuá Sì

A Buddhist temple dating back to the Yuán dynasty (1279–1368), this complex originally comprised over 20 buildings with 300 rooms. The temple's founder is said to have been a mendicant monk who ate only half the rice he was given and sold the rest to fund its construction. Only a few of the buildings remain, but these have been well maintained by a small group of resident monks. Free admission.

Head right after exiting, take the first left, and walk north along Hòu Hǎi to the:

❹ Former Residence of Soong (Sòng) Ching-ling

Located at Hòu Hǎi Běi Yán 46, this former imperial palace is where Soong Ching-ling (1892–1981), middle daughter of famous Bible salesman Charlie Soong and wife of Sun Yat-sen, spent most of her later life. While her family became leading supporters of the Guómíndǎng (Nationalists), Soong Ching-ling steered a more neutral course, displaying some measure of sympathy for the Communists only after her husband's death in 1925. Máo later rewarded her with this house. China's last emperor, Henry Pǔyí, is said to have been born on this site. Open 9am–4:30pm. Admission ¥8 ($1).

Continue on around the back of Hòu Hǎi and along the western shore of Qián Hǎi, bearing right onto Qián Hǎi Běi Yán; follow curve west and north to:

❺ Prince Gōng's Mansion

The mansion is the most lavish of the courtyard residences in the Back Lakes. Inside is one of the city's most spectacular gardens, a combination of pavilions and rockeries perfectly arranged so as to make it all seem larger than it really is. The mansion is located at Liǔyīn Jiē 17. Open 8:30am–4:30pm; ¥5 (65¢). For a more detailed description, see p. 109.

WINDING DOWN

Back on the west shore of Qián Hǎi, a short walk up from the Shuàifǔ Restaurant, is **Rive Gauche** (Zuǒ Àn; ✆ **010/6612-9300**). This stylish bar/cafe, open from 2pm to 2am, is located inside an unmarked courtyard-style building with tall wooden doors and large windows overlooking the lake It serves a wide range of drinks on immensely comfortable couches.

TOURS

Several companies offer guided group tours of Běijīng for English speakers, but these are almost always overpriced, often incomplete, and best thought of as emergency measures when time is short. The most popular operators are **Dragon Bus** (✆ **010/6515-8565**) and **Panda Tour** (✆ **010/6525-8372;** bjpanda@public.bta.net.cn), both with offices scattered through the five-star hotels. City-highlight tours by air-conditioned bus typically cost around ¥300 ($38) per person for a half day and around ¥500 ($60) for a full day with a mediocre lunch. **China International Travel Service (CITS; ✆ 010/6515-8566;** www.cits.net) offers tours that are more customizable, but at a much higher fee.

6 Side Trips from Běijīng

THE GREAT WALL

Even after you dispense with the myths that it is a single continuous structure and that it can be seen from space, China's best-known attraction is still a mind-boggling achievement. Referred to in Mandarin as the Wànlǐ Cháng Chéng (10,000-Lǐ Long Wall) or just Cháng Chéng for short, the Great Wall begins at Shānhǎiguān on the Bó Hǎi (sea) (p. 134) and snakes west to a fort at Jiāyùguān in the Gobi Desert (p. 271). Its origins date back to the Warring States Period (453–221 B.C.), when rival kingdoms began building defensive walls to thwart each other's armies. The king of Qín, who eventually conquered the other states to become the first emperor of a unified China, conscripted around 300,000 laborers to combine the walls into a more or less uninterrupted rampart. During the Hàn dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220), the wall was extended farther west, with subsequent dynasties adding their own bits and branches, which makes it difficult to pin down the Wall's precise length. It is at least 10,000km (6,200 miles) long by common estimates, but some guesses go as high as 50,000km (31,000 miles).

Most sections of the Great Wall visible north of Běijīng were reconstructed by the Míng dynasty (1368–1644) in an (ultimately vain) effort to defend against attack by Manchus and Mongols from the north. The four most easily visited sections are **Bādálǐng, Mùtiányù, Jūyōngguān,** and the vertiginous **Sīmǎtái.**

Bādálǐng ★ This was the first section of the Great Wall opened to tourists and it remains the most popular, fully restored to its original Míng appearance in 1957. A cable car was added in the 1980s, followed later by a museum, a theater, restaurants, numerous souvenir stands, and a KFC. Criticized by Wall "purists" for this profusion of facilities and also for the sterile precision of its restoration, Bādálǐng is still one of the most dramatic sections of the Great Wall. Set in a steep, forested mountain range, it offers tremendous views and, for those willing to travel beyond the restored sections, some worthwhile hiking. The ticket office at Bādálǐng is open from 6:30am to 7pm. Admission is ¥45 ($6) in summer, ¥40 ($5) in winter; round-trip cable-car transportation is ¥50 ($6) per person.

Bādálǐng is roughly 70km (43 miles) northwest of Běijīng. **Group tours** organized through hotel travel desks are typically combined with a trip to the Míng Tombs and cost around ¥400 ($50) per person. A cheaper but still comfortable option is to take one of the air-conditioned, city-sponsored **tourist *(yóu)* buses** (✆ **010/6779-7546**): *Yóu* no. 1 leaves from the northeast side of Qián Mén (every 20 min.; 6am–noon), and *yóu* no. 2 leaves from Dōng Zhí Mén and the Běijīng Railway Station (every 30 min.; 6:30–10am); both charge ¥50 ($6), a price that includes Jūyōnguān (see below) and the Míng Tombs. The

On the Wild Wall

Sections of the Great Wall listed below are easy to reach and suitably stunning, but they represent only a part of what the Wall has to offer. People with time and inclination to explore beyond these sections are strongly encouraged to join one of the excellent, usually multiday "Wild Wall" trips to the crumbling **"unofficial" sections of the Wall** that snake through more remote areas north of Běijīng. Most weekend trips cost around ¥1,600 ($200) and are based at one of two **modernized farmhouses** (one better outfitted than the other). The fee includes guided hikes, accommodations, and excellent home cooking (transportation to the farmhouse is an extra $65). Details and booking information about weekend trips, day hikes, and "Extreme" treks can be found on the Wild Wall website at **www.wildwall.com**.

cheapest way to get to Bādálǐng is on the red-and-yellow striped (air-conditioned) version of **bus no. 919** (6am–6pm; 1 hr.; ¥10/$1), which leaves from the east side of Déshèng Mén. A round-trip **taxi** should cost less than ¥300 ($38).

Mùtiányù The Great Wall at Bādálǐng proved so popular that authorities restored a second section of the Wall to the east in 1986. Mùtiányù is a bit rougher and slightly less crowded than Bādálǐng, but it does have its own traffic jams in summer. As at Bādálǐng, cable-car transportation is available. Sadly, a fence prevents you from walking onto the tempting unrestored sections. The ticket office is open 24 hours. Admission is ¥35 ($4) and the cable car costs ¥50 ($6) round-trip.

Mùtiányù is 90km (56 miles) north of Běijīng, and somewhat harder to reach. Once again, most hotels can arrange **guided group tours** for around ¥250 ($31). The ***yóu* no. 6** combines the trip to Mùtiányù with visits to a temple and a lake for ¥50 ($6); it leaves from the northeast side of the Xuānwǔ Mén metro station every 30 minutes from 6:30 to 8am. A **taxi** will cost between ¥200 and ¥400 ($25–$50).

Jūyōngguǎn This is the most recently restored section of the Great Wall, and the closest to Běijīng (55km/34 miles northwest, on the road to Bādálǐng). The restoration is crisp and the sense of history rather distant. But there are fewer tour groups here, and a number of impressive Buddhist bas-relief carvings on the separate and genuinely old Yún Tái (Cloud Platform) built in 1342. The ticket office is open from 8am to dusk. Admission is ¥40 ($5) in summer, ¥35 ($4) in winter.

The **tourist *(yóu)*** and **public buses** that go to Bādálǐng also stop here. A round-trip **taxi** ride should cost less than ¥250 ($31).

Sīmǎtái ★★ Somewhat tamed after a series of deaths led to the closing of its most dangerous stretch, Sīmǎtái nevertheless remains one of the best options for those who want more of a challenge from the Great Wall. The most harrowing portion, steep and unrestored, is on the east side of the Mìyún Reservoir. Several gravel-strewn spots here require all four limbs to navigate. The endpoint is Wàngjīng Tǎ, the 12th watchtower from the bottom. Beyond this is the appropriately named **Tiān Qiáo (Heavenly Bridge),** a thin, tilted ridge where the wall narrows to only a few feet—this section is now off-limits. Despite the danger, this

part of the Wall can get crowded on weekends, especially since the cable car was installed. Souvenir vendors can also be a nuisance. The round-trip hike to Tiān Qiáo takes roughly 3 hours at a moderate pace. The section of Sīmǎtái west of the reservoir is better restored (in the beginning at least) and connects to another section of the Great Wall, Jīnshānlǐng, in Héběi Province. The ticket office is in a small village 10 minutes' walk south of the reservoir; it's open from 8am to 10pm in summer (8am–6pm in winter). Admission is ¥30 ($4). The cable car runs only from April to November; a round-trip ride to the No. 8 Tower costs ¥50 ($6).

Sīmǎtái is 110km (68 miles) northeast of Běijīng. The best no-hassle option is to go there with one of the **Youth Hostelling International** tours (✆ **138/0135-8094;** ask for "Simon"). These tours typically leave the Far East Youth Hostel (p. 83) at 7:40am and cost ¥80 ($10) for simple transportation. The ***yóu* no. 12** travels to Sīmǎtái from northeast of the Xuānwǔ Mén metro stop for ¥60 ($8); this is supposed to be a daily service departing every 30 minutes from 6:30 to 8:30am, with 3 hours on-site, but call to make sure (✆ **010/6779-7546**). A round-trip **taxi** should cost less than ¥400 ($50).

OTHER SIGHTS OUTSIDE BĚIJĪNG

THE MÍNG TOMBS

Of the 16 emperors who ruled China during the Míng dynasty (1368–1644), 13 are buried in this valley north of Běijīng (hence the Chinese name Shísān Líng, the 13 Tombs). The Yǒnglè emperor, who also oversaw construction of the Forbidden City, consulted geomancers before choosing this site, considered advantageous because it is bounded to the north by a range of protective mountains. The geography of the valley is mirrored in the tombs themselves, with each emperor buried beneath a tumulus protected from the rear by a mountain. Only three of the Míng Tombs—**Dìng Líng, Cháng Líng,** and **Zhāo Líng**—have been restored, and only one (Dìng Líng) has been fully excavated. Many of the buildings mirror Míng palaces found in the city. Because of this, the sight can be boring to people who've already had their fill of imperial architecture. However, several attractions, particularly the **Shén Dào (Spirit Way),** make the trip worthwhile for those who have the time.

The valley is 48km (30 miles) north of Běijīng, on the same road that goes to Bādálǐng. Many **tours** to Bādálǐng also come here, but if you want time to explore some of the unrestored tombs (highly recommended), you'll have to make a separate trip. A **taxi** hired in Běijīng should cost less than ¥400 ($50).

A Great Hike on the Great Wall

Jīnshānlǐng ★★★ (✆ **010/8402-4647;** ¥30/$4) is one of the all-time great Wall hikes. It's not as steep as Sīmǎtái and is more heavily restored, but with fewer visitors. The hike from here east to the Mìyún Reservoir is roughly 10km (6 miles) and takes 3 to 4 hours. The middle part of the hike, as the people fall away and the Wall begins to crumble, can be truly sublime. A number of hotels provide transportation for this hike, including the Far East Youth Hostel. Otherwise, you can take an air-conditioned bus from the Xī Zhí Mén long-distance bus station to Mìyún (every 30 min.; 6am–4pm; ¥15/$2), then hire a minivan *(miàndī)* to drop you off at Jīnshānlǐng and pick you up at Sīmǎtái for around ¥100 ($12)—make sure you withhold payment until after you're picked up.

The most comfortable form of public transport is the air-conditioned **bus no. 845** from Xī Zhí Mén (a 10-min. walk south of the metro station) to Zhèngfǎ Dàxué in Chāngpíng (1½ hr.; ¥9/$1). Then cross the street and take bus no. 314 to the Dà Gōng Mén stop (15 min; ¥1/15¢). It is also possible to take the green-and-white *zhī* (express) version of **bus no. 919** to Zhèngfǎ Dàxué from Déshèng Mén (1 hr.; ¥4/50¢).

Shén Dào (Spirit Way) ★ The main entrance to the valley is the **Dà Hóng Mén (Great Red Gate),** remarkably similar to gates found in the Forbidden City, beyond which is a pavilion housing China's largest memorial stele, and beyond that the Spirit Way. The path, slightly curved to fool evil spirits, is lined on either side with willows and remarkable **carved stone animals** and human figures, considered among the best in China and far better than those found at the Qīng Tombs. Not to be missed.

Ticket office north of stele pavilion. 7am–6pm in summer, 8am–5:30pm in winter. Admission ¥20 ($3) in summer, ¥15 ($2) in winter. Simple bilingual maps available here for ¥3 (40¢).

Cháng Líng This tomb, home to the remains of the Yǒnglè emperor, is the largest and best preserved of the 13. It is essentially a Forbidden City in miniature, and perhaps disappointing if you've seen the palace already. Most striking is the **Líng'ēn Diàn,** an immense hall in which the interior columns and brackets have been left unpainted, creating an eye-catching contrast with the green ceiling panels.

4km (2½ miles) due north of the Shén Dào. Admission ¥30 ($4) in summer, ¥20 ($3) in winter. 8am–6pm in summer, 8:30am–5pm in winter. Bus: no. 314 or 22 to Cháng Líng stop from lighted intersection just beyond northern end of spirit way.

Dìng Líng ★ The 4,000-sq.-m (13,000-sq.-ft.) **Underground Palace** discovered here in 1956 was the burial place of the Wànlì emperor, his wife, and his favorite concubine. The "palace" is a plain marble vault, buried 27m (88 ft.) underground and divided into five large chambers. It's all a bit disappointing. The corpses have been removed, their red coffins replaced with replicas, and burial objects moved to aboveground display rooms. The original marble thrones are still here, though, now covered in a small fortune of *rénmínbì* notes tossed by Chinese visitors in hopes of bribing the emperor's ghost to grant them good luck. Outside, behind the ticket office, is the new and quite respectable **Shísān Líng Bówùguǎn** (**Míng Tombs Museum;** ¥20/$3).

Admission: *lián piào* (all-inclusive ticket) ¥50 ($6) in summer, ¥40 ($5) in winter; otherwise, ¥40 ($5) in summer, ¥35 ($4) in winter. 8am–5:30pm in summer, 8:30am–5pm in winter. On west side of valley; walk south from Cháng Líng, take 1st right, and walk west 20 min.

EASTERN QĪNG TOMBS ★★

The Qīng Dōng Líng have been open for more than 20 years but they are still little visited, despite offering considerably more to visitors than those of the Míng. Altogether, five emperors, 15 empresses, 136 concubines, three princes, and two princesses are buried in 15 tombs here. The first to be buried was Shùnzhì—the first Qīng emperor to reign from Běijīng—in 1663, and the last was an imperial concubine in 1935. The tomb chambers of four imperial tombs, the **Xiào Líng** (the Shùnzhì emperor), **Jǐng Líng** (Kāngxī), **Yù Líng** (Qiánlóng), and **Dìng Líng** (Xiánfēng), are open, as well as the twin **Dìng Dōng Líng** tombs (the Cíxǐ dowager empress and the Cí'ān empress). Also of interest is a group site for the Qiánlóng emperor's concubines.

The tombs are in Zūnhuà County, Héběi Province, 125km (78 miles) east of Běijīng. They are open daily, from 8am to 5:30pm in summer, 9am to 4:30pm

in winter. The *tōng piào,* which offers access to all the tombs, costs ¥81 ($10). A special Qīng Dōng Líng tourist bus leaves at 7:30am from northeast of the Xuānwǔ Mén (206) metro stop and allows you about 3 hours on-site before beginning the return journey If you want to explore at your own pace, you'll have to hire a cab or take a rickety local bus to Zūnhuà. The local bus is found just east of the Dàwàng Lù (123) metro station (exit C) (6:30am–4:30pm; 3½ hr.; ¥24/$3). After you get off the bus, hire a *miàndì* (minivan) to take you the rest of the way for about ¥20 ($3). An assortment of three-wheelers will offer their services to take you around the site, with an initial asking price of ¥10 ($1.25).

The **Xiào Líng** was the first tomb on the site, and a model for others both here and at the Western Qīng Tombs, although few others are so elaborate. Each tomb has an approach road or spirit way, which may have guardian figures. The entrance to the tomb itself is usually preceded by a large stele pavilion and marble bridges over a stream. To the right, the buildings used for preparation of sacrifices are now usually the residences of the staff, and hung with washing. Inside the gate, halls to the left and right were for enrobing and other preparations, and now house exhibitions, as usually does each **Hall of Eminent Favor,** at the rear, where ceremonies in honor of the deceased took place. Behind, if open, a doorway allows access past a stone altar to a steep ramp leading to the base of a **soul tower.** Through a passageway beneath, stairs to either side lead to a walkway encircling the mound, giving views across the countryside. If the tomb chamber is open, a ramp from beneath the soul tower leads down to a series of chambers.

The twin **Dìng Dōng Líng** tombs have nearly identical exteriors, but Dowager Empress Cíxī had hers rebuilt in 1895, 14 years after Empress Cí'ān's death (in which she is suspected of having had a hand), using far more expensive materials. Everywhere are reminders of the Forbidden City, such as the terrace-corner spouts carved as water-loving dragons *(chē).* The interior has motifs strikingly painted in gold on dark wood, recalling the buildings where the empress spent her last years. There are walls of carved and gilded brick, and columns writhing with superbly fearsome wooden dragons. After this, the other tombs seem gaudy.

The enclosure of the **Yù Fēi Yuán Qǐn (Garden of Rest)** contains moss-covered tumuli for 35 of the Qiánlóng emperor's concubines. Another is buried in a proper tomb chamber, along with an empress whom Qiánlóng had grown to dislike.

The **Yù Líng** has the finest tomb chamber, a series of rooms separated by solid marble doors, with walls and arched ceilings engraved with Buddha figures and more than 30,000 words of Tibetan scripture. The 3-ton doors themselves have reliefs of bodhisattvas (beings on the road to enlightenment) and the four protective kings usually found at temple entrances. This tomb is worth the trip in its own right. The **Jìng Líng** is the tomb of Qiánlóng's grandfather, the Kāngxī emperor. It's surprisingly modest given that he was possibly the greatest emperor the Chinese ever had, but that's in keeping with what is known of his character. The spirit say leading to the tomb has an elegant five-arch bridge; the guardian figures are placed at an unusual curve in the way, quite close to the tomb itself, and are more decorated than those at earlier tombs.

WESTERN QĪNG TOMBS ★★

The Yōngzhèng emperor broke with tradition and ordered his tomb to be constructed here, away from his father (the Kāngxī emperor). His son, the Qiánlóng emperor, decided to be buried near his grandfather and that thereafter burials

should alternate between the eastern (see above) and western sites, although this was not followed consistently. The first tomb, the **Tài Líng,** was completed in 1737, 2 years after the Yōngzhèng reign. The last imperial interment was in 1998, when the ashes of Aisin-Gioro Henry Pǔyí, the last emperor, were moved to a commercial cemetery here. He and two consorts were added to four emperors, four empresses, four princes, two princesses, and 57 concubines. The site is rural, with the tombs lapped by orchards and agriculture, and with chickens, goats, and the odd rabbit to be encountered.

Chāng Líng (the Jiāqìng emperor's tomb), and **Chóng Líng** (Guāngxù) are also open, as well as **Chāng Xī Líng,** with the extraordinary sonic effects of its **Huíyīn Bì**—an echo wall where, as the only visitors, you'll actually be able to try out the special effects available only in theory at the Temple of Heaven.

The **Qīng Xī Líng** are located 140km (87 miles) southwest of Běijīng, outside Yì Xiàn in Héběi Province. The ticket office is open from 8am to 5pm; a *tōng piào* (good for access to all the tombs) costs ¥80 ($10) and is good for 2 days. There's no access by tourist bus, but that is part of the appeal for most visitors. To get there, take a bus to Yì Xiàn from the Lìzé Qiáo long-distance bus station (departs every 15 min, 6:50am–5pm; 3 hr.; ¥40/$5). Then switch to a minivan *(miàndì)* for the 15km (9-mile) ride to the tombs; the fare is around ¥20 ($3). Unless you make a very early start, it might be better to spend a night at the modest **Qīng Xī Líng Bīnguǎn** (✆ **0312/471-0038;** fax 0312/471-0012), on the site itself. The new building has standard rooms for ¥140 ($17). Or you can stay at **Guì Bīn Lóu,** on the main road passing the site (✆ **0312/471-0883;** ¥188/$23 standard room). By **taxi** it's a reasonable day trip down the Jīngshí Freeway from the Southwest Third Ring Road to the turn for Gāo Bēi Diàn to the west, and beyond to Yì Xiàn.

The **Dà Bēi Lóu,** a pavilion containing two vast stelae, is on the curved route to the **Tài Líng.** The general plan of the major tombs follows that of the Eastern Tombs, above. In fact, the **Chāng Líng,** slightly to the west, is almost identical, brick for brick, to the Tài Líng, although the rear section with soul tower and tomb mound is not open. The Jiāqìng empress is buried just to the west in the **Chāng Xī Líng,** on a far smaller scale, the tomb mound a brick drum. But the perfectly semicircular rear wall offers the whispering-gallery effects found at some domed European cathedrals; clapping while standing on marked stones at the center of the site produces multiple echoes, while speech is amazingly amplified. The empress can't get much peace.

As if to reflect that the Qīng were already in decline, the Dàoguāng emperor's **Mù Líng** is much more modest than those of his predecessors, missing a stele pavilion and spirit way, and largely unpainted. The tomb mound is also a modest brick-wall drum. The Guǎngxù emperor was the last to complete his reign (although his aunt, Cíxǐ, is again suspected of shortening it), and his **Chóng Líng,** which uses more modern materials than other tombs, wasn't completed until 1915, well after the last emperor's abdication.

Several other tombs are open, and more are being restored. The recently opened **Tài Líng Fēi Yuán Qín** is a rather battered group of concubine tumuli, individually labeled with the years in which each concubine entered the Yōngzhèng emperor's service, and their grades in the complex harem hierarchy.

The ashes of **Pǔyí** (properly known as the Xuāntǒng emperor) lie buried on the eastern end of the site, up a slope behind a brand-new Qīng-style memorial arch *(páilóu),* and behind a shoddy modern carved balustrade. Neighboring plots are available for the right price.

WESTERN TEMPLES

Buried in the hills west of Běijīng, **Tánzhè Sì (Temple of the Pool and Wild Mulberry)** and **Jiètái Sì (Temple of the Ordination Platform)** are the tranquil kinds of Chinese temples people imagine before they actually come to China. Foreign travelers seldom visit them, but the effort to come out here is worth it, if only to escape the noise and dust of the city center.

Both are easily accessible by taking **bus no. 931** from the Píngguǒyuán metro station (103) at the far western end of Line 1. Take a right out of exit D and continue straight a few minutes to the bus station (be sure to take the plain red-and-beige, rather than the red-and-yellow *zhī,* version of the bus). Tánzhè Sì is the last stop on this line; the trip takes 1 hour and costs ¥2.50 (40¢). Basic but acceptable **accommodations** are available at both temples, for those who want (or need) to spend more time in quietude.

Tánzhè Sì ★★ This peaceful complex dates back to the Western Jìn dynasty (265–316), well before Běijīng was founded. In the main courtyard on the central axis is a pair of 30m (100-ft.) ginkgo trees, supposedly planted in the Táng dynasty (618–907), as well as several apricot trees, cypresses, peonies, and purple jade orchids. The **Guānyīn Diàn,** at the top of the western axis, was favored by Princess Miào Yán, a daughter of Kublai Khan; she is said to have prayed so fervently she left footprints in one of the floor stones (now stored in a box to the left).

48km (29 miles) west of Běijīng. Admission ¥35 ($4). 8am–5:30pm. Bus: no. 931. Get off at last stop and hike up stone path at end of parking lot.

Jiètái Sì ★ The **ordination platform** here, China's largest, is a three-tiered circular structure with 113 statues of the God of Ordination placed in niches around the base. It is located in the Jiètái Diàn, in the far right corner of the temple. Ceremonies conducted on this platform to commemorate the ascension of a devotee to full monkhood required permission from the emperor. Other courtyards have ancient, twisted pines, as venerable as the temple itself.

13km (8 miles) east of Tánzhè Sì. Admission ¥35 ($4). 8am–6pm. Bus: no. 931 from Tánzhè Sì. The stop is marked with a huge sign pointing the way to the temple.

TIĀNJĪN

Tiānjīn is a large, metal-bashing metropolis only 142km (89 miles) east of Běijīng. It lies just 56km (35 miles) upriver from the port of Tánggū, an occasional cruise-ship stop and 30-minute bus or taxi ride from Tiānjīn. If you take taxis in China, the chances are that you'll have ridden in one of its products, the Tiānjīn Xiàlì, a rattletrap which is self-dismantling on rough roads, now facing fierce competition from Sino-foreign joint-venture vehicles almost universally more robust. (The latest model greets you from a rotating dais as you emerge from the main railway station.)

For those not going to Shànghǎi, Tiānjīn provides a handy alternative for viewing colonial architecture at its best (if now rather shabby). Also, an excellent multi-courtyard merchant's mansion, the **Shí Jiā Dàyuàn** ★★, is a short journey out of town.

There are 11 double-decker all-seat **train** services daily from Běijīng Zhàn beginning with the T531 at 8:05am and ending with the T553 at 7:46pm, each taking about 1¼ hours. For the return trip, the first train is the T532 at 6:09am and the last is the T554 at 6:08pm. Services to and from the northeast and Shànghǎi and on south pass through Tiānjīn Běi (North) Station.

A Short Tour of Tiānjīn

Straight ahead, a short walk across the river by the colonial-era foreign-built iron bridge, now called the Jiěfàng Qiáo (Liberation Bridge), is an area of European office buildings, stores, and mansions dating from Treaty Port days, when there was once a total of eight **foreign concession areas.** These grew to dwarf the small walled town, which became the Chinese quarter. Foreign residents were forced upon the Chinese after the Second Opium War in 1861, with concessions for the British and French, then for the Japanese, Russians, Austro-Hungarians, Germans, Italians, and Belgians. Most of the foreign residents left buildings in very much their national styles, like an early Expo. Immediately across the bridge you're in the former French Concession, walking along what would have been the rue de France, now Jiěfàng Běi Lù. Past imposing brick and stone buildings with hints of Art Deco, the fifth right turn is Chéngdé Dào, and almost immediately on the right is the **Tiānjīn Art Museum (Tiānjīn Wénwùguǎn Cáng)** ★. Located in an imposing colonnaded stone mansion which was once the administrative headquarters of the French Concession (open Tues–Sun 8am–noon and 1:30–5pm; ¥10/$1.25). The building has a fine Art Deco interior, as well as a small but high-quality exhibition of historical items, including bronzes, jade, scroll paintings, and recent artworks.

If instead you walk straight on, you'll pass the crenellated **Gordon House** on the right, once the British administration, and further down on the left the **Astor Hotel,** once *the* place to stay. Despite the entirely new buildings at its rear, the hotel retains something of it former flavor, and displays photographs of illustrious guests of earlier times. En route, drop into any banks you see, as many still use the original banking halls of their capitalist predecessors—carved oak, stained glass, and all. Taking almost any turn at random can be rewarding, but at the end of Chéngdé Dào there's a circular green space with several particularly splendid mansions. Pedestrianized Hépíng Lù, stretching away from here, has had its colonial stores and offices restored and reopened as the city's principal **shopping street.** Without the slightest irony, its decorations include a life-size bronze horse and buggy with a bowler-hatted cabbie, behind whom you can sit for a photo, reinforcing a very confused view of Tiānjīn's past.

Within town, the old **Chinese city** is also worth visiting. The city walls were built in 1403 but were pulled down by the foreign powers in 1901, following the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion. The siege of the foreign concessions of Tiānjīn was nearly as bloody as that of the Běijīng Legation Quarter, and the Qīng were forced to agree not to restore the forts at the coast as well as to permit the stationing of foreign troops in both cities. What the foreigners achieved in 1901, the Chinese are completing a century later; they pulled down much of the surrounding area and rebuilt the center of the walled area to make it more attractive to tourism (as they see it) while providing a new history of a braver, prettier, cleaner, but highly imaginary past. However, the **Guǎngdōng Guildhall and Theatre Museum (Guǎngdōng Huìguǎn Xìjù Bówùguǎn)** ★ has been left intact (open Tues–Sun 9am–4pm, closed Mon; ¥4/50¢); the ticket office is on the southeast, opposite the newly refurbished Drum Tower. The main auditorium can have changed little in the century since it was built, and it's not difficult to imagine happy crowds sipping tea, cracking melon seeds, and yelling to make themselves heard over the cacophony of the performance, despite the slightly church-like atmosphere which now prevails. Outer courtyards carry exhibitions of gaudy costumes and chipped 78 rpm recordings of the greatest stars at their ear-piercing best.

Outside Tiānjīn, in the suburb of Yángliǔqīng, lies the well-preserved multi-courtyard mansion of a wealthy trading family, the **Shí Jiā Dàyuàn** ★★ (open 9am–4:30pm; ¥10/$1.25). The mansion is worth seeing in its own right. It's best reached by taxi; head straight west out of town on Xī Qīng Dào, turn left into Lín Kǒu Lù after about 18km (11 miles) and 45 minutes, and then turn right immediately before crossing the river. An MIG fighter can be seen parked on the opposite bank, and the mansion entrance is opposite that. Your driver will insist on asking directions once in Yángliǔqīng, so do not worry. Do make sure the taxi's "one-way" button is not pushed; the cost of the ride is about ¥60 to ¥70 ($7.50–$8.75), including waiting time. Your travel options are disintegrating *miàndī* minivans at ¥1.30 (15¢) per kilometer, Xiàlì at ¥1.50 (20¢), or Fùkāng at ¥1.70 (20¢). Their ¥8 ($1) flagfalls include 3 or 4km.

The mansion has 12 courtyards arranged along three axes, with a total of 278 rooms, and thus takes a while to explore. Like the more famous mansions around Shānxī Province (see chapter 5), it has been used as a film set, with Zhāng Yìmóu filming scenes from the epic *Huózhe (To Live)* here. Gray, black, and red are the predominant colors, but look out for finely carved decorative brick work, a private theater, and little details such as corridor lanterns whose glass panes are painted with colorful images of beautiful women.

There are plenty of places to eat around the station, including large branches of the usual fast-food outlets, and an independent Chinese pizza operation. But to your left as you leave the station is a specialist in Tiānjīn's famous *gǒubùlǐ* ("dogs won't touch them") dumplings—not significantly different from dumplings dogs would touch—rather tasty and available to eat here or take away from ¥6 (75¢) and up. One theory suggests they were named for their inventor, whose parents followed a tradition of giving children unappetizing names in order to fool evil spirits into leaving them alone.

7 Shopping

Stores and markets in Běijīng sell everything from cashmere and silk to knock-off designer label clothing to athletic wear, antiques, traditional art, cloisonné, lacquerware, Míng furniture, Máo memorabilia, and enough miscellaneous Chinesey doodads to stuff Christmas stockings from now until eternity. Prices are reasonable (certainly lower than in the Asian-goods boutiques back home), though increasingly less so. Cheap one-time-use luggage is widely available for hauling your booty if you get carried away.

Before you rush to the ATM, however, it is important to remember that not all that is green and gleams in Běijīng is jade. Indeed, the majority of it is colored glass. The same principle holds for pearls (see below), famous-brand clothing, antiques, and just about everything else. Shoppers who plan to make big purchases should educate themselves about quality and price well beforehand.

You should also be leery of any English-speaking youngsters who claim to be **art students** and offer to take you to a special exhibit of their work. This is a scam. The art, which you will be compelled to buy, almost always consists of assembly-line reproductions of famous (or not so famous) paintings offered at prices several dozen times higher than their actual value.

TOP SHOPPING AREAS

The grandest shopping area in Běijīng is on and around **Wángfǔjǐng Dàjiē,** east of the Forbidden City. The street was overhauled in 1999, the south section turned into a pedestrian-only commercial avenue lined with shops, fast-food

restaurants, and the city's top two malls—the Sun (Xīn) Dōng Ān Plaza and the Oriental Plaza (Dōngfāng Guǎngchǎng). **Dōngdān Běi Dàjiē,** a long block east, is a strip of clothing boutiques and CD shops popular among fashionable Běijīng youth.

Other major Westernized shopping areas include the section of **Jiànguó Mén Wài Dàjiē** between the Friendship Store and the China World Trade Center, and the neighborhood outside the **Northeast Third Ring Road North,** southeast of Sānyuán Qiáo around the new embassy district.

Běijīng's liveliest shopping zone, the one most beloved of tourists for its atmosphere and Chinese-style goods, is the centuries-old commercial district southwest of Qián Mén. **Liúlichǎng** is an almost too-quaint collection of art, book, tea, and antiques shops lining a polished-for-tourists, Old Běijīng–style *hútòng* running east–west 2 blocks south of the Hépíng Mén (207) metro station. The street is good for window-shopping strolls and small purchases—like the unavoidable **chop** (*túzhāng;* stone or jade stamp), carved with your name—but beware large purchases: Almost everything here is fake and overpriced. In a similar setting but infinitely more raucous, **Dà Zhàlán** (pronounced Dà Shílànr in the Běijīng dialect) is the prole alternative to Wángfǔjǐng Dàjiē; located in a pedestrian-only *hútòng* 2 blocks due south of Qián Mén, it is jammed on either side with cheap clothing outlets, cheap restaurants, and cheap luggage shops.

MARKETS

Although malls and shopping centers are becoming more popular, the majority of Běijīng residents still shop in markets. Whether indoors or out, these markets are inexpensive, chaotic and, for the visitor, tremendously interesting. Payment is in cash, bargaining is universal, and pick-pockets are plentiful.

Hóngqiáo Jímào Shìchǎng ★ An outlet for cheap jewelry better known as the **Pearl Market,** Hóngqiáo Market is just northeast of the Temple of Heaven at Hóngqiáo Lù 16. The first floor smells awful (there's a seafood market in the basement), but the upper floors have cheap Western clothing, luggage, old Chinese curios and, of course, pearls (3rd floor). The prices here are good and the bargaining fierce. The market is open from 8:30am to 7pm.

Pānjiāyuán Jiùhuò Shìchǎng ★★★ Eureka! Also known as the Dirt or Ghost Market, this is the Chinese shopping experience of dreams: row upon crowded row of calligraphy, jewelry, ceramics, teapots, ethnic clothing, Buddha statues, paper lanterns, Cultural Revolution memorabilia, PLA belts, little wooden boxes, Míng- and Qīng-style furniture, old pipes, opium scales, and painted human skulls. There are some real antiques scattered among the junk, but you'd have to be an expert to pick them out. Locals arrive Saturday and Sunday mornings at dawn or shortly afterward (hence the "Ghost" label) to find the best stuff; vendors start to leave around 4pm. Initial prices given to foreigners are always absurdly high—Máo clocks, for instance, should cost less than ¥40 ($5) rather than the ¥400 ($50) you'll likely be asked to pay. The market is located on the south side of Pānjiāyuán Lù, just inside the southeast corner of the Third Ring Road.

Silk Street (Xiùshuǐ Jiē) *Overrated* This is Běijīng's most famous market among foreign visitors, a crowded maze of stalls selling the city's largest selection of knock-off shoes and clothing—and very little silk. Prices aren't as good as they used to be, and the vendors have learned how to insult your mother in English if you make them lose face. Under no circumstances should you pay more than

Tips Buying Pearls

Most of the pearls on sale at Hóngqiáo Market are genuine, although of too low a quality to be sold in Western jewelry shops, but there are some fakes floating around. To test if the pearls you want to buy are real, try any one of the following:

- Nick the surface with a sharp blade (the color should be uniform within and without)
- Rub the pearl across your teeth (this should make a grating sound)
- Scrape the pearl on a piece of glass (real pearls leave a mark)
- Pass it through a flame (fake pearls turn black, real ones don't)

Strange as it may feel to do these tests, vendors are generally willing to let you carry them out and might even help, albeit with bemused faces. If you'd rather not bother (and most don't), just assume the worst, shop for fun, and spend modestly.

¥150 ($20) for a North Face (North Fake, the expats call it) jacket. Silk Street runs north off Jiànguó Mén Wài Dàjiē just west of the Jiànguó Hotel. Market hours are from 9am to around 5:30pm.

More Markets

The **Yǎxiù Fúzhuāng Shìchǎng** (open 9:30am–8pm) is a new clothing market in a large building west of Sānlǐtún North Bar Street, marked with a large sign that reads "Wearables Silk Shoescap Store" [sic]; it's essentially an indoor version of Silk Street but with more actual silk and assorted souvenirs on the upper floors. Similar to the Yǎxiù but more fashionable and located outdoors is **Nǚrén Jiē (Girl Street),** next to the new embassy district outside the Northeast Third Ring Road (northeast of the Lufthansa Center).

The **Yùtíng Huā Niǎo Shìchǎng,** opposite the southeast corner of the Temple of Heaven, sells almost everything for traditional Běijīng pastimes—flowers, birds, fish, and kites. It's open from 7am to sunset.

DEPARTMENT STORES

Friendship Store (Yǒuyì Shāngchǎng) This is a dinosaur from the days when foreigners used a separate kind of money and couldn't shop anywhere else. Everything's here and everything's viciously overpriced. A good source of Western periodicals, the store is open from 9am to 8:30pm. Jiànguó Mén Dàjiē 17.

Xī Dān Bǎihuò Shāngchǎng Crowded and chaotic, this is an old-school department store. Cosmetics and hearing aids are on the first floor; sports equipment, clothing, and appliances fill up three more floors. Good deals on denim and shoes. Hours are from 9am to 8pm. East side of Xī Dān Běi Dàjiē (north of Xī Dān metro stop).

MALLS & SHOPPING PLAZAS

Lufthansa Center (Yānshā Yǒuyì Shāngchǎng) Connected to the Kempinski Hotel, this is the most comprehensive but also most expensive shopping center in northeast Běijīng, with a range of upscale specialty shops, boutiques, restaurants, and international airline ticketing offices. It's open from 9am to 8:30pm. Liàngmǎ Qiáo Lù 50 (east side of the Northeast Third Ring Rd.).

Oriental Plaza (Dōngfāng Guǎngchǎng) Asia's largest shopping/office/apartment/hotel complex covers 4 city blocks of prime real estate from

Finding a Tailor in Běijīng

The only reason to get clothes made in Běijīng is if you want a ***qípáo,*** the tight-fitting traditional dress with a side slit most commonly associated with 1930s Shànghǎi. Textile shops generally have in-house tailors who'll make quick and cheap but low-quality dresses for ¥250 to ¥350 ($31–$44). For something nicer, try the **Cáo Shīfu Qípáo Shop** (Shǐjiā Hútòng 25, off Dōngsì Nán Dàjiē) or one of the tailors curiously located on South Bar Street (Dōng Dà Qiáo Xiéjiē); dresses at these shops typically cost ¥400 ($50) and up.

Wángfǔjǐng Dàjiē to Dōngdān Běi Dàjiē. Offering fun for the kids are a Sony ExploraScience museum, Starbucks, McDonald's, and more. Hours are from 9am to 10pm. Dōng Cháng'ān Dàjiē. Metro: Wángfǔjǐng (118).

Sun Dong An Plaza (Xīn Dōng'ān Shìchǎng) Běijīng's most successful mall is one of its most fully stocked. The "Old Běijīng Street" in the basement is a cheap ploy to overcharge tourists. The mall is open Monday through Thursday from 9am to 9pm; Friday through Sunday from 9am to 10pm. Wángfǔjǐng Dàjiē 138.

8 Běijīng After Dark

It wasn't so long ago that the after-dark options available to foreigners in Běijīng were limited to a short list of tourist-approved activities: Běijīng opera, acrobatics, and wandering listlessly around the hotel in search of a drink to make sleep come faster. Now opera and acrobatics are still available, but in more interesting venues, and to them have been added a range of other worthwhile cultural events: teahouse theater, puppet shows, traditional music concerts, and even the occasional subtitled film. Beyond such edification, Běijīng has China's most diverse stable of bars, clubs, discos, and cafes, cheaper and often more interesting than those of Hong Kong or Shànghǎi. For locations, see the map on p. 80.

PERFORMING ARTS

BĚIJĪNG OPERA

A relatively young opera form dating back only 300 years to the early Qīng dynasty, Běijīng Opera (Jīngjù) dazzles as much as it grates. Performances are loud and long, with dialogue sung on a screeching five-note scale and accompanied by a cacophony of gongs, cymbals, drums, and strings. This leaves most first-timers exhausted, but the exquisite costumes, elaborate face paint, and martial arts–inspired movements ultimately make it worthwhile. Several theaters now offer shortened programs more amenable to the foreign attention span, sometimes with English subtitles and plot summaries.

Most tourists on tours are taken to the bland, cinema-style **Líyuán Theater (Líyuán Jùchǎng)** inside the Qián Mén Hotel, where nightly performances at 7:30pm cost ¥30 to ¥200 ($3–$25). The venues below offer essentially the same performances in much better traditional settings.

Húguǎng Guild House (Húguǎng Huìguǎn Xìlóu) This combination museum-theater was originally built in 1807. The theater is a riot of color, with a beautifully adorned traditional stage and gallery seating. It is currently Běijīng's best opera venue. Nightly performances take place at 7:30pm. Hǔfáng Lù

3, at intersection with Luomashì Dàjiē. ✆ **010/6351-8284.** Tickets ¥100–¥380 ($12–$48). Metro: Hépíng Mén (207); walk south 10 min.

Zhèngyǐcí Xìlóu Rumors that this 300-year-old theater had gone under are untrue, but funding problems and its position at the center of a massive urban reconstruction project have limited the number of performances. The theater is similar to the Húguǎng Guild House but less ostentatious, with a more local feel. Shows are held most nights at 7:30pm (call to check). This is the first choice of venue for Běijīng Opera when it's open. Pray it survives. Qián Mén Xī Héyán Jiē 220 (walk south of the Hépíng Mén Quánjùdé, take 1st left). ✆ **010/8315-1650.** Tickets ¥150–¥280 ($19–$35). Metro: Hépíng Mén (207).

ACROBATICS

China's acrobats are justifiably famous, and probably just a little bit insane. This was the only traditional Chinese art form to receive Máo's explicit approval (back flips, apparently, don't count as counterrevolution). Not culturally stimulating, it's highly recommended nonetheless.

The city's best acrobatics venue is the **Wànshèng Jùchǎng** on the north side of Běi Wěi Lù, just off Qián Mén Dàjiē (west side of the Temple of Heaven; ✆ **010/6303-7449**). The fairly famous Běijīng Acrobatics Troupe performs nightly shows here at 7:15pm. Tickets cost ¥100 to ¥150 ($12–$19). The acrobats at the **Cháoyáng Jùchǎng** (Dōng Sān Huán Běi Lù 36) are slightly clumsier. Nightly shows at 7:15pm cost ¥100 to ¥150 ($12–$19)

TEAHOUSE THEATER

Snippets of Běijīng opera, cross-talk (stand-up) comedy, acrobatics, traditional music, singing, and dancing flow across the stage as you sip tea and nibble snacks. If you don't have time to see these kinds of performances individually, the teahouse is a perfect solution.

Lǎo Shě Teahouse (Lǎo Shě Cháguǎn) Performances change nightly at this somewhat garishly decorated teahouse but always include opera and acrobatics. It pays to buy the more expensive tickets, as rear views are obscured. Nightly shows take place at 7:50pm. Qiánmén Xī Dàjiē 3, west of Qián Mén on street's south side. ✆ **010/6303-6830.** Tickets ¥40–¥130 ($5–$16).

Tiān Qiáo Happy Tea House (Tiān Qiáo Lè Cháguǎn) Larger and somewhat classier than the Lǎo Shě, this teahouse features essentially the same show. They offer a Běijīng duck dinner option (reservations required). Performances take place nightly at 8pm (arrive at 6:30pm for dinner). Běi Wěi Lù, just west of intersection with Qián Mén Dàjiē (west side of Temple of Heaven). ✆ **010/6304-0617.** Tickets ¥180 ($22), or ¥330 ($41) with dinner.

PUPPETS

Puppet shows *(mù'ǒu xì)* have been performed in China since the Hàn dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220). Most theatrical performances, including weekend matinees, are held at the **China Puppet Art Theater (Zhōngguó Mù'ǒu Jùyuàn),** in Ānhuá Xīlǐ near the North Third Ring Road (✆ **010/6424-3698**). Tickets cost ¥20 to ¥25 ($2–$3).

SMALL LIVE-MUSIC VENUES

Běijīng CD Jazz Club (Běijīng CD Juéshì Jùlèbù) This cozy jazz club was modeled on the owner's favorite haunt during his stay in Europe. Live jazz is featured Wednesday through Sunday nights. If a special act is playing, get there

early. Hours are from noon to 2am. Dōng Sān Huán, south of the Agricultural Exhibition Center (Nóngzhǎn Guǎn) main gate (down small path behind trees that line sidewalk). ✆ **010/6506–8288.** Shows ¥30 ($4).

CD Café (CD Kāfēwū) The CD is Běijīng's best venue for live music, especially of the "underground" variety. Hours are from 2pm to 2am. Dōng Sān Huán, 50m (164 ft.) south of Agricultural Exhibition Center (Nóngzhǎn Guǎn). ✆ **010/6501-8877.** Shows ¥30–¥50 ($4–$6).

Get Lucky Bar (Háoyùn Jiǔbā) This odd and remote bar is an occasional venue for Běijīng's much-documented **punk** shows. Hours are from 5pm to 2am. In Tàiyán Gōng area, several blocks east of the UIBE campus south gate (Dùiwài Jìngmào Dàxuě Nán Mén). ✆ **010/6429-9109.** Shows ¥10–¥30 ($1–$4).

River (Hé) This strangely calm bar buried in the bacchanalian madness of South Bar Street is owned by the Wild Children (Yě Háizi), one of Běijīng's most respectable folk bands. It hosts frequent (and free) folk-rock performances, and the occasional open-mike night. It's open nightly from 7pm to 2am. West side of South Bar Street (Dōng Dà Qiáo Xiéjiē). ✆ **010/6594-4714.**

Sānwèi Bookstore (Sānwèi Shūwū) This tiny bookshop has a teahouse upstairs that hosts intimate concerts on the weekends. On Friday it's **jazz** and on Saturday it's **classical Chinese,** usually with a minority twist. Tea and snacks, too. Performances are held at 8:30pm. Fùxīng Mén Nèi Dàjiē 60, opposite the Minorities Palace (Mínzǔ Gōng). ✆ **010/6601-3204.** Tickets ¥30 ($4).

OTHER PERFORMING-ARTS VENUES

Běijīng hosts a growing number of international music and theater events every year, and its own increasingly respectable troupes—including the Běijīng Symphony Orchestra—give frequent performances. Among the most popular venues for this sort of thing is the **Běijīng Concert Hall** (**Běijīng Yīnyuè Tīng;** ✆ **010/6605-5812**), at Běi Xīnhuá Jiē in Liùbùkǒu (Xuānwǔ District). For information on other venues and the shows they're hosting, check one of the expatriate magazines (see "Visitor Information," at the beginning of this chapter).

BARS & CLUBS

Běijīng's oldest and still most popular drinking district is **Sānlǐtún.** The name comes from Sānlǐtún Lù, a north–south strip of drinking establishments east of the Workers' Stadium between the East Second and Third Ring Roads that at one time contained practically all of the city's bars. Now known as North Bar Street (Sānlǐtún Jiǔbā Jiē), it has been joined by other bars on South Bar Street (Dōng Dà Qiáo Xiéjiē), in the Xìngfú Cūn area to the west, and scattered around the stadium area. Bars here are rowdy and raunchy, and are packed to overflowing on weekends.

Popular clubs in this district include **The Club @ Sānlǐtún (Sānlǐtún Jùlèbù),** located in an alley of Sānlǐtún North Bar Street (30m/98 ft. west of a small branch of ICBC [Industrial and Commercial Bank of China]; ✆ **010/6416-1077** or 010/6417-7791); and **The Den** (**Dūnhuáng;** ✆ **010/6592-6290**), at the intersection of Gōngtǐ Dōng Lù 4A, next to the City Hotel (Chéngshì Bīnguǎn). Bars include the sports bar **ClubFootball (Wànguó Qúnxīng Zúqiú),** Chūnxiù Lù 10, attached to the Red House (✆ **010/6417-0497**); **The Hidden Tree (Yǐnbì de Shù),** with the city's best selection of Belgian beer, located halfway down South Bar Street (Dōng Dà Qiáo Xiéjiē; ✆ **010/6509-3642**), on the left/east side (look for a tree jutting from the building's front); the

divey **Jazz-ya (Juéshì),** Sānlǐtún Běi Jiē 18 (down the 1st alley on the right after you pass Public Space; ✆ **010/6415-1227**); and **Poacher's Inn (Yóuyì Qīngnián Jiǔdiàn),** the busiest bar in the district, at Běi Sānlǐtún Nán, west off Sānlǐtún North Bar Street (take a left at the ICBC branch, then take the 1st right; ✆ **010/6417-2632**).

Similar bars surround the south and west gates of **Cháoyáng Gōngyuán** (park) to the east, an area the government has tried to promote as the new drinking district because it has fewer residential buildings. Worth checking out is **World of Suzie Wong (Sūxī Huáng),** the see-and-be-seen venue for nouveau riche Chinese and new expatriates. It's located near the west gate of Cháoyáng Park (above Mirch Masala; ✆ **010/6593-6049**).

The fastest-growing spot for late-night drinking is the **Back Lakes (Shíchàhǎi or Hòu Hǎi),** a previously serene spot with a few discreetly fashionable bars which now threatens to explode into a riot of hip. Neon has become a common sight, and several dance clubs are in the works, but for now this remains the finest place in the city for a quiet drink. Good bars here include supercool **No Name (Bái Fēng de nèige Jiǔbā),** with the best gin-and-tonic in town, at Qián Hǎi Dōng Yán, east side of the Yíndìng Bridge (✆ **010/6401-8541**); **Pass-by Bar (Guòkè Jiǔbā),** which also serves good Italian food, at Nán Luógǔ Xiàng 108 (alley to the left/west of the Muslim restaurant on the north side of Píng'ān Dàdào; walk north 150m/492 ft.; ✆ **010/8403-8004**); and the stylish, smooth **Rive Gauche (Zuǒ Àn),** taking up an unmarked space in the front building of a courtyard house at Qián Hǎi Běi Yán 11 (10-min. walk up the west bank of Qián Hǎi; ✆ **010/6612-9300**). Finally, there is **Hǎidiàn,** the city's university district to the northwest. Bars and clubs are congregated around gates of several universities and cater to a predictable crowd of film students, English-language majors, and aspiring writers.

Outside of the districts, one club worth checking out is **Banana (Bānànà),** Jiànguó Mén Wài Dàjiē 22, in front of Scitech Hotel (✆ **010/6528-3636**).

GAY & LESBIAN BARS

Běijīng is a fairly miserable scene for lesbians, somewhat less so for gay men. You can expect this to change, but slowly. **Drag-on (Lóng Bā)** is Běijīng's gay bar, period. It's open from 10am to 5am. There's an always-packed dance floor. Find it at Xìngfú Cūn Zhōng Lù (✆ **010/6417-3493**), in an alley opposite **On/Off (Shàng Xià Xiàn).** If there's a lesbian bar in Běijīng, the On/Off is it. The bar is located at Xìngfú Yī Cūn Zhōng Lù 5, 2 blocks east of Xīn Dōng Lù (✆ **010/6415-7413** or 010/6415/8083). It's open from 10am to 2am.

CAFES & TEAHOUSES

Starbucks arrived at the end of the 1990s and quickly spread to all the places Běijīng's wealthy and/or hip congregate, including next to the Friendship Store, in the China World Trade Center, at the Oriental Plaza and, yes, inside the Forbidden City. For a coffee venue with more character, **Bella (Bèilā)** has branches at Sānlǐtún Xī Wǔ (5) Jiē 1, northeast of the Spanish Embassy (✆ **010/8451-7489**); Sānlǐtún North Bar Street, opposite the French School (✆ 010/6417-3449); and next to the Yǎxiù Market (✆ 136/9113-6430). All branches are open from 9am to 9:30pm. Known for its *zhēnzhū nǎichá* (pearl milk tea), **rbt (Xiānzōnglín)** has a convenient branch at Dōngdān Běi Dàjiē 69 (just north of the Oriental Plaza; ✆ **010/6527-7896**). It's open from 9am to 1am. **Sculpting in Time (Diāokè Shíguāng),** Běijīng's original cafe/film establishment, is

now at the Běijīng Institute of Technology (Wèigōngcūn Xī Kǒu 7 [Lǐgōng Dàxué Nán Mén]; ✆ **010/6894-6825**). Open from 9am to 1am, it's just to the left of the university's south gate. A second branch is in the Western Hills (✆ 010/8529-0040), south of Fragrant Hills Park. **The Teahouse of Family Fù (Chá Jiā Fù),** located at Hòu Hǎi Nán Àn, next to Kǒng Yǐjǐ (✆ **010/6616-0725**), is a unique and quiet teahouse, with semi-private rooms. It's open from 11am to midnight.

9 Chéngdé ★★

Héběi Province, 233km (146 miles) NE of Běijīng

If you can do only one overnight side trip from Běijīng, make it Chéngdé—the summer camp of the Qīng emperors. Here, in a walled enclosure containing numerous palaces, pavilions, and pagodas as well as a vast hunting park, they escaped Běijīng's blazing summer temperatures, entertained delegations from home and abroad, and practiced the mounted military skills which had originally gained them their empire. The design of the resort, built between 1703 and 1794, was shaped by its varied diplomatic functions. Some buildings are plain and undecorated to show visiting tribesmen that the emperors had not lost touch with their roots or been too softened by luxury; others were copies of some of China's most famous and elegant buildings; and some were giant edifices with hints of minority architecture, intended both to show the emperor's sympathy for the traditions of tributary and border-dwelling peoples, and to overawe their emissaries.

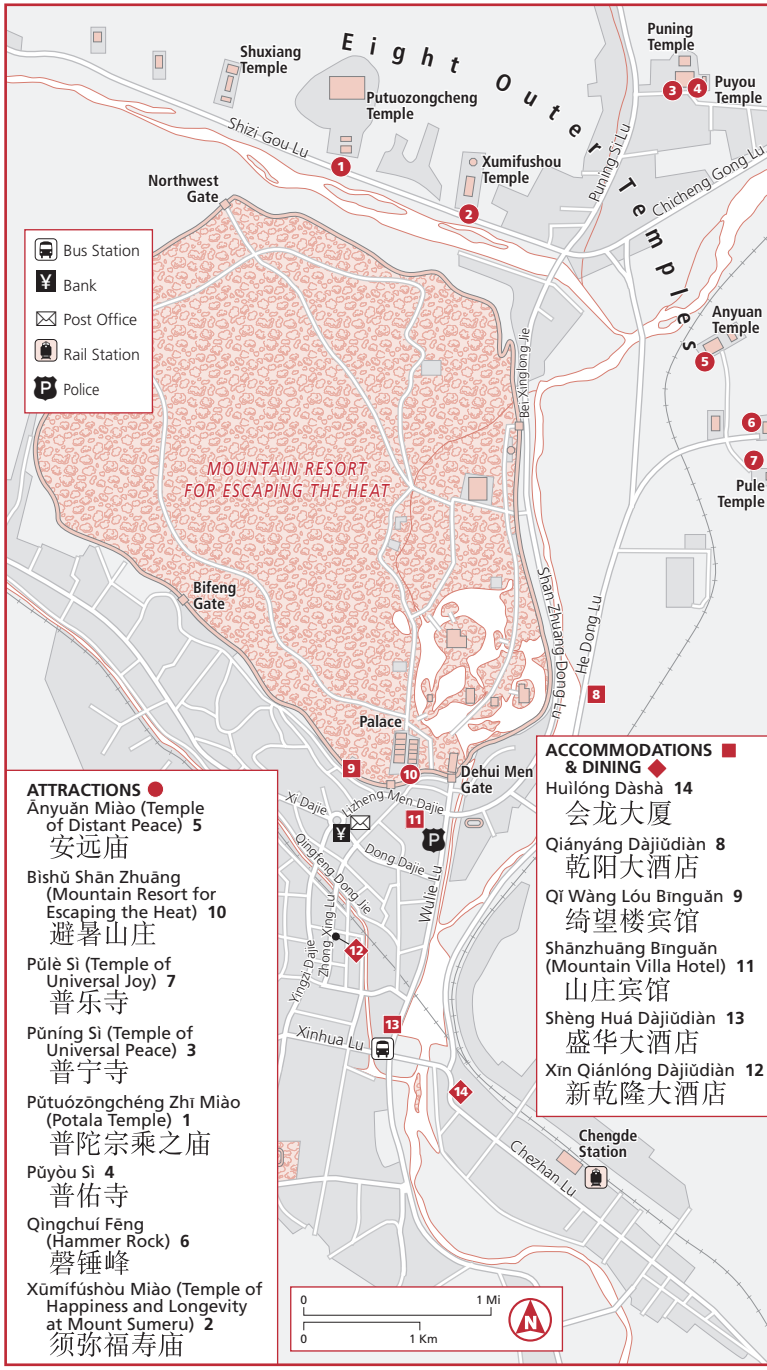
In 1794 Britain's Lord Macartney arrived on a mission from George III, and not finding the Qiánlóng emperor at home in Běijīng, followed him up to Chéngdé. He was impressed by the resort's vast scale, and was shown around by people who anticipated modern guides' hyperbole by telling him that the gilded bronze roof tiles of the Potala Temple were of solid gold.

The Jiāqìng emperor died here in 1820, as did the Xiánfēng emperor in 1861, having signed the "unequal" treaties which marked the close of the Second Opium War. The place came to be viewed as unlucky, and was already decaying by the fall of the Qīng in 1911. But the **Mountain Retreat for Escaping the Heat,** along with the remaining **Eight Outer Temples** around its perimeter, still form one of the greatest concentrations of ancient buildings in China. It's an 18th-century version of a "Splendid China" theme park (as seen in Florida and Shēnzhèn), but with oversize buildings rather than the miniatures offered there.

The modern town spreads down the valley to the south of the imperial resort. It caught on to modernization late, but new buildings are now going up fast. A lively market fills one main artery at night, and steam trains puff mournfully right through the center at regular intervals, carrying coal to a power station (although it is said the line is to be moved by the end of 2005).

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Chéngdé has no airport, and although it's an easy side trip from Běijīng, it's not well-connected to anywhere else except the northeast. A convenient morning all-seater **train** from Běijīng Zhàn, the K711, departs at 7:20am, arriving in Chéngdé at 11:18am. It returns to Běijīng as the K712, leaving Chéngdé at 2:40pm, arriving in Běijīng at 6:38pm. Soft seat costs ¥61 ($7.60), hard seat ¥41 ($5.10). The railway station is just south of the city center, and bus no. 5 from outside to your right runs to several hotels and to the



ATTRACTIONS

Ānyuǎn Miào (Temple of Distant Peace) **5**
安远庙

Bìshǔ Shān Zhuāng (Mountain Resort for Escaping the Heat) **10**
避暑山庄

Pǔlè Sì (Temple of Universal Joy) **7**
普乐寺

Pǔníng Sì (Temple of Universal Peace) **3**
普宁寺

Pǔtuózōngchéng Zhī Miào (Potala Temple) **1**
普陀宗乘之庙

Pǔyòu Sì **4**
普佑寺

Qìngchuí Fēng (Hammer Rock) **6**
磬锤峰

Xūmífúshòu Miào (Temple of Happiness and Longevity at Mount Sumeru) **2**
须弥福寿庙

ACCOMMODATIONS & DINING

Huìlóng Dàshà **14**
会龙大厦

Qiányáng Dàjiǔdiàn **8**
乾阳大酒店

Qī Wàng Lóu Bīnguǎn **9**
绮望楼宾馆

Shānzhuāng Bīnguǎn (Mountain Villa Hotel) **11**
山庄宾馆

Shèng Huá Dàjiǔdiàn **13**
盛华大酒店

Xīn Qiánlóng Dàjiǔdiàn **12**
新乾隆大酒店

Mountain Resort. The ticket office (up the stairs and to the right) is open from 5am to 11pm with brief breaks (you want window 2). At window 5 you can book tickets for all departures from Běijīng railway stations. There are also very limited services to Shěnyáng and Tiānjīn.

The soft-seat waiting room is through a door at the far left-hand end of the main hall as you enter. On the train both to and from Běijīng, enterprising staff sell tea for ¥3 (40¢), instant coffee for ¥5 (65¢), maps, and hotel reservations (do *not* book with them). About 1¼ hours after you leave Běijīng, you'll see a crumbling stretch of the Great Wall.

At least until construction of a new road/rail interchange station at Dōng Zhí Mén is complete, **bus** departures for Chéngdé from Běijīng are more frequent from Xī Zhí Mén. The 233km (144-mile) trip costs ¥46 ($5.75) for an Iveco or similar, with departures about every 20 minutes from 6am to 5:30pm. The current journey takes about 3½ hours, but a new highway may cut journey times to around 2½ hours, while increasing prices. At the moment it's possible to alight and see the Great Wall at JīnsShānlíng en route, and subsequently flag down a passing bus to finish the trip. Express buses from Běijīng run to and from the forecourt of Chéngdé railway station. Escape the pestering of touts and taxis by dodging into the bright Chinese fast-food restaurant called Měishí Chéng directly opposite where you alight, and if you're ready for a quick lunch, have it here. All other bus services run from the main **long-distance bus station,** at the corner of Xīnhuá Lù and Wǔliè Lù (✆ **0341/207-3476**). The ticket office is open from 5am to 10pm, and the information window on the right-hand side is fairly patient with foreigners. There are five departures a day to Qínhuángdǎo (for Shānhǎiguān) and four to Tiānjīn.

GETTING AROUND **Taxi** meters are generally not used. The fare is ¥5 (65¢) in town, or ¥10 ($1.25) to the outer temples. If the meter is started, the ¥5 (65¢) flagfall includes 1km; then it's ¥1.40 (20¢) per kilometer, jumping by 50% after 8km (5 miles). **Buses** charge ¥1 (15¢).

VISITOR INFORMATION For tourist complaints, call ✆ **0341/202-4549.**

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs No ATMs in Chéngdé accept foreign cards. The main foreign exchange branch of the **Bank of China** is at the junction of Dōng Dàjiē and Lìzhèng Mén Dàjiē. Its hours are from 8am to noon and 2 to 5:30pm (to 6pm in summer).

Internet Access Dial-up 163 works, but Internet cafes are few and mostly far from the usual visitor areas. The **Hóng Mén Shì Wǎngbā,** open 24 hours, is down an alley called Zhōng Xué Xiàmián Hútòng, opposite the Central Hospital (Shì Zhōng Yīyuàn) on Xī Dàjiē. It charges ¥2 (25¢) per hour. The cafe can be reached by bus nos. 1, 5, 7, and 8.

Post Office The post office is on Yíngzi Dàjiē at its junction with Dōng Dàjiē. Hours are from 8am to 6.30pm (to 6pm in winter).

Visa Extensions Extensions are available from the **PSB** office on Wǔliè Lù, just to the right of the main entrance. Hours are Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 5pm (they say), but omit the lunch hour.

RELAXING WITH THE EMPERORS

Bìshǔ Shānz Zhuāng (Mountain Resort for Escaping the Heat) ★

While the "Winter Palace," as Běijīng's Forbidden City was sometimes called, was the creation of the indigenous Míng dynasty, the summer palace at Chéngdé was

entirely the creation of the Manchu Qīng, and lay beyond the Great Wall in the direction of their homelands. Here the emperor and the Manchu nobility would play at the equestrian and military talents which had won them China in the first place, both with formal contests in archery and with hunting in the well-stocked park. The lakes and their many pavilions, stuffed with treasures, provided the emperor and his consorts with more refined diversions.

There's a half day of wandering here, although many of the buildings shown as lying within the park have long since vanished. The most important remaining is the **Zhèng Gōng (Main Palace).** The message here is one of simplicity and frugality (the beams and columns are very plain, although actually made of hardwoods brought long distances at great expense), with a pleasing elegance in great contrast to the usual Qīng gaudiness. The palace now serves as a museum, displaying ancient military equipment in the front rooms and period furnishings and antiquities at the rear.

Straight north, up the west side of lakes dotted with pavilions and crossed by many bridges, lies the **Wénjīn Gé (Pavilion of Literary Delight),** a ripple-roofed southern-style building reached through a rockery, which is a copy of a famous library building from Níngbō (p. 456).

A little farther northeast, the handsome **Liù Hé Tǎ (Pagoda of the Six Harmonies)** is the most striking building in the park. Its nine brick stories have green- or yellow-tiled eaves hung with bells and topped by a golden knob.

The pagoda is near the east entrance of the park, close to which the retired and unemployed can be found enjoying a game of croquet. If you've already examined the gaudy pavilions around the lakes, it's possible to leave this way to walk or catch a bus to the Eight Outer Temples.

Main entrance (Zhèng Mén) in Lízhèng Mén Dàjiē. Admission ¥50 ($6.25). 8am–5:30pm.

WÀI BĀ MIÀO (EIGHT OUTER TEMPLES) ★★

There were originally 12 temples, built between 1713 and 1780, and not all of those that remain are open to the public. Summer hours are May 1 to October 15; outside these times, some lesser temples may be shut. Several temples have features unique to Chéngdé. Most are extremely grand and suitably impressive (their purpose, after all), with successive halls on rising ground.

Tip: Pǔníng Sì and the other northern temples seem to be on morning itineraries for tour groups, followed by Pǔlè Sì and the eastern temples in the afternoon. If you're traveling independently, work the other way around.

Bus no. 6, from Yíngzi Dàjiē or the Mountain Resort main entrance, to Shīzi Gōu Qiáo (just across a river bridge at the northeast corner of the resort), will put you within walking distance of the northern group of temples. Walk west along the north bank of the river (Shīzi Gōu).

Xūmífúshòu Miào (Temple of Happiness and Longevity at Mount Sumeru) Partly inspired by Tashilhunpo in Tibet (p. 768), this temple was constructed to make the Panchen Lama, number two in the Tibetan religious hierarchy, feel at home during a visit in 1780.

Admission ¥25 ($3). 8am–6pm (to 5pm in winter). Bus: no. 6 to Shīzi Gōu Qiáo.

Pǔtuózōngchéng Zhī Miào (Potala Temple) Five minutes' walk west, the Potala Temple, its tapering windows and slab-sided walls obviously influenced by Tibet, is in no way "a copy of the Potala Temple in Lhasa" (p. 131), as local guides like to say. Many windows are blind, and several outbuildings are solid, just intended to add to the massy splendor of the whole. Items on display in the surrounding galleries include two nine-story sandalwood pagodas climbing

through holes cut in the floors, young girls' skulls fused with silver and once used as drinking vessels, and anatomically detailed esoteric statuary of sexual acts.

Shīzi Gōu Lù. Admission ¥25 ($3).8am–5pm (to 4:30pm in winter).

Pǔníng Sì (Temple of Universal Peace) The main Hall of Mahayana is very impressive—story upon story of red walls and yellow roofs, topped with a gold knob surrounded by four mini-pagodalike points. More impressive still is its contents, a giant copper-colored wooden Guānyīn figure more than 22m (73 ft.) high, the largest of its kind in the world. It's possible to climb three levels of interior galleries to look the figure in the eye, as she sits in dusty gloom.

Off Pǔníng Sì Lù. Admission ¥30 ($3.75). 8am–5:30pm (to 4:30pm in winter). Bus: no. 6 to terminus.

Pǔyòu Sì Next door to Pǔníng Sì, this temple only recently reopened to the public and is still largely ruins. The point of entering is to see the remainder of a collection of statues of the 500 arhats (the first followers of the Sakyamuni Buddha). Many of these were destroyed in 1937 during the Japanese occupation, but the remainder have a lively jollity, and are hung with scarves placed by respectful devotees.

Admission ¥10 ($1.25). 8:30am–5:30pm (to 4:30pm in winter).

Pǔlè Sì (Temple of Universal Joy) Tibetan advisors were employed in the design of this temple, built to receive annual tributary visits from defeated Mongol tribes. But the most striking element is the copy at the rear of the circular Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests from the Temple of Heaven. Shady benches around the quiet courtyards make perfect picnic stops.

Off Hédōng Lù. Admission ¥25 ($3). 8am–5:30pm (to 5pm in winter). Bus: no. 10 from Wǔliè Lù to terminus. Taxi: a short ride from Pǔníng Sì.

Qìngchuí Fēng (Hammer Rock) Bus no. 10's terminus is actually the cableway to Hammer Rock. The characters specifically mean a kind of hammer for striking a Buddhist musical instrument, but the shape of this club-like column will inevitably remind all who see it of something completely different. It reminds the Chinese of that, too—they're just being polite. Pleasant strolls across the hills and sweeping views of the valley await those who ascend.

¥20 ($2.50) one-way; ¥30 ($3.75) round-trip. Bus runs Apr 1–Oct 30, 9am–4pm.

Ānyuán Miào (Temple of Distant Peace) Built in 1764, this is another example of architectural diplomacy, built in imitation of a temple (now long-vanished) in Yīníng on China's remote western borders to please Mongol tribes who were resettled around Chéngdé. You'll almost certainly be the only visitor.

Admission ¥20 ($2.50). Summer only; daily 8am–5pm. About a 15-min. walk north of Pǔlè Sì.

SHOPPING

A lively **market** takes over the upper part of Yíngzi Dàjiē at night, interesting for its color rather than for what's on sale. The street also has several department stores with ground-floor supermarkets. Towards the post office there's a couple of bakeries where you can pick up snacks for the onward journey.

WHERE TO STAY

You can hurry around the main sights by spending 1 night here, but you might want to spend 2. Ordinary Běijīngrén now follow imperial tradition by flocking here to escape the baking summer heat. From the first week of May to the first

week of October, the town is fairly busy, weekends particularly so, but only during the weeklong national holidays should it be difficult to find a room. Even in peak season all but the best and busiest hotels will have 20% discounts off quoted rates, rising to as much as 70% in the off season for the gently persuasive bargainer who just shows up. A 50% discount is taken for granted, and you work down from there.

EXPENSIVE

Qiányáng Dàjiǔdiàn These four modern buildings opened in 1998, with standard four-star fittings in generally good condition. The buildings are pleasantly arranged around pools and gardens and connected by passageways, as if they all wish they were something far older and more traditional. There's a large sports and entertainment facility next to but separate from the buildings that contain guest rooms, which spares guests the howls of the damned also known as karaoke. Even if you don't stay here, the Chinese restaurant is worth visiting for its menu of local game dishes.

Pǔlè Lù 18 (a few min. north up the east side of the Wǔliè River, on the way to Pǔlè Sì). ✆ **0314/205-7188.** Fax 0314/205-7777. 96 units. ¥480–¥680 ($60–$85) standard room; ¥1,480–¥2,000 ($185–$250) suite. Typically 40% off. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 10 from bus station also connects to Mountain Retreat and Pǔlè Sì. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; indoor swimming pool; fitness room; sauna; billiards room; forex. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge.

Qī Wàng Lóu Bīnguǎn ★★ *Finds* Once good enough for the Qiánlóng emperor, this hotel is good enough these days for Party luminaries, including ex-president Jiāng Zémín. It's not as upmarket as this implies, but it's comfortable. Early-18th-century buildings erected courtyard-style around gardens inside the park are now only directly accessible from outside it. Standard hotel interiors have been recently renovated, and there are yet higher standards in a new building.

Bì Fēng Mén Dōng Lù 1 (a narrow street running up the west side of the park). ✆ **0314/202-4385.** Fax 0314/202-1904. 77 units. ¥500–¥600 ($63–$75) standard room; from ¥400 ($50) 3-bed basement room in new building; ¥1,000–¥4,000 ($125–$600) suite. Typical 50% discount off season. Bus: no. 5 from bus station to Bìshǔ Shānzhuāng. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; billiards room. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar.

Shèng Huá Dàjiǔdiàn A Chinese four star-to-be in a silver and black striped tower directly north of the bus station, due to open as this book went to press, the Shèng Huá promises to be Chéngdé's best hotel in terms of furnishings. Staff is helpful with inquiries, and speaks English and French.

Dōnggāng Xī Lù 481. ✆ **0341/227-1188.** Fax 0341/227-1112. 111 units. ¥600–¥680 ($75–$85) standard room; call about suites. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Pool planned.

MODERATE

Shānzhuāng Bīnguǎn (Mountain Villa Hotel) ★ Once the only hotel in town, this six-building monster directly opposite the Mountain Resort has recently given its best rooms a thorough upgrade to four-star standard, while maintaining a variety of simpler, cheaper rooms with common bathrooms for budget travelers. Usually these longer-standing hotels should be your last choice, but here a real effort has been made to stay in competition with the newer hotels. The broad corridors and high ceilings of these older buildings also make a welcome change.

Xiǎo Nán Mén Jiē 127 (opposite main entrance to Mountain Resort). ✆ **0314/202-5588.** Fax 0314/203-4143. mvhotel@cs-user.he.cninfo.net. 370 units. ¥180 ($23) triple and ¥240 ($30) twin, both with common bathroom; ¥480–¥580 ($60–$73) standard room; ¥880–¥2,000 ($110–$250) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 5 from bus station to Bìshu[av[Shānzhuāng. **Amenities:** 6 restaurants; fitness room; billiards; business center (Internet access ¥1.10/14¢ per min.); forex. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge.

WHERE TO DINE

The **night market** on Yíngzi Dàjiē runs through the heart of town. Stalls sell kabobs (¥1/15¢) and a wide assortment of other Chinese fast food, eaten at tables behind each stall.

As befits a former hunting ground, Chéngdé's specialty is game. The town is almost like a remote outpost of Guǎngdōng, of whose residents other Chinese say, "They eat anything with legs except a table, and anything with wings except an airplane." Donkey, dog, and scorpion are on menus. But so are deer, *shān jī* ("mountain chicken"—pheasant), and wild boar—often as unfamiliar ingredients cooked in familiar styles. Stir-frying makes venison tough, but wild boar softens up nicely while retaining its gamey flavor.

The best restaurants are in the larger hotels such as the **Qiányáng Dàjiǔdiàn** (see above). Try *lùròu chǎo zhēnmó* (venison stir-fried with hazel mushrooms) and *què chǎo shānjī piàn* ("Sparrow's nest" pheasant slices). The **Xīn Qiánlóng Dàjiǔdiàn** at Zhōng Xīng Lù 2 (✆ **0314/207-6768**), open from 10am to 2:30pm and 4:30 to 9:30pm, has attentive service, good portions, and both rough English translations and pictures on its menu. Plump *jiǎozi* dumplings stuffed with game are called *Qiánlóng shuǐjiǎo;* they cost ¥30 ($3.75) a half kilo, or about ¥3 (40¢) for six. *Cōng shāo yězhūròu* (wild boar cooked with onions) and *zhēnmó shānjī dīng* (nuggets of pheasant with local mushrooms) are both good. As long as you don't venture into scorpion or roe deer backbone marrow, a meal costs around ¥80 ($10) for two.

10 Shānhǎiguān

Héběi Province, on the Bó Hǎi coast, 439km (274 miles) E of Běijīng

Eventually the Great Wall gives up its mad zigzagging from high point to high point and plunges spectacularly down a mountainside to run across a small plain and into the sea. On its way it briefly doubles as the eastern city wall of the garrison town of Shānhǎiguān (Pass Between Mountains and Sea), built during the Míng dynasty to prevent the easy passage of mounted invaders from the northeast.

The Wall was never an effective defense mechanism, and Shānhǎiguān became irrelevant after 1644 when, following the overthrow of the Míng dynasty by peasant rebellions, the dismayed defenders here allowed Qīng forces through. Once the enemy was within the gates, the Wall became pointless, lying as it did within Qīng territory, and it was allowed to fall into ruin until the imperatives of tourism rebuilt parts of it.

Each year large quantities of material are still carted away for incorporation in domestic buildings, and local governments breach the Wall when it suits them. At Shānhǎiguān a local vegetable wholesaler was made to rebuild a section of the Wall when he pulled it down to expand his warehouse. The local government then plowed a new expressway straight through it and permitted the display of advertising on its side, to ". . . rejuvenate the national industry that will face increased competition after China's entry into the World Trade Organization," according to *China Daily.* It will take much more than defacing historic relics to achieve that.

Entrance prices to attractions in Shānhǎiguān seem to be in constant flux, and off season may be as low as half the high-season rates quoted here, although that fact isn't often posted. Whatever the season, always ask for a discount.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Qínhuángdǎo **airport** is just outside town to the south, reached by taxi, with infrequent flights from Tàiyuán, Harbin, Chángchūn, Dàlián, and Shànghăi. **Train** services from major cities in the northeast pass through Shānhăiguānon their way to many southern destinations, but **Qínhuángdǎo** is better served from Běijīng—take the T509 at 7:30am, arriving in Qínhuángdǎo at 10:24am. This is an all soft-seat train which marks the return of class designations to Chinese trains—imagine the embalmed Máo a-spin. *Yī děng* (1st class) is ¥97 ($12). Outside the Qínhuángdǎo railway station, cross the road and turn left to find bus no. 33. It reaches Shānhăiguān in about 25 minutes, for a fare of ¥3 (40¢). The bus drops you at the south gate of the old city walls (Nán Mén). Trains directly to Shānhăiguān from Běijīng tend to be slower or ill-timed, although the T11 departing at 10:22am and arriving at 3:15pm is a possibility. Returning to Běijīng, the T510 from Qínhuángdǎo at 1:50pm reaches Běijīng Station at 4:59pm. There's also an assortment of trains passing through Shānhăiguān, but you'll probably have to buy a seatless ticket and upgrade on the train. Shānhăiguān's railway station is a few minutes' walk south of the south gate, and also sells tickets for departures from Běijīng (window 3). For **bus** services it's again better to return to Qínhuángdǎo, with twice-daily connections to Běijīng's Xī Zhí Mén bus station and others to Běijīng Railway Station, for ¥60 ($7.50). Bus no. 33 to Qínhuángdǎo Railway Station runs every 2 to 5 minutes from 6:20am to 7pm.

GETTING AROUND **Buses** have conductors and cost ¥1 (15¢). A **tourist shuttle service** runs from Nán Mén (South Gate) to the Tiānxià Dìyī Guān and Jiǎo Shān at 8:30am, 11am, and 3:30pm, summer only. Most **taxis** have a flagfall of ¥8 ($1) which includes 2km, then charge ¥1.20 (15¢) per kilometer up to 8km (5 miles), then ¥1.80 (25¢) per kilometer thereafter. Use one taxi to see all the sights. Insist that the "one-way" button is not pushed, and then excluding the aircraft carrier visit this should be about 32km (20 miles), and cost less than ¥50 ($6.25) including waiting time. There's also an assortment of meterless rickety three-wheelers with extravagant ideas about the depth of foreigners' pockets.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The main **Bank of China** is just inside the city wall's southeast corner on Dìyī Guǎn Lù. Hours are daily from 8am to 6pm (to 5:30pm in winter); money exchange is offered Monday through Friday only. There's no ATM.

Post Office The post office is on Nán Guān Dàjiē, close to the railway station. Hours are from 8am to 6pm.

INSPECTING CHINA'S DEFENSES

Tiānxià Dìyī Guān The "First Pass Under Heaven" is the east gate of the city's walls and a gate through the Great Wall itself, originally defended by towers overlooking a large walled enclosure, most of which still stands. The only entrance was from the south, and would have required a sharp left turn to reach the main gate while coming under attack from all sides. To the north and south the Wall is heavily restored, the odd reconstructed tower holding either a small exhibition or a shop. It was once possible to walk north to Jiǎo Shān, and some rebuilding suggests access may be restored.

Admission ¥30 ($6.25). 7:30am–6pm (later in summer). From the south gate, walk north up Nán Dàjiē and turn right at Dōng Dàjiē, or walk west outside the walls and turn left up Dìyī Guān Lù inside the east wall—also the route any taxi will take. Alternatively, enter the south gate and simply zigzag through the back streets—worthwhile in itself; because there's no way through the walls once you're inside, you can't get lost.

Jiǎo Shān The rebuilt Wall plunges spectacularly down the mountainside, so your climb up it is consequently steep. There are handrails to assist you, and ladders up the sides of watchtowers, or the alternative of a chair lift for ¥15 ($1.90) one-way, ¥20 ($2.50) round-trip. The towers are certainly worth scaling for the views of the Wall wriggling down the hillside and running away to the sea. Higher up, the Wall becomes more attractively decayed but still safely passable, and those with the stamina (and a picnic) can travel some distance.

Admission ¥20 ($2.50). Open 24 hr. 3km (2 miles) north of Shānhǎiguān, and best reached by taxi.

Laǒ Lóng Tóu A few years ago the "Old Dragon's Head" was just rubble, with the odd stone sticking out of the sea. The Wall's final kilometer was re-created in 1992, and it runs past a brand-new "old barracks area" (with shops) and a final tower before it expires in the sea. Stand at the Wall's end, look back, try to see beyond the tawdry desperation for the tourist dollar, and view the Wall as the beginning of a vast drama, ending thousands of kilometers away in Gānsù Province. It's the culmination of a Míng dynasty arms race, the "Star Wars" project of its time, which nearly sank the national economy and which turned out to be pointless since scruffy little men on ponies armed with bows and arrows, the "terrorists" of their day, regularly got through it.

Stairs to the right lead down to a beach where Chinese, most of whom live a very long way from the sea, paddle in search of pebbles and shells. Beyond lies a small temple to the Sea God, rebuilt in 1989, an excellent vantage point for photography of the "Old Dragon's Head" itself.

Admission ¥30 ($3.75). Open daylight hours. Bus: no. 13 south down Nán Hǎi Xī Lù (everyone knows where you want to get off, at a point where the road forks); or bus no. 23 (which terminates here).

Mèngjiāngnǚ Miào This temple, a reminder of the Wall's human cost, is linked to a myth which crops up repeatedly around China, where compulsory labor on vast civil engineering projects led to the deaths of tens of thousands: Husband goes off to imperial construction project, and nothing more is heard. Eventually wife goes to look for husband, discovers that he has died during his labors, and upon her tears the Wall crumbles to reveal his bones. She subsequently chooses suicide in preference to becoming an imperial concubine.

Such was the fate of the probably mythical Mèngjiāngnǚ. Her temple is on a lookout point up a steep flight of stairs, called "Looking for Husband Rock," and consists of some remarkably battered halls and oddly shaped rocks, labeled opportunistically as her bed, dressing table, and so on.

Admission ¥30 ($3.75). 7am–7pm. 8km (5 miles) east of town. Bus: no. 23 from Nán Mén.

Aircraft Carrier *Kyev* (Jīfùhào Hángkōngmǔjiàn) *Kids* China owns two aircraft carriers, but they are both former Russian ships, and both tourist attractions. This 274m (899-ft.) vessel is as high as a 17-story building. It bristles with armament, but its equipment is smashed. You can climb up two or three decks past rocket mock-ups with a fin or two missing, to the aircraft control room and the main bridge. The vessel is perfect for small boys of any age, but keep a close eye on them.

It is rumored that the *Kyev* will be moved to Tiānjīn, so have someone call ahead to make sure it's still there.

Shānhǎiguān Lǎo Lóng Tóu Dōng Cè Chuánguǎng 1 Hào Mǎtóu. ✆ **0335/508-8006.** Admission ¥65 ($8). 8:30am–5:30pm. Bus: no. 13 (past Lǎo Lóng Tóu) to terminus (15 min.) Walk straight on, and fork right at large sign—the ship will be visible in 15 min.

WHERE TO STAY

A single night in Shānhǎiguān is enough. Few hotels take foreigners, and most are fairly modest. The town's coastal position makes May to August its busiest months, with visitors from Běijīng escaping the city heat. There are one or two resort hotels which are rather far-flung, inconvenient, over-priced, and of two minds about taking foreigners. The following are simple but acceptable.

Jīguān Zhāodàisuǒ *Finds* This is an old courtyard residence in the Shānhǎiguān back streets, refurbished and opened as a hotel in 2002. It is freshly painted, bright, and cheerful. Rooms open onto the courtyards and come in plain and more upmarket types, both with tile floors. The upmarket bathrooms are a little more luxurious. There is also an impressive suite, as well as dorms with decent common bathrooms. This is a rare chance to stay in something approaching traditional Chinese housing.

Dōng Sì Tiáo Hútòng 17 (a right turn about 4 blocks north of the south gate). ✆ **0335/505-1938.** Fax 0335/505-1361. 23 units. ¥80 ($10) dorm bed with common bathroom; ¥120 ($15) and ¥200 ($25) standard room; ¥380 ($48) suite. 20%–50% discounts available. No credit cards. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Lónghuá Dàjiǔdiàn The two four-story buildings are from different periods, the newest of which opened in 2000, neither of which is yet much beaten up. The rear building has the bigger rooms, though room sizes vary. The standard rooms are surprisingly spacious, although this isn't somewhere to do more than sleep. There's an unusual duplex suite worth considering, with a shower cubicle and wooden floors, sleeping five.

Nán Hǎi Dàjiē 1 (just south of Nán Mén and off junction with Xīnglóng Jiē). ✆ **0335/507-7698.** Fax 0335/505-2130. About 60 units. ¥168–¥258 ($21–$32) standard room; ¥368 ($46) triple; ¥688 ($86) suite. Off-season discount 50%. No credit cards. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Yìhé Jiǔdiàn (Friendly Cooperate Hotel) The kind of two-star that most would view as three-star, this hotel has good-size rooms and above-average bathrooms for this level. It's run by the post office (but none the worse for that). Opened in 2001, it's within walking distance of both the railway station and the Nán Mén (South Gate), which is the transport hub. The staff, once they get over dealing with a foreigner, are quite helpful and friendly.

Nán Hǎi Xī Lù 4 (from railway station cross forecourt and walk up street straight ahead, turning at 1st left). ✆ **0335/505-1033.** Fax 0335/507-0351. 37 units. ¥288 ($36) standard room; ¥388 ($49) triple; ¥400 ($50) quad; ¥588 ($74) suite. Discount of 30% most of the year. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant. *In room:* A/C, TV.

WHERE TO DINE

Roads leading north from the railway station and nearby turnings have *jiǎozi* (dumpling) restaurants and other cheap home cooking, along with a couple of bakeries and small convenience stores with travel snacks. Shānhǎiguān supposedly has good seafood, but it's not much in evidence. The restaurant at the Yìhé Jiǔdiàn (above) is comfortable enough, with a comprehensive menu.

11 Shíjiāzhuāng

Héběi Province, 269km (168 miles) SW of Běijīng

Héběi's nondescript capital is one of the few places in China where the intention to rebuild everything from scratch in only 20 years is actually improving the

city. Down-at-heel Shíjiāzhuāng is an accident arising from the crossing of major north–south and east–west railway lines—here X really does mark the spot. It's grown from village to provincial capital in 100 years.

Even that status is a hand-me-down from Tiānjīn, after the metropolis gained the right to report directly to Běijīng rather than through the provincial government. As a result there's little of glamour here. But the city has a decent infrastructure for visitors and provides a base for exploring marvelous sights in the surrounding countryside, including **Zhèngdìng** ★★, about 15km (10 miles) northeast. It was an important town for centuries before anyone had heard of Shíjiāzhuāng. Today it is still home to **Lóngxīng Sì** ★★, one of the oldest, most atmospheric, and (luckily) least "restored" Chinese temples. Zhèngdìng is also home to a number of pagodas so different from each other it's hard to believe they were produced by the same culture. **Zhào Xiàn,** 42km (26 miles) southeast, has an important example of religious revival in the large Zen (Chán) Buddhist temple, the **Bǎilín Sì.** It also has the elegant **Zhàozhōu Qiáo** ★—the first bridge of its kind in the world. Roughly 80km (50 miles) southwest, **Cāngyán Shān** has the bridge-top temple featured in the closing scenes of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon. Note:* Please turn to Appendix A for Chinese translation of key locations in this section.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The **airport** is 33km (20 miles) to the northeast. A shuttle bus (¥15/$1.90) meets flights and runs to the CAAC ticket office at Zhōngshān Dōng Lù 471, on the east side of town at the terminus of bus no. 5 to the center. **CAAC,** (open 8am–8pm) has a 24-hour flight-booking line (✆ **0311/505-4084**). Buy in town from agents such as the **Héběi Oversea Tour Aviation Ticket Center** (Héběi Hǎiwài Lǚyóu Hángkōng Piàowù Zhōngxīn), inside the Dōngfāng Dàshà (entrance to Bank of China), Zhōngshān Xī Lù 97 (✆ **0311/607-7777**). There are air connections to most provincial capitals, including daily flights to and from Běijīng, Hohhot, Shànghǎi, and Xī'ān.

Since Shíjiāzhuāng's prosperity, such as it is, originates with its railway connections, it's right that the **railway station** is in the center of town. Getting there from **Běijīng West** couldn't be easier, with six daily express trains taking 2 hours and 40 minutes, tickets (¥50/$6.25 soft seat [sometimes ¥40/$5 the other way]) can be bought outside waiting room 3 or on the train itself. These are all-seat double-decker trains with snack service. Taking the T511 from Běijīng at 7:35am and returning by the T514 at 5:45pm can make Shíjiāzhuāng a possible day trip. Shíjiāzhuāng is also a stop on the T97/98 run between Běijīng West and Kowloon (¥965/$120 soft sleeper; ¥609/$76 hard sleeper), arriving at 3:29pm from Kowloon and leaving at 12:49pm headed south. You will need your passport to book this ticket. Most south- and southwest-bound trains from Běijīng stop at Shíjiāzhuāng, offering connections to Tàiyuán, Xī'ān, and points as far flung as Ürümqi. **Rail tickets** can be booked by telephone (✆ **0311/566-6194;** 8am–6pm) for a ¥5 (65¢) commission. Ticket office windows 13 and upwards will help you from 7am to 10pm. The entrance to the soft-seat waiting room is around the far left-hand end of the building as you face it.

Shíjiāzhuāng is littered with **bus stations.** The most important of them, **Chángtú Kèyùn Zhàn,** is a 5-minute walk south of the railway station on Zhàn Qián Lù. Destinations served include Jī'nán (241km/149 miles; ¥53/$6.60), Tài'ān (281km/174 miles; ¥58/$7.25), Zhèngzhōu (437km/271 miles; ¥42/$5.35), and Qínhuángdǎo (480km/298 miles; ¥104/$13). There are frequent

connections to several Běijīng bus stations, including Lìzé Qiáo (7am–5:30pm) and Liánhuā Chí (6:30am–4pm; 3½ hr). But the real competition with the rail link to Běijīng is just to the right at the **Kèyùn Zǒng Zhàn,** where the Alsa company runs luxury coaches to Běijīng Liù Lǐ Qiáo (roughly every 20 min. 6am–12:15pm; returning 12:30–7:30pm; ¥44/$5.50). In addition, twice-daily super luxury buses have large, airline-style tiltable seats, only three across the bus (¥69/$8.60). For service from Běijīng call ✆ **010/6386-1263;** from Shíjiāzhuāng call ✆ **0311/611-3886.** The Alsa company also runs morning services to Tiānjīn (every 30 min.), Jǐ'nán, Zhèngzhōu, and Qínhuángdǎo, with afternoon returns.

GETTING AROUND **Taxis** are mostly Jettas and Fùkāng, and cost ¥1.40 (20¢) per kilometer. Xiàlì cost ¥1.20 (15¢) per kilometer. Flagfall of ¥5 (65¢) includes 2km. Add 50% after 6km (3¾ miles), and 20% from 11pm to 5am.

VISITOR INFORMATION **CITS** quotes horrendous prices for cars and guides. However, it does have some good English-speakers, so if you're desperate, call them at ✆ **0311/581-5102.**

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs There's a handy branch of the **Bank of China** in the Dōngfāng Dàshà, Zhōngshān Xī Lù 97, close to the railway station. Hours are Monday through Friday from 8:30am to noon and 2 to 5:15pm. Forex is available at counters 4 to 7. Another useful branch lies near a KFC just west of the Crowne Plaza on Zhōngshān Dōng Lù (same hours).

Internet Access Dial-up is **163** or **169.**

Post Office The post office near the railway station (corner of Gōnglǐ Jiē and Zhōngshān Xī Lù) is open 24 hours. There's another, more centrally located post office in Jiànshè Nán Dàjiē; its hours are from 8:30am to 9pm.

Visa Extensions The city **PSB** is 1 block north of Zhōngshān Xī Lù, and 2 blocks east of Zhōnghuá Běi Dàjiē, in Límíng Jiē. The visa office has a separate entrance on the east side of the building. Walk up Qīngnián Jiē on the west side of the Huáběi Shāngchéng (department store), across the next junction, and the office is on your left (✆ **0311/702-6911,** ext. 3173). Hours are Monday to Friday from 8am to noon and 2 to 6pm.

WALKING TOUR THE PAGODAS OF ZHÈNGDÌNG ★★

Getting There:	**Take minibus no. 201 from the enclosure between Zhàn Qián Jiē and the railway station; it drops you at Zhèngdìng bus station for ¥3 (40¢). Ignore *sānlúnchē* (three-wheeler) drivers and take minibus no. 1 from the same spot to its terminus outside Lóngxīng Sì (¥1/15¢). A *sānlúnchē* will cost you ¥5/65¢. A harder-to-find alternative is a tourist service which runs every 15 minutes from near the no. 50 bus stop farther south on the road running directly in front of the station, just north of the bus station, to outside Kāiyuán Sì; the fare is ¥3 (40¢).**
Start:	**Lóngxīng Sì**
Finish:	**Chánglè Mén**
Time:	**At least half a day**
Best Times:	**Weekdays between 8am and 4pm**

In once-important, long-irrelevant Zhèngdìng, only a little exertion brings a lot of pleasure, including sights like some of the oldest surviving wooden buildings

in China, a vast 27m (90-ft.) 10th-century bronze statue of Guānyīn, four very different pagodas, and a fragment of city wall.

Bus no. 1 terminates at the main entrance.

❶ Lóngxīng Sì

Open 8am to 5pm; ¥30 ($3.75), the Lóngxīng Sì dates its foundation to the Suí dynasty (581–618), and has three particularly unusual and interesting halls. The **Móní Diàn (Manichean Hall),** built around 1052, rebuilt in 1563, and restored with tact from 1977 to 1980, is almost square in plan, with gabled porches on all four sides. Inside, five gilded figures are approached across a dark uneven floor past vast columns, some of which have a slight lean; the walls carry faint traces of early frescoes, miraculously unretouched. Through a gate beyond, a small altar building houses a two-faced, four-armed and rather delicately executed figure from 1493, hung with scarves of honor. To the right the Pavilion of Kindness contains a 7.4m (24-ft.) Maitreya carved from a single piece of wood. To the left, the two-story **Zhuǎnlún Cáng Diàn (Turning Wheel Storage Hall)** of the Northern Sòng (960–1127) seems to have three stories due to an external gallery with "waist eaves." The ground floor is dominated by a 7m (23-ft.) high octagonal revolving bookcase, as complex in its design as a miniature temple. The climax is the **Pavilion of Great Benevolence,** also Northern Sòng, a vast hall seven bays wide containing a massive 27m (90-ft.) bronze Guānyīn with a "thousand arms" whose angularity give her a rather crustacean look. The figure was cast upon the instructions of the first Northern Sòng emperor in about 971. You can climb several dusty floors to look her in the eye. The rearmost Míng-era hall was brought to the site from another temple in 1959, and contains a remarkable three-layered statue of 12 figures seated on lotus thrones. One side hall contains a bizarre exhibition (¥3/40¢) that includes what is claimed to be a 2,100-year-old Hàn dynasty jade burial suit, reconstructed from hundreds of small jade plates and held together with cloth-covered gold wire. If it's the genuine article, it's priceless, but the presence in the exhibition of a pickled turtle, a dilapidated butterfly collection, and other bric-a-brac suggests otherwise.

Leaving the temple, note the rough map near the ticket office to the right. Turn right (west) from the temple and walk for 10 minutes.

❷ Tiānníng Sì

If you are here in the spring, the *wútóng* (Chinese parasol) trees you'll see will have spectacular cascades of pink blossoms. The **Língxiāo Tǎ** (pagoda), all that remains of the temple, is clearly visible to your right. Open 8am to 5:30pm; ¥5 (65¢), the Sòng dynasty nine-story octagonal brick structure, at 41m (134 ft.), is the tallest of the town's remaining pagodas. To climb it, enter from the far (north) side. If you are lucky the attendant may light the way, but if not, the climb to the second, third, and fourth floors is through narrow passages within the brick walls, with short periods of pitch darkness to start with. Keep your head *down.* The remainder of the climb to the ninth floor is by wooden staircases in the interior. A central set of trunks bound with hoops of iron, which radiate support beams, sit on fat brackets.

From the top you can see the squat, square form of your next destination.

Return to the main road and turn right. After less than 5 minutes, the recently constructed Lìshǐ Wénhuà Jiē "Historical and Cultural Street" is on the left at the traffic light. Turn left. There's a supermarket with snacks on

the corner, and the street has a number of modest restaurants, which are less modest than anything else in the town. Kāiyuán Sì is a short distance down to the right.

❸ Kāiyuán Sì

Two minor buildings stand here, including a heavily renovated late-Táng bell tower which can be climbed for a closer view of a 2.9m (9½-ft.) bronze bell. Open 8am to 5pm; ¥10 ($1.25).

The nine-story **Xūmí Tǎ** will seem familiar to those who've visited Xī'ān—a tapering, brick, four-sided building, with a projecting ridge between each floor and a plainness that makes the Língxiāo Tǎ look fussy. There are local claims that it dates from 636, but as Xī'ān's Great Goose (p. 244) is supposedly based on information brought back to China by the peripatetic monk, Xuánzàng, and its construction didn't start until 16 years later, one story is wrong (although Xuánzàng is said to have been in the area—see Bǎilín Sì, below). But the stately Xūmí Tǎ certainly looks its age—quite a few of the bricks have fallen out, providing handy niches for nesting sparrows, and it's fenced off. Around the base are eight tubby martial figures, simply carved but full of life. If you do go in, note the carvings of dragons and flowers. The interior floors are missing, and the main floor is slippery with guano, but there's an impressive view up the resulting vertical tunnel.

One area of the temple's ruined remains has been labeled STONE INSCRIPTION GARDEN and contains forlorn rows of chipped statuary and chunks of stelae probably smashed in the Cultural Revolution, along with the cracked remains of the largest *bìxì* you'll ever see, its claws 6 inches long. Often mistakenly described as turtles, *bìxì* are in fact a primitive kind of dragon (not only with claws, but teeth). This one was accidentally discovered in June 2000 during construction work, as illustrated by photographs in the entrance hall as you leave.

Outside, turn right. You'll see a few street vendors selling birds, flowers, plants, and fish, and almost immediately on the left the entrance to the ancestral hall of the Liáng family.

❹ Liángmín Zōngcí

This hall is a single unit five bays wide in brown wood, containing a small exhibition (pictures, family tree) of the Liáng family. Open 8am to 5pm; ¥3 (40¢).

Outside, turn left. Along the length of this street are antiques and memorabilia shops (with lower prices than most because they are aimed at domestic tourists) selling everything from Buddhist bits and pieces to Máo memorabilia. Still, expect most objects to be fake, and pay only a small fraction of initial asking prices. There are also places to buy ice cream, and assorted restaurants offering *jiǎozi* and Běijīng duck. Keep looking on the left for a large brown sign with white lettering, and turn left there.

❺ Línjì Sì

Open 7am to 5pm; ¥4 (50¢), this temple claims to have been founded by the Eastern Wèi dynasty (534–549). Its **Chénglíng Tǎ** was built to house the remains of the founder of a Zen Buddhist (Chán) sect still popular in Japan, who died late in the Táng dynasty in 867. The slender, octagonal brick pagoda is in a highly ornamental style; an elongated lower floor sits on a brick plinth carved with lotus petals. Eight further tiny stories, each with decorative brick brackets and eave figures, are topped by an umbrella spire. Roughly 30m (98 ft.) high, the pagoda was restored in 2001 and cannot be climbed.

Turn right out of the temple and left at the main street. The Guǎnghuì Sì is a well-signposted left turn a few minutes farther along.

❻ Guǎnghuì Sì

This temple's bizarre **Huá Tǎ,** dating from around 1200, is obviously a direct descendent of Indian stupas, consisting of a central brick pavilion topped with a stone spire covered with

intricate statuary of elephants, other animals, and figures—some headless, some faceless, and some intact–finished with a brick point on top. The central pavilion is supported by four smaller, rebuilt pavilions which house an exhibition of photographs of other pagodas around China. A climb up one floor to a gallery (again, watch your head) gives views of the earthen core of the old city wall, the fields still inside it, and a modern mosque. Open 8am to 5pm; ¥10 ($1.25).

Again return to the main road and turn left. The south gate of the city wall is straight ahead.

❼ Chánglè Mén

As is usual with city walls, the brick has been taken away to use in domestic construction–all except for those structurally necessary to maintain the gates, unless the wall is breached elsewhere (or removed, earthworks and all). Here the gate and its tower have been rebuilt. Admission is ¥10 ($1.25). The city also plans to sell an all-inclusive ticket for ¥60 ($7.50) which, especially if plans to double the price for the Guǎnghuì Sì go ahead, will be good value. The ticket will include entrance to a ConfucianTemple of minor interest, containing a rather gruesome exhibition on the Japanese occupation.

To return to Zhèngdìng, you can flag down passing buses which start from outside the Kāiyuán Sì.

BǍILÍN SÌ & ZHÀOZHŌU QIÁO

Bǎilín Sì The Cultural Revolution was so thorough here that only the Jīn dynasty (1115–1234) pagoda was left standing. The extensive complex has been reconstructed over the last few years entirely with donations from the faithful, and includes one of the largest "10,000 Buddha" halls in the world.

The temple saw the foundation of a sect of Zen (Chán) Buddhism, and dates its beginnings to 220 during the Eastern Hàn dynasty. Xuánzàng is said to have studied here before his trip to India in search of authoritative texts. The temple is entered through a small grove of cypresses (for which it is named), and has a calm bustle of activity from shaven-headed monks in orange and brown robes. One or two English-speakers tend to seek out foreign visitors and are happy to answer queries, show you around, and explain Zen principles and the *Shēnghuó* (life) variant introduced by Venerable Master Jìnghuì, the driving force behind the temple's change from weeds and rubble into an impressive complex. Then-President Jiāng Zémín visited in 2001. Perhaps the rumors are true and he is a closet Buddhist.

In Shíjiāzhuāng, take bus no. 3 to Huáxià Zhàn, the bus station for Zhào Xiàn, to the south of the center on Ān Nán Dàjiē, and catch a bus to Zhào Xiàn (30–45 min.; ¥6/75¢). Jump off at a traffic island with a mini-pagoda in the middle. The road to the left takes you to Bǎilín Sì in 5 min. on foot. Alternatively, if you head straight on down Shí Qiáo Dàjiē (Stone Bridge St.), you'll pass the earthen core and one or two watchtowers of the city wall, and get to a major junction straight over which is Zhàozhōu Qiáo, about a 20- to 30-min. walk. Or take *a sānlúnchē* (¥3/40¢ maximum).

Zhàozhōu Qiáo Also known as Ānjì Qiáo (Safe Crossing Bridge) and Dà Shí Qiáo (Big Stone Bridge), this is often labeled the oldest surviving bridge in China. There are probably older bridges, but this one was constructed between 595 and 605, and unlike China's wooden structures it is largely original in its current form. A mecca for architects and civil engineers as well as historians, it was the first bridge in the world to use a segment of an arc rather than a complete semicircle for its arch, giving a far more shallow curve to the road deck and thus making crossings for carts and horses much easier. This was a major design

breakthrough, but it would be 800 years before a similar approach would be tried in Europe, and nearly 1300 years before Europe tried using the spandrel—piercing the buttresses at either end of the bridge so as to reduce pressure on the foundations and allow flood waters to pass without sweeping the bridge away.

The parallel stone ribbons that form the main arch are surprisingly flexible and things of beauty in themselves. Until recently the bridge was still in use, but traffic is now diverted, and some of the damaged carvings on the superstructure, including scowling mythical beasts called *tāotiè,* have been replaced.

Sadly, the bridge's conversion to a tourist sight has brought pedalos (pedal boats) that wallow in the murky, tadpole-filled waters beneath, as well as construction of a hideous parallel concrete pedestrian bridge, mainly to obscure views from the new road bridge and thus increase receipts. But don't let this stop you from viewing China's most significant contribution to architectural method.

See directions for Bǎilín Sì above. The ticket booth is to the right of the main entrance. Admission ¥20 ($2.50). 7am–8pm. To find buses to Shíjiāzhuāng, return to the traffic island by foot or taxi, and continue to the next T-junction. (If you turn left and walk for a few min., on your right you'll find another, smaller bridge constructed in the same style, with no entrance fee at all.)

CĀNGYÁN SHĀN

This wooded mountain is part of the Tàiháng range, about 80km (50 miles) southwest of Shíjiāzhuāng; its summit is at 1,044m (3,424 ft.). The main point of visiting is a staircase of more than 300 steps leading up a cleft and beneath two parallel bridges, each topped by a temple, originally Suí dynasty (518–618). The setting is as spectacular as it looks in the closing scene of the feeble *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon* (although the final jump is reportedly from Huáng Shān), and the location, especially from the stairs below and on a misty day, makes for some spectacular photography. The paths which lace the mountainside do not lead to any other equally spectacular sights, and some have crumbled away. Take a picnic. The 2-hour minibus trip begins rather early in the morning.

Admission ¥30 ($3.75). Bus: to Cāngyán Shān from the Dōngfāng Qìchēzhàn in Xīnhuá Lù. It departs at 6am and returns late afternoon. Fare is ¥25 ($3).

WHERE TO STAY

EXPENSIVE

Crowne Plaza (Shìmào Huángguān Jiǔdiàn) ★★ This centrally located five-star joint-venture hotel—the only one in the city—had yet to open when we visited, but it is now reported to be doing well and is the first choice for foreign visitors. (A Shangri-La will eventually open to compete.) Foreign chefs will ensure that the Western food is the most authentic in town.

Zhōngshān Dōng Lù 303 (opposite She[av[ng Bówùguǎn/Provincial Museum). ✆ **0311/667-8888.** Fax 0311/667-1694. www.sixcontinentshotels.com. 270 units. ¥818 ($102) standard room; ¥1,820 ($228) suite; plus 15% service charge. Best rates often 50% less. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; fitness room with access to off-site facilities; Jacuzzi; sauna; limousine service; railway station shuttle; business center with translation services; forex; laundry and dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, dataport, minibar, safe.

Héběi Century Hotel (Héběi Shìjì Dàfàndiàn) ★ This Chinese five-star 29-floor glass cylinder tower opened in 2000 with a cavernous lobby and good-size rooms, if typically small bathrooms. The guest rooms have the standard neoclassical cabinetry of international five-stars, but someone involved in the design has been a bit more adventurous with color than is common to Chinese-run hotels, and service is a notch above average, too.

Zhōngshān Xī Lù 145 (just west of the city PSB, corner of Zhōnghuá Běi Dàjiē). ✆ **0311/703-6699.** Fax 0311/703-8866. www.hebei-centuryhotel.com. 441 units. ¥590–¥900 ($74–$113) standard room; ¥1,100

($138) suite. 30% discounts easily obtained. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 1 west along Zhōngshān Dōng Lù. **Amenities:** 5 restaurants; night club; indoor swimming pool; tennis; fitness room; sauna; billiards; children's play area; tour desk; business center; forex. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, computer (business and executive floors), Internet via dataport or broadband, minibar, safe.

Héběi Grand Hotel (Héběi Bīnguǎn) Opened in 1962, this was once Shíjiāzhuāng's premier and indeed only hotel for foreigners. It now seems remote—around 4km (2½ miles) from the railway station and off the main arteries. But unlike most long-standing state-run hotels of its kind, it has performed occasional refurbishments. Its rooms are quite fresh and have that larger-than-average size that comes from being in an older building. In 2003 the hotel is opening a brand-new 33-story tower next door, which it expects will earn five (Chinese) stars. Several more restaurants and bars will be added to the more than 20 already open. This is the home of conferences and business groups, and its labyrinthine interior is big enough to swallow them whole.

Yùcái Jiē 168. ✆ **0311/581-5961.** Fax 0311/581-4092. 216 units (with more than 300 to come). ¥380–¥750 ($48–$94) standard room; ¥880 ($110) suite; plus 15% service charge. Discounts 30%–50%. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 18 restaurants and bars; golf; tennis; fishing; fitness room; Jacuzzi; sauna; bowling; billiards; business center; mall; salon; babysitting. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, dataport, minibar.

Yànchūn Garden Hotel (Yànchūn Huāyuán Jiǔdiàn) ★ This 20-floor five-star hotel has big rooms in interesting shapes to fit its unusual wavy frontage, although bathrooms are the small size almost unavoidable in China. Opened in 2001, the hotel has a central location right next to a park and close to city hall. The guest rooms are bright, clean, and well appointed; the lobby is spacious and impressive. Dining options include a branch of the excellent Shànghǎi restaurant, Soup Best Shěn.

Zhōngshān Dōng Lù 195 (2 blocks east of the station). ✆ **0311/667-1188.** Fax 0311/604-8689. www.garden hotel.com.cn. 185 units. ¥350 ($44) single; ¥550–¥650 ($69–$81) standard room; ¥750–¥1,650 ($94–$206) suite. Breakfast included in rates. 40% discounts available. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; fitness room; sauna; billiards room; bowling alley. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, fridge, purified water system.

MODERATE

Huìwén Jiǔdiàn The 26-floor Huìwén is the newest and best choice of a clutch of three-star hotels conveniently opposite the railway station, and less than 10 minutes' walk north of the long-distance bus station. The hotel is adequately clean and well-run, but it needs at least one more elevator, and lighting in the bathrooms is poor. Public transport to most out-of-town sites leaves from stops nearby.

Zhàn Qián Jiē 6 (opposite railway station exit—look for Xīnhuá Bookstore sign). ✆ **0311/787-9988.** Fax 0311/701-5463. 171 units. ¥230–¥290 ($29–$36) standard room; ¥390–¥490 ($49–$61) suite. Discounts around 40%. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; teahouse; night club; fitness room; sauna; bowling; pool table; business center; forex; salon. *In room:* A/C, TV.

WHERE TO DINE

The usual fast-food culprits are here: KFC is opposite the Yànchūn Garden Hotel and just west of the Crowne Plaza on Zhōngshān Dōng Lù, along with a McDonald's. Extensive Western menus are available at both hotels. There's plenty of budget eating opposite the station, including two branches of **California Beef Noodle King (Měiguó Jiāzhōu Niúròu Mián Dàwáng),** and a branch of the **Mǎlán** noodle chain next to Quánjùdé (see below). At any of these you can fill yourself for ¥5 (65¢). There's a large food court in the basement of the Dōngfāng Chéngshì Guǎngchǎng Gòuwù Zhōngxīn (City Plaza), along with a couple of good bakeries. A supermarket for travel snacks, open from 9am

to 7:30pm, is located at Zhōngshān Xī Lù 83, just around the corner from the station. Shíjiāzhuāng is perhaps best at offering Běijīng specialties in better environments and for lower prices.

The Greenery Café (Lǜyīn Gé Kāfēitīng) *Kids* This clean and bright restaurant inside one of the town's better hotels has simulacra of Western food in a la carte and odd set-meal combinations (such as borscht followed by spaghetti) for around ¥60 ($7.50). Not only is there enough that's familiar to please children, but seats are available in a dissected aircraft fuselage that runs through the middle of the restaurant. A Western breakfast is available for ¥28 ($3.50).

Inside Yànchūn Garden Hotel. ✆ **0311/667-1188,** ext. 6666. AE, DC, MC, V. 7am–2am.

Quánjùdé ★ BĚIJĪNG The national capital's best-known supplier of its signature roast duck dish provides a better atmosphere, better service, and lower prices at this provincial branch than it does at home. The grand two-story building with a sweeping central staircase bustles pleasantly. The ovens are visible at the rear and use the traditional fruitwood method for baking the duck, which is as moist and succulent as it should be. The downstairs area also offers Shāndōng dishes, which you select from illuminated shelves. Upstairs has full waitress service. If you are by yourself, a half duck *(bàn zhī)* is only ¥49 ($6.10) There's another branch on the south side of Hépíng Xī Lù just west of Píng'ān Jiē.

Jiànshè Nán Dàjiē 7, just south of the Yànchūn Garden Hotel. ✆ **0311/621-1566.** ¥150 ($19). No credit cards. 10:30am–2pm and 5–8:30pm.

Shāo'érzǎi CHÁOZHŌU This branch of the roast goose specialist offers Cháozhōu cuisine's most famous dish, very popular throughout Guǎngdōng and Hong Kong. The large and busy restaurant is set back from the main road in a courtyard, but it's easily spotted by the big roast goose sign.

Zhōngshān Dōng Lù 189, just west of the Yànchūn Garden Hotel. ✆ **0311/603-3951,** ext. 6666. ¥60 ($7.50) for 2. No credit cards. 10am–1:30am.

4

The Northeast

by Josh Chin

Even if the Chinese no longer believe civilization ends at the Great Wall, most tourists still do. The frigid lands to the northeast, once known as Tartary or Manchuria and now referred to simply as Dōngběi (the Northeast), represent one of the least visited and most challenging regions in China and its last great travel frontier.

Dōngběi was the birthplace of China's final dynasty, the Manchu-ruled Qīng (1636–1912). It was declared off-limits to Hàn Chinese from 1644, when the first Qīng emperor took up residence in the Forbidden City, until the dynasty began to lose power in the late 19th century. The ban preserved Dōngběi's image as a mysterious and menacing place separate from China proper.

"The Chinese talk of Tartary as a country half as big as the rest of the world besides," Lord Macartney, George III's emissary to the court of the Qīng Qiánlóng emperor, wrote in the early 18th century. "But their conceptions of its limits are very dark and confused. There is a wide difference between pretension and possession."

Japan and Russia waged a series of battles for control of Dōngběi in the first half of the 20th century, the Chinese finally taking genuine possession of the region after Japan's defeat at the end of World War II. Using Japanese- and Russian-built railroads, China's new communist leaders made it the center of their efforts to bring the country into the industrial age.

The name "Dōngběi" now conjures images, not of wild invaders on horseback, but of ruddy-faced factory workers famous nationwide for their down-home friendliness.

Despite industrialization, Dōngběi still claims China's largest natural forest, its most pristine grasslands, and one of its most celebrated lakes (Tiān Chí). What makes the region unique, however, are the architectural remnants of the last 350 years—early Qīng palaces and tombs, incongruous Russian cupolas, and eerie structures left-over from Japan's wartime occupation.

The region is undergoing a tourism makeover in an attempt to replace income lost with a recent spate of state-owned factory closures. It is still frankly a difficult place to visit, with overpriced hotels, industrial malaise, and a paucity of English speakers. Yet the difficulty offers its own reward: the chance to travel in a place largely free of the exploitation and cultural hyperbole common to tourism in more accommodating parts of China.

Note: Unless noted otherwise, hours listed in this chapter are the same every day.

1 Shěnyáng

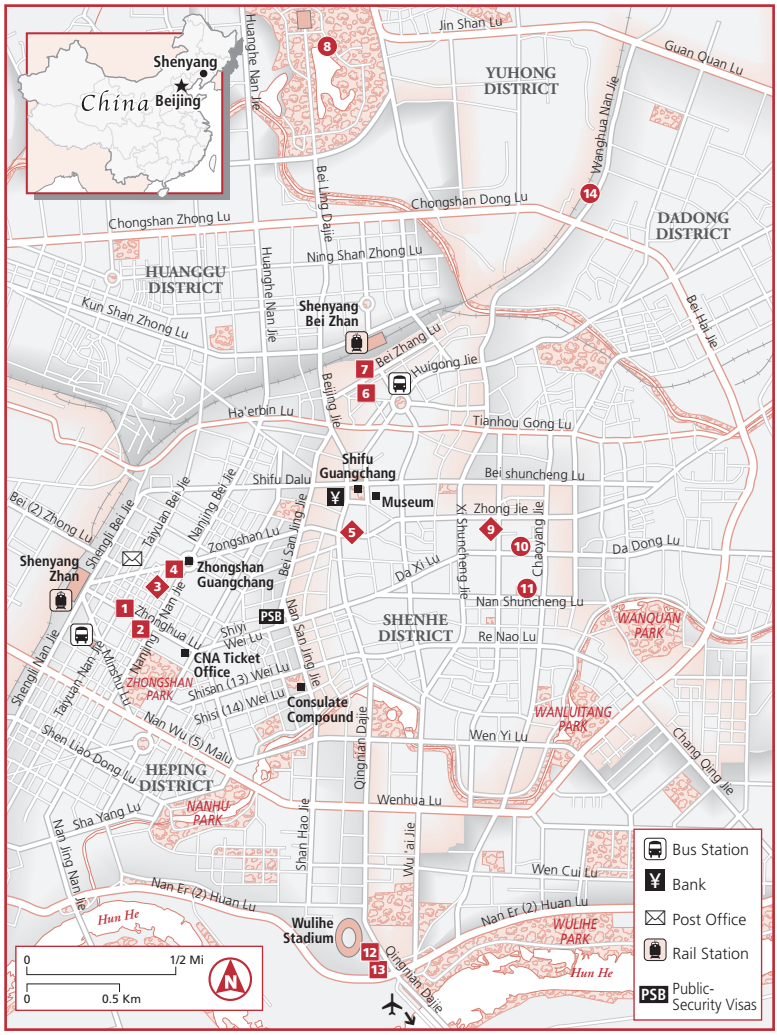
Liáoníng Province, 868km (538 miles) NE of Běijīng, 544km (337 miles) SW of Harbin

Shěnyáng is the largest city in Dōngběi and the region's unlovely gateway. A sprawling chaos of dirt and noise where historical buildings stand bathed in the

neon of new consumerism, it is the epitome of China's propensity for criminally negligent urban planning. It was the birthplace of the Qīng dynasty in the 15th century and is now the capital of Liáoníng, Dōngběi's southernmost and wealthiest province. Many travelers spend only enough time here to switch trains, but it is worthwhile to linger. The city may be ugly but it is also home to several of Dōngběi's most fascinating historical attractions.

Shěnyáng has existed under various names since the Táng dynasty (618–907) and has been the region's most strategically important city since 1625, when Jürchen founders of the Qīng dynasty (1626–1912) made it their capital (Shénjīng). The Qīng's leaders stayed in the city for 19 years, perfecting a system of government modeled on the Chinese and plotting an attack on the weakened Míng from inside their palace, which still stands in the city center. With the decline of the Qīng at the start of the 20th century, the city (renamed Fēngtiān) fell under the influence of legendary warlord Zhāng Zuòlín. Zhāng ruled Manchuria from his downtown residence courtyard complex (recently

Shěnyáng



renovated) just south of the Qīng palace, until his assassination by Japanese soldiers in 1928. The city drifted without obvious leadership until the fall of 1931, when Japan's Kwantung Army (in Japanese: *Kantogun;* in Mandarin: *Guāndōng Jūn*) used the "discovery" of a small hole blasted in their railway line north of the city (known to them as Mukden) as a pretense to invade. The attack, referred to in China as the September 18th (or Mukden) Incident and immortalized in a museum in the north part of the city, eventually led to the establishment of Manchukuo (Mandarin: *Mǎnzhōu Guó*), the puppet state Japan used to mask its territorial ambitions during World War II.

The mayor who transformed Dàlián (p. 159) into the shimmering pride of northern China, now the governor of Liáoníng Province, has vowed to work his magic on the capital. Shěnyáng has never been pretty, but perhaps it doesn't need to be. "[Mukden] is ancient and dusty, with nothing especially attractive," one

ACCOMMODATIONS ■

Gloria Plaza Shěnyáng (Shěnyáng Kǎilái Dàjiǔdiàn) **6**
沈阳凯莱大酒店

Liáoníng Hotel (Liáoníng Fàndiàn) **4**
辽宁饭店

New World Courtyard (Xīnshìjiè Wànyí Jiǔdiàn) **2**
新世界万怡酒店

Shěngyáng Marriott (Shěnyáng Huángcháo Wànháo Jiǔdiàn) **13**
沈阳皇朝万豪酒店

Sheraton Lido (Lìdū Xīláidēng Fàndiàn) **13**
丽都喜来登饭店

Shěnyáng Yóuzhèng Dàshà **7**
沈阳邮政大厦

Traders Hotel (Shāngmào Fàndiàn) **1**
商贸饭店

DINING ◆

Mǎ Family Shāomài (Mǎ Jiā Shāmài Guǎn) **9**
玛家烧麦馆

Star Hollywood Café (Xīngchén Hǎoláiwū Cāntīng) **3**
星辰好莱坞餐厅

Xīnglóngxuān Jiǎozi Guǎn **5**
兴隆轩饺子馆

ATTRACTIONS ●

Běi Líng **8**
[illegible]

Gù Gōng **10**
故宫

9.18 Museum (Jiǔyībā Bówùguǎn) **14**
九一八博物馆

Zhāng Residence (Zhāng Xuéliáng Jiùjū Chénlièguǎn) **11**
张学良旧居陈列馆

Other sights (not on map):

Qiān Shān 千山

visiting Catholic missionary wrote in 1919. "I found it very interesting." The same holds true today.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Flights connect Shěnyáng's new **Táoxiān International Airport (Táoxiān Guójì Jīchǎng)** with every major Chinese city, including Běijīng (8 flights daily), Shànghǎi (3 flights daily), Guǎngzhōu (1 flight daily); there are also connections to Seoul (2 flights daily) and Tokyo (Tues and Thurs). Flights can be booked at the **China Northern Airlines** ticket office (**Zhōngguó Běifāng Hángkōng Shòupiào Chù; ✆ 024/8939-2900**), located at Zhōnghuá Lù 117, north of Shíyī (11) Wěi Lù. The office is open from 8am to 5pm. The airport is 30km (19 miles) south of downtown. An **airport shuttle** runs from the ticket office every half hour (¥10/$1; 45 min.). **Taxis** at the ticket office offer to take groups for ¥15 to ¥20 ($2–$3) per person; other taxis charge ¥60 ($8), including the ¥10 ($1) road toll. Cash and traveler's checks can be exchanged at a kiosk near the international arrivals area.

Shěnyáng has two main **railway stations:** the Russian-built **Shěnyáng Zhàn (Shěnyáng Railway Station)** on the western edge of downtown, and the modern **Shěnyáng Běi Zhàn (Shěnyáng North Station),** north of Shìfú Guǎngchǎng. Trains to Běijīng (9 daily; 10 hr.; ¥185/$23), Dàlián (6 daily; 4 hr.; ¥55/$7), Chángchūn (4 daily; 3 hr.; ¥47/$6), and Dāndōng (3 daily; 4 hr.; ¥42/$5) stop at both railway stations. Express trains to Shànghǎi (11am and 8:30pm; 25 hr.; ¥405/$51) and Harbin (7 daily; 6½ hr.; ¥76/$10) leave only from Shěnyáng Běi; the main ticket hall is in a separate building on the right. The Shěnyáng Zhàn ticket office also stands apart to the left, but this could change after a full-scale restoration is completed.

Shěnyáng's main **long-distance bus station, Qìchē Kuàisù Kèyùn Zhàn** (ticket office open 7:30am–6pm; ✆ **024/2251-1225**), is on Huìgōng Jiē behind the Times Plaza Hotel. **Luxury coaches,** the best way to travel by bus, go to Harbin (7 hr.; ¥130/$16); Chángchūn (3⅓ hr.; ¥71/$9), Dàlián (5½ hr.; ¥99/$12), and Dāndōng (3 hr.; ¥58/$7).

GETTING AROUND The two areas in Shěnyáng where it is feasible to walk are the old city center, a 5-sq.-km (2-sq.-mile) area surrounding the Imperial Palace (Gù Gōng), and the shopping district east of Shěnyáng Zhàn. Most sights, however, are scattered in the sprawl outside these areas. **Taxis** charge ¥7 ($1) for the first 4km (2½ miles), then ¥1 (15¢) for every 600m (⅓ mile). **Buses** charge ¥1 to ¥2 (15¢–25¢) and congregate at the two railway stations. Bus no. 203 travels from Shěnyáng Zhàn via Shìfú Guǎngchǎng to Shěnyáng Běi Zhàn; a circle-line *(huán)* bus goes from Shěnyáng Zhàn past Tàiyuán Jiē to Zhōng Jiē (see "Shopping," later in this chapter) and the Gù Gōng. Maps can be bought at Shěnyáng Běi Zhàn.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs Traveler's checks and cash can be exchanged at window 28, on the second floor of the main **Bank of China** branch (Shìfú Lù 253, west of the Shìfú Guǎngchǎng); credit card transactions are handled on the third floor. The bank is open Monday through Friday from 8am to noon and 1 to 4pm. There are no international ATMs anywhere in town.

Consulates All consulates are located in a single, heavily fortified compound at the intersection of Shísì (14) Wěi Lù and Běi Sān Jīng Jiē. The **United States Consulate** (open Mon–Fri 8:30am–noon and 1–4:30pm; ✆ **024/2322-1198**) is closest to the corner at Shísì Wěi Lù 14. The **Japanese Consulate** (open Mon–Fri 8:45am–noon and 1–5:15pm; ✆ **024/2232-7250**) is next door. The surly staff at the **Russian Consulate** (✆ **024/8611-4963**), in the rear of the compound, keeps odd hours, doesn't speak English, and will almost never grant you a tourist visa; arrive before 10am if you want to try your luck.

Internet Access The 24-hour Internet cafe **Tiětōng Xīngànxiàn Wǎngbā** (¥2/25¢ per hr.) is 2 blocks east of the railway station on Zhōnghuá Lù. Dial-up is **263.**

Post Office The main post office is at the corner of Zhōngshān Lù and Tàiyuán Běi Jiē (open May–Sept 8am–5:30pm; Oct–Apr 8am–5pm).

Visa Extensions Visa extensions are available at the **PSB** Exit/Entry office (✆ **024/2283-0903**) in the old Bank of Communications building (3rd floor, northeast entrance), at the intersection of Běi Sān Jīng Jiē and Shíyī Wěi Lù (open Mon–Fri 8:30–11:30am and 1–4:30pm). Visas take 1 week to process, and require a hotel registration card and proof of at least ¥20,000 ($2,500) in a bank account.

EXPLORING SHĚNYÁNG

The one attraction within walking distance of the downtown hotels is **Zhōngshān Guǎngchǎng (Sun Yat-sen Square),** 4 blocks northeast of Shěnyáng Zhàn on Zhōngshān Lù. It's notable for its striking **statue of Máo,** which stands proudly surrounded by a teeming mass of soldiers, peasants, and workers all bearing weapons of the revolution (guns, sledgehammers, little red books) and staring grim-faced at the banks and hotels that now surround the square. Further east, in a circular white stone building on Shìfú Guǎngchǎng, is

the brand-new **Liáoníng Provincial Museum** (**Liáoníng Shěng Bówùguǎn**); it should be open by the time you read this.

Běi Líng ★★★ This august tomb at the center of an Eastern Eden of ponds, pavilions, twisting paths, and 300-year-old pines contains the remains of Qīng dynasty founder Hóng (the Manchurian Tài Zōng emperor, Abahai). The eighth son of Nurhaci, the Jürchen chieftain who unified Manchuria in the early 17th century, Huáng Tàijí rose to power shortly after his father's death, proclaimed the founding of the Qīng dynasty in 1636, then conquered Korea.

Construction of the tomb (also known as Zhāo Líng) began in 1643, the year Huáng Tàijí died, and took 8 years to complete. The complex is built around a central path, or spirit way *(shén dào),* that leads past two horse-dismounting tablets, through a gate flanked on either side by impressive glazed-tile dragons, to the Lóng'ēn Diàn, a large hall housing the emperor's memorial tablet. Behind this is the tomb itself, an unassuming mound protected in the north by an artificial crescent-shaped hill. Huáng Tàijí's body lies somewhere beneath. Storage halls on the right (¥3/$40¢) contain wax models of all the Qīng sovereigns from Nurhaci to Pǔyí (see "Chángchūn," p. 167).

Tàishān Lù 12, at northern end of Běilíng Dàjiē. Admission ¥30 ($4). 7:30am–6:30pm. Bus: no. 217 from Shěnyáng Běi Zhàn. Taxi: 20 min. from downtown (¥15/$2).

Minorities & the Manchu Myth

Manchurians, one of China's more numerous minorities with a population of 11 million, did not actually exist until a dozen years before they conquered China. Originally a loose alliance of nomadic tribes, they became Manchus (taken from "Manjusri," the Sanskrit name for the Bodhisattva of Wisdom), only after Qīng founder Hóng Tàijí invented the label to unify his people and distance them from their barbarian roots. Manchu culture borrowed heavily from a number of ethnic groups, especially in architecture (see "Gù Gōng," below), but many of their customs disappeared after they established the Qīng and adopted Chinese habits—a phenomenon Chinese historians still note with pride. Some aspects of Manchu culture have survived, however. Most notable among these are *kàng*, heated brick beds still found in some Dōngběi homes, and *qípáo* (traditional fitted dresses), made famous in 1930s Shànghǎi and recently back in fashion.

Dōngběi is technically home to more than a dozen other ethnic groups, including Mongolians, Russians, and Koreans. But the majority of them were, at one time or another, considered Manchurian. Victims of successive assimilation, most are now practically indistinguishable from Hàn Chinese. A few distinct minority cultures have managed to survive, if only barely, in the more remote corners of the Northeast. These include a few nomadic **Oroqen** hunters and reindeer-herding **Ewenkis** in the Greater Xīng'ān Mountains (on the border between Inner Mongolia and Hēilóngjiāng Province), and the **Hèzhé,** the majority of whom live in northeastern Hēilóngjiāng Province. Numbering fewer than 5,000, Hèzhé are famous for their fish-skin clothing, a typical suit of which costs between ¥5,000 and ¥6,000 ($625–$750) and uses roughly 250 kilograms (550 lb.) of pike, carp, or salmon.

Gù Gōng (Imperial Palace) ★ The imperial equivalent of a starter house, this piecemeal palace in the center of Shěnyáng is where the Qīng dynasty's founders ruled before upgrading to the Forbidden City in Běijīng. Many of the buildings are in poor condition, but this is still one of the most architecturally fascinating sites in the Northeast. Structures in the west part of the palace (built after the dynasty moved to Běijīng) imitate the Forbidden City, while those in the older middle and eastern sections bear the intricate Mongolian- and Tibetan-influenced carvings favored in the early Qīng.

The oldest and most distinctive structure is the **Pavilion of Ten Kings (Shí Wáng Tíng),** an octagonal throne hall and 10 smaller buildings that fan out in the shape of the Chinese character *bā* (eight) to represent the eight original banners (divisions) of the Manchurian army. This is where Dorgon, Hóng Tàijí's younger brother and regent to his successor Shùnzhì (the 1st Qīng emperor to rule from Běijīng), is said to have given the orders to invade. There is a pleasant exhibition of Qīng dynasty miscellany (pottery, clothing, paintings, a sword used by Hóng Tàijí) in the theater on the west side of the palace.

Shěnyáng Lù 171. Admission ¥50 ($6). Audio tours (available inside the theater) ¥20 ($3). Daily 8:30am–5:15pm. Bus: Huán to Gù Gōng stop; walk east along Cháoyáng Lù.

9.18 Museum (Jiǔyībā Bówùguǎn) This revamped museum in northern Shěnyáng does a respectable job of summarizing the Mukden Incident (1931) in which Japan staged an attack on its own South Manchurian railway line at Liǔtiáo Hú as a pretense to invade the Northeast. Other displays touch on the Unit 731 biological weapons experiments (see "Harbin," p. 181) and the Rape of Nánjīng (p. 368). The museum's take on history is predictably slanted, but that doesn't prevent large numbers of Japanese tourists from filing through.

Wánghuā Jiē 46 (at Chóngshān Lù, southeast of Běi Líng). Admission ¥20 ($3). 8am–5:30pm. Bus: no. 253 from Dà Xī Mén (west of Gù Gōng).

Zhāng Residence (Zhāng Xuéliáng Jiùjū Chénlièguǎn) *Finds* This recently resurrected courtyard house south of the Gù Gōng, originally known as Shuàifǔ (the Commander's Palace), was the home of warlord Zhāng Zuòlín and his celebrated son, Marshal Zhāng Xuéliáng. The residence provides a glimpse into the almost-imperial world inhabited by the powerful warlords who ruled parts of China after the Qīng dynasty collapsed. A study in the Xiǎoqīng Lóu, a small European-styled house next to the main courtyard complex, is where Zhāng Zuòlín died after Japanese assassins exploded a bomb under his private train in 1928.

Corner of Cháoyáng Lù and Nán Shùnchéng Lù. Admission ¥16 ($2). 8:30am–4:30pm. Walk west from Gù Gōng; take a left on Zhèngyáng Jiē.

OUTSIDE SHĚNYÁNG

Qiān Shān ★ This quiet mountain, with its pine-covered granite crags and scattering of Sòng dynasty temples, has inspired over 1,600 poems since the Míng dynasty. Despite its fame and its proximity to Shěnyáng (130km/81 miles south of the city), it has managed to avoid the popularity and carnival-like atmosphere of other sacred peaks farther south. "I have not seen Mount Tài in Shāndōng," visiting Japanese poet Yosano Tekkan scribbled in his journal in 1928, "but I have heard . . . it has become vulgarized. The vast otherworldly elegance that can be glimpsed in the mountain-climbing poems of (Táng poet) Lǐ Bái seems rather now to reside in Qiān Shān."

The mountain is still one of Dōngběi's most serene and easily accessible getaways. The Běi Bù (the Northern Ravine), with signs in English and free

shuttles, can be seen in 1 day. Xiānrén Tái (Peak of the Immortals), site of the legendary Dà'ān Temple where Yosano stayed during his visit, requires an overnight trip. There are several affordable hotels in the area. Modest rooms are available in some of the Buddhist temples if you ask nicely.

17km (11 miles) south of Ān Shān. Admission at main gate ¥40 ($5), temples ¥5–¥20 ($1–$3). Open 24 hrs. Bus: Catch large air-conditioned bus to Ān Shān (8:45am; 2 hr., ¥15/$2) near Wénhuà Gōng, 3 blocks southeast of Shěnyáng Zhàn on Mínzhǔ Lù; then take minibus (30 min.; ¥2/25¢) to Běi Bù. Last bus back to Shěnyáng leaves Ān Shān at 7pm.

WHERE TO STAY

High season in Shěnyáng runs from March to mid-October. Hotels become especially crowded with a series of industry exhibitions in early September. Room rates are high, even with the customary 15% discount, but some of the high-end hotels offer good deals in summer.

Budget options are scarce. One affordable choice, the **Peace Hotel** (**Hépíng Bīnguǎn;** Zhōngshān Lù 97; ✆ **024/7439-8888**), located in a massive brick building painted red and white north of the Shěnyáng Zhàn, has a large variety of clean and simple rooms. A dorm bed costs ¥50 ($6); a standard room costs ¥180 ($23); a nice triple costs ¥260 ($33). The **Méisǎn Bīnguǎn** (Xiǎoxī Lù 48; ✆ **024/2273-5538;** fax 024/2273-5548) offers old but tidy rooms with decent bathrooms; a standard room costs ¥160 ($20). It's just a few blocks west of Zhōng Jiē and within walking distance of the Gù Gōng.

VERY EXPENSIVE

Shěnyáng Marriott (Shěnyáng Huángcháo Wànháo Jiǔdiàn) ★ This ostentatious hotel was the only full-fledged Marriott in China until the chain opened a second branch in Běijīng in 2002. The property is luxurious, but its blinding exterior and the gold-and-crystal garishness of its lobby can leave you craving subtlety. Guest rooms mirror the rest of the hotel, with plush beds and beautiful redwood furniture. Small bathrooms have generous marble fittings. There's an excellent but pricey Japanese restaurant (see "Mikado," below) on the premises.

Qīngnián Dàjiē 386. ✆ **024/2388-3456.** Fax 024/2388-0677. www.marriott.com. 435 units. ¥968 ($121) standard room. 15% service charge. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; deli; bar; cigar room; small indoor pool; nice exercise room; concierge; business center; forex; salon; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; nonsmoking rooms; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, dataport, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Sheraton Lido (Lìdū Xīláidēng Fàndiàn) ★★★ This latest addition to Hong Kong shipping magnate Li Ka-shing's mainland hotel empire opened at the end of 2002 and is already the best five-star in Shěnyáng. Decorated throughout with artwork from Li's private collection, it offers the city's largest and classiest rooms—a stark contrast in style to the neighboring Marriott's. Standard guest rooms have large bathrooms with separate bathtub and shower. The fourth floor has an indoor climbing wall.

Qīngnián Dàjiē 386 (south of Wǔlǐhé Stadium). ✆ **024/2318-8888.** Fax 024/2318-8000. www.sheraton.com/shenyang. 424 units. ¥1,200 ($150) standard room. 15% service charge. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; deli; bar; cigar room; indoor pool; health club and spa; concierge; business center; forex; salon; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; nonsmoking floors; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, dataport, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Traders Hotel (Shāngmào Fàndiàn) ★★ What this jungle-themed Shangri-La–managed four-star lacks in amenities, it makes up for with stellar service and a convenient location in the heart of the Tàiyuán Jiē shopping area

(within walking distance of Shěnyáng Zhàn). Standard rooms are large and fully equipped, but bathrooms are on the small side. Shangri-La has started work on a five-star hotel next door, scheduled to open in 2004.

Zhōnghuá Lù 68 (at Tàiyuán Jiē). ✆ **024/2341-2288.** Fax 024/2341-1988. www.shangri-la.com. 588 units. ¥1,350 ($169) standard room. 15% service charge. Rates include breakfast for 1. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; deli; bar; small exercise room; Jacuzzi; sauna; concierge; business center; forex; large shopping center; salon; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; nonsmoking rooms; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, fridge, safe.

EXPENSIVE

Gloria Plaza Shěnyáng (Shěnyáng Kǎilái Dàjiǔdiàn) *Value* The Gloria Plaza was the first international hotel to open in the Shěnyáng Běi Zhàn area and is still a reliable luxury standby. Well-maintained guest rooms are unremarkably decorated but comfortable and have small but clean bathrooms.

Yínbīn Jiē 32 (at Běi Zhàn Lù). ✆ **024/2252-8855.** Fax 024/2252-8533. www.gphshenyang.com. 289 units. ¥999 ($124) standard room. 15% service charge. Summer discounts exceed 50%. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; newly renovated health club and spa; concierge; business center; salon; limited room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, fridge.

New World Courtyard (Xīn Shìjiè Wànyí Jiǔdiàn) The New World Courtyard, Shěnyáng's first international joint-venture hotel, is the only real downtown luxury alternative to Traders. Little has been done to update facilities since its opening in 1994, but rooms are spacious and comfortable enough, and service is courteous.

Nánjīng Nán Jiē 2 (at Zhōngshān Lù). ✆ **024/2386-9888.** Fax 024/2386-0018. www.courtyard.com. 227 units. ¥1,000 ($125) standard room. 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; rusty exercise room; sauna; concierge; business center; forex; salon; limited room service; in-room massage; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, fridge.

MODERATE

Liáoníng Hotel (Liáoníng Bīnguǎn) ★★ *Finds* Originally part of the illustrious Japanese-run Yamato chain, the Liáoníng is one of a very few truly charming hotels in the Northeast. The building (constructed in 1927) underwent an admirable $3.75-million restoration in 2001, giving new life to the original marble staircase with its well-worn brass handrails and intimate green-and-white tile lobby. Guest rooms are high-ceilinged and simply furnished; bathrooms are small but pleasant. The Liáoníng's central location on Zhōngshān Guǎngchǎng adds to the charm.

Zhōngshān Lù 97, south of Zhōngshān Guǎngchǎng. ✆ **024/2383-9166.** Fax 024/2383-9103. 79 units. ¥588–¥618 ($74–$77) standard room. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; outdoor tennis court; exercise room; sauna; beautiful game room (chess and card tables); business center; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

INEXPENSIVE

Shěnyáng Yóuzhèng Dàshà *Value* The hallways in this government-run three-star are typically depressing, but its newly renovated rooms are surprisingly comfortable and clean. Prices are far lower than they should be. The hotel is also conveniently located next to Shěnyáng Běi Zhàn.

Běi Zhàn Lù 78. ✆ **024/6223-8888.** Fax 024/2252-2369. 214 units. ¥278 ($35) standard room; ¥100 ($12) dorm (not renovated). **Amenities:** Restaurant; business center; laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, hair dryer.

WHERE TO DINE

Shěnyáng boasts a fair selection of Japanese restaurants. The classiest is **Mikado,** in the Shěnyáng Marriott (see above), with a specialization in teppanyaki and fine sushi served in private tatami-mat rooms. Cheaper and more convenient is

Model Citizens?

Few conversations about people from Dōngběi last long without at least one reference to "Dōngběi Rén Dōu Shì Huó Léi Fēng" (Northeasterners Are All Living Léi Fēng), a Dylan-esque folk song penned by Northeast native Xuě Cūn that dominated radio play lists all over the country in 2001. **Léi Fēng,** a 5-foot-tall soldier supposedly from the Liáoníng steel town of Ān Shān, is the quasi-mythical figure Máo held up as the model for good behavior during the Cultural Revolution. Léi was unknown in his lifetime, achieving fame only after the posthumous discovery of his journal—a suspiciously admirable tome in which he recounted helping old ladies cross the street and donating his life's savings to famine relief. That the journal is likely a forgery didn't matter in the zeitgeist of 1960s China, and when Máo urged the country to "study Comrade Léi Fēng!" it did.

Exactly who wrote the journal isn't really an issue any more. Bill Gates is the new national hero, and Dōngběi's exclusion from the Chinese economic miracle has turned it into a hotbed of misbehavior. Layoffs at state-owned factories have spawned worrying **labor protests** in places like oil-rich Dàqìng, some of which have involved over 30,000 laid-off *(xiàgǎng)* workers. Gangs have grown up in the cities, and many of them are armed with guns. And Dōngběi native Lǐ Hóngzhì's banned **Fǎlún Gōng** spiritual movement continues to thrive.

Despite all the trouble they make for the government, and all the hardships they endure, Dōngběi Rén are admired by travelers and Chinese alike for their sincerity, kindness, fondness for laughter, and willingness to help with directions—a combination of traits rarely found elsewhere in the country. Léi Fēng may have been a fake, but the people he represents are genuine, and a reason in themselves to visit.

the **Qiānyī Lāmiàn Diàn** (Tiānjīn Běi Jiē, north of the Dōngběi Cinema; ✆ **024/2341-9941**), open from 10am to 10pm. The small but lively Japanese noodle shop (with a picture menu) is located just southeast of the Shangri-La. There's a **KFC** on Zhōnghuá Jiē, south of Shěnyáng Zhàn; and a pair of **McDonald's** on Tàiyuán Jiē and Zhōng Jiē. Zhōng Jiē also has a **Pizza Hut.** For groceries, go to one of the city's ubiquitous 24-hour **Civic Moon** convenience stores or the **Carrefour** near Shěnyáng Běi Zhàn.

Mǎ Family Shāomài (Mǎ Jiā Shāomài Guǎn) ★★ MUSLIM Great-great-great-grandpa Mǎ is rumored to have first sold these award-winning *shāomài* (steamed open-top dumplings) from a street-side wheelbarrow in 1796. The current venue north of the Gù Gōng is little improvement, but their thin-skinned dumplings are still among the best in northern China. The most delicious offering here is the *chuántǒng* (traditional) *shāomài,* with beef and ginger. Vegetarian options include egg *(jīdàn),* tomato *(xīhóngshì),* and tofu *(dòufu).*

Zhèngyáng Jiē, 5-min. walk north of Zhōng Jiē. ✆ **024/2484-5218.** Meal for 2 ¥20–¥50 ($3–$6). 10am–9pm.

Star Hollywood Cafe (Xīngchén Hǎoláiwū Cāntīng) WESTERN Despite its emphasis on cinema, this popular restaurant/bar is more Hard Rock than Planet Hollywood, with walls entirely covered with posters, reproduced

photos, and other cheap memorabilia. The food is what you'd expect of any theme-heavy watering hole: chips and salsa, fries, pizza, Tex-Mex approximations, unhealthy salads. The Gorgonzola burger is interesting but small. Live bands play nightly after 9pm. The place fills to bursting with rich Chinese and thirsty foreigners after 10pm on weekends.

Tóngzé Běi Jiē 9, 10-min. walk north of Zhōnghuá Lù. ✆ **024/2341-0991.** Main courses ¥25–¥100 ($3–$12). Sun–Thurs 10am–midnight; Fri and Sat 10am–1:30am.

Xīnglóngxuān Jiǎozi Guǎn ★ JIǍOZI Unmistakable with its bright red facade, this restaurant is cheaper and livelier than the "tourist-approved" Lǎobiān Jiǎozi Guǎn (on Zhōng Jiē), and its *jiǎozi* are just as delicious. Try the *biānxiàn sānxiān* (egg, shrimp, and chives stir-fried before wrapping) or the standard *zhūròu báicài* (pork and cabbage).

Zhōngshān Lù 258, at Yī Jīng Jiē (1 block east of Golden Hotel). ✆ **024/2270-0207.** Meal for 2 ¥15–¥40 ($2–$5). 8am–10:30pm.

2 Dāndōng

280km (173 miles) S of Shěnyáng, 370km (229 miles) NE of Dàlián

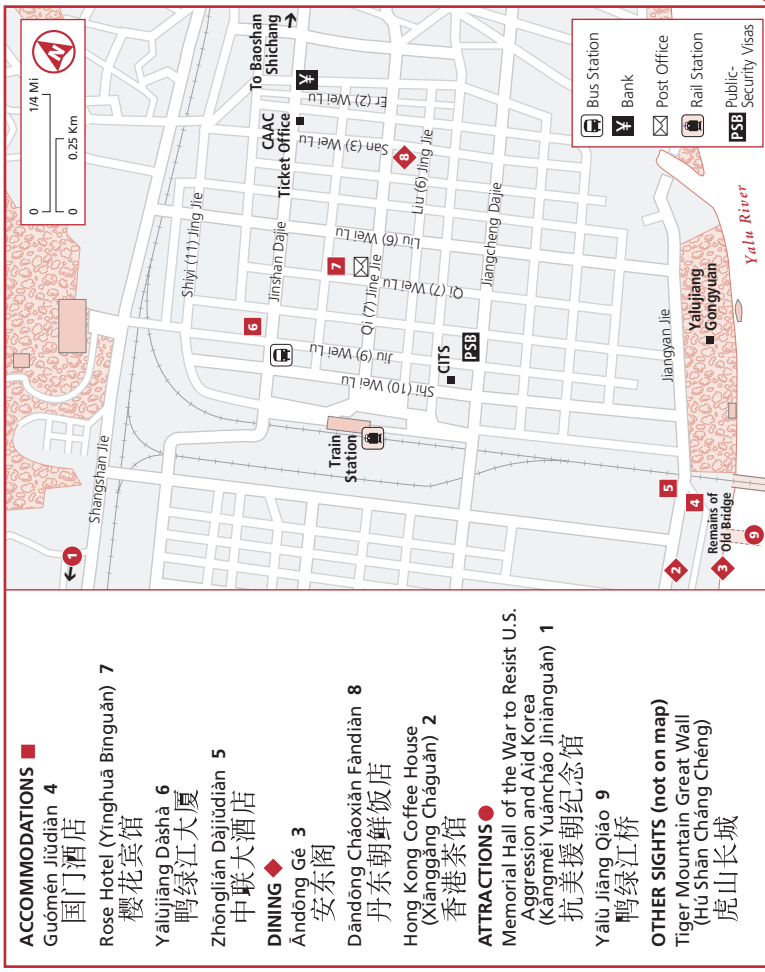
Visitors come to **Dāndōng** for one reason: to see North Korea. Situated on a bend in the Yālù Jiāng (Green Duck River) and connected by rail bridge to the North Korean town of Sinuiju, the city has built a robust economy around the thousands of geographical voyeurs who rush to the border every summer. For all its wealth, Dāndōng remains a Chinese city, with crowded tenement buildings and a new riverside development area already stained by pollution, but it gleams in comparison with its neighbor.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **Flights** leave the airport (Dāndōng Jīchǎng), 13km (8 miles) west of town, for Shànghǎi (Tues and Sat), Shēnzhèn (Tues and Sat), and Běijīng (schedule varies). Purchase tickets at the **CAAC ticket office** (**Mínháng Shòupiào Chù;** ✆ **0415/212-3427**) at Jīnshān Dàjiē 50 (intersection with Sān Wěi Lù); it's open Monday through Saturday from 8am to 11:30am and 1 to 4:30pm. The **airport shuttle** (30min.; ¥5/$1) leaves from the CAAC office 2 hours before each flight. A **taxi** trip takes 20 minutes for ¥30 ($4). Dāndōng's **railway station** is on Shí (10) Wěi Lù, on the western edge of town. Trains go to Běijīng (6:56pm; 14 hr.; ¥263/$32), Shěnyáng (4 daily; 4 hr.; ¥36/$5), Dàlián (6pm; 11 hr.; ¥99/$12), Chángchūn (7:13am; 8 hr.; ¥41/$5), and Yánjí (2:50pm; 21 hr.; ¥149/$19). **International trains** go to Pyongyang (¥101/$13) and Moscow (¥1,740/$212); tickets for these are available in the **CITS** foreign office (✆ **0415/212-7721;** open Mon–Fri 8:30–11am and 1:30–5pm). The office is located in the towering, double-spired Shuāngxīng Dàshà across from the railway station (see "Border Crossing," below). The **long-distance bus station** is across the street from the railway station, at the corner of Shí Wěi Lù and Gōng'ān Jiē, with coaches to Shěnyáng (¥58/$7), Tōnghuà (¥45/$6), and Běijīng (10am; ¥165/$20). **Dàlián express buses** (7:35am, 8:30am, 12:30pm, 1:50pm; 4½ hr.; ¥68/$9) leave from the Bǎoshān Shìchǎng, located 2km (1⅓ miles) east of the railway station, just off Gōng'ān Jiē). **Private cars** at the long-distance bus station will take you to Dàlián in 3½ hours for ¥80 to ¥100 ($10–$12).

VISITOR INFORMATION For tourist complaints call ✆ **0415/314-7397.**

GETTING AROUND Most of Dāndōng lies north of a V formed by the Yālù Jiāng and the train tracks. Shí Wěi Lù follows the tracks to the Yālù Jiāng



Gōngyuán, facing North Korea. **Taxis** are ¥5 (65¢) in town (negotiate for longer distances).

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs Cash and traveler's checks can be exchanged between 8am and 4pm inside the **Bank of China** branch at Jǐnshān Dàjiē 60 (at its intersection with Èr Wěi Lù). It's open Monday through Friday from 7:30 to 11:30am and 1 to 5pm. A 24-hour international ATM is located at the bank's entrance.

Internet Access The 24-hour **Wúxiān Wǎngyuàn** is on Shíyī (11) Jīng Jiē, north of Liù (6) Wěi Lù. It charges ¥2 (25¢) per hour. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The main post office is on the corner of Qī (7) Wěi Lù and Qī Jīng Jiē. Hours are from 8am to 5:30pm. Phone cards are available inside.

Visa Extensions For extensions, go to room 112 of the main **PSB** office at Jiāngchéng Dàjiē 15, behind Shuāngxīng Dàshà (✆ **0415/212-7086;** open

Mon–Fri 8am–noon and 1:30–5:30pm). You'll have to show a hotel registration card and proof that you have $100 per day of the extension.

EXPLORING DĀNDŌNG

There isn't much to see at the **North Korean border,** but the contrast between lively Dāndōng and depressed Sinuiju does provide a vivid illustration of the different paths to development taken by China and its communist ally. There are two ways to see the border—by boat and by bridge. Most visitors do both. **Boats** leave from inside the Yālù Jiāng Gōngyuán (6:30am–5:30pm; ¥1/15¢), a 10-minute walk south of the railway station at the end of Shí Wěi Lù. Large boats, taking 20 minutes and costing ¥8 ($1), take a while to fill up, so it's best to opt for the smaller, more expensive motorboats that take 10 minutes and cost ¥18 ($2.25). Drivers will hand you a flimsy life jacket, then whip you around to within 3m (10 ft.) of Sinuiju so you can take pictures of the rusting cargo boats and sad factories that dominate the North Korean side. A few blocks west, along Jiāngyán Jiē, is the **Yālù Jiāng Qiáo** ★ (6am–6pm; ¥15/$2), a unique horizontal rotation bridge bombed by the United States in 1950. Korea dismantled its half shortly after the Korean War armistice, rendering the bridge useless. You can wander out to the still-mangled end of the Chinese section, where someone has installed a pair of bomb casings as a reminder.

There is a clumsy diorama of the bombing and several other exhibitions related to the Korean War inside the less-than-objective **Memorial Hall of the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea** (**Kàngměi Yuáncháo Jìniànguǎn;** open May–Sept 8am–4:30pm, Oct–Apr 8am–4pm; ¥22/$3), located on a hill on the north side of Shàngshān Jiē, in the northwest part of town. Most of the captions are in Chinese and the exhibits could benefit from a good dusting, but the museum's alternative take on the war is interesting nonetheless. The museum is next to a large memorial to Korean War martyrs visible from the road. Take bus no. 21 from the railway station, get off at the Tǐyùguǎn, and walk northwest.

OUTSIDE DĀNDŌNG

Tiger Mountain Great Wall (Hǔshān Chángchéng) ★ Tiger Mountain, a short, steep, and impeccably restored section of the Great Wall located 30km (19 miles) northeast of Dāndōng, forms part of China's border with North

Tips Border Crossing: North Korea & Russia

At press time, United States citizens were not allowed to travel from Dāndōng to North Korea. CITS in Dāndōng can arrange tours for other nationalities, but independent Běijīng-based operations like foreign-run Koryo Tours (www.koryogroup.com) can also pick you up in Dāndōng, charge roughly the same rates, and have more experience with foreigners. The paperwork takes 2 weeks to process.

Crossing the border from Dōngběi into **Russia,** either on the Trans-Siberian train or at one of the border posts in Hēilóngjiāng and Inner Mongolia, is easier but also requires a visa. Standard tourist visas can usually only be arranged at the Russian Embassy in Běijīng. Keep in mind that you'll have to arrange for a Chinese **double-entry visa** if you plan to come back to China from either country.

Korea. A brief hike along the wall provides beautiful views of surrounding cornfields, and the return path takes you right up against the small stream that separates Chinese and North Korean territory. South Chinese sometimes wander onto stones set in the stream just behind the wall to trade goods and information with North Korean soldiers and farmers. ***Warning:*** Cross over on the stones yourself and you risk arrest.

Admission ¥23 ($3). Open 24 hr. Tourist bus (May–Oct; 40 min.; ¥11/$1 round-trip) leaves from left side of long-distance bus station at 8:10am and 1pm, returns from mountain 11:30am and 3pm.

WHERE TO STAY

Hotels in Dāndōng tend to offer only middling discounts (10%–20%) during the high season (mid-May to mid-Oct). The city's hands-down best hotel is the **Zhōnglián Dàjiŭdiàn** ★ (Shàngmào Lŭyóu Qū A Qū 1; ✆ **0415/317-0666;** fax 0415/317-0888; www.zlhotel.com.cn), a four-star property located opposite the Yālùjiāng Qiáo. The hotel offers a nice Western food buffet, a bowling center, a cigar lounge, and surprisingly large rooms with generously sized beds and impeccable bathrooms (¥489–¥658/$60–$80; AE, DC, MC, V credit cards accepted). The hotel cafe looks onto North Korea. Next door is the three-star **Guómén Jiŭdiàn** (Biānjìng Jīngjì Hézuò Qū Huìyŏu Huāyuán 1; ✆ **0415/315-7788;** fax 0415/315-7228), with spacious, nicely appointed guest rooms and small but clean bathrooms (¥498–¥528/$50–$66; AE, DC, MC, V accepted). There are regular discounts up to 30%.

In town, the newly remodeled **Rose Hotel (Yīnghuā Bīnguăn),** Qī Jīng Jiē 8 (✆ **0415/217-8888**), is small but offers large and tasteful rooms with big, soft beds (¥320/$40) and a location that's smack in the middle of downtown. The entrance is at the corner of Qī Wĕi Lù and Bā (8) Jīng Jiē. A block northeast of the railway station is the tour-group standard **Yālùjiāng Dàshà** (Jiŭ Wĕi Lù 87, at Jīnshān Dàjiē; ✆ **0415/212-5901;** fax 0415/212-6180; yrhcn@public2.ddptt.ln.cn; ¥368–¥428/$46–$54; AE, MC, V accepted). The rooms are clean but slightly worn and overpriced.

WHERE TO DINE

Downtown Dāndōng is full of small, nondescript home-style restaurants and *jiăozi* houses, and the river promenade has a number of upscale Japanese and Korean eateries. The **Dāndōng Cháoxiān Fàndiàn** ★ (✆ **0415/213-1506;** open 10am–9pm), northeast of the railway station at Qī Jīng Jiē 37, serves the best Korean cold noodles *(lĕngmiàn)* in town for a mere ¥3.50 (50¢). Two blocks west of the Yālùjiāng Qiáo and jutting into the river, the **Āndōng Gé** (✆ **0415/314-5801;** open 9:30am–9:30pm; ¥60–¥100/$8–$12 for two) offers Macao- and Sìchuān-influenced haute Chinese cuisine with views of North Korea in a classy setting. Try the filling *lăncài hŭpíjiāo* (bell peppers stuffed with pork, garlic, and green onions, covered in black bean sauce). A meal for two costs ¥60 to ¥100 ($8–$12). Across the street is the 24-hour **Hong Kong Coffee House** (**Xiāngăng Cháguăn;** ✆ **0415/312-2580**), a bizarre but charming cafe run by an elderly woman from North Korea that serves noodles, curry, and passable sandwiches.

3 Dàlián & Lŭshùn

397km (246 miles) S of Shĕnyáng

Dàlián is the supermodel of Chinese cities. Thoroughly modern, sartorially savvy, and unabashedly narcissistic, it is also the largest and busiest port in

northern China. Dàlián's straightforward beauty can be refreshing in a region where most towns are of the interesting-but-homely type, and indeed, there are few more enjoyable activities after a week in the Dōngběi gloom than a sun-lit stroll along the city's supremely walkable streets. The sex appeal wears off quickly, though, and most visitors stay only a few days.

Like Shànghǎi and Hong Kong, the cities to which it is most often compared, Dàlián isn't really Chinese. Located just north of the Lǚshùn naval base at the tip of the Liáodōng Peninsula, it was conceived by Russia's czarist government as an ice-free alternative to Vladivostok. Construction of the port, originally called Dalny, got off to a quick start after Russia secured a lease on the peninsula in 1898; however, it lost the city and Lǚshùn to Japan in the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905). Dàlián (in Japanese: *Dairen*) soon grew into the pleasantly sophisticated port Russia had imagined.

Communist-era industrial development swamped Dàlián in thick clouds of factory smoke, but it was miraculously resurrected in the mid-1990s by Mayor Bó Xīlái, who tried to model the new Dàlián on cities he had seen in Europe. This led him to introduce several revolutionary measures—including a hefty fine for public spitting—that have become a model for urban renewal projects throughout China. Today, Dàlián is considered a vision of China's future both by optimists, who laud its beauty and smoothly functioning modernity, and by more cynical observers, who point wryly to the same silver skyscrapers and note how many are empty. Striking as the modern buildings are, it is the old colonial architecture, remnants of Japanese and Russian rule contrasting pleasantly with the newness around them, that is the city's most interesting attraction.

Fashion designers and consumers from China, Japan, Korea, and Hong Kong descend on Dàlián in mid-September for the 2-week **Dàlián International Fashion Festival (Dàlián Guójì Fúzhuāng Jié).** The festival isn't as important or glamorous as the city claims, but it's worth seeing if you're in the area.

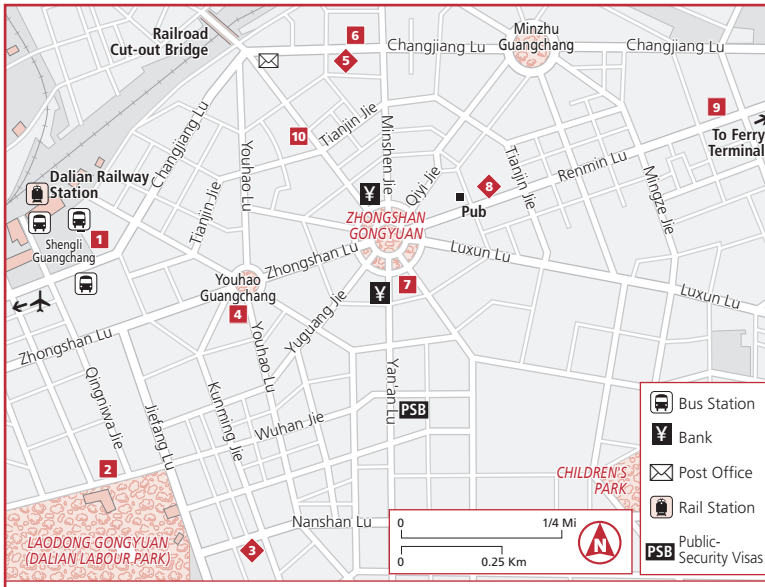
ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE ***Note:*** A temporary ticket counter (7am–6pm) may by now have been replaced by a new 24-hour office inside the rebuilt station. Some of the information below, including bus departure areas, can have changed by the time you get there.

Dàlián's **airport (Zhōushuǐzi Guójì Jīchǎng)** is roughly 5km (3 miles) northeast of downtown on Yíngkè Lù (10min. by taxi; ¥12/$2). Exchange traveler's checks on the second floor, next to the international check-in desk (no credit cards). **China Northern Airlines,** in the Mínháng Dàshà at Zhōngshān Lù 143 (open 6am–6pm; ✆ **0411/363-7480**) sells tickets to Běijīng (9 flights daily), Shànghǎi (6 flights daily), Guǎngzhōu (3 flights daily), Hong Kong, and Seoul. **All Nippon Airlines** has a ticket counter on the first floor of the Sēn Mào building (intersection of Zhōngshān Lù and Wǔhuì Lù; ✆ **0411/360-5511;** fax 0411/360-6622; open Mon–Fri 9am–5pm). The counter sells tickets to Tokyo (Tues, Fri, Sun) and Osaka (Wed, Fri).

Airport shuttles (departing every 2 hours; 8am–4:40pm; 20min.; ¥5/$1) from the Furama Hotel (next to the Shangri-La, see below) and Mínháng Dàshà. Or take **bus** no. 701 from the corner of Yùguāng Jiē and Yǒuhǎo Lù (45 min.; ¥1/15¢). By **taxi,** the trip between the airport and downtown takes 10 minutes and costs ¥12 ($2).

Dàlián's **railway station (Dàlián Zhàn)** is in the center of town, opposite Shènglì Guǎngchǎng (Victory Square). Trains go to Běijīng (4 daily; 12 hr.; ¥269/$34), Shěnyáng (6 daily; 6 hr.; ¥55/$7), Harbin (9:40pm; 10 hr.;



ACCOMMODATIONS

Bó Hǎi Pearl Hotel (Bó Hǎi Míngzhū Dàjiǔdiàn) **1**
渤海明珠大酒店

Dàlián Hotel (Dàlián Bīnguǎn) **7**
大连宾馆

Gloria Plaza Hotel (Kǎilái Dàjiǎdiàn) **4**
凯莱大酒店

Hilton Dàlián (Dálián Xī'ěrdùn Jiǔdiàn) **7**
大连希尔顿酒店

Jiāshùn Bīnguǎn **10**
佳顺宾馆

Shangri-la Dàlián (Dàlián Xiānggélǐlā Dàfàndiàn) **9**
大连香格里拉大饭店

Swissötel Dàlián (Dàlián Ruìshì Jiǔdiàn) **2**
大连瑞士酒店

DINING

Bǎixìng Cūn **5**
百姓村

Le Café Igosso (Yīgǒusǒu Cāntīng) **3**
一苟薮餐厅

Tiān Tiěn Yúgǎng **8**
天天鱼港

¥231/$29), and Dāndōng (7:37pm; 11 hr.; ¥99/$12). Most **long-distance buses** congregate around Shènglì Guǎngchǎng. Express air-conditioned coaches to Dāndōng (4 daily; 4½ hr.; ¥68/$9) leave from the square's west side; buses to Běijīng (10am and noon, 14 hr.; ¥210/$26) and Chángchūn (4 daily; 8 hr.; ¥140/$18) leave from the east side; and buses to Shěnyáng (10 daily; 6 hr.; ¥98/$12) leave from the Bó Hǎi Hotel next to the railway station.

Ferries leave from the Dàlián Kèyùn Zhàn, on Gǎngwān Jiē (east end of Rénmín Lù), for Yāntái (8:30am, 12:30pm, 2pm; 3½ hr.; ¥192/$24), Tiānjīn (even days 5:30pm; odd days 4:30pm; 14 hr.; ¥80–¥1,280/$10–$160), and Incheon (Rénchuǎn) in South Korea (Tues noon, Fri 3:30pm; ¥850–¥1,469/$106–$183). The ticket office is open from 4am to 10pm; Yāntái express tickets are also sold at booths near Shènglì Guǎngchǎng. Take bus no. 801 (15 min.; ¥1/15¢) from Yǒuhǎo Guǎngchǎng. The 10-minute taxi ride costs ¥10 ($1).

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Tourism Bureau** has an information line (✆ **0411/282-5500**) and a complaint line (✆ **0411/362-7127**).

GETTING AROUND Downtown Dàlián is arranged around a series of traffic circles. The two most important are **Yǒuhǎo Guǎngchǎng (Friendship Square),** dominated by a glass globe in the center, and **Zhōngshān Guǎngchǎng,** the city's transportation center. Ten roads radiate from Zhōngshān Guǎngchǎng, including Rénmín Dàjiē, a major avenue that runs east to the wharf, and Zhōngshān Lù, which runs west past the railway station to the city's far southwestern corner. **Taxis** charge ¥8 ($1) for the first 3km (2 miles), then ¥1.80 (25¢) per kilometer. Regular **buses** (without air-conditioning) cost ¥1 (15¢), air-conditioned and mini-buses cost ¥2 (25¢); pay as you get on. Bus no. 801 runs the length of Zhōngshān Lù and Rénmín Dàjiē. A red, trolley-style version of this bus takes tourists on a **sightseeing loop** around the city from Shènglì Guǎngchǎng (every 20 min.; 2½ hr.; ¥20/$3 round-trip). Real Japanese-built trolleys go from Èrqī Guǎngchǎng in the east to Xīnghǎi Gōngyuán in the southwest.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The main **Bank of China** branch is in a large tower on the corner of Yán'ān Lù and Báiyù Jiē, behind the Dàlián Hotel on Zhōngshān Guǎngchǎng (open Mon–Fri 8:30am–4:30pm). Traveler's checks and cash can be exchanged at window 32, and credit cards are handled at window 11 (both on the 2nd floor). There are international **ATMs** next to the old Bank of China on Zhōngshān Guǎngchǎng and inside the Hilton's shopping arcade.

Internet Access **Búyè Chéng Wǎngyuàn** (24hr.; ¥3/40¢ per hour) is the most central Internet bar, located underground on the northwest corner of Shènglì Guǎngchǎng. Dial-up is **8263** or **169.**

Post Office The central post office is located several blocks north of Zhōngshān Guǎngchǎng, on the corner of Shànghǎi Lù and Chángjiāng Lù (open May–Sept 8am–7pm; Oct–Apr 8am–6pm).

Visa Extensions Visa extensions are easy to obtain; you need only a passport and hotel registration to obtain one. Go to the **PSB** Exit/Entry Office on the corner of Yán'ān Lù and Wǔhàn Jiē (2nd floor; ✆ **0411/280-2722**). The office is open Monday through Friday from 8 to 11:30am and 1 to 5pm. Extensions take 5 days to process.

EXPLORING DÀLIÁN

Dàlián's most impressive buildings surround **Zhōngshān Guǎngchǎng.** Highlights are the late Renaissance–style white-brick and green-domed Bank of China (built in 1909) on the north side of the square, and the Dàlián Hotel (see "Where to Stay," below) directly opposite. The city recently made an effort to recapture some of its Russian history with **Éluósī Fēnqíng Jiē (Russian Street),** a collection of mostly new Russian-style structures north of the railway cutout, above Shànghǎi Lù. The large, dilapidated yellow-brick building at the end of the street was the municipal government office when Russia still controlled the city. For a less pretty but still interesting taste of modern Chinese architecture, head to **Rénmín Guǎngchǎng** (1km/½ mile east of the railway station on Zhōngshān Lù; bus: 801, 701). This large square, surrounded on three sides by ominous government buildings, is pleasant at night when lights illuminate the fountain; a stone arcade runs along its northern edge.

The Beaches & Bīnhǎi Lù *Kids* Dàlián's seaside location is the major draw for Chinese tourists. Most of its beaches are pebbly and polluted, but the simple

presence of the ocean and its attendant sea air provide respite from the rigors of travel. **Bàngchuí Dǎo,** 7km (4½ miles) southeast of downtown, was once the exclusive playground of Communist Party higher-ups and is now a pristine, hedge-lined country club only accessible by taxi (15min.; ¥16/$2). The city's nicest beach is a 30-minute walk past the gate; (¥10/$1). A few kilometers west is the relatively clean **Fù Jiā Zhuāng Beach** (¥5/65¢). This is where the city's serious swimmers gather for a brisk dip before work. Take bus no. 5 (25 min.) from Qīngníwā Qiáo (north of Shènglì Guǎngchǎng). **Xīnghǎi Gōngyuán,** (¥10/$1), 5km (3 miles) southwest of downtown, was originally a Japanese resort and is now Dàlián's most accessible but dirtiest beach. The only reason to come here is **Sun Asia Ocean World (Shèngyà Hǎiyáng Shìjiè; ✆ 0411/468-5136;** open 8:30am–5pm; ¥70/$9 adults, ¥35/$4 children). The small but gleaming aquarium has the world's longest underwater aquarium tunnel (116m/380 ft.). Call ahead for free English-speaking guides, who will explain which of the animals in the tanks are edible. Take bus no. 801 or minibus no. 502 from Qīngníwā Qiáo (30 min.).

All of Dàlián's beaches are connected by the city's coastal road, **Bīnhǎi Lù** ★. The first stretch of this road, from Bàngchuí Dǎo to the cartoonish **Lǎohǔ Tān Gōngyuán,** snakes up along coastal cliffs and delivers gorgeous views of the Yellow Sea as it stretches out to Korea. The hike takes 2 hours; start by taking a taxi to Bàngchuí Dǎo and return to the city center on bus no. 521 from Lǎohǔ Tān. Continue along the road and you'll eventually end up at **Xīnghǎi Guǎngchǎng,** a large square at the mouth of the Mǎlán River that houses Dàlián's Centennial Monument (Bǎinián Chéng Diāo)—a series of bronze impressions of residents' feet, some of them bound, that runs for several dozen meters. The square also contains a hot-air balloon in the shape of a soccer ball that rises 120m (390 ft.) for panoramic city views. (20 min.; ¥100/$12). Bus no. 801 stops here.

Lǚshùn Known to war historians as Port Arthur, Lǚshùn has been the most important, and most sensitive, naval base in northern China for roughly 100 years. Little used during the Qīng dynasty, it became a formidable installation under Russia, was captured and expanded by Japan after the Russo-Japanese War, and was finally returned to Chinese control after World War II. ***Warning:*** Most of the area is a military zone and officially off-limits to foreigners; the fine for alighting in the forbidden region, generally defined as any place south of Lǚshùn Běi Lù, is ¥5,000 ($625).

Only two historical sights fall north of Lǚshùn Běi Lù, both of which will appeal primarily to World War II buffs. They are only reachable by taxi from Dàlián (3 hr. round-trip; ¥200–¥250/$25–$31). Some travel agencies, and even the Dàlián Tourism Bureau, will claim that you can see other sights, but the *only* believable authority here is the PSB (see "Fast Facts," above).

The **Huìjiàn Suǒ** (open 7:30am–5pm; ¥40/$5), in the village of Shuǐshì, is where commanders of the Japanese and Russian armies met to discuss and sign Russia's surrender of Lǚshùn in 1905. The tiny house, chosen because it was the only major structure still standing after both sides bombed the town, contains the original table on which the agreement was signed set beneath a photo of the signatories.

203-Meter Mountain (Èrlíngsān Gāodì) ★ was Russia's rear defense base during the Russo-Japanese War and the site of one of the war's most pivotal battles. Between 10,000 and 17,000 Japanese soldiers, including the Japanese commander's son, died taking the mountain. A few of the trenches where they fought have been preserved, served by trails near the summit. An exhibition

room halfway up the hill contains several Qīng-era photos of the port and a few rusted swords and bullets used in the battle. Most striking is a large, bullet-shaped monument on the summit, erected by the Japanese and defaced by Russian tourists. You can look down into the port itself from here. The site's hours are from 8am to 5pm; admission is ¥30 ($4).

SHOPPING

Dàlián claims to be the fashion capital of China. **Tiānjīn Jiē,** running east and north from Shènglì Guǎngchǎng, originally the main shopping street, is in the process of redevelopment. Filling the void for now is **Qīngníwā Jiē,** south of Shènglì Guǎngchǎng, a materialistic mecca of malls, hotels, fast-food outlets, boutiques, and elaborate window displays unlike anything in China outside Shànghǎi. Beneath all this, the **Dìxià Shāngchǎng** is the most expansive and comprehensive underground market in the Northeast. None of the goods on offer in any of these places are particularly exotic, but prices are very reasonable and the spectacle of so many well-dressed Chinese people in one place is a strange, pleasant shock. **The Friendship Store** (Rénmín Lù 8, east of Zhōngshān Guǎngchǎng; open 9:30am–9pm) offers criminally overpriced silk jackets and traditional handicrafts. It also has 50-year-old bottles of Máo Tái, a brand of sorghum-based spirit, for ¥3,800 ($475).

WHERE TO STAY

Dàlián has the Northeast's largest selection of luxury hotels. Budget accommodations for foreigners officially do not exist, but some cheap hotels will let you stay if you promise discretion. Rooms are both hard to find and absurdly expensive during the September Fashion Festival, but discounts otherwise typically reach 50%. The city levies a ¥5 (65¢) per-person construction fee on all rooms.

VERY EXPENSIVE

Hilton Dàlián (Dàlián Xīěrdùn Jiǔdiàn) ★ The newest of Dàlián's upmarket hotels, the Hilton has state-of-the-art facilities but struggles a little with service. Guest rooms are small and modern, decorated in solid colors with lots of glass. Bathrooms are somewhat cramped. Units at the top of the tower sway a bit in the wind, and traffic noise can be a problem, but views are spectacular. Close to Zhōngshān Guǎngchǎng, the hotel also boasts Dōngběi's only Häagen-Dazs cafe.

Chángjiāng Lù 123 (at Mínshēng Jiē). ✆ **0411/252-9999.** Fax 0411/252-9900. www.hilton.dalian.com. 372 units. ¥1,280 ($160) standard room. 15% service charge. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; indoor pool; outdoor tennis court; luxurious health club and spa; concierge; business center; forex; small shopping center; salon; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; nonsmoking rooms; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, dataport, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Shangri-La Dàlián (Dàlián Xiānggélǐlā Dàfàndiàn) ★★ Shangri-La's Northeast flagship is not as up-to-date as the Hilton but is otherwise one of the finest hotels in the city. Standard rooms are spacious, tasteful, and comfortable. Bathrooms, the nicest in town, have separate shower and tub. Service is impeccable. The central courtyard garden is a pleasant place to rest your feet after a walk on Bīnhǎi Lù.

Rénmín Lù 66 (next door to the Furama). ✆ **0411/252-5000.** Fax 0411/2525050. www.shangri-la.com. 562 units. ¥1,680 ($210) standard room. 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; deli; bar; cigar room; indoor 25m (82-ft.) pool; indoor/outdoor tennis courts; health club and spa; concierge; business center; forex; salon; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; nonsmoking rooms; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar; fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Swissötel Dàlián (Dàlián Ruìshì Jiǔdiàn) ★★ The Swissötel's unbeatable location, between the Qīngníwā shopping area and the picturesque Láodòng Gōngyuán (Labor Park), makes it the top luxury option for leisure travelers in Dàlián. Guest rooms and bathrooms are a bit small but otherwise classy and very comfortable. Service is polite and professional. The Western buffet offers a great selection of local seafood.

Wǔhuì Lù 21 (back of Qīngníwā shopping area). ✆ **0411/230-3388.** Fax 0411/230-2266. www.swissotel-dalian.com. 327 units. ¥1,400 ($175) standard room. 15% service charge. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; outdoor BBQ in summer; deli; bar; indoor pool; large health club; sauna; concierge; business center; forex; salon; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; nonsmoking rooms; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV w/pay movies, dataport, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

EXPENSIVE

Bó Hǎi Pearl Hotel (Bó Hǎi Míngzhū Dàjiǔdiàn) This Chinese-run four-star is typically tacky (note the frightening harpy statues at the door), but the hotel's location directly east of the railway station is as convenient as it gets in Dàlián. Standard rooms are small with lackluster decor and undersize bathrooms. Facilities and staff are slightly above par.

Shèngli Guǎngchǎng 8. ✆ **0411/265-0888.** Fax 0411/280-0306. 380 units. ¥730–¥898 ($91–$112) standard room. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; small indoor pool; sauna; concierge; business center; forex; limited room service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar; fridge, hair dryer.

MODERATE

Dàlián Hotel (Dàlián Bīnguǎn) ★ The Dàlián, built in 1909 on the south side of Zhōngshān Guǎngchǎng, was described in a 1920s guidebook as "one of the finest hotels in the Far East." Originally a part of the Japanese-owned Yamato Hotel chain, it was restored to a semblance of its former appearance in 1997 but still lacks the charm of its counterparts in other northeastern cities. Guest rooms are large with small beds but clean, sizable bathrooms. Furnishings fail to match the grandeur of the building itself, but no other hotel in Dàlián can claim as much history.

Zhōngshān Guǎngchǎng 4. ✆ **0411/263-3111,** ext. 1101. Fax 0411/263-4363. www.chinadalianhotel.com. 36 units. ¥598 ($75) standard room. AE MC V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; business center; forex; laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, fridge, hair dryer.

Gloria Plaza Hotel (Dàlián Kǎilái Dàjiǔdiàn) Like the Dàlián (see above), the Gloria Plaza doesn't quite match its counterparts elsewhere, but discounts make it the most affordable Gloria in the Northeast. Guest rooms are small with tiny bathrooms, but everything is clean and the staff is friendly. Cheaper units on lower floors receive little natural light.

Yīdé Jiē 5 (at Yǒuhǎo Guǎngchǎng). ✆ **0411/280-8855.** Fax 0411/280-8533. www.gphdalian.com. 240 units. ¥788–¥988 ($99–$123) standard room. 10% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; business center; forex; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge.

INEXPENSIVE

Jiāshùn Bīnguǎn This amiable new guesthouse, sandwiched between a McDonald's and a KFC on Shànghǎi Lù, offers small and simple but clean standard rooms with acceptable bathrooms. Discounts are generous.

Shànghǎi Lù 61 (opposite Paris Shopping Center). ✆ **0411/280-7885.** Fax 0411/269-1463. 64 units. ¥260 ($33) standard room. **Amenities:** Restaurant. *In room:* A/C, TV.

WHERE TO DINE

Dàlián's specialty is seafood, but the city is cosmopolitan enough to offer plenty of other choices. A branch of the global Japanese chain **Suntory** is on the third

floor of the Hilton (✆ **0411/252-9999;** open 11:30am–2pm and 5:30–9:30pm). A competent **dim sum** restaurant is on the third floor of the Royal Gourmet Building (**Huángbīn Lóu;** ✆ **0411/250-2666,** ext. 7875; open 11am–9:30pm), in the middle of Shènglì Guǎngchǎng. A number of **fast-food outlets**—McDonald's, KFC, Pizza Hut—can also be found at Shènglì Guǎngchǎng and on Qīngníwā Jiē. The underground market has a large **food court** with several point-to-choose Chinese stalls. Yǒuhǎo Guǎngchǎng boasts a couple of **burger and pizza restaurants.**

Bǎixìng Cūn ★★ HOME-STYLE This is a delightful, if somewhat stiff, outgrowth of the yuppie countryside trend in Chinese dining. Servers' peasant uniforms are a bit too perfectly pressed, but the glass-topped wood tables and beautiful glazed dishes make for a pleasant setting. The restaurant specializes in clay pot soups, like the light and flavorful *xiānggūgūshì wēi tǔjī* (chicken and mushrooms). Order *yùmǐmiàn bǐng* (corn cakes) to dip in the soup or to sop up sauce left over from one of many well-prepared home-style dishes.

Chángjiāng Lù 128. ✆ **0411/258-0128.** Meal for 2 ¥60–¥100 ($8–$12). 10am–10pm.

Guāngtóu Xiānglà Xiè SÌCHUĀN "Shaved Head Spicy Crab," a clean little eatery where every staff member is as hairless as Kojak, is Dàlián's best outlet for Sìchuān food. The *xiānglà xiè*—a mix of unshelled crab, vegetables, and ginger served in a large silver bowl filled with spicy broth—is messy but delicious. The restaurant also serves the same dish with fish *(xiānglà yú)* and a small selection of more typical Sìchuān dishes.

Lǔxùn Lù 95 (20m/66 ft. west of Èrqī Guǎngchǎng). ✆ **0411/273-4822.** Meal for 2 ¥40–¥70 ($5–$9). 11am–11pm.

I-55 Coffee Stop (Àiwǔwǔ Kāfēizhàn) ★ AMERICAN Owned by an American expatriate who made sure to include all the details—chalkboard menus and corner couches, world music soundtrack, a Scrabble set propped on a shelf—I-55 is a suburban Seattle cliché, but a comforting one. The cafe roasts its beans on-site and serves the finest cup of coffee in Dōngběi. It also offers good desserts and a nice omelet breakfast. It's a bit out of the way, but the staff speaks English and (luxury of luxuries) there's a nonsmoking section in back.

Gāoèrjī Lù 67 (at Jìniàn Jiē, 2 blocks north of Rénmín Guǎngchǎng). ✆ **0411/369-5755.** Coffee drinks ¥20–¥30 ($2–$4); breakfast ¥33 ($4). 9am–midnight. Bus: no. 701, 801, 401.

Le Café Igosso (Yīgǒsǒu) ITALIAN/FRENCH This Japanese-run bistro, with its dark wood-paneled walls and fine white tablecloths, is as close as you'll get to authentic European dining in the Northeast. Music is subtle, service is silent and attentive, and the wine list is extensive. The English-language menu is mostly Italian, with a few French (foie gras) and Japanese (marinated octopus) selections. The beef carpaccio, drizzled with cream and generously garnished with capers and green onions, is rich but enjoyable. Fresh pasta and risotto dishes are small and simple. Desserts (posted next to the open kitchen) change daily.

Nánshān Lù 45 (at Kūnmíng Jiē, east of Láodòng Gōngyuán). ✆ **0411/265-6453.** Main courses ¥40–¥80 ($5–$10). AE, MC, V. 11am–2am.

Tiān Tiān Yúgǎng SEAFOOD Aquariums inside Dàlián's most prestigious (and expensive) seafood chain contain a truly astounding array of sea life: garoupa, flounder, eel, octopus, crab, clams, mussels, shrimp, lobster, sea snails, sea cucumber, and a host of creatures found only in Chinese waters. Try the *gōngbào yúdīng,* diced shark with peanuts and hot peppers. Also good, and

Fun Fact Dumplings & Dog Meat

Generally speaking, food is not one of Dōngběi's finer attractions, but there is at least one aspect of Dōngběi cuisine that will appeal to epicures: the delectable meat- and vegetable-filled ravioli-like dumplings known as ***jiǎozi.*** Cheap and satisfying, *jiǎozi* are popular all over China but are nowhere as divine as in the Northeast. Cooked in one of three ways—boiled *(shuǐjiǎo),* steamed *(zhēngjiǎo),* or pan-fried *(jiānjiǎo)*—they are most commonly filled with a mix of pork and cabbage *(zhūròu báicài)* and served with a soy-and-vinegar dipping sauce, to which you add your own chopped garlic, chili oil, and mustard. Alternatives are endless. Absolutely not to be missed.

Probably more well-known but significantly less appetizing is **dog *(gǒuròu),*** Dōngběi's other signature food. A Korean import shunned by Manchurians but valued among Chinese for its warming properties, it is a winter item most commonly eaten in hot pot. Dog meat turns greenish when boiled; trying it, according to one traveling companion of mine, is "like eating a piece of beef then licking a filing cabinet."

affordable, is the *wénchóng hé tāng,* a delicate soup made with local clams and bok choy. Penny-pinching locals claim they can make the same dishes in their own kitchens. They're lying.

Most convenient branch at Rénmín Lù 10, 1 block east of Zhōngshān Guǎngchǎng. ✆ **0411/280-1118.** Meal for 2 ¥80–¥400 ($10–$50). MC, V. 9am–9pm.

DÀLIÁN AFTER DARK

The majority of nightspots in Dàlián are neon karaoke dives that cater to naughty Japanese businessmen, but there are a few pleasant exceptions. Resident foreigners favor the subterranean Mǎkèwēi, known to English speakers as **Dave's Bar** (south end of Qīyī Jiē; ✆ **0411/282-2345;** open 1pm until late), a U.N. of watering holes just northeast of Zhōngshān Guǎngchǎng. Americans, Russians, Europeans, Asians, and Africans mix and flirt at Dave's without prejudice over bottles of Tsingtao beer. There are several small bars, quieter and with less libidinous clientele, on the north side of Rénmín Lù, a block east of Zhōngshān Guǎngchǎng. **I-55** (see above) is open till midnight.

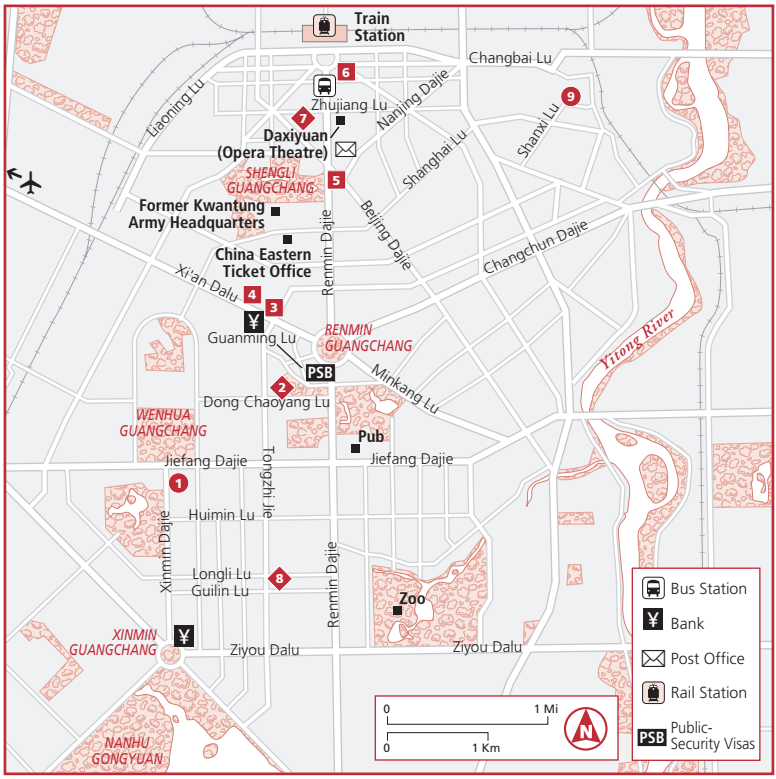
4 Chángchūn

Jílín Province, 302km (187 miles) NE of Shěnyáng, 250km (155 miles) SW of Harbin

Chángchūn is remote enough to feel authentic, is friendly and modern enough to be comfortable, and has just enough pop-history background to make it interesting. Between 1932 and 1945, it was the capital of Japanese-controlled Manchukuo (Mǎnzhōu Guó) and home to puppet ruler Henry Pǔyí, the bespectacled final Qīng emperor best known to Westerners as the subject of Bernardo Bertolucci's lush biopic *The Last Emperor.* The city provided a base for Japan's brutal World War II colonization campaign and was slated to sit at the center of a post-war empire that never materialized.

Chángchūn, now the capital of Jílín Province, has gained fame in the modern era as the Detroit of China, producing first Red Flag cars for Communist Party cadres and later Volkswagens for China's new middle class. Recent economic

Chángchūn



hardships have sent the city in search of tourism dollars and prompted admirable restorations of several Manchukuo-era buildings. But the city's greatest attraction is still its people, as unpretentious, warm-hearted, and quick-witted as any in the country.

The rest of Jílín Province mirrors Chángchūn in many ways. Less convenient than Liáoníng to the south and lacking the "extreme travel" cachet of Hēilóngjiāng and Inner Mongolia to the north and west, it quietly offers several of Dōngběi's most enjoyable attractions. **Chángbái Shān** (p. 178), a dramatic mountain straddling the China–North Korea border, is the most famous. Just as compelling is the seldom-visited **Yánbiān Korean Autonomous Region** (p. 174) to the north.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Construction has started on a new commercial airport, scheduled to open in early 2004. In the meantime, daily **flights** to Běijīng, Shànghǎi, and Dàlián, and twice-weekly flights to Hong Kong (Tues and Fri), leave from a civil/military airfield 10km (6 miles) west of town. The **China Eastern Airlines** ticket office (**Zhōnguó Běifāng Hángkōng Shòupiào Chù; ✆ 0431/799-4954;** open 8am–4:40pm) is at Xīnfā Lù 32, through the second door on the building's west side. A taxi from downtown to the airport takes 20 minutes and costs ¥23 ($3). Or take bus no. 364 (6:30am–7pm; 40 minutes; ¥1/15¢) from the northwest side of Rénmín Guǎngchǎng.

ACCOMMODATIONS ■

Chángchūn Maxcourt Hotel (Chángchūn Jílóngpō Dàjiǔdiàn) **4**
长春吉隆坡大酒店

Shangri-la Chánchūn (Chánchūn Xiānggélǐlā Dàfàndiàn) **3**
长春香格里拉大饭店

Chūnyì Bīnguǎn **6**
春谊宾馆

Paradise Hotel (Yuèfù Dàjiǔdiàn) **5**
乐府大酒店

DINING ◆

Dàqīnghuā Jiǎozi **7**
大清花饺子

French Bakery (Hóng Mò Fáng) **8**
红磨房

Xiàngyáng Tún **2**
向阳屯

ATTRACTIONS ●

Wěi Huáng Gōng (Puppet Emperor's Palace) **9**
伪皇宫

Wěi Mǎnzhōuguó Guówùyuán (Manchukuo State Council Building) **1**
伪满州国国务院

Express **trains** connect to Běijīng (5 daily; 11 hr.; ¥298/$37), Harbin (4 daily; 3 hr.; ¥41/$5), Shěnyáng (2 daily; 4 hr.; ¥47/$6), Jílín City (3 daily; 2 hr.; ¥20/$3), Shànghǎi (5pm; 29 hr.; ¥437/$55), and Dàlián (7am; 10 hr.; ¥183/$23). The railway station (Chángchūn Zhàn) is north of downtown, at the top of Rénmín Dàjiē. ***Warning:*** Students dominate trains in summer, so reserve seats 3 days in advance.

Air-conditioned **buses** to Harbin (all day; 3 hr.; ¥69/$9) and Shěnyáng (all day; 3½ hr.; ¥72/$9) and the express bus to Jílín City (all day; 1½ hr.; ¥30/$4) leave from a white building at Rénmín Dàjiē 6 (behind the Chūnyí Bīnguǎn). Regular minibuses to Jílín City (3 hr.; ¥15/$2) leave every few minutes from the north side of the building. Private **cars** leave from the railway station parking lot for cities east; prices are negotiable (¥150/$19 to Yánjí is reasonable).

GETTING AROUND Jetta **taxis** charge ¥5 (60¢) for the first 4km (2½ miles), then ¥1.95 (25¢) per kilometer. **Buses** (¥1–¥2/15¢–25¢) are pay-as-you-board. Bus no. 6 runs from the railway station through the middle of town on Rénmín Dàjiē; bus nos. 62 and 362 both wind from the railway station to Rénmín Guǎngchǎng and pass Xīnmín Guǎngchǎng, with stop announcements in English.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The most convenient **Bank of China** branch is on Tóngzhì Jiē, south of the Xī'ān Dàlù intersection. It's open Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm, weekends from 9am to 4pm. Traveler's checks and credit card transactions are handled on the second floor (*not* available 11:30am–1pm), and there's an ATM on the first floor. Another ATM inside the Guìlín Lù entrance to the Shangri-La dispenses up to ¥250 ($30) until 9pm.

Internet Access There's a 24-hour Internet bar next to the long-distance bus station, on the second floor of Jiāotōng Bīnguǎn. It charges ¥2 (25¢) per hour. Dial-up is **163** or **169.**

Post Office The most convenient post office (Kuānchéng Yóudiànjú; May–Sept 8am–5pm, Oct–Apr 8am–4:30pm) is in an old green building south of the long-distance bus station on Rénmín Dàjiē.

Visa Extensions Visa extensions are easy to obtain (passport and hotel registration only) at the imposing **PSB** Exit/Entry office on Guāngmíng Lù (✆ **0431/896-3344,** ext. 4468; open Mon–Fri 8:30–11:30am and 1:30–5pm), behind PSB headquarters on the southwest side of Rénmín Guǎngchǎng.

EXPLORING CHÁNGCHŪN

Chángchūn's chief attraction is the ghost of Japanese occupation, which still lingers in the more than two dozen ministry buildings left scattered throughout the city. The **former Kwantung Army headquarters** is an impeccably preserved Japanese-style castle on Xīnfā Lù (now occupied by the Communist Party) near the China Northern Airlines ticket office. Guards might let you roam around the grounds if you promise not to take pictures. There are also a number of buildings lining Xīnmín Lù south of the **Wénhuà Guǎngchǎng (Culture Square),** site of a never-completed imperial Japanese palace and now home to the main building of Jílín University. The grim building southeast of the square, fronted by a statue of infamous Canadian doctor Norman Bethune is the former site of the **Wěi Mǎnzhōuguó Guówùyuàn (Manchukuo State Council).** A bizarre English-language tour here (8:30am–6pm; ¥20/$3) includes a ride in a 70-year-old solid brass Otis elevator once used by Henry Pǔyí (see "Wěi Huáng Gōng," below). Bilingual maps are available (¥5/60¢) at the Wěi Huáng Gōng.

Wěi Huáng Gōng ★★ "The Puppet Emperor's Palace" is where Aisin-Gioro "Henry" Pǔyí, China's last emperor, spent 13 years as an impotent sovereign under Japanese control. This complex of imperial-style buildings, formerly criticized by travelers as shabby and boring, recently underwent a multimillion-dollar makeover and is now among the Northeast's premier historical attractions.

Installed as emperor of China in Běijīng in 1908, at the age of 3, Pǔyí was deposed by Republican forces in 1912 (at a time when he was still breastfeeding) and eventually fell into the hands of the Japanese. In 1932, eager to use Pǔyí's Manchurian face as a screen for its war efforts in the Northeast, Japan convinced him to move to Chángchūn and made him president (later emperor) of Manchukuo. He lived a futile life here, taking orders from the Japanese army and subsisting on a Qīng restoration fantasies, until he was captured by the Soviets in 1945. He spent 14 years in prison, was "rehabilitated," and worked as a gardener until his death in 1967.

The palace was damaged when Soviet troops occupied Chángchūn, so much of the furniture and trappings on display here are replicas. Otherwise, the restoration is meticulous. Most impressive is the Tóngdé Diàn (originally the Jílín Salt Tax Collection Office, and therefore sometimes referred to as the Salt Palace because it was built using money from Japan's salt-mining operations), a building Pǔyí supposedly never used for fear the Japanese had bugged the rooms. The main hall is recognizable as the setting for a dance party scene in *The Last Emperor,* although it was never actually used for that purpose.

Guāngfù Běi Lù 5. ✆ **0431/286-6611.** Admission ¥40 ($5). May–Sept 8:30am–4:20pm; Oct–Apr 8:40am–3:50pm. Bus: no. 18 (2 stops from the railway station; walk east on Guāngfù Lù), no. 264 (from the Wénhuà Guǎngchǎng).

SHOPPING

Chángchūn is one of China's top producers of ginseng, available in any one of the city's ubiquitous pharmacies. For more conventional shopping, try the upscale **Chóngqìng Lù** or **Guìlín Lù** (east of the Tóngzhì Jiē intersection), a hip and haphazard street lined with Korean clothing shops and stuffed-animal stores.

The **underground market** in front of the railway station was once part of an underground bomb shelter connected by tunnels to the Manchukuo ministries.

WHERE TO STAY

Rooms are scarce in late summer, when the city hosts a series of conferences and industry fairs, but discounts of up to 30% are common at other times of the year. Budget hotels generally do not accept foreigners. The city charges a room tax of ¥7 (90¢) per person.

EXPENSIVE

Chángchūn Maxcourt Hotel (Chángchūn Jílóngpō Dàjiǔdiàn) ★ *Value* This Malaysian-run four-star claims it will some day surpass the superior Shangri-La, but for now it is content to dominate the city's luxury-hotel price war with generous and flexible package deals (weekend discounts up to 50%). Bathrooms are small, but guest rooms themselves are some of the most comfortable in the city, and service is decent. This is the best deal in town.

Xī'ān Dàlù 19. ✆ **0431/896-2688.** Fax 0431/898-6288. www.maxcourt.com. 228 units. ¥900 ($112) standard room. 15% service charge. Rate includes breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; bar; small indoor pool; health club; full-service spa; game room with bowling alley; business center w/Internet access; forex; salon; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV w/pay movies, dataport, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Shangri-La Chángchūn (Chángchūn Xiānggélǐlā Dàfàndiàn) ★★ The Shangri-La is Chángchūn's oldest five-star property and still the only hotel in town that provides luxury with class. Standard rooms are spacious, with large beds and generously sized bathrooms, and the hotel's staff is head-and-shoulders above any other in the city. The Shangri-La is centrally located at the edge of the city's most upscale shopping district, a short walk from Rénmín Guǎngchǎng.

Xī'ān Dàlù 9. ✆ **0431/898-1818.** Fax 0431/898-1919. www.shangri-la.com. 458 units. ¥1,280–¥1,440 ($160–$180) standard room. 15% service charge. Rates include breakfast for 1. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bakery; outdoor beer garden and evening BBQ; bar; small indoor pool; outdoor tennis court; health center and spa; concierge; business center; forex; salon; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

MODERATE

Chūnyí Bīnguǎn The Chūnyí, built in 1909, is the least impressive of the former Yamato Hotels, and is attractive now only for its convenient location just across the street from the railway station. The original gate is still here, but the exterior is crumbling and the interior retains only a whisper of history. At press time, rooms in the main building were undergoing renovations. Large but shabby guest rooms with acceptably clean bathrooms are also available in an adjacent tower under the same management.

Rénmín Dàjiē 37 (southeast of railway station). ✆ **0431/279-9966.** Fax 0431/896-0171. 130 units. ¥218–¥260 ($27–$32) standard room. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Paradise Hotel (Yuèfǔ Dajiǔdiàn) ★ An institution among travelers in Chángchūn since it opened in 1994, the Paradise is one of a handful of state-run three-stars in China that have a firm grasp on the concepts of service and maintenance. Newly renovated doubles, equipped with a queen bed, are cramped. Standard rooms are larger but older. Both are nicely appointed with lacquer furniture, large TVs, and small but very clean bathrooms. Some of the staff speak English. The place fills up in summer, so call ahead.

Rénmín Dàjiē 46 (south of the Agricultural Bank of China building). ✆ **0431/209-0999** or 0431/209-0999, ext. 1111. Fax 0431/271-5709. yfh@public.cc.jl.cn. 187 units. ¥322 ($40) standard room. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; business center; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport.

WHERE TO DINE

A number of restaurants in Chángchūn serve reasonable regional cuisine. Otherwise, **KFC** and **McDonald's** branches are plentiful throughout the city. There is also a **Pizza Hut** on the right side of the square in front of the railway station.

Dàqīnghuá Jiǎozi ★ *Value* DŌNGBĚI This successful chain, with its nostalgic Qīng dynasty decor and near-perfect *jiǎozi,* has inspired dozens of imitators but remains unmatched. Try the *bènjīdàn bàn xiǎocōng,* a colorful mix of shredded pork, red peppers, and spring onions served cold with chili oil on a bed of boiled eggs. Don't miss the steamed Manchurian dumplings *(Mǎnzhōu jiǎozi)* filled with pork, shrimp, egg, and Chinese chives.

Lóngjiāng Lù 1 (at Běijīng Dàjiē). ✆ **0431/276-0858.** Photo menu. Meal for 2 ¥20–¥50 ($3–$7). 9am–10:30pm.

French Bakery (Hóng Mòfáng) ★ WESTERN A dark and low-ceilinged cafe with French movie posters pasted to its fake brick walls, this has long been a haven for Chángchūn's foreign residents. A very clean kitchen produces simple sandwiches, omelets, pizza, and near-authentic pastries. Coffee drinks are genuine. Olive oil, Tabasco sauce, Heinz BBQ sauce, and ground coffee are for sale on a small shelf near the door.

Guìlín Lù 33 (east of Tóngzhì Jiē intersection). ✆ **0431/562-3994.** Main courses ¥18–¥25 ($2–$3); coffee ¥10–¥15 ($1–$2). 8am–8pm.

Xiàngyáng Tún ★★★ HOME-STYLE This delightful countryside eatery, with a statue of Máo out front and calligraphy-covered walls in the main dining room, is the favorite for home-style fare. Try the *tiěbǎn lùròu*—sliced venison served sizzling on an iron skillet with green peppers, onions, garlic, and ginger. Absolutely try the *dà páigu* (big ribs), a melt-in-your-mouth house specialty with meat that literally falls off the bone.

Dōng Cháoyáng Lù 3 (east of Tóngzhì Jiē intersection). ✆ **0431/894-4325.** Meal for 2 ¥30–¥60 ($4-$8). 10:30am–11pm.

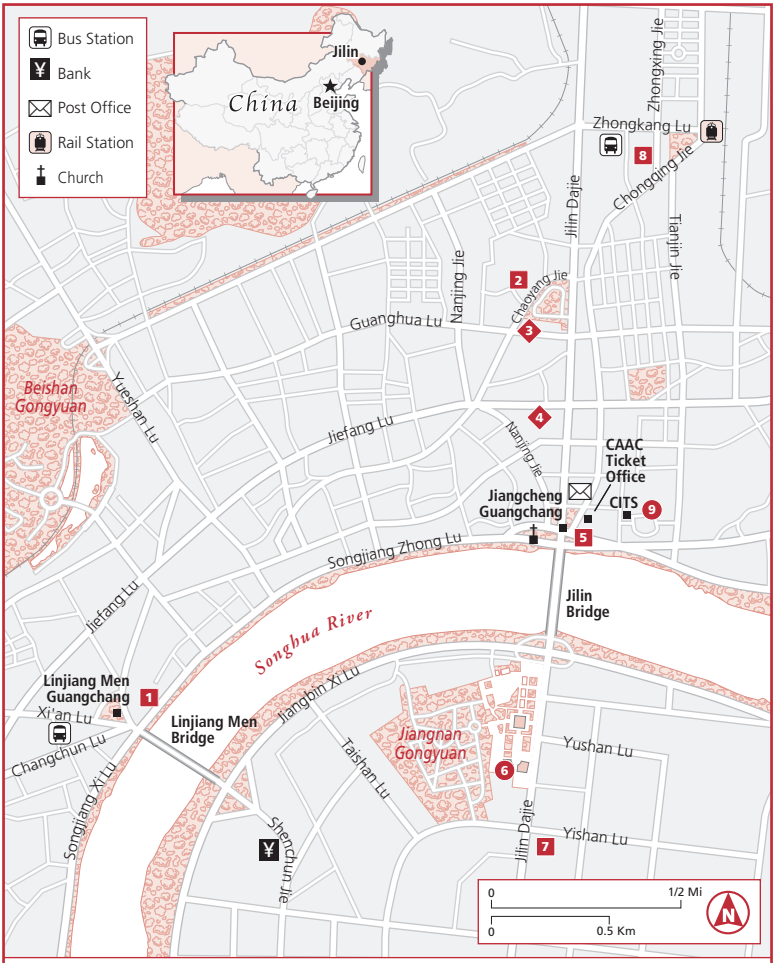
CHÁNGCHŪN AFTER DARK

Chángchūn is the birthplace of ***èrrénzhuàn,*** a mix of stand-up comedy and opera that is thoroughly vulgar and, for those who can understand Mandarin, very entertaining. Real fans head to the raucous, smoke-filled **Hépíng Dàxìyuàn,** a block north of the post office on Rénmín Dàjiē (✆ **0431/276-3391**), where tawdry performances get audiences roaring with laughter and keep them that way most of the night. Nightly shows at 7:10pm cost ¥10 to ¥50 ($1–$6). Chángchūn's disco club of the moment is the **Mayflower** (**Wǔyuèhuā Jiǔbā;** no phone available), tucked underground on the south side of the Wénhuà Huódòng Zhōngxīn on Rénmín Dàjiē, a few blocks south of Rénmín Guǎngchǎng. The club is popular with foreigners and stays open late.

5 Jílín City

Jílín Province, 128km (79 miles) E of Chángchūn

Jílín, one of the oldest settlements in the province and a legendary shipbuilding center during the Qīng dynasty, is famous now for its delicate winter scenery. The city's original name was *Jílín Wūlā* (Manchurian for "along the river"), because it straddles a bend in the Sōnghuā Jiāng (Sungari River). It was hit hard in World War II and, despite one of the country's more impressive urban renewal plans, it will probably never recover its old prestige. Most visitors now use it as a staging point for trips to the Chángbái Shān Nature Preserve (p. ###).



ACCOMMODATIONS ■

Century Hotel (Shìjì Dàfàndiàn) **7**
世纪大饭店

Dōnguān Bīnguǎn **5**
东关宾馆

International Hotel (Guójì Dàfàndiàn) **8**
国际大饭店

Lǚyóu Bīnguǎn (Tourism Hotel) **2**
旅游宾馆

Milky Way Hotel (Yínhé Dàshà) **1**
银河大厦

DINING ◆

Lìyǎdé Shífǔ **4**
利雅德食府

Red Dude (Hóng Shèdé) **3**
红社德

ATTRACTIONS ●

Wén Miào **9**
文庙

Yǔnshí Bówùguǎn (Meteorite Museum) **6**
陨石博物馆

Wild China: Yánbiān

Koreans first fled across the border to Yánbiān, a seldom-visited area of greener-than-green hills and fertile fields nestled in the northeastern corner of Jílín Province, after the first of several severe famines struck the Korean peninsula in 1869.

Subsequent diasporas in the 20th century, the result of continued food shortages and a pair of brutal Japanese occupations, turned the area into what many now call the Third Korea. Now officially called the Yánbiān Cháoxiǎn (Korean) Autonomous Prefecture, it is home to the largest population of ethnic Koreans outside the peninsula itself.

Many parts of Yánbiān have only recently been opened to tourists, and even those areas that have been open for years see few Westerners. Facilities are minimal and English almost nonexistent. But people adventurous enough to travel here can enjoy one of Dōngběi's most peacefully stunning landscapes—a sublime combination of Scotland and Japan—and interact with one of China's only truly bicultural societies.

The capital of Yánbiān is **Yánjí,** a rapidly developing city where all of the street signs, and most of the residents, are bilingual. Bland and somewhat rigid, its chief value is as a base for journeys to the surrounding countryside, Chángbái Shān, and the North Korean border.

A late-afternoon bus ride through the **Yánbiān countryside** ★★★, as sunlight glitters on fields of rice and warms the upturned roofs of Korean huts, is one of the most exquisite experiences available in the Northeast. The best excuse to take such a ride is **Fángchuān,** a tiny town at the end of a needle-thin strip of Chinese territory between North Korea and Russia, and China's preeminent border-viewing spot. A view from the tower here (¥20/$3) provides vistas of Russia, North Korea and, on a clear day, the northern edge of Japan. Catch the 6:30am bus to Húnchūn (2½ hr.; ¥17/$2) from the Yánjí railway station, take a taxi to the Húnchūn Kèyùn Zhàn (¥5/65¢), and catch the 9:30am bus to Fángchuān (70km/43 miles; 2 hr.; ¥15/$2). The last bus back to Húnchūn with a connection to Yánjí leaves at 1:30pm.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **Trains** travel from Jílín to Chángchūn (7 daily; 2 hr.; ¥20/$3), Yánjí (4 daily; 7 hr.; ¥52/$7), Shěnyáng (4:46pm; 9 hr.; ¥116/$15), and Běijīng (5:56pm; 13 hr.; ¥256/$32). The **railway station (Jílín Zhàn)** is north of the river, at the intersection of Zhōngkàng Lù and Chóngqìng Jiē; the ticket office is open from 5am to 1:30am. The main **long-distance bus station (Gōnglù Kèyùn Zōngzhàn or Chàlù Xiāng)** is at Zhōngkàng Lù 13, west of the railway station; buses leave from here for Tōnghuà (all day; ¥42/$5), Harbin (all day; ¥43/$5), and Yánjí (8am, 6 hr.; ¥44/$5). **Express buses** to Chángchūn (every 30 min., 6am–6pm; 1½ hr.; ¥30/$4) depart from the Línjiāng Mén Kèyùn Zhàn on Xī'ān Lù, a block west of Línjiāng Guǎngchǎng. **Flights** to Běijīng (Wed and Sat) and Shànghǎi (Wed and Sun) leave from the Gūdiànzi Jīchǎng, 30km (19 miles) west of the city. The **CAAC ticket office** (**Mínháng**

Warning: North Koreans continue to flow into Yánbiān, but without official permission. The result is frequent identity checks, especially in border areas—carry your passport with you at all times.

GETTING THERE Trains connect Yánjí to both Běijīng (10:40am; 15 hr.; ¥322/$40) and Chángchūn (2 daily; 9½ hr.; ¥119/$15).The **railway station (Yánjí Zhàn)** is to the south, at the end of Zhànqián Jiē; the ticket office is open from 4:30am to 10:30pm. **Buses** to Chángbái Shān (p. 178) and towns in the countryside leave from the Dōngběiyà Kèyùn Zhàn (on Chángbái Lù, northeast of railway station); the ticket office is open from 5am to 4:30pm. Buses also leave from the railway station parking lot. **Flights** to Běijīng (4 daily; ¥970/$121) and Seoul (Mon, Wed, Fri; ¥2,540/$318) depart from a small airport 6km (3¾ miles) west of the railway station; a taxi ride there costs ¥10 ($1.25). Purchase flight tickets at the **CAAC ticket office** (✆ **0433/2751-5188;** open 8am–9pm) inside the Xiǎngyǔ Dàjiǔdiàn above the Yánxīn Bridge, north of the railway station.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE Yánjí's most convenient hotel is the **Dōngběiyà Dàjiǔdiàn** (Chángbái Lù 109; ✆ **0433/280-8111;** fax 0433/282-0970), next to the long-distance bus station on Chángbái Lù. Avoid old rooms in the tower; go instead for clean and spacious units (¥488/$61 standard room) in the new building in back. The joint-venture **Yánbiān Daewoo (Yánbiān Dàyǔ Fàndiàn)** ★, Júzi Jiē 272, 3km (1¾ miles) north of the post office (✆ **0433/265-7700;** fax 0433/265-7701), is Yánjí's largest and most luxurious hotel. The small but tasteful rooms cost ¥800 ($100) and come with breakfast. Yánjí's food specialty is Korean ***lěngmiàn* (cold noodles),** semi-translucent wheat noodles served in a cold broth with pickled cabbage, beef, sesame seeds, and Korean chili paste. The best *lěngmiàn* restaurant in town is the **Jīndálái Fàndiàn** ★★ (Hǎilán Lù 42, at Xīnhuá Jiē; ✆ **0433/251-3634**), open from 8:30am to 10pm. The stripped-down eating hall serves noodles (¥15/$2 for a deluxe bowl) made by women in head-to-toe rubber.

Shòupiào Chù; ✆ **0432/245-4260;** open 8am to 5pm) is behind the Dōngguān Hotel at Chōngqìng Lù 1. An **airport shuttle** leaves from here every Wednesday and Sunday at 11:30am and costs ¥10 ($1.25). A **taxi** to the airport costs ¥30 ($3.75).

VISITOR INFORMATION For tourist complaints, call ✆ **0432/245-7524.**

GETTING AROUND Jílín Dàjiē, the main thoroughfare, runs north–south through the middle of town. Most **buses** (¥1/15¢) stop at the railway station; bus no. 103 leaves from the railway station and travels along Jílín Dàjiē. **Taxis** charge ¥5 ($6) for the first 2km (1¼ miles) and ¥1.80 (25¢) per kilometer after that.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The main **Bank of China** branch is inconveniently located on Shēnchún Jiē, at the east end of the Línjiāng Qiáo (Línjiāng Bridge). It's open May through September from 8:30am to 4:30pm

and October through April from 8:30am to 4pm. Windows on the left handle traveler's checks and credit card transactions (*not* available 11:30am–1pm). There's an international ATM just inside the door.

Internet Access There are several **24-hour Internet bars** charging ¥2 (25¢) per hour north of the Tourism Hotel (see below) on Cháoyáng Jiē.

Post Office The main post office is on Jílín Dàjiē (open 8:30am–4:30pm), north of the Jílín Bridge.

EXPLORING JÍLÍN

Jílín is host to a scene of unearthly beauty in winter, when steam rises from the Sōnghuā River and condenses on nearby trees. The phenomenon, dubbed ***wùsōng* (ice-rimmed trees)** ★ in Mandarin, is a by-product of the nearby Fēngmǎn Hydroelectric Dam, which feeds warm water into the Sōnghuā and keeps it from freezing despite air temperatures of –22°F (–30°C). To see this, get up early and walk along any section of the pleasant riverside promenade that follows Sōnghuā Jiāng Lù. Also beautiful is an old **Catholic Church (Tiānzhǔ Jiàotáng),** built in 1917 and restored in 1980, opposite the promenade on the west side of Jiāngchéng Guǎngchǎng; it isn't open to tourists, but you might convince someone in the attached hospice to let you in for a look.

IN TOWN

Wén Miào This decrepit, charming Confucian temple is notable for its exhibition on the Qīng dynasty imperial examination system, inside the first hall on the right. A mural at the entrance to the exhibit depicts a mountain of men stepping on each other in an effort to climb the Confucian hierarchy. Inside are reproductions of "cheat sheets"—pieces of clothing covered in thousands of near-microscopic characters found on Qīng-era candidates in Běijīng.

Nánchāng Lù. Admission ¥8 ($1). 8:30am–4:30pm; closed holidays. Bus: no. 103 to Jiāngchéng Guǎngchǎng, then walk east 2 blocks on Jiāngwān Lù and turn left at the Jiāngchéng Hotel.

Yǔnshí Bówùguǎn (Meteorite Museum) *Kids* On March 8, 1976, one of the largest meteorite showers in recorded history fell on a 500-sq.-km (195-sq.-mile) area around Jílín, pelting the city with 4,000 kilograms (4.4 tons) of rock and giving it a reason to open this museum. The facility has recently been renovated but still lacks English captions. The main reason to come here is the world's largest stony meteorite (1,774kg/3,921 lb.), which hovers dressed in a blue velvet skirt in the middle of the hall. Records show that the meteorite's impact registered 1.7 on the Richter scale. Visitors are allowed to touch a smaller meteorite in the adjacent room.

Jílín Dàjiē 96. Admission ¥40 ($5) adults, ¥5 (60¢) children. 8:30–11:30am and 1:30–4:30pm. Bus: no. 103 to Jiāng Nán Gōngyuán, then walk south past a large statue of Máo.

WHERE TO STAY

Jílín's hotels are busy year-round but only fill up during major Chinese holidays. Discounts range from 15% to 25% in summer.

EXPENSIVE

Century Hotel (Shìjì Dàfàndiàn) An exaggerated statue of Cretheus on Argus at the entrance is the first of many ancient Greek and Roman flourishes installed throughout this odd hotel. Nominally managed by Swiss-Belhotel but dominated by its Chinese owner, the Century feels grossly out of place in Jílín. Still, it is the city's newest and nicest hotel, and close to the sights. Rooms are spacious and opulent, with fluffy beds, pale walls, and dark wood furniture.

Jílín Dàjiē 77 (at Yíshān Lù). ✆ **0432/464-9888.** Fax 0432/464-9000. www.centuryswiss-belhotel.com. 166 units. ¥800 ($100) standard room. 10% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; nightclub; small indoor pool; health club and spa; business center; forex; limited room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Crystal Hotel (Wùsōng Bīnguǎn) ★ Once the only luxury hotel in Jílín, this four-star still offers the city's best combination of comfort and service. Perched several kilometers northeast of the railway station on the east bank of the Sōnghuā Jiāng, it is far from most sights in the city but provides good views of the ice-rimmed trees in winter. Decent-size rooms are nicer than the hotel's worn exterior would suggest. Corner rooms are larger and offer the best river views. Bathrooms in both are clean.

Lóngtán Dàjiē 29 (south of Lóngtán Bridge). ✆ **0432/398-6200.** Fax 0432/398-6501. ggwusong@mail.jihuacomm.com.cn. 152 units. ¥750 ($93) standard room; ¥1,000 ($125) corner standard room. 15% service charge. Rates include breakfast. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; small exercise room; nice spa with river view; bowling alley; business center; limited room service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, fridge, hair dryer (upon request).

MODERATE

Dōngguān Bīnguǎn Built in 1957 just north of the Jílín Bridge, the Dōngguān is a relic, but a convenient one. The main building, a white behemoth with a traditional green tile roof, underwent minor renovations in 2002 and offers worn but clean standard rooms with small bathrooms. Similar rooms on the first floor of the rear building are heavily discounted.

Jiāngwān Lù 2. ✆ **0432/216-0114** or 0432/216-0118. 168 units. Standard room ¥280 ($35) in back building; ¥220 ($28) in main building (limited hot water). Rates include breakfast. **Amenities:** Restaurant; small business center. *In room:* A/C, TV.

International Hotel (Guójì Dàfàndiàn) This three-star no longer gleams the way it used to but is still the most comfortable and best-equipped hotel in the railway station area. Rooms are tidy and bright with hard beds. The hotel charges the same price for every room and varies the discount: Well-maintained standard rooms are the most expensive, and older rooms on the seventh and eighth floors are the cheapest.

Zhōngxìng Jiē 20 (southwest of railway station). ✆ **0432/612-9818.** Fax 0432/255-3788. 191 units. ¥480 ($60) all rooms. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; exercise room; Jacuzzi; sauna; bowling alley; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Milky Way Hotel (Yínhé Dàshà) ★ The Milky Way is the closest thing Jílín has to a traveler's hotel, with English-speaking staff, an international ATM in the lobby, and a helpful in-house travel service. Rooms on the third, fourth, and 11th floors have recently been refurbished and are comfortable with soft beds. Bathrooms are small but very clean. Older guest rooms, darker and slightly worn, are available at a good discount. The hotel is far from the center of town, near Línjiāng Guǎngchǎng.

Sōnghuā Lù 97. ✆ **0432/484-1780.** Fax 0432/484-1621. http://jlyinhe.yeah.net. 176 units. ¥380 ($48) standard room. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; travel service; business center; forex; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge.

INEXPENSIVE

Lǚyóu Bīnguǎn (Tourism Hotel) *Value* Located just off Rénmín Dàjiē, halfway between the railway station and the river, the Tourism Hotel is the best deal in town. Guest rooms are large, clean, and comfortable, with spacious, impeccable bathrooms. The carpets are a bit scuffed but nothing to complain about at this price. Rooms are often full, so call ahead.

Cháoyáng Jiē 88 (on Wénhuà Guǎngchǎng). ✆ **0432/248-1127,** ext. 8001. 58 units. ¥160 ($20) standard room. **Amenities:** Restaurant. *In room:* A/C, TV.

WHERE TO DINE

There is a **KFC** inside the Fu-Mart at the intersection of Chóngqìng Lù and Bǎodìng Lù; the Fu-Mart also has a **supermarket.** The Century Hotel's Western restaurant serves decent pizza and salads and offers occasional buffet promotions for about ¥60 ($8) per person. There are several **Korean cold-noodle** restaurants around the railway station (see box, "Wild China: Yánbiān," p. 174).

Lìyǎdé Shífǔ MUSLIM By far the most upmarket Muslim restaurant in the city, Lìyǎdé lacks the gritty appeal of Jílín's other Huí minority eateries but still manages to serve some fine mutton dishes. Portions are small but well presented. Don't miss the *shǒusī yángròu,* tender bits of torn lamb served with soy-and-garlic dipping sauce.

Jíyuán Shāngchéng on Jiěfàng Zhōng Lù (west of Jílín Dàjiē). ✆ **0432/201-7999.** Meal for 2 ¥70–¥120 ($9–$15). 10am–10pm.

Red Dude (Hóngshèdé) HOME-STYLE Part of a local chain of restaurants (there's a Green Dude noodle shop across the street), Red Dude serves Jílín's biggest selection of northern and Sichuanese favorites in a clean setting and at decent prices. Try the *liū ròuduàn*—deep-fried pork strips and green peppers, similar to but more savory than sweet-and-sour pork.

Cháoyáng Jiē 0 (yes, as in "zero"), south of the Tourism Hotel. ✆ **0432/249-3788.** Picture menu. Meal for 2 ¥40–¥70 ($5–$9). 8:30am–10:30pm.

6 Chángbái Shān

Jílín Province, 565km (350 miles) E of Jílín City

Chángbái Shān (Long White Mountain) is the mythical source of Manchurian and Korean culture, the center of the 200,000-ha (494,000-acre) **Chángbái Shān Nature Preserve,** the tallest peak in Dōngběi, and the region's most impressive attraction. The main reason to visit is **Tiān Chí (Heavenly Lake)**—a pristine, two-million-year-old fog-enshrouded lake set deep in the crater at the top of the mountain. Roughly 13km (8 miles) in circumference, it straddles the Chinese–North Korean border and is the source of the Sōnghuā River. Below the lake, the mountain is home to a truly impressive range of flora—over 80 tree and 300 medicinal plant species, including ginseng, Korean pine, and the rare Chángbái larch.

The mountain was considered forbidden territory throughout most of the Qīng dynasty, and Hàn Chinese who wandered into the area, usually in search of ginseng, were sometimes beaten to death with sticks. Extreme as it sounds, visitors today might find themselves wishing for a similar policy to protect the mountain from new hordes of trash-shedding Chinese tourists. (The mountain's UNESCO World Natural Reserve listing has done little to this end.)

Snow makes routes impassable from early October to late May, and even in summer the weather is maddeningly unpredictable (bring a raincoat). The best time to visit is early September, when the weather clears somewhat and the lake is most likely to be visible. Unfortunately, September is also when an army of South Koreans flood the area, taking up hotel rooms as far west as Jílín City and driving up prices.

THE NORTHERN APPROACH

One of only two routes open to foreigners (the others enter or venture too close to North Korea), this is the most convenient and scenic way to tackle the mountain. It is possible to see Tiān Chí and return in a single day using this approach, but it's worthwhile to spend at least 2 days here.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The route begins at **Èrdào Bái Hé** (Bái Hé for short), a small town 25km (16 miles) north of the mountain, named for a river that flows down from Tiān Chí. The best way to reach Bái Hé from the north or west is through Yánjí (see "Wild China: Yánbiān," above); a **tourist express** leaves Yánjí's long-distance bus station at 5:30am and goes directly to the mountain gate. The 3-hour trip costs ¥55 ($7) one-way; ¥101 ($13) same-day round-trip including lunch. Or you can catch one of several Bāi Hé-bound buses (191km/118 miles; 4hr.; ¥23/$3) that leave from the Yánjí railway station. From the south, the easiest approach is by **train** via Tōnghuà (2 daily; 6½ hr.; ¥42/$5).

Buses (¥40/$5) and **private cars** (¥60–¥100/$8–$13) gather every morning at the Bāi Hé railway station, at the north end of town, for trips to the *dàochē zhàn* (vehicle switching station), 17km (11 miles) up the mountain from the main gate. **Admission** at the main gate costs ¥60 ($8) for adults and ¥30 ($4) for students and children.

ORGANIZED TOURS **CITS** in Jílín offers **3-day tours** of Chángbái Shān for ¥500 ($63) per person. Jílín's **Yíntōng Travel Service,** on the fifth floor of the Milky Way Hotel (✆ **0432/481-1780,** ext. 285), open 8:30am to 5pm, offers a similar package for ¥580 ($73). Both tours are reasonably priced but don't leave much time to enjoy anything but the lake.

SEEING THE LAKE

SUVs (30min.; ¥80/$10 per person) travel from the *dàochē Zhàn* to a weather station that overlooks Tiān Chí. More enjoyable is the 2-hour hike, which follows a smaller road up a narrow valley, crosses a bridge (¥10/ $1.25), then climbs past the 68m (223-ft.) **Chángbái Shān waterfall** to the north shore *(běi pō)* of the lake. Rock slides sometimes block the trail, in which case freelance guides (¥100/$12 per person) will show you an alternate route. Go early in the morning to avoid the crowds. Once you arrive, search out Mr. Sòng, an ex-reporter and photographer who lives by the lake and likes to tell tales of the mythical **Tiān Chí monster** ***(guàiwu)*** over harsh glasses of Chinese moonshine.

OTHER SIGHTS

Chángbái Shān is home to a number of volcanic **hot springs,** the largest of which seeps steaming out of the rock south of the waterfall. Water from the springs commonly reaches 180°F (80°C); vendors sell eggs boiled in the springs (¥10/$1 for 6). The **Wēnquán Yù,** in a small white building that's a 10-minute walk below the waterfall (on the left side as you descend), charges ¥60 ($8) for a pleasant soak in its hot-spring baths. Also on the mountain, 4km (2½ miles) below the *dàochē Zhàn,* is the truly magical **Dìxià Sēnlín (Underground Forest)** ★, a lush forest that becomes progressively more alien as it descends, with the Èrdào Bāi Hé 60m (200 ft.) below the mountain stratum (bring bug spray). In Bāi Hé itself, between the railway station and the rest of town, is the tranquil **Měirén Sōng Sēnlín** (**Sylvan Pine Forest;** 6am–6pm; ¥8/$1). Sylvan pines *(měirén sōng)* are a rare species that grow only on the northern slope of Chángbái Shān between 650m and 1,600m (2,100 ft.–5,200 ft.).

WHERE TO STAY & DINE

Rooms in most hotels are outfitted with **kàng**—heated brick platform beds, favored by Koreans and Manchus, either raised or sunk into the floor and covered with quilts. A group of families have set up small guesthouses next to the railway station in Bāi Hé, where it is possible to sleep on a *kàng* and enjoy home cooking for as little as ¥15 ($2).

If you prefer a mattress, Bāi Hé's largest and nicest hotel is the **Xīndà Bīnguǎn** (✆ **0433/572-0111;** fax 0433/572-0555; 134 units), on the east side of Báishān Dàjiē just south of the Měirén Sōng Sēnlín. Simple but spacious and clean rooms with slightly dirty bathrooms cost ¥360 ($40). The brand-new **Fúbái Bīnguǎn** (✆ **0433/571-7565;** fax 0433/571-8372; 32 units), inside the Bāi Hé Forestry Bureau complex south of the railway station, has clean guest rooms with small but tidy bathrooms for ¥260 ($33), as well as beds for ¥50 ($6).

If you plan to spend more than a day at Chángbái Shān, it makes sense to pay the extra money and stay on the mountain. The **Athlete's Village,** at the *dàochē Zhàn* (**Yùndòngyúan Cūn;** ✆ **0433/574-6066;** fax 0433/574-6055; 59 units), offers basic but comfortable rooms with TVs and small, clean bathrooms in a ski-lodge setting for ¥560 ($70). A 15-minute walk up the road, in a large, traditional Korean-style building, is the **Chángbái Shān International Hotel** (**Chángbái Shān Guójì Bīnguǎn;** ✆ **0433/574-6001;** fax 0433/574-6002; 42 units). It offers relatively luxurious standard rooms with plush beds and clean marble bathrooms for ¥700/$88 (AE, DC, MC, V credit cards are accepted). Next door, the impeccable **Chángbái Shān Daewoo (Chángbái Shān Dàyǔ Fàndiàn)** ✆ **0433/574-6011;** fax 0433/574-6012; 59 units) offers a choice of bed or water-heated *kàng* for ¥960/$120 (AE, DC, MC, V accepted).

All of the hotels mentioned above serve overpriced but adequate food. Restaurants in town are mostly dives, but they are significantly cheaper and serve comparable fare. The best meal, also the most expensive, can be found at the Chángbái Shān Daewoo.

THE WESTERN APPROACH

Still in the process of being developed, this route lacks the grandeur of the northern approach but compensates with a more subtle beauty. The starting point is the dusty village of **Sōngjiāng Hé,** 40km (25 miles) west of Chángbái Shān, connected by a newly paved road to a saddle of rock overlooking Tiān Chí on the border with North Korea. The chief attraction here is the plant life, which changes gradually from ghostly forests of birch at the lower elevations to vivid fields of wildflowers and grassy tundra just below the lake. The flowers are at their most vibrant in early June.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The best way to get to Sōngjiāng Hé is by **bus** from Chángchūn (5:30am; 9 hr.; ¥42/$5) or Jílín (6am; 10 hr.; ¥41/$5); or by **train** from Tōnghuà (8:10am; 4 hr.; ¥29/$4). The long-distance bus station, in a blue speckled building with a red-tile roof, is a 20-minute walk south of the railway station on Zhànqián Jiē, the city's main thoroughfare.

TOURS The **Sōngjiāng Hé Forestry Company,** with a travel office inside the Sōngjīang Hé Bīnguǎn (see "Where to Stay," below), is the only organization officially allowed to run tours of Chángbái Shān's west slope. The cost of ¥500 ($63) includes admission and lunch, but no English is spoken. It's much

Tips From West to North

Development of the western approach has made it possible to hike around Tiān Chí and see both sides of the lake in 2 days, provided you have a tent, warm clothes, and plenty of food and water. The **hike from the west shore** ★★ along the ridge past Báiyún Fēng to the waterfall on the north shore takes roughly 6 hours. Once you reach the waterfall, you can hike down to the hot spring, camp, and catch a ride to Bái Hé the next morning. Buses back to Sōngjiāng Hé (3 hr.; ¥13/$2) leave from the long-distance bus station on Bāishān Dàjiē at 2pm.

Warning: The path is rocky and the weather unpredictable—for experienced hikers only.

cheaper, if you can speak Mandarin, to hire a **private car;** drivers will approach you at the railway station. A reasonable price range is ¥150 to ¥250 ($19–$31).

EXPLORING THE MOUNTAIN

The **Xī Pō Shān Mén (West Slope Mountain Gate),** located 44km (27 miles) west of Tiān Chí, is open from 6:30am to 4:30pm; admission is ¥65 ($8). The drive from the gate runs past birch forests and fields of wildflowers, ending at a steep set of stairs that leads to Tiān Chí and the **No. 5 border stone,** which marks the beginning of North Korea. Birds and Chinese tourists cross the border at will, but soldiers stationed by the stone keep foreigners from doing the same. There is a 3-hour round-trip hike from here to **Báiyún Fēng,** the highest point (2,691m/8,826 ft.); it's the second peak to the left as you face the lake.

None of the other sights in the area are particularly impressive or worth the extra money your driver will demand.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE

The only proper hotel in Sōngjiāng Hé is the dark **Sōngjiāng Hé Bīnguǎn** (✆ **0439/632-0669;** fax 0439/631-8820; 88 units) on Gōngyì Dàjiē, across from the Sēnlín Huódòng Zhōngxīn. Partially refurbished rooms with acceptable bathrooms cost ¥240 ($30), but this can be bargained below ¥200 ($25) even in the high season. Clean dorm beds are available at the brand-new **Hǎiyuè Jiǔdiàn** (✆ **0439/632-4840;** 8 units), on the west side of Zhànqián Jiē north of a small Industrial and Commercial Bank of China branch.

It is also possible to stay on the mountain at the **Chángbái Shān Lǚyóu Shānzhuāng** (✆ **0439/661-2089;** fax 0439/631-2077; 16 units), south of the West Slope Gate. Dorm beds with in-room bathroom cost ¥80 ($10); or stay in one of the *kàng* cabins for ¥400 ($50).

All three hotels serve mediocre food. Independent restaurants aren't much better.

7 Harbin

Hēilóngjiāng Province, 1,421km (881 miles) NE of Běijīng, 553km (342 miles) NE of Shěnyáng

Harbin (Hā'ěrbīn), originally a Russian-built railway outpost carved out of the wilderness on the banks of the Sōnghuā Jiāng (Sungari River), is the northernmost major city in China and capital of Hēilóngjiāng Province. Named for the Black Dragon River that separates Dōngběi from Siberia, Hēilóngjiāng represents China's northern limits. It is the country's coldest province, with winter

temperatures that frequently plummet below –40°F (–40°C). Like many border regions, it is an amalgamation of clashing extremes, home to one of China's roughest mountain ranges (the Greater Hinggan or Dà Xīng'ān Lǐng), some of its most fertile soil, its largest oil and coal fields, its most pristine wilderness, and most of its few remaining nomad groups.

Harbin itself suffers from a similar internal antagonism, one that ultimately makes it the most compelling destination in Dōngběi. The city was founded in 1897 as a camp for Russian engineers surveying construction of the eastern leg of the Trans-Siberian railroad (called the China Eastern Railroad, or CER). Demand for labor and the city's laissez-faire atmosphere quickly attracted a diverse population of outcasts from Latvia, the Ukraine, and Poland, as well as Manchuria. It was, at its height, one of the most bizarrely cosmopolitan cities in Asia—cold, dirty, rife with speculation and venereal disease, architecturally vibrant, and a model for ethnic and religious tolerance. The town fell under Japanese control during World War II and was finally recaptured in 1946.

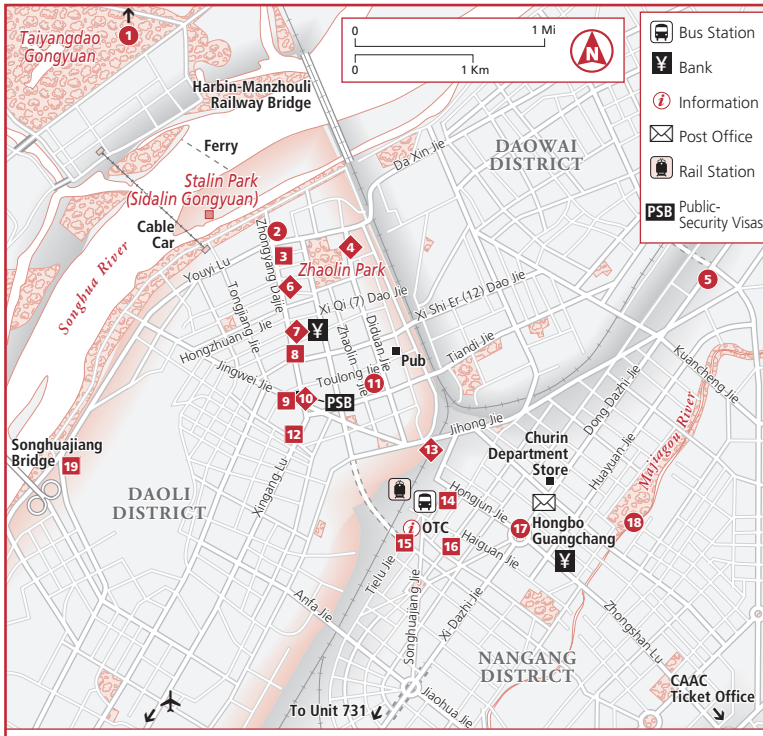
Most original foreign residents fled at the end of World War II. The city has begun to recover some of its former face, however, as trainloads of Russian merchants and prostitutes flood back to take advantage of China's new economic momentum. Harbin attracts visitors year-round, especially in winter, when it hosts the famous **Ice and Snow Festival (Bīngxuě Jié)** ★. But most foreigners prefer to come in summer, when mild temperatures allow for leisurely strolls past the truly stunning clusters of Russian buildings, with their lonely cupolas and embellished pediments, that still brighten older parts of town.

The Ice and Snow Festival has successfully turned the city's worst feature—villainous winter cold—into its greatest asset. The festival now covers most of the city and features some truly outstanding ice and snow sculptures. Past highlights have included translucent reproductions of the Great Wall and Běijīng's Gate of Heavenly Peace (Tiān'ān Mén), life-size pagodas, structurally sound multilevel houses, and a massive statue of Elvis—all equipped with internal lights.

It's easy to underestimate the cold (temperatures often drop below –22°F/–30°C), so bring more warm clothing than you think you'll need. Admission can be expensive, but there are increasing numbers of free displays on Zhōngyāng Dàjiē and other major streets. Major venues include **Zhàolín Gōnyuán** on Shàngzhí Jiē for ice sculpture (¥20/$3); **Tàiyáng Dǎo Gōngyuán (Sun Island Park),** across the river for snow sculptures (¥40/$5); and the **Ice and Snow Palace (Bīngxuě Gōng),** a building constructed entirely of ice and snow on the banks of the Sōnghuā Jiāng (¥100/$12).

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **Flights** connect Harbin with Běijīng, Shànghǎi, Dàlián, and Guǎngzhōu; international routes include Hong Kong (1 per week), Seoul (daily), and Niigata (Mon, Wed, Fri, Sun). The **Tàipíng International Airport (Tàipíng Guójì Jīchǎng)** is 30km (19 miles) south of central Harbin. An ICBC booth next to the international departures area on the second floor exchanges traveler's checks and cash. The **CAAC ticket office** (**Mínháng Shòupiào Chù; ✆ 0451/265-1188;** fax 0451/231-9343; domestic 6am–9pm, int'l 8am–4pm) is in a large white tiled building with a red roof, 4km (2½ miles) south of the railway station at Zhōngshān Lù 99. An **airport shuttle** (50min.; ¥20/$2.50) leaves the CAAC office every 30 minutes from 6am to 6pm. **Taxis** to the airport from downtown (¥60/$7.50) take between 40 minutes and an hour, depending on traffic. Leave early either way.



ACCOMMODATIONS ■

Hēilóngjiāng Kūnlún Hotel (Hēilóngjiāng Kūnlún Dàjiǔdiàn) **15**
黑龙江昆仑大酒店

Holiday Inn City Center (Hā'ěrbīn Wàndá Jiàrì Fàndiàn) **12**
哈尔滨万达假日饭店

Lóngmén Guìbīn Lóu **14**
龙门贵宾楼

Lóngyún Bīnguǎn **16**
龙云宾馆

Modern Hotel (Mǎdì'ěr Bīnguǎn) **8**
马递尔宾馆

Shangri-La Hotel Harbin (Hā'ěrbīn Xiānggélǐlā Dàfàndiàn) **19**
哈尔滨香格里拉大饭 店

Sōnghuājiāng Gloria Inn (Sōnghuājiāng Kǎilái Shāwù Jiǔdiàn) **3**
松花江凯莱商务酒店

Zhōngdà Dàjiǔdiàn **9**
中大大酒店

DINING ◆

Běiláishùn **4**
北来顺

Dà Fēngshōu **13**
大丰收

Dōngfāng Jiǎozi Wáng **10**
东方饺子王

Portman (Bōtèmàn Xīcāntīng) **7**
波特曼西餐厅

Russia (Lùxīyà Xīcāntīng) **6**
露西亚西餐厅

ATTRACTIONS ●

Church of St. Sofia (Shèng Suǒfēiyà Jiàotáng) **11**
圣索非亚教堂

Dōngběi Hǔ Línyuán (Siberian Tiger Park) **1**
东北虎林园

Értóng Gōngyuán (Children's Park) **18**
儿童公园

Fánghóng Shènglì Jìniànguǎn (Flood Control Monument) **2**
防洪胜利纪念馆

Gémìng Lǐngxiù Shìchá Jìniànguǎn **17**
革命领袖视察纪念馆

Jílè Sì (Temple of Bliss) **5**
极乐寺

Harbin's **main railway station (Hā'ěrbīn Zhàn)** is on Tiělù Jiē, between Nángǎng and Dàolǐ districts. Trains depart from here for Běijīng (8 daily; 14–18 hr.; ¥281/$35), Dàlián (8:47pm; 9½ hr.; ¥224/$28), Shěnyáng (2pm; 6½ hr.; ¥139/$17), Qiqihar (4 daily; 4 hr.; ¥37/$5), and Mǎnzhōulǐ (6:48pm; 15 hr.; ¥188/$24). The ticket sales office is on the right side of the station (✆ **0451/690-2828**); tickets can be bought 5 days in advance. For tickets to Khabarovsk and Vladivostok, visit the **Harbin Railway International Travel Service** (**Hā'ěrbīn Tiědào Guójì Lǚxíngshè;** ✆ **0451/363-0780;** open Mon–Fri 8am–5pm;) on the seventh floor of the Kūnlún Hotel, west of the main station. **CITS** (Xīdàzhí Jiē 13, west of Hóngbō Guǎngchǎng; ✆ **0451/366-1165;** 8:30am–5:30pm) and the **Hēilóngjiāng Overseas Tourist Company** (**Hēilóngjiāng Hǎiwài Lǚyóu Gōngsī;** 11th floor of Hùshi Dàshà, on west side of railway station; ✆ **0451/366-1159;** fax 0451/362-1088) sell tickets for the **Trans-Siberian Railroad** (2 weeks to process).

The central **long-distance bus station (Chángtú Kèyùn Zhàn)** is across from the railway station, in a renovated building next to the Běi Běi Hotel. Luxury air-conditioned buses go to Qiqihar (3½ hr; ¥61/$8), Wǔ Dà Liánchí (1:30pm; 5½ hr.; ¥69/$9), and Běijīng (5:30pm; 13 hr.; ¥249/$31). Regular buses go to Yánjí (3:30pm; 9 hr.; ¥112/$14) and Dàlián (4:40pm; 13 hr.; ¥178/$22). The ticket sales office is open from 5:30am to 6pm (luxury tickets at windows 7–11).

GETTING AROUND Nearly everything of interest falls into one of two old districts—Dàolǐ and Nángǎng—divided by the train tracks that run past the main station. The Sōnghuā Jiāng (Sungari River) forms the city's northern border and divides it from Tàiyáng Dǎo, a new island development area that seeks to imitate Pǔdōng in Shànghǎi.

Taxis fall into two categories: Increasingly rare Xiàlìs (¥7/90¢ for the 1st 3km/1¾ miles, then ¥1.6/20¢ per kilometer); and more expensive Jettas (¥8/$1 for 1st 3km/1¾ miles, then ¥1.9/25¢ per kilometer). A number of useful **buses** (¥1–¥2/15¢–30¢) stop at the railway station; **bus no. 13** goes from the station through the heart of Dàolǐ.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The main **Bank of China** branch, (open Mon–Fri 8:30am–4:30pm) is at Hóngjūn Jiē 20, 1 block north of Hóngbō Guǎngchǎng. Credit cards (including Amex) and traveler's checks are handled at window 2 on the second floor (*not* available 11:30am–1pm). A second branch at Xī Shí (10) Dào Jiē 29 (east of Zhōngyāng Dàjiē) exchanges traveler's checks and cash (weekdays, 8:30am–4:30pm). There are no international ATMs.

Internet Access Go online at the 24-hour **Yìdù Kōngjiān Wǎngbā** (¥3/40¢ per hr.)on the north side of Hóngzhuàn Jiē, a block west of Zhōngyāng Dàjiē. The dial-up number is **163.**

Post Office The main post office **(Nángǎng Yóuzhèngjú;** open May–Oct 8am–7pm, Nov–Apr 8am–6:30pm) is on the corner of Dōng Dàzhí Jiē and Fèndòu Lù, several blocks east of Hóngbō Guǎngchǎng. Phone cards are sold inside.

Visa Extensions Visa extensions are available inside the **PSB Exit/Entry Administration Office** (✆ **0451/466-1613;** Mon–Fri 8–11:40am and 1:30–4:40pm) at Duàn Jiē 26, near the bottom of Zhōngyāng Dàjiē. Passport and hotel registration are required.

EXPLORING HARBIN

ZHŌNGYĀNG DÀJIĒ ★★★

A cobbled, tree-lined street located in the heart of Dàolǐ District, Zhōngyāng Dàjiē was once the buzzing heart of social and commercial life in Harbin, home to the city's most exclusive hotels and shops. "From 3am until nightfall, it was alive with throngs of people," a Japanese visitor wrote of the avenue, originally known as Kitaiskia (Chinese) Street, in 1926. "The Russian women with their gaudy early summer hats and clothing together with their white shoes formed a spectacle to be seen nowhere else in the Far East save Shànghǎi." The scene today is much the same. Particularly vibrant is the **pedestrian-only section** at the southern end, where Chinese women in absurd fur coats window-shop a new generation of boutiques set up in the old Russian buildings, beautifully restored with explanatory plaques in English. The introduction of a few fast-food restaurants and wedding studios only highlights the old-world charm.

At the top of the street, constructed along a large embankment erected after the Sōnghuā River flooded and buried Harbin under several feet of water in 1932, is **Sīdàlín Gōngyuán (Stalin Park),** a recently repaved stretch of trees and benches where locals gather to exercise and gossip. In the center of the park is the **Fánghóng Shènglì Jìniàntǎ (Flood Control Monument).** The monument commemorates the city's struggle against the floods of 1957, when the river rose 4 feet above street level but was kept from spilling into town by an army of soldiers and volunteers. Water levels from other big floods are marked at the base of the monument.

Church of St. Sophia (Shèng Suǒfēiyà Jiàotáng) ★★ The brick spires and green dome of the Church of St. Sophia rising out of the chaos east of Zhōngyāng Dàjiē are the divine reminders of a more inspired age in architecture. Erected in 1907 and rebuilt several times, the church took its current form in 1932. The handiwork is still visible on the vaulted ceilings and painted chambers, despite near-destruction by the Red Guards in the 1960s and a restoration in 1996. The church is now home to the **Harbin Architecture Arts Center.** An exhibition inside contains photos of other churches, old newspaper clippings, and an interesting scale model of Nángǎng District in the 1920s. The rear cloister, used for storage prior to 2002, now contains a small but interesting collec-

Fun Fact **Zion That Wasn't**

Unlikely as it sounds, Jews fled to Harbin in such numbers in the early 1900s (the population reached 25,000 at its height) that Manchuria ranked just below Morocco and Palestine on early-20th-century lists of potential sites for a Jewish homeland. Fleeing official discrimination and a revival of pogroms in czarist Russia, they were instrumental in Harbin's development but fled en masse for the real Zion shortly after World War II. The only obvious Jewish structures still remaining in the city are the **Modern Hotel** (see "Where to Stay," below); and a **music and Torah school** at Tōngjiāng Jiē 86 (a block west of Zhōngyāng Dàjiē), a ragged structure built in 1919 with Star of David window frames that now houses the No. 2 Korean Middle School (Cháoxiǎn Èr Zhōng). The city government has toyed with plans to turn an unrecognizable synagogue at the intersection of Jīngwěi Lù and Jīngwěi Wǔ Dàojiē into a Jewish History and Culture Museum.

tion of religious objects. The church's incongruous beauty is enhanced by dozens of white pigeons (kept in place with the promise of free food from feeders in the surrounding square). Pocket-size guides to old Harbin, with color photos and bilingual introductions to several buildings, are sold inside.

Intersection of Tòulóng Jiē and Zhàolín Jiē. Admission ¥20 ($2.50). 8:30am–5:30pm. Bus: no. 103 from the railway station to Hāyībǎi, then walk 2 blocks east on Tòulóng Jiē.

Értóng Gōngyuán (Children's Park) *Kids* Built in 1925, this park is famous for its Children's Railroad (Értóng Tiělù), a working pint-size replica of the real thing. The train (¥5/65¢), complete with small hard-seat benches, travels a 2km (1¼-mile) circle from "Běijīng Station" (Běijīng Zhàn) behind the main entrance to "Harbin Station" (Hā'ěrbīn Zhàn) at the opposite end of the park and back again.

Fèndòu Lù 295. Admission ¥2 (25¢) adults, ¥1 (15¢) children. May–Sept 4:30am–10pm; Oct–Apr 6:30am–6pm. Bus: no. 8 from top of Zhōngyāng Dàjiē. Or walk 4 blocks southeast from the main post office.

Gémìng Lǐngxiù Shìchá Jìniànguǎn This elegant mansion, built in 1919 by a Polish merchant and opened as a museum in 2002 after a 3-year restoration effort, was where China's top Communist leaders stayed during official inspections of Hēilóngjiāng. Sumptuously designed rooms on the first floor contain several mementoes, including a bathrobe once used by Zhōu Ēnlái. An impressive spiral staircase leads up to the room where Máo slept, still with the original bed.

Yíyuán Jiē (off Hóngjūn Jiē). Admission ¥6 (75¢). 9am–4pm. Located behind Sinoway Hotel; it's the 2nd old mansion on the left.

Jílè Sì (Temple of Bliss) Jílè Sì is the largest active Buddhist temple in Hēilóngjiāng Province, a beautiful complex welcoming tourists but not made for them. Most impressive are the halls on either side of the main pavilion in the northeastern half, each filled with 500 individually carved arhats *(luóhàn),* or Buddhist saints. The hall on the right is devoted to Manchu namesake Wénshū Púsà (Sanskrit: *Manjusri*), the tiger-riding Boddhisattva of Wisdom (see "Minorities & the Manchu Myth," p. 151).

Dōng Dàzhí Jiē 9. Admission ¥10 ($1.25). May–Sept 8am–4:30pm; Oct–Apr 8am–4pm. Bus: no. 104/14 from Hóngbō Guǎngchǎng to Yóulèyuán; walk northeast on Xuānpǔ Jiē, then take a left on Dōng Dàzhí Jiē.

Unit 731 Museum (Qīnhuá Rìjūn Dìqīsānyāo Bùduì Jiùzhǐ) ★★ Between 1939 and 1945, members of Japan's Unit 731 killed roughly 3,000 Chinese, Russian, British, and American prisoners of war in a series of nauseating experiments designed to perfect their biological weapons program. Japanese soldiers destroyed most of the 6-sq.-km (2-sq.-mile) facility at the end of the war, and the unit's existence was kept covered up for decades with the help of the United States government, rumored to have purchased the research with a promise of immunity for participating doctors. A wave of publicity in the 1990s finally prompted Harbin to renovate the facility and add English signs in 2001.

An exhibition in the main office building contains a series of grim but nicely presented displays on the experiments, in which victims (called *maruta,* Japanese for "log") were frozen, burned, injected with hemorrhagic fever virus, exposed to plague and cholera, and sometimes dissected alive. Most chilling is the medical instruments display (room 9), with its test tubes, needles, saws, and coat rack vivisection hooks (used to "hang human viscera"). The smokestacks of a large incinerator, where dead *maruta* were burned, still stand on the edge of a weed-strewn field in back.

Xīnjiāng Dàjiē 21 (west of the train tracks), Píngfáng Qū. Admission ¥15 ($2). 8:30am–4:30pm. Bus: no. 343 from Kūnlún Hotel (¥2.50/35¢, 45 min., 20km/12 miles) to museum office; continue in same direction past train tracks. Purchase tickets inside main building.

Dōngběi Hǔ Línyuán (Siberian Tiger Park) *Overrated* Like the fictional Jurassic Park after which it appears to have been patterned—think SUVs, electric fences, and sacrificial livestock—this place reeks of human folly. The park, set up in 1986, has increased its tiger population from the original eight to nearly 300, but the facility is more tourist attraction than breeding center. The tigers, most of them fat and lackluster, prowl around a fenced 400,000-sq.-m (1,435,187-sq. yd.) area as visitors in flimsily reinforced Land Cruisers goad them with live chickens. The park will supposedly be renamed the Breeding Base for Siberian Tigers and undergo a much-needed expansion in 2004. But outside experts say the park is flawed and even recommend euthanasia for most of the cats (expected to number 500 by 2005).

5km (3 miles) northeast of Tàiyáng Dǎo Gōngyuán. Admission ¥50 ($6) includes tour; ¥40 ($5) chicken feeding, ¥1,500 ($188) cow feeding. May–Sept 8am–6pm; Oct–Apr 8:30am–4pm. Last tour 30 min. before closing. Bus: no. 85 from south end of Gōnglù Dàqiáo (40 min.; ¥2/25¢). Cable car: from Sīdàlín Gōngyuán to Tàiyáng Dǎo Gōngyuán (¥20/$3), then minibus to park entrance (20 min.; ¥30/$4).

WHERE TO STAY

Rooms are nearly impossible to find from December to early March, when thousands flood the city for the Ice and Snow Festival, but some hotels still offer minor discounts. Discounts at other times range from 30% to 50%.

EXPENSIVE

Hēilóngjiāng Kūnlún Hotel (Hēilóngjiāng Kūnlún Dàjiǔdiàn) ★ *Value* Buried inconspicuously behind the Hùshi Building west of the railway station, the four-star Kūnlún offers luxury and convenience at a very good discount. Service is lackluster, but guest rooms are decently sized and comfortable, with sparkling bathrooms. The noise and chaos that drift over from the railway station are the hotel's only major drawback.

Tiělù Jiē 8, Nángāng District. ✆ **0451/360-6688.** Fax 0451/360-0888. 198 units. ¥640 ($80) standard room. 15% service charge. Discounts of 50% in summer. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 5 restaurants; bar; indoor pool; exercise room; Jacuzzi; sauna; bowling center; business center; forex; salon; limited room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV w/pay movies, minibar, fridge.

Holiday Inn City Center (Hā'ěrbīn Wàndá Jiàrì Fàndiàn) ★ The Holiday Inn, Harbin's finest hotel 5 years ago, now feels more like a mid-range Chinese hotel than a respectable joint venture. But its convenient location at the bottom of Zhōngyāng Dàjiē, solid service, and one of the best Western restaurants in Harbin still make it an attractive option. Rooms are large, clean, and comfortable, but also worn and outdated, with ancient bedside consoles and somewhat dull furniture.

Jīngwěi Jiē 90, Dàolǐ District. ✆ **0451/422-6666.** Fax 0452/422-1663. holiday@public.hr.hl.cn. 148 units. ¥880 ($110) standard room. 15% service charge. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; basic health club; sauna; business center; forex; salon, room service; dry cleaning/laundry; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Shangri-La Hotel Harbin (Hā'ěrbīn Xiānggélǐlā Dàfàndiàn) ★ The Shangri-La is the finest hotel in central Harbin, and the only five-star in Dàolǐ District, but its relatively small rooms, sub-par food, and slightly inattentive service are a disappointment. Rooms are comfortable and tasteful enough,

despite their size. The hotel is a bit far from Harbin's fabled architecture, but its location on the river (across from the Ice and Snow Palace) becomes ideal in winter.

Yǒuyì Lù 555 (east of Sōnghuājiāng Gōnglù Bridge), Dàolǐ District. ✆ **0451/485-8888.** Fax 0451/462-1777. www.shangri-la.com. 346 units. ¥1,085 ($136) standard room. 15% service charge. Rate includes breakfast for 1. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; small indoor pool; outdoor tennis courts; health club and spa; concierge; business center; forex; salon; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; nonsmoking rooms; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, fridge, hair dryer.

MODERATE

Lóngmén Guibīn Lóu ★★★ *Finds* Built in 1907, this inexplicably ignored yellow and white Russian building behind the nondescript Lóngmén Hotel is the most beautifully restored of the old Yamato Hotels. Rooms are spacious and nicely appointed with period furniture. History buffs with money to spare can stay in the suite, outfitted with a beautiful bed from the 1930s, where Zhāng Xuéliáng (see "Shěnyáng," p. 146) held court when in Harbin. Dining rooms on the first floor still display the original Russian woodwork and contain several turn-of-the-century relics, including an old wooden icebox and a still-functioning phonograph.

Hóngjūn Jiē 85 (at Jiànzhù Jiē, opposite the railway station), Nángǎng District. ✆ **0451/642-6810.** Fax 0451/363-9700. www.lmhotel.com. 39 units. ¥680 ($85) standard room; ¥1,360 ($170) suite. AE, MC, V. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; bar; new spa; billiards room; business center; forex; salon; limited room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, fridge.

Modern Hotel (Mǎdiē'ěr Bīnguǎn) ★★ The most glamorous hotel in Harbin during the city's heyday, the Modern fell on hard times in the early Communist era but has recovered some of its brilliance with a full restoration in 2002. The three-story Art Nouveau hotel (now painted light pink) was built on Zhōnyáng Dàjiē in 1913 by Jewish merchant Joseph Caspe. Standard rooms are slightly dark but otherwise nice, with soft beds, plush carpets, and all new furniture. Bathrooms are small but very clean. The hotel once played host to American journalist and Communist sympathizer Edgar Snow and the beloved Soong Qing-ling (Sòng Qìnglíng), wife of Sun Yat-sen (Sūn Zhōngshān).

Zhōngyāng Dàjiē 89 (at Xībā Dàojiē, entrance in back), Dàolǐ District. ✆ **0451/461-5846.** Fax 0451/461-4997. www.modern.com.cn. 131 units. ¥580 ($73) standard room. Breakfast included. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; indoor pool and health club (in neighboring building); business center; forex; laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, fridge.

Sōnghuā Jiāng Gloria Inn (Sōnghuā Jiāng Kǎilái Shāngwù Jiǔdiàn) The Sōnghuā Jiāng Gloria prospers almost entirely from its location just south of the Flood Control Monument. The hotel, inside a large European-style building, underwent partial renovation in 2001. Rooms are midsize with the green carpets and multilevel ceilings typical of Gloria hotels—worn but still livable. Bathrooms are small and tidy.

Zhōngyāng Dàjiē 257, Dàolǐ District. ✆ **0451/463-8855.** Fax 0451/463-8533. www.giharbin.com. 304 units. ¥588 ($74) standard room. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; business center. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, fridge.

INEXPENSIVE

Lóngyún Bīnguǎn ★ *Value* Previously indistinguishable from the other cheap flophouses that surround the railway station, the Lóngyún underwent a top-to-bottom refurbishment at the end of 2002 and is now the nicest budget option in Nángǎng. Everything in the well-lit rooms is brand new, including the plush carpets. The hotel is right next to the bus station and therefore sometimes noisy.

Chūnshēn Jiē 28 (at Hǎiguān Jiē), Nángǎng District. ✆ **0451/363-4528.** Fax 0451/363-4937. 120 units. ¥220 ($28) standard room; ¥110 ($14) dorm with shared bathroom, no A/C. **Amenities:** Restaurant; business center. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge.

Zhōngdà Dàjiǔdiàn A very basic hotel at the foot of Zhōngyāng Dàjiē, the Zhōngdà is the only affordable option north of the train tracks that doesn't feel torn out of Kafka. Units are shabby but livable, with shockingly clean bathrooms. The staff is pleasant, if slightly inattentive. Look for heavy discounts, even in winter.

Zhōngyāng Dàjiē 40, Dàolǐ District. ✆ **0451/469-9969.** Fax 0451/465-2888. 70 units. ¥240–¥288 ($30–$36) standard room. *In room:* A/C, TV.

WHERE TO DINE

Restaurants in Harbin are traditionally classified according to a **lantern system:** blue lanterns mean Muslim food, red lanterns mean Chinese, and white mean Korean, with the number of lanterns corresponding roughly to price level. This system has begun to fray, but the color-coding is still in effect.

The basement of the Zhōngyāng Shāngchéng, at Zhōngyāng Dàjiē 100, has a **food court** with point-to-choose Chinese food and a well-stocked **supermarket.** Zhōngyāng Dàjiē is also home to two **McDonald's** and two **KFC** branches. For quick and convenient local food from 9am to 9pm, try the *shāguō shīzitóu* (smoky tofu, carrots, and a large meatball in savory broth) and pancakes *(bǐng)* at **Lǎo Shàng hǎo** (✆ **0451/262-6335**), above a bakery at the corner of Zhōngyāng Dàjiē and Dà'ān Jiē.

Běiláishùn MUSLIM This long-lived Muslim restaurant, named after the legendary Dōngláishùn in Běijīng, is often packed in winter, when believers and atheists alike quiet their shivers over the steam from brass hot pots *(huǒguō).* Thin-sliced mutton is the main hot pot ingredient, but it's big on the menu, too: Try the *pá yángròu tiáo*—tender, bacon-like strips of lamb braised in a simple soy-and-garlic sauce.

Yǒuyì Lù 51 (next to Children's Hospital). ✆ **0451/461-5531.** Meal for 2 ¥40–¥100 ($5–$12). No credit cards. 11am–9pm.

Dà Fēngshōu ★★ *Finds* DŌNGBĚI Everything about this immensely popular place is authentic Dōngběi: Diners sit on benches and drink beer out of bowls, waitresses unceremoniously dump handfuls of sunflower seeds on the table as appetizers, and the dishes are immense. Avoid the pig-face set dinner and go instead for *jiācháng tǔdòuní,* a Chinese take on garlic mashed potatoes. The entrance is marked by a huge neon sign and a long, lantern-lit pathway.

Yīmiǎn Jiē 283 (north of traffic circle next to railway bridge). ✆ **0451/364-6824.** Meal for 2 ¥30–¥60 ($4–$8). 9am–9pm.

Dōngfāng Jiǎozi Wáng ★★ JIǍOZI So popular it inspired a region-wide chain, this original branch is classier than other members of the "Eastern Dumpling King" family and serves some of the best *jiǎozi* in China. Order a plate of *sānxiān* (shrimp, pork, and Chinese chive) or *sōngrén yùmǐ* (corn and pine nut) *shuǐjiǎo,* then wander over to the glass-enclosed kitchen to marvel as the restaurant's army of chefs wrap and boil the dumplings with inconceivable speed.

Zhōngyāng Dàjiē 39. ✆ **0451/465-3920.** Meal for 2 ¥10–¥20 ($1–$3). 10:30am–9:30pm.

Portman (Bōtèmàn Xīcāntīng) WESTERN A lively cross between pub and bistro located just north of the Modern Hotel, Portman serves the most authentic

Western food in Harbin. The Moscow potato salad (egg, mustard, and diced ham) and the restaurant's signature crisp pork ribs, deep fried and served with a small dish of spices for dipping, are both delicious. A wide range of chicken, fish, and pasta dishes is also available. Decent live-music performances run every night at 9pm.

Xīqī Dàojiē 63, just off Zhōngyāng Dàjiē. ✆ **0451/468-6888.** English menu. Main courses ¥20–¥50 ($3–$6). 11am–2am.

Russia (Lòuxīyà Xīcāntīng) ★ RUSSIAN/COFFEE This small cafe decorated with heirlooms left behind by a Russian family is a rare reminder of China's treaty port days, when expatriates would suffer the chaos of pre-war China by day and retreat at night to the softly lit, lace-covered comfort of their homes to drink coffee and write fantastic letters to the people they'd left behind. The cafe, nestled inside the cracked-wall room of an old Russian building near the top of Zhōngyáng Dàjiē, serves a small but satisfying selection of Western dishes. Try the hearty red vegetable soup, or the "pot beef," a steaming stew of beef, carrot, and tomato. Or just spend the day here with a few cups of coffee and a book.

Xītóu Dàojīe 57. ✆ **0451/456-3207.** English menu. Main courses ¥20–¥60 ($3–$8). 9am–midnight.

SHOPPING

The **Churin Department Store (Qiúlín Bǎihuò),** located in an immense green baroque-style building on the north side of Dōng Dàzhí Jiē (opposite the main post office), was once one of the largest department stores in East Asia. The first floor is where you'll find Harbin's best *dàlièbā*—heavy circular loaves of crusty bread—and Russian-style red sausage *(hóngcháng),* which you can take for a picnic in the nearby Children's Park. A few blocks west, at the intersection of Dōng Dàzhí Jiē and Hóngjūn Jiē, is the **Hóngbō Shìchǎng,** one of the largest underground markets in the Northeast. The market is set up inside an old air-raid shelter, located underneath the former site of the St. Nicholas Church (destroyed by Red Guards in the 1960s), and offers everything from fur hats to black market video games.

HARBIN AFTER DARK

The Popov distillery left town long ago, but foreign residents still imbibe plenty of vodka at **Blue Kiss** (**Bùlǔsī Jiǔbā; ✆ 0451/468-4277**). The drinks-and-dance venue at Dìduàn Jiē 100, near Tòulóng Jiē, is open from 1pm to very late; go late on a weekend night for the must-see variety show, a mix of high-kick quasi–strip tease numbers that leaves even regular visitors shaking their heads in slack-jawed wonder. A less raunchy choice, **Portman** (see "Where to Dine," above), is open late and serves passable pitchers of dark draft beer.

8 Wǔ Dà Liánchí

Heīilóngjiāng Province, 340km (210 miles) NW of Harbin

Wǔ Dà Liánchí (Five Linked Lakes) is an utterly strange health retreat wedged between the Greater and Lesser Hinggan (Xīng'ān) mountains, several hundred miles north of Harbin. The area is named for a series of connected lakes, formed 260 years ago by lava flows from the two youngest of 14 local volcanoes. Wǔ Dà Liánchí is celebrated among Chinese for its pungent natural springs, water from which is rumored to cure everything from gastritis to chronic cardio-cerebral angiopathy. The springs are disgusting, but the area's physical oddity is fascinating. Avoid the summer miracle-cure crowd if at all possible.

ESSENTIALS

Air-conditioned Volvo coaches (5½ hr.; ¥70/$9) leave the **Harbin long-distance bus station** at 1:30pm and stop at the Worker's Sanatorium (see "Where to Stay," below). Return buses leave from the same spot at 6am, and at 1:30pm during the high season (June–Aug). Brochures with Chinese **maps** are sold in the Worker's Sanatorium (see below).

EXPLORING WŬ DÀ LIÁNCHÍ

Wŭ Dà Liánchí's most impressive sight is not the lakes but the lava fields, collectively dubbed **Shí Hăi (Sea of Stone),** which spread out for miles around the area's two largest volcanoes and look vaguely like charred marshmallow. At the center of this is **Lăohēi Shān** (also known as Hēilóng Shān, or Black Dragon Mountain), tallest of the Wŭ Dà Liánchí volcanoes. An hour-long circumnavigation of the crater's edge, with its twisted birch trees and lichen-covered desolation, provides panoramic views. The **Bīngdòng** (8am–4pm, ¥22/$3), 7km (4⅓ miles) east of the Worker's Sanatorium, is a system of sub-freezing caves that contains an exhibition of colorful but underwhelming ice lanterns.

Private **minivans** are the only way to see most sights in Wŭ Dà Liánchí. Drivers gather near a large bilingual **map of the area** opposite the entrance to Nán Quán (South Spring), a 30-minute walk east of the Worker's Sanatorium. Negotiations for a full tour of the area (25km/16 miles) usually start at around ¥150 ($19) per person (¥100/$12 is fair). Drivers sell **entrance tickets** for ¥42 ($5) that include access to the volcano and lava fields; avoid the ¥2 markup by buying them yourself at the volcano entrance.

WHERE TO STAY

Wŭ Dà Liánchí swims with sanatoriums and guesthouses, all offering the same basic accommodations. The most convenient and popular option is the **Wŭ Dà Liánchí Worker's Sanatorium** (**Gōngrén Liáoyǎngyuàn; ✆ 0456/722-1569;** fax 0456/722-1814; www.wdgl.com.cn; 350 units), a large complex just east of the central traffic circle. Standard rooms in the main building (¥210/$26) are dark but clean with passable bathrooms. Suites with air-conditioning and 24-hour hot water (¥450/$56) are available in a separate building. At least one building is kept open all year. Each has its own restaurant, although neither serves particularly great food.

9 Mănzhōulĭ

Inner Mongolia, 981km (608 miles) NW of Harbin

A tiny frontier town of 50,000 lost in a sea of grass in the northeast corner of Inner Mongolia, Mănzhōulĭ is the East-meets-Wild West frontier outpost David Carradine should have used as the backdrop to *Kung Fu.* Born almost overnight in the early 1900s, it was once the primary channel for trade between China and Russia. A new wave of Russian traders has revitalized the city, effecting a return to the rough-and-tumble days of its founding. It is the most convenient base for trips into the gorgeous **Hulun Buir,** home to China's most pristine grasslands.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The closest airfield for now is the **Hailar Airport (Hăilā'ĕr Fēijīchăng),** 15km (9⅓ miles) south of the Hailar railway station. (Mănzhōulĭ is supposed to have its own airport sometime in 2004.) Purchase tickets for **flights** to Bĕijīng (5 per week) and Hohhot (Tues, Fri) in Mănzhōulĭ

at the **International Hotel ticket office** (✆ **0470/622-1436;** 8:30–11:30am and 2–5pm). You can also buy flight tickets in Hailar at the **CAAC ticket counter** (**Mínháng Shòupiào Chù;** ✆ **0470/833-1010;** May–Sept 8am–6pm, Oct–Apr 8am–5pm) on Dōng Dàjiē, at the western end of Zhōngyāng Qiáo (Central Bridge). An **airport shuttle** (25min.; ¥3/40¢) leaves the Hailar CAAC office 1½ to 2 hours before each flight. A **taxi** ride takes 20 minutes and costs ¥30 ($4).

Trains connect Mǎnzhōulǐ to Běijīng (11:48am; 33 hr.; ¥380/$48), Harbin (5pm; 14 hr.; ¥188/$22), Qiqihar (9:20am; 11 hr.; ¥164/$20), and Hailar (3 daily; 3 hr.; ¥22/$3). The Trans-Siberian train comes through once a week, usually Monday morning, with stops in Irkutsk (¥584/$73) and Moscow (¥1,425/$178). The **railway station** (✆ **0470/225-2592**) is opposite downtown, south of the tracks. Purchase tickets for the **Trans-Siberian** at the business center inside the International Hotel. (***Note:*** you must have arranged a Russian tourist visa in Běijīng if you want to board the train.) The **long-distance bus station (Guójì Kèyùn Zhàn)** is north of the tracks on Yī Dàojiē, a 5-minute walk west of the railway footbridge. Iveco buses depart from here for Hailar (3hr.; ¥26/$3) every 30 minutes from 7:30am to 5pm.

GETTING AROUND Most of Mǎnzhōulǐ is located north of the train tracks (behind the railway station) and is easily navigated on foot. **Taxis** charge ¥5 (65¢) anywhere in town.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China** (open Mon–Fri 8am–noon and 2–6pm) is at Sān Dàojiē 38. Cash and traveler's checks are exchanged in the main hall on the right; credit card transactions (V, MC only) take place inside a separate entrance on the left.

Internet Access There is a row of 24-hour basement-level **Internet bars** on Xìnghuá Lù, northeast of the International Hotel. They charge ¥2 to ¥3 (25¢–40¢) per hour of access. The dial-up number is **163.**

Post Office The post office is at the corner of Sān Dàojiē and Hǎiguān Lù. It's open May through September from 8am to 5:30pm and October through April from 8am to 5pm.

IN & AROUND MǍNZHŌULǏ

A few Russian wood houses still stand in the center of Mǎnzhōulǐ, and the free flow of cash and vodka lends a certain exhilaration to the place, but most points of interest lie elsewhere. The closest attraction, only 10km (6 miles) west of town, is the old **Sino-Russian border crossing** (**Guó Mén;** 8am–5pm; ¥20/$3). Nothing much happens here anymore, as most Russians enter China through a new border crossing further north, but it is worth visiting simply to see the CCCP still printed on the gate that marks the Russian side. You'll need your passport to get in. Access is by taxi only (20min.; ¥15/$2).

Dàlài Hú ★ Also known as Hūlún Hú (*Hulun Nur* in Mongolian), the immense Dàlài Hú emerges seamlessly out of the landscape 36km (22 miles) south of Mǎnzhōulǐ, a liquid equivalent to the grasslands that surround it. The lake is China's fifth largest and a popular feeding ground for rare bird species. A small resort on the north shore offers boat, horse, and camel rides.

The only way to get to the lake from Mănzhōulĭ is by taxi (1hr.; ¥80–¥120/$10–$15 round-trip). Admission at the main gate, just north of the resort, costs ¥16 ($2) plus another ¥10 ($1) for taxi entrance. A 10-minute boat ride on the lake costs ¥3 (45¢).

Hulun Buir Grasslands (Hūlúnbèi'ĕr Cǎoyuán) ★★★ No other grasslands in Inner Mongolia can match the Hulun Buir, an emerald expanse shot through with radiant patches of wildflowers that spreads over the hills outside Mănzhōulĭ. The grass here is twice as long as anything found outside Hohhot, and people are scarce. Nothing this beautiful lasts long, though: The season for seeing the grasslands at their most vibrant runs only from late June to mid-August.

The only organization in Mănzhōulĭ officially allowed to arrange tours of the grasslands is **CITS** (inside the International Hotel; ✆ **0470/622-2988;** 8:30am–5pm). Three-day tours (¥600/$75 per person) include accommodations in a yurt, horse riding, a mutton banquet, and a visit to Dàlài Hú (see above). A better option, if you speak Mandarin and don't mind modest facilities, is to negotiate a stay with one of the local families who approach visitors at the railway station. If you decide to do this, be clear about the details and withhold final payment until your stay is over.

The Hulun Buir is the backdrop to one of China's most authentic **Nadaam** festivals (see also "Hohhot," p. 202), held every summer, usually between mid-July and mid-August. Call CITS for the specifics of when and where.

Zhālàinuò'ĕr The turn-of-the-century Russian-built open coal mine *(méikuàng)* is a hideous scar on an otherwise pristine landscape, but few other places in Asia can offer what it does: the chance to see 22 steam trains from the 1920s and 1930s in still-chugging order. CITS (see "Hulun Buir Grasslands," above) offers expensive multiday tours (¥1,050/$131 per person) that include a ride on one of the working engines, but it is possible to visit on your own. The mine is 18km (11 miles) south of Mănzhōulĭ, with free admission. The best time to visit is between October and March, when the steam is most dramatic. A bus to Zhālàinuò'ĕr (30min.; ¥3/40¢) leaves from the intersection of Sì Dàojiē and Xìnghúa Lù in Mănzhōlĭ and drops you in the center of town. From there, hire a taxi to tour the mine for ¥30 to ¥50 ($4–$6). The easier but pricier option is to simply hire a taxi in Mănzhōulĭ for ¥70 to ¥100 ($9–$12).

WHERE TO STAY

All of Mănzhōulĭ's hotels are located north of the train tracks. Most offer discounts of 20% or more outside July and August.

Friendship Hotel (Mănzhōulĭ Yǒuyì Bīnguǎn) ★ Fully renovated in 2002, the formerly unremarkable Friendship Hotel now offers the nicest rooms in town, with good service and easy access to the railway station. Standard rooms are spacious, clean, and bright, with large beds and sparkling-clean bathrooms. The hotel isn't as lively as some of its competitors, but this could change as word spreads. Older rooms are available at lower rates.

Yī Dàojiē 26 (between Xìnghúa Lù and Hăiguān Lù). ✆ **0470/624-8888.** Fax 0470/622-3828. 80 units. ¥378 ($47) new standard room; ¥320 ($40) old room. Rates include breakfast. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; small indoor pool; business center; forex; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge.

International Hotel (Guójì Fàndiàn) Once the only hotel for foreigners in Mănzhōulĭ, this aging labyrinth of a three-star still manages to draw mobs of

Russian traders and is the de facto town hall. Standard rooms are old but well maintained and comfortable (if you can bear the gaudy orange decor), and bathrooms are clean enough. The only major drawback is the elevators, which Russian guests use to haul their loads of Chinese booty.

Èr Dàojiē 35 (between Zhōngsū Lù and Xinghúa Lù). ✆ **0470/624-8188.** Fax 0470/622-2976. mzlhotel@public.hh.nm.cn. 231 units. ¥280–¥330 ($35–$41) standard room. Rates include breakfast. MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; nightclub; business center; forex; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Jīnghuī Bīnguǎn *Value* This newly renovated hotel, with its comfortable rooms and surprisingly low rates, is one of Mǎnzhōulǐ's little undiscovered gems and the closest thing to a budget option in the city center. Rooms are slightly cramped but clean and tasteful, with soft beds and plush carpets. Bathrooms could be cleaner.

Èr Dàojiē 8 (east of Hǎiguān Lù). ✆ **0470/622-5674.** 27 units. ¥180 ($23) standard room. **Amenities:** Restaurant; laundry. *In room:* TV.

Míngzhū Fàndiàn Opened in 1995 and conveniently located just north of the railway station, this is the International's biggest rival for Russian affections. Rooms are dark but spacious and clean; bathrooms are showing signs of age. The fifth and eighth floors have been renovated, each with a separate theme ("Chinese village" for the 5th, "European" for the 8th). Rooms on these floors are brighter, with new furniture and bathrooms.

Xinghuá Lù 4 (Yī Dàojiē). ✆ **0470/624-9000.** Fax 0470/622-3261. 108 units. ¥240–¥360 ($30–$45) standard room. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar, laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

WHERE TO DINE

The local specialty is *shuàn yángròu,* a form of mutton hot pot that uses plain boiling water instead of broth. The best is found at **Sānlù Huǒguō Chéng** (✆ **0470/623-3913;** open 9am–11pm; meal for 2 ¥30–50/$4–$6), an unassuming restaurant with a green and gold sign, several blocks east of the Míngzhū Fàndiàn on Yī Dàojiē. They're famous for their fresh lamb but do offer a vegetarian option *(qīngshǔ guōdī).*

The city's busiest Russian restaurant is **Xīnmǎnyuán Xīcāntīng** (Sān Dàojiē 38; ✆ **0470/622-2008;** open 7am–1am; meal for 2 ¥10–¥30/$1–$4), a strange and raucous eatery-cum-nightclub located behind the International Hotel (look for the white-and-green awning). Best are the bowls of hearty *sūbā tāng* (beef, potato, and carrot in creamy tomato broth). A branch of **Délifrance** (**Dàmòfáng;** open 7am–10pm; ¥12–¥18/$1–$2), directly across from the International Hotel on Sān Dàojiē, serves horrible coffee but has a large variety of satisfying rice plates.

5

Along the Yellow River

by Michelle Sans

The six cities and one mountain village featured in this chapter cover an area of northern China that includes parts of Shāxī, Shǎxī (sometimes spelled Shaanxi), Inner Mongolia, and Níngxià, roughly following the central loop of the Yellow River, north of Xī'ān.

This arid portion of China contains desert, grassland and, most conspicuously, loess plateau made of the powdery yellow soil that gave the Yellow River and the legendary Yellow Emperor their names. (For an object lesson in what makes the river yellow, wash your T-shirt in the sink after a day of touring the loess cliffs of Yán'ān.) This powder of sand and silt has for millennia been deposited over this part of north and northwest China by winds blowing across the Gobi Desert.

Rich in history, the area lays claim to most of China's oldest surviving timber-frame buildings, its oldest carved Buddhist grottoes, and the mausoleums of nine Xī Xià (1038–1227) emperors. The area around Tàiyuán in Shānxī Province is recognized as one of China's "cradles of civilization," and it was here that the mythical sage kings Yáo, Shùn, and Yǔ are said to have performed their miracles.

From Běijīng, Dàtóng is the logical gateway. Going south, a 10-day itinerary might include Dàtóng; the sacred Buddhist mountain, Wǔtái Shān; the Shānxī capital of Tàiyuán; and Píngyáo, one of China's best-preserved walled cities. For the grasslands of Inner Mongolia and the relics and monuments of the tribes from beyond the Great Wall, go west from Dàtóng—first to Hohhot, and then to Yínchuān, the provincial capital of Níngxià. There is enough to see for a 3- or 4-day stay in each city. The revolutionary sites and cave dwellings of Yán'ān could be added as the last stop on either itinerary or as the stepping stone between the two.

Piercing winds and icy air currents from the north keep most travelers away from this region from late November to mid-March. Moving south, summer temperatures can be scorching, but evenings are generally comfortable. ***Note:*** Unless noted otherwise, hours listed in this chapter are the same every day.

1 Dàtóng

Shānxī Province, 379km (236 miles) W of Běijīng, 284km (176 miles) SE of Hohhot, 350km (217 miles) N of Tàiyuán

In 398, Dàtóng (then Píngchéng) became the capital of the Xiānbēi tribes' first Chinese-style state—as opposed to a tribal confederation—under the Northern Wèi dynasty. Modeled after the Hàn Chinese capital of Chángān (Xī'ān), Dàtóng remained their political center for the next hundred years, and it was

during this period that most of the Yúngǎng Buddhist Caves were carved out. Four hundred years after the Wèi moved their capital south to Luòyáng in a step toward Sinicization, the Khitan (or Qìdān) established their Liáo dynasty (907–1125) capital in Dàtóng. Two buildings from that era survive at Huáyán Monastery which with the Yúngǎng Caves and the spectacular Hanging Temple give ample reasons to visit.

Modern Dàtóng is an industrial center with an abundance of coal that is both a blessing and a curse. Without it, Dàtóng's economy would collapse; with it, skies are rarely clear and lung disease is common. But in 2001, the city began implementing pollution-control measures, and some industries have been closed.

It's possible to visit Dàtóng as a long day trip from Beijing (see "Tours," below), but to see all the sights, 2 days are needed.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Dàtóng's **airport** is scheduled for completion in 2003 with connections from Běijīng, Shànghǎi, Guǎngzhōu, Chéngdū, and Shěnyáng.

The overnight **train** from Běijīng to Dàtóng (4433) is convenient, leaving Běijīng at 10:58pm and arriving in Dàtóng at 7:15am the next morning. Sleepers cost ¥91 to ¥170 ($11–$21). The return train leaves Dàtóng at 11:45pm, and arrives in Běijīng the next day at 6:20am. Express trains also link Běijīng Xī Zhàn and Dàtóng (K713/K714, K715/K716; 5½–6 hr.; ¥31/$3.85). Useful trains from Tàiyuán are the express K746 and K748, arriving in Dàtóng at 2:36pm and 8:28pm. Heading west, the Běijīng–Bāotóu line connects Dàtóng with Hohhot (K43/K44; 5 hr.; ¥25/$3); trains on the Běijīng Xī Zhàn and Hohhot line (K89/K90) can be difficult to book in Dàtóng.

Bus trips between Běijīng and Dàtóng take 3 or 4 hours. The plan is for Běijīng-bound large, deluxe buses to depart from a new station in the south part of the city (starting service in 2003). Until then, the old long distance bus station is opposite the railway station; another "new" station is on Yàntóng Xī Lù near Xīngjiàn Běi Lù. Air-conditioned buses connecting with Hohhot arrive and depart from the old bus station (¥50/$6.25; 3 hr., 40 min.) Departure from Dàtóng is at 8am; the return bus departs Hohhot's long-distance bus station at 2:30pm. Buses also connect with Wǔtái Shān (4 hr.; ¥45/$5.60 A/C bus;) and with Tàiyuán (from 7am; 4 hr.; ¥70/$8.75 A/C bus).

GETTING AROUND Although the city is spread out, it can be toured on foot because the few tourist sights are in a fairly compact area south of Dà Xī and Dà Dōng Jiē. Rates for the two types of **taxis** are ¥5 (60¢) for the first 3km (2 miles), then ¥1.20 (15¢) per kilometer. Beyond 10km (6 miles), the fare is ¥1.50 (20¢) per kilometer. Between 10pm and 7am, the first 3km (2 miles) are ¥5 (65¢), then ¥1.50 (20¢) per kilometer. Beyond 10km (6¼ miles), the fare is ¥1.80 (25¢) per kilometer. Most trips within the city are under ¥10 ($1.25).

TOURS A **CITS** office just inside the main entrance to the railway station (✆ **0352/510-1326;** fax 0352/510-2046) offers useful 1-day tours to the Hanging Monastery and the Yúngǎng Buddhist Caves, or to the Hanging Monastery and the wooden pagoda in Yīngxiàn. The tour starts at 8:30am from the Yúngǎng Hotel, and departs at 9am from the station; the cost is ¥100 ($13), or ¥210 ($26) including entrance fees and lunch. Some visitors arrive overnight from Běijīng, take this tour, and return overnight. CITS also has offices in the Yúngǎng Hotel (✆ 0352/502-4176).

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The main **Bank of China** (Yíngbīn Lù near Hóngqí Nán Jiē; Mon–Fri 8am–noon, 2:30–6:30pm, 6pm in winter; 3–6pm hottest days) has full-service foreign exchange. There is no ATM.

Internet Access There's a convenient *wǎngbā* with a complex pricing system directly opposite the railway station. Asked the hourly rate, the wife said ¥4 (50¢); the husband instantly changed it to ¥2 (25¢); the wife corrected him, saying ¥5 (65¢); he repeated that it was really ¥2 (25¢); as I prepared to leave, the wife said, "No, no—for Koreans it's ¥5; for Americans, ¥3 (40¢)." The husband's last words as I stepped out the door were, "¥2 (25¢) for everyone!" Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The main post office is on Hóngqí Square (7am–7pm; 8am–5:30pm winter).

Visa Extensions The **PSB** (**Gōngānjú;** open Mon–Fri, 8am–noon, 3–6:30pm; 2:30–6pm winter) is on Xīnjiàn Běi Lù. Visas can be extended while you wait.

AROUND TOWN

If you have time after a visit to Huáyán Sì, Dàtóng's **Jiǔlóng Bì** (**Nine Dragon Wall;** Dà Dōng Jiē, east of Dà Nán Jiē; ¥6/75¢; open May–Sept 7:30am–7pm; Oct–Apr 8am–6:30pm; Bus: no. 4) is a fine example of a spirit screen, designed to fend off ghosts and evil spirits that can only move in straight lines. The

brightly colored glazed wall with nine writhing dragons was built in 1392 in front of a prince's mansion, long ago razed by fire. The much-restored **Shànhuà Sì,** east off Nánmén Jiē, last rebuilt in 1445, is also a pleasant escape from Dàtóng's dusty streets. Most impressive are the beautiful timber doors of the **Hall of Three Sages** (**Sān Shèng Diàn;** ¥10/$1.25; open May–Sept 8am–6pm, Oct–Apr 8:30am–5:30pm).

Huáyán Sì ★ This monastery has separate upper and lower temples which share a lane. The upper temple's massive main hall, the **Dàxióng Bǎo Diàn** of 1140, is one of China's few surviving 12th-century buildings. Inside are the lined-up Buddhas of the Five Directions (including the center), seated on elaborately decorated lotus thrones and set off by small standing attendants.

Most significant of all the halls in the two temples is the **Bójiā Jiàozàng Diàn** of 1038, a very rare example of a Liáo dynasty building. Inside, Buddhist sutras (scriptures) are stored in one of the finest and best-preserved examples of the miniature timber buildings favored by the period's architects for housing sutras. Named the **Celestial Palace Pavilion (Tiāngōng Lóugé),** the sutra cabinet is an exquisite dollhouse with elaborate bracketing, an arched bridge, curved eaves, and balconies. The 31 elegant stucco statues in the hall also date from the Liáo dynasty. One of the most prized is the female bodhisattva on the right-hand side. Her palms are pressed together as if in prayer, and her lips are parted, revealing her teeth—a rarity in Chinese sculpture.

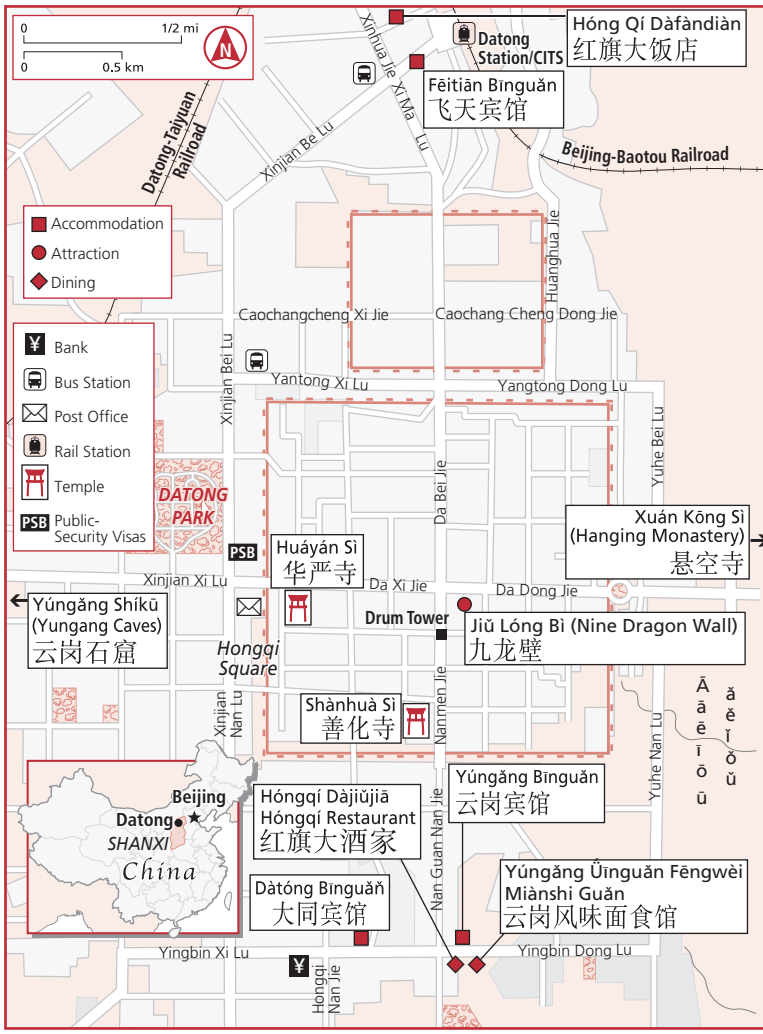
Both Upper and Lower temples are down a lane off the south side of Dà Xī Jiē. Admission ¥10 ($1.25) each temple. May–Sept 8am–6pm; Oct–Apr 8:30am–5:30pm. Bus: no. 4 from railway station.

OUT OF TOWN

Yúngǎng Shíkū (Yúngǎng Caves) ★★★ Influenced by the Buddhist site of Bamiyan in Afghanistan and the caves of Kizil and Kuqa (in Xīnjiāng, p. 295), the stone carvings of Yúngǎng are the earliest of their kind in China. Hewn in three stages between 460 and 524, they show the movement from a heavy reliance on Indian and central Asian artistic models to an emergence of Chinese traditions. The caves numbered 16 to 20 (the "Five Caves of Tán Yào") were carved between 460 and 465 under the supervision of a Buddhist monk. Caves 1, 2, and 5 to 13 were carved in the second stage, which began in 470 and ended when the Wèi dynasty capital was moved from Dàtóng (at that time Píng Chéng) to Luòyáng in 494. The remaining caves, carved without imperial patronage, are less notable.

For sheer size, **Caves 16 through 20** are the most impressive. Made in part to honor the reigning emperor, Wén Chéng, and his four predecessors, each cave contains one central Buddha figure (representing an emperor) and his attendants. The best of them, **Cave 18,** contains the colossal image of Sakyamuni, the 10 arhats (enlightened disciples) associated with him, and two attendant Buddhas. The Buddha to the right of Sakyamuni has a webbed hand—one of the 32 marks of a superior being. His robe was originally red, his face white, and his hair black. Traces of his green mustache and beard can still be seen, and echo the art of Iran.

Largest of the Buddhas in the Tán Yào caves is the sitting figure in **Cave 20,** now exposed by the collapse of the top and sides of the cliff. Holes for beams indicate that a wooden structure was built to protect the Buddha, but that, too, is long gone. The squared figures and static style are typical of this early period of Northern Wèi statuary; they also suggest that the artists may have worked



from sketches or drawings brought back by pilgrims from Indian holy sites. Notice in the later carvings the fluidity of line in the postures and draped clothing.

There is much more going on in the second group of caves, many of which depict stories from Buddhist scriptures. **Cave 1** is interesting for its Chinese-style architectural features in the bas-reliefs of buildings, though many of the images have eroded. **Cave 3** is the largest of the caves. The fuller bodies of the three Buddhist images it contains suggest it was carved as late as the Suí or the Táng dynasties. **Caves 5 and 6** were both carved before 494, but the four-story wooden facade dates to 1651. **Cave 5** houses the largest carving at Yúngǎng—a stunning Sakyamuni in meditation. In **Cave 6** look for the two Buddhas,

Sakyamuni and Prabhutaratna, facing each other. This customary pairing alludes to an episode from the Teaching of the Lotus Sutra. In this episode, a stupa containing the relics of the Prabhutaratna Buddha appears in the sky. Surrounded by Buddhas and bodhisattvas, Sakyamuni rises to the stupa and unlocks it with his finger. Out comes the extinct Prabhutaratna, who praises and congratulates him. Other episodes from the life of Sakyamuni decorate the walls. On the entrance arch of **Cave 8** are contented images of Shiva and Vishnu (two of several Hindu divinities who found their way into Buddhism). The discs they hold represent the sun and the moon. Some sources identify the small bird on Vishnu's chest, and the larger one on which his feet rest, as the mythical *garuda*—the vehicle (and disciple) of Vishnu; others, less convincingly, call them phoenixes, a Chinese motif. Traces of ancient Greece appear in the classical bow with inward curve at its center. (As in this relief, the bow is commonly held in the left "wisdom" hand. Presumably the missing right "method" hand held an arrow.) A seated Maitreya Buddha (Future Buddha) dominates **Cave 13.** Most delightful about this statue is the figurine of a four-armed attendant who stands on the Buddha's thigh while supporting its huge raised arm—the artists' solution to a crack in the stone. Allow yourself at least 2 hours to see the main caves.

16km (10 miles) west of Dàtóng. Admission ¥50 ($6.25). 8:30am–5:30pm. Bus: no. 4 (¥1/15¢) from railway station to terminus (Xīnlǐ Kǒu), then bus no. 3 (¥2/25¢) to Yúngǎng Caves.

Xuánkōng Sì (Hanging Temple) This temple, clinging to the side of a cliff, is composed of some 40 connected halls that appear to be supported by toothpicks. Looking more like a wooden model than anything weight-bearing, it is actually supported by sturdy timbers that extend deep into the mountain. Founded in the Northern Wèi dynasty (386–534), the temple contains Buddhist, Daoist, and Confucian chambers, along with a chamber—the Sānjiào Diàn—that combines all three. Sakyamuni is in the center with Confucius to his right and Lǎozǐ to his left. While the temple is marvelous, be prepared for the particularly unattractive surroundings—a huge parking lot and, beyond that, a dam and reservoir.

62km (39 miles) south of Dàtóng. Admission ¥45 ($5.60). 7am–7pm summer; 8am–6:30pm winter. Minibuses to Húnyuán (near the monastery) leave from the station opposite the railway station when they fill up. Price isn't fixed, so bargain; expect to pay ¥8–¥12 ($1–$1.50). From Húnyuán, it's another 6km (4 miles) to the monastery by minibus (about ¥5/60¢) or taxi (about ¥9/$1.15).

Yīng Xiàn Mù Tǎ (Yīng Xiàn Wooden Pagoda) ★ Built in 1056 during the Liáo dynasty, this impressive building is China's oldest surviving wooden pagoda. From the outside, it appears to have only five stories, though it actually has nine; and its complex system of supports includes 54 kinds of brackets. Frescoes on the ground floor and a gilded statue of Sakyamuni date to the Liáo dynasty. During a 1974 renovation, engraved sutras and documents related to the construction of the pagoda were discovered inside one of the statues of Buddha.

For those on their way from Dàtóng to Wǔtái Shān, it's possible to visit the Hanging Temple and Wooden Pagoda in a day, then spend the night in Yīng Xiàn and leave the next morning for Wǔtái Shān. East of the pagoda, the friendly, affordable **Líhuā Chūn Bīnguǎn,** Yīnghún Lù (eastern extension of Xīnjiàn Dōng Lù; ✆ **0349/502-9593**), is the best hotel in Yīng Xiàn, and its restaurant serves good Cantonese and local dishes. Standard rooms go for ¥88 to ¥108 ($11–$14). The hotel can arrange for north- or southbound hotel pickup. The minibus to Wǔtái Shān charges ¥35 ($4.35) for the 2-hour trip.

76km (47 miles) south of Dàtóng. Admission ¥36 ($4.50). 7:30am–7pm; 8am–6:30pm winter. Minibuses to Yīng Xiàn leave from the station opposite the railway station (¥10–¥15/$1.25–$1.90; 2 hr.) and drop passengers near the Wooden Pagoda. Minibuses also leave from Húnyuán (¥10/$1.25 for the 1½-hr. drive).

WHERE TO STAY

CITS agents are likely to meet you coming out of the Dàtóng railway station. They can book a hotel for you on the spot, but you'll get a better discount by shopping around and doing the negotiating yourself. Of their economy choices, the **Hóng Qí Dàfàndiàn** (✆ **0352/281-6310**), opposite the station, is the best choice, with standard rooms costing ¥130 ($16). Its rooms are small, the only electric outlet is in the bathroom, and that old custom of the floor attendant letting guests into their rooms is alive and well at Hóng Qí. This part of town is dingy, too, but if you only plan to visit Yúngǎng and Xuánkōng, the hotel is well-located near the railway station, plus you can usually bargain the room rate down to ¥100 ($13).

Dàtóng Bīngǔn With its manicured gardens, park-size lawn with gazebo, and manor-house facade, this is by far the most attractive of Dàtóng's hotels. Service is excellent, rooms are clean and comfortable, bathrooms are a decent size, and the price is reasonable. Some of the standard rooms have small balconies, which are worth requesting. Rooms facing the street overlook the front lawn and the adjacent "musical fountain."

Yíngbīn Xī Lù 37. ✆ **0352/203-2476.** Fax 0352/203-2288. 221 units. ¥456 ($56) standard room; ¥460 ($58) single room. Some rates include breakfast. 20% discount available. 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 1 or 2. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; ticketing; business center; limited forex; limited room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, fridge, hair dryer.

Yúngǎng Bīnguǎn Recently renovated, this three-star hotel is well situated near the main tourist sites and has modest but modern facilities. Standard rooms are, well, standard issue, but they are clean and well kept. The Yúngǎng used to be the best hotel in town, but the Dàtóng Hotel now surpasses it. This hotel excels in its huge kitchen, which employs over 80 workers and is divided into a number of small specialty kitchens—one for making pasta, a Peking duck room with a brick fireplace, a *jiǎozi* kitchen, and more. The food is excellent.

Yíngbīn Dōng Lù 21. ✆ **0352/502-1601.** Fax 0352/502-4927. 160 units. ¥400 ($50) standard room; ¥800 ($100) suite. 20% discount available. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; ticketing; business center; forex; limited room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, fridge, hair dryer.

WHERE TO DINE

One of the best restaurants near the hotels is **Yúngǎng Fēngwèi Miànshí Guǎn,** on the south side of Yíngbīn Xī Lù, across from the Yúngāng Hotel. It's a comfortable little cafe run by a helpful young staff. Some recommended dishes are *shāo qiézi* (stewed eggplant); *sōngrén yùmǐ* (corn cooked with pine nuts); and *chǎo lāmiàn* (fried wheat noodles with ground mutton, spring onion, and garlic). A meal for two costs ¥16 to ¥80 ($2–$10). The three-story **Hóngqí Restaurant** next door is more formal and twice as expensive, but the food is excellent and—with every table celebrating something (often it's a wedding)—the atmosphere is always lively. The Chinese restaurant on the first floor of the Yúngǎng Hotel serves delicious *jiǎozi* (12 per serving) for ¥2.50 (30¢). For vegetarian *jiǎozi,* order a half-hour ahead. They also offer a wide variety of regional dishes.

For a Western breakfast, try the Yúngǎng and the Dàtóng hotels. There's a **KFC** at the main square, Hóngqí Guǎngchǎng.

2 Hohhot

Inner Mongolia, 410km (255 miles) W of Běijīng

By Chinese standards, Hohhot, the capital of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, has a short history. In 1557, when the Mongolian prince, Altan Khan, ordered the construction of a large Tibetan-Buddhist complex, he had his own agenda. (In a historical twist, his workforce was made up of captured Hàn Chinese artisans and Hàn peasants forced into corvée labor.) Completion of such a complex would legitimize his rule over the southern Mongolian tribes and secure the recognition of the Míng Empire. By 1579, Dà Zhào Temple, which still survives, was completed, and by 1590 the town of Hohhot (in Mandarin Hūhéhàotè, or simply Hū Shì) had sprung up around it.

From the beginning, the city was both Mongolian and Hàn Chinese, and though the ratio has fluctuated wildly over 4 centuries, the population has always been culturally mixed. In the 19th century, the Huí (Chinese Muslims) became the third largest ethnic group in the city. Population claims are rarely reliable when they're about China, but it's said that currently for every Mongolian in Hohhot, there are 12 Hàn Chinese.

Hohhot is a pleasant city with some good hotels, excellent restaurants, modern stores, and worthwhile sights.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The **airport** is 16km (10 miles) east of town. A taxi into town costs around ¥25 to ¥30 ($3.10–$3.75). Locals negotiate the price in advance and don't use the meter. The CAAC (Zhōngguó Mínháng) shuttle (¥5/60¢) meets flights and is also an option. It leaves from CAAC's main ticket office on Xīlín Guōlè Lù just south of Wūlánqiàtè Xī Jiē 1½ hours before every flight. There are direct flights from many major cities in China, including Běijīng, Shànghǎi, Chéngdū, and Guǎngzhōu. **Mongolian Airlines** (**MIAT;** ✆ **0471/430-3254**) shares offices with the Mongolian Consulate (Měnggǔ Lǐngshìguǎn), and offers flights to Ulaan Baatar.

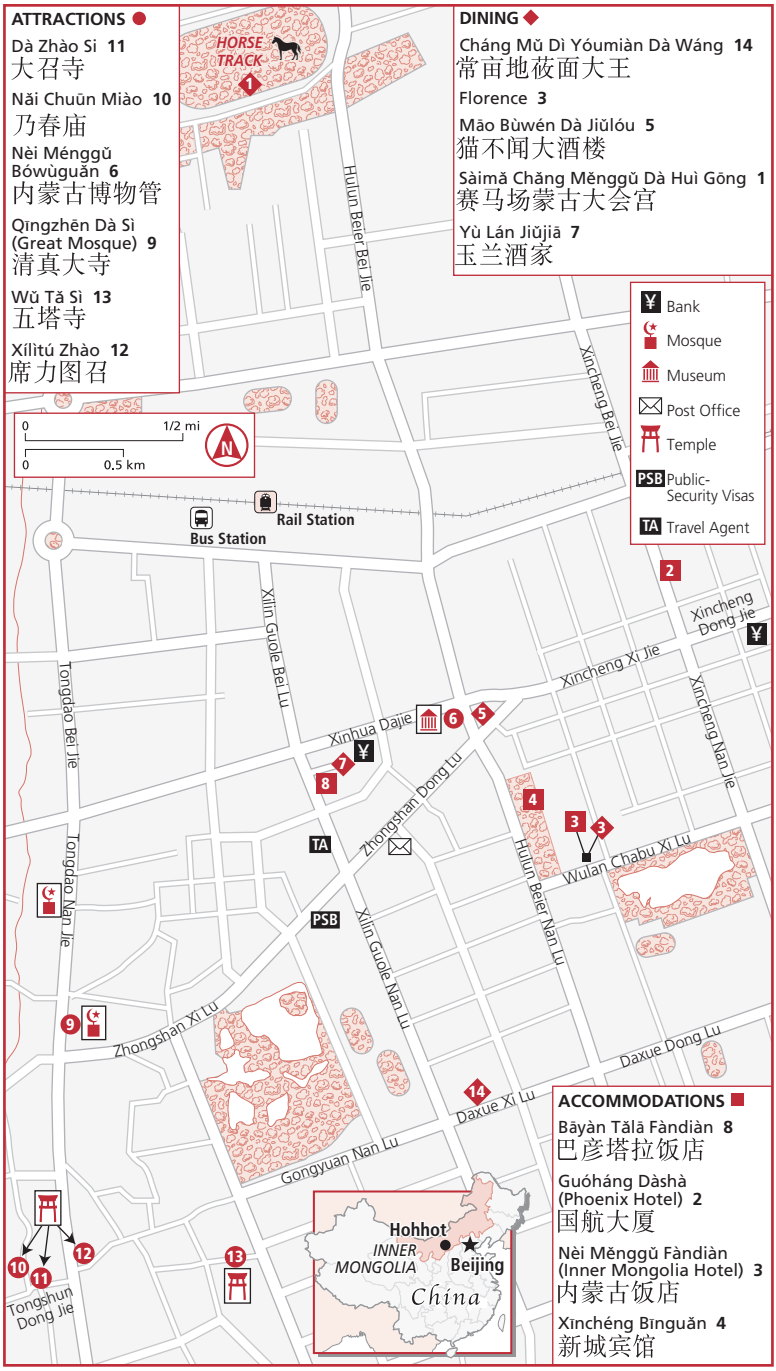
The **railway station** is in the north part of town. The fastest trains linking Hohhot with Běijīng are the K89/K90 (10½ hr.), each arriving at 7:20am. Dàtóng is also on this line. Another useful service is the 2003/2004 link with Lánzhōu (7 hr.). Yínchuān and Zhōngwèi are two of the stops on this line. Tickets can be bought in advance at all windows, but sleepers are often in short supply. Try agents in hotels for these.

The **Long Distance Bus Station** is west of the railway station. There are at least four buses daily to Běijīng (12 hr.; ¥60/$7.50) and daily buses to Dàtóng (5 hr.; ¥40/$5).

GETTING AROUND **Bus** fare is ¥1 (15¢); **minibus** fare is ¥1.50 (20¢). The **taxi** rate for the first 2km (1¼ miles) is ¥6 (75¢); after that, it's ¥1 (15¢) per kilometer.

TOURS The **CITS** office in the Tōngdá Fàndiàn, Suite 530, on Chēzhàn Dōng Jiē (✆ **0471/682-8619**), is just east of the railway station. It can arrange expensive tours to the grasslands with an English-speaking guide. Most hotels have desks offering cheaper, non-English tours. Shop around and bargain.

FESTIVAL & SPECIAL EVENTS Dà Zhào has more than a dozen temple festivals. Among the best are **Sòngjīng Dà Fāhuì** (8th–15th days of the 1st and 6th lunar months), 8 days of prayer and chanting sutras; **Sòngbālìn** (14th day of the 1st and 6th lunar months), a morning spent exorcising demons—chanting,


ATTRACTIONS
Dà Zhào Sì 11
大召寺
Nǎi Chuǔn Miào 10
乃春庙
Nèi Ménggǔ Bówùguǎn 6
内蒙古博物管
Qīngzhēn Dà Sì (Great Mosque) 9
清真大寺
Wǔ Tǎ Sì 13
五塔寺
Xīlìtú Zhào 12
席力图召
DINING
Cháng Mǔ Dì Yóumiàn Dà Wáng 14
常亩地莜面大王
Florence 3
Māo Bùwén Dà Jiǔlóu 5
猫不闻大酒楼
Sàimǎ Chǎng Měnggǔ Dà Huì Gōng 1
赛马场蒙古大会宫
Yù Lán Jiǔjiā 7
玉兰酒家
Bank
Mosque
Museum
Post Office
Temple
PSB Public-Security Visas
TA Travel Agent
ACCOMMODATIONS
Bāyàn Tǎlā Fàndiàn 8
巴彦塔拉饭店
Guóháng Dàshà (Phoenix Hotel) 2
国航大厦
Nèi Měnggǔ Fàndiàn (Inner Mongolia Hotel) 3
内蒙古饭店
Xīnchéng Bīnguǎn 4
新城宾馆
HORSE TRACK
Hulun Beier Bei Jie
Xincheng Bei Jie
0 1/2 mi
0 0.5 km
N
Rail Station
Bus Station
Xilin Guole Bei Lu
Tongdao Bei Jie
Xinhua Dajie
Zhongshan Dong Lu
Xincheng Dong Jie
Xincheng Xi Jie
Xincheng Nan Jie
Wulan Chabu Xi Lu
Hulun Beier Nan Lu
Tongdao Nan Jie
Xilin Guole Nan Lu
Zhongshan Xi Lu
Daxue Dong Lu
Daxue Xi Lu
Gongyuan Nan Lu
Tongshun Dong Jie
Hohhot
INNER MONGOLIA
Beijing
China

performing ritual dance, burning of demon effigy; **Liàng Dàfó** (15th day of the 1st and 6th lunar months), which begins with the Sunning of the Maitreya *thangka* (a giant image of the Future Buddha hung in the courtyard to air and be admired), and is followed by prayer, chanting, ceremonial dance and music, circumambulation, and alms-giving; and **Máníhuì** (14th–17th day of the 8th lunar month), Dà Zhào's most solemn festival of the year; 3 days and nights of continuous prayer for good fortune (at the end, visitors who give alms are rewarded with a packet of "sacred medicine," said to cure all manner of illness and disease).

The traditional sports festival, **Naadam,** which features wrestling, horse and camel racing, and archery, occurs when and if the grasslands turn green. That's usually mid-August, but it can be as early as July. Last-minute cancellations aren't uncommon. Note that the dates don't coincide with the (People's Republic of) Mongolia's Naadam festival, which is tied to their National Day and always occurs from July 11 to 13.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs Two branches of **Bank of China** that have full-service foreign-exchange counters and 24-hour ATM access are at Xīnchéng Dōng Jiē 88 (2 blocks east of the Xīnchéng Dōng/Xījiē and Xīnchéng Běi/Nánjiē intersection); and on the south side of Xīnhuá Dàjiē between Xīlín Guōlè Běi Lù and Yíngbīn Běi Lù. There's also an ATM in the lobby of the Guóháng Dàshà hotel.

Consulates The **Mongolian Consulate** (✆ **0471/3254**) issues 30-day tourist visas at Wūlánchábù Dōng Lù 5. Service is available Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday from 8:30am to 12:30pm. Two photographs are required. The 1-day rush fee is ¥500 ($61); regular processing can take a week and costs ¥300 ($37). Take bus no. 2 or 16.

Internet Access There's a no-name Internet cafe opposite the station, next to a small Bank of China. The cafe's hours are from 8am to 3:30am; it charges ¥2 (25¢) per hour. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The main branch of the post office is on Zhōngshān Dōng Lù (open 8am–7pm summer, 6:30pm winter).

Visa Extensions The visa office (Mon–Fri, 8am–noon and 2:30–5:30pm) is on the left beyond the guards at the **PSB office (Gōngānjú)** on Zhōngshān Xī Lù, almost opposite the big pink Mínzú Shāngchǎng.

WALKING TOUR HOHHOT: TEMPLE TO TEMPLE

Getting There:	**Starting from the railway station, walk west on Chēzhàn XīJiē to Tōngdào Jiē. Take bus no. 6 going south, and get off at the stop called Xiǎo Shízì.**
Start:	**Xiǎo Shízì bus stop**
Finish:	**Zhōngshān Jiē**
Time:	**Half a day**
Best Times:	**8am to 4pm any day**

Hohhot's most renowned temples, **Dà Zhào, Xílìtú Zhào,** and **Wǔtǎ Sì,** are in the oldest parts of town—the Yùquán District in the southwest corner of the city. Just to the north is the **Moslem Quarter (Huímín Qū)** with Hohhot's **Qīngzhēn Dà Sì (Great Mosque).** Before long, every trace of the flat-topped mud and brick houses and storefronts that used to dominate this area will be

gone; for a glimpse of the past, go now. By setting out an hour earlier, it's possible to add the Great Mosque to your walk. Better still, devote a full day to the four sites and explore the Moslem Quarter, too.

From the Xiǎo Shízǐ bus stop, walk about 50m (160 ft.) west on the small street called Tōngshùn Dōng Jiē. The temple is on the right.

❶ Dà Zhào

It's said that at one time this 6th-century temple (Apr–Sept 8am–7:30pm; Oct–Mar 8:30am–5:30pm, ¥10/$1.25) had over 400 lamas in residence. Later, the Qīng government (1644–1911) decreed that no more than 80 could live in Hohhot's earliest Tibetan temple. Today Dà Zhào houses 16 students from all over Inner Mongolia and only about 50 monks, but it is still an active center of Buddhist worship. Unlike Beijing's famed lamasery, Yōnghé Gōng, Dà Zhào looks and feels much more like the monasteries of Tibet, but with Chinese characteristics: Instead of offerings of *tsampa* (a roasted barley and yak butter mix), devotees leave mounds of uncooked rice; and the pervading smell is of incense rather than rancid yak butter. But as in Lhasa, worshippers here drape their favorite Buddhas and bodhisattvas with shiny white ceremonial scarves. As you make your way through the complex, look for Dà Zhào's three most prized holdings: the 400-year-old Silver Buddha; in front of it, a pair of vivid golden dragons coiled around two floor-to-ceiling pillars; and exquisite Míng wall murals (in their original paint) depicting stories from Buddhist lore. Go all the way to the back of the complex to find a library full of antique sutras wrapped in orange and yellow cloth. Peek into the less-visited side chambers, too, where you're likely to find a lone lama chanting and playing Tibetan cymbals or a devotee kowtowing in the half-dark.

As you come out of the Dà Zhào temple from the main entrance, turn right, go around the corner, and walk along the west wall for 60m (200 ft.). A lama temple that was once part of the Dà Zhào temple complex is on your left.

❷ Nǎi Chūn Miào

There's no ticket kiosk because this temple is rarely visited by anyone outside the neighborhood. A painting of a sinner hanging upside down by his ankles, blood dripping over his face, adorns both panels of the main door. According to a young monk outside the temple, the hall is 300 years old. While the door paintings are considerably more recent, the wall and ceiling paintings inside are darkened with age and are certainly worth a look. The temple is scheduled for restoration by 2004.

Walk back past Dà Zhào, and continue about 90m (300 ft.) to Dà Nán Jiē. Cross over, turn left, and walk about 30m (100 ft.). This will take only about 10 minutes if you don't stop to take pictures and peer into shops and side alleys along the way.

❸ Xílitú Zhào

The temple (Apr–Sept 8am–7:30pm; Oct–Mar 8:30am–6:00pm, ¥5/60¢) is visible down the first lane, Dà Nán Jiē, though you wouldn't know it by the plaque above the front gate which uses the name given this temple by the Kāngxī emperor in 1696: Shòu Sì, or Temple of Extended Longevity. Like Dà Zhào, this Buddhist temple was constructed during the Wànlì reign (1572–1620) of the Míng dynasty and remains active, with 16 monks in residence. Razed by fire in the 19th century, it was rebuilt only to be damaged during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). Its latest humiliation is the transformation of its front buildings into souvenir shops. However, a short distance into the complex, it starts feeling more like a temple than a tourist spot. One highlight is the Buddhist ornaments

crowning the central hall. In front is the Wheel of Dharma flanked by two deer, representing the Buddha's first turning of the dharma wheel in the Deer Park. Behind the wheel are two victory banners and a jeweled trident symbolizing the Three Buddhas (past, present, and future) and the Three Jewels (the Buddha, the doctrine, and the monastic community; or body, speech, and mind). Inside the main building is a typical Tibetan prayer hall with cylindrical banners that hang from the ceiling, a white elephant (identified with the Buddha), and sutras (Buddhist scriptures) lining the walls. The first day of each lunar month, from 9am to noon, the monks can be heard (and viewed) chanting sutras in the main hall.

The walk from Xílìtú Zhào to Wǔ Tǎ Sì threads through another traditional neighborhood where everyone knows each other and "real Chinese life" abounds. Exiting Xílìtú Zhào, turn left (eastward) down Xīngshèng Street and continue walking until you reach a small playground. (En route, you'll pass old brick single-level storefronts on both sides and a toilet on the left.) Pass the playground and turn right, walking along the far side of the playground, which in summer is lined with billiards tables. Continue past a small outdoor market on the right and a narrow lane on your left. At the second narrow lane, Xiǎo Zhào Xiàng, turn left. Ahead, on the right, a new two-story gray building with a traditional Chinese roof takes the place of the mud and brick buildings. You'll see the five spires of Wǔ Tǎ Sì straight ahead, on Wǔ Tǎ Sì Hòu Jiē.

❹ Wǔ Tǎ Sì

This rare Indian-style five-pagoda Buddhist temple (Apr–Sept 8am–6:30pm, Oct–Mar 8am–6pm; ¥10/$1.25) is one of only six *jīngāng bǎozuò* (diamond throne pagodas) in China. Built between 1727 and 1732, it was quite likely modeled after Běijīng's Wǔ Tǎ Sì, constructed 300 years earlier. Like that one, Hohhot's Wǔ Tǎ Sì is the only remaining structure of a much larger temple complex that fell into disrepair. Notable features are the 1,561 stone-carved images of Buddha that cover the middle and top portions of the temple; the graceful bas-relief images of bodhisattvas, bodhi trees, and sacred creatures gracing the base of the temple; and the astronomical map on the back wall purported to be the only one of its vintage written in Mongolian script. Carved in stone, it depicts the 24 seasonal periods of the lunar year, 28 planets, some 270 constellations, over 1,550 stars, and the 12 astrological divisions. Climb to the top of the temple for a view of the changing neighborhood.

To get back to Zhōngshān Jiē from Wǔ Tǎ Sì, as you leave from the main gate, turn right (eastward) and walk about 100m (330 ft.) to the main street, Gōng Yuán Xī Lù. Across the street catch bus no. 26, which will take you to Zhōngshān Road. The bus turns right and follows Zhōngshān a block beyond the Nèiměnggǔ Bówùguǎn (Inner Mongolian Museum), where it turns left (north) onto Hūlúnbèiěr Lù.

IN AND AROUND HOHHOT

Nèiměnggǔ Bówùguǎn (Inner Mongolia Museum) ★★ Kids

Hohhot's museum is home to a rare and magnificent collection of cultural relics left behind by nomadic clans from the north. As befits a collection this important, the displays are adequately lit and include Chinese and English introductions and explanations (though in the case of the minority exhibit their main purpose is to propagandize). The first floor's north wing is devoted to minority costumes, musical instruments, and fishing and hunting implements, but the main attraction is the south wing, which houses skeletal fossils of a broad range of prehistoric behemoths. On the second floor, a fine collection of ruins and relics from the Stone Age forward reflects the artistic refinement and creative abilities of the various northern cultures. Not to be missed are the graceful gold Xiānbēi belt buckles, to which a 4th-century poet compared a maiden's "exquisite neck." Also of note

are sets of pottery figures from a nearby Northern Wèi tomb. Among them is a pair of troll-faced pottery tomb-guardians, and eight pottery figurines of a musical troupe and a dancer who look more like a mime troupe, their wooden instruments having long ago disintegrated. After seeing this collection, you may never think of ancient Mongols, Huns, or Tartars in terms of "hordes" again.

Xīnhuá Dàjiē 2. Admission ¥10 ($1.25). Apr–Sept 9am–5pm (last ticket 4pm); Oct–Mar 10am–4:30pm (last ticket 3:30pm). Bus: no. 4 or 15 on Xīnchéng Xī Jiē; no. 19 on Zhōngshān Lù.

Qīngzhēn Dà Sì (Great Mosque) As beautiful as this 360-year-old mosque is, it has yet to become a standard tourist sight. Typically, a few seniors are chatting and passing time in the courtyard. The buildings include the prayer hall with a beautiful ceiling painted with pink flowers; the teaching hall; and a 15m (49-ft.) tall wooden pavilion (a Chinese version of the minaret) which, with permission, can sometimes be climbed. (***Note:*** A sign in Chinese at the mosque's entrance requests no shorts, short skirts, smoking, or loud talking.) The back exit leads through a small street lined with food stalls on one side and tables and chairs on the other. Here you'll find Moslem snacks such as noodles and kabobs. To get back to Tōngdào Jiē, walk the full length of the lane.

Tōngdào Jiē (near Zhōngshān Xī Lù intersection). Free admission. 10am–4pm. Bus: no. 3, 19, 21 to Tōngdào Jiē and Zhōngshān Xī Lù intersection.

THREE WAYS TO THE GRASSLANDS

BY BUS Two buses a day go to Xīlāmùrén Dà Cǎoyuán from the bus station. For a day trip, take the 7:50am bus no. 123 to Zhào Hé (terminus Chágānhādá) for ¥14 ($1.75), and return on the last bus around 3pm (check on the exact time before leaving). The drive takes about 2½ hours—much of it through the scrub, wild grass, and cultivated forests that carpet the Dà Qīng Mountain range. About 65km (40 miles) out of Hohhot, the bus makes a 10-minute stop in the small town of Wǔchuān. Before leaving Wǔchuān, let the driver know you wish to get off at **Lǚyóu Dùjià Cūn (Traveler's Holiday Village)** about 30km (19 miles) from Wǔchuān. A set of tourist *ger* (the Mongolian word for the circular felt tents known in Central Asia as yurts) are visible across the street about 300m (1,000 ft.) away. Mr. Bāo, who operates these with his wife, has horses, and though he's not inclined to let you ride off on your own, he and his yellow dog are affable riding companions. (When the mood strikes, he breaks into song—anything from Mongolian folk to "The East is Red.") With an hour, he can take you to a famous *oboo* (stone memorial) in the area. More time allows you to ride deeper into the grasslands and visit a herdsman's family living in a real *ger* rather than one for tourists. The going rate of ¥15 to ¥25 ($1.85–$3.10) per hour includes use of one of the guide's horses, though the first asking price will probably be in the ¥50 ($6.25) range. The Bāo family can also prepare a delicious Mongolian lunch (even vegetarian, if requested), which will include Mongolian milk tea and the homemade snacks that go with it. You may get *shǒubā ròu* (handheld meat)—mutton on the bone, eaten with the hands. The return bus passes the spot by the roadside where you were dropped off in the morning.

BY TAXI If you balk at taking a crowded, smoke-filled rattletrap with no air-conditioning, opt for a private taxi. Drivers are at the ready at the bus and railway stations. Prices can vary drastically, so ask around and compare. (This will amount to you and the driver pushing a calculator back and forth at each other.) Round-trip fare should be under ¥200 ($25), but you'll want to be certain the driver is taking you to a set of *ger* where you'll be able to ride horses and get a Mongolian meal.

TOURS One-day tours to Xīlāmùrén Dà Cǎoyuán start at ¥270 ($33) per person for a group of two to five. The tour includes a visit to a herding family, performance of Mongolian song and dance, and a wrestling demonstration. Unless you speak Mandarin, **CITS** is the most reliable way to go, though not the most adventurous. The office is in the Tōngdá Fàndiàn, Suite 530, on Chēzhàn Dōng Jiē (✆ **0471/682-8619**).

SHOPPING

The **Mínzú Shāngchǎng (Mongolian Minority Department Store)**—one of the biggest stores in Hohhot—is a one-stop shopping opportunity on Zhōngshān Xī Lù at the Gōngyúan Jiē intersection. On the first floor are a **bakery** and a large, well-stocked **supermarket** that's worth a visit if you're shopping for food, travel snacks, or alcohol. The second floor has Mongolian handicrafts, traditional costumes, swords, teapots, jewelry, and more. For travel snacks, you could also visit **Parkson** supermarket, which has just about anything you could want. Be prepared to check your backpack or let it be sealed in shrink-wrap so you can keep it with you. Store hours are from 9am to 8pm. It's located at Zhōngsh1an Xī Lù 212 at Tōngdào Nán Jiē..

WHERE TO STAY

Bāyàn Tǎlā Fàndiàn *Value* Renovated in 2002, the VIP Building in this clean, appealing hotel near Xīnhuá Guǎngchǎng offers a cheerful lobby and an atypically attractive elevator. Rooms have the usual twin beds and small bathrooms, but everything is spotless and well maintained. The VIP Building boasts a branch of Beijing's most famous Peking Duck restaurant, Quánjùdé. Though the "Main Building" is less charming, it, too, is clean, and offers dorm beds for as low as ¥20 ($2.50) in a setting a notch above the usual dorm standard.

Xīlínguōlè Běi Lù 42 (between Xīnhuá Dàjiē and Zhōngshān Xī Lù). ✆ **0471/696-3344.** Fax 0471/696-7390. 173 units with bathroom in VIP Building; 244 economy units (some with shower only, some with common bathroom) in Main Building. ¥380 ($47) standard room in VIP Building (off season as low as ¥200/$25); ¥600 ($75) suite. Rates in VIP Building include breakfast. ¥280 ($35) standard room in Main Building. Off season ¥160–220 ($20–$27). Bus: no. 34 or 35 from the railway station. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; small business center; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Guóháng Dàshà (Phoenix Hotel) ★ Completed in 2001 and owned by Air China, this four-star hotel equals or surpasses a good number of China's so-called five-star hotels. From the moment you step into the lobby, you know you're in an international hotel. Most of the staff have been trained in Shanghai and are competent and eager to please. Guest rooms are spacious and bathroom facilities are high in quality. The rooms have blonde wood desktops and crisp white down comforters; they are light, airy, and well maintained. Big discounts make this hotel a bargain.

Moments Skulls for Sale

It's not unusual on warm summer evenings to see someone peddling cow or sheep skulls on the city squares. Their buyers are probably opening a new business soon. A traditional belief is that after you eat a cow or sheep, its spirit is still alive. If you display the skull in a prominent place, the living spirit will attract other cows or sheep your way. The skull continues to be a symbol of good luck and a promise that business will thrive. The first asking price for a cow skull is ¥280 ($35), for a sheep skull, ¥160 ($20).

Xīnchéng Běi Jiē (north of Xīnchéng Běi/Nán Jiē and Xīnchéng Xī/Dōng Jiē junction). ✆ **0471/481-6611.** Fax 0471/628-0959. www.ni-phoenix.com.cn. 280 units. ¥880–¥1,080 ($110–$135) suite; ¥600–¥760 ($75–$95) standard room; ¥880–¥1,080 ($110–$135) suite. Rates include breakfast or use of sauna/swimming pool. Usual discount 25% with breakfast; 35% without breakfast. Bus: no. 2 from the railway station. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; large indoor pool; outdoor tennis court; health club, sauna; complimentary airport transfer; very helpful business center; ATM; forex; limited room service; laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV w/pay movies, dataport, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Nèiměnggǔ Fàndiàn (Inner Mongolia Hotel) ★ The Nèiměnggǔ was entirely rebuilt to five-star standards in 2001. In addition to having all the trappings of an international hotel (including a sweeping lobby staircase), it has the best non-Chinese cuisine in the province, served in three of Hohhot's handsomest restaurants. Guest rooms and bathrooms are spacious and attractive, service is excellent, and the decor in the hotel's lounges, bars, and tearooms is elegant. Located around the corner from the Xīnchéng Hotel, it hasn't the gorgeous grounds of its competitor, nor the warmth, but there is a public park right across the street. Get the best of both five-star worlds by staying at the Xīnchéng and dining here.

Wūlánchábù Xī Lù (east of Hūlúnbèiěr Nán Lù). ✆ **0471/693-8888.** Fax 0471/695-2288. www.nmghotel.com.cn. 345 units. ¥996–[Yen]1,536 ($124–$190) business or deluxe room; ¥788–¥830 ($98–$103) standard room; from ¥1,660 ($207) suite. 20% discount possible. AC, MC, V. Bus: no. 37 from the railway station to Wūlán Chábù Xī Lù; from there, walk east. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; bar; large indoor pool; health club; Jacuzzi; sauna; business center; forex; 24-hr. room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV w/pay movies, dataport, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Xīnchéng Bīnguǎn ★★ *Kids* The grounds of this hotel and garden complex in the heart of the city cover 119,000 sq. m (1,280,904 sq. ft.) and include a lake, a park, a large sports complex, and a set of *ger* tents. Originally built in 1958, the Xīnchéng underwent a 2001 renovation that produced Hohhot's first five-star hotel. (Some economy rooms are still available, though dorms are gone.) This is the place to take a break from traveling. If you have kids, send them off to swim, bowl, or play video games while you treat yourself to a massage in what the expats call the best spa in town. If you opt for a deluxe standard, ask for a room with a front view (overlooking gardens, a fountain and, in the distance, a bustling avenue) in the newly renovated Building A.

Hūlúnbèiěr Nán Lù 40. ✆ **0471/629-2218.** Fax 0471/693-1141. www.xincheng-hotel.com.cn. 300 units in buildings A and B; 5 villas with luxury rooms. ¥130–¥180 ($16–$22) economy standard (shared bathroom); ¥300–¥600 ($37–$75) deluxe standard; (¥3,000–¥15,000 ($375–$1,875) presidential suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 37 from railway station. For under a dollar, a taxi saves you the long walk across the immense grounds to the hotel's front door. **Amenities:** 12 restaurants; bar; large pool; indoor tennis courts; squash court; health club; sauna; bike rental; bowling alley; billiards; video arcade; business center; forex; limited room service; massage; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, dataport, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

There's a **KFC** on the first floor of the Parkson Building and another next to the Mínzú Shāngchǎng, and a **McDonald's** is on the way. But Hohhot's varied and satisfying Mongolian cuisine, a big change from the mainstream Chinese diet, should get priority.

Cháng Mǔ Dì Yóumiàn Dà Wáng ★★★ *Value* MONGOLIAN Eating in this lively restaurant specializing in pastas and pancakes made of husked wheat will put you in a good mood. The decor is a mix of Mongolian *ger* and prettified farmhouse. The walls are brightly decorated with floral and folk designs. The waitresses, dressed in equally bright colors and busy patterns, are friendly and efficient. Private rooms have imitation *kàng* (coal-heated brick beds). Best

of all, the food is inexpensive and exceptionally tasty. Try house specialties like *wōwo,* husked wheat pasta shaped by curling the dough around the little finger then pressed together in a bamboo steamer, forming what looks like honeycomb made of pasta. *dùndun*—husked-wheat pancakes filled with carrots, potato, and cabbage—are rolled up and sliced like Mediterranean levant sandwiches. Also try *wō bǐng,* or corncakes, which diners dunk like donuts into a soup of vinegar, sesame oil, and soybeans.

Dàxué Xi[li]lù (across from the pharmaceutical company Táng Yàoyè). ✆ **0471/691-0168.** Reservations recommended. Meal for 2 under ¥40 ($5). No credit cards. 10:30am–10pm.

Florence ★ *Value* ITALIAN/AMERICAN This attractive restaurant serves authentic pasta, pizza, and baked lasagna. The chef has worked in several international hotels—most recently in Xī'ān's Sheraton—which may be how poached salmon, lobster Newburg, and T-bone steak ended up on an Italian menu (not to mention the burger, fries, and club sandwich). Though neither the selection nor the dishes themselves demonstrate creativity, this is the best place to satisfy a craving for Western food. You can also drop in for tiramisu and espresso or order takeout. A violin soloist serenades diners nightly, and dinner is by candlelight, but dress is as casual or formal as you like.

In the Nèiměnggǔ Fàndiàn, Wūlánchábù Xī Lù (east of Hūlúnbèiěr Nán Lù). ✆ **0471/693-8888.** English menu. Pasta, pizza, and sandwiches ¥32–¥48 ($4–$6); steaks, seafood ¥78–¥128 ($9.75–$16). AE, DC, MC, V. 5:30–9:30pm.

Mão Bùwén Dà Jiǔlóu ★ HOME-STYLE/JIǍOZI In addition to local specialties and 80 kinds of *jiǎozi* (¥16–¥20/$2–$2.50 for 40), the menu includes Cantonese, Sìchuān, and Shāndōng specialties. The best time to come is between 8pm and 2am, when you'll find the place packed with locals enjoying a late supper of cold dishes and beer topped off by a plate of *lā miàn* (you can watch the chef stretch and swing the dough as it is transformed into noodles before your eyes). Highly recommended dishes are *suāncài ròu chǎo fěn* (wheat noodles mixed with shredded pork, green pepper, cabbage, and spices); *sù hézi* (fried vegetable pie stuffed with chives, crumbled scrambled egg, carrots, and tree ear fungus); the refreshingly light *shénxiān báicài tāng* (immortals' cabbage soup), which includes cabbage, shrimp, mushrooms, and carrots; and *tèsè kǎo rǔniú* (barbecued marinated veal). Before barbecuing, the veal is soaked for a day in a marinade containing over two dozen herbs and spices, the sum of which are said to balance *yīn* and *yáng*.

Hūlúnbèiěr Běi Kǒu 91 (at Zhōngshān Dōng Lù intersection). ✆ **0471/629-6558.** Meal for 2 ¥20 ($2.50) and up. No credit cards. 10am–2am.

Yù Lán Jiǔjiā ★★ *Finds* MONGOLIAN There's no better place to be introduced to Mongolian cooking than this clean, friendly, family-operated restaurant named after its female proprietor, Chén Yùlán. Though no one speaks English, the staff will bring out ingredients from the kitchen to show you what goes into any particular dish. Their best Mongolian specialties include various types of *guōzǎi.* This stew comes to the table in a pot with flame underneath. Unlike hot pot, the ingredients are already cooked when the dish is set in front of you. Just stir it a bit and remind your waiter to put the flame out when it gets too hot. A Mongolian favorite is *guōzǎi suāncài* (pickled vegetables and sheep organ *[yáng zásuì]* stew) made of mutton, sheep heart, lung, liver, intestines, cilantro, hot pepper, green vegetable, and spices. A Mongolian friend says Yùlán's version of this is exactly right. If you're not inclined to eat internal organs, the dish is also made with the same vegetables and spices combined with

Fun Fact A Mongolian Folk Instrument

Sounding most like a viola, the two-stringed bowed instrument played by Mongolian folk musicians is made of wood and sports a carved horse's head at the top of the neck—hence its name, *mǎtóu qín* or "horse head fiddle" (*morin khuur* in Mongolian). Traditionally, the bow was made of horse tail, and the two strings came from the horse's mane.

mutton *(yángròu),* beef *(niúròu),* or chicken *(jīròu). Chǎo miàn* are Mongolian-style fried wheat noodles that can be ordered with or without meat and include cilantro, sesame seeds, and garlic. *Nǎichá,* the milk tea of Hohhot—made with cow's milk—is absent the pungent mutton taste associated with milk tea of the outer steppe. Here, the tea is usually served salted with a dish of sugar on the side. Snacks such as *guǒtiáo* (sticks of crisp fried dough) and pats of *nǎipízi* ("milk skin" which, in taste and texture, falls between cream and fresh butter) are eaten on their own or tossed into the tea along with *chǎo fěn,* processed millet that looks like tiny yellow beads. *Liángfěn* are thick translucent grain noodles served cold in a thin broth made of vinegar, soy sauce, sesame seeds, and hot pepper. If the slimy texture of the noodles isn't an obstacle, you'll find this a delicious dish. In addition to Mongolian specialties, the chef makes a variety of noodle dishes, vegetable and meat dumplings, and delicious *jiācháng cài* (Chinese home-style fare).

Just down the alleyway that runs along the north side of the Bāyàntǎlā Hotel on Xīlínguōlè Běi Lù. It's the 1st restaurant on your right. ✆ **0696/3344-6101.** Meal for 2 ¥20–¥40 ($2.50–$5). No credit cards. 10am–10pm (to 9pm in winter).

HOHHOT AFTER DARK

Sàimǎ Chǎng Měnggǔ Dà Huì Gōng A performance stage and over a hundred *ger* (or yurts) have been erected on the large open field next to Hohhot's horse-racing track. They comprise one big restaurant specializing in Mongolian fare—from noodles to an entire barbecued goat. Even if you're not interested in eating, the time to come is between 6:30 and 9pm, when Mongolian folk musicians and dancers perform on the outdoor stage free of charge. On hot summer nights, Mongolians and Hàn alike bring their families for an inexpensive evening out. The combination of *ger,* outdoor music, and a crowd lend a county-fair atmosphere.

Sàimǎ Chǎng (Hohhot's horse-racing track). No credit cards. Restaurant: 9am–2:30pm and 5–10pm. Performance: 6:30–9pm. Performance canceled in snow or heavy rain. Bus: no. 13 north along Hūlúnbèiěr Lù to the racetrack.

3 Yínchuān ★

Níngxià Province, 1,369km (845 miles) W of Běijīng, 723km (450 miles) NW of Xī'ān

Compared to the other major cities in this chapter—particularly the dirty duo of Dàtóng and Tàiyuán—Yínchuān is a breath of fresh air. Capital of the Níngxià Huí Autonomous Region, it has a population under a million, its tree-lined streets still have relatively few automobiles, and it is rumored (read: reported by the *People's Daily*) to be the quietest city in China. It has also escaped the extreme poverty associated with this province by having the good fortune to be hydrated by the Yellow River and an irrigation system first built during the Hàn dynasty. Over a third of the region's population is Huí (Chinese Muslims),

The (Nearly) Lost Dynasty of the Xī Xià

After Genghis Khan died in 1227 near the Xī Xià (Western Xià) capital of Zhōngxīng Fǔ (present-day Yínchuān), his corpse was carried in an ox-drawn chariot—the centerpiece of a grand procession that led back to the Mongolian steppe. En route, any person or beast in the procession's path was slaughtered—in offering to the Khan's spirit and to keep news of his death from spreading. As dour as it must have been, the escorting soldiers might have smiled to themselves in the knowledge they were returning home victorious—having once and for all defeated the Xī Xià (Western Xià) dynasty (1038–1227), which had lasted almost 200 years.

Today the Xī Xià is somewhat of a mystery. It was never recognized as a legitimate dynasty by the Chinese, so there is no official history of the empire or its people, the Tangut; and Xī Xià documents—written in a system fashioned after but different from Chinese—have been difficult to decipher. It's known that the ancient Tangut nomads came from what is now Sìchuān, Qīnghǎi, and Tibet. By the Táng dynasty (618–907), they had a leader and were one of the major players (along with the Khitan and Jurchen) in the ongoing struggle for territory. By the early 11th century they had defeated the Sòng imperial army, declared an independent empire, and extracted an annual tribute of tea, cloth, silk, and silver from the Sòng empire. Almost a century later, the Xià's alliance with the Jīn (the Jurchen state) ignited the wrath of Genghis Khan, who personally led his troops south to destroy the "Great Xià," as they called themselves. At its height, the Xī Xià empire controlled much of what is now Qīnghǎi, Gānsù, Níngxià, and Inner Mongolia. This obscure Buddhist state left behind imperial mausoleums, religious monuments, its own written language, and cultural relics that reveal a passion for Buddhist art, fine pottery, sculpture, and exquisite gold and silver artifacts. Much of what remains can be seen in and around Yínchuān.

and a significant percentage live in the capital, adding a cultural diversity less apparent in other Chinese capitals. This is an easy town to settle down in for a few days. Hotel rates aren't exorbitant, the food is good, and most of the sights are within walking distance or easy to get to by bus or taxi.

The best time to visit is between May and October. Though summer temperatures can soar, the dry climate makes even the hottest days bearable. ***Note:*** Yínchuān holds its annual Motorcycle Tourism Festival June 16 to 22. The emphasis is on tourism, so unless you're prepared for throngs of unregenerate cap-wearing tourists and dancers in go-go boots performing the "songs and dances of the Western Xià," it may be a good time to stay away.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE There are direct **flights** from most major cities, including Běijīng, Shànghǎi, Chéngdū, Guǎngzhōu, and Xī'ān. Discounts are usually available. The **CAAC** office (✆ **0951/691-3668**) is located in the Mínháng Hotel (Mínháng Dàshà) at Shènglì Jiēkǒu (Shènglì Junction). A bus costing ¥15

ACCOMMODATIONS

Hóngqiáo Dàjiǔdiàn **4**
虹桥大酒店

Yīshèng Bīnguǎn **7**
伊盛宾馆

Zhōngyín Bīnguǎn **2**
中银宾馆

DINING

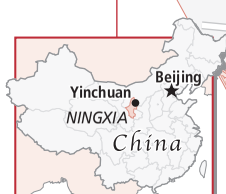
Shāhú Bīnguǎn **3**
沙湖宾馆

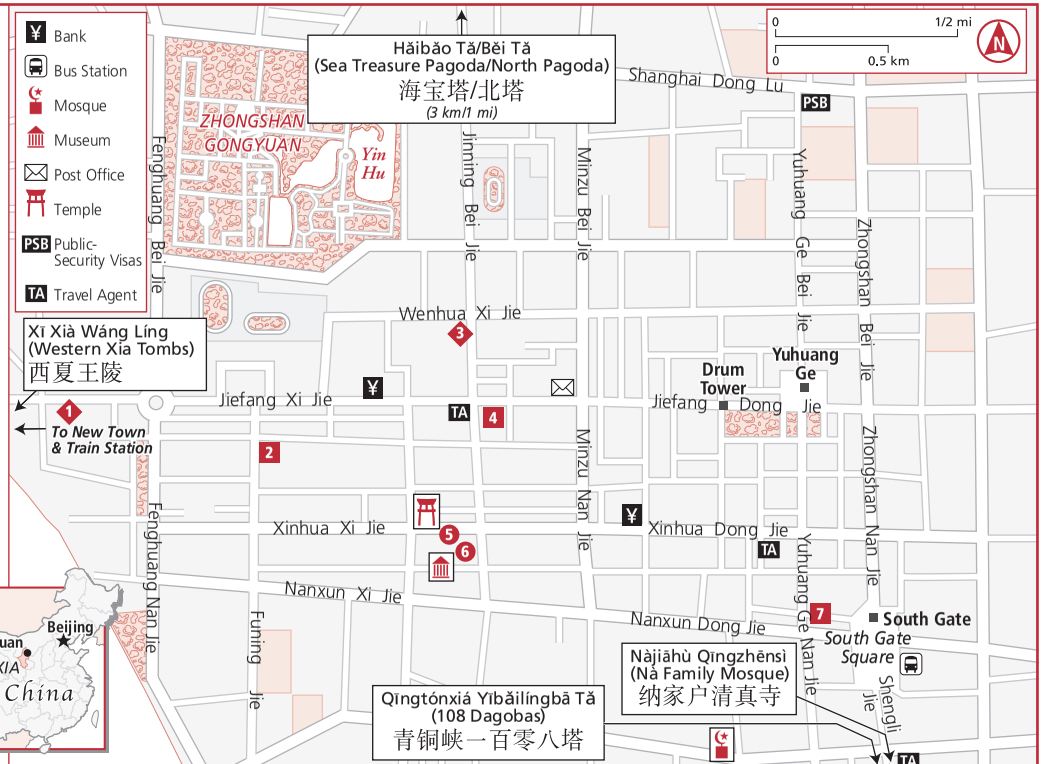
Yùhuáng Gé Jiǔdiàn **1**
玉皇阁酒店

ATTRACTIONS

Chéngtiān Sì/Xī Tǎ
(Chéngtiān Temple/West Pagoda) **5**
承天寺/西塔

Níngxià Bówùguǎn **6**
(Níngxià Museum)
宁夏博物馆





($1.90) to **Hédōng Airport** leaves the hotel 95 minutes before flights for the 25-minute trip. Buses meet every flight. A taxi into town costs about ¥24 to ¥32 ($3–$4).

The **railway station** is in the new part of town, but there's a booking and ticket office in the old town on Xīnhuá Dōng Jiē. Major connections are with Běijīng (K177/K178; 20 hr.) and Xī'ān (2585/6 and 2587/8; 15 hr.). Trains connecting Hohhot and Lánzhōu stop in Yínchuān (no. 2003 and 2004).

The **long distance bus station (qìchē zhàn)** is in the southeast corner of the old city on Shènglì Běi Jiē. From Xī'ān, there are five afternoon sleeper buses to Yínchuān (720km/447 miles; 15 hr.; ¥110/$14) and three express buses daily to Xī'ān at 7am, 8:40am, and 9am (723km/450 miles; ¥136/$17). Four buses connect with Tàiyuán (763km/474 miles; ¥115–¥122/$14–$15); two express buses connect with Yán'ān (449km/279 miles; ¥75/$9.35); and four buses connect with Lánzhōu (514km/320 miles; ¥41–¥75/$5–$9.35). Tickets can be bought up to 4 days in advance at the bus station.

GETTING AROUND Yínchuān has a new town (as of the 1960s) and an old town. The railway station is in the new town, but everything else the traveler would need or want is in the much more charming old town 10km (6 miles) to the east. **Taxis** wait in the parking lot at the railway station to transport passengers to the old town. Most prefer not to use the meter, and you'll have to negotiate for a reasonable fare (about ¥15/$1.90). **Minibus** no. 1 goes from the railway station to the Nán Mén Qìchē Zhàn (South Gate Bus Station) via Jiěfàng Jiē, which runs east to west through the center of the old town; the fare is ¥3 (40¢). **Bus** no. 11 from the railway station follows the same route, but turns north instead of south at the end of Jiěfàng Dōng Jiē. Bus fare within the old city is ¥1 (15¢). Taxi rates are ¥6 (75¢) for the first 3km (2 miles), then ¥1.20 (15¢) per kilometer. Beyond 8km (5 miles), the rate is ¥1.50 (20¢) per kilometer. Fares within the old town will rarely exceed ¥6 (75¢). ***Tip:*** When negotiating trips to out-of-town sites, local residents calculate ¥1 (15¢) per kilometer.

TOURS Níngxià **CITS,** at Jiěfàng Xī Jiē 116 (✆ **0951/505-4477**), arranges expensive tours to nearby sites, Zhōngwèi, and Shāpōtóu.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China,** at Jiěfàng Jiē 80, has a 24-hour ATM. Change traveler's checks and foreign currency at window 10. Bank hours are Monday to Friday from 8:30am to noon and 2:30 to 6pm (2–5:30pm in winter). For cash advances on credit cards, go to the second floor of the branch at Xīnhuá Dōng Jiē 5, which also has a 24-hour ATM and foreign exchange.

Internet Access Just south of the Yùhuáng Gé, there's a true Internet bar *(wǎngbā)* at Yùhuáng Gé Nán Jiē 53. Cocktails are served up front; the computers are in a small room at the back. The bar is open 24 hours and charges ¥2 (25¢) per hour. Dial-up is **163** or **169.**

Post Office The main post office (open 8am–6:30pm summer, until 6pm winter) is on the northwest corner of the Jiěfàng Xī Jiē and Mínzú Běi Jiē intersection.

Visa Extensions The Exit-Entry Office of the **PSB** is in the northeast quadrant of the old town at Yùhuáng Gé Běi Jiē 105, entered from Shànghǎi Dōng Lù, ✆ **0951/691-5080** (Mon–Fri 8:30am–noon, 2:30–6:30pm summer, 2–6pm

winter). The official processing time is 3 to 5 days, but it's usually done overnight. Take bus no. 4 from Wénhuà Jiē.

IN & AROUND THE TOWN

Chéngtiān Sì and Níngxià Bówùguǎn (Chéngtiān Temple and Níngxià Museum) The museum, which doesn't keep the most reliable hours, is on the grounds of Chéngtiān Temple, which also goes by the name of its Xī Tǎ (West Pagoda). First erected in 1050, the pagoda did not survive Yínchuān's devastating 1739 earthquake. The existing pagoda dates from 1820, and visitors are allowed to climb the 11-story building.

The museum collection is divided into four parts, distributed among three buildings. The first two sections share a building and are devoted to the history, language, and relics of the Western Xià dynasty. Of all the sites in and around Yínchuān, these two rooms have the most helpful English explanations. The advantage to making this your first stop is a better understanding of the culture that is most connected with the out-of-town tombs and pagodas. The second building houses relics of the Communist revolution and has no English labeling. A third hall focuses on the Huí (Muslim) "nationality," and has only an English introduction.

Jìnníng Jiē 6. Admission to museum and pagoda ¥20 ($2.50). 6am–6pm summer; 9am–5:30pm winter. Bus: no. 2.

Hǎibǎo Tǎ/Běi Tǎ (Sea Treasure Pagoda/North Pagoda) In a province that has more than its share of stately pagodas, Hǎibǎo Tǎ is one of the loveliest. Originally built in the fifth century, it was toppled by the 1739 earthquake and rebuilt in the original style some 30 years later. Restored since then, it has retained its distinctive cross-shaped ground plan that adds depth and complexity to the four-sided tower. Its rare peach-shaped steeple of glazed green tiles is one of only two—the other crowns Chéngtiān Temple's West Pagoda.

3km (1 mile) north of town along Jìnníng Běi Jiē. Admission ¥5 (65¢). 8am–6pm summer; 9am–5pm winter. No public bus. Taxi from town center ¥5 (65¢).

Nàjiāhù Qīngzhēnsì (Nà Family Mosque) A good time to visit this 490-year-old wooden mosque is morning, as the town begins to stir. From the three-storied entrance gate, you can look east over the flat-topped brick houses and into small yards and alleys. The population of greater Yǒngníng (which is a half-hour drive south of Yínchuān) is about 80% Huí, while this old village that immediately surrounds the mosque is 100% Huí—that being one of the requisites of residing in this well-preserved section of town. To this day a majority of residents are part of the Nà family after which the mosque was named. According to the septuagenarian caretaker, the mosque escaped the destruction of the Cultural Revolution because the tightly knit community kept constant watch over it and refused entrance to the Red Guard. These days, visitors are invited into the pretty and peaceful courtyard. If you come alone or with only a few people, the caretaker may also let you into the prayer hall.

23km (14 miles) from Yínchuān in the town of Yǒngníng, at Guó Dào 109. Admission ¥5 (60¢). 6am–noon and 1:30–4pm. Bus: green no. 9 opposite Nán Mén to Yǒngníng; you'll be dropped at the Xīnzhàizi Lùkǒu (Xīnzhàizi intersection). Walk west about 300m (1,000 ft.). You'll cross a small timber bridge. Look for the mosque on your left.

Qīngtóng Xiá Yībǎilíngbā Tǎ (108 Dagobas) Little is known about the 108 dagobas that stand like bowling pins on the side of the Qīngtóng Gorge, near the Yellow River. In the Míng dynasty they were referred to as the "ancient

pagodas" *(gǔ tǎ)* and their origin was already a mystery. Today scholars associate them with the Western Xià dynasty because other relics and remains from the Xià culture have been unearthed in the vicinity. Their shape—like a Buddhist alms bowl—is similar to that of the classic Tibetan stupa, supporting the accepted belief that Tibetan Buddhism thrived in this area during the Western Xià and Yuán dynasties. Extensive repairs were made to them in 1987, but the dagobas are unusual and worth the visit. On the way, consider stopping at the Nàjiāhù Qīngzhēnsì (see above).

82km (51 miles) south of Yínchuān, near Qīngtóng Xiá Zhèn. Admission ¥10 ($1.25). 7:30am–7pm. Bus: no. 153 to Qīngtóng Xiá Zhèn (not to be confused with Qīngtóng Xiá Shì, where the bus may stop on the way). Minibuses wait at the drop-off point. The asking price will be higher if the minibus isn't full. Hard bargaining might get it down to ¥20 ($2.50). If the minibus is full, it should be considerably less. To walk from the drop-off junction, take the road to the right. Turn left at the hydroelectric plant; then continue toward the right until you reach the dam. (Signs in English point the way.) Cross the Yellow River by ferry (¥15/$2 round-trip), then hike up and over. Follow the trail to the dagobas. A taxi from Yínchuān and back, including road toll and parking, should be around ¥180 ($23) and take 1 hr., 40 min. one-way.

Xī Xià Wáng Líng (Western Xià Tombs) As the tourism bureau develops this spot, it is fast acquiring a theme-park aura. But if you can forgive the modern "spirit way" (fashioned after the path to the Míng tombs), skip the cheesy reenactment scenes of Xià life in the "Art Hall," and ignore promoters' claims that these are "China's Pyramids," you'll be able to appreciate this intriguing site. The tombs of nine Xià kings are spread across a 5km by 11km (3-mile by 7-mile) area at the foot of the Hèlán Mountains. In the fashion of Táng imperial tombs, each of these was originally surrounded by a 1-hectare (2½-acre) mausoleum composed of eight different types of traditional buildings. While only ruins survive, all but one of the nine imperial tombs remain intact. Dotting the landscape, the eerie, mud-encased pyramids resemble giant termite mounds. A two-story museum contains most of the relics, such as compelling stone plinths carved to look like potbellied gnomes on their knees, eyes and foreheads bulging as if from the weight they bear.

38km (24 miles) west of Yínchuān on eastern slopes of Hèlán Mountains. Admission ¥30 ($3.75). For now, no public buses, but that may change when current roadwork to the site is completed. Taxi round-trip: negotiate for ¥80–¥100 ($10–$13).

SHOPPING

The largest supermarket in town is the **Huálián Supermarket** (9am–10pm) under Nánmén Square opposite the bus station.

WHERE TO STAY

Hóngqiáo Dàjiǔdiàn This is the closest Yínchuān gets to a four-star hotel. Rooms are well maintained and carpets are clean while midsize bathrooms have combo shower and tub. The hotel isn't in the heart of the tourist area, but it's only a few blocks west of Gǔ Lóu (the Drum Tower), which is the center of town. It's popular, and is especially busy on weekends.

Jiěfàng Xī Jiē. ✆ **0951/691-8888.** Fax 0951/691-8788. 192 units. ¥339–¥382 ($42–$47) standard room. 10% discounts often available. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 1 or 11 from railway station. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; fitness center; ticketing; business center; forex; limited room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Yīshèng Bīnguǎn This newly opened budget hotel north of Nán Guān Mosque is modest, exceptionally clean, and one of the few inexpensive guesthouses in Yínchuān that isn't dismal. Guest rooms are small and bright; each has a private bathroom and shower without a separate cubicle. The hotel's

location—within walking distance of Nán Mén, the bus station, and the Nán Guān Mosque—makes it prime for sightseeing.

Nánxūn Dōng Jiē 67 (northeast corner of Nánxūn Dōng and Yùhuáng Gé Nán Jiē intersection). ✆ **0951/604-1888.** 12 units. ¥138 ($17) standard room. 20% discounts sometimes available. Bus: no. 2 or 17. **Amenities:** Teahouse. *In room:* TV.

Zhōngyín Bīnguǎn Opened in 1997 and yet to be renovated, this hotel has still been maintained better than most. The rooms are clean and airy, and except for a few spots of peeling wallpaper, they don't show extreme wear. With the discount, the value is good.

Fùníng Jiē 27. ✆ **0951/501-1918.** Fax 0951/504-7545. 50 units. ¥200–¥260 ($25–$32) standard room; ¥580–¥880 ($72–$110) suite. Non-discounted rates include breakfast. 20% discount available. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 1 or 11 from railway station to Fùníng Jiē, then walk 2 min. south. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bowling alley; ticketing; business center; limited room service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

Shāhú Bīnguǎn ★ *Value* CHINESE FAST FOOD By 7am customers are lined up at this restaurant's outdoor stand to buy *bāozi* (stuffed steamed buns) for takeout. Generous portions of good, inexpensive food have turned this restaurant into the most popular breakfast spot in Yínchuān. According to one taxi driver, a ¥3 (40¢) *bāozi* at Shāhú is one and a half times the size of a ¥3-*bāozi* anywhere else. For very little money you can sample lots of local specialties; choose from among noodle dishes, savory pancakes, eight-treasure soups *(bābǎo zhōu)*—of which there are many kinds—and every sort of *bāozi, jiǎozi,* and *hézi* (steamed buns, Chinese ravioli, fried meat or vegetable pies). A sample breakfast costing just ¥8 ($1) includes a bowl of noodles, three vegetarian *bāozi,* two fried *jiǎozi,* and two crepes stuffed with chives, egg, and cilantro. And there are many more choices for meat eaters and vegetarians alike. Customers pay food servers with coupons purchased in advance from the cashier. Unspent coupons can also be redeemed there.

Wénhuà Xī Jiē 22 (on the ground floor of the Shāhú Hotel). Meal for 2 ¥16 ($2). No credit cards. 6:30am–2pm and 5–10pm. Bus: no. 4 or 18.

Yùhuáng Gé Jiǔdiàn ★★ HOME-STYLE This family-operated restaurant at the west end of town is out of the way but worth the trip. The decor is simple and characteristic of this style of restaurant—fluorescent lights and neat rows of tables for four—but what it lacks in ambience it makes up for in great food. Try the *guàntāng bāozi.* These unleavened *bāozi* served in a bamboo steamer are a Xī'ān specialty. The choice of stuffing includes beef *(niúròu),* mutton *(yángròu),* or vegetable *(sùxiàn).* Their version of *tǔdòu sī* (shredded potatoes with slivers of green and red pepper) is also delicious, as is sweet *bābǎo zhōu* (eight treasure soup), made with sesame seeds, peanuts, rice, lotus seeds, and *gǒuqí* (sometimes translated "wolfberry"), the ubiquitous dried fruit from this area that resembles a red raisin and is considered good for the health by Chinese.

Jiěfàng Xī Jiē 158. ✆ **0951/505-4758.** Meal for 2 ¥20–¥50 ($2.50–$6.25). No credit cards. 10am–10pm.

4 Yán'ān

Shǎnxī Province, 371km (230 miles) N of Xī'ān

For 10 years between 1937 and 1947, the dusty, desolate town of Yán'ān in Shǎnxī Province (sometimes spelled "Shaanxi" to distinguish it from its neighbor, Shānxī) was the site from which the Chinese Communist Party consolidated power and spread revolution. It was here that Máo seized leadership of the

Party and formulated the theories that came to be known as "Máo Zédōng Thought." As the Japanese took control of the eastern part of the country, intellectuals from all over China moved to impoverished Yán'ān, eager to make their contribution and share in the collective experiment. Among them were the writer Dīng Líng (who was chastised by Máo for her essay on International Women's Day—"Thoughts on March 8"—which pointed out gender inequities in Yán'ān) and the Shànghǎi starlet Jiāng Qīng, who became Máo's third wife and, later, a key player in the Cultural Revolution. This part of northern Shǎnxī was also the location of Chén Kǎigē's affecting 1984 film, *Yellow Earth,* about the impact on villagers of a young Communist soldier who goes into the countryside to collect folk songs.

Like Máo's birthplace of Sháo Shān, Yán'ān was a place of pilgrimage during the 1960s. Now, it has returned to being a not-quite sleepy town, eager to take part in the modernization sweeping China. The appeal of this part of Shǎnxī is its very austerity—the cave dwellings, the dry terraced hills, and the yellow loess that covers it all. The "revolutionary sites" that have become such a part of the founding myth of the PRC will also draw anyone with an interest in modern Chinese history. *Note:* Please turn to Appendix A for Chinese translations of key locations.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **Yán'ān Airport** is 10km (6 miles) northeast of town. A **CAAC shuttle bus** (✆ **0911/211-3854**) costing ¥5 (65¢) runs between the airport and the Mínháng Bīnguǎn (Jīchǎng Lù); it departs from the CAAC office an hour before flights and meets all arrivals. Yán'ān is connected by air with Běijīng (5 flights weekly) and Xī'ān (daily).

The Yán'ān **railway station** is at the south end of town, with services from Xī'ān (4761/4762, 7551/7552; ¥76/$10 hard sleeper). The best chance of getting a sleeper leaving Yán'ān is through your hotel or CITS. At the station, same-day tickets go on sale at 3:30pm. Arrive by 3:15pm and be prepared to fight your way to the window. Scalpers who aren't inclined to deal with foreigners usually buy up all the hard sleepers—ask a Chinese for help.

Buses arrive and depart from the railway station parking lot and the **qìchē zhàn (bus station)** east of town on Dōng Guān Jiē. From Píngyáo or Tàiyuán, it's easiest to go to Xī'ān first, then transfer to bus or train for Yán'ān. Buses connecting Xī'ān and Yán'ān leave throughout the day for the 6- to 7-hour journey costing ¥40 to ¥6.50 ($5–$8.50). Overnight buses also connect Yán'ān to Luòyáng and Yínchuān.

GETTING AROUND Shaped like a "Y," the city of Yán'ān traces the Yán River as it forks to the east and west. The town is small by Chinese standards and easy to navigate on foot, since its commercial district is concentrated in a few blocks around Zhōngxīn Jiē (Central St.) and Dà Qiáo Jiē (Big Bridge St.). City **bus** rides cost ¥1 (15¢). Rates for the two types of **taxis** are ¥5 (65¢) or ¥6 (75¢) for the first 3km (2 miles), then ¥1.20 (15¢) per kilometer or ¥1.30 (15¢) per kilometer. Between 10pm and 7am, the first 3km (2 miles) are ¥5.90 (75¢) or ¥6.90 (85¢). Most destinations within the city are under ¥10 ($1.25).

TOURS **CITS** (✆ **0911/212-3320**) is a short distance down the alley next to the Yán'ān Bīnguǎn. The office is on the second floor of the brick compound to your right. Hours are Monday through Friday from 8am to noon and 2 to 6pm, but the office is occasionally empty even then.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China,** at Zhōngxīn Jiē and Běi Guān Jiē, changes cash. It's open Monday through Friday from 8am to noon and 2:30 to 6pm (to 5:30pm in winter).

Internet Access **Huànyǐng Wǎngbā,** a small 24-hour Internet room, is in Qǔyì Guǎn, the lane next to the Yán'ān Bīnguǎn, at the top of the outdoor stairway. The access rate is ¥2 (25¢) per hour. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The post office is on Zhōngx1n Jiē, south of Yán'ān Bīnguǎn. It also offers 24-hour Internet access.

IN & AROUND TOWN

Fènghuáng Shān (Phoenix Hill) During the months after the Long March when the Communist Party first arrived in Yán'ān, it chose this site for its headquarters. Of greatest interest are the cave dwellings of Máo Zédōng, Zhōu Ēnlái, and Zhū Dé, who lived here between 1937 and 1938. Brick floors, simple wooden furniture, and graceful window lattices give these austere rooms a cozy quality. On display are intriguing photographs from the Yán'ān years, Yán'ān currency, and the raised *kàng* (a coal-heated brick bed). On sale are attractive black-and-white prints with proletarian themes by a local artist.

Entrance on Zhōngxīn Jiē, a few hundred yards south of the Yán'ān Hotel, before the post office. Admission ¥9 ($1.15). 8am–6pm (to 5:30pm winter).

Gémìng Jìniànguǎn (Revolutionary Memorial Hall/Museum) While Máo lies under glass in Běijīng, the trusty white steed that transported him through northern Shǎnxī in 1947 stands stuffed behind glass at this museum. Unfortunately, there is no English signage, so without a familiarity with the players, the photographs on display have little meaning. Weapons, personal effects, and military gear are of some interest, but the museum—established in 1950 as "a classroom for advancing patriotism, revolutionary tradition, and the Yán'ān spirit"—shouldn't take more than a half-hour of your time.

Northwest of the city center. Admission ¥15 ($1.85). 8am–6pm (to 5:30pm in winter). Bus: no. 8 from Dà Qiáo Jiē.

Wángjiāpíng Gémìng Jiùzhǐ (Former Revolutionary Headquarters at Wángjiāpíng) A 5-minute walk south of the museum is the site of the general office of the Eighth Route Army and headquarters of the CCP Central Military Commission from 1937 to 1947. Máo, Zhū Dé, Zhōu Ēnlái, and other top brass also lived here at various times. In March 1947, as the Guómíndǎng (KMT) army moved into northern Shǎnxī, the CCP abandoned Yán'ān, and during the following 13 months of KMT occupation, the Wángjiāpíng buildings were destroyed. Some years later, after the end of the civil war, they were restored according to the original layout and design. The simple mud dwellings and halls, with their low-pitched rooflines and arched doorways and windows that mimic the surrounding hills, are worthy of Frank Lloyd Wright in the way they blend with the natural environment. The site is similar to Fènghuáng Shān (see above), but on a much larger scale. If you don't have time for both, this is the one to see.

Admission ¥12 ($1.50). 8am–6pm (to 5:30pm in winter). Bus: no. 8 from Dà Qiáo Jiē.

WHERE TO STAY

Many Yán'ān hotels still cannot accept foreigners, so choices are limited.

Yán'ān Bīnguǎn Dignitaries such as Ho Chi Minh, Lee Kuan Yew, Zhōu Ēnlái, and Jiāng Zémín have stayed at this Soviet-style hotel, but until an upgrade in 2000, it had only three stars. In some ways, nothing's changed. Although guest rooms are clean and comfortable (but absolutely generic), water pressure is poor and there's only cold water from the sink faucet. The hotel is several decades old and still feels like a government hotel, which it is. The staff seems slightly suspicious of guests, and they generally lack the cordiality required in hotels that have to compete to stay in business. The Yàshèng (below) is a much better choice.

Zhōngxīn Jiē 56. ✆ **0911/211-3122.** Fax 0911/211-4297. 193 units. ¥480–¥580 ($60–$72) standard room; ¥1,160–¥2,880 ($145–$360) suite. Most rates include breakfast. 20% discount available. 10% service charge. No credit cards. Bus: no. 2, 3, 12 from railway station. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; indoor pool, ticketing; business center; forex; limited room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge.

Yàshèng Dàjiǔdiàn A welcoming, efficient staff and bustling lobby make this three-star hotel instantly more inviting than the Yán'ān Bīnguǎn. And while its hallways are dim and rather cavernous, guest rooms are almost comparable to those at the four-star Yán'ān. Slightly smaller, they are nonetheless clean and well maintained. An advantage to the location is that the area is lively and full of restaurants and food stalls.

Èr Dào Jiē, Zhōng Duàn. ✆ **0911/213-2778.** Fax 0911/213-2779. 189 units. ¥228–¥380 ($28–$47) standard room. No credit cards. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; ticketing; business center; forex; limited room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

WHERE TO DINE

One of the best areas to find good, inexpensive dishes is along Ér Dào Jiē in the vicinity and north of Yàshèng Hotel. In warm weather this is a popular stretch for evening strolls. Along nearby Dà Qiáo Jiē, you'll also find outdoor stalls and small restaurants selling *jiǎozi* (Chinese ravioli), meat kabobs, *yángròu pào mó* (mutton soup), and pasta, including *dāoxiāo miàn*—knife-pared noodles—made by paring slices off a block of pasta dough into a large pot of boiling water. Supposedly, in earlier days, the chef placed a clump of dough atop his cotton skullcap and, with a knife in each hand, whittled away above his head—pasta strips flying—until all the dough was in the pot.

5 Píngyáo ★

Shānxī Province, 616km (383 miles) SW of Běijīng, 100km (62 miles) S of Tàiyuán, 540km (335 miles) NE of Xī'ān

The great majority of Chinese cities have histories extending back hundreds and often thousands of years, but few have anything outside of a museum to show for it. The central Shānxī city of Píngyáo is an exception. This 2,700-year-old city had its heyday during the late Míng and Qīng dynasties, and the walled city that survives today was largely built then, though a few Yuán dynasty structures also survive. Chinese and overseas travelers come to this area to see some of the best-preserved traditional architecture in China: gray-brick courtyard homes *(sìhéyuàn),* extravagant family mansions (one of which was the set for Zhāng Yìmóu's *Raise the Red Lantern*), a Míng city wall, Daoist and Buddhist temples, and China's earliest commercial banks. Visitors also get to stay in restored courtyards, sleep on a *kàng* (heated brick bed), and eat wonderful Shānxī cuisine, which for some reason has yet to catch on in the West.

But Píngyáo isn't all quaintness and old-world charm. Like any place in China dependent on tourism, it has an overabundance of vehicles of every kind, fake

antiques, touts, and, well, tourists. As more residents of the old city are moved to modern apartments with modern plumbing, this World Heritage city faces the threat of becoming an over-precious imitation of itself. But for now, Píngyáo still has the vitality of a thriving town behind the veneer of an ancient one. *Note:* Turn to Appendix A for Chinese translations of key locations.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Overnight **trains** from Běijīng save you a night's hotel stay and arrive in Píngyáo in the morning. The Tàiyuán–Yùnchéng train, the K25/K27, stops in Píngyáo; so does the Xī'ān–Tiānjīn train, the 2562; and the Tàiyuán–Xī'ān train, the 2535. For sleepers, you may have to leave from Tàiyuán. Luxury **buses** from Běijīng's Lìzé Qiáo Long Distance Bus Station leave every 20 minutes (6 hr.; ¥120/$15). Transfer to a direct Iveco bus to Píngyáo (2 hr.; ¥25/$3.15). A new expressway from Běijīng will soon reach Píngyáo and reduce the total drive to 6 hours. There are three to six buses daily connecting with Xī'ān (8 hr.; ¥115/$14).

GETTING AROUND Trains and buses arrive at the Píngyáo **railway station** in the modern city that is west of the ancient wall. The 7-minute ride by **bicycle rickshaw** to the old city is ¥2 (25¢). Taxis aren't allowed into the narrow streets of old Píngyáo, so walk a short stretch or take a bicycle rickshaw for about ¥2 (25¢). Most of the courtyard hotels are in the vicinity of the Shì Lóu (Market Building)—the tallest building in sight—at the center of the ancient town, on Nán Dàjiē (also called Míng Qīng Jiē).

The old town has only four main streets and a number of small lanes, so most places are within walking or biking distance. A ride on a motorcycle or bicycle rickshaw to places within the wall cost only a few *yuán.* Several of the courtyard hotels rent bicycles. There's also **bike rental** at Xī Dàjiē 50 (near Běi Dàjiē).

TOURS Most of the courtyard hotels can arrange cars and buy bus and train tickets for a small fee.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs None available.

Internet Access At Chénghuáng Jiē 31, in the southeast quadrant of town, a 24-hour Internet service is operated by a couple out of their home ("Knock and we'll open"). They charge ¥2 (25¢) per hour. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The old town's post office is at Xī Dàjiē 1.

EXPLORING THE TOWN

The ancient town within the 6km (4-mile) long city wall is ideal for walking. Take your map, head in any direction, and you're bound to find traditional architectural and cultural gems. On the way, you'll get to see how some of the 40,000 current residents of Píngyáo live. A good first stop is the three-story **Shì Lóu (Market Building)** that marks the city center and affords the best view of the old town. The well-preserved Míng dynasty **ancient city wall *(gǔ chéngqiáng),*** made of rammed earth and bricks, also affords views of the old city and outlying areas. It takes about 75 minutes to walk the circumference of the wall (admission ¥15/$1.85). Near the center of town, **Rìshēng Chāng** and **Bǎi Chuān Tōng**—headquarters of two of 19th-century China's leading money exchanges—are reminders that this remote town was once the financial center of the Qīng government. Both compounds have been transformed into museums that look much more like elegant courtyard residences than banks. Restored

and rebuilt, Rìshēng Chāng (Xī Dàjiē 38) is an engaging museum consisting of three courtyards and almost two dozen halls and rooms (open 8am–7pm in summer, 9am–6:30pm in winter; admission is ¥16/$2). Bǎi Chuān Tōng (Nán Dàjiē 109) is now a furniture museum consisting of bedrooms, parlors, a kitchen, and a room for taking snuff (and probably opium)—all furnished and decorated in Míng and Qīng styles (open 8:30am–7pm in summer, 9am–6pm in winter; admission is ¥13/$1.60).

A few blocks southeast of the Market Building on Chénghuáng Miào Jiē are three Daoist temples in one, the **Chénghuáng Miào, Cáishén Miào,** and **Zàojūn Miào,** honoring the City God, the God of Wealth, and the Kitchen God. The separate but connected buildings are meant to imitate the arrangement of the government seat and its offices. Start at the Temple of the City God. At the back, where scriptures would normally be, the walls have trompe l'oeil murals of bookshelves filled with books and scrolls. Turn right (east) to get to the Kitchen God Temple. To get to the less obvious Temple of the God of Wealth, go to the back of the first temple and take the door to the left (west). This Míng dynasty complex burned down twice and was last rebuilt in 1864. Hours are from 8am to 8pm (to 6pm in winter); admission is ¥15 ($1.85). Follow Chénghuáng Miào Jiē west (where it becomes Zhèngfǔ Jiē) to visit the **Xiànyá Shǔ** (or Yámen). This was the administrative office that meted out justice, such as it was, during the Míng and Qīng dynasties. On the east side, there was a summoning drum *(dēngwén gǔ).* When someone had a complaint, they beat the drum to call for the Yámen chief, who would then hear the case and make his judgment. You may catch performers in rehearsal for operas and reenactments of trials that are performed here at select times throughout the week. Museum hours are from 8am to 7pm (8am–6pm in winter); admission is ¥20 ($2.50). A fine example of a wealthy urban residence, the former home of pioneering banker Léi Lǔtài, **Léi Lǔtài Gǔjū,** Shūyuàn Jiē 11 (open 7am–8pm summer, 8am–7pm winter; ¥8/$1), is also worth a visit for its four rows of connecting courtyards, each in a different style. In the front courtyard, a "certified fortune-teller" reads hands, faces, and astrological charts—alas, only in Chinese.

A Buddhist temple (open 8am–6pm; ¥12/$1.50) within biking or driving distance of Píngyáo is **Zhènguó Sì,** 12km (7½ miles) northeast of the old town. Its **Wànfó Diàn (Palace of Ten Thousand Buddhas),** from the Táng dynasty, is another of China's oldest timber-frame buildings. Inside, its impressive statuary dates to the Five Dynasties (907–960). One of the pleasures of this less-visited temple is its tranquil atmosphere, due in part to an absence of touts and souvenir stalls.

OUT OF TOWN

Qiáo Jiā Dàyuàn ★★ The best-known of Shānxī's merchant-family mansions (*dàyuàn,* or "grand courtyards") is **Qiáo Jiā Dàyuàn,** where Zhāng Yìmóu's *Raise the Red Lantern* was filmed. Almost midway between Tàiyuán and Píngyáo, it is easily reached from either city. Containing six large courtyards and 313 houses, the compound was constructed in 1755 by Qiáo Guìfā, the first member of the family to strike it rich selling tea and bean curd in Bāotóu, beyond the Great Wall. Returning to his hometown, he built his dream home, to which successive generations added until it reached its present size. Give yourself at least 2 hours.

Admission ¥30 ($3.75). 8am–7:30pm (to 6pm in winter). Avoid weekends. Buses between Píngyáo and Tàiyuán will drop you off. Follow signs to Qiáo Family Courtyard (10-min. walk). Round-trip taxi 30 min. from Píngyáo, 45 min. from mid-town Tàiyuán, is ¥50–¥70 ($6.25–$8.75).

Shuānglín Sì This Buddhist temple is 6km (4 miles) southwest of Píngyáo and easily reached by bicycle or motor-rickshaw (¥20–¥30/$2.50–$3.75 round-trip). Built in the sixth century, the complex underwent large-scale renovations during the Míng dynasty. It is most famous for the 2,000-plus painted statues distributed among 10 halls in three connected courtyards. Highlights include the arhats in **Tiānwáng Diàn.** Princely and dignified, they are a refreshing change from the usual gilded, grotesque variety. Statues of worshippers depict commoners in everyday dress looking humble and devout and nothing like the serene, finely clad bodhisattvas nearby. In the **Púsa Diàn (Bodhisattva Palace),** which contains a thousand-armed Guānyīn, look up at the ceiling where the green, three-clawed, round-bellied figure of a guard keeps watch.

Qiáotóu Cūn. Admission ¥18 ($2.25). 8:30am–6:30pm (8:30am–5pm winter).

Wáng Family Courtyard (Wáng Jiā Dàyuàn) Sixty kilometers (37 miles) south of Píngyáo, this *dàyuàn* dwarfs the Qiáo family's mansion. First constructed in the mid-17th century, its expansion continued for over a century. Walking through the 123 courtyards and 1,118 houses takes around 3 hours, but the time is well spent. The decorative lattice screens and windows, shaped openings between rooms and courtyards, and undulating partition walls are exquisite examples of Míng and Qīng vernacular architecture. Rarely are so many classic styles found all in one place. Also of note and well worth looking for are the cave dwellings at the compound's periphery.

Admission ¥45 ($5.60). 8am–7:30pm (to 6pm in winter). Buses connect Tàiyuán and Píngyáo to the town nearest Wáng Jiā Dàyuàn, Língshí Chéng. Buses between Língshí Chéng and Wáng Jiā Dàyuàn leave every 10 min. and cost ¥1 (15¢). Round-trip taxi from Píngyáo ¥120 ($15).

WHERE TO STAY

There are now many courtyard hotels within the old town, and more opening every day. Prices vary and bargaining is expected. Standard and deluxe rooms are decorated in Qīng style and have large *kàng* heated brick beds and small modern bathrooms. Budget rooms have conventional beds and less traditional ornamentation. Guesthouses do not accept foreign credit cards nor do they exchange foreign currency. Most, including the three guesthouses recommended here, have bike rentals for ¥2 to ¥15 (25¢–$1.85) per day.

Chāng Xīng Lóng Comprehensive (and affordable) services at this well-managed courtyard hotel include Internet access, English guide, car, or bicycle. Both standard and deluxe rooms are attractively decorated with Qīng-style furniture and traditional art. Deluxe rooms are spacious and have huge "dragon-phoenix beds" in the Qīng imperial style. Large standard rooms have *kàng* that are heated in winter and cooled in summer. Bathrooms are small and showers have no cubicle.

Chénghuáng Miào Jiē 29. ✆ **0354/568-4188.** Fax 0354/568-4088. www.pycxl.com. 20 units. ¥198–¥298 ($25–$37) standard and deluxe rooms; ¥168 ($21) budget. Rates include breakfast. 50% discounts available. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; ticketing; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Déjū Yuán A gracious host, excellent cooking, and attention to decor make this—along with Tiān Yuán Kuí (below)—one of the top two courtyard guesthouses in town. Attractive standard rooms come with large *kàng* beds. A three-room suite has two bedrooms connected by a living room and is ideal for families. Bathrooms are slightly bigger than those elsewhere in town.

Xī Dàjiē 43. ✆ **0354/568-5266.** Fax 0354/568-5366. www.pydjy.com. 11 units. ¥138–¥288 ($17–$36) small to large standard rooms; ¥160–¥488 ($20–$61) suite. 20% discount Nov–Mar. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; ticketing; free transport from railway station; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Tiān Yuán Kuí ★★ Like Déjū Yuán, this appealing courtyard guesthouse, which opened in 2000, gets a mix of Chinese, European, and North American guests. Aware of growing competition, its savvy proprietors have continually renovated and added services and facilities to keep ahead of the pack. In 2003 the guesthouse added Internet access and a sauna. One of the biggest attractions of this guesthouse is its Shānxī opera performances *(Jìn jù),* which are likely to occur on hot summer nights when the guesthouse is full and the performers available.

Nán Dàjiē (Míng Qīng Jiē) 73. ✆ **0354/568-0069.** Fax 0354/568-3052. www.pytyk.com. 13 units. ¥120–¥150 ($15–$19) standard room; ¥150 ($19) 4-person room. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; ticketing; free transport from railway station; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, no phone.

WHERE TO DINE

Most Píngyáo restaurants specialize in Shānxī and local cuisine, which emphasize wheat pastas, meat pies, Píngyáo beef (similar to corned beef in color and taste), and fried cakes and breads. Two of the best restaurants in town are in the **Déjū Yuán** and **Tiān Yuán Kuí** guesthouses (see "Where to Stay," above). Dinner for two costs ¥30 to ¥50 ($3.75–$6.25). Nearly every restaurant in town serves a version of *lǎolao yóumiàn* (sometimes called *wōwo*). These small rings of husked-oat pasta are served pressed together in a bamboo steamer. The sauce that accompanies the dish varies from place to place, but Déjū Yuán serves one of the best. The pasta is so substantial that it almost tastes like cornmeal, while the tomato-based sauce—flavorful and slightly hot—is reminiscent of a light tamale sauce. *Xiāngsū jī* (crispy aromatic chicken) is also highly recommended, as is the lightly sweet *yóuzhá gāo* (crispy puff with date and red bean paste). Try corned beef with potatoes *(tǔdòu shāo niúròu)* at Tiān Yuán Kuí; or try any of their numerous noodle dishes, made from husked oat, yellow bean, or sorghum flour. Most famous is the pasta shaped like little cats' ears *(māo ěrduo).* Both restaurants also serve excellent Western breakfasts, including delicious omelets and fruit crepes.

In the lanes, look for the **mobile stand** selling "beggar's" chicken *(jiàohuà jī).* The chicken is wrapped in two layers of paper, then packed in loess mud ("yellow earth") and cooked over an open fire for 2 hours.

6 Tàiyuán

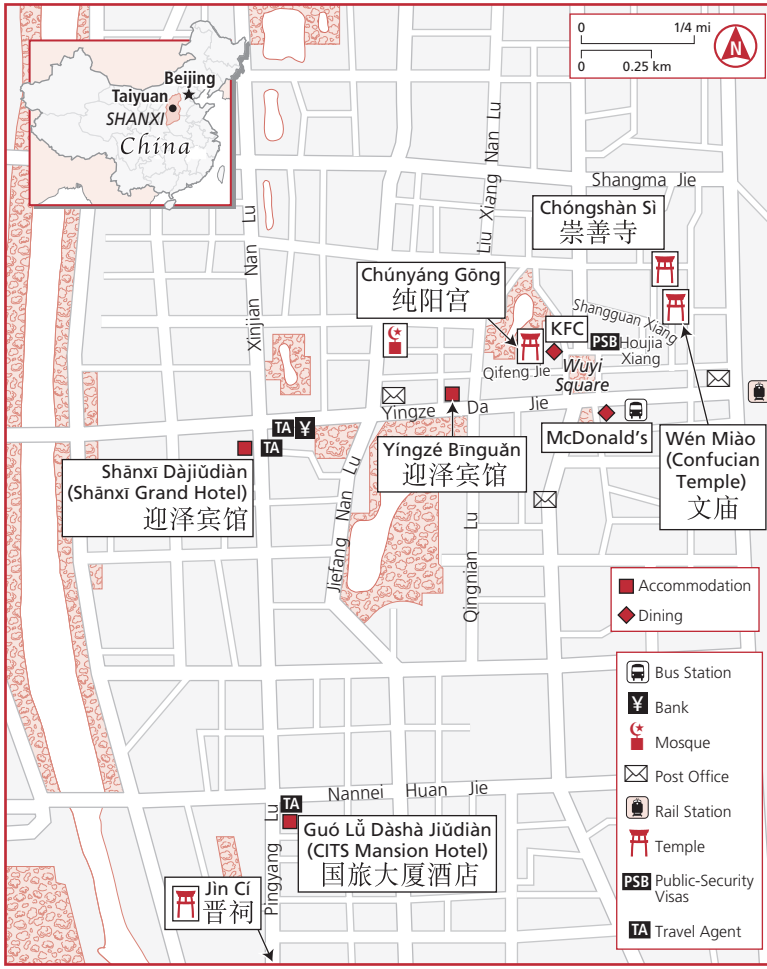
Shānxī Province, 500km (310 miles) SW of Běijīng, 651km (405miles) NE of Xī'ān

During the 77 years of disunion that followed the collapse of the Táng dynasty, northern China was up for grabs by the various kingdoms that came to be known as the Five Dynasties (907–960). Each laid claim to Tàiyuán (then called Jìnyáng) until the first emperor of the Sòng dynasty (960–1279) stepped in and annihilated the city, going so far as to divert the Fén River so that it would wash away any evidence that Jìnyáng ever existed. Modern Tàiyuán—the capital of Shānxī Province—is located on the site of the rebuilt city.

Today things are more tranquil, but not necessarily better for your health. A 1999 report found this sooty industrial city to be the most polluted in the country and city officials, shamed into action, began to take strides toward cleanup. Still, you may want to limit your stay in this environmentally challenged city to a day or two at most.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **Wǔsù Airport** is 15km (9 miles) southeast of town. Useful connections include flights from Hong Kong (1 flight weekly), Běijīng



(several flights daily), Shànghǎi (1 or 2 flights daily), and Xī'ān (4 flights daily). **China Eastern Airlines** runs an airport shuttle bus from its office at Yíngzé Dàjiē 158, 2 hours before flights; shuttle fare is ¥10 ($1.25). The main **railway station** is on the east side of town at the start of Yíngzé Dàjiē. An overnight connection with Běijīng leaves either point around 9pm and arrives by 7:30am (K701/K702; ¥230/$29 soft sleeper). The K717 from Běijīng's West Station leaves at 9:50pm and arrives at 7:10am. Other useful connections are Dàtóng (K745/K746, K747/K748; 6½ hr.; ¥156/$20 soft sleeper); Píngyáo on the Tàiyuán–Yùnchéng route (K25/K27; 2 hr.; ¥10–¥28/$1.25–$3.50); Xī'ān on the Tiānjīn route, which also stops in Píngyáo (2562; from Tàiyuán to Xī'ān 2535; 11½ hr.; ¥180/$22 soft sleeper). Most long-distance buses connect with Tàiyuán's **Main Bus Station (Qìchē Zhàn)** opposite the railway station, but a few from Wǔtái Shān arrive at a small bus station 7km (4 miles) southwest of the city. From there, bus no. 815 (¥1/15¢) leaves every 5 minutes for the railway station and main hotel area. Luxury buses link Tàiyuán's Main Bus Station with Běijīng's

Lìzé Qiáo Bus Station (6 hr.; ¥120/$15), Píngyáo (2 hr.; ¥15–¥25/$2–$3.12), Wǔtái Shān/Táihuái (4 hr.; ¥43/$5.35), and Dàtóng (5 hr.; ¥70/$8.75).

GETTING AROUND City **bus** fare is ¥1 (15¢); with air-conditioning, the fare is ¥2 (25¢). The most common **taxi** is the Fùkāng. The fare for the first 4km (2½ miles) is ¥7 (90¢); after that it's ¥1 (15¢) per kilometer. Beyond 10km (6¼ miles), it's ¥1.50 (20¢) per kilometer.

TOURS A helpful branch of **CITS** is at Píngyáng Lù 38 (✆ **0351/723-2188**).

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China** (open Mon–Fri, 8am–noon, 2:30–6:30pm; winter 6pm) at Yíngzé Dàjiē 288 has an ATM and full foreign-exchange facilities.

Internet Access There's a small 24-hour *wǎngbā* at Shàngmǎ Jiē 54, on the way to Chóngshàn Sì. It charges ¥2 (25¢) per hour. The **Xīnyí Wǎngbā,** with the same hours and rates, is just around the corner at Shàngmǎ Jiē 20. Enter through a courtyard with grapevines. Internet dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The main post office (Mon–Fri, 8am–noon, 2:30–6:30pm; winter 6pm) is opposite the railway station.

Visa Extensions The **PSB** is at Hóujiā Xiàng 9 (✆ **0351/202-3011;** open Mon–Fri 8:15–11:45am, 2:45–5:45pm).

EXPLORING TÀIYUÁN

A new provincial museum is rumored, but for the time being the collection is divided between two sites—the Daoist temple Chúnyáng Gōng and the former Confucian temple Wén Miào. **Chúnyáng Gōng** (Qǐfēng Jiē 1, around the block from KFC) is dedicated to Lǚ Dòngbīn, the Táng dynasty poet, calligrapher, and wine connoisseur who, by the time of the Sòng dynasty, was worshipped as one of the Eight Immortals of Daoism. He's usually depicted as an impassive scholar with two long wisps of mustache and a thin pointed beard, holding a double-edged sword given to him by a dragon. The main hall is the **Lǚ Zǔ Diàn,** which is dedicated to him. Behind that is a tight group of halls, each containing a portion of the museum collection. Pieces of pottery are from the Sòng and Jīn dynasties, and the bronze collection has wine vessels that date from the Shāng dynasty (1600–1045 B.C.) The temple is open from 9am to 6pm (to 5pm in winter); admission is ¥5 (65¢). The painting and calligraphy portion of the collection (from the Míng and Qīng dynasties) is in the former **Confucian Temple (Wén Miào)** on Shàngguān Xiàng. The grounds have gardens and covered walkways, making this a pleasant place to amble. Hours are from 9am to noon and 2:30 to 6:30pm in summer; 9am to 5pm in winter. Admission is ¥2 (25¢).

OUT OF TOWN

Jìn Cí (Jìn Temple) ★★ The site of Jìn Cí is a large park with gardens and a lake, as well as pavilions, halls, and temples from various dynasties, beginning with the Sòng (960–1279). It isn't known when the original temple was built, but the earliest written reference to Jìn Cí is from the sixth century. As you stroll the grounds, the one building that must not be overlooked is **Shèngmǔ Diàn (Hall of the Holy Mother).** Located at the back of the park, it is recognizable by its double-eaved roof and its extraordinary writhing dragons, each carved out of wood and coiled around one of the building's eight front columns. First completed in 1032, the hall was restored several times—most recently in the

Míng dynasty—but without ever altering the original architectural style and design. Today, along with a handful of other Shānxī buildings, it is one of the earliest surviving wooden halls in China.

The contents of the hall are equally impressive. Inside is a statue of the honored matriarch—the mother of the founder of Jìn—surrounded by a retinue of life-size handmaidens, actresses, and eunuchs. Dating to the Sòng, these gorgeous painted clay figures reveal much about court customs and dress. Sitting in lotus position, the Holy Mother is the picture of composure. Standing third in attendance on her right is a eunuch with one ear bigger than the other and one eye crossed—from listening intently to his mistress while never daring to look at her directly. Some of the actresses are dressed as male characters, evident from their stances—toes pointed outwards—and flat-topped headdresses.

Directly opposite the Hall of the Holy Mother, across the **Flying Bridge Over the Fish Pond (Yúzhǎo Fēiliáng),** is the **Xiàn Diàn (Hall of Offerings),** where offerings were made to the Holy Mother, believed to have magic powers. Built in 1168 and rebuilt 400 years later, the hall was last restored in 1955.

Admission ¥40 ($5). 8am–6:30pm in summer; 8:30am–5:30pm in winter. Bus: no. 804 (¥2/25¢) from railway station or on Xīnjiàn Nán Lù, just south of Yíngzé intersection in front of the Industrial and Commercial Bank. On arrival, motorcycle-taxi drivers may try to convince you that the distance to the temple is too far to walk; in fact, it's a short walk through the park. Cross the parking lot and go through a small film-and-map store to the park entrance on the other side. It's a 10-min walk through the park to the temple.

WHERE TO STAY

Guó Lǚ Dàshà Jiǔdiàn (CITS Mansion Hotel) *Value* Located on the southern extension of Xīnjiàn Road, this CITS-owned hotel is less convenient than others. But with breakfast included and the standard 40% discount, it is good value for mid-range lodging, with small but clean standard and (slightly larger) deluxe rooms.

Píngyáng Lù 38. ✆ **0351/723-2188.** Fax 0351/723-3624. 60 units. ¥280–¥330 ($35–$41) standard room; ¥560–¥700 ($70–$88) suite. Most rates include breakfast. 40% discount available. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; ticketing; business center, forex; limited room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, fridge.

Shānxī Dàjiǔdiàn (Shānxī Grand Hotel) Plush sofas, high-ceilinged guestrooms, and real plants give this hotel an edge over the Yíngzé Bīnguǎn (see below). Business suites include a computer in the room and free Internet access.

Xīnjiàn Nán Lù 5. ✆ **0351/404-2899.** Fax 0351/404-3525. 166 units. ¥680 ($85) standard room; ¥1,530–¥1,700 ($190–$210) suite. Most rates include breakfast. 30% discount available. 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 1 from railway station. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; indoor pool; health club; sauna; bowling lanes; ticketing; airport shuttle; business center; forex; limited room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, dataport, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Yíngzé Bīnguǎn Last renovated in 1999, this pleasant hotel has a four-star (west) and a two-star (east) wing, and is conveniently located less than 3km (2 miles) south of the railway station. Management and staff go out of their way to meet guests' needs, and the business center's post office is convenient and reliable. Guest rooms are the standard issue (two beds, two chairs, and coffee table) but are clean and well maintained. For convenience and cordiality, this hotel is number one; for luxury, it is second to the Shānxī Grand Hotel.

Yíngzé Dàjiē 189. ✆ **0351/882-8888.** Fax 0351/882-6688. book@shanxiyingzehotel.com. 457 units. West wing ¥580 ($72) standard room; ¥880–¥2,600 ($110–325) suite. East wing ¥230 ($29) standard room. 20% discount available. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 1 or 6 from railway station. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; indoor pool; outdoor tennis court; fitness center; sauna; ticketing; business center; forex; limited room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, dataport (select floors), minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

Shānxī cuisine is famous for its buckwheat, sorghum, bean, and potato-flour pastas—all currently enjoying increased popularity in China—as well as for its vinegar *(cù).* A favorite dish that employs potato-flour noodles, vinegar, soy sauce, and spring onion is *liángfěn.* Served cold, the dish is particularly refreshing on muggy summer evenings. Like Italian pastas, *cuōjiāner* (twisted points), *māo ěrduo* (cats' ears), and a variety of others are named for their shapes. Two winter specialties are Shānxī beef or lamb hot pot *(huǒguō)* and—for breakfast—mutton soup *(tóunǎo).* Made with fatty mutton, yam, lotus, and herbs (to mask the gamy taste), it goes well with the flatbread called *xiǎobǐng* and fortifies you against the winter cold.

The best place to get these local specialties is at the **night market** on Liǔ Xiàng Nán Lù, north of Yíngzé Dàjiē.

One of the places expats go to for Western food is the **cafe** at the **Shānxī Grand Hotel** (see hotel listings). For fast food, **McDonald's** is on Yíngzé Dàjiē catty-corner from Wǔyī Square; it's open from 7am to midnight. **KFC** is on the corner of Liǔxiàng Nán Lù and Yíngzé Dàjiē. The **Tiānlóng Supermarket,** on the northwest corner of Yíngzé Dàjiē and Xīnjiàn Lù, has a decent **bakery** as well as a variety of snacks and a well-stocked supermarket.

7 Wǔtái Shān ★

Shānxī Province, 327km (203 miles) SW of Běijīng, 210km (130 miles) S of Dàtóng, 238km (148 miles) N of Tàiyuán

The mountain known as Wǔtái or "Five Platforms" is actually a cluster of mountains, which long ago collectively became the northernmost sacred peak of Buddhism. Situated roughly halfway between Dàtóng and Tàiyuán, Wǔtái Shān is, in Buddhist lore, the earthly residence of the great bodhisattva, Manjusri. Often depicted astride a lion, he is said to embody the perfection of wisdom. To this day, though tourists far outnumber them, pilgrims come entreating Manjusri to reveal himself again. The peaks of Wǔtái Shān have an average height of 2,000m (6,561 ft.) above sea level, and from northeast to southwest they stretch 120km (75 miles). Cradled at their center is the small town of Táihuái Zhèn, with an elevation of 1,680m (5,500 ft.). Part tourist slum, part sacred site, the town is a combination of souvenir shops, restaurants, temples, and shrines. Summer is the best time to visit—when Wǔtái Shān offers an escape from the heat and humidity of lower climes. In July and August, the average temperature is only about 50°F (10°C), with warm days and cool nights. Even at this most temperate time of year, the mountain itself is rarely overcrowded during the week. Weekends are another story, and national holidays should be avoided at all costs. Winters are severely cold, with temperatures dipping as low as –40°F (–40°C). Even in June, snow is not unheard of.

One of the liveliest of Wǔtái's temple festivals is held on the 14th and 15th days of the sixth lunar month, when demons are exorcised and the Diamond Sutra is honored in a ritual dance. All who join the parade from Púsa Dǐng to Luóhàn Temple are promised blessings. *Note:* Turn to Appendix A for Chinese translations of key locations.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Most visitors arrive by bus from Tàiyuán to the south or Dàtóng to the north. Wǔtái Shān has no airport. The Wǔtái Shān **railway station** is in Shāhé, 48km (30 miles) and an hour-plus drive from Táihuái. There

are daily fast trains to and from Běijīng on the Běijīng–Tàiyuán line (K702/701; 6½ hr.; ¥268/$33 A/C soft sleeper); and to and from Tàiyuán (4 hr.; ¥50/$6 A/C car). **Buses** between Shāhé Railway Station and Táihuái Zhōngxīn Tíngchē Station leave regularly throughout the day for ¥20 ($5). A **taxi** between Shāhé and Táihuái is at least ¥100 ($13). Allow 2 hours if you're catching a train in Shāhé. There are daily buses from Tàiyuán (3½–4-hr.) and Dàtóng (about 5 hr.). Buses drive into town and will drop you at your hotel if you know where you're staying. Air-conditioned luxury buses to Tàiyuán (¥40/$5) depart throughout the day beginning at 6am from the Wŭtái Shān Bus Station on the main street just south of the Friendship Hotel turnoff. The ticket office opens at 5:30am. Buses to Dàtóng leave from various small hotels on the main street beginning around 6am. The fare for an air-conditioned bus is ¥45 ($5.60). If you'd rather not have to wave one down, ask your hotel or a CITS branch to arrange hotel pick-up (no service fee). In summer only, a direct bus to Hohhot leaves daily around 6am from Yíngfāng Street.

Admission to the Wŭtái Shān area is ¥90 ($11). All vehicles are stopped at the gate while an attendant collects money and passengers grumble about government corruption and the latest price hike.

GETTING AROUND The town of Táihuái at the foot of Wŭtái Shān is small enough to cover on foot in a half-hour. The main street (Táihuái Jiē/Yíngfāng Jiē) runs north–south along the Qīngshuĭ River. Minivans and motorcycles troll the stretch from town to the area in the south where the best hotels are, picking up passengers for a few *yuán* (they can be fined and their bikes confiscated for this). The mountains rise to the immediate east, while two small streets running west off the main street lead to Táihuái's temple area. Although the streets have names, nobody uses them; even maps dispense with them. Directions to anyplace begin with the name of the nearest temple, many of which can be reached on foot. A cable car goes up to **Dàilóu Peak,** east of the village.

TOURS Tour buses and taxis go to the mountain temples from the **Wŭtái Shān Tour Taxi Ticket Office (Wŭtái Shān Lŭyóu Chē Chūzū)** on Yíngfāng Street (across from the White Pagoda and the parking lot/night market). Buses carry 15 passengers and don't set out until they're full. They charge ¥30 to ¥35 ($3.75–$4.40) for tours to any one of the five peaks. A 6-hour tour of 10 temples and lamaseries around the mountains (including Nán Shān Sì and Lóngquán Sì) costs ¥40 ($5).Taxis will take groups of four to the same sights for ¥5 to ¥10 (65¢–$1.25) more per person. **CITS** has a number of branch offices in Táihuái. The main office is at Míng Qīng Jiē 18 (✆ **0352/654-5909;** open 7:30am–8pm). They don't have their own vehicles, but they will arrange a car, driver, and English-speaking guide for a full-day tour to the outlying temples for about ¥380 ($48) for two to four people.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China** (open 8am–noon, 2:30pm–6:30pm; winter 8:30am–6pm)**,** Yíngfāng Jiē, only exchanges U.S. cash; no foreign currency or traveler's checks. Restaurants will sometimes change foreign currency, but it's best to arrive with enough *yuán* for the duration of your stay.

Internet Access The one wăngbā in town, Fēiyŭ Diànnăo (8am–midnight, ¥4/50¢ per hr.) is on the main street as you head south, just before the turnoff to the Friendship Hotel. Look for an ENGLISH INTERNET sign.

Post Office The post office (8am–8pm; winter 8am–6pm) is on Yíngfāng Jiē after it rounds the corner from the main street, half hidden by souvenir stalls. The entrance is up a staircase behind the stalls.

AROUND THE MOUNTAINS

One of the delights of Táihuái Village is the variety of people it attracts. Nuns, monks, and lamas from different orders and from all over China, Japan, and Thailand come to Wǔtái Shān in the summer—some to climb the five terraces, others to simply take part in the many temple activities. Ask around and you will usually learn of some mass gathering in one or another of the temples. Alms meals *(dǎzhāi)* for the nuns and monks (paid for by wealthy patrons to amass good karma) take place frequently all summer. Observers are welcome as long as you're quiet and very discreet with cameras.

TEMPLES IN TÁIHUÁI

There are close to a dozen temples in the small town of Táihuái Zhèn. West of town, next to the bell tower, **Xiǎntōng Sì** is the largest and one of the oldest of the temples at Wǔtái Shān. It was first built in A.D. 68; the surviving halls date to the Míng and Qīng dynasties. Climb the belfry for a commanding view of the town and mountains. Also be sure to visit the **Tóng Diàn (Bronze Hall),** which is lined with thousands of miniature statues said to symbolize the myriad bodhisattvas to whom Manjusri read the Buddhist scriptures while he lived on Wǔtái Shān. The bronze roof and outside structures are remarkable for their flawless imitation of timber construction and wood design.

A 5-minute walk south of Xiǎntōng Sì is **Tǎyuàn Sì,** easily recognized by its tall white pagoba which dominates Táihuái's skyline and has become the symbol of Wǔtái Shān. A smaller pagoda is said to contain strands of Manjusri's hair. Equally famed is the two-story **Sutra Library** in Tǎyuàn Sì. At its center is a revolving wooden bookcase that dates to the Míng dynasty. Now empty and unable to turn, it once held more than twenty thousand volumes of Buddhist scriptures, written in Chinese, Mongolian, and Tibetan.

Admission to temples ¥3–¥6 (40¢–75¢). 6am–7pm or later.

MOUNTAIN TEMPLES

The temples on the mountains are generally of less note than those in town, but two of the most famous are **Nán Shān Sì** and **Lóngquán Sì.** The former is 2km (1¼ miles) south of Táihuái Zhèn. Lóngquán Temple is another 2km (1¼ miles) in the same direction, so they are easily visited together and, with a few hours, can be done on foot. Like several of Wǔtái's temples, they claim 108 stairs leading to the entrance gate. Though none of them seem to have exactly that number, the point is that the steps represent the 108 worries (or delusions) of mankind. With each step a worry is cast off, so that by the time visitors reach the gate, you are cleansed with sweat and worry-free. A variation on the theme equates the silent and earnest counting of each stone stair with the meditative chanting of the Buddhist rosary (of 108 beads). With every step, the pilgrim has a chance to reach a pure land, free of temptations and defilements. Founded in the Later Liáng dynasty (907–923) and rebuilt in 1937 on seven terraced levels, Nán Shān Sì is one of Wǔtái Shān's largest temples. Visitors come to see its 18 superb clay arhats (enlightened disciples) in the **Hall of the Great Buddha (Dàfó Diàn)**—the sleeping arhat is considered the best for its lifelike posture and craftsmanship. In the same hall, to the right of the large gilded Sakyamuni, look for the white marble statue of Avalokitesvara (Guānyīn) holding a plump

baby boy on her knee. Worshippers bring offerings to her in hopes of male offspring. Located at the foot of Wŭtái Shān's central peak, Lóngquán Sì or Dragon Spring Temple has three courtyards connected to one another by moon-shaped gates. The main halls can be found in the east courtyard. At the front, the **Hall of Celestial Kings (Tiān Wáng Diàn)** houses, among others, the Buddha With a Cloth Sack (Bùdài Fó). This rotund Buddha with an exposed potbelly was a Táng dynasty monk who—with his walking stick and sack of worldly belongings—roamed from place to place carefree and begging. He had in his favor the gift of predicting the future and forecasting the weather, and was believed to be an incarnation of Maitreya, the Future Buddha. A purely Chinese creation, he only appears in temples built after the Míng dynasty (1368–1644). The stupa in the central courtyard contains the remains of Pŭjì, the abbot of Nán Shān Temple who died in 1917 believing he, too, was an incarnation of Maitreya. The four images on the sides of the stupa are of Pŭjì/Maitreya at different ages.

TEMPLES BELOW

Two of only three Táng dynasty (618–907) wooden buildings still standing in China—**Nánchán Sì** and **Fóguāng Sì**—are located between Wŭtái Shān and Tàiyuán. With 120km (75 miles) separating them, visiting both in 1 day is best done en route from one town to the other rather than as a day trip from either point. Since both are also well off the main road, they aren't on the regular bus route. Depending on the day of the week and the time of year, a taxi between Tàiyuán and Táihuái Village that includes stops at both temples costs between ¥200 and ¥500 ($25–$66). A day trip from Táihuái Village to both temples and back costs between ¥150 and ¥300 ($19–$38). Allow 6 to 7 hours for the round-trip. Buses to Tàiyuán pass the turnoffs to these temples, and those with light luggage can hop off and negotiate with waiting taxis for each side trip.

Nánchán Sì (Temple of Southern Meditation) ★ About 177km (110 miles) south of Wŭtái Shān, turning west off the main road to Tàiyuán, a dusty loess road leads to this tranquil ancient temple. It's said that this temple escaped the great Táng persecution of Buddhism in 845 because it was so far from the assemblage of temples on Wŭtái Shān. Today, its small, perfectly proportioned main hall, **Dàfó Diàn (Hall of the Great Buddha),** is reason enough to make the trip. Built in 782, the wooden-frame building has been much restored, but—unlike the other halls in this complex, which are distinctly of Míng and Qīng design—it has retained its original proportions and graceful Táng design. Features to notice are its gently sloping roof, markedly different from the steep gabled roofs of the previous Northern Wèi and Suí dynasties. Along the main roof ridge, the pre-Míng ornaments that curl toward each other are called *chīwěi,* meaning "owl tails." The word refers to a mythical sea monster—one of the sons of the dragon—believed to protect against fire.

Inside the hall are 17 Táng dynasty painted clay statues stationed around the large figure of Sakyamuni. Several of the statues are missing a hand or part of a foot, but generally they are in remarkable shape. The large statue in the far left corner is Manjusri riding a lion.

Fóguāng Sì (Temple of Buddha's Light) ★ The temple is 35km (22 miles) south of Táihuái Village. First built during the Northern Wèi dynasty when Buddhism was the official religion, it had greatly expanded by the time it fell victim to the Táng anti-Buddhist campaign of 845. After its total destruction, it was rebuilt 12 years later with the help of a female benefactor named Níng

Gōngyú. The one hall associated with her, **Dōng Dàdiàn (Eastern Great Hall),** survives today. Like the Nánchán's Hall of the Great Buddha, it is the only Táng-style building amidst a cluster of mostly Míng and Qīng dynasty halls.

To get to the Eastern Great Hall, follow the cobblestone path through the first courtyard. This leads through a deep archway similar to a city-wall gate, followed by a steep stone staircase. The statues, calligraphy, and wall paintings within are from the Táng (618–907) and Sòng (960–1279) dynasties, while the 296 arhats (enlightened disciples) on either side—remainder of the original 500—date to the Míng. Note the more elaborate bracketing, double roofs, and ridge ornaments of this hall compared with the simple elegance of Nánchán Sì.

SHOPPING

All manner of Buddhist art, clothing, and accoutrements are sold in several small shops on and off the main street. Paintings on fabric *(tiáofú)* and religious scrolls sell for around ¥25 ($3).

WHERE TO STAY

Wǔtái Shān has a number of commendable hotels south of town and some satisfactory budget hotels in town. High season is May through October, but even then, hefty discounts are possible Monday to Thursday.

Guǎnghuà Sì (Guǎnghuà Monastery) This convenient monastery is the first one the bus passes after it enters town from the north. No one speaks English, but the monks are friendly and the rooms basic and inexpensive. Drivers will drop you here if you tell them to in advance. Look for the red brick wall on your right as you enter town from the north. The charm of staying in a monastery is in the close-up look it provides of the pilgrimage. The other guests are usually Buddhists—monks, nuns, middle-aged housewives—who've come to Wǔtái Shān to pray at the famed temples and take part in temple activities. Often they don't mind if a stranger tags along to one of the many gatherings or ceremonies. (The temples on the mountain usually serve one meal a day—at lunchtime—consisting of *luóhàn fà*—rice and mixed vegetable—for which a ¥5/60¢ donation is standard.)

Guǎnghuà Sì. ✆ **0350/654-5021.** www.jssjghs.org.cn. 5 units. ¥10 ($2.25) per bed, with shared bathroom. No credit cards.

Qīxiángé Bīnguǎn ★ Off the main road and next to the mountain, Qīxiángé is especially quiet and relaxing, though slightly far from town. The hotel is made up of several small buildings. The nicest rooms are in the Yèdòu 3 building, but the best views are in the Jīnxiù building opposite, which is next to the mountain. Slightly smaller, the rooms are still comfortable, and they face a small mountain road favored by cycling teams for their daily workouts. For the best setting, stay here.

Off the main street, about 5km (3 miles) south of town. Look on the left for a small bridge that spans a stream. After crossing the bridge, continue for about 200m (650 ft.). Hotel is on the left. ✆ **0350/654-2400.** Fax 0350/654-2183. 93 units. ¥380 ($48) standard room; ¥898 ($112) suite. Some rates include breakfast. 10%–20% discounts available. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; gym; ticketing; business center; limited room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* TV, hair dryer.

Yínhǎi Shānzhuāng Built in the Qīng style, this four-story complex, with its gray buildings, red trim, and bright green and gold roofs with upturned eaves, looks almost like another mountain temple. Mostly catering to tour groups, it is probably the best hotel in Wǔtái Shān. Its attractive lobby has a lively, international feel, and the rooms sparkle. For the best view, request a room facing south.

Xiǎo Nánpō Cūn, on the main street, 3km (2 miles) south of town, opposite Nánshān Sì. ✆ **0350/654-2676.** Fax 0350/654-2949. 80 units. ¥150 ($19) budget room; ¥548 ($68) standard room; ¥1,280 ($160) suite. 30% discount sometimes available. No credit cards. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; ticketing; limited room service. *In room:* TV, fridge (some rooms), hair dryer.

WHERE TO DINE

Fúrén Jū Jiǔlóu SHĀNXĪ Serving everything from dog, deer, and donkey to delicious sesame paste with transparent green-pea noodles *(májiàng fěnpí),* this clean, pleasant restaurant specializes in local dishes. A sandwich board with some English and photographs of many of the dishes takes the anxiety out of ordering. Highly recommended are *dà dùn gǔtou* (seared pork ribs), *jiàng mèn xiǎo tǔdòu* (stewed baby potato with sesame paste), and *shāo táimó* (simmered wild mushrooms).

Yíngfāng Jiē (on the main street in the north part of town; just south of Guǎnghuà Temple). ✆ **0350/654-5646.** Meal for 2 ¥30–¥50 ($3.75–$6.25). No credit cards. 6am–11pm. Closed Oct–Apr.

Jìngxīn Lián VEGETARIAN Of the three excellent vegetarian restaurants in town, this one (which has a sister restaurant in Běijīng) is the best. Most dishes are served in small and large portions, so two people can order a variety of dishes. The extensive menu is in Chinese and English. Recommended are tofu with mushroom and turnip; braised eggplant with bean cake in a clay pot; and *málà huǒguō* (hot and numbing hot pot). The staff has close ties with the Buddhist community and can tell you when and where temple activities and festivals will take place.

Yánglín Jiē (several shops down from Yíngfāng St., on the right side). ✆ **0350/54-5202.** Meal for 2 ¥20–¥160 ($2.50–$20). No credit cards. 7am–10pm.

Màilì Lái BAKERY This well-stocked little bakery-cum-grocery store has freshly baked cakes, cookies, and breads, along with a variety of cold and hot snacks, grocery items, and soft drinks. The very friendly proprietors make everyone feel welcome.

Next to the Wǔtái Shān Bīnguǎn on the corner of Yánglín Jiē and Yíngfāng St. 7:30am–9pm.

Nèiměnggǔ Jiēdàichù MONGOLIAN Catering to visiting monks and nuns from Inner Mongolia, this small restaurant, attached to an inn, serves authentic Mongolian fare that is flavorful and inexpensive. Their *dāoxiāo miàn,* or knife-pared noodles, come with a variety of toppings—vegetarian and meat—and servings are generous. Other specialties include *sùmiàn* (vegetarian noodles), made with fresh tomatoes, *dòufu,* green peppers, and spices; pork fried noodles; and Mongolian milk tea. There is no English menu, but the staff is friendly and eager to please.

Yíngfāng Jiē (on the main street in the north part of town; just north of the stream crossing). ✆ **0350/654-5756.** Meal for 2 ¥16–¥30 ($2–$3.75). No credit cards. 7am–10pm.

6

The Silk Routes

by Graeme Smith

China was first known in the West as Seres, the land of silk or *serica.* The Romans were entranced by this strong but delicate thread, and believed it was combed from trees. But it was also viewed as a decadent, effeminate luxury—for the appetite of Rome's better classes for silk was rarely sated, and without a luxury (other than glass) to export in return, silk imports emptied Rome's coffers. As a result, in A.D. 14 the Roman Senate forbade the wearing of silk by men, and Caligula, who was fond of diaphanous silk garments, was disparagingly referred to as *Sericatus.*

In Táng China, silk was the most important form of legal tender; taxes, fines, and official's wages were all measured in bales of silk. Silk was used to buy off raiding armies of Uighurs and Tibetans and (hopefully) make them a bit less barbaric.

The term "Silk Road," coined in the 19th century by German geographer Ferdinand von Richthofen, is both an evocative and misleading appellation. The trade routes that connected China and the West from the 1st century B.C. until the 10th century A.D. carried a whole inventory of luxuries and necessities beyond silk, from gold and jade to wool and rhubarb. Nor was the road traveled from end to end. Chinese merchants rarely went beyond the edges of the **Taklamakan Desert** before turning the goods over to Sogdian or Parthian caravans, who were left to face the forbidding mountain passes of the **Pamirs.** Only devoted missionaries went further, like the legendary monk Xuánàng, who spent 15 years traveling across India and central Asia in search of Buddhist sutras.

Silk was just one of many goods transported over these vast distances. Apricots, peaches, and pears reached the West, while China gained the fig tree and the grape vine. China imported spices, woolen fabrics, horses for military campaigns, and foreign novelties such as musical instruments, coral, colored glass, and jewels, which fascinated the courts.

Traders also brought foreign ideas, and were soon followed by missionaries of many faiths. Nestorian Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism and, most significantly, Buddhism, were welcomed by a confident and cosmopolitan civilization. Doctrines and art spread eastward, leaving spectacular monuments in the cave temples of **Dūnhuáng, Mài Shān,** and **Kizil.**

The Silk Road wasn't one road at all, but a series of routes emanating from the capital of Cháng'ān. From Cháng'ān, camel trains would follow the Wèi River west before branching into several different routes.

The southern route passed through **Dūnhuáng, Miran,** and **Khotan,** in the shadow of the mighty **Kūnlún Shān,** whose meltwater streams fed thriving Buddhist communities. Intrepid travelers today, tolerant of

Balqash
L. Balkhash
KAZAKHSTAN
Almatu
Bishkek
KYRGYZSTAN
Torugrat Pass
Ireshtam Pass
Kashgar
Yengisar
Yarkand
Yecheng
Moyu
Mazar
Khotan
Dahongliutan
Tashkurgan
Mutzagata
PAKISTAN
Aksu
Yarkand
Kuqa
Luntai
Tacheng
Bu'ergin
Altai
Hovd
Hanas Lake
Tacheng
Karamay
Shihezi
Urumqi
Turpan
Korla
Hami
Ruoqiang
Qiemo
Yutian
Kekya Pass
TIAN SHAN
JUNGGAR BASIN
TAKLAMAKAN DESERT
XINJIANG
ALTUN SHAN
KUNLUN MTNS.
TIBET
PLATEAU OF TIBET
INDIA
ALTAI MTNS.
RUSSIA
Ulaanbaatar
Uliastay
Altay
MONGOLIA
Dalandzadagad
Karamay
Anxi
Dunhuang
Jiayuguan
Zhangye
Yumen
Golmud
QINGHAI
Xining
Lanzhou
Wuwei
Xunhua
Tongren
Linxia
Hezuo
Maqu
Langmusi
GANSU
NINGXIA
Pinglijang
Tianshui
Maiji Shan
Taibai Shan
Xian
Tongchuan
Wei He
Hohhot
Huang He
INNER MONGOLIA
Yinchuan
Taiyuan
Shijiazhuang
Beijing
BEIJING
HEBEI
SHANXI
Zhengzhou
Hua Shan
HENAN
SHAANXI
HUBEI
SICHUAN
0 200 mi
0 200 km
Beijing
China
area of detail

bare-bones transportation and accommodations, can still traverse the route, which will lead to quiet towns such as Khotan with ancient markets and traditions undisturbed by either tourism or modernization.

The middle route was initially (1st c. B.C.–4th c. A.D.) popular, allowing merchants to float on barges down the Tarim River from the garrison town of Lóulán to Korla and **Kuqa.** But when the river changed course, and Lop Nor Lake "wandered off," this route was abandoned. Thanks to more recent nuclear testing, which finally ended in 1996, this route will likely remain closed for the half-life of plutonium-239.

The northern routes, skirting the northern and southern foothills of **Tiān Shān (the Heavenly Mountains),** were menaced by Kazakh and Kyrgyz bandits. The bandits are less of a problem these days, and most travelers follow the northern route along the Hé Xī corridor to the mighty fort of **Jiāyùguān,** the peerless Buddhist caves of Dūnhuáng, and the grape trellises of **Turpan.** Beyond, the road leads to fascinating oasis towns such as Kuqa, and the great market town of **Kashgar,** skirting the northern edge of the Taklamakan Desert. (Taklamakan is commonly translated as "go in and you don't come out," but in ancient Uighur it means "vineyard," evoking a time when the region was more fertile.) The desert dunes have been marching south for many years, threatening the oasis towns of the ancient southern route.

The present character of the Silk Road is Islamic rather than Buddhist. An exodus of the Turkic Uighur peoples from western Mongolia displaced the Indo–European inhabitants, the Táng dynasty fell, and Islam gradually spread east through the Tarim Basin. With the rise of sea trade, land routes fell into disuse. Settlements and temples (which also functioned as banks) were abandoned to the desert. They remained undisturbed until the turn of the 20th century, when archaeologists from Britain, France, Germany, Russia, Japan, and (later) America came searching for lost Buddhist kingdoms.

The adventurers saw the Hàn Chinese as fellow colonizers, keeping the Turkic Uighurs in their place. British diplomat Eric Teichman believed "the Turkis are a patient, contented and submissive people, made to be ruled by others." Xīnjiāng means "new territories," rather a giveaway in itself, but many Hàn guides will try to persuade you that this region has always belonged to China. Most Uighurs would prefer to rule themselves, and they still practice a form of Islam that is both tolerant and catholic, recalling a time when towns such as Kashgar were centers of Islamic learning.

Turkic Uighurs make up the majority of the population in Xīnjiāng, but they are gradually being displaced by a wave of migrants from the east. After an absence of over a millennium, Hàn Chinese are reasserting control over the Silk Routes with a ruthlessness that the Wǔdì emperor (reigned 141–87 B.C.)—the first ruler to control the Silk Routes—would have envied.

Travel along the Silk Routes has always been arduous, temperatures are extreme, and the distances involved are considerable. Peak season is early May, and mid-July to mid-October. Outside of Xī'ān, Lánzhōu, Dūnhuáng, and Ürümqi, expect little in the way of luxurious lodgings. The more adventurous should seek out the Uighur trading centers of Kashgar, Khotan, and Kuqa, or the Tibetan monastic settlements of **Xià Hé** and **Lángmù Sì.** ***Note:*** Unless otherwise noted, hours listed for attractions and restaurants are daily.

1 Xī'ān

Shǎnxī Province, 1,200km (744 miles) SW of Běijīng

Surrounded by rich loess farmland, Xī'ān (Western Peace), the present capital of Shǎnxi Province, was home to the ruling houses of the Qín, Hàn, Suí, and Táng dynasties, when it was known as Cháng'ān (Eternal Peace). The city reached a peak during the Táng dynasty (618–907), when it was the military and trading base for China's shaky control of the Silk Routes. During the Xuánzōng reign of the Táng (712–755), Cháng'ān boasted two million taxable inhabitants and was the largest, most cosmopolitan settlement in the world.

The scale of the metropolis is readily imagined—what are now referred to as the city walls were rebuilt during the Míng dynasty (1644–1911) on the remains of Táng *palace* walls. The Táng city walls extended 8km (5 miles) north–south and almost 10km (6 miles) east–west, and the south gate opened onto a tree-lined avenue 150m (500 ft.) wide, down which foreign emissaries would once approach the metropolis. The Táng era was a high point for advocates of "foreign religions" as Manicheans, Nestorians, and Buddhists flocked to the capital. Buddhism in particular enjoyed royal patronage.

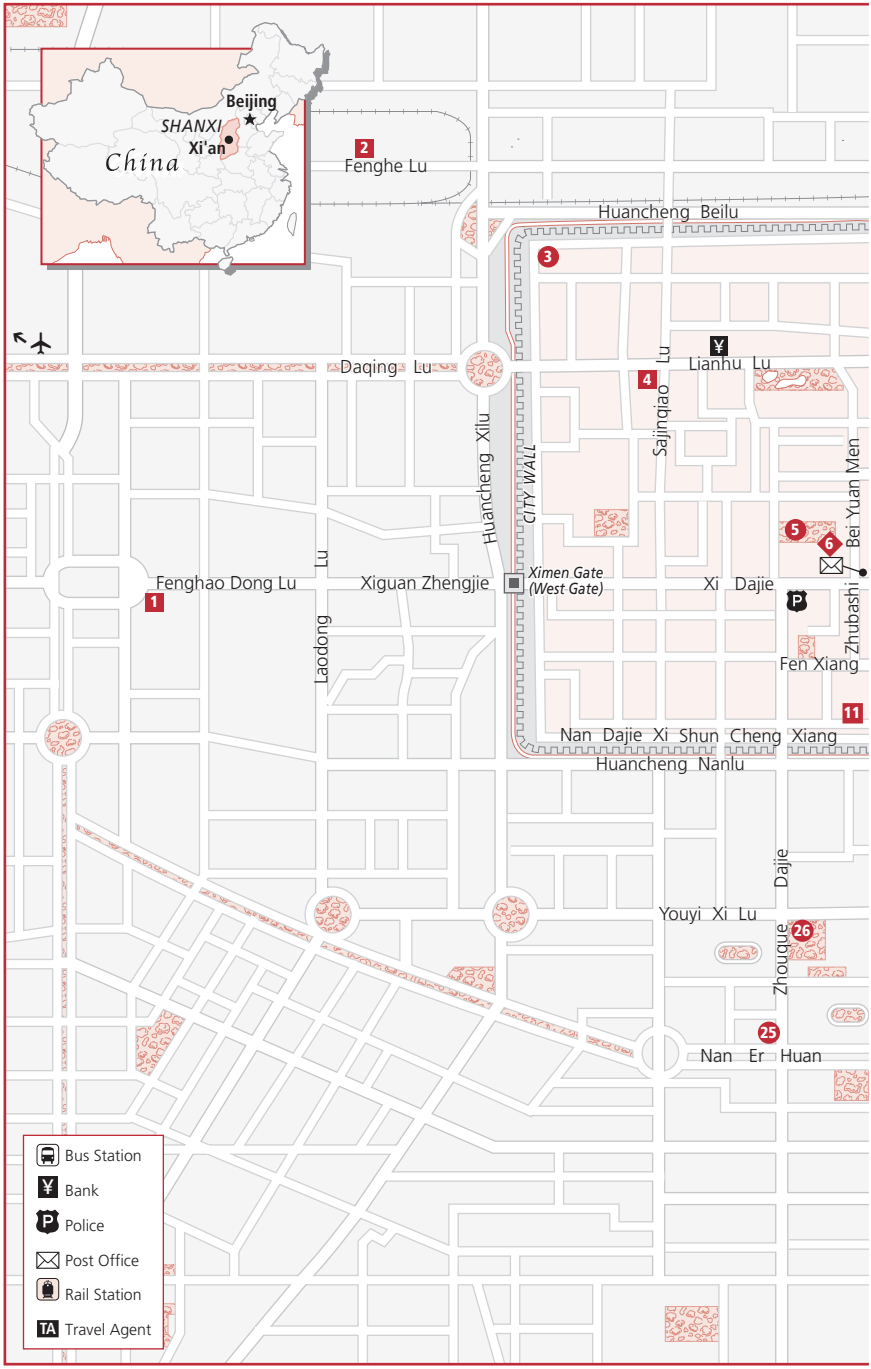
Surviving monuments open a window onto the imperial power and cosmopolitan style of the old capital. The short-lived totalitarian state of Qín Shǐ Huángdì is reflected in the awe-inspiring massed terra-cotta armies of the **Qín Bīngmǎyǒng Bówùguǎn.** The influence of Buddhism is clear from the majestic spire of the **Dà Yàn Tǎ (Great Goose Pagoda),** constructed under the supervision of Xuánzàng (d. 664), who returned to China in 645 after 15 years of travel across India and central Asia. Evidence of the flourishing trade along the Silk Routes may be found in the **Shǎnxī History Museum** and **Fǎmén Sì.**

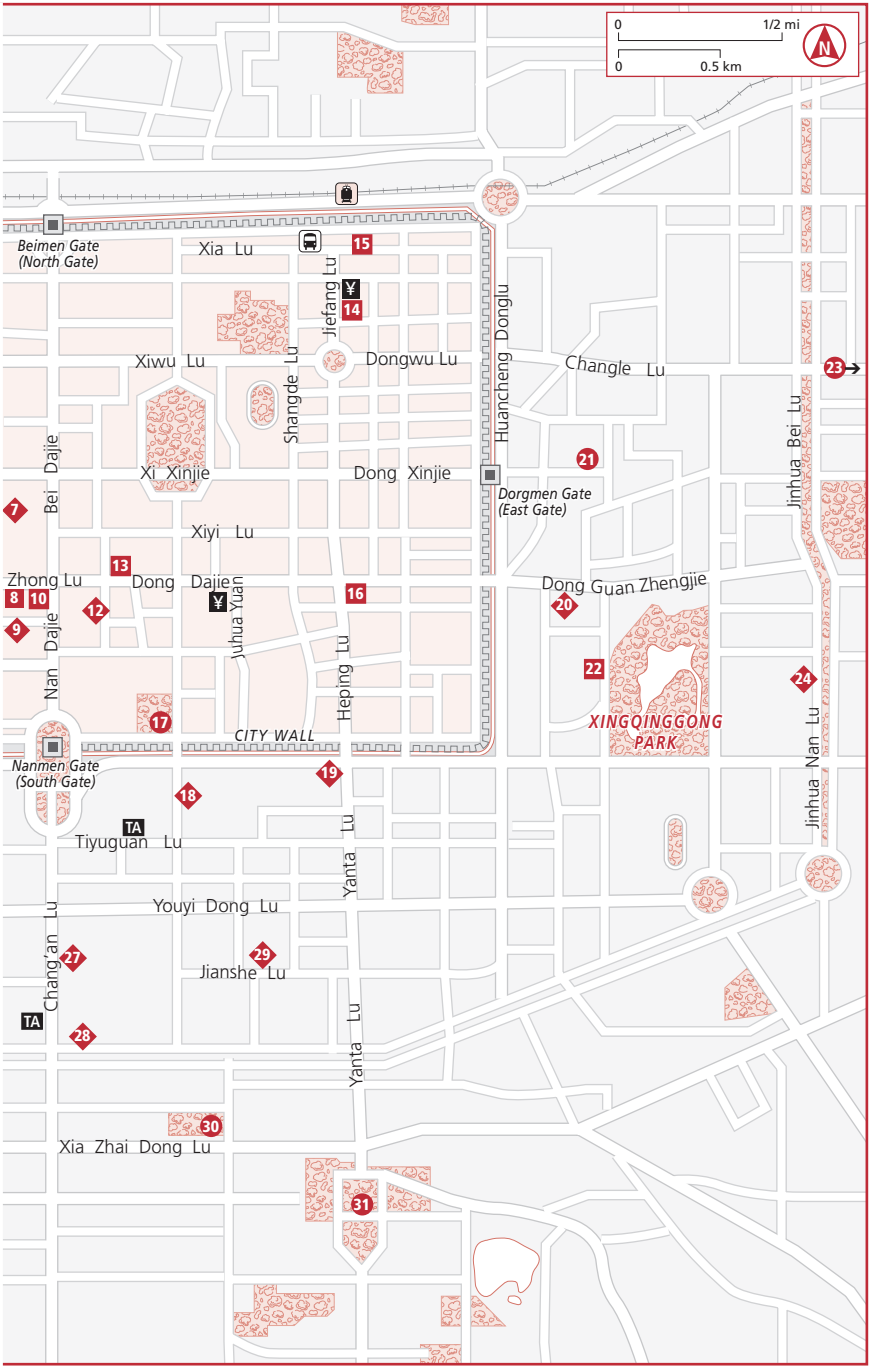
There is enough to see in and around Xī'ān to keep even the most energetic visitor busy for a week or two. It's the most-visited town on the Silk Routes, which brings the usual annoyances. Most locals are easygoing and disparaging of their ancient capital, endlessly shaking their heads in regret that their ancestors "fell behind" their richer cousins in Běijīng.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Numerous direct **flights** connect Xiányáng Airport with all major cities in China, including Běijīng, Shànghǎi, Chóngqìng, Chéngdū, Kūnmíng, Ürümqi, Lhasa, and Hong Kong. The **CAAC office,** located at Láodòng Lù 296 (✆ **029/870-2299**), will deliver airline tickets free of charge. An **airport shuttle bus** (¥25/$3) leaves from the CAAC office on the hour from 5am to 5pm; aim to leave at least 2 hours before your flight. You can also book tickets through the **Xī'ān Huá'ān Airlines** ticket office at Nán Dàjiē 60 (✆ **029/723-2210**). Discounts are possible. A **taxi** from the airport into town costs about ¥80 ($10).

The **railway station** is located outside the northeast side of the city wall, 20 minutes by double-decker bus no. 603 from the main hotel area. The station is open 24 hours, and all windows (except 15, 16, and 18) can be used. There is no longer a foreigners' counter, but window 17 should have an English speaker. Ticket refunds can be obtained from window 2. The fastest trains to Běijīng are the T42 (14 hr.) at 5:48pm, and the T232 at 4:48pm. Other useful trains are the T140 to Shànghǎi (17 hr.) at 6:26pm; the K84 to Guǎngzhōu (27 hr.) at 9:40am; the K119 to Lánzhōu (13 hr.) at 6:05pm; the K165 at 10:18pm, which passes through Chéngdū (14 hr.) and terminates in Kūnmíng (35 hr.); the K762


Beijing
SHANXI
Xi'an
China
2
Fenghe Lu
Huancheng Beilu
3
Daqing Lu
Lianhu Lu
4
Sajinqiao Lu
Huancheng Xilu
CITY WALL
5
6
Bei Yuan Men
Fenghao Dong Lu
1
Laodong Lu
Xiguan Zhengjie
Ximen Gate (West Gate)
Xi Dajie
Zhubashi
Fen Xiang
11
Nan Dajie Xi Shun Cheng Xiang
Huancheng Nanlu
Dajie
Youyi Xi Lu
26
Zhouque
25
Nan Er Huan
Bus Station
Bank
Police
Post Office
Rail Station
TA Travel Agent


0
1/2 mi
0
0.5 km
N
Beimen Gate
(North Gate)
Xia Lu
Jiefang Lu
Xiwu Lu
Shangde Lu
Dongwu Lu
Huancheng Donglu
Changle Lu
Jinhua Bei Lu
Bei Dajie
Xi Xinjie
Dong Xinjie
Dorgmen Gate
(East Gate)
Xiyi Lu
Zhong Lu
Dong Dajie
Juhua Yuan
Dong Guan Zhengjie
Dajie
Nan
Heping Lu
XINGQINGGONG
PARK
CITY WALL
Nanmen Gate
(South Gate)
Jinhua Nan Lu
Tiyuguan Lu
Yanta Lu
Youyi Dong Lu
Chang'an Lu
Jianshe Lu
Yanta Lu
Xia Zhai Dong Lu
TA
TA

Xī'ān Key

ACCOMMODATIONS ■

Bell Tower Hotel **10**
(Zhōnglóu Fàndiàn)
钟楼饭店

Grand New World Hotel **4**
(Gǔdū Xīn Shìjiè Dàjiǔdiàn)
古都新世界大酒店

Hyatt Regency Xī'ān **16**
(Kǎiyuè Fàndiàn)
凯悦饭店

Jiěfàng Fàndiàn **15**
解放饭店

Melody Hotel **8**
(Měi Lún Jiǔdiàn)
美伦酒店

Rénmín Dàshà Gōngyù **2**
人民大厦公寓

Shangri-La Golden Flower **22**
(Jīnhuā Fàndiàn)
金花饭店

Sheraton Xī'ān **1**
(Xīláidēng Dàjiǔdiàn)
喜来登大酒店

Tiān Shūn Dàshà **14**
(Silk Road Hotel)
天顺大厦

Wǔyī Fàndiàn **13**
(May First Hotel)
五一饭店

Xī'ān Shūyuàn **11**
Qīngnián Lǚvum]shè
西安书院国际青年旅舍

ATTRACTIONS ●

Bā Xiān Ān (Temple of the Eight Immortals) **21**
八仙庵

Bànpō Bówùguǎn (Bànpō Neolithic Village) **23**
半坡博物馆

Bēilín Bówùguǎn (Forest of Stelae) **17**
碑林博物馆

Dà Qīngzhēn Sì (Great Mosque) **5**
大清真寺

Dà Yán Tǎ (Great Goose Pagoda) **31**
大雁塔

Guǎngrén Sì **3**
广仁寺

Shǎnxī Lìshǐ Bówùguǎn **30**
陕西历史博物馆

Xiǎo Yán Tǎ (Small Goose Pagoda) **26**
小雁塔

Zhōng Běi Jiùhuò Shìchǎng **25**
中北旧货市场

DINING ◆

Fánjì Làzhī Ròudiàn **9**
樊记腊汁肉店

Hǎi Cháo Yīn Teahouse **24**
海潮音茶叶馆

Highfly Pizza (Gāofēi Bǐsà) **19**
高飞比萨

Huǒchē Pí Jiǔbā (Railway Bar) **28**
火车皮酒吧

Jiǎsān Guàntāng Bāozi **7**
贾三灌汤包子

Kentucky Fried Chicken (Kěndé Jī) **12**
肯德鸡

Lǎo Sūn Jiā **20**
老孙家

Píngwá Kǎoròu **6**
平娃烤肉

Shǎnxī Gēwǔ Dà Xìyuán **18**
陕西歌舞大戏院

The Tang Dynasty **27**
(Táng Yuè Gōng)
唐乐宫

Wénháo Záliáng Shífǔ Lǎo Diàn **29**
文豪杂粮食府老店

Tips Alternate Ways to Book Rail Tickets

The station can get crowded, so either book tickets through your hotel, which will charge between ¥40 ($5) and ¥80 ($10) to book a ticket, or visit a branch of the **Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (Gōngshāng Yínháng),** which levies a reasonable ¥5 (65¢) service charge. The closest branch to the railway station is 1.6km (1 mile) south of the station at Wūlùkǒu Gōngháng, Jiěfàng Lù 288; it's open weekdays from 8am to 6pm, and on weekends from 9am to 5pm. The **city branch** is cater-corner to the Home Club Department Store at Mùtou Shì 9 (✆ **029/727-5196,** ext. 168) and is open weekdays 8am to 8pm; weekends 9am to 3pm.

to Zhèngzhōu (7½ hr.) at 11:06am; the T52/53 to Ürümqi (34 hr.) at 11am; and the monstrously slow 2119 to Chóngqìng (28 hr.) at 2:16pm.

The **bus station** (**Xī'ān Qìchē Zhàn;** ✆ **029/742-7420**) is directly opposite the railway station. Regular buses connect with Zhèngzhōu (573km/355 miles; 9 hr.; ¥98/$12), Luòyáng (425km/264 miles; 7 hr.; ¥60/$7.50), Tàiyuán (685km/425 miles; 12 hr.; ¥128/$16), and Tiānshuǐ (380km/236 miles; 6 hr.; ¥60/$7.50). Six buses connect with Píngyáo (7am–12:30pm; 8 hr.; ¥115/$14) and with Yán'ān (402km/249 miles; 6 hr.; ¥52–¥68/$6.50–$8.50). Five afternoon sleeper buses connect with Yínchuān (720km/446 miles; 15 hr.; ¥110/$14).

CITY LAYOUT The center of town is generally denoted by the massive Míng **Bell Tower (Zhōng Lóu),** which marks the crossroads between the main north–south and east–west roads—which connect with the four main city gates. The main arteries are **Běi, Nán, Dōng,** and **Xī Dàjiē** (North, South, East, and West avenues). Most of the main hotels, and many of the main sights and restaurants, are along these roads.

GETTING AROUND There are two ways to travel by **bus.** If there's no conductor, expect to pay a flat fare of ¥1 (15¢); no change is given. If there is a conductor, the fare ranges from ¥.50 to ¥2 (5¢–25¢).

Most **taxis** are green Santana sedans that charge ¥6 (75¢) for the first 3km (2 miles), then ¥1.40 (20¢) per additional kilometer; add ¥1 (15¢) if you're traveling between the hours of 10pm and 5am. Tiny Alto hatchbacks charge slightly less. You'll encounter few problems with drivers overcharging or failing to start the meter, but they will round the fare up or down to whole yuán, so don't sit around waiting for change.

Xī'ān is flat and thus suitable for **biking,** but the streets are congested, and any traffic rules that may exist are ignored by motorists. Only recommended for the experienced urban cyclist.

TOURS Many travel agencies and hotels offer 1-day tours of the sights around Xī'ān. The most popular tour follows the **Eastern Route (Dōng Xiàn),** which usually includes the **Terracotta Warriors (Qín Bīngmǎyǒng Bówùguǎn), Huáqīng Chí (Huáqīng Pools),** and **Bànpō Bówùguǎn.** The less-traveled **Western Route (Xī Xiàn)** should include **Fǎmén Sì, Qián Líng (Táng dynasty tombs),** and perhaps **Máo Líng (Hàn dynasty tombs)** and **Xiányáng Bówùguǎn (Xiányáng Museum).**

CITS, at Cháng'ān Běi Lù 48 (✆ **029/524-1864;** fax 029/526-1454; www.citsxa.com), offers the most expensive tours in town, charging ¥580 ($72) for the Western Route, and a more reasonable ¥340 ($42) for the Eastern Route.

They have competent branches in the lobby of the Jiěfàng Fàndiàn (✆ 029/742-2227) and on the second floor of the Bell Tower Hotel (✆ 029/727-9200, ext. 2842). A cheaper option is the **Golden Bridge Travel Service** at Tíyùguǎn Lù 111 (✆ **029/781-5596;** fax 029/781-1521; gbtour@pub.xaonline.com), which charges ¥298 ($37) for the Eastern Route and ¥450 ($56) for the Western Route. Some major hotels offer their own tours.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The most effective **Bank of China** is the city branch at Jiěfàng Lù 157 (✆ **029/742-8650;** open 8am–8pm Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm weekends) It's about 400m (¼ mile) south of the railway station, on the west side of Jiěfàng Lù, next to the Silk Road Hotel. The provincial branch is located in the center of town, on the corner of Júhuā Yuán at Dōng Dàjiē 306 (✆ 029/726-1726). Foreign exchange counters are located on the second floor; windows 14 to 16 and ATMs downstairs accept foreign credit cards. There's also a branch, with an ATM, just 180m (200 yd.) south of the Bell Tower at Nán Dàjiē 29 (✆ 029/728-1287**;** open 8am–6pm Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm weekends). A branch in the west of town, at Liánhú Lù 95 (✆ 029/731-6924), changes traveler's checks and cash at counter 4, and is open weekdays from 8:30am to noon and 2 to 6pm.

Internet Access In the railway area, there are many Internet cafes on Shàngdé Lù. A reasonable choice is **Wǎng Shì Rú Fēng Internet Cafe** (on the east side of the road, just south of the intersection with Xī Bā Lù), which charges the standard rate of ¥3 (40¢) per hour. Avoid the Internet bar on the opposite side of the road, which has a "special price" for foreign guests *(wàibīn)* that's interestingly not mentioned in the English translation of its price list. In the center of town, the **Huì Qún Wǎngbā** at Dōng Dàjiē 323, on the north side, up an escalator to the left of a cinema (✆ **029/723-4984**), is a massive complex of over 300 computers, with deluxe rooms and a cafe. Just north of Nán Mén is **Potman Internet Cafe** at Nán Dàjiē 9 (✆ **029/727-0874**). Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The **main branch** is at the northwest corner of the Bell Tower at Běi Dàjiē 1, open 8am to 8pm.

Visa Extensions Extensions can be obtained from the **PSB,** located 2 blocks west of the Bell Tower on the south side of the road at Xī Dàjiē 138 (✆ **029/723-4500,** ext. 51810). They take 3 days to process. The office is open Monday through Friday 8am to noon and 2 to 6pm**.**

EXPLORING XĪ'ĀN

Bā Xiān Ān (Temple of the Eight Immortals) ★ *Finds* Tucked away in a narrow alley the tour buses can't reach is the most charming temple in Xī'ān. As with the Great Mosque, the walk into it is half the adventure, with a flea market out front in some of the temple's old buildings. This becomes a huge antiques market on Wednesday and Sunday mornings (see "Shopping," later in this chapter). Inside the temple, monks, their hair tied up in traditional Daoist fashion, play chess and are always keen for a chat. The folk legend of the **Eight Immortals (Bā Xiān)** is said to have originated here during the late Táng dynasty. As you look at the temple murals, note the influence of Confucianism on its supposed alter-ego, Daoism: The eight immortals have a strict hierarchy, with Lǚ Dòngbīn in front on his tiger, the rotund Tiěguǎi Lǐ waddling along with his crook to his side, and the one woman, Hé Xiāngū, near the back, carrying a lotus flower.

Wǔ Dào Shízi Dōngjiē (from Ān Rén Fáng, continue east 135m/150 yd. before heading south down the 1st alley on your right; turn right when the road meets a T-junction. Immediately take a left and continue south to the back of the temple, following the incense vendors). Admission ¥3 (40¢). 7:30am–6pm. Bus: no. 13 or 42 from the station, or bus no. 4 or 11 from the Bell Tower to Ān Rén Fáng.

Bēilín Bówùguǎn (Forest of Stelae) ★ Formerly the Shǎnxī Provincial Museum, the Forest of Stelae is situated in a former Confucian temple (ca. 1087) that the literature describes as "unsophisticated and elegant." Originally forming the basis of a Táng university, many of the stelae have traveled a long way to get here; they were floated downriver on rafts to Luòyáng during the Sòng dynasty before returning here in 1087. Stelae are often borne on *bìxì*, legendary turtle-like creatures descended from the Dragon King *(lóngwáng)* that were renowned for their incredible strength.

In the main courtyard, the first major stele was composed by the Xuánzōng emperor in 745; the exposition on filial piety pre-dated the influential "three character classic" *(sān zì jīng)*. Room 1 houses the Confucian classics, including *The Analects, The Spring and Autumn Annals.* Candidates for official examinations would pore over rubbings taken from these stelae and would be expected to know the classics by heart—an educational style that unfortunately still holds sway in China. Immediately to your left in room 2 is the Nestorian Stele. Nestorian Christians were drummed out of the Church for maintaining that Jesus was both human and divine and that Mary was the mother of "the man Jesus," and not the mother of God. The stele records the visit of a Nestorian priest to Cháng'ān and the founding of a Nestorian chapel, providing evidence of a Nestorian presence in China as early as A.D. 635. The influence of other faiths is clear—the Maltese cross is set amid Daoist clouds, supported by a Buddhist lotus flower. Rooms 2 and 3 also house the work of master calligraphers, such as Wáng Xīzhī, whose writings are still used as models by calligraphy students. Room 4 has pictorial stelae, including a famous image of Confucius. Here you will encounter a demonstration of "rubbing," whereby moistened paper is hammered onto the inked stones, color is tapped on using a wooden disk wrapped in a cloth, and the impression is dried before being gobbled up by Japanese tour groups. It isn't a gentle process, and it's easy to see why many stelae are almost unreadable. Double back to your left to enter rooms 5 to 7, as well as a gallery of stone sculpture containing an exquisite statue of a bodhisattva that shows Indian and Grecian influences. Before you leave, rest in one of the 1950s cinema seats that line the courtyard.

Wényì Běi Lù 18. ✆ **029/721-0764.** Admission ¥30 ($3.70). 8am–5:40pm.

Dà Qīngzhēnssì (Great Mosque) Founded during the height of the Táng dynasty in 742, this is one of the most tranquil places in town and the center of a sizable Muslim community, residents in Xī'ān for over 1,200 years. As with Bāxiān Ān, half the adventure is getting there, as you veer left just north of the Drum Tower. The covered alleyway, Huàjué Xiàng, has good-humored vendors selling all manner of weird merchandise (see "Shopping," below) and it may take you a few attempts to find the mosque. The courtyards are spacious and have a garden-like feel, with a wonderful fusion of Arabian and Chinese architectural styles. To the right of the entrance is a hall filled with exquisite Míng furniture. In the living quarters to the left, debates on the scriptures and temple finances can sometimes be heard. The central courtyard has a triple-eaved octagonal pagoda from which worshippers are called to prayer. The prayer hall is normally

closed to non-Muslims. As this is an active mosque, be circumspect in taking photographs. Avoid visiting on Friday, when access to the mosque is restricted.

Huàjué Xiàng 30. ✆ **029/727-2541.** Admission ¥12 ($1.50). Apr–Oct 8am–7pm; Nov–Mar 8am–5pm.

Dà Yàn Tǎ (Great Goose Pagoda) & Dà Cí'ēn Sì (Temple of Great Goodwill) This is the best-known temple in Xī'ān, and worth a visit if, like many in the U.K. and Australia, you were entranced by the TV version of *Monkey* as a child. The scripture-collecting journey of Xuánzàng (596–664) to India, on which the show was based, lasted 15 years, and was immortalized and lampooned in Wú Chéng'ēn's novel *Journey to the West (Xī Yóu Jì).* But the journey was not the end of Xuánzàng's travails. Upon his return, he requested the construction of a pagoda to house the scriptures; his request was accommodated inside a temple built from 647 to 652 by Prince Lǐ Zhì in honor of his mother, Empress Wén Dé. Construction of the pagoda commenced in 652, in a style similar to those seen by Xuánzàng in India—hence the simple, tapering structure. Xuánzàng is credited with translating 75 texts into over 1,000 volumes, an amazing feat since the originals contained a host of specialized terms with no Chinese equivalents.

Halls at the back of the temple contain murals depicting Xuánzàng's journey—in many pictures, he is shown holding a fly whisk, intended to send evil spirits into flight. To the left and right of the pagoda's south entrance are prefaces to the texts written by Tàizōng and Gāozōng. Above the east and west doors are barely visible Táng carvings of the Buddha. If you need exercise, the pagoda is worth a climb, but without an act of Buddha you won't see much through the muck. If you need a rest, there is a reasonably priced teahouse just to the right of the south gate as you enter the temple.

Admission ¥21 ($2.60) temple, ¥25 ($3) pagoda. 8am–5:40pm. Minibus: no. 501 from the Bell Tower. Bus: no. 5 from the station.

Shǎnxī Lìshǐ Bówùguǎn (Shǎnxī History Museum) ★★★ If you visit one museum in China, make it this one, for its unrivalled collection of treasures. As you enter, start with the hall on the left, pull on a jacket to brave the fierce air-conditioning, and ignore the man who tries to drag you to his display of "original art." Items are displayed chronologically, starting with the Shāng dynasty (ca. 17th c.–11th c. B.C.) and the Zhōu dynasty (ca. 11th c.–221 B.C.) on the ground floor, including items that speak to eating, drinking, and merriment in the Western Zhōu (ca. 11th c.–771 B.C.).

Things take a martial turn as you enter the Qín dynasty (221–206 B.C.): Aside from the bronze swords and rusting iron weapons (which gave the Qín a decisive military edge), a striking exhibit is a **tiger-shaped tally** covered in characters *(dùhǔ fú)* which gave its owner, one General Dù, imperial authorization to mobilize over 50 soldiers at will. As you move on to the Táng dynasty (618–907), the influence of Buddhist art from the Silk Routes becomes apparent—carvings are more sophisticated, and bright colors are introduced. Perhaps the most startling exhibits are the frescos *(bìhuà)* relocated from the Táng tumuli around Xī'ān. A depiction of ladies-in-waiting *(gōngnǚ tú)* ★★ shows nine women carrying the tools of their trade—candelabras, fans, cloth bundles, powder boxes, even fly swatters. Two of them are dressed in male clothing. Another fresco *(mǎ qiú tú)* shows noblemen enjoying the newly imported game of polo. Ceramic **tomb guardians** point to a lively trade with the outside world—there's a trader from Africa and a fanciful depiction of a man on horseback battling a leopard. You can easily spend 3 or 4 hours here.

Xiǎo Zhài Dōng Lù 91. ✆ **029/525-4727.** Admission ¥35 ($4.40). 8am–5pm. Bus: no. 5 (from the station) or 610 (from just north of the Bell Tower to Lìshǐ Bówùguǎn).

Xī'ān Chéngqiáng (City Wall) The largest and best-preserved city walls in China are definitely worth a visit. The walls were built during the early Míng dynasty, on the remains of Táng palace walls. The original city walls were much further out, well past Dà Yàn Tǎ. The surrounding moat will allegedly be cleaned up by 2004, but the chances of this seem remote. The South Gate (Nán Mén) is the best place to start your exploration on foot or bike. Individual (¥10/$1.25) and tandem bicycles (¥20/$2.50) may be hired by the hour from here, or just east of Hépíng Mén. Traces of vernacular architecture can be found clustered around small temples like **Guāngrén Sì.** Signs suggest the wall is intact, but a large bite has been taken out of the northeast section. You can rejoin the wall several hundred yards south of the East Gate, but it's easier to turn back once you reach the North Gate (Běi Mén).

Admission ¥10 ($1.25). Apr–Oct 8am–10pm; Nov–Mar 8am–6pm.

AROUND XĪ'ĀN

EASTERN ROUTE (DŌNG XIÀN)

Of the two common tours from Xī'ān, the **Eastern Route** is shorter, less expensive, and more popular than the **Western Route.** There is enough to keep you interested for a whole day, but organized tours of the Eastern Route include "shopping" and sights of dubious merit. While tours are convenient if you have the time, you can do without one. If you are short on time, simply visit Bīngmǎyǒng as a half-day trip.

Bīngmǎyǒng (Terracotta Warriors) ★★★ This is the reason most visitors come to Xī'ān, and unlike many big sights in China, it does not disappoint. Amazingly, the warriors are just one piece of Qín Shǐ Huáng's attempt to reconstruct his empire for the afterlife. The tomb to the west is still to be fully excavated, and is said to include a full reconstruction of the ancient capital, complete with rivers and lakes of mercury. According to historian Sīmǎ Qiān, over 700,000 workers were drafted for the project, and those involved in the construction of the tomb were rewarded with graves beside their emperor. Tourism officials pray that the warriors are "just the tip of the iceberg," but it is just as likely that the tomb was plundered during the Táng or Sòng dynasties.

It's hard not to get a shiver down your spine as you survey the unromantically named **Pit 1,** with four columns of warriors in each of the 11 passageways; there are over 6,000 infantry in battle formation, stretching back 182m (200 yd.). Originally painted in bright colors, they were constructed from interchangeable parts luted together by clay. Because the heads were hand-molded, no two appear the same. Qín Shǐ Huáng's army was drawn from all over his vast empire, and this ethnic diversity is reflected in the variety of hairstyles, headdresses, and facial expressions. Even on the mass-produced bodies, the level of detail is striking, down to the layering of armor and the studs on archers' shoes that prevented them from slipping. The average height of the warriors is 1.8m (5 ft. 11 in.); senior officers are taller. Pit 2 holds 1,400 soldiers and cavalry and a taller (nearly 2m/6½ ft.) general; pit 3 houses the headquarters, with 68 senior officers.

A small **hall** just to the right of pit 1 contains a display of two magnificent bronze chariots, reconstructed from nearly 3,500 pieces excavated from a pit to the west of the tomb.

An **English–speaking guide** (¥50/$6) can be arranged on the spot at the tour guide center *(dǎoyóu fúwù zhàn)* located near a red umbrella to the right of the entrance.

✆ **029/391-1961.** Admission: Main exhibits ¥65 ($8.10), chariot display ¥12 ($1.50). Mar 16–Nov 14, 8:30am–6pm; Nov 15–Mar 15, 8:30am–5pm. Bus: no. 306 (leaves from the front of the railway station, on the east side). Take the large A/C bus (¥5/65¢) rather than the minibuses that leave when full.

Bànpō Bówùguǎn (Bànpō Neolithic Village) If you're interested in archaeology, this is an essential visit. Otherwise, you can give it a miss. Given the amount of material unearthed here since its discovery in 1953, it's amazing that only one-fifth of the site has been excavated (mostly due to the cost of preserving what has been discovered). The village, traced back to the **Yǎngsháo culture,** was occupied from about 5000 to 4000 B.C. Start with the halls to your left, which show a gradual development of tools, pottery (including a cleverly designed vessel for drawing water) decorated with painted geometrical designs, and evidence of an embryonic written language. The rear hall houses the 50,000-sq.-m (538,000-sq.-ft.) site, with traces of semi-subterranean and above-ground houses, all protected by a moat and stockade. **Burial jars** for children, with holes in the tops to release their souls, hold your attention. Avoid the concrete wonders of Bànpō Matriarchal Clan Village, and the hall stupidly comparing Bànpō to nomadic tribes in Africa.

Bànpō Bówùguǎn (from the Bànpō Bówùguǎn bus stop, walk back towards town and turn left at the 1st cross street). Admission ¥20 ($2.50). 8am–5:40pm. Bus: no. 11 (from just north of the Bell Tower) or no. 105 (from the station). Continuing on to Huáqīng Pools and Bīngmǎyǒng is tricky, but possible. Take bus no. 105 back towards town as far as Wànshòu Lù. Catch bus no. 512 north far as Wáng Jiā Fén (3 stops) and then catch bus no. 306 east.

WESTERN ROUTE (XĪ XIÀN)

The Western Route is commonly seen as a long, full-day trip from Xī'ān. A tour is the best way to see the sites, as most are inaccessible by public transport. The longer distances and hence higher costs make this route slightly less trammeled than the more accessible Eastern Route.

Xiányáng Bówùguǎn (Xiányáng Museum) Thirty kilometers (19 miles) west of Xī'ān, this museum is not worth a trip in itself, but it is a worthwhile part of any tour out to the west. The main attraction is a set of warriors from the early Hàn dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 221), which are an interesting contrast to those buried with Qín Shǐ Huángdì. The horses are animated, nostrils flaring, eyes wide, ready for battle, while the mounted and foot soldiers are solemn.

Admission ¥20 ($2.50). 8am–5:30pm.

Táng Qián Líng (Táng Qián Tomb) ★ This is the most spectacular of the many Táng tombs clustered in an area about 90km (56 miles) northwest of Xī'ān. Built for the Gāozōng emperor and his strong-willed wife, the Empress Wǔ Zétiān, the Qián Líng has never been excavated or (it is believed) robbed. A "spirit way" leads up to the tumulus, which is built into a hill. The way is lined with massive stone guardians—winged horses, ostriches, horses, human figures, and stone lions. At the top are two stelae. The one on the left is a eulogy to the reign of Gāozōng, composed by his wife. The one on the right is the "blank stele" of Wǔ Zétiān, awaiting comment from future rulers on her reign. Comment was added after the Táng, in the Sòng and Jìn dynasties, and was not flattering. Further on is a group of headless figures, foreign emissaries at the Gāozōng emperor's funeral. Their decapitated state is a result of being blamed by local farmers for crop failures. Climb up the hill to get a perspective on the

size of the spirit way, which commences from twin towers over 3km (2 miles) away. In the surrounding area are smaller Táng tombs which have been excavated and robbed, including the **Yǒngtài Gōngzhǔ Mù (Tomb of Princess Yǒngtài), Zhānghuái Tàizǐ Mù (Tomb of Prince Zhānghuái),** and **Yìdé Tàizǐ Mù (Tomb of Prince Yìdé).** The occupants of these tombs all died at the hands of Wǔ Zétiān. Visit one to see the layout, but many of the original wall paintings have been relocated to **Shǎnxī History Museum** (p. 244) to protect them from stampeding tour groups.

Admission ¥31 ($3.90). 8am–7pm.

Fǎmén Sì (Fǎmén Temple) ★ Situated 110km (68 miles) west of Xī'ān, Fǎmén Sì is essential to any Western Route tour. This was the wealthiest temple during the later Táng dynasty, largely due to a relic: four slivers of the finger bone of Sakyamuni Buddha. With money from Hong Kong and Táiwān, expansion continues—an additional pavilion was built in 2000 and more monastic housing is planned. When you enter the temple, you are greeted by a picture of Jiāng Zémín examining the finger of the Buddha, restoring after a hiatus of over 1,000 years the tradition of disinterring the relic for the emperor's pleasure, and adding to rumors that China's no. 1 Marxist is a closet Buddhist. The center of the temple is an imposing 13-tiered octagonal pagoda built during the Míng dynasty (1368–1644). The reformist Xiànzōng emperor (reigned 806–821) placed the relic here, but after the fall of the Táng, it was forgotten. In 1981, subsidence of the pagoda led to excavations, which uncovered the underground palace which, in turn, housed not only the relic, but also treasures bestowed by Táng rulers. These are displayed in **Fǎmén Sì Bówùguǎn,** and include the beautifully crafted caskets that housed the relic, and a bejeweled, gilded bodhisattva holding a lotus plate with a prayer from the Yìzōng emperor "that the barbaric nations will come to acknowledge their allegiance." The museum is a rare find—curatorial standards are high, with good English explanations and even piped music to soothe you. Tea lovers will enjoy the tea culture exhibit, displaying candles and spoons that confirm written accounts of the origins of tea culture.

Admission to Fǎmén Sì ¥28 ($3.50). Admission to Fǎmén Sì Bówùguǎn ¥32 ($4). 8am–5:30pm. Bus: Hourly from Jiànguó Fàndiàn 7am–midday (1½ hr.; ¥18/$2.30).

OUTDOOR PURSUITS

HIKING Other than taking your chances in the traffic on a bicycle, there are few options for staying fit in Xī'ān. One choice is to join a weekend trip to the mountains southwest of Xī'ān organized by **Green Ants Outdoors** at Zhūquè Dàjiē 60 (✆ **029/526-5960;** www.greenants.com.cn). They stock outdoor gear and rent tents, sleeping bags, and backpacks from 9am to 8pm. Take bus no. 610 from the station or north of the Bell Tower to Xiǎo Yàn Tǎ and walk west to the intersection; the shop is on the southwest corner.

SWIMMING One of China's most entertaining outings awaits the intrepid at **Lónggōng Shuǐshàng Lèyuán,** at Jiěfàng Lù 39 (✆ **029/744-7311**). The surprisingly clean water-slide park is about a mile south of the railway station. It's open year-round Friday through Sunday from 10am to 8pm; admission is ¥50 ($6) for adults, ¥25 ($3) for children under 1.4m (4 ft. 7 in.) tall. Take bus no. 611 from the station or from west of the Bell Tower to Mínlè Yuàn.

SHOPPING

Bā Xiān Ān The outdoor **antiques market** on Wednesday and Sunday mornings is the most atmospheric in town. Despite a sign warning that antiques must

be declared with Customs before you leave China, there's no guarantee that what you buy is a genuine antique. But there is a buzz to the place, and you can find some wonderful Cultural Revolution kitsch, ceramics, bronze Buddhas, and Qīng coins. See the Bā Xiān Ān review in "Exploring Xī'ān," earlier in this chapter, for directions.

Zhōng Běi Jiùhuò Shìchǎng With peasants finding that their fields are full of valuable antiques stored in the graves of their prosperous ancestors, digging is going on at a furious pace in the countryside surrounding Xī'ān. Factories producing excellent copies are also very busy. If you're after a genuine antique, you have some chance of finding one here. There are fakes aplenty, but this market is geared to locals, so asking prices are not as absurd as elsewhere. There are bronzes of all kinds, heroic comic books from the Cultural Revolution, weird kama sutra-inspired wood carvings, Buddha heads that look as if they were knocked off statues, fake Bànpō water-retrieving vessels, and even mobile phones. Be wary when purchasing bronzes, which tended to be melted down and reused over the ages (unless they were buried). Your best bets are ceramics and pottery. The market is open April through October from 9:30am to 6pm, and November through March from 10am to 6pm. Zhū Què Dàjiē Zhōng Duàn 2. Bus no. 6 from south of Bell Tower to Zhōngtǐ Guǎngcháng; continue south.

Wáng Zhèng To the west of some pricey dumpling restaurants above the subterranean Zhōng Lóu Guǎngchǎng (Bell Tower Square), you'll find a **second-hand camera shop** selling Nikons, Hasselblads, and beautiful ancient box cameras. The owner, Wáng Zhèng, is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. Zhōnglóu Guǎngchǎng Shāngyè Jiē 38. ✆ **029/727-3627.**

Gǔwénhuà Jiē This enjoyable street for browsing is east of Nán Mén, on the way to Bēilín Bówùguǎn. Shops sell huge paint brushes, rubbings, paintings, and musical instruments, and you can watch artists at work in this faithfully restored street.

Home Club (Jiālè Shāngdiàn) Diagonally opposite the Hyatt on Dōng Dàjiē is the ubiquitous **Parkson (Bǎishèng),** but the newest department store is the Home Club, with a huge range of groceries on the first and second floors. Located just south of the Bell Tower, the store is open from 9:15am to 10pm. Fěn Xiàng 18. ✆ **029/727-1922.**

Huàjué Xiàng The most enjoyable place to shop for souvenirs is the covered alleyway that leads to **Dà Qīngzhēnsì.** Shopping here is bloodsport, and you are the game, but the vendors are friendly. Interesting finds include fēngshuǐ compasses, Máo lighters, panda Christmas tree balls, Tibetan prayer wheels, Little Red Books in French, old bone mahjong sets, and gnarled walking sticks.

WHERE TO STAY

The locals don't go anywhere near the railway station unless they are catching a train, and if you have any amount of time on your hands, it's best to follow their example. If you must, try the **Jiěfàng Fàndiàn,** Jiěfàng Lù 181, (✆ **029/742-8946;** fax 029/742-2617; www.jiefanghotel.com; ¥240–¥480/$30–$60 standard room; ¥580/$72 suite), directly across from the railway station on the left, or the **Silk Road Hotel (Tiānshùn Dàshà)** 360m (400 yd. south) of the railway station at Jiěfàng Lù 53 (✆ **029/743-3999;** fax 029/741-2666; ¥280–¥580/$35–$72 standard rooms; from ¥800/$100 suites). Both hotels have restaurants and very negotiable rates. Buses for Bīngmǎyǒng, Fǎmén Sì, and

Huá Shān leave from outside the Jiěfàng, and there's a CITS office inside, but service is less brusque at the Silk Road.

The major attractions and restaurants are clustered around the southern and central parts of town, which are safer places to find lodgings. Discounts of 20% off rack rates are achieved with little bargaining.

VERY EXPENSIVE

Hyatt Regency Xī'ān (Kǎiyuè Fàndiàn) ★★ The Hyatt is the best-situated of the luxury hotels, many of which are in grim suburban areas. The rooms are smaller than those at the Sheraton and Shangri-La, but they are warmly furnished. Some of the facilities—particularly the bathrooms—are showing signs of wear, although major renovations are planned. An atrium with flowing streams, dense foliage, and singing birds forms the core of the hotel; sipping a coffee here is the best way to recover from the heat and the smog. Should your finances allow it, the Hyatt is the best five-star option.

Dōng Dàjiē 156. ✆ **029/723-1234.** Fax 029/721-6799. www.hyatt.com. 404 units. ¥1,320 ($165) standard room; from ¥2,320 ($290) suite. 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 611 from the station to Dàcháshì; continue south for 54m/60 yd. and cross to the street's southeast side. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar, cafe; tennis courts; health club and spa; bike rental; concierge; airport shuttle; 24-hr. business center; 24-hr. forex; salon; in-room massage; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, broadband Internet access (¥30/$3.70 per day), minibar, fridge, iron, safe.

Shangri-La Golden Flower (Jīnhuā Fàndiàn) ★ Of Xī'ān's several five-star hotels, the Shangri-La boasts the most spacious rooms, all with either king- or queen-sized beds. When it opened in 1985, this was the first luxury hotel in town, and crowds would gather to gaze at its fountain. The plush south wing opened in 1989, and it remains very well kept. The older north wing was recently renovated, with fresh carpets, wallpaper, curtains, and bathrooms. Located well outside the city wall, the hotel is inconvenient for walking around town, but it does offer some excellent tour packages (other hotels rely on outside tour agencies) and the best breakfast in town. A comprehensive staff-training program doesn't always seem to be paying dividends.

Chánglè Xī Lù 8 (3km/2 miles east of city wall). ✆ **800/942-5050** or 029/323-2981. Fax 029/323-5477. www.shangri-la.com. 453 units. ¥1,360 ($170) standard room; from ¥2,080 ($260) suite. 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 13 (from the station) or 45 (from east of Bell Tower to Jīnhuā Lù). **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; cafe; large indoor swimming pool; health club and spa; concierge; tour desk; airport shuttle; 24-hr. business center; 24-hr. forex; salon; 24-hr. room service; in-room massage; same-day laundry/dry cleaning; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, broadband Internet access (¥30/$3.70 per day), minibar, fridge, iron, safe.

Sheraton Xī'ān (Xīláidēng Dàjiǔdiàn) ★★ *Kids* Located over a mile west of the city walls, the Sheraton has improved remarkably in recent years, and service is the best in Xī'ān. Renovations are ongoing. Rooms are modern and well appointed, with sturdy beds and plush carpets. After a day braving the grimy air of Xī'ān, you can seek refuge in the immaculate bathrooms. The Gate West Restaurant offers tasty Western fare. Locals are gradually developing a taste for these luxuries, although they have been spotted adding sugar to fine French red.

Fēnghào Dōng Lù 262. ✆ **029/426-1888.** Fax 029/426-2188. www.sheraton.com/xian. 338 units. ¥1,370–¥1,743 ($165–$210) standard room; from ¥2,615 ($315) suite. 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 611 from the station and west of the Bell Tower to Fēnghào Dōng Lù. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; cafe; bar; large indoor swimming pool; health club; spa; game room; concierge; tour desk; airport shuttle; 24-hr. business center; 24-hr. forex; salon; 24-hr. room service; in-room massage; same-day laundry/dry cleaning; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, broadband Internet access (¥30/$3.70 per day), minibar, fridge, hair dryer, iron, safe.

EXPENSIVE

Bell Tower Hotel (Zhōnglóu Fàndiàn) The charmingly dilapidated rooms of the best-situated hotel in town, the Bell Tower, are finally undergoing much-needed renovations, which should be completed in 2003. The lunch buffet on the second floor is still the best all-you-can-eat value in town. In the hotel are branches of both CITS and Golden Bridge Travel. Service is competent, but there's an air of state-run indifference that no renovation can fix.

Nán Dàjiē 110 (southwest corner of Bell Tower). ✆ **029/727-9200.** Fax 029/727-1217. 320 units. ¥748 ($93) standard room; from ¥1,190 ($149) suite. 10% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 603 from the station. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; cafe; health club; game room; concierge; tour desk; business center; 24-hr. forex; shopping arcade; next-day laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, fridge, hair dryer.

Grand New World Hotel (Gǔdū Xīn Shìjiè Dàjiǔdiàn) Built in 1990, this massive four-star luxury hotel is allegedly under foreign management. The rooms are spacious, bright, and functional; the staff is friendly and exceedingly helpful. However, an air of seediness is creeping in: The low, dark corridors and the sign in the bathroom advertising MASSAGE give it the feel of a dodgy Chinese-run hotel. Marriott is set to hand the hotel over to the Renaissance chain; perhaps they can turn things around. The west side of town isn't glamorous, but just southeast of the hotel is the bustling residential section of the Muslim quarter, which makes for a rewarding after-dinner stroll.

Lián Hú Lù 48 (corner of Jiǔjīn Qiáo Lù). ✆ **800/321-2211** or 029/721-6868. Fax 029/721-9754. www.gnwhxian.com. 491 units. ¥830 ($104) standard room; suites from ¥1660 ($207) and way up. 50% discount usually offered. 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 103 (from station) or no. 606 (from east of Bell Tower to Jiǔjīn Qiáo). **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; nightclub; indoor swimming pool; tennis court; health club; concierge; tour desk; business center; 24-hr forex; shopping arcade; 24-hr room service; same-day laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport (¥4.20/55¢ per hr.), minibar, fridge, safe.

MODERATE

Melody Hotel (Měilún Jiǔdiàn) For location and price, this is the best mid-range choice in town. Rooms are clean and bright, and it's worth paying a little extra for a view of the Drum Tower, which is directly opposite. The Melody opened in 2001 and is an entirely private venture. If you've ever wanted to try the full-body shower featured in the movie *Shower (Xǐzǎo),* this is the place. As is apparent from the number of "eights" in the prices, and the size of the bathing area, this hotel caters to domestic tourists—expect service to be indifferent at times.

Xī Dàjiē 86 (opposite the Drum Tower). ✆ **029/728-8888.** Fax 029/727-3601. 158 units (shower only). ¥398–¥588 ($50–$73) standard room; ¥888 ($111) suite. 10% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; exercise room; concierge; same-day laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, fridge, hair dryer.

Wǔyī Fàndiàn (May First Hotel) Stung by exclusion from various travel guides, the first hotel in town to accept foreigners is frantically renovating from the top floor downwards. Some of the wallpaper looks unchanged since the hotel's opening in 1946, so be sure to ask for a room on the refurbished seventh floor. May First requires that their staff take classes in English and politeness, which is more than can be said for some five-star hotels in town. Lugging your bags up the stairs to reception is inconvenient, but with a bustling food court downstairs and elevators that only take four people, a stay here is reminiscent of Hong Kong in the 1970s.

Dōng Dàjiē 351 (225m/250 yd. east of Bell Tower, on north side). ✆ **029/721-2212.** Fax 029/721-3824. www.may-first.com. 129 units. ¥230–¥288 ($29–$36) standard room. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; food court; tour desk; same-day laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV.

INEXPENSIVE

Shāng Hǎo Bīnguǎn *Value* Opened so recently that they still don't have a street number, this is a small, friendly hotel with prices well below what you would expect to pay for comfortable, clean, and spacious midsize rooms. The staff speaks almost no English so you'll need your phrasebook, but this is a steal. The hotel is situated in one of Xī'ān's liveliest areas, a taste of "real China."

Jiànshè Xī Lù. ✆ **029/553-9111.** 48 units (shower only). ¥180 ($23) twin; ¥120 ($15) twin with shared bathroom; ¥150 ($19) standard room; ¥320 ($39) suite. Rates easily reduced by 40%. No credit cards. Bus: no. 601 from north of Bell Tower, or bus no. 5 from the railway station to Lǔ Jiā Cūn; walk south for 45m (50 yd.) and turn right onto Jiànshè Lù. The hotel is 90m (100 yd.) ahead, on the north side, directly opposite a hospital. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; next-day laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Xī'ān Shūyuàn Qīngnián Lǚshè (Xī'ān Shūyuàn Youth Hostel) ★★ *Finds* Youth hostels are taking over the budget accommodation niche in China, and this one is the best option in town. A magnificent restored courtyard residence, it formerly housed the Xiányáng County government. Chinese visitors wonder why foreigners put up with rooms that have concrete-and-tile floors and hot water that only runs from 6pm to 12:30am (although you can ask for it at other times). What you get is a friendly English-speaking staff, an excellent location, impartial and useful information, and that rare commodity in China—ambience.

Nán Dàjiē Xī Shùn Chéng Xiàng 2A (27m/30 yd. west of the South Gate, just inside the city wall). ✆ **029/728-7720.** Fax 029/728-7238. 45 units (shower only). ¥160 ($20) standard room; from ¥20 ($2.50) dorm. Discounts for YHA members. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 603 from the railway station to Nán Mén. **Amenities:** Cafe; bike rental; concierge; tour desk; railway station courtesy car; laundry and kitchen facilities; Internet access. *In room:* A/C, TV, no phone.

WHERE TO DINE

Fánjì Làzhī Ròudiàn SHǍNXĪ This is the most famous vendor of Shǎnxī's most widely consumed snack—*ròu jiā mó,* finely chopped pork pressed between two halves of a solid steamed bun. Xī'ān's answer to the hamburger makes a perfect snack on the run, but you can almost feel your arteries clogging up as you wolf it down. Ask for the good-quality *(yōuzhì)* bun (¥4/50¢). The state-run atmosphere is quaint and friendly, and the numerous awards that decorate the walls are well deserved.

Zhúbāshì Jiē 46 (from Gǔ Lóu, the shop is opposite, 45m/50 yd. south of Xī Dàjiē on the road's east side). Meal for 2 less than ¥20 ($2.50). 7am–9pm. Bus: no. 610 from the station to Gǔ Lóu.

Hǎicháo Yīn Teahouse TEAHOUSE Soothing traditional music is drowned out by the clack of mahjong tiles and entrepreneurs bragging about their latest business coup, but that makes this teahouse experience more authentic. Like coffeehouses in the West, teahouses were the place to do business in ancient China. Avoid the first floor, which is for Japanese tour groups, and head for the bamboo enclosures on the second floor. Arrangements can be made for an English-speaking tea hostess, who will guide you through the subtle rituals of taking tea, such as draining your cup in three gulps. Novices might start with light teas such as the fragrant *gāo shān* or the sweet ginseng tea *(rénshēn).* An unusual tea is *bái máohóu,* or white-haired monkey tea (picked at high altitudes where the monkey is found). It tastes like ordinary oolong tea, but after you quaff hot water, its sweet flavors are released.

Jīnhuā Nán Lù 5. (From Jiànguó Fàndiàn, follow the road as it curves south for 315m/350 yd. The teahouse is to the right, before a pedestrian bridge.) ✆ **029/322-3525.** AE, DC, MC, V. ¥68–¥100 ($8.50–$12) small pot (up to 4 people); ¥100–¥160 ($12–$20) large pot. 9am–2am. Bus: no. 8 from east of Bell Tower to Jiànguó Fàndiàn.

Highfly Pizza (Gāofēi Bǐsà) WESTERN Outside of the five-star hotels and the inevitable KFCs, Xī'ān offers little in the way of Western food; it's a relief to find pizza (the four-cheese and pepperoni pizzas are superb), real oven-baked penne, tuna sandwiches, chocolate brownies, even Texas stew. There are vegetarian options, the kitchen is spotless, and the entire restaurant is nonsmoking.

Hépíng Mén Wài Shènglì Fàndiàn. ✆ **029/785-5333.** AE, DC, MC, V. Meal for 2 ¥60–¥100 ($7.50–$12). 9am–11pm. Bus: no. 5 (from station) or no. 601 (from north of Bell Tower to Hépíng Mén).

Jiǎsān Guàntāng Bāozi ★ MUSLIM Still the most famous of the Jiǎ Brothers' restaurants, you'll know you're there when you see the monstrous blue arch over the entrance and a wall festooned with photographs of Xī'ān notables—TV hosts, writers, and musicians. The specialty dish is *guàntāng bāozi,* with a choice of beef, lamb or "three flavors"—lamb, mushroom, and prawn. The dumplings have piping-hot soup inside, so let them cool before testing your chopstick skills. This dish is best washed down with *bā bǎo tián xīfàn,* a sweet rice porridge filled with peanuts, sultanas, hawthorn, and medlar berries.

Běi Yuàn Mén 93 (135m/150 yd. north of Drum Tower, on the east side). ✆ **029/725-7507.** Meal for 2 less than ¥20 ($2.50). No credit cards. 7:30am–midnight.

Lǎo Sūn Jiā ★ SHǍNXĪ The original restaurant, opened in 1898, is still the best place to sample Xī'ān's most celebrated dish, *yángròu pàomó.* There are now three branches, two of them on Dōng Dàjiē. The branch with the best reputation at the moment is located inside a large hotel. On the first floor, you can dine with the masses—not recommended unless you want to be the main attraction. The second floor is a point-to-choose *xiǎochī* (snack) restaurant. Recommended dishes include the lamb dumplings *(suān tāng shuǐjiǎo)* and a local favorite, *fènzhēng yángròu,* two steamed buns perched delicately to the side of a pile of mince and flour. Order *yángròu pàomó* on the third floor. You will face an empty bowl and two steamed buns, as well as plates of chili, coriander, and cloves of garlic that have been marinated in vinegar and sugar for several months. Tear the buns into tiny pieces and pop them into the empty bowl. When you've finished, your bowl will be taken away and refilled with broth and noodles. Stir in the coriander and chili, and when your palate gets greasy, nibble a clove of garlic and encourage your friends to do likewise. If the star dish doesn't fill you up, the stewed oxtail *(hóngshāo niúwěi)* and bok choy with mushrooms *(bìlǜ zá shuāng gū)* are recommended. Don't bother with the fourth floor, unless you are entertaining a government official looking for a bribe.

Dōng Guān Zhèng Jiē 78 (from Dōng Mén, cross the road, walk 27m/30 yd. north, turn right, and walk 45m/50 yd. east). ✆ **029/248-2828.** Reservations recommended on weekends (3rd floor). ¥60 ($7.50) on 2nd floor, ¥200 ($25) on 3rd floor. No credit cards. 11am–9pm. Bus: no. 45 from just east of Bell Tower to Dōng Mén.

Wénháo Záliáng Shífǔ Lǎo Diàn SHǍNXĪ This is one of the more affordable and healthy theater/banquet restaurants in Xī'ān. You won't leave with a grumbling stomach after you polish off up to eight appetizers, eight main courses, and 20 snacks *(xiǎo chī).* There are three different banquets available, and if you book in advance, you may be able to get a table close to the shadow puppet show (see "Chinese Shadows," below), which is held every night on the third floor. Worth looking out for are a delicious steamed corn bun *(wōtóu)* and a nutty sweet-potato pancake *(shǎn nán xiāngyù bǐng).*

Jiànshè Lù 2. (From Lǔ Jiā Cūn, walk south 54m/60 yd. and turn right into Jiànshè Lù. The restaurant is 225m/250 yd. ahead, on the north side.) ✆ **029/553-5555.** Reservations recommended. Meal for 2 ¥120–¥200 ($15–$25). No credit cards. 9:30am–11pm. Bus: no. 606 (from just north of Bell Tower) or no. 5 (from the railway station to Lǔ Jiā Cūn).

Chinese Shadows

Píyǐng was the staple entertainment of rural Shǎnxī before karaoke. Puppets are carved from leather and dyed dazzling colors—many date from the Qīng dynasty (1644–1911). There are over 600 different plays, ranging from legends to love stories to kung-fu epics. Unlike opera, this is loud, irreverent entertainment for the masses. Despite gaining brief notoriety after the release of Zhāng Yìmóu's film ***To Live (Huózhe),*** this art will probably die out in Shǎnxī. Its main exponent—who played Gě Yōu in the movie—is a septuagenarian, and his only student is a few years younger. It takes 10 years to learn the craft, and for most, driving a taxi is a more appealing option. For now, the puppet troupe **(Shǎnxī Hù Xiàn Píyǐng Yìshùtuán)** also performs at **Dōngfāng Dàjiǔdiàn.**

XĪ'ĀN AFTER DARK

THE PERFORMING ARTS

Two companies perform Táng-style banquets and musicals to entertain visitors. The competition for the group-tour dollar is fierce.

Shǎnxī Grand Opera House (Shǎnxī Gēwǔ Dà Xìyuàn) While it can't compete with Táng Yuè Gōng (see below) as a spectacle, this opera company has a more authentic feel, with revolutionary credentials tracing its origins to the Northwest Culture Work Group in Yán'ān. If you opt for the dinner, you'll gorge on dumplings with 20 different fillings. Be sure to book in advance; the busy season (May–Oct) may offer two performances nightly (call ahead). Voice-overs are in Chinese and English. If you attend one show, dinner starts at 7pm and the show starts at 8:30pm. If you attend two shows, the first performance is at 6pm, dinner at 7:10pm, and the second show at 8:40pm. Wén Yì Lù 165. ✆ **029/785-3293.** Reservations essential. Dinner and show ¥198 ($25); show only ¥118 ($15). AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 14 from the station, or no. 208 from south of the Bell Tower to Diāo Jiā Cūn.

Táng Dynasty (Táng Yuè Gōng) Run by a Hong Kong entrepreneur, this show delivers all your fantasies of Asia at once: lavish costumes modeled on the Mògāo cave paintings, a six-course banquet (watch out for the rice wine), hammy acting, and some amazing music and dance. Gāo Míng's performance of the Spring Oriole's Song on a vertical bamboo flute, the *pái xiāo,* is almost worth the money in itself. If you can get past the slickness and the feeling that it's just for foreigners (the voice-overs are all in English), the show makes a spectacular night out. Dinner starts at 6:30pm; the show begins at 8:30pm. Cháng'ān Lù 75. ✆ **029/526-1633.** www.xiantangdynasty.com. Reservations essential. Dinner and show ¥410 ($51); show and cocktail ¥200 ($25). AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 603 from station or north of Bell Tower to Cǎo Cháng Pō.

BARS & CLUBS

The **Huǒchē Pí Jiǔbā (Railway Bar),** Cháng'ān Běi Lù 1 (✆ **029/522-9622**), is a real find. The owner located eight 1930s railway cars half-buried near Bǎojī; it took 6 months to dig them out and move them here, next to a busy highway overpass. The original pine wood paneling gives the bar an ambience that no amount of renovating can produce. It's open from 2pm. To get there, take bus no. 603 from the station and north of the Bell Tower to Shěng Tǐyùchǎng. At **M9 Jūn Bā,** the decor is dark and martial, a contrast to the friendly service and relaxed atmosphere popular with foreign students, jaded tour guides, and

curious locals. The bar is at the corner of Nán Dàjiē and Fěn Xiàng, underground (✆ **029/727-4255**).

The best music in town is at **Goldfish Crazy Club** (Jīn Chì Niǎo), Xī Yī Lù 77 (✆ **029/726-1136**). It's located 18m (20 yd.) east of the intersection with Běi Dàjiē, above a fish market on the north side. The **1 + 1 Bar** (Yī Jiā Yī), Dōng Dàjiē 285 (✆ **029/726-3128**), is popular with expatriates and travelers.

SIDE TRIPS FROM XĪ'ĀN

THE POTTERS OF CHÉN LÚ ★★

This tiny group of villages in undulating terrain north of Xī'ān has been turning out exquisite **pottery** since the Táng dynasty, and is free of the hype that surrounds Jíngdézhèn (p. 433). Locals joke that Chén Lú "eats pottery," and while this may be fiction, walls are made of ceramic urns rather than bricks. Elegant cups that would fetch tidy sums in Xī'ān lie by the side of the road. No fewer than 17 small factories turn out different styles of pottery, ranging from the sleek black *hēiyòu* to the rusty shades of *tiěxiù huā* and the blues and whites of *qīng huā*. It's an old-fashioned town: People call each other "comrade" *(tóngzhì)* without the overtone of homosexuality that it now usually bears in urban China, wear Léi Fēng hats with thick tops and earflaps without irony, and offer cigarettes on reflex when they meet a stranger.

If you visit on a day trip, it's doubtful you'll have time to explore all the factories and shops. The best bargains are found in the factory showrooms, where the starting prices will have you offering more money, but you're more likely to come across original works in the houses of individual artisans. The main factory, **Chén Lú Táocí Chǎng** (✆ **0919/748-3350;** www.yaozc.com), has an exhibition of antique ceramics, including Táng dynasty moxibustion cups, hat canisters from the Yuán dynasty, and ceramic pillows—still used by villagers today! Visit the exhibition before going on a spending spree, as staff can advise you on which factories make which kinds of pottery. Exquisite bowls in *qīng huā* style cost as little as ¥10 ($1.25), while original works are considerably more expensive. Individual artisans are proud to display their wares and may hail you in the street. Well-known artisans include **Xú Kuàilè** (✆ **0919/748-2235**) and **Wáng Àiguó** (✆ **0133/0919-9977**).

The guesthouse at Chén Lú isn't someplace you'd willingly reside. But in this relaxed town, you won't be short on offers to stay and dine with the villagers, whose houses often have domed roofs in the manner of pottery kilns. Before you agree, check what sort of headrest your host has in mind. Ceramic pillows take some getting used to.

Chén Lú is a 1½-hour drive from Xī'ān, but most tour agencies will look blank when you mention it. A taxi should cost no more than ¥300 ($37) for the round-trip. Air-conditioned buses depart for Tóngchuān (100km/62 miles; 1½ hr.; ¥15/$1.90) from the main bus station every 20 minutes from 6:30am to 9pm. In Tóngchuān, continue north to the first roundabout for 630m (700 yd.), or catch bus no. 8 to the roundabout at Yígǔ Liángzhàn. From south of the roundabout, white minivans leave when full for Chén Lú (18km/11 miles; 40 min.; ¥3/40¢).

HÙ XIÀN: A BRUSH WITH MÁO

Farmers' paintings began as propaganda for the government, which wanted to present cheerful scenes of country life. The paintings show bumper harvests, irrigation schemes, and tractors. After the Cultural Revolution, most villagers put down their brushes. But Hù Xiàn villagers kept painting, and in the late 1980s

they found a market—foreigners. Visitors to Xī'ān cannot avoid farmers' paintings, as they are sold at every tourist site. With brilliant colors and rustic scenes—village fairs, peasants harvesting crops and herding geese—they make excellent souvenirs, but even casual observation shows that paintings on display in Xī'ān are nearly all the same.

If you are taken by the paintings and have a spare day, a visit to Hù Xiàn is worthwhile. There's nothing spectacular here—a sleepy country town that the trains no longer visit—but this is a way to see rural China and support people who produce original art. There are two villages renowned for their art—**Xī Hán Cūn** and **Dōng Hán Cūn.** The former is more rustic, and home to the famous old school painter, **Lǐ Fènglán** (✆ **029/481-6527**). She produced masses of revolutionary art, was a member of the National People's Congress, and has a sense of humor about her previous endeavors. Dōng Hán Cūn is prosperous and resembles a holiday resort. If you want to see an exhibition of famous farmers' paintings, you won't be crushed in the line. But at **Hù Xiàn Nóngmín Huà Zhǎnlǎnguǎn,** Hù Xiàn Nóngmín Huà Zhǎn Jiē 14 (✆ **029/481-2871**), interesting new works have far-from-traditional (wholesome) subjects; for example a vivid portrait shows red-faced peasants loafing on a couch, drinking *bái jiǔ,* and slapping each other on the back. The exhibit is open from 8am to noon and 2 to 5:30pm; admission is ¥20 ($2.50).

If you want to study painting, stay in Dōng Hán Cūn, where comfortable beds cost from ¥30 ($3.70) per night. One of the "second generation" painters, **Pān Xiǎolǐng** (✆ **029/481-3544**), who speaks a little English, is happy to make arrangements.

Getting to Hù Xiàn is an adventure. Take bus no. 43 from the Bell Tower to Qìchē Zhàn. Buses for Hù Xiàn (1 hr.; ¥6/75¢) depart from this bus station southwest of the city wall. Most buses pass Xī Hán Cūn and Dōng Hán Cūn, which are a 5-minute drive from Hù Xiàn's center. A taxi will cost ¥200 ($25).

2 Huá Shān

Shǎnxī Province, 120km (74 miles) E of Xī'ān

The first king of Shāng made a sacrifice on Huá Shān in 1766 B.C., and Hàn Wǔdì (reigned 141–87 B.C.) declared it the Sacred Mountain of the West. The mountain's present popularity with Chinese tourists was aided by Jīn Yōng's martial-arts novel *Huá Shān Lùn Jiàn,* which is filled with heroic swordsmen, mythical beasts, and beautiful maidens. Add a popular soap-opera set against the granite bluffs, precariously perched pine trees, and Daoist temples dangling from precipitous peaks, and Huá Shān's popularity with the locals was guaranteed. Huá Shān sees few foreign visitors, which is a shame, because the climb is a more pleasant experience here than at many other holy mountains in China (where you can be pestered off the mountain by local tourists who see you as part of the entertainment). The scenery is spectacular, the Daoist monks are friendly, and the air is clear enough to make the sunrise worth seeing. The best times to visit are mid-autumn, when the trees are a magical, colorful jumble, or spring, when the wildflowers bloom. Winter is picturesque but bitterly cold.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Huá Shān can be visited as a 1- or 2-day trip from Xī'ān. An air-conditioned **bus** leaves from the front of the Jiěfàng Hotel at 7:20am (2 hr.; ¥18/$2.20). Ignore touts who try to drag you away to their minibuses.

If you are walking up, ask the conductor to drop you at Huá Shān Kǒu, a village at the base of the mountain, or say that you are walking the *lǎo lù* (old road). To reach the chairlift, stay on the bus to the park entrance and connect with another bus (¥10/$1.25) that takes a further 25 minutes to reach the cable car. Entry to Huá Shān is ¥60 ($7.50). The last bus returns to Xī'ān from the cable car stop at 5:30pm, and minibuses run until 7pm.

Connect by **rail** via Huá Shān railway station. There is a minibus every half hour to Huá Shān Kǒu (20 min.; ¥3/40¢); or hail a red minivan that will take you there for the same price. Trains back to Xī'ān (2 hr.) cost between ¥10 ($1.25) and ¥20 ($2.50) and depart every hour or so.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Huá Shān Tourist Bureau** (✆ **0913/436-3161;** fax 0913/436-3578) is inside the Huá Shān Financial Hotel.

EXPLORING THE AREA

Consider the **cable car,** especially if you only have 1 day in your schedule. The mountain is a tough 2,000m (6,600-ft.) climb, especially if you don't have a head for heights. If you have 2 or more days, walk up and stay at one of the guesthouses on the mountain. You will enjoy a feeling of smugness when you meet the masses piling out of the cable cars at **North Peak (Běi Fēng).** By staying on the mountain, you can see the sunrise and the sunset, and enjoy the mountains when the light is soft.

Chinese guidebooks recommend climbing up at night with a flashlight to see the sunrise (presumably skipping the entrance fee). The locals say, "You don't fear what you can't see" *("Bú jiàn bú pà").* This is not sensible. The cable car (¥55/$6.90 one-way, ¥100/$12 round-trip) reaches Běi Fēng in 10 minutes, about 4 hours quicker than you would on foot. If you want to save your knees and leave yourself more time on the mountain, take the cable car down.

On the old road, it's 8km (5 miles) to Běi Fēng, all uphill. The last mile to North Peak is steep, narrow, and slippery, particularly through **Heaven's Well (Tiān Jǐng).**

Chinese tour groups, bedecked in yellow hats and white gloves, will gape at you, and souvenirs, bottles of water, and cucumbers will be waved in your face, but there is an enjoyable spirit of camaraderie among the hikers. And at least one of the souvenirs is worth purchasing. Every Chinese visitor has his or her name engraved on a brass padlock (¥2/25¢) wishing good health for the family, and attaches it to one of the many chain railings.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE

Outside of early May and mid-October, there is a surplus of accommodations on Huá Shān, so discounts of 30% to 50% are easily obtained. Dining on the mountain is basic and over-priced; take as much food as you can carry.

HUÁ SHĀN KǑU

If you arrive at Huá Shān late at night, there are a couple of passable hotels here, and unlike the lodgings on Huá Shān itself, they have showers.

Huá Shān Jīnróng Bīnguǎn (Huá Shān Financial Hotel) This is a three-star hotel for cadres done in regulation white tile and blue glass. The dark, mid-sized rooms are overpriced, and service can be distant. The best rooms are in Building 4, which was renovated in 2001. The hotel is 118m (130 yd.) uphill from the Huá Shān Kǒu intersection, on the left. The Huá Shān Tourist Bureau is located here.

Yù Quán Lù Zhōng Duàn. ✆ **0913/436-3120.** Fax 0913/436-3124. www.huashanfinancialhotel.com. 180 units. ¥388 ($48) twin; from ¥488 ($60) suite. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; concierge; same-day laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Xī Yuè Bīnguǎn This property is friendlier and a better value than the Financial Hotel. It was renovated in 2002 but the money ran out, leaving the corridors dark and dank. Located 100m (110 yd.) before the entrance to Yù Quán Temple on the right-hand side, it is easily spotted because of its traditional sloping tiled roof.

Yù Quán Lù Zhōng Duàn. ✆ **0913/436-3145.** Fax 0913/436-4559. 55 units (shower only). ¥190 ($24) twin. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant. *In room:* A/C, TV.

HUÁ SHĀN

On the mountain, facilities are basic, there are no bathrooms or showers, and pit toilets are common. Problems with wastewater treatment may lead to the closure of many hotels, so call ahead to check if your intended lodgings are still there.

Běi Fēng Fàndiàn Just a 5-minute walk from the cable car, the Běi Fēng Fàndiàn is perfect for the lazy and the late. Both the sunset and the sunrise can be enjoyed from the North Peak. The hotel offers a competent staff, clean rooms, and magnificent views. If the scenery isn't sufficient diversion, there is a movie and tearoom.

Huá Shān Fēngjǐng Qū Běi Fēng. ✆ **0913/430-0062.** 28 units (no bathroom). ¥300 ($37) twin. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant. *In room:* A/C, TV, no phone.

Zhēnyuè Gōng Shānzhuāng Based in the north wing of a small Daoist temple that lies in a valley between the rear peaks, this is the most interesting choice on the mountain. Some of the monks here speak English and love a chat. It's a 10-minute walk to **West Peak (Xī Fēng)** to see the sunset, and a 30-minute moon-lit scamper to **East Peak (Dōng Fēng)** to watch the sunrise. The twin units upstairs are drier and have the most comfortable beds. If Zhēnyuè Gōng is full, try Xī Fēng Fàndiàn, 45m (50 yd.) from West Peak. Also based in a peaceful Daoist sanctuary, this inn was undergoing refurbishment at press time.

Huá Shān Fēngjǐng Qū Xī Fēng, 714200. ✆ **0913/430-0101.** 9 units (no bathroom). ¥200($25) twin; from ¥50 ($6) dorm bed. **Amenities:** Restaurant; no phone.

3 Tiānshuǐ

Gānsù Province, 385km (239 miles) W of Xī'ān, 294km (182 miles) SE of Lánzhōu

Tiānshuǐ is divided into two parts—the main town of **Qín Chéng,** and the smaller township of **Běidào Qū,** 15km (9 miles) down the **Wèi river valley** to the west. Both townships are unexceptional; the main reason to visit is a clamber around the stunning Buddhist caves of **Màijī Shān,** a 1-hour bus ride from Běidào Qū. *Note:* Please turn to Appendix A for Chinese translations of key locations.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The **railway station** is in the north of Běidào Qū, with many trains from Lánzhōu (6 hr.) and further west, and from Xī'ān (6 hr.) and further east. Tiānshuǐ's allocation of tickets is limited, so you may need to proceed through CITS in Qín Chéng. Heading west for Lánzhōu are the T113 (11:47am), T75 (12:47pm), and T117 (1:25pm). For trains beyond Lánzhōu, try the T53 (29½ hr.; no reserved seats; 3:41pm), T69 (2:43pm), or 1083 (36½ hr.; 7:03pm). To Xīníng, the speediest choice is the K377 (10 hr.;

12:20am). To Chóngqìng, the only direct train is the 1084 (26 hr.; 11:43am). Pray for an upgrade. To Xī'ān, take the K120 (12:16am) or the T54 (no reserved seats; 3:48pm) that continues to Shànghǎi. Běijīng trains include the T70 (18½ hr.; 5:23pm), T152 (6:28pm), and T76 (8:08pm).

Connecting with Xī'ān (370km/229 miles; 6 hr.), the **bus** is your best option. From the **Běidào Qū long-distance bus station** on Jiāotōng Lù (✆ **0938/261-3113**) there are eight buses a day to Xī'ān (8am–5:30pm; ¥60/$7.50); half-hourly buses to Lánzhōu (7am–6pm; 381km/236 miles; 7 hr.; ¥53/$6.60); and buses to Yínchuān on alternate days (noon; 610km/378 miles; 17 hr.; ¥75/$9). Buses for Lánzhōu also depart from the railway station between 7:30am and 5pm.

The main bus station in Qín Chéng is 3 blocks east and 2 blocks north of the main square at Shāndōng Lù 31 (✆ **0938/821-4028**). Eleven buses depart daily for Xī'ān from 7am to 8pm. Buses depart every half hour for Lánzhōu (¥50/$6); at 6am and 5pm for Yínchuān (¥60/$7.50); and at 6:30am for Línxià (396km/246 miles; 13 hr.; ¥47/$5.90).

GETTING AROUND Bus no. 6 from the railway station connects Qín Chéng with Běidào Qū (15km/9¼ miles; 30 min.; ¥2.40/30¢). The first bus is at 6:20am; the last bus departs at 11:30pm. Taxis in both areas cost ¥4 (50¢), white minivans ¥3 (40¢).

TOURS & GUIDES Two hundred meters (656 ft.) east of the Bank of China is **CITS,** at Luóyù Xiǎo Qū (✆ **0938/821-4463;** fax 0938/821-3621; www.tianshuitour.com). They are useful if you are looking for an English-speaking guide (¥200/$24 per day), but don't expect obligation-free advice. They are open from 8:30am to 6pm.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The main **Bank of China** is located at Jiànhè Lù 8 (✆ **0938/821-1724**) in Qín Chéng, 800m (870 yd.) east of the northeast corner of the main square on the north side of the road. The building has massive bronze lions out front. It's open from 8am to 6pm on weekdays.

Internet Access An **Internet bar** on the second floor of Gōnghuì Dàshà charges ¥2 (25¢) per hour. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The main post office is located on the northwest corner of the main square in Qín Chéng.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

Màijī Shān Shíkū ★★ These are the most remarkable Buddhist caves in China, demonstrating a fine range of statuary styles amid spectacular scenery. Located 30km (19 miles) southeast of Tiānshuǐ, the haystack-shaped mountain is home to 194 extant caves, most on the western side of the mountain. The first caves were carved out during the Later Qín (384–417), a non-Hàn dynasty established during the Sixteen Kingdoms Period. Unlike other Buddhist caves, these saw little construction during the Táng dynasty, due to a series of earthquakes. The most serious occurred in 734, when the middle part of the grottoes collapsed. Significant statuary dates from the Northern Wèi, Northern Zhōu, and Suí dynasties.

Unlike other sites, the statuary here was not carved from the crumbling red rock, but added to it. **Grotto 18** explains the method of construction: A wooden superstructure is hauled up the mountain, bored into the soft cliffs, and coated with clay. Striking grottoes include **no. 191,** which houses a menacing winged figure with bulging eyes as its centerpiece; **no. 13,** with a huge Buddha and two

attendant bodhisattvas dating from either the Northern Zhōu dynasty or the Suí dynasty; and **no. 5,** with a sensuous bodhisattva dating from the Táng dynasty. As you scramble up the ladders that connect the caves, the charming scenery complements the statuary.

Many of the most interesting caves are off-limits without payment of between ¥300 ($37) and ¥600 ($75) per group. If you have either the money or many like-minded friends, **cave no. 133** from the Northern Wèi (which is actually a tomb) is recognized as Màijī Shān's best. It contains 18 carved granite stones that depict the life of the Buddha. A sublime statue stands to the right, depicting one of Buddha's disciples, Bhiksu, smiling enigmatically as he listens to the master. When (now ex-) Prime Minister Zhū Róngjī visited in 2001, he was depressed by the poverty he saw on his tour of Gānsù. After staring at this statue, his good humor returned.

Buses for Màijī Shān (1–1½ hr.) leave Běidào Qū railway station from 7am, with the last bus leaving the mountain at 6pm. The bus will stop at a ticket office, where you pay ¥22 ($2.70) to enter the "scenic area." Collect a map of the area, which is included in the price but is not offered without prompting. The bus stops further up the mountain; the 10-minute walk to the ticket office takes you through souvenir stalls and excited locals letting off firecrackers. There are no English-speaking guides, so unless you are fluent in Mandarin, there is no need to pay for a guide. Take a picnic, and leave time to explore the surrounding mountains and the botanical gardens.

✆ **0937/281-6076.** Admission: Scenic area ¥22 ($2.70) entrance to the caves, ¥30 ($3.70) or ¥50 ($6) with a guide; entrance to "special caves" up to ¥600 ($75); entrance to the botanic gardens ¥15 ($1.90). 9am–4:30pm.

WHERE TO STAY

Unless you have an early bus to catch from the main bus station in Qín Chéng, stay in Běidào Qū,which is handier for both the railway station and Màijī Shān. Discounts of 20% are easily obtained at all establishments. Going against the trend elsewhere, the best hotels in Běidào Qū are near the railway station.

Màijī Dàjiǔdiàn Built in 1998 and refurbished in May 2002, this two-star hotel has bright, clean rooms and an efficient staff. The best rooms are on the sixth floor, facing away from the railway station. Opposite is the almost identical **Hóngqiáo Bīnguǎn** (✆ **029/261-6377**), which opened in 2001. The Hóngqiáo Bīnguǎn, however, does have a restaurant on the premises.

Tiānshuǐ Huǒchē Zhàn Guǎngchǎng Xī Cè, 741020. ✆ **0938/492-0000.** 108 units. ¥210 ($26) twin; ¥486 ($61) suite. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; tour desk; same-day laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Tiānshuǐ Dàjiǔdiàn If you decide to stay in Qín Qhéng, this is the best choice for facilities and location. Built in 1992, opened in 1998, and due to be completely renovated by the end of 2003, this standard Chinese two-star hotel is on the southeast side of the main square.

Dàzong Lù Nán Kǒu 1. ✆ **0938/828-9999.** Fax 0938/821-1301. 125 units. ¥144–¥172 ($18–$22) twin; ¥200 ($25) suite. No credit cards. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; same-day laundry, next-day dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Zhíwùyuán Zhāodàisuǒ *Finds* If you want to spent the night at Màijī Shān, the cabins are good value—you can pay by the bed. The setting is the botanical gardens behind the mountain, amid imposing oak and birch forests. The staff claps with joy when they see you.

Màijī Shān Zhíwùyuán. ✆ **0938/281-6025.** 80 units (shower only). ¥100 ($12) twin in old wing; ¥280–¥360 ($35–$44) cabin. No credit cards. By car, take a road to the left 720m (800 yd.) past the scenic area ticket office and continue uphill for 3km (2 miles), or walk 15 min. past the Màijī Shān caves. **Amenities:** Restaurant. *In room:* TV.

WHERE TO DINE

Běidào Qū may not be a culinary paradise, but it sports honest eateries serving generous portions for around ¥10 ($1.25) per person. Elbow past the locals to find a seat in **Niú Dàwǎn,** a halal (Muslim) restaurant north of the bus station on Ér Mǎ Lù. There's one dish to order—*niúròu miàn* (beef noodles), and two choices to make—thick *(kuān)* or thin *(xì)* noodles, and whether to add more beef *(jiā ròu).*

A friendly establishment just west of the Gōnghuì Dàshà, the **Tiān Xī Xiǎochīdiàn** is run by three retired sisters and serves generous portions for around ¥10 ($1.25) per person. Filling *chǎo miàn* (stir-fried noodles) or a stone bowl of bubbling *shāguō jīkuài* (chicken clay pot) are perfect after a hike in the mountains.

4 Lánzhōu

Gānsù Province, 665km (412 miles) W of Xī'ān, 514km (319 miles) SW of Yínchuān

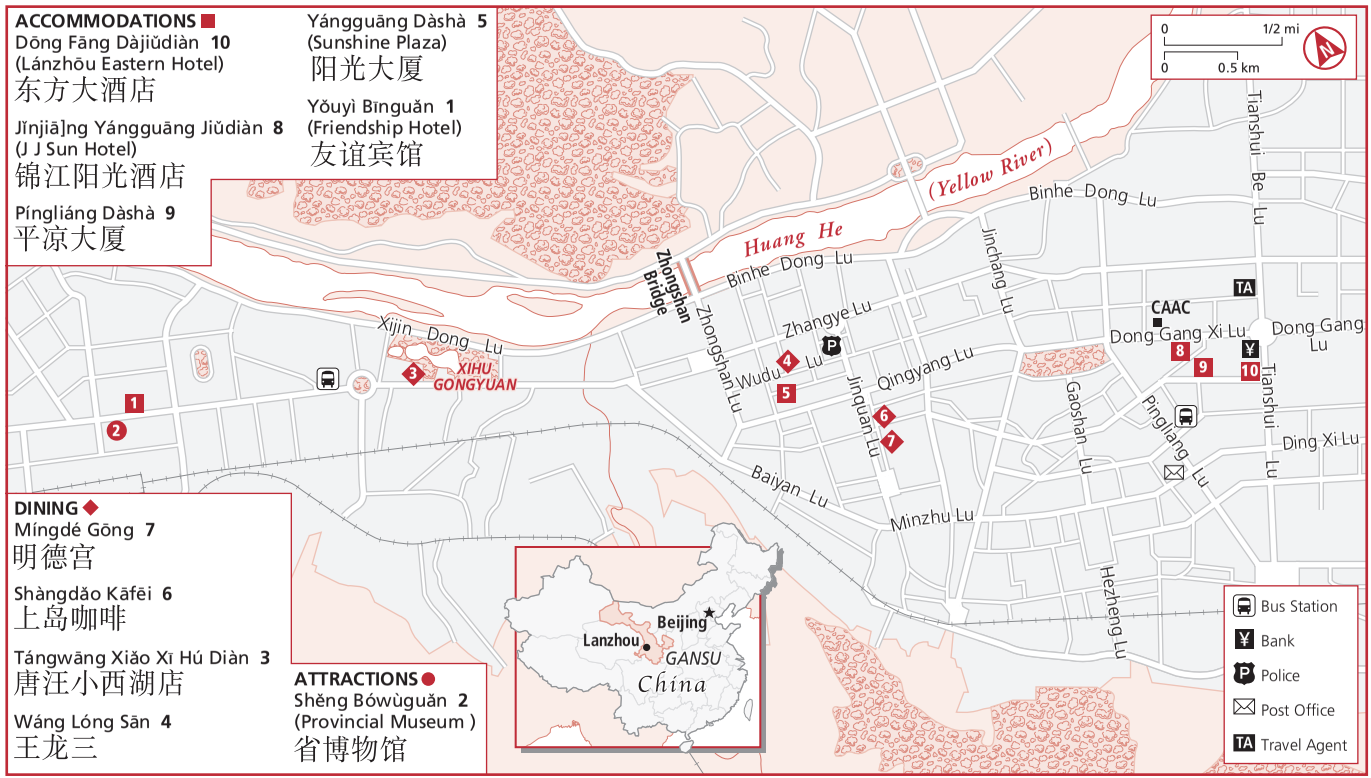
This was once the point where the Silk Routes crossed the Yellow River; however, whatever charms the old town possessed were buried long ago. In 1998, **Lánzhōu** won the title of the planet's most polluted city by a considerable margin (Chinese towns filled 7 of the top 10 places). This dubious distinction led to humorous attempts to rectify the problem—one entrepreneur got backing for a scheme to knock a hole in the surrounding mountains to "open the window" on Lánzhōu's smog. Alas, after 18m (20 yd.) of leveling, and much talk of villas and technology parks, this grand dream of moving the mountain ended when planners discovered that Lánzhōu was hemmed in, not by one mountain, but by 24km (15 miles) of mountains. Plans to convert the city's largest polluter—a coal-fired power station—to natural gas also fell through when the German partner found that the numbers didn't add up.

Lánzhōu offers a glimpse of what lies further northwest, but there are few reasons to linger. The **museum** is worth a look, and the town is a comfortable base for trips south to **Bǐnglíng Sì, Xiàhé,** and **Lángmùsì.** But your first action should be to book a ticket out of town.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The airport is 75km (47 miles) to the north. **China Northwest Airlines** (✆ **0931/882-1964;** fax 0931/882-8174; open 8am–9pm) has its main office opposite the JJ Sun Hotel. Buses for the airport (1½ hr.; ¥25/$3) leave 3 hours before each flight. There is also an office in the Nánguān branch of the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (✆ 0931/843-3436).

Although the up-to-date new **railway station** in the south of town resembles an airport terminal, the queues are as long as ever—which is odd, because you can only buy tickets for the day of travel. Sleeper tickets may be purchased through your hotel; from various branches of the Industrial and Commercial Bank (Gōng Háng); or from the largest ticket outlet in the Railway Bureau (Tiělùjú) at Hézhèng Lù 156 (✆ **0931/463-9552**), on the first floor of the Jīnlún Dàshà. Take bus no. 34 from the station to Tiělùjú.


ACCOMMODATIONS
Dōng Fāng Dàjiǔdiàn 10
(Lánzhōu Eastern Hotel)
东方大酒店
Jīnjiā]ng Yángguāng Jiǔdiàn 8
(J J Sun Hotel)
锦江阳光酒店
Píngliáng Dàshà 9
平凉大厦
Yángguāng Dàshà 5
(Sunshine Plaza)
阳光大厦
Yǒuyì Bīnguǎn 1
(Friendship Hotel)
友谊宾馆
DINING
Míngdé Gōng 7
明德宫
Shàngdǎo Kāfēi 6
上岛咖啡
Tángwāng Xiǎo Xī Hú Diàn 3
唐汪小西湖店
Wáng Lóng Sān 4
王龙三
ATTRACTIONS
Shěng Bówùguǎn 2
(Provincial Museum)
省博物馆
Huang He
(Yellow River)
Zhongshan Bridge
Binhe Dong Lu
Xijin Dong Lu
XIHU GONGYUAN
Zhongshan Lu
Wudu Lu
Zhangye Lu
Qingyang Lu
Jinquan Lu
Jinchang Lu
Baiyan Lu
Minzhu Lu
Gaoshan Lu
Pingliang Lu
Hezheng Lu
Tianshui Lu
Ding Xi Lu
Dong Gang Xi Lu
Dong Gang Lu
CAAC
TA
Beijing
Lanzhou
GANSU
China
0 1/2 mi
0 0.5 km
Bus Station
Bank
Police
Post Office
Travel Agent

Trains originating in Lánzhōu connect with Běijīng (T76: 2:07pm, 24 hr.; K44: 2:50pm, 28 hr.), Shànghǎi (T118: 8:37am, 30 hr.), Ürümqi (T295: 9:30am, 24 hr.,), Xī'ān (K120: 5:11pm, 13 hr.), Guǎngzhōu (K228: 5:41pm, 42 hr.), Chéngdū (K348: 10:55am, 25 hr.), Píngliáng (K432: 7:32pm, 12 hr.), Jiāyùguān (K437: 8:50pm, 14 hr.), Xīníng (T653: 8:18am, 3 hr.; T655: 3:26pm), and Golmud (K427: 5:51pm, 17 hr.). The speediest connection with Yínchuān is the K424 at 10:43pm (8 hr.). There will soon be a weekend train to Yǒngjìng (Liújiā Xiá), departing at 6:30am and returning at 6pm.

Bus insurance, which costs ¥30 ($3.70) and is required for travel in Lánzhōu, Xiàhé, and Hézuò, may be purchased from **China Life** (✆ **0931/840-3858,** ext. 8102) at Bīnhé Dōng Lù 573; take bus no. 7 from the station to Qiáo Nán Zhàn, then continue west for about 360m (400 yd.). The **West Bus Station** is at Xījīn Dōng Lù 486 (✆ **0931/266-3285**). Bus insurance (plus ¥10/$1.25 commission) may be purchased from counter 2, tickets from counter 3. Buses connect with Hézuò (258km/160 miles; 6 hr.; ¥32/$4 or ¥44/$5.40 Iveco) every half hour from 7am; with Línxià (149km/92 miles; 4 hr.; ¥27/$3.20) every hour from 8:30am; and with Xīníng every hour from 7:30am. The final bus for these destinations is at 4pm. There are three direct buses to Xiàhé (256km/159 miles; 6 hr.) at 7:30am (¥33/$4); 8:30am and 2pm (¥44/$5.50); and three direct buses to Liújiā Xiá (2 hr.; ¥11/$1.30) at 7:30am, 8:30am, and 10am. Every other day there is a bus to Tóngrén (10 hr.; ¥38/$4.70).

The **long-distance bus station** at Píngliáng Lù 133 (✆ **0931/463-7573**) is just northwest of the railway station. Half-hourly buses connect with Xīníng from 7am to 7:30pm. Daily sleeper buses depart for Golmud (6pm; 20 hr.; ¥150/$19); Xī'ān (5:30pm; 13 hr.; ¥130/$16); and Yán'ān (5:30pm; 16 hr.; ¥161/$20).

GETTING AROUND Green Santanas charge ¥7 (90¢) for the first 3km (2 miles), then ¥1.40 (20¢) per kilometer; add a night surcharge (¥1.60/20¢) from 10pm to 5am. Yellow *miàndī* vans charge ¥5 (60¢) for the first 3km (2 miles), then ¥1 (15¢) per kilometer thereafter; and ¥1.20 (15¢) per kilometer from 10pm to 5am. Buses start at ¥.50 (5¢), which is paid to a conductor. Bus no. 1 is useful; it starts at the railway station and passes the Bank of China, the JJ Sun Hotel, Northwest Airlines, Sunshine Plaza, and the Lánzhōu Museum.

TOURS Most **hotels** have tour desks which offer tours to Bǐnglíng Sì. There are numerous branches of **CITS,** each accusing the others of being illegitimate. A helpful branch is located at Tàiyáng Lù 242 (✆ **0931/842-9453;** fax 0931/842-9452), about 90m (100 yd.) east of the Gānsù International Hotel.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China** (open Mon–Friday 8:30am–noon and 2:30am–6pm) at Tiānshuǐ Lù 589 accepts traveler's checks (counter 48) and credit cards (counter 47). The ATM doesn't accept foreign cards. Take bus no. 1 to Pánshī Lù.

Internet Access Just south of Lánzhōu University is **E Sù Wǎngbā,** at Tiānshuǐ Nán Lù 286 (✆ **0931/876-1878**). It offers a speedy connection, potted plants, and classical music, all for ¥2 (25¢) per hour.

Post Office The post office (Mínzhǔ Dōng Lù 104) is located on the corner of Mínzhǔ Dōng Lù and Píngliáng Lù near the East Bus Station. It's open weekdays from 8am to 7pm.

Visa Extensions Visa extensions are processed promptly up to 2 weeks before the expiration date at a helpful **PSB,** just west of the city government building at Wǔdū Lù 310 (✆ **0931/846-2851,** ext. 8540; open daily 8am–noon and 2:30–6pm.

EXPLORING LÁNZHŌU

Shěng Bówùguǎn (Provincial Museum) It's worth calling ahead to arrange an English-speaking guide, as the quality of curatorship does not match the significance of the exhibits. The **late Neolithic pottery** is particularly impressive, most of it from the region around Tiānshuǐ, displaying the rapid progress in both pottery and painting during this period (ca. 3000–1900 B.C.). The museum's most famous exhibit is the **Flying Horse (Tóng Bēn Mǎ)** ★, taken in 1969 from the tomb of an Eastern Hàn (25–220) general near Wǔwēi. Staff admit that the bronze horse on display is a replica; the real article is in the vaults of the museum, and another copy is in Běijīng. However, the original was damaged in the copying process, and the mold was either lost or destroyed, so this copy is priceless. Other items from the tomb include bamboo strips containing meticulous instructions on the etiquette of drinking, marriage, and death. Allow at least an hour.

Directly opposite the Friendship Hotel. ✆ **0931/232-5049.** From Yǒuyì Bīnguǎn, cross the road and continue west for 135m (150 yd.). Admission ¥15 ($1.90); English-speaking guide about ¥40 ($4.80). 9am–4:30pm. Bus: no. 1 to Yǒuyì Bīnguǎn.

SHOPPING

Běijīng Huálián Stock up on fresh fruit and snacks for long bus journeys at this supermarket a half-mile walk northeast from the railway station. Another large supermarket is Parkson (Bǎishèng), on the northeast corner of People's Square. Hóngxīng Xiàng 21. ✆ **0931/863-3110.** Open 10am to 9pm. Bus: no. 1 to Guāngcháng Dōngkǒu.

A NEARBY GROTTO

Once a long day trip from Lánzhōu, **Bǐnglíng Sì** may now be visited on the way to Xiàhé; set out early to avoid being stuck in Línxià (p. 265). The town nearest Bǐnglíng Sì is **Liújiā Xiá,** soon to be connected with Lánzhōu by an expressway that credulous locals claim will make it a 40-minute journey from Lánzhōu. Unless you have a passion for cave temples, this one's probably not worth the long haul from Lánzhōu, but if you're heading south to Xiàhé and the weather is fine, it makes for an agreeable outing.

On arrival at Liújiā Xiá, you'll be bundled off to the ticket office, where you purchase an entry ticket for the **Sān Xiá Dam** (¥15/$1.90)—formerly China's largest and single reason that the Yellow River ends well short of the sea—and a boat ticket. The public ferry costs ¥30 ($3.70), though the staff will deny its existence. It's better to take the fast boats instead, as they get you to the caves 2 hours faster. A round-trip ticket is ¥70 ($8.70); rates are slightly lower for groups. Those continuing to Línxià (25km/16 miles; 40 min.; ¥5/60¢; last minibus 6pm) and then to Xiàhé (107km/66 miles; 2½ hr.; ¥9/$1.10) should ask to be dropped at **Liánhuā Tái** on the way back. The last bus back to Lánzhōu (¥10/$1.25) leaves at 6:30pm. If you stay in Liújiā Xiá, the best lodgings are the **Huáng Hé Bīnguǎn** and the cheaper **Liú Diàn Bīnguǎn.**

There's a mock-fort hotel to the left (west) of the grottoes. Head straight for the caves, as most boats only wait for an hour. Two-thirds of the caves were

carved in the Táng dynasty, but examples range from the Northern Wèi (368–534) to the Míng dynasties. Pay ¥30 ($3.70) at the ticket office and turn right; follow a narrow pathway around. A 27m (90-ft.) **Maitreya (Buddha of the Future)** with prominent nipples—a decidedly non–Hàn Chinese touch—dominates the valley. Higher up the cliff face is **Cave 169** ★ (¥300/$37 extra!), one of the most ancient in China, showing Indian influences. Unlike most cave temples, the upper caves are natural. Unfortunately, 200 lower caves were flooded when the dam was completed.

WHERE TO STAY

Lánzhōu may be a dump, but it has new hotels with comfortable beds. Budget options are few, but 30% to 50% discounts are negotiable at most establishments.

Jīnjiāng Yángguāng Jiǔdiàn (JJ Sun Hotel) ★ This recently opened Hong Kong–managed hotel is better than the three stars hanging in the foyer might lead you to believe. The staff is enthusiastic, guest rooms are spotless, and bathrooms are immaculate if a little poky.

Dōnggāng Xī Lù 481. ✆ **0931/880-5511.** Fax 0931/885-4700. www.jjsunhotel.com. 236 units. ¥800 ($100) twin; ¥900 ($112) standard room; from ¥1,500 ($187) suite. Rates include full breakfast. 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; cafe; exercise room; concierge; business center; 24-hr. forex; same-day dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, broadband Internet access, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Píngliáng Dàshà *Finds* Hidden away down a lane to the east of the JJ Sun, this newly opened hotel is such good value that it's often full, so call ahead to check (but not to book . . . you're charged more if you book in advance). Guest rooms are fresh and bright, and bathrooms are less cramped than those at many four-star hotels in town. A 30% discount is standard.

Dōnggāng Xī Lù 449-1. ✆ **0931/873-3986,** ext. 8000. 99 units (96 with private bathroom). ¥200–¥220 ($25–$27) twin; ¥140 ($17) standard room; ¥380–¥480 ($47–$60) suite. Rates include full breakfast. **Amenities:** Restaurant; next-day dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Yángguāng Dàshà (Sunshine Plaza) ★★ *Value* *Kids* Easily the best hotel in town, the Sunshine Plaza opened so recently that not all staff have uniforms. Rates are likely to rise when management successfully applies for a five-star rating. Beds are cozy, and raised sitting areas are a nice touch. No bathtub, but the massage showers with six jets are state-of-the-art. The game room is inspired; you can practice your golf swing, grand-prix driving, skiing, dancing, and even shuffleboard, a spectator sport in China. Facilities for travelers with disabilities are available.

Tàiyáng Lù 408. ✆ **0931/460-8888.** Fax 0931/460-8889. gsygds@sohu.com. 189 units (shower only). ¥798–¥1,168 ($100–$146) standard room; from ¥1,288 ($161) suite. Rates include full breakfast. 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; nightclub; huge game room; concierge; courtesy car; business center; executive business services; 24-hr. forex (no traveler's checks); 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, broadband Internet access, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

Those craving junk food will find a **KFC** on the northeast corner of Zhōngshān Lù and Zhāngyè Lù. Take bus no. 1 to Xīguān Shízì. **Shàngdǎo Kāfēi,** Nánguān Shízì Shíyóu Dàshà 1 Lóu (✆ **0931/844-8396**), serves eminently drinkable coffee—but be sure to specify hot *(rè),* iced *(bīng),* or by the pot *(hú).* The simple menu offers toast, waffles, and steaks.

Míngdé Gōng ★ GĀNSÙ The Míngdé Gōng, a four-story palace that gets progressively more luxurious as you ascend (culminating in dark wood paneled rooms, gold-plated cutlery, and some of the biggest karaoke TVs you'll ever see),

is the flag-bearer for Gānsù cuisine—*"lǒng cài."* While the boss is a Huí entrepreneur, the chefs hail from Běijīng and Guǎngzhōu. Signature dishes include *měnggǔ yángpái* (Mongolian lamb), the huge and spicy *kǎo yángtuǐ* (roast leg of lamb with walnuts), a deep-fried lamb and green pepper pancake *(bóbǐng yángròu),* and the sweet vegetarian dish, *xīshì jīnjú bǎihé.*

Jiǔquán Lù 191. ✆ **0931/466-8588.** Meal for 2 ¥90–¥170 ($11–$21). No credit cards. 10:30am–10pm.

Tángwāng Xiǎo Xī Hú Diàn GĀNSÙ Regional specialties are scarce, but locals are proud of *shǒuzhuā ròu* (grabbed meat): hunks of beef dunked in salt and pepper and chased by a clove of raw garlic (optional!). Ask for a lean portion *(shòu fèn),* unless you want to guzzle on huge lumps of lard. The *xìliè niúròu miàn* (beef noodles) are also first rate. Lánzhōu's liveliest night market, **Xiǎo Xīhú Yèshì,** is directly across the road.

✆ **0931/260-2398.** Meal for 2 less than ¥40 ($5). No credit cards. Open 24 hr. Bus: no. 1 to Xiǎo Xī Hú.

Wáng Lóng Sān *Finds* GĀNSÙ Despite the efforts of Míngdé Gōng, Lánzhōu's most famous contribution to the national cuisine will always be beef noodles. This tiny noodle-house offers the genuine article, in a delicious turnip-based broth. Buy your ticket on the left under the advertising board of their "sponsors": Nokia, Motorola, and Erikson. If you like roast beef, ask them to *"jiā yī fèn ròu"* (add an extra portion of meat). Proceed to the other side with your docket, where you will be served when the chef feels inclined, and then relax under the helicopter-leaf trees and green shade-cloth.

Wǔdū Lù 326. Meal for 2 less than ¥20 ($2.50). No credit cards. 9am–10:30pm.

5 Línxià

Gānsù Province, 149km (92 miles) SW of Lánzhōu, 107km (66 miles) NE of Xiàhé

"All writers agree on the commercial ability and energy of the T'ung-kan (Huí), as well as on their surliness, ill manners and hostile suspicion of strangers. . . ." This judgment by American journalist Owen Lattimore seems harsh until you visit **Línxià,** a predominantly Huí town (with a smattering of Bǎo'ān and the Altaic Dōngxiāng minorities). Those wishing to stay in a traditional, non-Uighur Islamic town should visit Xúnhuà in eastern Qīnghǎi. But for those arriving from the north, an overnight stay here in Línxià may be unavoidable.

GETTING AWAY The **West Bus Station** (**Xī Zhàn; ✆ 0930/621-2177**) is less prone to thievery than the **South Bus Station** (**Nán Zhàn; ✆ 0930/631-3092**). There are buses every half hour for Lánzhōu (149km/92 miles; 4 hr.; ¥11/$1.40) from 7am to 3pm; Hézuò (106km/66 miles; 2 hr.; ¥13/$1.60) every half hour from 6:30am; Xīníng (269km/167 miles; ¥25/$3) at 6am; Xiàhé (107km/66 miles; 2½ hr.; ¥9/$1.10) at 7am and 1pm; Xúnhuà (115km/71 miles; 2½ hr.; ¥12/$1.50) and Tōngrén (183km/113 miles; 5 hr.; ¥20/$2.40) at 6:30am; and Yùmén (973km/603 miles; 20 hr.; ¥75/$9.40), just beyond Jiāyùguān, at noon. Nán Zhàn has more buses to Xiàhé—every half hour from 6:30am to 4pm.

WHERE TO STAY

If you stay overnight, there's the **Línxià Fàndiàn** at Hóngyuán Lù 9 (✆ **0930/623-2805;** fax 0930/631-4412), with rooms with twin beds in the old wing from ¥98 ($12), and in the new wing from ¥180 ($23). Head east from Xī Zhàn along Mínzhǔ Xī Lù, then turn down the first street on your right (south).

6 Hézuò

Gānsù Province, 258km (160 miles) SW of Lánzhōu, 72km (45 miles) SE of Xiàhé

Aside from a substantial Tibetan population, the capital of Gān Nán (Southern Gānsù) Prefecture is much like any other Hàn town of recent construction. As a transit point, it is much preferred to Línxià. If time permits, the imposing red nine-story **Milarepa Tower** ★ of Hézuò Monastery, located to the north of town, is worth climbing.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Hézuò has two bus stations. The new **South Bus Station (Qìchē Nán Zhàn; ✆ 0941/821-3039**) is inconveniently located in the far south of town; the ticket office is on the right as you enter. Buses connect with Xiàhé (72km/45 miles; 1½ hr.; ¥8.50/$1) every 40 minutes between 8am and 5pm. Buses connect with Línxià (106km/66 miles; 2 hr.; ¥13/$1.60) every 20 minutes from 7am to 5:40pm. Six buses depart for Lánzhōu (258km/160 miles; 6 hr.; ¥32/$4 or ¥44/$5.40 for Iveco) between 6:20am and 10am. Buses for Lángmù Sì (173km/107 miles; 5 hr.; ¥20/$2.40) depart at 7am and 9:40am. The **Central Bus Station, Hézuò Qìchē Zhàn** (**✆ 0941/821-2422**), also has buses for Ruò'ěrgài (7 hr.; ¥37/$4.60) in northern Sìchuān at 7:30am, continuing on to Aba (583km/361 miles; ¥77/$9.60) the following day. Every second day at 6am there are buses to Xīníng (331km/205 miles; 12 hr.; ¥43/$5.30).

Bus insurance may be obtained from **China Life,** about 450m (500 yd.) north of Hézuò Qīchē Zhàn, just across a bridge on the left (west) side of the road at Téngzhī Zhōng Jiē 46 (**✆ 0941/821-2219**). It's open Monday through Friday from 8am to 6pm, weekends from 9am to 4pm.

WHERE TO STAY

Gān Nán Fàndiàn (Gān Nán Hotel) Not to be confused with the surly Gān Nán Bīnguǎn diagonally across from the bus station, this is your regular ramshackle two-star hotel. Comfortable midsized guest rooms with cramped bathrooms are located in the VIP building *(guìbīn lóu).* Cheaper rooms in the older east wing *(dōng lóu)* have tiny, decrepit bathrooms.

Téngzhī Jiē 83. **✆ 0941/821-2611.** Fax 0941/821-3236. 99 units (45 with bathroom). ¥80–¥160 ($10–$20) standard room; ¥162–¥262 ($20–$33) suite; ¥32 ($4) dorm bed. Rates include breakfast. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; concierge; 24-hr. room service. *In room:* TV.

Huáng Hé Fàndiàn ★ Radical renovations have brought something startling to this formerly run-of-the mill hotel: large bathrooms! Guest rooms are sizable and airy, beds are new and firm, and the staff actually seems to give a damn. There is a merciful absence of sleaze, so for the moment, the home of the Mǎqū County Government is the best choice in town.

Mǎqū Xiàn Zhèngfǔ Zhù Hézuò Bànshìchù. **✆ 0941/821-0158.** 29 units (12 with bathroom). ¥160 ($20) twin; from ¥180 ($22) suite; ¥45 ($5.60) dorm bed. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; teahouse. *In room:* TV.

7 Xiàhé (Labrang) ★★★

Gānsù Province, 256km (159 miles) SW of Lánzhōu, 72km (45 miles) W of Hézuò

The delightful monastery town of **Xiàhé** is nestled north of the banks of the **Dà Xià Hé (Sang Chu)** at an elevation of 2,900m (9,500 ft.). Not surprisingly, it gets very cold in winter, dipping to –4°F (–20°C); even in August, the average temperature is a cool 59°F (15°C). The town is divided into two sections.

Primarily Huí and Hàn at its eastern end, it changes abruptly to Tibetan as you approach the monastery in the west. *Note:* Please turn to Appendix A for Chinese translations of key locations.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **Buses** (✆ **0941/712-1462**) connect with Hézuò (72km/45 miles; 1½ hr.; ¥9/$1.10) from 6:10am to 5:10pm; Línxià (107km/66 miles; 2½ hr.; ¥13/$1.60 or ¥18/$2.20 Iveco) from 6am to 5pm; Lánzhōu (256km/159 miles; 6 hr.; ¥32/$3.90 or ¥44/$5.50 Iveco) at 6:30am, 7:30am, 8:30am, and 2:30pm; Tóngrén (107km/66 miles; 5 hr.; ¥15/$1.90) at 8am; and Amchog (72km/45 miles, 2 hr.; ¥15/$1.80) at 12:30pm and 3:40pm. The Tóngrén service connects with a Xīníng bus. Insurance may be purchased at the bus station; refuse payment for "excess luggage."

Minivans connect with Lángmù Sì (7 hr.; ¥300/$37); service is arranged outside Tara Guesthouse or at the bus station. ***Warning:*** If you're taking the rough but scenic route southeast via Amchog, hire a Tibetan driver and bring cigarettes; banditry, in the form of determined children with large rocks, is common.

FAST FACTS

Banks Forex services are unavailable in Xiàhé.

Internet Access Inexpensive Internet access can be found at the 24-hour **Lèlè Wǎngbā** (✆ **0941/712-3928**), in a courtyard diagonally opposite the bus station. A cup of tea is provided, and you can watch novice monks transfixed by ultraviolent computer games.

Post Office The post office (open 8am–6pm) is just downhill from Xīnhuá Shūdiàn, opposite the China Life Building.

Visa Extensions One-month extensions can be obtained 2 weeks in advance from the **PSB** (open weekdays 9am–noon and 2:30–6pm) just up from the bus station on the north side of the street.

EXPLORING XIÀ HÉ

A 3km (2-mile) clockwise perambulation *(kora)* of the monastery is an excellent way to begin the day. You may find yourself befriended by delightful elderly pilgrims or by young monks keen to practice their English. If your schedule allows, time your visit to coincide with the **Monlam Festival,** held on the 4th to 16th days of the first lunar month (Feb–Mar). The monastery is open to all during the festival, and on the 13th day you can watch the "sunning of the Buddha." An enormous *thangka* (silk painting) is spread across a **Thangka Wall** on the south bank of the Sangchu. When sanctified, it effectively becomes the Buddha in the minds of believers. The following days feature religious dancing and the offering of *torma* (butter sculptures).

A hike up into the hills gives you a magnificent view of the monastery. Just west of it is a small, friendly **nunnery.**

Lābǔléng Sì (Labrang Monastery) ★★ As any monk you come across will tell you, Labrang Monastery, founded in 1709, is one of the six largest monasteries of the Geluk order, and the largest monastery in Amdo. Unlike most large religious institutions, it escaped desecration during the Cultural Revolution, although the number of monks and nuns was reduced from over 4,000 to the present number of just over 1,000. The head lama ranks behind only the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama, and with the passing away of the sixth incarnate lama (whose stupa rises in the south of the complex), the monastery is in transition. There are colleges for esoteric and exoteric Buddhism, astronomy,

mathematics, geography, and medicine. Amdo monks see themselves as the true holders of the faith—looking down on the Khampas and central Tibetans as soldiers and politicians respectively—and the monks take pride in the appearance of their monastery. Stunning *thangkhas* adorn the walls, and many beams and finials are inscribed with sacred and protective script.

The most striking building is the **Assembly Hall**, with its golden roof. This is a recent addition, as the original burned down in 1985. The **museum** and a display of frozen **butter sculptures**—including memorable sculptures of Jiāng Zémín and his cronies—are also worth seeking out. English-speaking tours are the only way to gain admission to the monastery; if you arrive late, you'll find yourself tacked on to a Hàn tour. Once inside, you're free to wander. Former British consul Eric Teichman noted the contrast between the monks' abodes and places of worship: "The temples were the finest and the richest I have visited in China, and the residences of the monks the usual gloomy buildings common to all lamaseries." Just to the right of the main entrance is the **School of Buddhist Studies,** where monks are often keen to practice their English.

Admission ¥24 ($3). Tours leave from the main gate at 10:30am and 3:30pm. Closed Nov–Feb.

AROUND XIÀ HÉ

About 13km (8 miles) up the Dà Xià Hé are the grasslands of **Sāngkē** (entry ¥3/40¢), an ideal place for horse riding (¥20/$2.50 per hr.). The grasslands are most spectacular in July and August, when the canola is flowering. Minivans wait outside the Tara Guesthouse and charge about ¥60 ($7.50) round-trip; or you can ride out by bike in an hour or so. (Bikes may be rented from Tara Guesthouse for ¥10–¥20/$1.25–$2.50 per day.) Some of the recent tourist developments—there are 18 "holiday villages" in the grasslands—are so appalling they are attractions in their own right. More spectacular grasslands are reached by turning left onto a seasonal road 12km (7½ miles) beyond town; continue southeast up the Xiàhé valley and over a pass towards the monastery town of **Amchog (Ā'mùqùhū).** Vast grasslands populated by marmots, vultures, and real nomads are your reward.

WHERE TO STAY

Hotels practice a form of apartheid. Hàn-run hotels overcharge foreigners and don't want your business. Equally perverse are Tibetan-run hotels with signage only in English, sending a clear message to Hàn would-be patrons. Bargaining at Tibetan-run establishments is fruitless.

Lābǔléng Bīnguǎn (Labrang Hotel) Once Xiàhé's premier hotel, the Labrang Hotel is desperately in need of a makeover. The last lick of paint was applied in 1995, and it shows. The Tibetan villas to the north of the complex feature enormous bathrooms, thick rugs, and obscene brown padded walls. The south building *(nán lóu)* is an unimaginative construction, although waking to the sound of a bubbling brook is pleasant. The hotel is set in fields to the far west of town, beyond the monastery.

Láizhōu Cūn 70, 747100. ✆ **0941/712-1849.** Fax 0941/712-1328. 98 units (36 with shower only). ¥280–¥320 ($35–$40) standard room; ¥600 ($75) suite; ¥30 ($3.70) bed in economy room. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; bike rental (¥20/$2.50 per day); concierge; business center; same-day laundry. *In room:* TV.

Overseas Tibetan Hotel (Huáqiáo Fàndiàn) The manager, Losang, is a Nepalese Tibetan who earned an MBA in the U.S. and does his best to instill a service ethic into his often lethargic staff. Once a dreary concrete monolith, this hotel has been greatly improved by successive additions to the second and third

floors. The midsize rooms with twin beds on the third floor were added in 2001 and are the best in town, with tasteful Tibetan decorations and well-appointed bathrooms. The first-floor dormitory rooms are dank.

Rénmín Xī Jiē 77, 747100. ✆ **0941/712-2642.** Fax 0941/712-1872. othotel@public.lz.gs.cn. 35 units (20 without bathroom). ¥160–¥200 ($20–$25) standard room; ¥80 ($10) twin without bathroom; ¥20 ($2.50) dorm bed. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bike rental (¥10/$1.25 per day); concierge; next-day laundry; Internet access. *In room:* TV.

Tara Guesthouse (Zhuómǎ Lǚshè) If any hostel deserves the dreaded "backpacker mecca" title, this cozy establishment does. Outside winter, it is always full. Rooms with twin beds on the second and third floors are sunny and airy, though the dormitories on the first floor carry a pungent aroma of yak butter and wet socks. The communal showers and toilets, once unspeakably rank, are much improved. Hot water runs for about half the day, and service is Tibetan casual.

Yǎgē Táng 268, 747100. ✆ **0941/712-1274.** t-dolma@yahoo.com. 19 units (shared bathroom). ¥15–¥30 ($1.80–$3.70) dorm bed. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Bike rental. *In room:* TV, no phone.

WHERE TO DINE

Lóngshèng Jiǔjiā *Value* HOME-STYLE The standard pan-Chinese menu has few surprises, but staff are courteous enough to let you order half-portions *(xiǎo pán),* allowing you to try more dishes. You can also order an individual hot pot (¥30/$3.70 for all you can eat!), an appealing option for those who venture here in winter.

Rénmín Dōng Lù 86. ✆ **0941/712-2687.** Meal for 2 ¥30–¥80 ($3.70–$10). No credit cards. 7:30am–midnight.

8 Lángmù Sì (Taktsang Lhamo) ★★

Gānsù Province, 431km S of Lánzhōu, 91km NW of Ruò'ěrgài

Perched on the border of Sìchuān and Gānsù, this Tibetan monastic center is largely unknown to Chinese tourists. The tranquil mountain village is reminiscent of Lìjiāng before it was "discovered." Hopefully Lángmù Sì can escape UNESCO listing for a few more years.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Daily **buses** connect with Hézuò (173km/107 miles; 5 hr.; ¥20/$2.50) at 7am and 8am; with Línxià (279km/173 miles; 7 hr.; ¥30/$3.70) at 8am. From the south, a bus connects with Ruò'ěrgài (91km/56 miles; 2 hr.; ¥15/$1.90) every second day at noon. There are plans for a daily Sōngpān bus; a minibus to Sōngpān may be arranged through the Renchin Hotel (¥1,000/$125 for an 11-seat bus). The hardy can walk 3km (2 miles) north to the intersection and wait for buses from Hézuò, which pass by after 11am.

EXPLORING LÁNGMÙ SÌ

The town is home to two major Geluk monasteries, **Sertri Gompa** (¥10/$1.25 admission) and **Kirti Gompa** (¥13/$1.60 admission), situated in Gānsù and Sìchuān respectively. Both were razed during the Cultural Revolution and rebuilt during the early 1980s. Together, they house about 1,000 monks. True to the factional traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, they refer to each other as "that place in the other province." While the buildings are of recent construction, both are lively centers of worship, and the sound of monks chanting the scriptures may

be heard throughout the day. A magnificent view of the surrounding countryside may be had from Sertri Gompa.

There are some delightful rambles around Lángmù Sì. If you head southwest beyond the Richen Hotel and Kirti Gompa, a succession of narrow ravines and moraine valleys crowded with wildflowers, birds, and bubbling springs show the way to an abrupt pass. Continuing over the pass, you eventually connect with the Lángmù Sì–Mǎqū road, but this is a strenuous tramp through wild nomad country and should only be attempted by well-equipped parties (see box, below). Another stiff hike is to the top of the distinctively shaped **Huā Gài Shān (Flower Cap Mountain)** ★★; this is best done as a horse trek (¥100/$12 per day), camping overnight on the peak. Traditionally, only men are allowed to sleep on the mountain, but this taboo is relaxed for foreigners. On a clear morning, you can see the holy mountain of Amnye Machen in Qīnghǎi. On the 15th day of the 6th month of the lunar calendar, a magnificent "sunning of the Buddha" festival takes place on a broad plateau just below the peak, the consecration of the *thangka* heralded by lamas trumpeting from the summit. A nearby **hot spring** is also a popular destination for horse treks.

Lángmù Sì is a popular spot to attend a **sky burial** or *chadur* (¥10/$1.25 admission). In this arid, treeless land, an alternative to cremation or burial had to be found for the people of the Tibetan plateau. The remains of the deceased (whose soul is thought to have already left the body) are dismembered and offered to huge vultures. Nothing is wasted. Even the bones are ground up by attendants. If attending the funeral of a stranger doesn't put you off, be aware that Lángmù Sì is a small town, so you may have to wait a few days for someone to die. A large breakfast beforehand is not advised.

WHERE TO STAY

Lángmù Sì Bīnguǎn This family-run hotel is basic but should be much improved by the time you reach town, as new standard rooms (with a double or twin beds) and a Nepalese restaurant were under construction at press time. The owner was once the mayor and a sitting member of the National People's Congress, so he has plenty of tales. His son can organize horse treks.

Lángmù Sì. ✆ **0941/667-1086.** 12 units (shared bathroom). 4-bed dorms ¥15 ($1.90). No credit cards. *In room:* No phone.

Rénqīng Bīnguǎn (Renchin Hotel) Seen from above, this new hotel, not the friendliest of lodgings, is a blot on the landscape. The guest rooms are tidy, but the attached bathrooms are tiny and the hot water is temperamental. The teahouse on the top floor is always full of monks from Kirti Gompa.

Lángmù Sì. ✆ **0941/667-1298.** 28 units (14 with cubicle-less shower). ¥100 ($12) twin; ¥30 ($3.70) 2-bed dorm; ¥20 ($2.50) 4-bed dorm. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; teahouse. *In room:* TV, no phone.

Tips Nomadic Curiosity

If you go hiking in remote grassland regions, it's common to have your pockets and wallet politely turned inside out by nomads. The contents are almost invariably replaced exactly as they were, after careful inspection. The first time this happens, it's unnerving; you should understand that this is only well-meant curiosity. Realize also that nomads are very tough and have large, sharp knives.

WHERE TO DINE

Aside from the teahouse on the top floor of the Renchin Hotel, the **Snowland Happy Restaurant** (✆ **0941/667-1121**), tucked behind the post office, is also popular with monks and other locals. Hearty backpacker fare is offered by **Lesha's Cafe** (✆ **0941/667-1179**), across the bridge between the Lángmù Sì Bīnguǎn and the Renchin Hotel. Fans of "competitive eating" should inquire about the Yak Burger Challenge. Adjacent to the cafe is a half-built mosque, the center of an ongoing dispute between the Tibetan and Huí (Muslim) residents of Lángmù Sì.

9 Jiāyùguān

765km NW of Lánzhōu, 383km E of Dūnhuáng

At the northwest end of the narrow **Hé Xī corridor** lies a fort that marks the western extremity of the Míng Great Wall. During the Míng dynasty, **Jiāyùguān** was regarded as the end of the Chinese world, beyond which lay the strange lands and peoples of the western lands. Just as transportation to Australia struck fear into Britons, exile ranked just behind decapitation and death by strangulation in the Qīng penal code. Many common criminals passed through the gates of Jiāyùguān, but so did victims of court intrigues, such as commissioner Lín Zéxú (1785–1850), who tried to suppress the opium trade in Guǎngzhōu (Canton) but found himself banished to Yīníng. The only people regarded as less fortunate were those who built the Míng wall. Its construction was estimated to have claimed eight million lives—one life for every yard. Jiāyùguān today is a quiet and affluent steel town.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The **airport** is 15km (9 miles) northeast of downtown. A taxi there costs ¥25 ($3), or you can take a shuttle bus for ¥9 ($1.10). **CAAC** is at Xīnhuá Zhōng Lù 4–3 (✆ **0937/622-6237;** open 8:30am–5:30pm), about 90m (100 yd.) south of the main roundabout. Because all flights leave at 6pm, the airport shuttle departs from outside the CAAC office at 4:30pm. Jiāyùguān is connected with Lánzhōu (daily), Dūnhuáng (daily), and Xī'ān (Mon, Wed, Fri, Sun).

The **railway station** is 4km (2½ miles) southeast of the center of town. A taxi from the station should cost ¥10 ($1.25). Heading west, your chances of obtaining a sleeper ticket are slim. Proceed through CITS (¥30/$3.70 commission), or buy a hard-seat ticket and try to upgrade. Heading east, there are two new trains to Lánzhōu, for which tickets can be readily purchased—the K438 (4:32pm; 14½ hr.) and the faster T658 (9:48pm; 9½ hr.).

The **bus station** is on the southeast corner of Shènglì Zhōng Lù and Xīn Xī Lù. Daily buses connect with Dūnhuáng at 9am, 11am, 11:40am, and 1pm (383km/237 miles; 6 hr.; ¥46/$5.70); air-conditioned coaches depart at 2:30pm and 4pm (¥67/$8.30). Sleeper buses for Lánzhōu (765km/474 miles; 13 hr.; ¥135/$16) leave at 3pm, 5pm, and 5:40pm. Bus insurance costing ¥30 ($3.70), which is essential for those traveling east, may be purchased at **Zhōngguó Rénshòu Bǎoxiǎn Gōngsī (China Life)** just south of the Bank of China, at Xīnhuá Zhōng Lù 36 (✆ **0937/626-2786**). It's open weekdays from 8:30am to 12:30pm and 2:30 to 6:30pm, weekends from 11am to 4pm.

GETTING AROUND Santana **taxis** cost ¥7 (90¢) for the first 3km (2 miles), ¥1.20 (15¢) per kilometer thereafter, with a night surcharge of ¥1.40

(20¢) from 10pm to 5am. *Xiàlì* taxis charge ¥6 (75¢) for the first 3km (2 miles), with other rates the same as a Santana taxi's. **Bus** nos. 1 and 2 run from the railway station; both cost ¥1 (15¢). With wide, tree-lined bicycle lanes, **bikes** are the best way to get around. The standard rate is ¥2 (25¢) per hour, or ¥10 ($1.25) per day.

TOURS **Jiāyù Guān International Tours** is run by the friendly Qīn Jiǎn. His office is on the second floor of Shènglì Běi Lù 2 (✆ **0937/622-6598;** fax 0937/622-6931; www.westtour.cc). Hours are from 8:30am to 12:30pm and 2:30 to 6:30pm. Rates for train tickets and tours are reasonable.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs You can change traveler's checks at the **Bank of China** (open weekdays 9pm–5pm, weekends 9:30am–4:30pm) at Xīnhuá Zhōng Lù 42, but your credit card will be of no use. Nor are there ATMs for international cards.

Internet Access The best Internet cafe is **Jīn Chángchéng Wǎngbā,** located on the second floor of the Wénhuà Huódòng Zhōngxīn, just south of the night market. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The main post office (open 8:30am–7pm) is on the southeast corner of the main roundabout at Xīnhuá Zhōng Lù 1.

Visa Extensions The **PSB** is moving to Yíngbīn Zhōng Lù (✆ **0937/631-6927,** ext. 3016), but if you ask your hotel, a PSB officer will come to you.

EXPLORING JIĀYÙGUĀN

Jiāyùguān Chénglóu (Jiāyùguān Fort) ★★ The Míng dynasty's rebuilt section of the Great Wall is still most people's image of China; this final outpost of the Wall is the best-preserved and most spectacular. First built in 1372, then expanded and reinforced in 1539, it was the final project of the Míng rebuilding. Entering from the east, you first come to the **Wénchāng Pavilion,** restored in the late Qīng dynasty, where intellectuals were said to compose poems, lamenting their rotten luck in being sent to live with the barbarians beyond the Wall. Before leaving, they could enjoy performances at the open-air theater opposite. After passing through **Guānghuá Mén,** the first of the three main 17m (56-ft.) towers, they would hurl a stone against the Wall to find out whether they would ever return to civilization. If the stone bounced back, all was well, but if it slithered quietly down the Wall, hope was lost.

Another legend associated with the Wall shows that obsession with quantification started long before 1949. The project's supervisor demanded an exact estimate of the number of bricks to be used in the construction of the fort; if the number was off by one brick, the death penalty awaited one Engineer Yì. When the fort was completed, Yì found that there was one brick left over. Faced with evidence of his failure, Yì declared it "the brick to balance the fort" *(dìng chéng zhuān)* and walked away unscathed. The brick sits on the side of **Huì Jì Mén,** and locals joke about tripping on it. The second main tower, **Róu Yuǎn Mén,** represents the Míng policy of peaceful coexistence with the minorities beyond the Wall, a policy that ended in the Qīng dynasty, when Xīnjiāng was dragged back into the Chinese empire. Inside the main courtyard is the **Yóujī Yámen,** where the unfortunate generals were stationed with their families. The building is unremarkable but for an **antiques shop** on the east side. Most items are copies, and all are overpriced, but there are genuine pieces left over from the relocation of the **museum** from Jiāyùguān to the fort.

0
1/4 mi
0
0.25 km
N
Bus Station
Bank
Post Office
Rail Station
TA Travel Agent
Xinhua Bei Lu
Shengli Bei Lu
Xinhua Zhong Lu
Jing Tie Shichang
Lanxin Xi Lu
Shengli Zhong Lu
To Airport
Jianshe Dong Lu
Jianshe Xi Lu
To Rail Station
Jiayuguan
Beijing
GANSU
China
ACCOMMODATIONS
Chángchéng Bīnguǎn 7
(Great Wall Hotel)
长城宾馆
Jiāyù Guān Bīnguǎn 2
嘉峪关宾馆
Qīngnián Bīnguǎn 8
青年宾馆
DINING
Fùqiáng Shìchǎng 1
富强市场
Lín Yuàn Jiǔdiàn 6
林苑酒店
Yǎnjìng Kǎoròu Diàn 3
(Spectacles)
眼镜烤肉点
ATTRACTIONS
Jiāyù Guān Chénglóu 4
(Jiāyùguān Fort)
嘉峪关城楼
Xuán Bì Chángchéng 5
(Overhanging Great Wall)
悬臂长城

Gliding Heaven

Gliding above Jiāyùguān Fort, the Overhanging Great Wall, and the surrounding snowcapped peaks provides an unforgettable experience. Start at the **Jiāyù Guān Gliding Base (Huáxiáng Jīdì; ✆ 0931/849-8328;** fax 0931/849-8326), located inside the old airport, 25km (16 miles) northeast of town. The gliding season is from mid-June to September, when the warm ascending air flow of the Jiāyùguān basin can lift gliders nearly 6km (4 miles) up. If you don't have a gliding license, training courses are available, but you'll need a very good translator. Basic and overpriced accommodation is available at the base. Whatever your arrangements, make them at least a month in advance, and be sure to get them in writing. It may be best to proceed through CITS.

Continuing west, you face the massive outer wall, over 10m (33 ft.) high, and pass through **Jiāyùguān Gate.** Chinese tour groups joke about forgetting their passport, ride camels, and dress up in funny minority costumes, but in the past it was no joke. Locals called it the Gate of Sighs, and the walls were scrawled with hastily composed poems by unfortunate exiles.

July–Oct 7am–10pm; Nov–Jun 8am–8pm. Admission ¥65 ($8.10), including entry to the Chángchéng Bówùguǎn (Great Wall Museum). Take a taxi (¥12/$1.40), ride a bike, or walk the 5km (3 miles) from town. Turn right about 1km after the railway bridge, follow a line of concrete camels, and eventually turn left at a signposted fork in the road.

Xīnchéng Wèi Jìn Mù (Wèi–Jìn Tombs) Twenty kilometers (12 miles) northeast of Jiāyùguan, this is sometimes misleadingly called the **Dìxià Huàláng (Underground Art Gallery).** There are thousands of tombs in this area dating from the Wèi (220–65 B.C.) and Jìn (A.D. 265–420), but only one is open to the public. You will see the tomb of a sixth-rank official, the lowest rank in the imperial pecking order. The valuables were plundered soon after the tomb was sealed, probably by the builder, judging from the accuracy of the thief's tunnel. Compared with Buddhist art, the murals in the tomb are crude cartoons. Detailed instructions on slaughtering pigs, goats, and cows leave no doubt as to what the owner was hoping for in the next world. There is evidence that sericulture had already spread to this part of the empire, that barbecues were enjoyed before Australia was colonized, and that officials were plumper than their servants. Murals detail the official's trip to the capital in Luòyáng, doubtless the highlight of his career. The remaining contents of the tomb are on display in an **exhibition center,** and include black stone pigs found in the hands and the mouth of the official's corpse. He liked his pork.

8:30am–6:30pm. Admission ¥30 ($3.70); guide fee ¥25 ($3) or ¥5 (65¢) per person (whichever is greater).

Xuánbì Chángchéng (Overhanging Great Wall) Built in 1539, this is as far northwest as the Wall goes. Farmers were putting the masonry to better use before this section of the Wall was restored in 1988. It's a sweaty 20-minute climb into the desolate **Hēi Shān (Black Mountains)** as the Wall rises at a 45-degree angle for 500m (550 yd.). Chinese tourists arrange stones into the equivalent of "John loves Mary." Farms in the village below are a small finger of green in an immense desert. This section is 8km (5 miles) north of the fort, and can be reached by taxi or bike. Take plenty of water.

Apr–Oct 8am–9pm; Nov–Mar 9am–6pm. Admission ¥8 ($1).

SHOPPING

Much of the stock in the **Băihuò Dàlóu,** on the northeast side of the main roundabout, looks like it hasn't moved since the Cultural Revolution. This is a chance to pick up Seagull cameras, mahjong tiles, and chess sets at 1960s prices.

WHERE TO STAY

Outside the busy season in early May and mid-July to October, occupancy rates run as low as 20%—so discounts of at least 40% can be obtained.

EXPENSIVE

Chángchéng Bīnguăn (Great Wall Hotel) A favorite with tour groups since 1987, this sprawling, comfortable three-star hotel, styled as a mini-Jiāyùguān Fort, is the best appointed in town. Service in the hotel is friendly and efficient, although the service in the cavernous restaurant and the snarling bike rental service are glaring exceptions. Building nos. 1 and 3 were renovated in 2001; building 2 still has lumpy carpets and an aroma of stale cigarettes.

Jiànshè Lù 6 (from Sīfājú walk back 50m/164 ft. and the hotel is on your right). ✆ **0937/622-5213.** Fax 0937/622-6016. 156 units. ¥280 ($35) standard room; ¥780 ($97) suite. No credit cards. Bus: no. 2 to Sīfājú. **Amenities:** Restaurant; swimming pool; exercise room; bike rental; concierge; tour desk; business center; 24-hr. forex; same-day laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Jiāyùguān Bīnguăn Right in the center of town, this hotel has been giving birth to new wings since 1983, most recently the west wing (opened in 2002). The rooms are the cleanest and most comfortable in town.

Xīnhuá Běi Lù 1. ✆ **0937/622-6231.** Fax 0937/622-7174. www.jiugang.com. 171 units. ¥380 ($47) standard room; from ¥580 ($72) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 1 to Yóudiàn Dàlòu. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; exercise room; bike rental; game room; concierge; tour desk; business center; 24-hr. forex; same-day laundry, next-day dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV.

MODERATE

Qīngnián Bīnguăn ★ *Value* For the moment, this freshly renovated hotel, which resembles a Disney castle, is great value. Rooms with twin beds with attached shower were being offered for ¥25 ($3) at press time. Built in 1991, the original target was the backpacker market, but management aspires to the lofty heights of a Chinese three-star, so prices will climb in the future.

Jiànshè Dōng Lù 3 (from Sīfājú, walk back 50m/164 ft. to the red building on your left). ✆ **0937/626-7499.** 88 units. ¥188($23) standard room; ¥40 ($5) dorm bed. No credit cards. Bus: no. 2 to Sīfājú. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bike rental; concierge; tour desk; business center; 24-hr. room service; same-day laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Tàihé Shānzhuāng ★★ Located inside the Jiāyùguān Fort, this replica of a Qīng dynasty courtyard house allows you to spend more time at Jiāyù Guān's main attraction and to view the fort at sunrise and sunset, when the earthen ramparts are highly photogenic. Service is friendly and the rooms are clean and spacious, but English is at a minimum. The restaurant fare is excellent, if overpriced. Combined with the magnificent fort, this guesthouse makes for the perfect "real China" experience.

Jiāyùguān Guānchéng (150m/492 ft. past the entrance to the fort). ✆ **0937/639-6616.** Fax 0937/639-6914. bjyggch@public.lz.gs.cn. 18 units (shower only). ¥120 ($12) standard room; ¥360 ($45) suite. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; concierge; tour desk; same-day laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

WHERE TO DINE

Jiāyùguān is a prosperous steel town, so the restaurants—unlike the hotels—do well year-round. The main outdoor food markets are **Fùqiáng Shìchăng** and **Jìngtiě Shìchăng.**

Lín Yuàn Jiǔdiàn ★★ CANTONESE With a Cantonese chef poached from one of Xī'ān's top restaurants, this is where the locals go for a treat. The *fuguì niúròu* is akin to roast beef on sesame toast. *Jiāngnán qiánjiāng ròu,* lightly battered chicken in sweet-and-sour sauce, complements the Cantonese favorite, *xīqīng bǎihé chǎo xiān yóu* (fresh squid on a bed of celery, field mushrooms, and lotus).

Xīnhuá Nán Lù 34. ✆ **0937/628-6918.** Meal for 2 ¥80–¥120 ($10–$15). 9am–11pm. Bus: no. 1 to Bǎoxiǎn Gōngsī.

Yǎnjing Kǎoròudiàn (Spectacles) UIGHUR The night market on the north side of Jìngtiě Shìcháng is the liveliest in town. Sheep carcasses dangle, beer flows, and vendors make fun of their regular customers. No one knows the name of the night market's greatest showman, who is simply called Yǎnjìng (Spectacles). His shop is easy to spot, under a sign with a caricature of a man with huge glasses and a smock. The caricature is on the mark and Spectacles will serve you tasty lamb skewers *(yángròu chuàn)* or mini-lamb chops *(yángpái)* by the handful *(bǎ)*—about 20 in each serving, give or take a couple. But make sure you know what you're eating.

10 Dūnhuáng

Gānsù Province, 383km (237 miles) W of Jiāyùguān, 524km (325 miles) NE of Golmud

Dūnhuáng's name (blazing beacon) derives from its function as a Hàn Chinese garrison town, but the Táng name of Shā Zhōu (sand district) describes it better, hemmed in by sand dunes and bleak, pebbly desert. The middle and southern Silk Routes set off from Dūnhuáng, passing through the remote garrison town of **Lóulán** (abandoned when Lop Nor Lake "wandered off" in the 4th c.) and through the **Lop Desert.**

A large number of the early residents of Dūnhuáng were not Hàn, and the town came under the sway of the Tibetans, the Uighurs, and the Xī Xià, only really becoming a Hàn town after the colonization of the western regions was initiated during the Qīng dynasty. The town is dependent on tourism, and despite efforts to develop other sites, it is the peerless **Mògāo cave-temple complex** which makes Dūnhuáng *the* essential stop on the Silk Routes.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The **airport** is 13km (8 miles) east of Dūnhuáng, just past the turnoff to the Mògāo caves. CAAC once ran a bus to the airport, but you are now at the mercy of taxi drivers without meters, who should charge no more than ¥20 ($2.40). The most useful office of **CAAC** (open 8am–6pm summer, 8am–12.30pm and 2:30–6pm winter) is opposite the Tàiyáng Dàjiǔdiàn at Shā Zhōu Běi Lù 5 (✆ **0937/882-2389**). They will deliver tickets to your hotel, so there is no need to book tickets through hotel travel agencies, who will charge up to ¥70 ($8.40) for making a local call. There is a friendly office of **Northwest Airlines** 150m (165 yd.) north of Fēitiān Bīnguǎn on Míng Shān Lù (✆ **0937/882-9710;** fax 0937/883-9888; open 7:30am–7:30pm). Daily flights connect with Lánzhōu (¥890/$111) and Ürümqi (¥620/$77). Five flights connect with Xī'ān (Mon–Fri; ¥1,340/$167) and four flights connect with Běijīng (Mon, Wed, Fri, Sun; ¥1,620/$202). There are fewer flights in winter.

Dūnhuáng is 2 to 3 hours or 130km (81 miles) southwest of the **railway station** at Liǔyuán. From the station, you will have no trouble finding minibus drivers, who ask ¥30 ($3.70) for the ¥15 ($1.90) trip. Buses for the railway

Dang River
Dunhuang
Beijing
GANSU
China
0 1/8 mile
0 100 meters
N
Airport
Bank
Police
Post Office
Travel Agent
Shazhou Bei Lu
Yanguan Zhong Lu
Yanguan Dong Lu
To Airport (13 km)
Shichang Xiang
Henshui Lu
Xiyu Jie
Mingshan Lu
Xinjian Lu
Shazhou Nan Lu
Huancheng Nan Lu
Dunyue Lu
DINING
Dá Jī Lǔròu Huángmiàn Guǎn 2
达记驴肉黄面馆
John's Information Cafe 7
(Yuēhàn Cāntīng)
约翰餐厅
ATTRACTIONS
Míngshā Shān 12
鸣沙山
Mògāo Shíkū 5
(Mògāo Caves)
莫高石窟
Xī Qiān Fó Dòng 1
(Western Thousand Buddha Caves)
西千佛洞
ACCOMMODATIONS
Dūnhuáng Dàshà 9
敦煌大厦
Dūnhuáng Shānzhuāng 11
(Silk Road Dūnhuáng Hotel)
敦煌山庄
Fēitiān Bīnguǎn 8
飞天宾馆
Jīnyè Bīnguǎn 10
金叶宾馆
Rén Háng Péixùn Zhōngxīn 4
人行培训中心
Tàiyáng Cūn 6
(Sun Village Hotel)
太阳村
Tàiyáng Dàjiǔdiàn 3
太阳大酒店

station leave the long-distance bus station at 7:30am, 9:30am, 11am, noon, 2pm, 4pm, 6pm, and 7:30pm. Or you can hire a taxi for ¥120 ($15) or a minivan for ¥100 ($12). Heading west, the best choice of trains is the K889 for Ürümqi (12 hr.) at 8:06pm, which originates in Dūnhuáng. Heading east, you may have to proceed through travel agencies. The lowest commission, ¥30 to ¥40 ($3.70–$5), is charged by John's Information Cafe. Or you can buy a hard-seat ticket at Liǔyuán and try to upgrade. If you arrive at the station early, there is a rest area on the second floor which charges ¥5 (65¢) for a cup of tea and a bit of peace and quiet.

The **bus station** is on Míng Shān Lù (✆ **0937/882-2174**), diagonally opposite the Fēitiān Bīnguǎn. Daily buses connect with Jiāyùguān at 11:30am (383km/237 miles; 6 hr.; ¥43/$5.40), 1pm (¥56/$6.90), and 2:30pm (¥66/$8.20); with Lánzhōu at 8:30am (1,148km; 17–20 hr.; ¥133/$17) and 10:30am (sleeper bus; ¥214/$27); with Golmud at 8am (524km/325 miles; 11 hr.; ¥61/$7.60) and 7:30pm (sleeper bus; ¥99/$12); and with Xīníng at 10am (1,067km/662 miles; 22 hr.; ¥183/$23).

GETTING AROUND **Taxis** fill Dūnhuáng's narrow streets; meters are usually "broken." The rate should be ¥1 (15¢) per kilometer. Get around on foot, or hire a **bike** for ¥1 (15¢) per hour. There are also three **bus** routes.

TOURS **CITS** is inside the compound of the Dūnhuáng Guójì Dàjiǔdiàn at Míng Shān Lù 32 (✆ **0937/882-3312;** fax 0937/882-2173; www.dhcits.com; open Fri 8am–12:30pm and 3–6:30pm summer, 8am–12:30pm and 2:30–6pm winter), on the right as you enter.

VISITOR INFORMATION Booking train tickets and arranging transportation is best done through **John's Information Cafe,** Míng Shān Lù 22 (✆/fax **0937/882-7000** or 0937/883-7731 in winter; johncafe@hotmail.com).

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The main branch of the **Bank of China** at Yáng Guān Zhōng Lù 13 (✆ **0937/882-2141**) has an ATM outside, and accepts credit cards and traveler's checks. Weekday hours are 8am to 6pm in the summer, 8:30am to 5:30pm in the winter; year-round weekend hours are 8:30am to 6pm.

Internet Access There are several Internet bars north of the hospital. They tend to overcharge foreigners; the rate should be ¥3 (40¢) per hour. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The post office is on the northwest corner of the main roundabout, at Yáng Guān Zhōng Lù 1. It's open from 8am to 7pm.

Visa Extensions The **PSB** (✆ **0937/882-2660,** ext. 2206), next to the Bank of China, is courteous and efficient. Summer hours are Monday through Friday from 8am to 12:30pm and 3 to 6:30pm. Winter hours are Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 12:30pm and 2:30 to 6pm.

EXPLORING DŪNHUÁNG

Míngshā Shān & Yuèyá Quán (Singing Sand Mountains & Crescent Moon Spring) When Aurel Stein settled down by the spring to churn out his memoirs, he opined, "It lay hidden away amidst high sands beyond the southern edge of the oasis and about three miles from the town. For the desert wanderer there could be no more appropriate place of rest, I thought, than this delightful little pilgrimage place enclosed all around by sand-ridges rising to over

250 feet in height. There was a limpid little lake, of crescent shape and about a quarter of a mile long, which has given the locality its name and its sanctity."

Stein's peaceful temple was razed during the Cultural Revolution and is now a souvenir shop. The limpid "lake" is a fenced-off muddy pond reduced to half the original size, a result of the ongoing exploitation of underground water. The pilgrimage is marked by a gauntlet of stalls selling stuffed camels, batik, and glow-in-the-dark cups, culminating in a ticket office charging ¥50 ($6) to see a naturally formed attraction. Inside the entrance there are camels (¥30/$3.70) or carts (¥10/$1.25) to take you to the lake, and **toboggans** to take you down the sand dunes, which make for a fun, if sandy experience. If you've never seen desert dunes, it's worth the effort, especially just before sunrise or sunset, when the delicate contours and colors of the dunes are beguiling.

Open daylight hours (24 hr. in high season). Admission ¥50 ($6). Taxi (¥10/$1.25) or minibus no. 3.

Mògāo Shíkū (Mògāo Caves) ★★★ Here is the biggest, best-preserved, and most significant site of Buddhist statuary and frescoes in all of China. A guide is compulsory, as is leaving your bag (¥1/15¢) and camera (¥2/25¢) at the gate. Generally the guides are excellent, sometimes going well beyond the script. Tours usually take 2 hours and cover half of the caves that are open to the public. It is worth spending the entire day at Mògāo Shíkū, even though this means that you have to pay for admission twice. Tours in the afternoon are less crowded, and you may get a guide to yourself.

To the left of the ticket office is the **Dūnhuáng Research Institute** ★, which includes a copy of the one of the earliest grottoes, **Cave 275,** dating from the short-lived 5th century Northern Liáng dynasty, and including a *Jataka* (moral story) from one of the historical Buddha's previous lives. He is depicted as a Kushan king, allowing an attendant to cut the flesh from his leg as ransom for a dove that sits in his palm. *Jataka* were popular in the early caves, gradually being displaced by stories from the Mahayanist sutras in later caves as the influence of the "Pure Land Sect" of Chinese Buddhism grew. The subject matter of these *Jataka* was frequently gory. **Cave 285,** for example, tells the tale of 500 rebels who fought against the corrupt King Prasenajit and had their eyes gouged out and were banished to the wilderness before the gods took pity on them and allowed them to be tonsured as monks, their sight restored by the Buddha. Upstairs is a somewhat out-of-place exhibition of Tibetan bronze statues, both complete and beheaded, that were rescued from Red Guards by the canny curator.

Your first stop on the tour will be an exhibit of the documents, paintings, and artifacts removed from **cave 17 (the Library Cave)** in the early 1900s. The cave was sealed off sometime after 998 (the year of the last dated manuscript), perhaps out of fear of the spread of Islam—the Buddhist kingdom of Khotan was captured and sacked in 1006. In 1900, the cave was rediscovered by Wáng Dàoshi (Abbot Wáng), the self-appointed guardian of the caves. First among the villains was archaeologist Aurel Stein, a Hungarian who obtained British citizenship (and later a knighthood), who arrived during the winter of 1907. The Chinese commentary is only slightly more damning than the English translation, accusing Stein of "purchasing by deceit" over 7,000 complete manuscripts and silk paintings from the "ignorant" Abbott Wáng for a paltry £130. Next came young French Sinologist Paul Pelliot, whose mastery of Chinese gave him a selectivity his predecessor lacked—Stein returned to London with over 1,000 copies of the Lotus Sutra. Pelliot obtained thousands of documents for even less—only £90! The Chinese save their greatest condemnation for Langdon

Warner, who removed 12 murals **(Cave 323)** and a statue **(Cave 328).** Warner justified his theft as a way of avoiding the "renovations" funded by Abbot Wáng. A map illustrates how the contents are spread around the world.

Remarkable early caves (usually open) include **Cave 257,** commissioned during the Northern Wèi (A.D. 386–535), which contains a *Jataka* of the deer king; and **Cave 428,** where an early incarnation of the historical Buddha sacrifices himself to feed a tigress and her cubs. Later caves, such as **Cave 96,** which houses a 33m (100-ft.) Buddha, and **Cave 148,** which contains a serene 17m (56-ft.) Sleeping Buddha, indicate that artisans from the Táng court found their way to Mògāo. Some lower caves were affected by floodwaters from the **Dàquán River,** and sunlight has caused lead-based pigments to turn black, but the overall state of preservation is incredible. Caves are grouped roughly by period, and it is intriguing to view the steady transformation of facial features from Greco-Indian to plumper, more feminine Chinese features.

8:10am–4:30pm. Admission ¥80 ($10), English-speaking guide ¥20 ($2.50). To reach the caves, minibuses leave from Fēitiān Bīnguǎn at 8am (30 min.; ¥8/$1 one-way, ¥10/$1.25 round-trip); or you catch a minibus on Xīn Jiàn Lù for a similar fare. In peak season these fill up quickly, but in the off season, you will get a free tour of Dūnhuáng. If you plan to see Mògāo Shíkū as a half-day trip, get there as early as possible; buses return to Dūnhuáng at noon. Afternoon buses return at 6pm.

Xī Qiān Fó Dòng (Western Thousand Buddha Caves) The missionary Mildred Cable described the scene: "At the edge of the cliff was a rough opening, and from it a very precipitous path led down to a narrow ledge from which the new caves opened . . . they were comparable to the better known Thousand Buddha Grottoes . . . the figures were free and stately, with flowing lines and elegant draperies, and the frescoes showed the same clear warm tints."

Located 35km (22 miles) southwest of town, the valley is easily accessed as a half-day trip, but it's still a scramble down to the caves. They were largely built by locals from the nearby village of Nán Hú, and have several *Jataka* stories not covered by the Mògāo caves. Most of the statuary (with the exception of caves 5 and 16) was repainted to poor effect during the Qīng dynasty. The most spectacular murals are located in **Cave 15** ★, which is not open to the casual visitor without payment of an additional fee. The stunning blues and muscular bodhisattvas of the Northern Wèi **(Cave 5)** and Northern Zhōu **(Cave 6)** are in real contrast to the plump, feminine bodhisattvas of the Middle Táng **(Cave 15).** To reach the site, a taxi may be hired for ¥60 ($7.50); or take any bus heading west from Dūnhuáng for ¥5 (65¢). From the road, it's a 15-minute walk south to the cliff face, with a set of stairs to the left leading down to the ticket office.

8am–5pm. Admission ¥30 ($3.70).

WHERE TO STAY

Dūnhuáng has a surplus of accommodations. With the exception of holiday weeks in early May and October, discounts of up to 60% are readily negotiated.

VERY EXPENSIVE

Dūnhuáng Shānzhuāng (The Silk Road Dūnhuáng Hotel) ★★★ This Hong Kong venture is the finest hotel on the Silk Routes. It lies 4km (2½ miles) south of town, just before the Míng Shān Dunes, which loom in the background. The main building is an imposing fortress, surrounded by stylishly renovated courtyard houses. Airy rooms with finely crafted wooden furnishings and cool stone floors mesh perfectly with the desert surroundings. Bill Gates was duly impressed with the villas, which feature a mixture of Táng and Hàn

architectural styles. An aptly named "student building" with beds for ¥43 ($5.40) also houses the staff.

Dūnyuè Lù. ✆ **0937/888-2088.** Fax 0937/888-2086. www.the-silk-road.com. 279 units, 21 villas. ¥800 ($100) standard room; from ¥1,200 ($150) suite; from ¥2,000 ($250) villa. 13% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; cafe; bar; sauna; bike rental; concierge; tour desk; evening shuttle bus to town; 24-hr. business center; 24-hr. forex; salon; 24-hr. room service; massage; same-day laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, hair dryer.

Tàiyáng Cūn (Sun Village Hotel) A favorite with Japanese and Taiwanese tour groups, the Sun Village, finished in 2001, though bland on the outside, boasts enormous, well-appointed rooms and the only swimming pool in town. The well-trained staff is helpful and versed in Japanese, Cantonese, and English. Food is grown on-site (without pesticides), and the villas are ideal for long-term visitors.

Jīháng Lù Zhōngduàn 1. ✆ **0937/886-8588.** Fax 0937/886-8689. www.dhsuntravel.com. 120 units. ¥688 ($86) standard room; from ¥1,188 ($148) villa. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; cafe; large swimming pool; bowling alley; billiards room; concierge; 24-hr. forex; 24-hr. room service; same-day laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

EXPENSIVE

Tàiyáng Dàjiǔdiàn (Grand Sun Hotel) ★★ This is the best hotel situated in Dūnhuáng proper. While the new wing hasn't been renovated since 1997, the rooms are in immaculate condition. The staff is brilliant because the long off-season provides time for training. True to the hotel's name, 24-hour hot water is provided by solar power. There are cheaper rooms in the old building. The Japanese restaurant can safely claim to be the best for miles around.

Shāzhōu Běi Lù 5. ✆ **0937/882-9998.** Fax 0937/882-2019. dhytn@mail.jq.cninfo.net. 220 units. ¥ 688 ($86) standard room; from ¥988 ($123) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Rates include full breakfast. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; cafe; concierge; tour desk; business center; 24-hr. forex; shopping arcade; 24-hr. room service; same-day laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, fridge.

MODERATE

Dūnhuáng Dàshà (Dūnhuáng Building) This unglamorous three-star hotel is owned by the Tax Department, so there is no danger of it running short of money for renovations, which are continuous. Rooms are clean and bright, and the hotel's location—in a quiet area south of the center of town—is a definite advantage. A similar operation, backed by the Peoples' Bank (Rén Háng Péixùn Zhōngxīn; ✆ 0937/882-9008; fax 0937/882-9088), is more central, south of the Grand Sun Hotel.

Shāzhōu Nán Lù 15, 736200. ✆ **0937/882-5007.** Fax 0937/882-5006. 101 units. ¥380 ($47) standard room; ¥680 ($85) suite; ¥50 ($6) dorm bed. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; concierge; business center; same-day laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Jīnyè Bīnguǎn (Golden Leaf Hotel) ★ This is the least sleazy of the three-star options. The location is inconvenient, 1.6km (1 mile) south of the center of town, but staff is friendly and rooms are in excellent condition, having been renovated towards the end of 2001. An orchard provides grapes, apricots, and peaches for the hotel restaurant. Ask for a room overlooking the orchard, as rooms facing the main road are noisy. "Golden leaf" is a reference to tobacco: the hotel is owned by the Gānsù Tobacco Company.

Míng Shān Lù 37. ✆ **0937/882-1470.** Fax 0937/882-1427. 110 units. ¥422 ($53) standard room; ¥888 ($111) suite. Rates include full breakfast. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; large exercise room; game room; concierge; tour desk; business center; same-day laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge.

WHERE TO DINE

Clustered around the **Fēitiān Hotel** are small restaurants with English menus, offering "Western" food and overpriced Chinese fare. Favorites are **Shirley's, Charlie Johng's Cafe,** and **John's Information Cafe.** John's serves the best coffee.

Dá Jì Lǘròu Huángmiàn Guǎn *Finds* Surprisingly, the specialty dish of Dūnhuáng is *lǘròu huángmiàn* (donkey meat yellow noodles). More surprisingly, it's delicious. It is claimed that the method of making the noodles is revealed in Cave 265, but the cave isn't open to the public and the owners of this noodle shop aren't talking. The noodles are cooked with tomato, tofu, mushrooms, and plenty of garlic—a small plate *(xiǎopán)* is more than sufficient. To accompany the main dish, order some donkey meat *(lǘròu).* Half a *jīn (bàn jīn),* which is half a kilo, is enough for two. The meat is lean and tastes a little like roast beef. You'll be served a bowl of finely chopped garlic, to which you should add chili sauce and vinegar to taste, before dipping the meat in it. If you want to meet some locals, this market street is a better choice than the tacky main night market *(yèshì).* An after-dinner stroll through the charming narrow lanes provides a rewarding glimpse of the old town.

Dà Shìchǎng. ¥10 ($1.25) per person. No credit cards. 10:30am–10:30pm.

11 Turpan (Tǔlǔfān) ★★

Xīnjiāng Province, 187km (116 miles) SE of Ürümqi

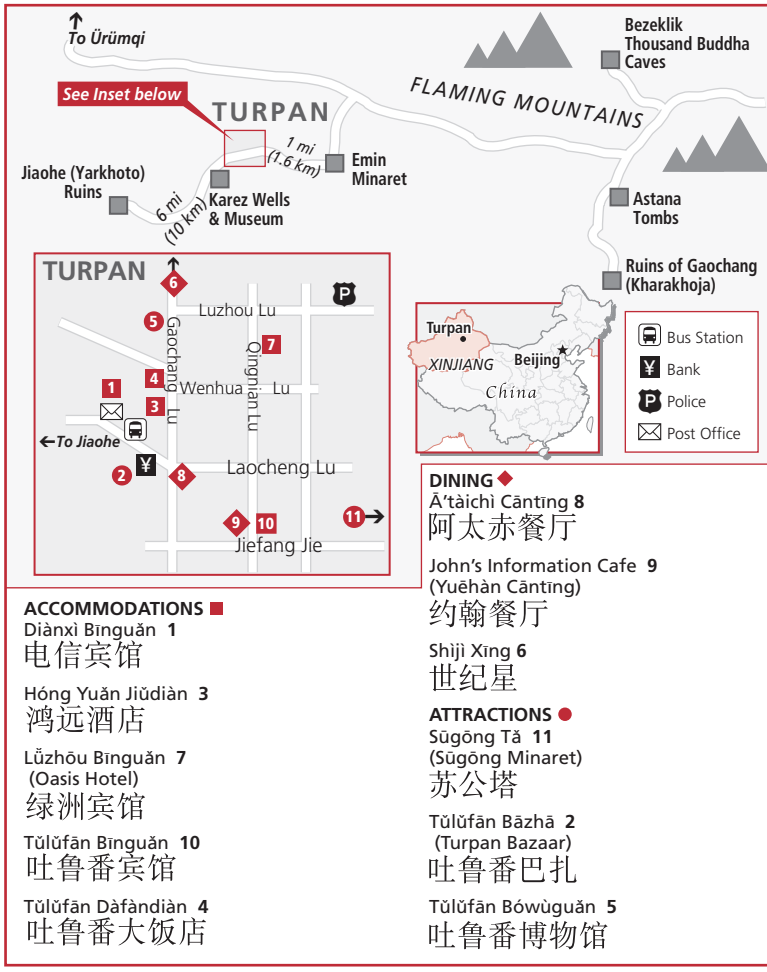
Early European visitors were preoccupied with the overwhelming heat of this delightful oasis town. Set in the **Turpan Depression,** 154m (505 ft.) below sea level at its lowest point at **Lake Ayd Inkol (Àidīng Hú),** the town experiences midday temperatures hovering above 113°F (45°C) during the summer months. The American journalist Lattimore found some relief: "Over the central streets, which are at once passageways and market-places, are trellises, covered with mats, gourd-vines, and the branches of willows and poplars. In the chequered shade the people step softly, loose-robed and barefooted or slipper-shod; as they chatter in Turki, guttural but soft, the eyes of women flash under stenciled eyebrows and the teeth of men flash from black beards . . ."

The green fields that surround Turpan are sustained by the *karez* irrigation system, thought to have been introduced in Persia 2 millennia ago. A web of a thousand miles of covered water channels brings water from the mountains to the north and west of Turpan. Keeping the *karez* clear requires considerable effort, and locals are proud of this ongoing engineering achievement. Turpan is surrounded by significant ancient sites, all readily accessed by car or minibus. Often an independent kingdom, it has maintained a strong sense of local identity, and observes a relaxed and tolerant version of Islam.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The nearest **airport** is at Ürümqi, although there is talk of a new airport being built in 2004.

The **railway station** is located 54km (33 miles) north of Turpan in the unprepossessing town of Dàhéyàn. Minibuses connect with **Turpan's long-distance bus station** for ¥6 (75¢). They meet you at the station, along with minivan drivers from John's Information Cafe charging ¥5 (65¢), who will pursue you for the rest of your stay. The Turpan **long-distance bus station** in Dàhéyàn is reached by heading up the hill in front of the station, taking the first right turn, and continuing along the road for about 180m (200 yd.). The bus station is on your left.



To connect with Kashgar, the best choice is the K887 at 5:40pm; the trip takes 21 hours. Except in peak season, sleeper tickets are readily purchased in Dàhéyàn. Those heading to Ürümqi are better served by bus. Heading east, sleeper tickets are tighter; your chances are best on the T198 to Zhèngzhōu (40 hr.) at 4:51pm and the 1044 to Xī'ān (43 hr.) at 5:57pm. Otherwise, proceed through CITS or John's Information Café, which charges a ¥50 ($6) commission.

The **bus station** is at Lǎo Chéng Lù 27 (✆ **0995/852-2325**), about 90m (100 yd.) west of the central roundabout. Buses for Ürümqi (187km/116 miles; 2½ hr.; ¥25/$3) leave every half hour from 7:30am to 8:30pm. There are daily buses for Kuqa (638km/396 miles; 15 hr.; ¥62/$7.70) and a sleeper bus for Kashgar (1,385km/859 miles; 26 hr.; ¥110/$14 upper berth, ¥130/$17 lower berth). Both depart at 11am.

GETTING AROUND Turpan is a small town, and nearly everything is within walking distance of the center, marked by the intersection of Lǎo Chéng

Lù and Gāochāng Lù. Most sights are outside town and require a **taxi, minibus,** or **bike,** which can be hired from John's Information Cafe. Your presence is noted by local drivers when you arrive. They will politely but insistently offer tours of the eight sights *(bāge dìfāng).*

TOURS **CITS** is located on the right as you enter the grounds of the Oasis Hotel at Qīngnián Lù 41 (✆ **0995/855-3402;** fax 0995/852-8688; xjggts@263.net; open 8am–9pm).

FAST FACTS

Banks & Foreign Exchange You can change traveler's checks and draw money on your credit card from counters 3 to 5 at the **Bank of China,** just west of the main roundabout, at Lǎo Chéng Lù 18. It's open 9:30am to 1pm and 4:30 to 7:30pm.

Internet Access Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The main post office (open 9am–7:30pm summer, 9:30am–7pm winter) is west of the bus station.

Visa Extensions The **PSB** office (open weekdays 9:30am–1pm and 4:30–7:30pm) on Lùzhōu Dōng Lù (✆ **0995/852-8141,** ext. 3043) takes an hour or so to process extensions.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

Tǔlǔfān Bówùguǎn Although the space-age exterior and lobby belie the sloppily curated interior, this is worth an hour of pottering, especially in the midday heat. Many of the exhibits are from the **Astana graves,** and attest to the preservation qualities of Turpan's arid climate. You'll see dumplings, cakes, and sultanas, all at least 13 centuries past their best. Other grave goods include a rooster-shaped pillow to ensure its owner didn't sleep through the afterlife, and the naturally mummified bodies of some of the inhabitants. The macabre nature of the exhibit attracted experts from the **Běijīng Natural History Museum,** who have added a reproduction of a Gāochāng army general and his wife. The final exhibition hall features the skeleton of a 9m (30-ft.) long herbivorous dinosaur, *Paraceratherium Tienshanensis,* and various *Jurassic Park*–inspired replicas.

Gāochāng Lù 26. Admission ¥20 ($2.50). 9:30am–7pm.

AROUND TURPAN

The "eight sights" around Turpan can easily be visited in 1 day. These are the ancient city of **Gāochāng,** the **Astana tombs,** the **Bezeklik Caves,** the **Flaming Mountains** (made famous by Ang Lee's travelogue *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*), **Pútao Gōu (Grape Valley), Sūgōng Minaret,** the ***karez*** irrigation channels, and the ancient city of **Jiāohé.** Private minibus drivers charge around ¥50 ($6) per person. The air-conditioned CITS minibus (which runs July–Oct) is worth considering, as it includes an English-speaking guide and costs ¥80 ($10) per person. Hiring a taxi allows you to be selective, and prices can be as low as ¥150 ($19) for a Santana in the off season, rising to a CITS high of ¥350 ($44).

Several of the eight sights are not worthwhile. The ticket seller at Astana tells you to "save your money for the museum." The road to Gāochāng passes the Flaming Mountains, and Bezeklik is in them, so don't stop at the designated photo op unless you enjoy being pestered by small children selling bells. The *karez* wells are unimpressive, and there are grape vines in Turpan, so there's no need to pay ¥20 ($2.50) for an overpriced meal at Grape Valley. Organize a

half-day tour including Gāochāng, Bezeklik, Sūgōng Minaret, and Jiāohé, or take a 1-day tour with a visit to Tuyoq in the morning. Sūgōng Minaret and Jiāohé can also be reached by bike.

Bózīkèlǐkè Qiān Fó Dòng (Bezeklik Thousand Buddha Caves) The setting of Bezeklik Caves, in a ravine deep in the **Flaming Mountains,** is more spectacular than the contents of the caves. Bezeklik was stripped by several German expeditions—led by Albert Grünwedel and his nominal understudy, Albert von Le Coq—and relocated to the Museum für Indische Kunst in Berlin. Grünwedel was reluctant to remove Buddhist antiquities, but Le Coq deemed it essential for their preservation, sparing them from Muslim iconoclasts and practical-minded farmers who would scrape off paintings for use as fertilizer. Nearly all the large wall paintings were destroyed during Allied bombing raids on Berlin in 1943 and 1945. What little is left, particularly in **Cave 39,** hints at a distinctly Indo-Persian style. The new *Journey to the West* statue outside is rather special.

Admission ¥20 ($2.50). Summer 9am–8:30pm; winter daylight hours.

Gāochāng (Karakhoja) Located 45km (28 miles) southeast of Turpan, Gāochāng was founded during the Hàn dynasty as a garrison town to supply troops engaged in the conquest of the "Western Regions." Gāochāng rose to prominence, becoming the capital of the region and maintaining its influence even when it passed from Chinese hands. Xuánzàng visited in A.D. 630, and the king of Gāochāng was so impressed by his preaching that he took the young monk captive. Xuánzàng went on a hunger strike and was released with a promise to return. He wriggled out of his pledge, returning to China by the southern Silk Route. In any event, the king was dead before he returned, as Turpan returned to Chinese control.

During the Táng dynasty, Gāochāng was a thriving artistic and spiritual center for Buddhism and Manichaeism, and most relics recovered by Albert von Le Coq, Stein, and Chinese archaeologists date from this period. There is a **Manichean shrine** northeast of the city walls, but the contents of its library were thrown into a river 5 years before Le Coq arrived. The man feared "the unholy nature of the writings and . . . that the Chinese might use the discovery as a pretext for fresh extortions."

Gāochāng is a significant site, but aside from the city walls and the restored **Buddhist temple,** the weathered mud-brick buildings are hard to discern. A donkey-cart ride to the Buddhist temple costs ¥10 ($1.25).

Open daylight hours. Admission ¥20 ($2.50).

Jiāohé (Yarkhoto) Ten kilometers (6¼ miles) west of Turpan, these ruins are better preserved and enjoy a more spectacular location than Gaōchāng, though they are historically less significant. Originally a Hàn garrison town, it has no city walls, as the site (which means "meeting of the rivers") is bounded by steep ravines. A clear central avenue runs east–west through the town, with residential, religious, and governmental areas delineated. The reason for the demise of the settlement during the Yuán dynasty is unclear—the depth of the numerous wells suggests the water supply may have run out. Jiāohé can be reached by taxi for ¥20 ($2.50) round-trip; or make it a pleasant bike ride.

Admission ¥30 ($3.70). Summer 8am–9pm; winter 10am–6:30pm. Bus: no. 101 to the west edge of town, then catch a 3-wheeler (¥3/40¢).

Sūgōng Tǎ or Émǐn Tǎ (Sūgōng Minaret) The mosque was built in 1778 by Prince Suleiman in honor of his father, Prince Emin, one of the few rulers of

Turpan to have made the pilgrimage to Mecca. One of the first Western visitors was Francis Younghusband, who was less than overawed: "Some three miles from Turfan we passed a mosque with a curious tower, which looked as much like a very fat factory chimney as anything else. It was about eighty feet high, circular, and built of mud bricks, and it was ornamented by placing the bricks at different angles, forming patterns."

The most spectacular building is the minaret, actually about 10m (34 ft.) in diameter and 40m (132 ft.) tall. The style is neither Hàn nor Huí, but similar to those found further west on the Silk Routes. The mosque is not the oldest in Turpan, but it's the best preserved. It's open for worship at 2:30pm on Friday, when entry for non-Muslims is restricted.

Admission ¥20 ($2.50). 9am–7pm. Bus: no. 6 to the terminus; continue east for 10 min.

TUYOQ: A UIGHUR STRONGHOLD ★★

Less than 20km (12 miles) beyond Gāochāng, the idyllic Uighur village of **Tuyoq** is a fine day trip, and can be included in a tour. CITS immediately adds ¥200 ($25) to the cost of their tour, shaking their heads about how bad the road is (it's fine), but ¥40 ($5) is more realistic. Direct buses to Tuyoq (¥6/75¢) leave Turpan at noon, 2pm, and 4pm. Buses to **Lǔkèqìn** (¥9.50/$1.20) pass Tuyoq, and leave from 10am; the last bus back to Turpan leaves Lǔkèqìn at around 5pm, passing Tuyoq about 20 minutes later. Bus station staff, in the pay of taxi drivers, will do everything they can to persuade you that the bus goes nowhere near Tuyoq. If you catch the Lǔkèqìn bus, you will be dropped at the south end of the sprawling settlement, leaving a hot but fascinating 5km (3-mile) walk north to the village proper. Three-wheelers also make the trip for ¥3 (40¢).

You'll pass beautiful traditional courtyard houses and spy through richly painted doorways decorated with landscapes and religious themes. Grape-drying rooms perch atop the houses; in season, the valley is bursting with fruit. The verdant fields stand out against the stunning **Flaming Mountains.**

At the top of the valley is a complex of Buddhist caves, visited by Le Coq in 1905 and Stein in 1914. An earthquake in 1916 destroyed the hanging monastery and many of the caves, of which nine have murals. The gatekeeper will demand a letter from Ürümqi Regional Museum before allowing access to the caves. You'll need academic credentials to arrange the genuine pass.

WHERE TO STAY

Even during the peak season, discounts of 20% are standard. During the off season, discounts of 40% to 60% are possible.

Diànxìn Bīnguǎn This welcoming and unpretentious establishment (which resembles an Italian pension) is both quiet and well located close to the bus station. Built in 1999, rooms are showing signs of wear. However, service is friendlier than at the **Bus Station Hotel,** which should be avoided.

Lǎo Chéng Lù Diànxìnjú Yuǎnnèi (take a right turn down a narrow lane immediately west of the China Telecom building, then follow the lane for 135m/150 yd. until you see a small garden on your left. The entrance is on the far side). ✆ **0995/855-3070.** 34 units (shower only). From ¥100 ($12) standard room; ¥180 ($22) suite. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Same-day laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Hóngyuǎn Jiǔdiàn *Value* Opened in May 2002, this is one of those rare finds offering three-star facilities at less than two-star prices. Staff is helpful, and rooms are spotless and well appointed. A lively night market in front of the hotel appears at 7pm. Avoid the hotel's karaoke-sauna-massage parlor complex.

Gāochāng Lù (Lǚyóu Wénhuà Guǎngchǎng Xī Cè). ✆ **0995/857-8188.** Fax 0995/857-8180. 66 units. From ¥160 ($20) standard room; ¥380 ($47) suite. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; concierge; tour desk; business center; same-day laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Lǜzhōu Bīnguǎn (Oasis Hotel) ★ Managed by the same Hong Kong entrepreneur who created the Silk Road Hotel in Dūnhuáng, this three-star hotel set in rambling grounds is showing signs of age and group-tour syndrome. But it's still the best-run place in town. Uighur-style rooms on the first floor, with low beds and richly colored rugs, are a delight but are often booked. Gone are the dormitory rooms, replaced in 2001 by economy rooms with attached showers. The "minority rooms" are tastefully done, in contrast to the "cowboy rooms" on the third floor, outfitted with guns and horseshoes on the walls.

Qīngnián Lù 41. ✆ **0995/852-2491.** Fax 0995/852-3348. www.the-silk-road.com. 193 units (28 with shower only). ¥528 ($66) twin; ¥1,088 ($136) suite; ¥140 ($17) economy room. Room rates readily reduced by 40%. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bike rental; billiards room; concierge; tour desk (CITS); business center; 24-hr. forex; same-day laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Tǔlǔfān Dàfàndiàn (Grand Turpan Hotel) ★ Once a humble one-star operation, this Hong Kong–managed venture is now the best-appointed hotel in Turpan. Spacious rooms in the new wing (completed in 2001) meet four-star standards—they're the only rooms in town that come with a fridge. The dormitory beds in the old wing are great value, as the communal showers have 24-hour hot water. The hotel, tucked behind an excellent Cantonese restaurant, is difficult to locate. Look for an archway watched over by a bored security guard.

Gāochāng Lù 20. ✆ **0995/855-3868.** Fax 0995/855-3908. www.hoitakhotel.com. 149 units (38 with shower only). ¥380 ($47) standard room; from ¥680 ($85) suite; ¥30 ($3.70) dorm bed. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; cafe; exercise room; large game room; concierge; business center; 24-hr. forex; same-day laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, fridge, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

Western breakfasts can be found at the Oasis Hotel for ¥25 ($3), as well as at **John's Information Cafe.** Hotels offer safe but boring Muslim and Chinese fare and evening performances of singing and dancing. For real food, head for the **bazaar** just west of the Bank of China, where you can enjoy pastries stuffed with minced lamb *(samsa, kǎo bāozi),* kabobs, and homemade ice cream scraped from gigantic sweet orange mounds. If you want singing and dancing as well. . . .

Ātàichì Cāntīng UIGHUR The original dinner and dance restaurant for the locals is feeling the competition from **Shìjì Xīng** (below); call ahead to see if it's open. Although its underground location keeps it cool, there is a dungeon-like feel to it, and the print of a whole roast sheep sitting contentedly on a tablecloth in a meadow may be enough to convert you to macrobiotics. Busiest on Friday and Saturday, the banquets (minimum 6 people) are an excellent way to try a variety of foods without wearing out your phrasebook.

Dà Shízǐ (on the southeast side of the main intersection, downstairs through a clothing shop). ✆ **0995/852-9775.** Banquets ¥39–¥89 ($4.90–$11) per person. No credit cards. 7–10pm (performance starts 9pm).

Shìjì Xīng ★★ UIGHUR Set in grape fields north of town, with a meltwater stream flowing by, this is a favorite among locals for carousing late into the night. Bakri, a Uighur entrepreneur, caters to the fantasies of both locals and foreigners, recruiting handsome waiters from Khotan and dancers from all over Xīnjiāng. Grapevines hang above the tables, and discreet fans keep you cool. Waiters shuffle on their knees across elevated platforms and somehow manage to look elegant. *Shìjì xīng yángpái* (lamb chops) is worth the expense, and don't

miss the chance to cook your own kabobs. For the long-suffering China traveler, a real treat—dessert! Sweets *(tiánshí)* are not on the menu, but a platter of shortbread and gingerbread biscuits, many with tart apricot fillings, can be arranged. Try mulberry wine *(sāngshèn jiǔ),* less sickly-sweet than most in the region. The wine will help if you get hauled up on stage.

Xīn Zhàn Dīngzì Lùkǒu ✆ **0995/855-1199.** Meal for 2 ¥40–¥120 ($5–$15). No credit cards. Open at 1:30pm; performance at 9:30pm. Bus: no. 2 or 201 to Xīnzhàn; walk 135m (150 yd.) to the northwest side of the T-junction.

12 Ürümqi (Wūlǔmùqí)

Xīnjiāng Province, 1,470km (911 miles) NE of Kashgar, 692km (429 miles) E of Yīníng

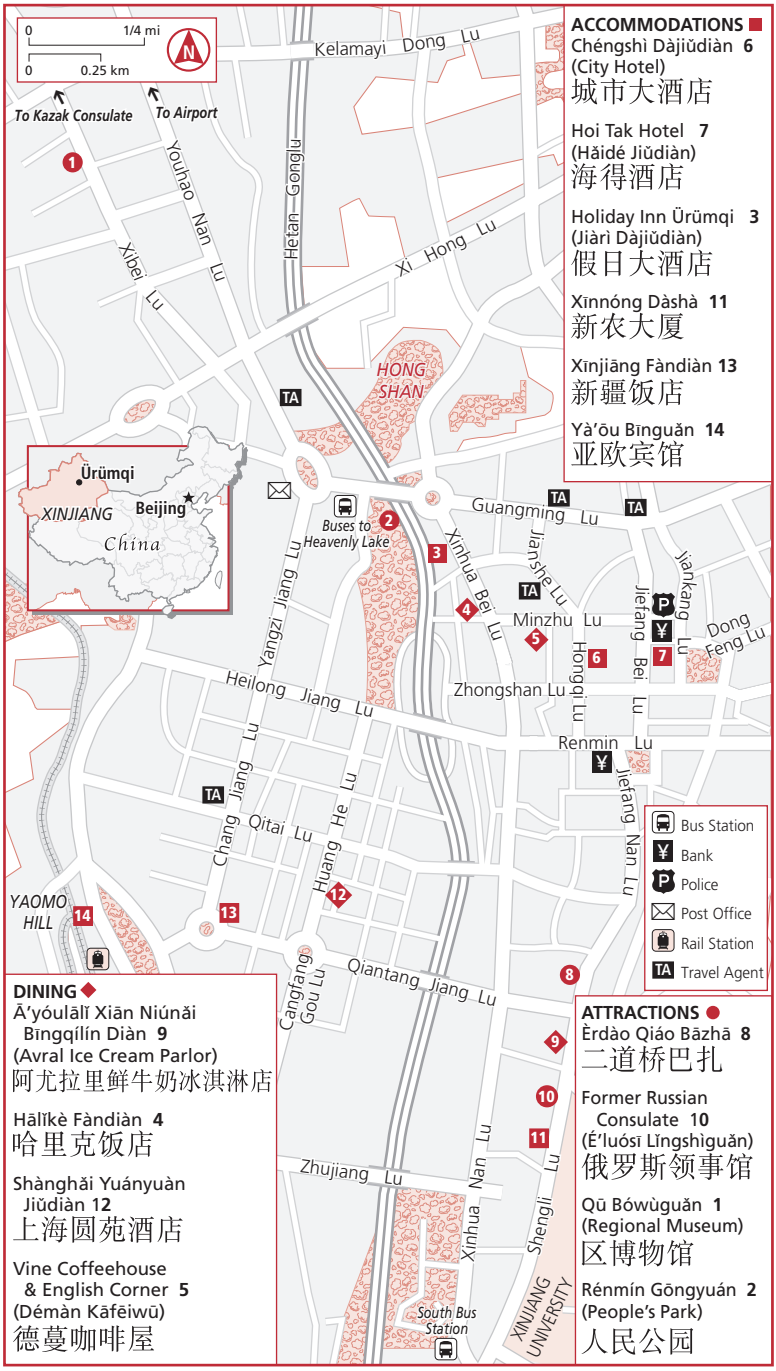
Early visitors gave mixed reviews. Missionary Mildred Cable thought the town "has no beauty, no style, no dignity and no architectural interest. The climate is violent, exaggerated and at no season pleasant . . . ." However, acerbic American author Owen Lattimore loved Ürümqi "in the spring, when along the liquescent streets the Chinese began to appear in gay colors and flowered silks and satins, and the Turkis, abandoning the reds and purples of their long winter gowns, to put on the white cotton robes of warm weather; and in the beginning of summer, when the early leafage of trees was not yet dulled with dust, and to walk on the city walls at sunset was the crowning glory of the day."

Opinions on the town are still divided, but everyone agrees that Ürümqi is best avoided in winter. Ringed by factories and relying on coal heating, the town sees its first snow coated by a film of soot within hours. For those who fly in from the east, it provides a tantalizing first taste of a different culture, and there are fascinating markets to explore.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **Ürümqi airport,** to the north of town, has a brand-new domestic terminal and a ramshackle international terminal. It's clear which is which. Taxis into town cost around ¥30 ($3.70), or you can lug your bags for 10 minutes to the south and catch the slow but cheap bus no. 2 for ¥2 (25¢). Air tickets may be booked over the phone (✆ **0991/800-893-9800**), and substantial discounts are available if you book up to 10 days in advance. The main ticket office for **Xīnjiāng Airlines** (✆ **0991/451-4668**) is opposite the Huádū Dàjiǔdiàn on Yǒuhǎo Nán Lù, just north of the post office. There are also ticket offices at the **airport** (✆ **0991/380-1652**) and the Bogda Hotel (✆ **0991/233-1166**). Several daily flights connect with Běijīng, Xī'ān, Kashgar, Yīníng, and Dūnhuáng. There are also daily connections with Shànghǎi, Guǎngzhōu, Chéngdū, and Khotan. There are flights for Lánzhōu (Sun and Tues–Fri) and Xīníng (Tues, Fri, and Sat). Xīnjiāng Airlines has international connections with Moscow (5 hr.; Wed), Almaty in Kazakhstan (1½ hr.; Mon and Fri), Islamabad in Pakistan (2½ hr.; Wed), Tashkent (2½ hr.; Wed and Sat), Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan (2 hr.; Mon–Tues and Thurs–Sat), Novosibirsk in Russia (2 hr.; Mon and Fri), and Hong Kong (5 hr.; Sat). **Siberian Airlines** (✆ **0991/286-2326**) has an office in the Túnhé Huáměi Dàjiǔdiàn, on the corner of Qítái Lù and Cháng Jiāng Lù, with flights to Novosibirsk on Tuesday and Saturday.

Ürümqi's **railway station** is located in the southwest corner of town. Nearly all trains from the east and west terminate here. Tickets (for same-day travel only) may be purchased at the station in a building behind and to the right of the main entrance. To purchase sleeper tickets, either proceed through your hotel and pay around ¥30 ($3.70) commission, or queue up with the masses at


0 1/4 mi
0 0.25 km
N
To Kazak Consulate
To Airport
Kelamayi Dong Lu
Youhao Nan Lu
Xibei Lu
Hetan Gonglu
Xi Hong Lu
HONG SHAN
TA
Ürümqi
XINJIANG
Beijing
China
Buses to Heavenly Lake
Guangming Lu
Xinhua Bei Lu
Jianshe Lu
Minzhu Lu
Jiefang Bei Lu
Jiankang Lu
Dong Feng Lu
Hongqi Lu
Yangzi Jiang Lu
Heilong Jiang Lu
Zhongshan Lu
Renmin Lu
Jiefang Nan Lu
Chang Jiang Lu
Qitai Lu
Huang He Lu
YAOMO HILL
Qiantang Jiang Lu
Cangfang Gou Lu
Zhujiang Lu
Xinhua Nan Lu
Shengli Lu
South Bus Station
XINJIANG UNIVERSITY
Bus Station
Bank
Police
Post Office
Rail Station
Travel Agent
ACCOMMODATIONS
Chéngshì Dàjiǔdiàn 6
(City Hotel)
城市大酒店
Hoi Tak Hotel 7
(Hǎidé Jiǔdiàn)
海得酒店
Holiday Inn Ürümqi 3
(Jiàrì Dàjiǔdiàn)
假日大酒店
Xīnnóng Dàshà 11
新农大厦
Xīnjiāng Fàndiàn 13
新疆饭店
Yà'ōu Bīnguǎn 14
亚欧宾馆
DINING
Ā'yóulālǐ Xiān Niúnǎi Bīngqílín Diàn 9
(Avral Ice Cream Parlor)
阿尤拉里鲜牛奶冰淇淋店
Hālǐkè Fàndiàn 4
哈里克饭店
Shànghǎi Yuányuàn Jiǔdiàn 12
上海圆苑酒店
Vine Coffeehouse & English Corner 5
(Démàn Kāfēiwū)
德蔓咖啡屋
ATTRACTIONS
Èrdào Qiáo Bāzhā 8
二道桥巴扎
Former Russian Consulate 10
(É'luósī Lǐngshìguǎn)
俄罗斯领事馆
Qū Bówùguǎn 1
(Regional Museum)
区博物馆
Rénmín Gōngyuán 2
(People's Park)
人民公园

the **railway ticket office** (✆ **0991/282-8368**) at Jiànshè Lù 3, in the courtyard of the Láiyuǎn Bīnguǎn, and pay ¥5 (65¢) commission. There are direct express trains to Běijīng (T70; 43 hr.) at 11:44am, and to Shànghǎi (T54; 51 hr.) at 10:07am, passing through Lánzhōu and Xī'ān. There are also speedy connections with Lánzhōu (T296; 25 hr.) at 6:18pm, and with Dūnhuáng (K890; 12 hr.) at 9:10pm. Sluggish trains head for Chóngqìng (1084; 48 hr.) at 6:45 pm, and for Chéngdū (1014; 47 hr.) at 3:38pm.

Tickets for Almaty in Kazakhstan may be purchased in the foyer of the **Yà'ōu Bīnguǎn** (✆ **0991/583-5408;** fax 0991/585-6699). It's open Thursday, Friday, and Sunday from 10am to 1pm and 3:30 to 6pm; Monday and Saturday from 10am to 1pm, 3:30 to 6pm, and 9:30 to 11pm. The Kazakh train runs on Monday (¥394/$49 hard sleeper; ¥625/$78 soft sleeper) and the Chinese one on Saturday (¥409/$51 hard sleeper, ¥589/$74 soft sleeper). Both trains leave at 11pm, arriving on Wednesday and Monday mornings respectively. The Kazakh train is more comfortable.

From the **main bus station** at Hēilóngjiāng Lù 51, buses connect with Yīníng (692km/429 miles; 12 hr.; ¥113/$14); and with the border town of Tāchéng (633km/392 miles; 11 hr.; upper berth ¥85/$11, lower berth ¥95/$12) at 7:30pm. The **Southern Bus Station** (✆ **0991/286-6635**) has regular connections with Turpan (187km/116 miles; 2½ hr.; ¥25/$3) from 8:20am; Kuqa (745km/462 miles; 17 hr.; ¥84/$10 upper berth, ¥94/$11 lower berth) at 2pm and 7:30pm; Kashgar (1,470km/911 miles; 30 hr.; ¥149/$18 upper berth, ¥168/$20 lower berth) at 2pm and 8pm; and Héjìng (376km/233 miles; ¥55/$6.90) at 9:40am. Bus nos. 1, 7, and 101 all connect with this bus station. Buses across the Taklamakan Desert to Khotan (1,777km/1,101 miles; 25 hr.; ¥360/$45 for a luxury sleeper or ¥233/¥265 [$29/$33] for upper/lower berth) leave from the **Hétián Bànshìchù** (✆ **0991/484-6649**) on the west side of Hétán Gōnglù, 180m (200 yd.) south of the Kèlāmǎyī Dōng Lù overpass. Luxury sleeper buses depart at 4pm and 6pm, while ordinary sleeper buses leave at noon, 2pm, and 8pm. The ticket office is on the right, a window beyond a row of pool tables.

GETTING AROUND A legion of Santana and *Xiàlì* **taxis** charge ¥6 (75¢) for 3km (2 miles), then ¥1.30 (15¢) per kilometer; ¥1.50 (20¢) midnight to 5am. For the useful **bus** nos. 1, 2, and 7, pay ¥1 (15¢) into a box as you enter, or ¥.50 to ¥2 (5¢–25¢) to a conductor. Riding a **bike** through the smog and traffic snarls is not recommended.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The main **Bank of China** (open summer weekdays 9:30am–7pm, winter weekdays 10am–6.30pm, and year-round weekends 11am–4pm) is opposite the Hoi Tak Hotel at Dōngfēng Lù 1. Credit cards and traveler's checks are accepted. An ATM (left of the entrance) accepts foreign cards. Another ATM is located at the Jiěfàng Lù branch, just west of the Xīnhuá Bookstore. Credit cards and traveler's checks are accepted at counter 23, and there's the added convenience of black market dealers operating *inside* the bank. The branch is open weekdays 9:30am to 1:30pm and 4 to 7pm.

Consulates **Transit visas** are available from the **Kazak Consulate** (✆ **0991/383-2324**) at Kūnmíng Lù 31 for ¥174 ($22). They are issued in 5 to 7 days. Or you can pay ¥348 ($43) to have them issued in 1 to 3 days. The consulate is open Monday through Thursday from 9:30am to 1pm in the summer, Monday

through Thursday from 10am to 1pm in the winter. Two photos are required, visas are collected after 1:30pm, and a handling fee of ¥85 ($11) may be charged. The consulate is not easily located, so take a taxi. Or catch bus no. 2 as far as Xiǎo Xīgōu, walk east along Sūzhōu Dōng Lù, take the first right, and continue about 315m (350 yd.). The consulate is on the left (east) side.

Internet Access East of the Bogda Hotel is **169 Internet Cafe** (✆ **0991/233-7169**), open from 10am to 2am. A more central Internet cafe is the **Xīnguāng Wǎngbā** (✆ **0991/283-1848**), open from 10am to midnight, on the second floor of the Liántōng Dàlóu on Jiěfàng Běi Lù. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The main post office on Yángzǐ Jiāng Lù is open from 9:30am to 8pm. Overseas mail is handled at counter 3.

Visa Extensions A friendly **PSB** at Jiànkāng Lù 27 (✆ **0991/2810-4152,** ext. 3646) offers 1-month visa extensions up to 20 days in advance. The entrance is to the right of the main gate, marked ALIENS RECEPTION ROOM ÜRÜMQI.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

Qū Bówùguǎn (Regional Museum) This massive building is undergoing a full renovation, but an abbreviated exhibition, with most of the dull exhibits removed, is open around the back. Don't miss the 12 remarkably well-preserved **mummies** ★★, many with Indo-European features: high cheekbones, long noses, brightly colored woolen kilts. The mummies, some of which have been dated to 2000 B.C., were unearthed from tombs scattered around the Taklamakan in **Lóulán, Astana, Hāmì,** and **Charchan (Qiěmò)**—see map on p. 289. They do little to further Hàn claims over Xīnjiāng. Add the cost of preservation and you might believe, as some suggest, that additional finds are being deliberately left in the ground. Hàn Chinese chauvinists point out that Uighurs, a Turkic people who migrated from western Mongolia, have nothing in common with the indigenous Indo-European Tocharians, who spoke a language that resembles a Celtic tongue. But there are enough blue- or green-eyed folk on the streets of Turpan and Kuqa (former Tocharian strongholds) to suggest that interbreeding was common. As my Uighur companion remarked, "So we killed all of them?"

Hàn Chinese guides make much of the relatively young mummy of **General Zhāng** (d. A.D. 633), commander of the armies in Gāochāng, whose wife rests in the Turpan Museum. Other interesting items on exhibit are lead and bronze eyeshades used in sandstorms, and a hunting boomerang unearthed in Hāmì.

Xī Běi Lù 132. Admission ¥25 ($3). 9:30am–5:30pm. Bus: no. 7 to Bówùguǎn; the museum is opposite.

SHOPPING

You'll find a wide range of Uighur handicrafts on sale at **Èr Dào Qiáo Bazaar,** in the heart of what locals jokingly refer to as the "autonomous region." Nearby is **Báihétǐyà'ěr Huángjīn Shǒushìdiàn** at Jiěfàng Nán Lù 197, which sells affordable gold, silver, and platinum jewelry. The necklaces are particularly elegant. Watch the Uighur women bargain, and see if you can get a similar price.

Dōngfēng Chāoshì, at Xīnmín Lù 5, is an excellent place to stock up on snacks before long train and bus rides. Take bus nos. 1 or 101 to Běi Mén, and continue north for about 135m (150 yd.).

Those hunting for **books** on Buddhist art will find an excellent selection of pictorial and theoretical works at **Tiān Zhī Yá Shūshè,** in a small lane just east of Xīnhuá Bookstore, at Jiěfàng Nán Lù 348.

WHERE TO STAY

VERY EXPENSIVE

Hăidé Jiŭdiàn (Hoi Tak Hotel) ★ Unquestionably the best-appointed hotel in Ürümqi, the Hoi Tak benefits from aggressive Hong Kong management, rigorous staff training, and plenty of capital from its parent company for renovations. The 36-story building is the largest in town, and on the rare days when the pollution haze clears, a magnificent view of the Tiān Shān range can be enjoyed. The Uighur concierge, Terry, may be the most effective man in Xīnjiāng—there's nothing he can't arrange! Unfortunately, other service can be uneven, and they have a way to go before they reach the standards set by the Holiday Inn.

Dōngfēng Lù 1. ✆ **0991/232-2828.** Fax 0991/232-1818. www.hoitak.com. 318 units. ¥1,400–¥1,600 ($175–$200) standard room; from ¥2,080 ($260) suite. 50% discounts are standard. 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; bar; cafe; nightclub; large indoor pool; health club; 8-lane bowling alley; billiards and table tennis rooms; concierge; tour desk; courtesy car; business center; 24-hr. forex; salon; 24-hr. room service; in-room massage; same-day dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, broadband Internet access, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Holiday Inn Ürümqi (Jiàrì Dàjiŭdiàn) ★★ Despite increased competition from the new hotels popping up all over Ürümqi, the aging Holiday Inn has something no amount of shiny marble can compete with—a brilliantly trained staff. Strapped for funds in recent years, they are set to open a new 57-story wing in 2003, which will add a swimming pool and more restaurants. Rooms in the old wing, which have an undeniably 1980s feel to them, are being fully refurbished as well.

Xīnhuá Běi Lù 168. ✆ **0991/281-8788.** Fax 0991/281-7422. www.holiday-inn.com/hotels/urcch. 360 units. ¥1,000–¥1,100 ($125–$137) standard room; ¥1,100–¥1,200 ($137–$150) twin; from ¥1,700 ($212) suite. 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 7 (South Bus Station) or 902 (railway station) to Dàxīqiáo. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; nightclub; health club; billiards room; concierge; tour desk (CITS); courtesy car; business center; 24-hr. forex; salon; 24-hr. room service; in-room massage; same-day dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, dataport (¥4.20/55¢ per hr.), minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe

EXPENSIVE

Chéngshì Dàjiŭdiàn (City Hotel) *Value* Right in the center of town, the facilities at this three-star hotel are better than you would anticipate for the outlay. The beds are firm, the dark wood paneled floors are a rare treat, and the bathrooms are spotless, if a little cramped. Service has improved to meet the expectations of the primarily Japanese clientele. While their promise to "make you more enjoyable" may not come true, this is the best mid-range choice.

Hóngqí Lù 119. ✆ **0991/230-9911.** Fax 0991/230-5321. xjcityhotel@163.com. 226 units. ¥280–¥480 ($35–$60) standard room; from ¥600 ($75) suite. Discounts of 40% are standard. 15% service charge. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; nightclub; teahouse; billiards room; concierge; tour desk; business center; 24-hr. forex; same-day dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, fridge.

MODERATE

Xīnnóng Dàshà (Sunny Hotel) A favorite with Russian traders, this two-star hotel is handy to the Uighur part of town and the South Bus Station. True to its name, rooms are bright, and recent renovations have delivered well-sprung beds and squeaky-clean bathrooms. Try to get a room on an upper floor, as there is plenty of bustle around the hotel.

Shènglì Lù 175. ✆ **0991/285-0033,** ext. 8007. Fax 0991/287-2378. 75 units. ¥260 ($32) twin; ¥460 ($57) suite. 30% discounts possible for short stays; up to 60% possible for longer stays. No credit cards. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; concierge; tour desk; business center; next-day dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge.

WHERE TO DINE

Āyóulālǐ Xiān Niúnǎi Bīngqílíng Diàn (Avral Ice Cream Parlor) ★★ *Moments* *Kids* UIGHUR This is an ice cream parlor as they once were, before God invented the chain store. Rather than hundreds of different flavors with cookies and nonsense, there's only one, at ¥3 (40¢) per bowl. If you don't like pistachio, you're out of luck. If you do, prepare for ecstasy. Grandfathers proudly treat their granddaughters, young lovers slowly and nervously share a bowl, and everyone sits elbow-to-elbow—no waiting around for a table here.

Shènglì Lù 193. Bus: no. 101 to Èr Dào Qiáo; walk south under the overpass, keeping to the west side.

Hālǐkè Fàndiàn *Finds* UIGHUR Hidden in a small alley behind the Holiday Inn, you'll find simple Uighur fare in simple surroundings. An order of mixed noodles *(bàn miàn)* is big enough to feed two, while kabobs are more meat than fat, a novelty in Ürümqi.

✆ **0991/280-2687.** Meal for 2 less than ¥30 ($3.70). 8am–11:30pm.

Shànghǎi Yuányuàn Jiǔdiàn ★ *Value* SHÀNGHǍI After the wilds of Xīnjiāng, the subtle flavors and genuinely friendly service of this unlikely restaurant may be just what you need. There is a well-translated menu, which is a relief, as Shànghǎi cuisine has a weakness for euphemistic and flowery names. Those with few cholesterol concerns should try the *Yuányuàn hóngshāo ròu* (Yuányuàn pork). Vegetarian choices are extensive. The one jarring note is the TV blaring in the corner.

Huáng Hé Lù 83. ✆ **0991/583-0777.** Reservations recommended. Meal for 2 ¥60–¥140 ($7.50–$17). No credit cards. 12:30pm–12:30am.

Vine Coffeehouse & English Corner (Démàn Kāfēiwū) WESTERN A West Indian cafe is not something you expect to find in downtown Ürümqi, but this oasis in a sea of blandness is a delight. The halal menu was established by the head chef of the Plaza Hotel, Curaçao. Try his signature dish, the Jacques Steak, pan-fried with green peppers, tomatoes, and onions, and served with sides of potatoes, coleslaw, and (in a concession to local tastes) rice. Other hits are the soup de jour, chicken a la king, and the cookies under the front counter. "English Corner" is currently held on Thursday and Sunday nights; it's a nice way to meet locals, and possibly find a guide who isn't out to bilk you.

Mínzhǔ Lù 65. ✆ **0991/230-4831.** Main courses ¥20–¥35 ($2.50–$4.40). No credit cards. 1:30–11.30pm.

ÜRÜMQI AFTER DARK

Most Hàn Chinese believe that Uighurs, like all minorities, love to sing and dance *(néng gē shàn wǔ)*. As one Chinese guidebook notes, "although very few Uighurs speak Chinese well, they will often *spontaneously* break into song and dance to show their friendship." If you're already not exhausted by all the singing and dancing, the best-known song-and-dance troupe is the **Xīnjiāng Gēwǔ Tuán** (✆ **0991/286-6572**), which performs at different venues around town. They are housed in the former **Russian Consulate,** at Shènglì Lù 193, whose elegant, decaying buildings and grounds are a must-see for aficionados of the Great Game, a drawn-out battle of espionage fought out in Central Asia between Russian (and later Soviet) diplomats and their counterparts in British India.

AROUND ÜRÜMQI

Mildred Cable was struck by the contrast between the drab town and the spectacular alpine scenery around it. "Towering above Urumchi is the matchless

snowy peak of the Bogdo-Ola, Mount of God. Its lower slopes are clothed with pine forests and carpeted with wild flowers and mountain strawberries, and in its recesses it hides rushing torrents, quiet lakes and dashing waterfalls. . . . It is a striking contrast. On the one hand the slopes of the Mount of God, a perfect paradise of purity and beauty, and on the other the man-made slum at its foot, a slough of iniquity and misery."

While Ürümqi has improved, an explosion in domestic tourism means that **Tiān Chí** (**Heavenly Lake;** admission ¥60/$7.50) is on the way to becoming the world's largest public convenience. A "paving-the-lake" operation is underway, but it's still a more pleasant destination than **Hanas Lake** in the north of Xīnjiāng. If you do go, stay the night, as the lake is more tranquil after buses return to Ürümqi around 5pm. Avoid Rashid's Yurt, which is listed in every guidebook—fame is not good for everyone. Buses depart for the lake from the entrance to Ürümqi's **Rénmín Gōngyuán** at 9am (120km/74 miles; 1½ hr.; ¥40/$5 one-way, ¥60/$7.50 round-trip). A similar day trip is to **Báiyáng Gōu (White Poplar Gully),** where you can ride horses, stay in yurts, and enjoy lush countryside. Buses depart at 9:40am (76km/47 miles; 1½ hr.; ¥40/$5) and return mid-afternoon.

13 Kuqa (Kùchē)

Xīnjiāng Province, 748km (464 miles) SW of Ürümqi, 723km (448 miles) E of Kashgar, 591km (366 miles) SE of Yīníng

A maverick Silk Route kingdom, Kuqa was the center of the ancient kingdom of **Qiūcí.** The inhabitants were Indo-European Tocharians, who migrated down from Anatolia (Turkey) and the Caucasus. Drawing on inspiration from Gandhara and Persia, Kuqan musicians and artists were very much the fashion in the cosmopolitan capital of Cháng'ān. Monks adhered to Hinayana Buddhism, in contrast to other Tarim basin towns and China proper, which adhered to the more complex Mahayana tradition.

Kuqa's most famous son was **Kumarajiva** (A.D. 343–413), uniquely qualified to be a translator, with a Brahmin father and a Kuqan mother. His father wanted him to be ordained as a Buddhist monk, but his mother sent him to Kashmir and Kashgar to be instructed in Indian literature, astronomy, and Buddhism. He arrived in Cháng'ān in 401 as a prisoner of Chinese raiders, and soon caught the eye of the fervently Buddhist Tibetan ruling house. Kumarajiva oversaw the largest "translation team" in history. Although the Kuqan scholar was skeptical that the scriptures could ever be rendered faithfully from the Sanskrit, the team of around 1,000 scholars translated the *Diamond Sutra,* which became one of the most influential texts in Chinese Buddhism.

Present-day Kuqa is a friendly, ramshackle Uighur town. The fertile soil and relatively temperate climate yield delicious apricots, grapes, peaches, and plums. *Note:* Please turn to Appendix A for Chinese translations of key locations.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE At press time, there were no **flights** to Kuqa, but there are plans to open air routes to Kashgar and Ürümqi. Check with **CAAC** on Wénhuà Lù (✆ **0997/712-9390**) or with the **airport** (✆ **0997/712-2051**).

The **railway station** is on the southwest side of town. Taxis (¥10/$1.25) and bus no. 6 (¥1.50/20¢) take you into town. Heading west, the K887 train for Kashgar (11 hr.) leaves at 5:18am; the 8873 at 11:03am. Heading east, the K888 for Ürümqi (14 hr.) leaves at 2:47am; the 5808 at 11:22pm and the 8874 at

7:12pm leave at more agreeable hours. The railway ticket office, open from 9am to noon, 1 to 8pm, and 9pm to midnight, sells tickets for the day of travel; your best chance of securing a sleeper ticket is CITS, which charges ¥50 ($6) commission.

The **bus station** at Tiān Shān Lù 125 (✆ **0997/712-2379**) refuses to divulge information, and is gratuitously discourteous. There are no direct buses to Kashgar, and no guarantee of a berth on sleeper buses from Korla. However, there are buses to Aksu (275km/171 miles; 7 hr.; ¥23/$2.90), where it is possible to board a sleeper bus to Kashgar. Heading west, regular buses connect with Lúntái (111km/69 miles; 2 hr.; ¥10/$1.25); with Korla (285km/173 miles; 8 hr.; ¥25/$3); and with Ürümqi (748km/464 miles; 17 hr.; ¥70–¥80/$8.70–$10). There are two buses to Yīníng (591km/366 miles; 20–25 hr.; ¥75/$9.40), through spectacular mountain scenery around Bayan Bulak. Buses to Xīnyuán also pass through Bayan Bulak (245km/152 miles; 10 hr.; ¥40/$5).

GETTING AROUND **Taxis** have no meters; most trips within town cost ¥5 (65¢). There are **three-wheelers** and **pedicabs,** as well as six **bus** routes. Bus fare is ¥1 (15¢). Donkey-drawn **carts** for ¥1 (15¢) connect the bus station with the old part of town. Staff at the Jiāotōng Bīnguǎn will lend their own **bikes** to guests.

TOURS A surprisingly helpful **CITS** is located inside the Qiūcí Bīnguǎn, at Tiān Shān Lù 93 (✆ **0997/713-6016;** fax 0997/712-2524; open 9:30am–1:30pm and 4–8pm).

FAST FACTS

Banks The **Bank of China** (open weekdays 9:30am–8pm summer, and 10am–7:30pm winter) Tiān Shān Lù 25 can draw money on credit cards, but it doesn't change traveler's checks.

Internet Access **Liánxiǎng Wǎngbā** at Wǔyī Lù 6–78 charges ¥2 (25¢) per hour for an excellent connection. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The post office is at Wénhuà Lù 8, open from 9:30am to 8:30pm.

EXPLORING KUQA

Friday is the most interesting day to be in town, as humanity pours in from the surrounding countryside for the **Kuqa Bazaar** ★★, filling the old town with unforgettable sights and smells. Eric Teichman, making the first motorized journey across Xīnjiāng, found himself greatly inconvenienced: "The streets were so packed with Turki peasants that it was difficult to force a passage with the trucks. . . . We lost our way in the maze of narrow streets round the bazaar of Kuchar and it was after 4 p.m. by the time we cleared the town."

There has been no attempt to "modernize" this bazaar, which spills out in front of the mosque, just across the **Kuqa River.** Get there early when the light is ideal for photography. On any day of the week, the **old town** is worth exploring. Make for the **Kuqa Grand Mosque (Kùchē Dà Sì),** the only mosque in Xīnjiāng that retains a religious court (ca. 17th c.), whose influence is considerably less than when it was founded by Hoja Yisak. Bus no. 1 connects the old town with the bus station, or you can hail a donkey-drawn cart.

Kizil Thousand Buddha Caves (Kèzī'ěr Qiān Fó Dòng) Those without a special passion for cave temples should save themselves for Dūnhuáng, but for those seeking a complete picture of the transmission of Buddhist art and ideas, this site is a must. Seventy-eight kilometers (48 miles) from Kuqa, the site can

be reached by arranging a tour, hiring a taxi (¥80/$10), or catching a bus in the direction of **Bái Chéng** and getting off at the turnoff, but this leaves a hot 11km (6¾-mile) walk to the caves. It is possible to stay at a rather basic hotel along the way; rooms with twin beds and shower are ¥90 ($11), and a quiet night is assured.

Tickets are purchased at the gate, and there are numerous options for seeing this extensive site of 236 caves. Entrance to both the **Eastern Section (Dōng Qū)** and the **Western Section (Xī Qū)** is ¥35 ($4.40).The more spectacular caves open to the public are found in the latter. The **Rear Caves (Hòu Shān Shíkū)** can be viewed for ¥100 ($12), but there is little in the way of staircases. The athletic are rewarded by glimpses of **Temptation Caves;** they feature the Buddha seated on a carpet, surrounded by buxom dancing girls arranged for by his father, who was not keen for young Siddhartha to leave home. Monks were meant to be similarly immune to temptation. Prices for "special caves" range from ¥60 ($7.50) for **Cave 14** (which features a classic *Jataka*) to ¥300 ($37) to see the earliest cave (18, possibly dating from the 3rd century, which is decorated with 42 different *Jataka* stories). A peek at the "new" caves, rediscovered in the 1970s, costs ¥500 ($62). If you can convince staff that you are an "expert," ¥1,500 ($187) buys access to *all* the caves, which would require several days to explore. Negotiation is possible, particularly for the renowned **Cave of the Musicians** (Cave 38, ¥100/$12), which features lutes *(pípa),* harps *(kamanche),* drums, harmonicas *(páixiāo),* guitars, and trumpets *(suǒnà).* The blue tones in this cave, produced by lapis lazuli from Afghanistan (which was worth twice its weight in gold during the Middle Ages), are stunning. Grünwedel decided to leave this cave intact, much to the disgust of Le Coq.

The site pre-dates Dūnhuáng, and painting continued until the Míng dynasty, when Islam fully displaced Buddhism. The site lies in a spectacular and remote valley beside the Muzart River, where the lack of Hàn influence is striking. Persian, Gandharan, Indian, and Grecian motifs dominate. Black suns, Garuda (a bird god borrowed from Indian mythology), and Apollo riding in a chariot are common decorations on the axis of the roofs. Most caves have a central pillar for perambulation, with a sleeping Buddha at the rear, presided over by mourning disciples. Buddhas and bodhisattvas are lean and muscular, with Indian features.

Unfortunately, little statuary remains, and many of the wall paintings have been removed to Europe and Japan. The eyes and mouths of most remaining images have been defaced by Muslim iconoclasts. There are also some inappropriate recent additions, particularly a ridiculous man-made lake less than 180m (200 yd.) from the caves, which depend on aridity for their preservation. The **Exhibit of Kizil Artifacts,** just inside the entrance, is unremarkable, except for an elaborate (and large) penis totem.

✆ **0997/893-2235.** Open daylight hours.

Sūbāshí Gǔchéng Originally called Jarakol (Headwater) Temple when it was established in the 4th century, this ruined town 24km (15 miles) northeast of Kuqa is evidence of Buddhist parishioners' penchant for spectacular sites. Kumarijiva and Xuánzàng both preached here, the latter recording, "The images of the Buddha in these monasteries were beautiful almost beyond human skill: and the Brethren were punctilious in discipline and devoted enthusiasts." A large fire devastated the town in the 9th century, and it was gradually abandoned from the 11th century as the populace converted to Islam. There were still Buddhist

relics (brought by Prince Asoka) housed in the **main pagoda** when the enigmatic Count Otani visited during the early 19th century.

Admission ¥15 ($1.90). Open daylight hours. Taxi: ¥40 ($5).

SHOPPING

Kuqa is famous for its **musical instruments,** such as lutes, drums, harmonicas, and guitars. One establishment where they are still made by hand is run by the affable Yasun Turap, who can usually be found working in his tiny shop on the corner of Jiěfàng Lù and Tiān Shān Lù at the Dìfāng Shuìwùjú. In the evenings, Yasun can be found relaxing on a rug and pillow in front of the shop. He is open for business from 10am till late evening.

WHERE TO STAY

Jiāotōng Bīnguǎn Located right next to the bus station, the basic rooms were renovated in 2001, and staff are embarrassed about the hotel's previous incarnation as a decrepit flophouse. If you leave early, you may miss a hot shower. Rooms at the back are quieter.

Tiān Shān Lù 87, 842000. ✆ **0997/712-2682.** Fax 0997/712-5115. 56 units, 47 with bathroom (cubicle-less shower only). From ¥80 ($10) standard room; from ¥160 ($20) suite; from ¥15 ($1.90) dorm bed. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Same-day laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Kùchē Bīnguǎn Closed for renovations the last time we visited, this three-star hotel just north of the police station will be ready for business when you hit town.

Jiěfàng Lù 76. ✆ **0997/712-2901.** 68 units. Bus: no. 2 from the bus station.

Kùchē Fàndiàn Handy for the railway station and little else, this relatively new two-star hotel is constructing a new building that will aim for the lofty heights of three stars, promising a business center, an exercise room, and a swimming pool. Ask for a room on the west side, which overlooks a lush grape and fruit orchard.

Tiān Shān Lù 8. ✆ **0997/712-0285.** Fax 0997/713-1156. 80 units. ¥280 ($35) standard room; ¥300 ($37) suite. A 40% discount is standard. No credit cards. Bus: no. 6 from the railway or bus station. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; same-day laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Qiūcí Bīnguǎn This state-run two-star hotel on the west side of town is geared towards visiting cadres and tour groups. Rooms are large if dark and smoky. The souvenir shop, which opens when a critical mass of naïve foreigners is detected, is best avoided. The receptionist cheerily informs Chinese visitors that the marked prices are just for "foreign guests," and immediately offers a 50% discount. Try for the same.

Tiān Shān Lù 93. ✆ **0997/712-2005.** Fax 0997/712-2524. 56 units. ¥260 ($32) standard room; ¥360($45) suite. No credit cards. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; tour desk (CITS); same-day laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

WHERE TO DINE

Wúmǎi'ěrhóng Měishí Chéng (Umerjan Resturani) ★★ UIGHUR Elsewhere, you can polish off 20 kabobs and still not be sated, but three kabobs are sufficient at Kuqa's most famous eatery. Despite catering to the Hàn market—you are greeted by a grinning girl adorned with a sash, and tourist posters adorn the walls—these are the best kabobs in Xīnjiāng, cooked over wood rather than coal. *Lǎohǔ cài,* a spicy salad of cucumber, carrot, and red peppers; and the fruit salad *(shuǐguǒ shālà),* are also delicious.

Tuánjié Lù. ✆ **0997/712-4634.** Meal for 2 ¥20–¥100 ($2.50–$12). No credit cards. 9am–1:30am.

Wūqià Guǒyuán Cāntīng (Uqa Bhag Resturani) UIGHUR At this restaurant, a favorite among Kuqans for special occasions, you risk becoming the guest of honor, especially if you're game to sing, dance (be prepared to make a fool of yourself attempting Uighur-style dancing), and imbibe. The *dàpán jī* is an excellent value, though you'll need a party of four to polish off this tasty meal of whole chicken, peppers, potato, and tomatoes covered in thick noodles. Other dishes include spicy beef strips *(gānzhá niú ròu tiáo)* and a cold platter of sweet cucumber *(tángbàn huángguā)*. The restaurant is in a garden to the right of another Uighur eatery.

Tuánjié Lù 1-13. ✆ **0997/712-4003.** Meal for 2 ¥60–¥150 ($7.50–$19). No credit cards. 1:30–11:30pm. Donkey cart south from the intersection of Tiān Shān Lù and Yǒuyì Lù.

14 Kashgar (Kāshí)

Xīnjiāng Province, 1,470km (911 miles) SW of Ürümqi, 520km (322 miles) NW of Khotan

The northern and southern Silk Routes joined at ancient **Kashgar** and bifurcated again, leading south through the **Pamirs** to Gilgit, and west through the **Ferghana Valley** to Samarkand. At the height of the Hàn and Táng dynasties, Kashgar was in Chinese hands. The Chinese were routed by the Arabs in 751 in the Battle of Talas River (northeast of Tashkent). This allowed Islam to spread east into the Tarim Basin, displacing Buddhism and Manichaeism. Kashgar subsequently became a center of Islamic scholarship and, but for a brief return during the Mongol Yuán dynasty, it lay outside the sphere of Chinese influence. During the Qīng dynasty the Chinese reasserted control, and Kashgar became a key site for players of the **Great Game**—it boasted both a Russian and a British consulate.

Trade is the lifeblood of Kashgar, and with the opening of border crossings at **Khunjerab, Torugart,** and the **Irkeshtam route to Osh,** it is now once again an international trading center. Kashgar's strategic position has unfortunately made it a priority in efforts to "Sinicize" border areas, and with the opening of the railway line in 2000, Hàn settlers are arriving by the trainload, a glimpse of what's in store for Lhasa.

The **old town** maintains its charm. The markets are a riot of color and exotic scents, donkeys pull rickety carts laden with watermelons and cotton bales in and out of town, gray-bearded mullahs call the faithful to prayer on every street corner, and serene old men enjoy long chats over tea.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The **airport** is 12km (7½ miles) north of downtown. Take a taxi from the airport for ¥10 ($1.25), or you can take bus no. 2, which terminates to the west of the Peoples' Square. The **CAAC** airline ticket office at Jiěfàng Nán Lù 95 (✆ **0998/282-2113**) does not deliver tickets. Do your best not to resemble a separatist; bring your passport and buy your ticket on the spot. Two daily flights connect with Ürümqi, and onward **flights** can also be booked. Discounts can be obtained by booking up to 15 days in advance.

The **railway station** is southeast of town. Take a 15-minute taxi ride for ¥10 ($1.25), or take bus no. 28 to immediately east of the Peoples' Square. The station only sells tickets from the same day, and is open from 8:30am to 6pm, so if you want sleeper tickets, proceed through a travel agency (**Bīng Shān Lǚxíngshè,** in the foyer of the Peoples' Hotel, charges the lowest commission for train tickets; call ✆ **0998/221-9966**), or line up at the Kāshí Huǒchē Zhàn Shìnèi Shòupiào Chù (ticket office) at Jiěfàng Běi Lù 226. Despite a sign promising

ACCOMMODATIONS
Chini Bagh Hotel (Qīníwǎkè Bīnguǎn) 6
其尼瓦克宾馆

Jīnsīlù Dàjiǔdiàn 16
金丝路大酒店

Rénmín Fàndiàn (People's Hotel) 12
人民饭店

Seman Hotel (Sèmǎn Bīnguǎn) 2
色满宾馆

Xīnyífā Wàishāng Huódòng Zhōngxīn 5
新怡发外商活动中心

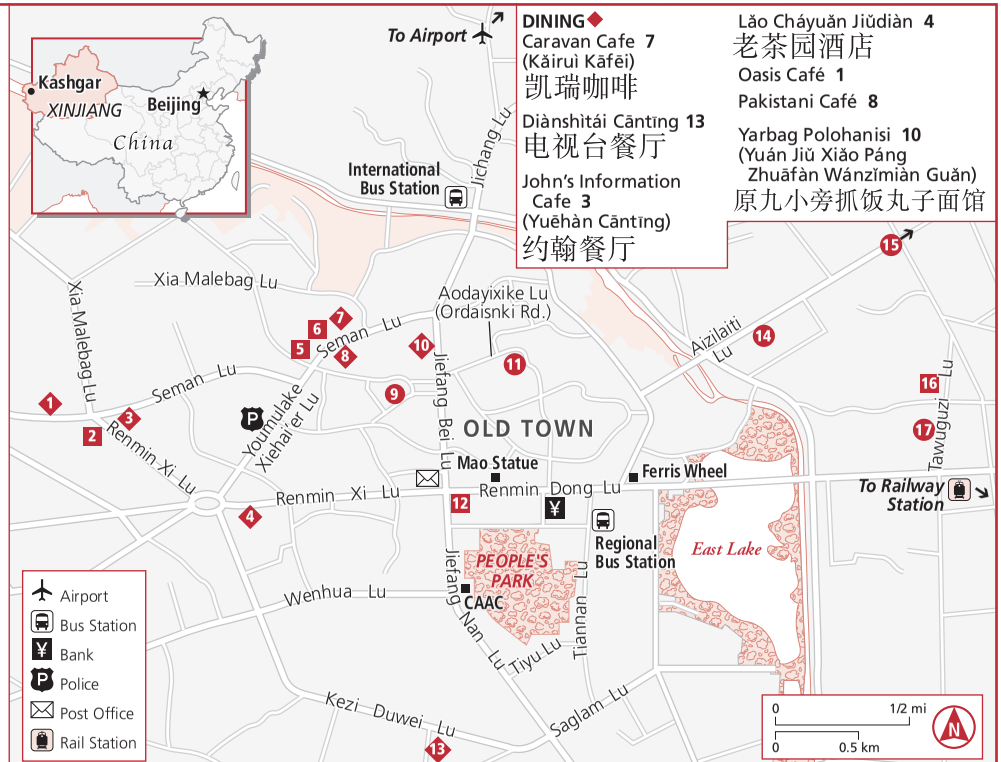
ATTRACTIONS
Abakh Hoja Mosque (Xiāngfēi Mù) 15
香妃墓

Dìqū Bówùguǎn (Kashgar Museum) 17
地区博物馆

Idkah Mosque (Àitígǎ'ěr Qíngzhēn Sì) 9
艾提噶尔清真寺

Ordaisnki Mosque
(Àodàyìxīkè Qíngzhēn Sì) 11
奥大伊西克清真寺

Sunday Bazaar
(Xīngqītiān Dàshìchǎng) 14
星期天大市场



DINING
Caravan Cafe 7
(Kǎiruì Kāfēi)
凯瑞咖啡

Diànshìtái Cāntīng 13
电视台餐厅

John's Information Cafe 3
(Yuēhàn Cāntīng)
约翰餐厅

Lǎo Cháyuǎn Jiǔdiàn 4
老茶园酒店

Oasis Café 1

Pakistani Café 8

Yarbag Polohanisi 10
(Yuán Jiǔ Xiǎo Páng Zhuāfàn Wánzǐmiàn Guǎn)
原九小旁抓饭丸子面馆

"warm service," you may witness brawls between Uighur queue jumpers and Hàn security guards. Tickets can be purchased 5 days in advance. The ticket office is open from 10am to 7pm in summer, from 10:30am to 7:30pm in winter. The K888 for Ürümqi (21 hr.) leaves at 5:50pm, and the 8874 (30 hr.) departs at 9:16am.

Most **buses** connect to the grandly named **International Bus Station (Guójì Qìchē Zhàn)** in the north of town at Jīchǎng Lù 29 (✆ **0998/282-2912,** ext. 8003). Sleeper buses link with Ürümqi daily between 10am and 9pm; you can opt for fast, comfortable buses (24 hr.; ¥213/$27 lower berth, ¥186/$23 upper berth) or for cheaper, slow buses (30 hr.; ¥167/$21 lower berth, ¥144/$18 upper berth). All buses pass through Aksu (468km/290 miles), Kuqa (723km/448 miles), and Korla (1,003km/622 miles). There are five departures daily for the long and scenic trip over the mountains to Yīníng (1,644km/1,019 miles; 2 days; ¥194/$24 lower berth, ¥173/$22 upper berth, ¥144/$18 seat). Buses to Sost in Pakistan (2 days; ¥270/$34) stop overnight in Tashkurgan, but they don't leave every day. Those only traveling to Tashkurgan are still forced to take the "international" (295km/183 miles; ¥62/$5.20 plus ¥1/15¢ insurance), unless it's not running. Do a dry run to check. The ¥26 ($3.20) premium buys you nothing—except the feeling that you have been cheated—because locals on the same bus pay the real price.

Twice a week there is a direct bus to Bishkek for the scenic ride over the Torugart Pass (¥420/$50), but at press time, foreigners were not allowed on it. Until the pass is upgraded to a "first level" border crossing, travelers will need to charter a vehicle through a travel agency in Kashgar. The Caravan Cafe and John's Information Cafe provide the most reliable services.

It is now possible to take a bus to Osh in southern Kyrgyzstan via Irkeshtam for ¥420 ($50). No permit is required, only a valid Kyrgyz visa. At present, the bus departs at 9am on Monday, but this is likely to change, as the service only commenced in 2002. In winter, you may need to proceed through travel agencies.

The **Dìqū Kèyùn Zǒng Zhàn (Regional Bus Station)** on Tiānnán Lù has buses to Khotan every 2 hours from 9:30am to 9:30pm (520km/322 miles; ¥50/$6.20 seat, ¥74/$9.30 upper berth, ¥85/$10 lower berth), and daily local buses to Tashkurgan at 9:30am (294km/182 miles; ¥37/$4.60), which you will

The Back Door to Lhasa

From **Yèchéng,** a short minibus ride for ¥2 (25¢) takes you to **Aba,** the main point for hitching a ride to **Ali (Shíquán Hé),** the main town in western Tibet. Truck drivers ask in the vicinity of ¥1,000 ($125) and may be bargained down to ¥600 ($75) for the 1,100km (680-mile) trip that takes at least 4 days. It is likely to take several days to arrange a lift. Aside from travelers' tales of Frenchmen freezing to death in the backs of trucks, be aware that you are putting your driver at risk. If you make it to Ali without incident, expect to be fined by the PSB and issued with an Aliens Travel Permit (¥50/$6) to continue on to Lhasa. It is now possible to undertake the journey legally, but for a price. The **Caravan Cafe** (✆/fax **0998/284-2196;** www.caravancafe.com) asks ¥18,000 ($2,250), which includes permits, a 4WD, and a driver. Meals and accommodations are not included. The **Kashgar Mountaineering Association** (✆ **0998/252-3660;** fax 0998/252-2957; www.ksalpine.com) may also be persuaded to arrange this trip.

not be allowed to board if there is a bus leaving from the International Bus Station. There are regular buses to Yèchéng (Karghalik), for those considering the illegal journey to Tibet (see below).

The confusion between Xīnjiāng time and Běijīng time reaches its apogee at Kashgar's bus terminals. The International Bus Station posts its times according to Xīnjiāng time (2 hr. behind Běijīng time), but issues tickets with the Běijīng time printed on them. The Regional Bus Station does the opposite. Confused? You will be.

TOURS & GUIDES Those interested in adventure travel such as the popular trek out to **Mustagh Ata;** an assault on the world's second highest mountain, **K2;** or following in the footsteps of Swedish explorer Sven Hedin into the mountains south of Khotan, should connect with either the **Caravan Cafe** (see "Visitor Information," below) or the **Kashgar Mountaineering Association** at Tìyù Lù 45 (✆ **0998/252-3660;** fax 0998/252-2957; www.ksalpine.com). They are friendly and experienced mountain guides, and if you want a trekking permit, you must go through them.

VISITOR INFORMATION Reliable information may be obtained from the **Caravan Cafe** (✆/fax **0998/284-2196;** www.caravancafe.com) or **John's Information Cafe** (✆/fax **0998/255-1186;** johncafe@hotmail.com).

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs Both traveler's checks and credit cards are accepted at counter 1 of the **Bank of China** (weekdays 9:30am–1pm and 4–7pm) on the west side of the Peoples' Square. There is no ATM, but it is possible to draw money against a personal check with your American Express card.

Internet Access Access is available at **John's Information Cafe** for ¥6 (75¢) per hour (open 9am–12:30am), or at **Yīmèi'ér Wǎngbā** at Rénmín Dōng Lù 49 (on the 2nd floor of a bathhouse immediately west of the Máo statue) for ¥3 (40¢) per hour (open 10am–2am). Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The post office (open 9:30am–7pm) at Rénmín Xī Lù 7 has a counter on the second floor for troublesome foreigners.

Visa Extensions The **PSB** is located about 180m (200 yd.) south of the Chini Bagh Hotel at Yóumùlākè Xiéhǎi'ěr Lù 137. They process visa extensions in half a day, but will only extend them up to 5 days before the visa expires.

EXPLORING KASHGAR

Much of **old town** ★★★ has changed little since the 1920s, when Lady Macartney wrote, "The people too were all dressed in the brightest of colours; and a Kashgar crowd was very gay compared with an English one. . . . The side streets were often given up to one special trade, and so you found the Cotton bazaar, where the Russian prints were sold, the Blacksmiths' and the Silversmiths' bazaars, the flour and grain bazaars and so on. And one horrible place went by the name of the flea bazaar, for it was there that the old clothes were sold, and I am pretty certain that it lived up to its name. Of course, the inevitable tea shop, or Chai–Khana, was everywhere, where people sat and drank tea while they listened to dreamy native music played by a band consisting of perhaps one or two long-necked mandoline-shaped instruments that produced a very soft fairy-like music, accompanied by a small drum."

The "dreamy native music" has been supplanted by television, but the real threat is Hàn town planners, who plan to cover the town in white tile within 10 years. This is called modernization. See the town now.

Abakh Hoja Mosque (Xiāngfēi Mù) The tomb of one of Kashgar's most renowned kings and spiritual leader of the **Bái Shān sect** is several miles northeast of town. Five generations of his family are housed in a domed mausoleum decorated with green, blue, red, and white tiles. The cool interior houses 58 tombs draped with silks. The admission ticket means that the tomb is not a center of worship, but the adjacent mosque is active; devotees seem oblivious to police, who photograph anyone with a beard. The **Gāodī Mosque** ★ to the left of the entrance has swastika motifs decorating its columns, trays for washing corpses, and wooden stretchers for transporting them to the graveyard. The cemetery is now cut off from the mausoleum by a high wall, hopefully not impeding the smooth passage of believers to the afterlife.

The tomb is known to the Chinese as **Xiāngfēi Mù,** or **Tomb of the Fragrant Concubine,** a member of the Hoja clan known for her "exceptional body aroma," probably due to the sprig of oleaster she was fond of wearing. A favorite of the Qiánlóng emperor (1711–1799), she constantly refused his advances, but all tales have him devastated by her death. She was either murdered by Qiánlóng's mother, committed suicide rather than sleep with the emperor, or died naturally, depending on which account you believe. The sedan just inside the tomb is labeled as the one that brought her back to her beloved Kashgar, although her remains are almost certainly buried in the Eastern Qīng Tombs in Héběi. If the ticket office tries to sell you tickets to other "attractions" involving singing and dancing minorities, hold your ground or simply walk off.

Admission to the tomb ¥15 ($1.90), admission to the Gāodī Mosque ¥2 (25¢). Open daylight hours. Bus: no. 20 from Peoples' Sq. to the terminus.

Idkah Mosque (Àitígǎ'ěr Qīngzhēn Sì) More of a relief from the bustling market than an attraction in itself, the prayer hall and leafy courtyard of Xīnjiāng's largest mosque (ca. 1442), the heart of Islamic Kashgar, can house up to 20,000 worshippers. Whether that would make a dent in the crowd outside is doubtful.

Admission ¥10 ($1.25), photography ¥5 (65¢). Sat–Thurs 10am–2pm and 4–7pm.

Kashgar Sunday Bazaar (Kāshí Xīngqītiān Dàshìchǎng) *Overrated* You might expect the world's most famous open-air market to be safe from the meddlings of bureaucracy, if only in the name of financial gain. But you would be wrong. The Bazaar is now *two* bazaars. The original site is marked as KASHGAR INTERNATIONAL TRADE MARKET OF CENTRAL AND WESTERN ASIA. But the animals are gone, and so is the charm. This market is enjoyable on any day *except* Sunday; on those days it is possible to bargain for carpets, hats, and knives at leisure. Bus nos. 7 and 20 have to squeeze through crowds.

The livestock market, squeezed out by the imperatives of modernization and property development, is located several miles southeast of town, next to a four-lane motorway. Known as the **Ivan Bazaar** ★★, it still feels like a bazaar. Efforts to herd all the traders into an enclosure are cheerfully ignored by small traders, who haggle on the road outside, blocking traffic. Ignore demands for payment on entry, unless you have donkeys to trade. Bearded Uighur men in traditional blue and white garb sharpen their knives and trim their sheep; small boys wearing Inter Milan strips gorge themselves on Hami melons; Kyrgyz in dark fur hats pick up and drop dozens of lambs to test their weight and meatiness before settling deals with vigorous and protracted handshakes. No fewer than 10 people act as witnesses.

Arrive early while the market is setting up, and the light is perfect for some unforgettable photography. Shelter under colorful awnings during the midday heat, enjoying tea, buns stuffed with minced lamb *(samsas),* and bagels. Taxis (¥15/$1.90), noisy three-wheelers (¥3/40¢), and donkey carts (¥2/25¢) connect the Kashgar Bazaar with the Ivan Bazaar; or simply hire a bike and follow the crowds.

Ordaisnki Mosque (Àodàyíxīkè Qīngzhēn Sì) Islamic readers looking for a less scrutinized place to worship can visit the oldest mosque in Kashgar (c. 1119), about 270m (300 yd.) east of Idkah Square on Ordaisnki Road. Follow your nose—the city government has so much respect for religion they have placed four huge rubbish dumpsters outside!

SHOPPING

The lanes surrounding the **Idkah Mosque** are ideal for browsing for gifts, but those short on time can try **Gōngyì Měishù Gōngsī** at Jiěfàng Běi Lù 233, where most tour groups are corralled for the shopping component of their trip. The advantage of this establishment is that it allows you to see a wide range of goods at once. As you'd expect, all credit cards are accepted. It's open 9:30am to 8pm.

Those craving a real supermarket will find one in the underground premises of **Jiāhé Chāoshì** at Kèzīlè Dūwéi Lù, Jīn Shān Míngdiàn Dìxià Dàtīng.

WHERE TO STAY

When you reach town, Kashgar should have its first four-star lodging, the **Jīn Sīlù Bīnguǎn,** east of the Peoples' Hotel, on Rénmín Dōng Lù.

Chini Bagh Hotel (Qīníwǎkè Bīnguǎn) ★ Housed on the grounds of the former British consulate, beds in the new wing of this three-star hotel are among the most comfortable in town. Currently, only British diplomats are allowed to stay in the old consulate, tucked away at the back of the hotel, but there are plans to redevelop it, hopefully more sympathetically than the rest of the site, which is indistinguishable from any modern Chinese hotel. Cozy triple rooms in the weathered Jīngyuǎn building are an excellent value for budget travelers.

Sèmǎn Lù 144. ✆ **0998/282-2103.** Fax 0998/284-2299. 337 units (shower only). From ¥280 ($35) standard room; from ¥680 ($85) suite; ¥120 ($15) triple without bathroom. Discounts of 30% are standard. Rates include breakfast. No credit cards. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; concierge; tour desk; 2 business centers; forex counter (8am–midnight); same-day laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Jīn Sīlù Dàjiǔdiàn (Golden Silk Road Hotel) *Value* North of the museum, this unsightly gray brick hotel offers clean and airy rooms, good-sized bathrooms, and staff who actually want to work. You get three-star facilities at two-star prices—a stark contrast to the decaying state-run **Kashgar Hotel** further north, deserted but for the odd hapless tour group.

Tǎwúgǔzī Lù 111. ✆ **0998/261-6222.** Fax 0998/261-6333. 66 units. ¥298 ($37) twin; ¥888 ($111) suite. No credit cards. Bus: no. 10 from the Peoples' Sq. to Dìqū Dǎngxiào—Party School. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; concierge; business center; same-day laundry; next-day dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar.

Sèmǎn Bīnguǎn (Sèmǎn Hotel) Set in the grounds of the former Russian Consulate, this huge two-star hotel, comprising several buildings, claims to be "one of the top 10 hotels in the world." Whoever made this statement needs to get out more; in reality, it's a poorly run property that's falling apart for lack of funds. However, standard rooms and suites in the beautifully decorated **Russian Consulate** (with high ceilings and dramatic oil paintings) can be bargained down to ¥300 ($37) and ¥400 ($50) respectively; a steal for soaking up some

"Great Game" ambience. The new Building 3 is decorated with sumptuous rugs but was completed in a hurry—the finishing, particularly in the bathrooms, is appalling. The Jīntái "entertainment complex" should be avoided, as should the dorms, which are filthy and overcrowded. The best-value beds are in Building 4 across the road, which has its own reception. Staff cheerily inform Chinese visitors that the marked prices are just for foreigners. Keep this in mind when bargaining.

Sèmǎn Lù 337. ✆ **0998/255-2861.** Fax 0998/255-2861. 300 units, 284 with bathroom. From ¥200 ($25) twin; from ¥680 ($85) suite. No credit cards. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; concierge; tour desk (CYTS); business center; same-day laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Xīnyífā Wàishāng Huódòng Zhōngxīn (New Yield Fast Foreign Executive Center) Just south of the Chini Bagh Hotel, this spanking-new hotel with three-star facilities has one problem—it can't decide whether it's an entertainment center or a hotel. The guest rooms and bathrooms are spacious, but be sure to ask for a room on the fourth floor further down the hallway if you're looking for a peaceful night's sleep, as the nightclub on the first floor is the liveliest (and loudest) in town.

Sèmǎn Lù 148. ✆ **0998/283-7388.** Fax 0998/283-7808. xinyifa@263.net. 36 units (18 with shower only). From ¥280 ($35) twin; ¥680 ($85) suite. 40% discounts are standard. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; nightclub; concierge; business center; same-day laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV.

WHERE TO DINE

The best kabobs in town are roasted at **Dōng Mén,** 450m (500 yd.) west of the Sunday Bazaar. People-watching is a traditional sport in Kashgar. Dodge the midday heat by relaxing under the shade of colorful awnings and sipping tea from huge bronze pots. Bus nos. 7 and 20 pass by.

The **Oasis Cafe,** at Sèmǎn Lù 394, currently does the best cheap, near-Western food, offering more generous portions than **John's Information Cafe** (✆ **0998/255-1186**). Both are found opposite the Sèmǎn Hotel. At John's, you can pick up free information, rent a bike, surf the Net, and even get your laundry done. For a change, try the delicious chapatis on offer at the tiny **Pakistani Cafe,** opposite the Chini Bagh Hotel. It's not a place to go if you're short of time, as the mother of the family cooks up the dish of the day on the one available gas ring.

Caravan Cafe (Kǎiruì Kāfēi) ★★ WESTERN After some time in Xīnjiāng, the caffeine-deprived may dream of the smell of freshly ground coffee or of lattes with perfectly formed froth, perhaps accompanied by a cinnamon roll and a bowl of muesli with yogurt, served by handsome and courteous waitstaff. Fortunately, this is no mirage—the coffee, the food, and the service are 100% real and 100% Western. Managed by Americans with a passion for Central Asia, and staffed by friendly English-speaking Uighurs, the Caravan Cafe can also arrange top-of-the-line adventure travel to the Taklamakan Desert, Shipton's Arch, and Mustagh Ata. If you want to know what's going on in town, make this your first port of call. Try to ignore the tree.

Sèmǎn Lù 120. ✆ **0998/284-2196.** Main courses ¥19–¥33 ($2.40–$4.10). 9am–11:30pm. Closed Jan to mid-Apr.

Diànshìtái Cāntīng *Finds* UIGHUR Known by the locals for its whole pigeon soup *(lǔ gēzi),* the restaurant also serves generous helpings of *lāmiàn* (hand-pulled noodles) and *dàpán jī* (whole chicken with noodles and vegetables), which are more likely to suit Western palates. The kitchen is open, so you

can admire the chefs' skills as they prepare the meals from scratch, looping the noodles in wide circles to stretch them out. The noodles come in four different sizes; the medium *(zhōng)* or small *(xiǎo)* portions will suffice for most. Wasting food is frowned upon in Xīnjiāng, so finish up your meal, or a waiter will chase you down the road with your plate.

Opposite the TV station on Kèzīlè Dūwéi Lù. ✆ **0998/252-5593.** Meal for 2 less than ¥40 ($5). Daily 10am–11:30pm. Bus: no. 12 or 29 to Diànshìtái.

Lǎo Cháyuán Jiǔdiàn ★ UIGHUR When the locals treat themselves, they make for this eatery, an institution since 1989. Service can be frosty, and the pseudo-Arabian decor is tacky. Let the food take center stage. All dishes are well presented, often with fancy garnishes, something you don't see a lot of in southern Xīnjiāng. For starters, try *bàn sān sī,* a finely sliced salad of capsicum, onion, carrot, cucumber, and noodles; or try the old favorite, roast peanuts. Recommended main courses are a tender beef stir-fry *(chǎokǎo ròu)* and the dry-fried spring chicken *(gānbiān tóngzǐjī).* The local delicacy is field mushrooms steamed with bok choy, ginger, and garlic *(bāchǔ mógu),* although their slippery texture won't be to everyone's taste.

Rénmín Xī Lù 251. ✆ **0998/282-4467.** Meal for 2 ¥70–¥150 ($8.70–$19). No credit cards. 10am–1:30am.

Yarbag Polohanisi (Yuán Jiǔ Xiǎo Páng Zhuāfàn Wánzimiànguǎn) ★ UIGHUR Kashgar's best-known restaurant has been packed with locals for the last 5 years, taking shade under a willow tree. Alas, old willow trees are not in the picture for the new Kashgar. City planners have arranged a date with the bulldozer, leaving the new restaurant with the unwieldy name "The pilaf and noodle restaurant that was once next to the no. 9 Primary School." The willow tree remains the logo, and the larger premises will continue to serve savory pilaf and beef ball noodles *(wánzimiàn).*

Jiěfàng Běi Lù (135m/150 yd. south of Sèmǎn Lù). Meal for 2 less than ¥20 ($2.50). 8am–8pm.

AROUND KASHGAR

Shipton's Arch (Tushuk Tash) The world's largest natural arch stands, largely unheralded, about 50km (31 miles) northwest of Kashgar. Located at an elevation of 3,168m (10,394 ft.), the arch towers 366m (1,200 ft.) above the canyon floor. It is composed of crumbling conglomerate and is exceedingly difficult to reach. Eric Shipton, Britain's final representative in Kashgar and an accomplished mountaineer, failed several times from the southern route via Muk and Mingyol, finally gaining access from the north via Artux and Karakum. His wife described the scene: "We found ourselves looking straight across at the immense curve of the arch. Its upper half soared above us, but the walls continued down into an unfathomable gorge below. It was as if we stood on a platform some few feet away from a giant window. . . ."

The Caravan Cafe runs day tours to the arch for ¥800 ($100).

Tomb of Mohammed Kashgari The tomb of this eminent 11th-century translator lies 30km (19 miles) southwest of Kashgar, west of the charming Uighur town of **Opal (Wūpà'ěr).** The scholar spent most of his years in Baghdad and is credited with compiling the first Turkic dictionary in Arabic. Hire a jeep for ¥300 ($37); or take a taxi (¥120/$15) or bus no. 4 (¥2.50/30¢) from Kashgar's Opal bus station (a block south of the Sèmǎn Hotel) as far as Shūfù, then share a taxi to Opal for ¥5 (65¢). Donkey carts, charging ¥4 (50¢), leave for the tomb from under a red and yellow arch in the center of Opal.

15 Tashkurgan (Tǎshíkùěrgān)

Xīnjiāng Province, 295km (183 miles) SW of Kashgar

Tashkurgan marked the end of the Silk Routes for Chinese traders arriving from Kashgar or Yarkand. Their goods would be transferred to Bactrian, Persian, or Sogdian caravans, which continued on to Gilgit and thence either south to the Indian Ocean along the Indus River, or west through Kabul, Herat, and Meshed, ultimately reaching the Mediterranean Sea at Antioch or Tyrus. Described by British consul Eric Teichman as the "storm centre of Asian politics," the town has a strong military presence. Those heading to Pakistan must spend the night here.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The road from Tashkurgan to Kashgar was under repair at press time, so what is currently a 12-hour nightmare will soon be a smooth 6-hour journey. Roughly two-thirds of the way to Tashkurgan is **Karakul Lake,** over which towers the magnificent **Mustagh Ata.** The icy lake is surrounded by yurts that take in visitors. Room and board can be negotiated for ¥40 ($5) per person, but many of the locals are quite pushy. If you encounter this, just walk on; there are plenty of other yurts. ***Warning:*** Do not camp alone—recently, an Italian tourist almost met an untidy end here. Beyond Karakul is the town of **Subash (Sūbāshí),** starting point for hikes to Mustagh Ata. It may be possible to stay here, as a less-touristed alternative to Karakul Lake. Beyond Subash, there is a magnificent moraine valley, a highlight of the trip. Buses return to Kashgar at 9:30am for ¥62 ($7.70). There is a cheaper local bus, but you will not be allowed to buy a ticket for it. You can continue to **Sost** for ¥225 ($28); the 8-hour trip arrives in town in late afternoon after many inspections.

ORIENTATION Those who suspect the Communist Party is a front for a bathroom tile company will find more proof in Tashkurgan. Nearly all traces of vernacular architecture have been bulldozed. The main road runs from east to west, with one major road running from north to south. The bus stops at the west end of town at the Traffic Hotel, just off the highway. The Tashkurgan Fort and the Pamir Hotel are at the east end of town. It is impossible to head further south without a Pakistani visa. The nearest Pakistani consulates are in Běijīng or Bishkek.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

Tashkurgan Fort Dating from the 14th century, this substantial fort is accessed by a small lane just east of the Pamir Hotel. Tickets are rarely collected, and an impressive view of the surrounding fields, mountains, and military complexes can be enjoyed. The best view of the fort is from the pastures below in the early morning light.

Admission ¥10 ($1.25). 8:30am–5pm.

WHERE TO STAY

The only thing recommending either of the hotels open to foreigners in Tashkurgan is their existence. Substantial discounts are always obtainable, as Tashkurgan is not a major destination for Chinese tourists.

Jiāotōng Bīnguǎn (Traffic Hotel) Described by one travel guide as "the worst hotel in the world," the hotel is still stung by this assessment. On those grounds, this establishment is entitled to a "most-improved" award. Rooms facing south are sunnier. The Muslim restaurant is often the site of the Tajik

equivalent of a Scottish *ceilidh,* with plenty of drinking and dancing—all arms, wrists, and hips—that will test your sense of rhythm.

Kāshígālè Lù 50. ✆ **0998/342-1192.** Fax 0998/342-1576. 45 units (36 with bathroom). ¥100 ($12) twin; ¥400 ($50) suite; from ¥10 ($1.25) dorm bed. **Amenities:** Restaurant; cafe; same-day laundry. *In room:* TV.

Pàmĭ'ĕr Bīnguǎn (Pamir Hotel) This apathetic two-star hotel on the far side of town offers slightly more comfortable rooms with temperamental showers that allegedly run for 16 hours a day. Just which 16 hours is a matter of speculation. Rooms in the newer wing are worth the extra outlay. The only excitement the last time we visited was an exhibition on ETHNIC SEPARATISM AND TERRORISM, enthusiastically attended by brigade after brigade of adolescent Hàn soldiers. The author missed an invitation.

Kāshígālè Lù 207. ✆/fax **0998/342-1085.** 70 units (30 with open shower). ¥120–¥150 ($15–$19) twin; ¥180 ($22) suite; from ¥20 ($2.50) dorm. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bike rental; same-day laundry. *In room:* TV.

WHERE TO DINE

Fine treats are offered at the **Pamir Restaurant** (**Pàmĭ'ĕr Kuàicān, ✆ 0998/342-1999**), about 27m (30 yd.) north of the main intersection on the right (east) side. Excellent Sichuanese fare is served up diagonally across from them, at **Chuānfǔ Dàpáidàng.**

16 Khotan (Hétián) ★★

Xīnjiāng Province, 520km (322 miles) SE of Kashgar, 1,509km (936 miles) SW of Ürümqi

Khotan was once a more important trading and religious center than Kashgar. From ancient times, jade was "fished" from the 24 rivers in the Khotan area, and "jade routes" to Mesopotamia and China flourished from the 3rd millennium B.C. onwards. Passing through on his way to India in the 5th century, the Chinese Buddhist monk Fǎxiǎn found a purely Buddhist population in the order of "several myriads." Returning to China after his adventures in India, Xuánzàng found a thriving center: ". . . the country produced rugs, fine felt, and silk of artistic texture, it also yielded black and white jade. The climate was genial, but there were whirlwinds and flying dust. The people were of gentle disposition, and had settled occupations. The nation esteemed music and the people were fond of dance and song; a few clothed themselves in woolens and furs, the majority wearing silk and calico. . . . The system of writing had been taken from that of India."

From 1901, Aurel Stein visited several sites around Khotan, concluding that the ancient capital was at **Yoktan (Yāotègān),** 9.7km (6 miles) to the west. He found Roman coins, and some delightful paintings and sculptures (ca. 2nd century) showing Grecian influence. Unconnected by rail and thus safe from inundation by Hàn settlers, Khotan is home to the liveliest **bazaar** in Xīnjiāng, and is a must for those hoping to experience traditional Uighur culture and markets. *Note:* Please turn to Appendix A for Chinese translations of key locations.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Khotan's **airport,** 10km (6¼ miles) west of downtown, was undergoing renovations at press time. Daily connections with Ürümqi are expected. The **CAAC** air ticket office, on Wūlǔmùqí Nán Lù (✆ **0903/251-2178**), is open from 10am to 1pm and 4 to 6pm.

The main **bus station** (✆ **0903/203-2700,** ext. 8088) is in the north of town, on the south side of Highway 315. Comfortable sleeper buses at 1pm and 5pm cross the Taklamakan Desert Highway to Ürümqi (1,509km/936 miles;

25 hr.; ¥367/$46). Cheaper, less comfortable sleeper buses run every 2 hours between 10am and 8pm. For Kuqa, buy a ticket to Lúntái (874km/542 miles; 14 hr.; ¥147/$19). You are dropped off in the forlorn settlement of Lúnnán, about 30km (19 miles) south of Lúntái. A seat in a taxi to Lúntái should cost ¥10 ($1.25). Ask to be dropped at the bus station (qìchē zhàn), where buses for Kuqa (110km/68 miles; 2 hr.; ¥10/$1.25) leave when full. A daily bus at 9am visits the oasis towns east of Khotan, stopping at Keriya (Yùtián; 177km/110 miles; 3 hr.; ¥15/$1.90), Niya (Mínfēng; 294km/182 miles; 5 hr.; ¥25/$3), and Charchan (Qiěmò; 603km/374 miles; 11 hr.; ¥50/$6). Sleeper buses for Kashgar leave at 5:30pm, 8:30pm, and 9:15pm (509km/316 miles; 13 hr.; ¥87/$11), while hard-seat buses depart at 9am, 10am, and noon (¥57/$7.10). There are daily sleeper buses to Yīníng at 11am and 1pm (2,469km/1,531 miles; 3 days; ¥265/$33).

GETTING AROUND **Taxis** are plentiful and do use their meters. They charge ¥5 (65¢) for 3km (2 miles), then ¥1.30 (20¢) per kilometer. **Bus** fare is usually ¥1 (15¢), paid to the conductor.

TOURS & GUIDES **CITS** is on the third floor of a building 180m (200 yd.) south of the Bank of China, at Tāmùbāgé Lù 23 (✆ **0903/202-6090;** fax 0903/202-2846). It's open from 9:30am to 1:30pm and 4 to 8pm. While rates charged for guides are reasonable, you're better off arranging your own transport.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs If you are continuing east along the southern Silk Route, change your money in Khotan, as there are no facilities before Golmud or Dūnhuáng. The **Bank of China** at Wūlǔmùqí Nán Lù 14 accepts credit cards and traveler's checks. It's open weekdays in summer from 9:30am to 1:30pm and 4 to 8pm; weekdays in winter from 10am to 2pm and 3:30 to 7pm. No ATMs are available.

Internet Access The 24-hour **Xīn Shíkōng Dìdài,** just west of the Hétián Yíng Bīnguǎn, charges ¥4 (50¢) per hour for an excellent connection. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office On the southwest corner of the main intersection at Běijīng Xī Lù 1, the post office is open in summer from 9am to 8:30pm and in winter from 9:30am to 8pm.

Visa Extensions The **PSB** at Běijīng Xī Lù 22 (✆ **0903/202-3614**) offers one of the speediest visa extensions available—it takes less than half an hour! It's open weekdays from 9:30am to 1:30pm and 4 to 7:30pm.

EXPLORING KHOTAN

Sunday Market, Xīngqītiān Dàshìchǎng ★★★ *Moments* This is everything the Kashgar Market once was. You'll need an early start and a lot of film stock to make the most of Xīnjiāng's liveliest **bazaar,** set in the heart of the Uighur part of town. The intersection between Gǔjiāng Běi Lù and Jiāmǎi Lù marks the center of the action, and you're unlikely to see a Hàn face as the streets fill with livestock and people throughout the day. Jewelers pore over gemstones, blacksmiths busy themselves shoeing horses and repairing farm tools, blanket makers beat cotton balls, rat poison sellers proudly demonstrate the efficacy of their products—the sights and smells are overwhelming. Don't miss the **horse riding enclosure** towards the north side of the melee, where buyers test the roadworthiness of both beast and attached cart, with frequent spectacular tumbles. Head southeast from the bus station or simply follow the crowds.

SHOPPING

Jade Factory (Gōngyì Měishù Yǒuxiàn Gōngsī) Khotan has long been China's source of jade (nephrite). The jade was first noticed by Zhāng Qiān, sent to Khotan on a reconnaissance expedition by Hàn Wǔdì, prior to the first successful Chinese invasion of the Western Regions. He believed women were adept in finding the gem, and they would dive for jade in the rivers around Khotan. Diving in the muddy and much diminished Khotan River is now not recommended, regardless of your gender. Those contemplating jade purchases should do your homework with a reputable jeweler before leaving home. While this shop is reliable, fake jade is one commodity Khotan never runs short of. Visit the dusty workshop behind the shop, where artisans turn, carve, and polish the jade. The Jade Factory is open from 9:30am to 8pm. Tǎnàiyī Lù 4.

Yúmó Diàojù Háng (Whopper Fishing Tackle Co.) If you know your fishing gear, there are bargains to be found in this small shop with an inflatable dinghy hung outside. Good fishing is reputed to be upstream (south) from Keriya and Móyù, with grass carp said to be found in abundance. The amicable storekeeper, Mrs. Dù, saves her highest praise for the Yīlí River, said to be home to over 100 varieties of fish. Open from 8:30am until midnight. Běijīng Xī Lù.

WHERE TO STAY

Service is informal along the southern Silk Route; don't expect luxury accommodations. Special prices for foreigners are a problem. The **Huāyuán Bīnguǎn** (✆ **0903/202-4818**), a two-star operation on Hétián Lù, was closed for renovations when we visited. It should be in good shape when you arrive.

Hétián Yíng Bīnguǎn Set in sprawling grounds with rose gardens, trees, and buildings of varying vintage, rooms in the recently renovated north wing are the cleanest. The dormitories are a good value, as the once decrepit communal showers are now in good order. The only hazard is portly men from Sìchuān watching TV in their underwear. A new four-story, three-star building should be open soon. Rates are charged per bed; haggling is futile.

Tǎnàiyī Běi Lù 4. ✆ **0903/202-2824.** Fax 0903/202-3688. 78 units (53 with bathroom). ¥110–¥180 ($14–$22) twin; ¥380–¥480 ($47–$60) suite; from ¥20 ($2.50) dorm bed. No credit cards. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; business center; same-day laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Tiānhǎi Bīnguǎn ★ *Value* This welcoming three-star hotel, opened in June 2002, is easily Khotan's premier lodging. Although it didn't have permission to take foreigners last time we visited, the manager promises that this will soon be corrected. The building looks like a Lego block from outside, but rooms are sizable, beds are firm, and bathrooms sparkle, and there are even real potted plants.

Běijīng Xī Lù 5. ✆ **0903/203-7666.** Fax 0903/203-7222. 70 units. ¥188–¥218 ($23–$27) twin; from ¥388 ($48) suite. 40% discounts are standard. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; concierge; business center; same-day laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, fridge.

WHERE TO DINE

Nàwǎkè Lù Gāoyáng Kǎoròu, Kuàicāndiàn ★ UIGHUR The prize for Xīnjiāng's best *samsa*—a package of lamb and spices baked in pastry—is safe with this delightful open-air restaurant, the last in a line of eateries with blue awnings. Customers queue up for some time waiting for them, so be patient. The kabobs and naan are also excellent if you're short on time. The slightly sweet medicinal tea is common to many restaurants, and the tea leaves *(jiànkāng chá)* can be purchased from the **Uighur Hospital,** Jiāmǎi Lù 2.

Nàwǎkè Lù. ✆ **0903/202-5132.** Meal for 2 less than ¥50 ($6). 8am–10:30pm.

Wild China: Yīníng (Gulja)

Yīníng, 692km (429 miles) west of Ürümqi, has always been a tenuous possession of the Chinese empire, surrounded by the richest farmland in central Asia, and closer to Moscow than Běijīng. During the Qīng dynasty, it was the furthest point of banishment. Surrounded by high peaks and blessed with a mild climate, Yīníng is now a Hàn city with a smattering of Kazaks and Uighurs; it boasts hearty cuisine and access to the fascinating **Qapqal Xībó Autonomous County (Chá Xiàn).**

The colonization of Xīnjiāng began with the fierce ancestors of the current residents of **Qapqal,** 25km (16 miles) west of Yīníng. In 1764, a thousand Xībó soldiers (followed "secretly" by 4,000 family members) were dispatched from Manchuria by the Qiánlóng emperor, with the promise that they would be allowed to return after 50 years. After putting the natives to the sword and hunting the region's animals to near extinction, the Xībó accepted the fact that there was no prospect of a return home, settled down, and took to farming.

While the **Manchu language** died out in northeast China, this outpost maintained their written and spoken language, and traditions such as the **hanging family tree *(jiāpǔ).*** Most houses have one, with coins to represent the family coming into money, clubs and arrows the birth of a boy, and ribbons and boots the birth of a girl. Catch a bus from outside the Yīníng bus station to Chá Xiàn (30 min.; ¥5/65¢) and take a three-wheeler (¥5/65¢) onwards to **Jìngyuǎn Sì** (admission ¥10/$1.25). An exhibition of **Xībó** history inside this lamaist temple is fascinating, but alas, the guide speaks fluent Russian and awaits her first Russian visitor. Wander among the fields of sunflowers and wheat, dotted with light blue courtyard houses with earthen roofs.

GETTING THERE The **airport** is connected to town by taxi (¥10/$1.25). **CAAC** (✆ **0999/822-1505**) is in the foyer of the **Yóudiàn Bīnguǎn,** Jiěfàng Lù 162. Flights connect with Ürümqi, Xī'ān, and Wǔhàn. The **bus terminal** on Jiěfàng Lù in the northwest of town has connections with Ürümqi (12 hr.) and Kashgar (52 hr.) via the wild Mongolian minority town of Bayan Bulak. Tickets for Almaty (12 hr.; ¥260/$32; Mon, Wed, Thurs, Sat) are purchased at the hotel reception **immediately** inside the bus terminal. There are abundant **taxis,** which charge ¥5 (65¢) for 2km (1¼ mile), then ¥1.30 (20¢) per kilometer thereafter; add ¥.20 (5¢) from midnight to 5am. **Buses** charge ¥1 (15¢), dropped in a box when you board. A **tandem bike** may be rented at **Diāokè Shíguāng** (Jiěfàng Lù 64; ✆ **0999/838-2369**), which also serves excellent coffee and traditional Tajik ice cream.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE **Yīlí Bīnguǎn** (Yíngbīn Lù 8; ✆ **0999/802-3799;** fax 0999/802-4964) is Yīníng's oldest hotel, set in the extensive (30,000 sq. m/32,700 sq. yd.) grounds of the former **Soviet Consulate,** which are particularly charming in autumn. Midsize twins for ¥160 to ¥488 ($20–$61) in buildings 2 and 3 to the west of the complex are the best choice. Yīníng's swankiest three-star hotel, the **Yīlìtè Dàjiǔdiàn** (Shènglì Jiē 98; ✆ **0999/803-5600;** fax 0999/802-1819), is situated on the northeast

corner of the Peoples' Square, the scene of anti-government riots in 1997. While this 12-story glass-and-tile monolith is out of place in sleepy Yīníng, standard rooms at ¥298 ($36) are spotless and bright. Discounts of 30% are available.

For dining, **Guǒyuán Cāntīng** (Yīlí Hé Mínzú Wénhuà Cūn Xiàng Nèi 500 Mǐ Chū; ✆ **0999/832-3580**) charges less than ¥100 ($12) for a meal set in an apple orchard on the north bank of the Yīlí River. (Turn left down the final road before the Yīlí Bridge south of town and continue for 455m/500 yd. The entrance is on the right.) Enjoy steamed dumplings *(yóu tǎzi),* a local version of *samsa* with three fingerprints in each bun *(yībǎzhuā),* whole chicken with vegetables and noodles *(dàpán jī),* and the filling *náng bāo ròu,* a huge plate of lamb and vegetable stew on a wheat pancake. Sup honeyed rye beer called *kvass (géwǎsī),* and make friends with the local Uighurs. Another well-regarded Uighur restaurant is **Hónghuā Cāntīng** (✆ **0999/802-8499**), a 5-minute walk west from the main post office. Try the most renowned Kazakh dish, *nàrén,* at **Nàrén Cāntīng** (Xīnhuá Xī Lù 7; ✆ **0999/803-2434**). *Nàrén* is roasted horse meat (taken from the waist) served on a pile of thick noodles with a side serving of naan and an appetizing salad of tomato, cucumber, and Spanish onion; it costs less than ¥40 ($5). The genial owner, Talgat, will cajole you to try horse's milk or yogurt, but these sour concoctions are an acquired taste. The regular yogurt *(niúnǎi)* is creamy and delicious.

FURTHER AFIELD The tiny Mongolian hamlet of **Bayan Bulak (Bāyīn Bùlǔkè)** ★, surrounded by breathtaking grasslands, is reached by a spectacular journey through pine forests, waterfalls, and wildflowers. Most visitors come here for a glimpse of the vast **Swan Lake (Tiān'é Hú).** Admission is ¥12 ($1.50). The lake is the breeding ground for elegant **black swans.** If you hope to see the birds, set out early. Leave your car at the gate; it's a short horse ride or 10-minute walk to the top of the hill. Binoculars and rain gear are essential—the weather can be abysmal. Transport (at present, a 4WD is essential, but a paved road to the viewing platform is nearly completed) can be arranged at either hotel (see below). Pay no more than ¥200 ($25) for a half-day trip.

GETTING THERE Bayan Bulak is a closed area, meaning that law-abiding travelers should arrange a **7-day travel permit** for ¥50 ($6) through either **CTS** (✆ **0999/822-3868**), located in the Yóudiàn Bīnguǎn; or **CITS** in Kuqa. The main road is **Highway 217,** which continues south to Kuqa through Kyrgyz territory before cresting the Talamat Pass and entering stunning alpine scenery around **Dragon Lake (Dà Lóng Chí),** then descending through red desert crags. Unfortunately, unless you have your own transport, a ride out is not guaranteed. For Ürümqi, catch a bus to Héjìng (270km/167 miles; 6 hr.; ¥40/$5) from 7am. Buses for Kuqa (245km/152 miles; 10 hr.), Yīníng (363km/225 miles; 9 hr.), and Xīnyuán (165km/102 miles; 6 hr.) are usually full. Sometimes bribery is required.

AROUND KHOTAN

Carpet Factory (Dìtǎn Chǎng) In the 1980s, factory inspections were an unavoidable part of any trip to China. Fortunately, you can examine the workings of this factory without listening to a cadre reciting statistics concerning output, expected turnover, and the area of the factory down to the last square meter. Workers sit outside the main carpet-making hall, their hands, feet, and hair stained red by henna dye. The gentle rattle of the looms and swoosh of the combs is almost drowned out by the banter of Uighur women—there can be as many as eight of them working on one carpet. At the back is the inevitable shop, but much of the art of carpet weaving was lost during the Cultural Revolution, so you won't find anything to match the splendor of carpets in your average Uighur home. The factory is open Monday through Saturday from 9:30am to 1:30pm and 3:30 to 7:30pm.

Nàwǎkè Jiē 6. Take a cab (about ¥20/$2.50) or bus no. 2 east along Běijīng Lù to the terminus, then bus no. 5 heading south, again to the end of the line.

Silk and Mulberry Research Center (Sī Sāng Yánjiūsuǒ) Khotan is said to have broken the closely guarded Chinese silk monopoly in the 5th century. According to legend, a Chinese princess was instructed by the king to smuggle silk-moth eggs in her hairpiece, as frontier guards, however zealous, would never touch a lady's hair.

The front building houses offices, and possibly someone willing to show you around, but the surest way to see the center is to arrange a tour through CITS, who will also show you "their" traditional silk makers. You can view the entire mysterious process, from sorting and boiling the cocoons, to reeling off the thread—typically 900m (2,950 ft.) long—through to the final weaving into the wave-like ikat patterns characteristic of Khotan silk. While the primitive (and deafening) technology makes for a good tour, business is not good. A sign near the gate opens with a statement of the company's bold production targets, and ends with the modest objective, DON'T LOSE MONEY *(bù kuī)*. You'll find few tasteful products in the shop; buy your silk in a large city. This difference in tastes is nothing new. Chinese silk patterns were never in vogue among the Romans, who usually imported silk thread—Plinius recorded that Chinese cloth would be unraveled and rewoven.

Hémò Lù 107. Bus: no. 1 from north of the main roundabout on Hétián Lù to the terminus, then walk back about 225m (250 yd.).

WHERE TO STAY & DINE

Situated at the north end of town, **Xībù Qíng Bīnguǎn** (✆ **0996/535-0555;** fax 0996/535-0556) offers comfortable and tidy twins for ¥160 ($20) on the second floor. Hot water is reliable, and the restaurant offers fresh pan-Chinese fare. If it's full, try the mock-Tudor charms of **Héjìng Dōngguī Bīnguǎn** (✆ **0996/535-0452**), which boasts more spacious twins for ¥180 ($22).

7

Eastern Central China

by Sharon Owyang

If Shānxī Province is the cradle of Chinese civilization, then the stretch of eastern central China between the Yellow River (Huáng Hé) and the Yángzǐ River (Cháng Jiāng)—an area covering the provinces of **Hénán, Shāndōng, Jiāngsū,** and **Ānhuī**—can be seen as the crucible in which Chinese culture subsequently developed and flourished. Bounded by the Yellow Sea and the East China Sea on the east, and buffered from ethnic minority influences from the north, west, and south, this swath of China is a region that, except for some Western influence late in China's history, has remained unapologetically and overwhelmingly "Hàn" Chinese in character.

Early Chinese civilization may have developed around the Yellow River in Hénán Province with the Shāng dynasty (1700–1100 B.C.), but Chinese culture as it is widely perceived today really started to take shape only some 600 years later with the birth of the most influential figure in Chinese history, Confucius, in **Qūfǔ** in Shāndōng Province. By the time of the "golden age" of the Hàn dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220), Confucianism, that quintessentially Chinese philosophical tradition, had become the official state philosophy, and would be put to the test in the subsequent 2,000 years of dynastic changes. Arguably, no region or place in China has seen the rise and fall of more dynasties than this eastern central section of the country, with the ancient capitals of **Luòyáng** (capital of 9 dynasties), **Kāifēng** (6 dynasties), and **Nánjīng** (8 dynasties) serving as China's seat of power 23 times. Today, though none of these former capitals has retained much of their previous glory, all contain vestiges of a Chinese imperial past, and are worth visiting. Chinese history buffs may be interested as well in some lesser-known but intriguing finds such as the **miniature terracotta army** in Xúzhōu, and the **horse and chariot funeral pits** in Zībó.

The influence of that other indigenous Chinese religious-philosophical tradition, daoism, is also very strong in this region, which is home to two of daoism's sacred mountains: **Tài Shān,** the most climbed mountain in China, and **Sōng Shān,** the central daoist mountain. Though not indigenous to China, Buddhism's influence on Chinese culture has also been profound. Some of China's finest Buddhist art and sculpture can be seen at the magnificent **Lóngmén Grottoes (Lóngmén Shíkū)** in Luòyáng.

Historically, this region has also been the cultural bridge between the political center of gravity mostly in the north, and the economic center in the south, especially around the fertile lower deltas of the Yángzǐ River. The physical link was the great Chinese engineering feat of the **Grand Canal,** built between the Suí dynasty (581–618) and the Yuán dynasty (1206–1368) to link the Yángzǐ and Yellow rivers. Although much of the canal is no longer navigable, it gave rise in its heyday to many flourishing

river towns, including Sūzhōu, Zhōuzhuāng, and the underrated but delightful **Yángzhōu,** the economic and cultural capital of southern China during the Suí and Táng dynasties. The gardens that were built here by merchants and retired officials, with rocks hauled up from nearby **Tài Hú (Lake Tài),** have created in many a mind's eye the quintessential Chinese garden. But it is at nearby **Huáng Shān (Yellow Mountain)** that you find the ultimate Chinese landscape, as wispy clouds hover over a lone pine tree on a distant mountain top.

Today, this eastern central region of China continues to function as a modern crucible of sorts. Traveling in this area, you will encounter two of China's richest provinces (Shāndōng and Jiāngsū) bordering one of its poorest (Ānhuī). You will see some of China's oldest temples standing next to some of its newest skyscrapers. In the country of Lǎozǐ, this tug between such opposing forces should come as no surprise. It is, after all, quintessentially Chinese. The region sees hot, humid summers, while winters can be bone-chillingly cold; spring and fall are the best times to visit. ***Note:*** Unless otherwise noted, hours listed for attractions and restaurants are daily.

1 Zhèngzhōu

Hénán Province, 689km (413 miles) SW of Běijīng, 998km (599 miles) NW of Shànghǎi

Zhèngzhōu, a sprawling industrial city of 6 million and a major railway stop on the Běijīng–Guǎngzhōu rail lines, was once a former ancient Shāng dynasty (1700–1100 B.C.) capital, though few traces of its 3,000-year history remain. Many travelers simply overnight here en route to Kāifēng and Luòyáng, but there are a few lesser known but intriguing sights in the surrounding area. Zhèngzhōu's proximity to the Yellow River (30km/18 miles to the north) also makes it a convenient base from which to explore the river. *Note:* For Chinese translations of selected establishments listed below, see Appendix A.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Zhèngzhōu is connected by **air** to many major Chinese cities, including Běijīng (1 hr., 20 min.), Guǎngzhōu (2 hr., 20 min.), Hong Kong (2½ hr.), and Shànghǎi (1 hr., 20 min.). Tickets can be purchased at the **CAAC office** at Jīnshuǐ Lù 3 (✆ **0371/599-1111**). The airport is about 35km (21 miles) southeast of the city. Sofitel and Crowne Plaza have booths at the airport and can arrange transportation into the city if you contact them ahead of time. **Taxis** make the run for around ¥100 ($13). **CAAC airport shuttles** (40 min.; ¥15/$1.90, 6am–6pm) depart every hour for the airport from the Airport Hotel (Mínháng Dàjiǔdiàn) at Jīnshuǐ Lù (✆ **0371/851-0055,** ext. 6528) and also meet incoming flights.

Trains run from Zhèngzhōu's **railway station** (✆ **0371/835-2222** or 0371/697-1920) to Luòyáng (2 hr.), Kāifēng (1 hr.), Xī'ān (10 hr.), Běijīng (12 hr.), Shànghǎi (14 hr.), Guǎngzhōu (36 hr.), and a host of other cities in between. Tickets can be purchased at the advance booking office at Èrqī Lù 134 (✆ **0371/697-1920;** open 8:30am–noon and 2:30–5pm).

From the **long-distance bus station** (**chángtú qìchēzhàn;** ✆ **0371/696-6107**) opposite the railway station, Iveco buses depart for Luòyáng (every 15 min. 5:30am–8pm, every ½ hr. 8–10pm; 2–2½ hr.; ¥25/$3), Kāifēng (every 20 min. 5:40am–8pm; 1½ hr.; ¥13/$1.50), Dēngfēng (every 20 min. 6am–8pm; 30 min.; ¥15/$1.80), and Gǒngyì (every half hour 7am–6pm; 1½ hr.; ¥15/$1.80).

More frequent buses depart for Kāifēng (every 20 min. 6:20am–8pm; 1 hr., 20 min.; ¥12/$1.40) from the **East Bus Station (Kèyùn Dōng Zhàn)** on Jīchǎng Lù. In addition, a private bus service, **Hénán Yǔtōng Kuàiyùn** (✆ **0371/593-5888**), runs air-conditioned buses to Luòyáng (every half hour 7:30am–7pm; 2 hr., 10 min.; ¥30/$3.75), Běijīng (7:50am, 9:50am, 1:50pm, and 10:20pm; 8 hr.; ¥150–¥210/$18–$26), and Xī'ān (9:30am and 1:30pm; 5½ hr.; ¥98/$13). Buses leave from the bus station as well as from a small office in front of the Crowne Plaza.

GETTING AROUND **Taxis** charge ¥7 (85¢) for 3km (2 miles), then ¥1 (15¢) per additional kilometer until 10km (6 miles), after which the price rises to ¥1.50 (20¢) per kilometer. From 11pm to 5am, prices rise to ¥9 ($1.10) per 3km (2 miles). City **buses** cost ¥1 (15¢) flat fare. Bus no. 26 runs from the railway station to Jīnshuǐ Lù via Rénmín Lù, while bus no. 16 runs from Èrmǎ Lù to the Yellow River.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs A convenient **Bank of China** branch (open Mar–May and Sep–Nov 8am–6pm; Dec–Feb 8am–5:30pm; Jun–Aug 8am–6:30pm) is across from the Crowne Plaza Hotel at Jīnshuǐ Lù 8. Counter 7 is for foreign exchange. There is an ATM at this location.

Internet Access Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The post office is just south of the railway station. Hours are from 8am to 8pm.

Visa Extensions The **Gōngānjú (PSB)** is located at Èrqī Lù 70. (open Mar–May and Sept–Nov: Mon–Fri 8:30am–noon and 2–6pm, Dec–Feb: Mon–Fri 8:30am–noon and 2–5:30pm; Jun–Aug: 8:30am–noon and 3–6:30pm). Allow 5 business days, though emergency 1-day visas can also be processed.

EXPLORING ZHÈNGZHŌU

The 11-story twin-tower pagoda in the heart of town is the **Èrqī Tǎ (Monument to the February 7 Workers' Uprising),** which commemorates the February 7, 1923, strike on the Běijīng–Hànkǒu rail line against the warlord authorities. The workers were fighting for their rights and freedom to organize, but the uprising was bloodily suppressed.

Hénán Bówùguǎn (Hénán Provincial Museum) ★★ Located in the northern part of town, this marvelous museum—the fourth largest in China, it claims—is well worth a couple hours of your time. Housed in a pyramid-shaped structure, it has a strong collection of prehistoric and early Chinese artifacts such as oracle bones, tools, and pottery from the Yǎngsháo culture, the Lóngshān culture, and the early Xià, Shāng, and Zhōu dynasties, as well as bronzes, jades, and Hàn dynasty funeral objects. Exhibits are well documented in English, and the English-language audio tour, ¥30 ($3.75) with a deposit of either ¥400 ($50) or your passport, is quite helpful. English-speaking museum guides are available for ¥100 ($13).

Nóngyè Lù 8. Admission ¥20 ($2.50). 8:30am–6pm. Bus: no. 32 from the railway station to Jīngqī Lù.

Huáng Hé (Yellow River) ★ Prone to flooding because of silt deposits in its upper reaches, the mighty Yellow River (Huáng Hé) has long been known as "China's Sorrow," having wreaked untold damage and taken countless lives through the ages. Here, the river can be visited from two different locales. The first is at **Huáng Hé Yóulǎn Qū (Yellow River Tourist Zone),** a large artificial park on the southern bank of the river. You can take the official hydrofoil on a 40-minute round-trip tour for ¥65 ($8) per person, which includes a stop at a sandy islet in the middle of the river.

About 15km (9 miles) east of the Yellow River Tourist Zone, the **Huáng Hé Huāyuán Kǒu Lǚyóu Qū** was where Chiang Kai-shek ordered his army to blow up the dikes in order to halt the advance of the Japanese troops in 1938. The tactic worked temporarily, but in the process it flooded 44 counties, killed almost a million people, and left another 12 million homeless and destitute. Today, stone tablets in this tourist park commemorate the event, as does a four-character inscription, ZHÌ LǏ HUÁNG HÉ, on the embankment by Máo Zédōng, meaning "Control the Yellow River."

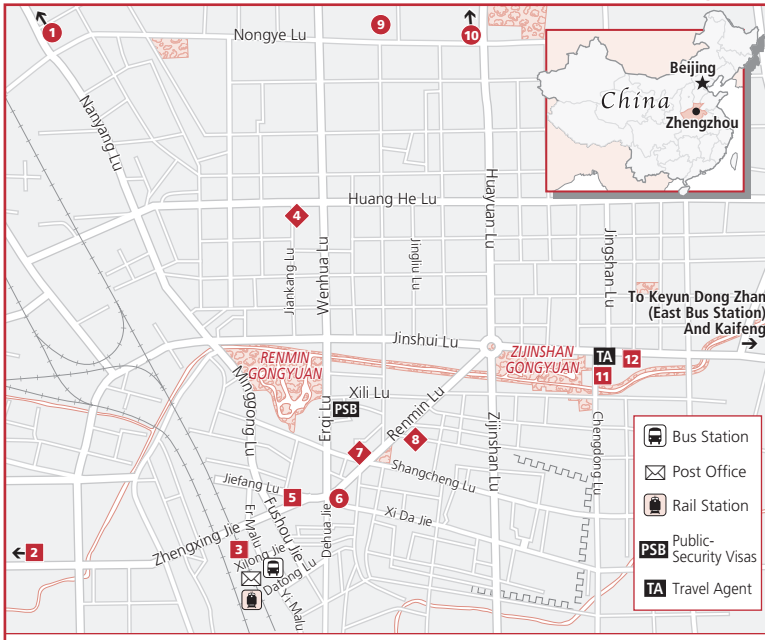
Yellow River Tourist Zone: Admission ¥25 ($3). 8am–6pm. Bus: no. 16 (¥4/50¢) from corner of Èrmǎ Lù and Zhèngxìng Jiē to its terminus. Huāyuán Kǒu Tourist Region of the Yellow River: Admission ¥10 ($1.25). 8am–6pm. Bus: no. 310 from Èrqī Pagoda to the last stop.

WHERE TO STAY

Hotel rates in the expensive category are all subject to a 15% surcharge.

EXPENSIVE

Crowne Plaza/Holiday Inn Zhèngzhōu (Zhèngzhōu Huángguān Jiàrì Bīnguǎn) ★★★ Situated in the northeastern part of town, this hotel chain is in the rather unusual position of having the five-star **Crowne Plaza** and the



ACCOMMODATIONS

Crowne Plaza/Holiday Inn Zhèngzhōu (Zhèngzhōu Huángguān Jiàrì Bīnguǎn) **12**
皇冠假日

Sofitel Zhèngzhōu (Suǒfēitè Dàjiǔdiàn) **11**
索菲特国际饭店

Tiānquán Dàjiǔdiàn **3**
天泉大酒店

Yàxìyà Dàjiǔdiàn (Asia Hotel) **5**
亚细亚大酒店

Yùdá Guómào Fàndiàn (Yùdá Palace Hotel) **2**
裕达国贸饭店

DINING

Cola Planet (Kělè Xīngqiú Cāntīng) **4**
可乐星球餐厅

Héjì Huìmiàn **8**
合记烩面

Hénán Shífǔ **7**
河南食府

ATTRACTIONS

Èrqī Tǎ (Monument to the February 7 Workers' Uprising) **6**
二七塔

Hénán Bówùguǎn (Hénán Provincial Museum) **9**
河南博物馆

Huáng Hé Huāyuán Kǒu Lǚyóu Qū **10**
黄河花园口旅游区

Huáng Hé Yóulǎn Qū (Yellow River Tourist Zone) **1**
黄河游览区

four-star **Holiday Inn** right next to each other and sharing many of the same facilities and management. By the time you read this, there should be a third member of this party, the three-star **Holiday Inn Express,** converted from the former International Hotel. Crowne Plaza rooms are spacious and fitted with bay windows, and while not especially beautiful, they are beyond reproach. Rooms at the Holiday Inn, geared more towards the business traveler, are smaller but still well appointed and sufficiently comfortable. Bathrooms are clean and modern. Staff is extraordinarily friendly and warm.

Jīnshuǐ Lù 115. ✆ **0371/595-0055.** Fax 0371/599-0770. www.crowneplaza.com/hotels/cgoch; www.holiday-inn.com/hotels/cgcch. Crowne Plaza 221 units; Holiday Inn 202 units. Crowne Plaza: ¥1,360 ($170) standard room; ¥1,632 ($204) suite. Holiday Inn: ¥1,088 ($136) standard room; ¥1,520 ($190) suite. 35%–45% discounts possible. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 5 restaurants; bar; lounge; indoor pool; health club and spa; sauna; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; massage; laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, broadband Internet access (some rooms), minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Sofitel Zhèngzhōu (Suǒfēitè Dàjiǔdiàn) ★★★ This modern, elegant hotel in the northeast part of town offers plenty of five-star luxury high above Zhèngzhōu. Rooms are exceedingly comfortable and fitted with plush beds, classy furniture, and all the expected amenities. Favored by international business travelers, the hotel has a slightly formal air. Service is first-rate, and the staff is professional and helpful.

Chéngdōng Lù 289. ✆ **0371/595-0088.** Fax 0371/595-0080. www.accorhotels-asia.com. 241 units. ¥990 ($124) standard room; ¥1,328 ($166) suite. 30% discounts possible. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; indoor pool; health club and spa; sauna; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; massage; laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, broadband Internet access, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Yùdá Guómào Fàndiàn (Yùdá Palace Hotel) ★★ This handsome, modern, 45-story building is Zhèngzhōu's grandest and most opulent hotel, but its location in the western part of town makes it inconvenient for independent travelers. Rooms are enormous—the largest in the city—comfortable, and gorgeously furnished with classic Italian furniture and a high-tech Bose "surroundsound" audio system. The spacious all-marble bathrooms come with separate tub and shower, except for corner rooms. Supposedly trained by Westin, the staff here appears to be still finding their way.

Zhōngyuán Xī Lù 220. ✆ **0371/743-8888.** Fax 0371/742-2539. yudaeo@public2.zz.ha.cn. 356 units. ¥1,494 ($180) standard room; ¥2,490 ($300) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 5 restaurants; bar; lounge; disco; indoor pool; health club; sauna; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; massage; laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, broadband Internet access, minibar, hair dryer, safe, scales.

MODERATE

Tiānquán Dàjiǔdiàn Conveniently located right next to the railway station, this three-star hotel offers relatively clean accommodations at reasonable prices. Guest rooms are a little dark, with forgettable furnishings, but are otherwise quite comfortable. Bathrooms are acceptably clean, if a little old. Be sure to ask for a room in the back, as the honking from taxis in the front of the square can be a rude surprise at 3am. The staff tries to be helpful.

Xī Dàtóng Lù 1. ✆ **0371/698-6888.** Fax 0371/699-1814. 214 units. ¥358–¥388 ($44–$48) standard room; from ¥1,198 ($149) suite. Rates include Chinese breakfast. 30% discounts possible. MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; nightclub; exercise room; salon; business center; gift shop; limited room service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

WHERE TO DINE

EXPENSIVE

Mama Mia Pizzeria ★ ITALIAN/CONTINENTAL This low-key restaurant offers many of the comfort foods of home. The ambience is casual and unpretentious, with low lighting and checkered tablecloths. Pizzas and pastas are popular here; the *ravioli al pomodoro e basilico* (homemade ravioli stuffed with ricotta cheese, spinach, and basil) garners high marks. Other favorites include the U.S. Angus T-bone steak and the grilled salmon. Service is attentive.

In the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Jīnshuǐ Lù 115. ✆ **0371/595-0055.** Main courses ¥40–¥160 ($5–$20). AE, DC, MC, V. 11:30am–2:30pm and 5:30–10pm.

MODERATE

Hénán Shífǔ ★★ HÉNÁN Located in a recessed courtyard off Rénmín Lù in the center of town, this is one of Zhèngzhōu's more popular and long-standing restaurants. The decor here is traditional Chinese with a loud festive atmosphere during peak dining hours. The food is uniformly excellent and intriguing, especially the *xiāngmá shāobǐng jiā niúròu* (also known as Zhèngzhōu's "hamburger"); it consists of marinated cold beef sandwiched in fried sesame bread—a subtle but sublime mix of cold and hot, savory and sweet. Other noteworthy dishes include *bāsù shíjǐn,* a vegetarian dish of mushrooms, seasonal greens, and bamboo shoots; and *guōtiē dòufu,* a tofu casserole. Service is efficient and friendly but the staff doesn't speak English, nor is there an English-language menu.

Rénmín Lù 22. ✆ **0371/622-2108.** Meal for 2 ¥60–¥160 ($7.50–$20). No credit cards. 11am–2:30pm and 5:30–9:30pm.

INEXPENSIVE

Cola Planet (Kělè Xīngqiú Cāntīng) INTERNATIONAL This trendy place with dark booths serves Asian and Western dishes that are tasty and inexpensive. Set meals, like the beef brisket with rice or any noodle dish, are especially good values.

Jiànkāng Lù 159, Fǎzhàn Dàshà. ✆ **0371/397-7155,** ext. 7777. Main courses ¥10–¥30 ($1.25–$3.50). No credit cards. 11am–1am.

Héjì Huìmiàn MUSLIM/NOODLES The specialty at this always-crowded Muslim restaurant in the center of town is the *tèyoū huìmiàn* (house specialty noodles), which consists of fresh coarse noodles served with a variety of mushrooms and small chunks of lamb in broth. Chilies, cilantro, and vinegar can be added at the table to taste. The first floor offers no-frills fast-food dining: Order your noodles for ¥6 (75¢) at the counter; then, chit in hand, join the long line to pay for and collect your food. The second and third floors offer a la carte dining in a more pleasant, well-lit environment, but menus are in Chinese only.

Rénmín Lù 3. ✆ **0371/622-8026.** Meal for 2 ¥25–¥60 ($3–$7.50). No credit cards. 1st floor: 10:30am–10pm; 2nd floor: 11am–3pm and 5–10pm.

ZHÈNGZHŌU AFTER DARK

Cola Planet (Jiànkāng Lù 159) is extremely popular with Zhèngzhōu's expats who come here for the live music, dancing, and the weekend DJ. Part-owner Lǎo Wáng also runs the casual and relaxed **Target Pub (Mùbiāo Jiǔbā)** at the south end of Jīng Liù Lù (✆ **0138/038-57056**), an even cooler place for those in the know. You can actually have a conversation here or simply sit at the bar and let Lǎo Wáng regale you with tales of off-roading in Lhasa, Mongolia, and the Gobi Desert.

AROUND ZHÈNGZHŌU

Gǒngyì, a city 80km (48 miles) west of Zhèngzhōu, is the final resting place of most of the Northern Sòng emperors. Scattered over an area of 30 sq. km (12 sq. miles), **Běi Sòng Huánglíng (Imperial Tombs of the Northern Sòng Dynasty)** was first built in 963, shortly after the first Sòng emperor, Jiànlóng, moved his capital to Kāifēng in 960. Over the next 160 years, seven of the nine Northern Sòng emperors, along with members of the imperial family, were buried here for a total of nearly 1,000 tombs. Today, most of the Sòng tombs

have fallen into a sad state of neglect. The main tomb currently open to visitors is **Yǒng Zhào Líng** (Dùfǔ Lù; ¥20/$2.50; open 8am–6pm), that of the fourth emperor, Yǒng Zhào, also known as the Rénzōng emperor (reigned 1022–1063). Inside the entrance, a "spirit way," lined on both sides by 14 elegant pairs of stone statues including lions, elephants, soldiers, and officials, leads to a walled compound which contains the emperor's tomb. To get to Yǒng Zhào Líng, take a Gǒngyì-bound bus at the Zhèngzhōu long-distance bus station, then take local bus no. 6 from the Gǒngyì bus station for two stops.

About 8km (5 miles) to the north of town is **Shíkū Sì** (admission ¥15/$1.90; open 8am–6pm), a series of Buddhist caves dating from the Northern Wèi dynasty (386–534) to the Sòng dynasty (960–1279). Today, five grottoes have been preserved, as well as three large Buddha cliff statues and over 7,000 carved Buddhist figures. **Cave 1** features an impressive depiction of the emperor and empress embarking on a pilgrimage to worship Buddha, while **Cave 5,** the smallest, has carvings of apsarases (celestial nymphs) on the ceiling. To get to the caves from the imperial tombs, take the infrequent tourist bus from outside the tombs, or hire a taxi for around ¥30 ($3.75).

2 Dēngfēng & Sōng Shān

Hénán Province, 63km (40 miles) SW of Zhèngzhōu, 87km (53 miles) SE of Luòyáng

Located south of the Yellow River in northwest Hénán Province, Sōng Shān is the central mountain of the five holy daoist mountains. Today, it's better known as the home of the Shàolín Temple (Shàolín Sì), birthplace of the eponymous brand of kung-fu martial art (Shàolín *gōngfu*) that has long been popular in Asia but has only in recent years has become increasingly known to the Western world. The main town serving Sōng Shān is Dēngfēng (meaning "Ascending to Bestow Honor"), named by the Táng dynasty Empress Wǔ Zétiān who preferred Sōng Shān to Tài Shān (Mount Tài) in Shāndōng Province, traditionally the favorite mountain of most emperors. Sōng Shān can be visited in conjunction with Luòyáng, or as a day trip from Zhèngzhōu once the highway linking the two is completed in late 2003. *Note:* For Chinese translations of selected establishments listed in this section, please turn to Appendix A.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The nearest **airport and rail connections** are in Zhèngzhōu, but air and rail tickets can be bought at **CITS** at the Guólǚ Dàlóu on Běihuán Lù Xīduàn (✆ **0371/288-3442**). At press time, **buses** make the run to Zhèngzhōu for ¥12 ($1.50) in 1½ hours. When a **new highway** linking the two cities is complete around October 2003, the trip should only take half an hour. From Dēngfēng, it's a 20-minute, ¥5 (60¢) **minibus** ride to Shàolín Sì (Shàolín Temple). Minibuses also connect Dēngfēng to Luòyáng (every 20 min. 6am–5pm; 1½ hr.; ¥13/$1.60) and Gǒngyì (8:30am, 9am, 1:30pm, 3pm, 3:30pm; 1 hr.). In Dēngfēng, all minibuses depart from the ramshackle **West Bus Station (Xī Kèchē Zhàn)** on Zhōngyuè Dàjiē just west of Sòngyáng Zhōng Jiē. Buy your tickets on the bus. A **taxi** from Zhèngzhōu to Dēngfēng will cost about ¥400 ($50), subject to negotiation.

GETTING AROUND The town of Dēngfēng is small enough to **walk** or traverse by **bus** (¥.50/5¢). Bus no. 2 runs from the Sòngyáng Academy (Sòngyáng Shūyuàn) through town to the Zhōngyuè Miào (temple). Bus no. 1 connects the Tiānzhōng Hotel with the West Bus Station.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China** (open Mon–Fri 8am–noon and 3–6:30pm in summer; 8am–noon and 2:30–5:30pm in winter) is at Shàolín Dàdào 114. ATM available.

Post Office The main post office (open 8am–6:30pm) is at Sōngshān Lù 86 (corner of Àimín Lù).

EXPLORING THE CENTRAL MOUNTAIN

Sōng Shān is made up of two mountain ranges, each with 36 peaks and dotted throughout with temples and pagodas. The larger range to the east is known as **Tàishì Shān,** and the lesser range to the west is **Shàoshì Shān.**

TREKKING THE MOUNTAIN Ascending the **eastern** or greater range **(Tàishì Shān)** of Sōng Shān is more challenging as there are no cable cars to bail out the weary. The trail typically starts behind the Sòngyáng Academy (Sòngyáng Shūyuàn). Stone steps lead all the way up to the 1,470m (4,900-ft.) high **Jùnjí Féng** where, unlike at China's other sacred mountains, there is no temple or building at the summit, just patches of grass and all of Sōng Shān below you. Allow 4 hours to reach the top. At press time, no ticket was required to climb this range, but plans are underway to create a Tàishì Shān Scenic Area. A ¥10 ($1.25) entrance fee is required to go up the road to the **Sōngyuè Temple Pagoda.**

Climbing the **western** or lesser range **(Shàoshì Shān)** is made easier by two cable cars. The **Sòngyáng Suǒdào,** a pleasant ¥20 ($2.50), 20-minute ride on a chairlift, is located about 150m (492 ft.) west of Tǎ Lín (Forest of Stupas) and runs less than halfway up the mountain. The ride (or hike) back down affords some marvelous views of the Shàolín Monastery and the Forest of Stupas nestled in the foothills. The **Sōng Shān Shàolín Suǒdào** is another 300m (984 ft.) from the lower terminus of the first gondola, and is a ¥100 ($13), 40-minute cable-car ride that goes past Ladder (Tīzi) Gully to just below the summit. From here, trails lead to the **Sōng Shān Diào Qiáo,** a suspension bridge stretched over a deep ravine of tall bald rocks. You can climb back down either the northern side of Shàoshì Shān underneath the cable cars, or the sheer southern face lined with steep narrow trails. At the parking lot below Sānhuáng Xínggōng (Sānhuáng Palace), you can hire a taxi back to Dēngfēng. For the relatively fit, climbing Shàoshì Shān takes 5 to 6 hours round-trip.

SHÀOSHÌ SHĀN

Shàolín Sì (Shàolín Monastery) ★ Most visitors these days come to Sōng Shān not for the mountain climbing but for this famous monastery, better known for its martial arts than for its religious affiliations. Today's Shàolín, more loud marketplace than quiet monastery, is overrun with vendors, tourists (up to 10,000 a day in the summer), and martial-arts students.

Located 15km (9 miles) west of Dēngfēng at the northern base of Shàoshì Shān, the monastery was built in A.D. 495 during the Northern Wèi dynasty. Legend has it that the Indian monk Bodhidharma (Dámó in Chinese), founder of the Chán (Zen) school of Mahayana Buddhism, retreated here in 527 after failing to convince the emperor of Liáng in Nánjīng of the "nothingness" of everything. With the Chán emphasis on meditation, Dámó is said to have sat praying in a cave for 9 years. As an aid to, or perhaps relief from, meditation, Dámó's disciples apparently developed a set of exercises based on the movements of certain animals like the praying mantis, monkey, and eagle, which eventually

developed into a form of physical and spiritual combat known as Shàolín kung-fu *(gōngfu)*. In the Táng dynasty, Prince Lǐ Shìmín (later to be the Táng Tàizhōng emperor) was rescued from a battle by 13 Shàolín monks. Thereafter the emperor decreed that the monastery always keep a troop of fighting monks, a practice that reached its apogee during the Míng dynasty (1368–1644), when 3,000 Shàolín monks were engaged in fighting Japanese pirates off the coast of China. The Shàolín monks' exploits, depicted in countless popular Hong Kong and Chinese films, have in recent years caught on with Western audiences. These days, it's not unusual to see Western faces leaping and stomping at the more than 60 martial-arts schools around the monastery.

Pugilism aside, the temple itself has a number of religious relics and frescoes worth viewing. In the **Wénshū Diàn (Wénshū Hall),** visitors can squint at a piece of cave wall supposedly imprinted with Dámó's shadow from all those months of meditation. In the last hall, **Qiān Fó Diàn (Thousand Buddha Hall),** is a gorgeous Míng dynasty fresco of 500 arhats (Buddhist disciples) worshipping Pílú, a celestial Buddha embodying wisdom and purity. Visitors can also view martial-arts performances for ¥20 ($2.50) throughout the day on the temple grounds.

About 400m (436 yd.) west of the temple is the impressive **Tǎ Lín (Forest of Stupas)** ★, the monastery's graveyard where 243 brick stupas built between the Táng (618–907) and Qīng (1644–1911) dynasties contain the remains of notable monks. The oldest stupa, honoring Táng dynasty monk Fǎwán Chánshī, was built in 791 and features a simple stupa on a two-tiered brick pedestal. High on the mountain behind the forest is the **cave (Dámó Dòng)** where Dámó was said to have meditated for 9 years.

Shàolín Sì. ¥ 60 ($7.25). 6:30am–6pm. To reach Shàolín Temple, see "Getting There," above, for directions.

Martial Arts Training

Shàolín Wǔshù Guǎn (**Martial Arts Training Center; ✆ 0371/ 274-9120**), inside the main entrance near the Shàolín Monastery, has a very basic hostel for students and an inexpensive restaurant. Fees for foreigners average ¥125 ($15) per day for classes and lodgings.

The **Shàolín Sì Tǎgōu Wǔshù Xuéxiào** (**Shàolín Monastery Wǔshù Institute at Tǎgōu; ✆ 0371/274-9627;** www.shaolin-kungfu.com), just outside the monastery's main entrance, is one of the largest and oldest schools, with 7,000 students. The fee for foreigners is ¥160 ($20) per day, including lodgings.

It is also possible to study at one of the many private schools in the area. **CITS** (Běihuán Lù Xīduàn, Guólǚ Dàlóu; **✆ 0371/288-3442;** fax 0371/287-3137) can arrange such study trips with students staying from a week to 6 months and longer. The office is open Monday through Friday from 8am to noon and 2:30 to 6pm.

TÀISHÌ SHĀN

Sōngyuè Tǎ (Sōngyuè Pagoda) ★ Five kilometers (3 miles) northwest of town, nestled at the foot of the Tàishì Shān Scenic Area (Fēngjǐng Qū) is the oldest surviving (A.D. 520) brick pagoda in China, originally part of the Sōngyuè Temple built in 509 as an imperial palace for the Xuán Wǔ emperor of the Northern Wèi. The Táng Gāozōng emperor and Empress Wǔ Zétiān stayed at this temple every time they visited Sōng Shān. One of the few relics from the temple still stands today: The gracefully curving, 15-story hollow pagoda is 40m (131 ft.) tall. It features arched doorways and windows at its thick base, and increasingly narrow upper stories separated by layers of stepped brickwork.

Today, the pagoda is still beautiful but not well kept, and it seems to attract more bats than humans. Motorcycle taxis run here from the nearby Sòngyáng Academy for around ¥10 ($1.25) each way.

Tàishì Shān Scenic Area (Fēngjǐng Qū). Admission: Tàishì Shān Scenic Area ¥10 ($1.25); Sōngyuè Pagoda ¥4 (50¢). 8am–6pm.

Zhōngyuè Miào Located about 5km (3 miles) east of Dēngfēng on the road to Zhèngzhōu, this is the largest daoist temple in Hénán Province, and one of the oldest dating to before 110 B.C. Today's complex dates to the Qīng dynasty (1644–1911). In the courtyard after the Chóngshèng gate (Chóngshèng Mén) are four 3m (9[f]3/4-ft.) high Sòng dynasty iron guards originally cast in 1064 with weapons in their hands, but these were supposedly sawed off during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). Just before the central gate (Língjí Mén) is a rather unusual 1604 **stele with carvings** of the five sacred daoist mountains: Sōng Shān stands in the middle, Tài Shān in the east, Héng Shān Běi in the north, Hěng Shān Nán in the south, and Huá Shān in the west. The temple's central hall, the impressive golden-roofed, double-eaved **Zhōngyuè Dàdiàn,** resembles the Forbidden City's Tàihé Gōng and has a statue of the god of Sōng Shān.

Zhōngyuè Dàjiē. Admission ¥15 ($1.90). 8am–6:30pm. Bus: no. 2.

A UNIQUE OBSERVATORY

Gàochéng Guānxīng Tái Located about 8km (5 miles) southeast of Dēngfēng, this intriguing observatory is a welcome change for those who've had their fill of temples and pagodas. Built in 1276 by Guō Shǒujìng, a Yuán dynasty astronomer, this 10m (33-ft.) high pyramidic brick structure is China's earliest surviving observatory. In Guō's time, a long stone beam from a runnel in the back wall was fitted with shadow markers and used to measure time and seasonal solstices.

Gàochéng Zhèn. Admission ¥10 ($1.25). 8am–6pm. From Dēngfēng, catch any Gāochéng-bound minibus or *miàndī* taxi (¥2–¥3/25¢–30¢) from the corner of Yángchéng Lù and Shàolín Dàdào in the southeastern part of town.

WHERE TO STAY

MODERATE

Fēngyuán Dàjiǔdiàn This three-star hotel is just west of the Tiānzhōng and has several wings with two grades of standard rooms. Opt for the more expensive rooms (¥388/$48), which at least are larger, newer, and brighter. The staff tries to be helpful, but overall service ranks below that at the Tiānzhōng.

Zhōngyuè Dàjiē 18. ✆ **0371/286-5080.** Fax 0371/286-7090. 132 units. ¥238–¥388 ($29–$48) standard room; ¥888 ($111) suite. 20%–30% discounts possible. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; lounge; sauna; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; massage; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Shàolín Guójì Dàjiǔdiàn (Shàolín International Hotel) The first upmarket hotel to cater to Western tourists, this three-star property is still popular with independent travelers, but the facilities and service do not match those at the Fèngyuán or Tiānzhōng hotels. Rooms are comfortable enough, even though they're unremarkably decorated with standard-issue brown furniture and old carpets. Bathrooms could use a scrubbing.

Shàolín Dàdào 16. ✆ **0371/286-6188.** Fax 0371/287-1448. 60 units. ¥258–¥358 ($32–$44) standard room; ¥576 ($72) suite. 20%–30% discounts possible. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; lounge; sauna; concierge; business center; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; massage; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Tiānzhōng Dàjiǔdiàn This sprawling Chinese-style hotel complete with grand upturned eaves is the best place to stay in town. Rated four stars, it only deserves three. Rooms are spacious and fitted with the usual nondescript brown furniture and rather lumpy beds. Bathrooms are worn but clean. The friendly staff is used to dealing with foreign tour groups, and Western breakfasts are served on request.

Zhōngyuè Dàjiē 6. ✆ **0371/289-1688.** Fax 0371/286-1560). 130 units. ¥315–¥399 ($39–$49) standard room; ¥888 ($111) suite. No credit cards. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; sauna; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; massage; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

WHERE TO DINE

No restaurants stand out in Dēngfēng, so stick to hotel dining. The **Tiānzhōng Dàjiǔdiàn** (✆ **0371/289-1688;** see above) offers Western breakfasts (upon request) and Chinese lunch and dinner buffets for ¥30 ($3.75) per person. You can also order from the menu (in Chinese only); a meal for two averages ¥80 to ¥100 ($10–$13). For the adventurous, there is a **night food market** in the evenings at the corner of Zhōngyuè Dàjiē and Càishì Jiē, a block east of Sōng Shān Zhōng Lù, where you can eat your fill of spicy kabobs, stir-fries, and the local noodles, *dāoxiāo miàn.* The **Jīnguàn Miànbāo Xīdiǎn Fáng** on the western side of Sōng Shān Zhōng Lù, just north of Shàolín Dàdào, has a wide selection of breads and pastries and is open from 6:30am to 9:30pm. Just up the street from the bakery is the small **Xiāngjī Wáng,** selling fried chicken.

3 Luòyáng

Hénán Province, 322 km (200 miles) E of Xī'ān, 150km (93 miles) W of Zhèngzhōu

Situated in western Hénán Province at the junction of the Grand Canal and the ancient Silk Road, Luòyáng (literally "north of the river Luò") was the capital of nine dynasties from the Eastern Zhōu (770–221 B.C.) to the Late Táng (923–936). Today, this industrial town with a population of 1.3 million is better known as home to the magnificent UNESCO World Heritage site, **Lóngmén Grottoes (Lóngmén Shíkū)** ★★★, a must-see for anyone interested in Buddhist art and sculpture. A visit in April will allow you to take in Luòyáng's famous **Peony Festival** as well. *Note:* For Chinese translations of selected establishments listed in this section, please turn to Appendix A.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Luòyáng's small airport is located about 11km (7 miles) north of the city center. There are daily **flights** from Luòyáng to Běijīng (1½ hr.) and Shànghǎi (1 hr., 40 min.), as well as weekly flights to Xī'ān (1 hr.), Chéngdū (1 hr., 15 min.), and Chóngqìng (1½ hr.). Tickets can be purchased at the **CAAC office** (**Míngháng Shòupiào Chù;** ✆ **0379/393-1120**) on Jīchǎng Lù just north of the railway station. **CITS** is at Jiǔdū Xī Lù4, Lǚyóu Dàshà (✆ **0379/433-1337**); they can also arrange tickets.

From the **railway station** (✆ **0379/395-2673**) just north of the city center on Dàonán XīLù, trains run to Běijīng (express train 8 hr.), Shànghǎi (15 hr.), Xī'ān (6 hr.), Zhèngzhōu (2 hr.), and Kāifēng (3 hr.).

From the **long-distance bus station** (**chángtú qìchē zhàn;** ✆ **0379/323-9453**), opposite the railway station on Jīngǔyuán Lù, buses run to Zhèngzhōu (every 20 min. 5:40am–7pm; 2–2½ hr.; ¥24–¥30/$3–$3.75), Kāifēng (every 30 min. 6:40am–6pm; 3 hr.; ¥3/$4.50), and Dēngfēng (hourly; 1½ hr.; ¥13/$1.60).

Private car rental from Zhèngzhōu to Luòyáng will run around ¥300 ($38) one-way and ¥400 ($50) round-trip. Your hotel can arrange this.

GETTING AROUND Most **taxis** charge ¥6 (75¢) for 3km (2 miles), then ¥1 (15¢) per kilometer until 10km (6 miles), after which the price rises to ¥1.50 (20¢) per kilometer. From 10pm to 5am, prices rise to ¥5.80 (75¢) for 2km (1¼ miles), then ¥1.75 (20¢) per kilometer thereafter. The bus costs ¥1/15¢. From the railway station, bus no. 81 runs to the Lóngmén Grottoes, bus no. 83 runs to the airport, and bus no. 11 runs to the western part of town via the Friendship Hotel.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China** (open Mon–Fri 8am–6pm) is located at Zhōngzhōu Zhōng Lù 439. Foreign exchange is available at counter 17. An ATM is located here.

Post Office The main post office (open 8am–9pm) at Zhōngzhōu Zhōng Lù 216 has a Western Union in addition to the usual services.

Visa Extensions Located at Kǎixuán Xī Lù 1, the **Gōngān Jú** (**PSB; ✆ 0379/393-8397;** open Mon–Fri 8am–noon and 3–6:30pm in summer; 8am–noon and 2–5:30pm in winter) can process visa extensions in 3 business days.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

Lóngmén Shíkū (Dragon Gate Grottoes) ★★★ Located 13 km (8 miles) south of the city center, along the banks of the Yī River (Yī Hé) which divides Xiāng Shān to the east from Lóngmén Shān to the west, these caves are considered one of the three great sculptural treasure troves in China. (The other two are the Mògāo caves in Dūnhuáng, and the Yúngǎng Grottoes in Dàtóng, the precursor to Lóngmén.) In general, the limestone is harder at Lóngmén than at Yúngǎng, and the caves closer to the river, making it easier to discern the details but more difficult to see the caves as a whole.

The first caves were carved in the Northern Wèi dynasty in A.D. 493, when the Xiào Wén emperor moved his capital from Píngchéng (today's Dàtóng) to Luòyáng. Over the next 400 years, cave art and sculpture flourished, reaching their zenith during the Táng dynasty (618–907) and even continuing into the Northern Sòng. Benefactors of the Lóngmén Caves included imperial families, high-ranking officers, Buddhist leaders, and merchants as well as common folk, many of whom could only afford the smaller honeycomb niches. Today, there are 2,300 caves and niches with more than 2,800 inscriptions and over 100,000 Buddhist statues on both East Hill and West Hill. About 30% of the caves are from the Northern Wèi dynasty (386–584); their statues are more elongated, static, and lacking in complexity and detail than the later Táng dynasty sculptures which account for about 60% of the caves, with their fuller figures, gentle features, and characteristic liveliness. The section of Lóngmén Shíkū currently open to visitors is concentrated in a 1km (½ mile) long stretch on the West Hill side of the Yī River. Morning is the best time to visit the Lóngmén Grottoes, which mainly face east and catch the light from the rising sun. Try to arrive before 8am to avoid the tour groups who usually descend on the caves around 9am.

Following are the best caves of the lot, starting at the entrance and running south. Displays have rudimentary English captions, but even for the most independent traveler, this is one of those times when a guided tour is highly recommended. English-speaking guides are available for hire just inside the main entrance for ¥100 ($13).

Bīnyáng Sān Dòng (Three Bīnyáng Caves) Carving of these caves began in the Northern Wèi dynasty from 500 to 523, but the carver died in 523 after completing only the middle cave. The other two were finished later. All three were commissioned by the Xuán Wǔ emperor, who dedicated the middle cave to his father, the Xiào Wén emperor, the southern cave to his mother, and the northern cave to himself. The figures in the middle cave are comparatively longer and thinner than their fleshier, curvier Suí and Táng dynasty counterparts in the other two caves. Missing reliefs are now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City.

Wànfó Dòng (Ten Thousand Buddha Cave) ★ Finished in 680, this exquisite cave actually contains carvings of 15,000 Buddhas, mostly in small niches in the north and south walls, with the smallest Buddha measuring only 4cm (1½ in.) in height. Even more remarkable is the fact that this cave was commissioned by two women, an indication perhaps of the comparatively elevated status of females during Empress Wǔ Zétiān's reign. The centerpiece of the cave is the Amitabha Buddha, whose delicate rounded features are said to be modeled on those of one of the cave's patrons.

Liánhuā Dòng (Lotus Flower Cave) Carved during the Northern Wèi dynasty around 527, this cave's highlight is a lotus flower, measuring 3m (10 ft.) in diameter, carved in high relief on the ceiling. Representing serenity and purity, lotus flowers are common motifs in Buddhist art. Surrounding the lotus are some faded but still fine apsarases (Buddhist flying nymphs).

Fèngxiān Sì (Ancestor Worshipping Temple) ★★★ Carved in the Táng dynasty between 672 and 675, this majestic cave is the largest and most beautiful at Lóngmén. Originally started by the Táng Gāozōng emperor, it was expedited by Empress Wǔ Zétiān, an ardent Buddhist, who poured money (from her cosmetics budget, it is said) into its completion, no doubt because the central Buddha's face is thought be modeled on hers. This main Buddha, Vairocana, seated on a lotus flower, is a stunning 17m (56 ft.) tall, with a 4m (13-ft.) high head, 1.9m (6-ft.) long earlobes, a wide forehead, a full nose, and serene eyes, which were painted black at one time.

Flanking the Buddha are the disciple Kasyapa (the elder) to the left, and Sakyamuni's cousin, the clever disciple Ananda (the younger), to the right. Beside the disciples are two attending bodhisattvas (Buddhas who delay entry into nirvana in order to help others), Manjusri and Samantabhadra, who are decorated with exquisitely fine beads and ornamental drapes. It is said that this tableau of statues is a distilled replica of the Táng imperial court, with the dignified main Buddha representing the emperor (or empress), the obedient disciples representing the ministers, the heavenly kings standing in for the warriors and soldiers, the richly dressed bodhisattvas evoking the imperial concubines, and the flying devas (spirits) recalling palace maids.

Fun Fact A Brilliant Coincidence?

Each winter solstice, there is a moment when the sun and the moon are said to shine on the Vairocana Buddha's halo at the exact same time, illuminating the head in a cosmic union of *yīn* and *yáng*. Coincidence or deliberate planning?

Yàofāng Dòng (Medical Prescription Cave) This small cave was first carved in the Northern Wèi dynasty but was appended in the subsequent dynasties. The main Buddha here is a Northern Qí (550–577) creation, its fuller figure emblematic of the transition from the thin Wèi figures to the fuller Táng sculptures. At the entrance are stelae carved with Chinese medicine prescriptions for 120 diseases, including diabetes and madness.

Gǔyáng Dòng First carved during the Northern Wèi sometime between 488 and 528, this is the oldest cave at Lóngmén, though additions were being made well into the Táng dynasty by different benefactors. Nineteen of the famous "Lóngmén Twenty" (20 pieces of calligraphy deemed especially fine and representative of their time) are found here. The central Buddha's head was restored during the Qīng dynasty, and is said to resemble daoist master Lǎozǐ.

Shíkū Dòng (Stone Room Cave) This last of the major caves was carved in the Northern Wèi between 516 and 528 and has the best worshipping scenes in Lóngmén. On both sides of the wall are niches with low-relief carvings of officials in high hats, court ladies in flowing robes carrying single lotus flowers, and servants carrying sheltering canopies, all in a procession to honor Buddha.

Luòlóng Lù. Admission ¥60 ($7.50). Apr–Oct 6:30am–6:30pm; Nov–Mar 7am–6pm. Bus: no. 53, 60 (from the western part of town opposite the Friendship Hotel), and 81 (from the railway station) run to the caves (35–45 min., ¥1/15¢). Taxi: about ¥30 ($3.75).

OTHER ATTRACTIONS

Báimǎ Sì (White Horse Temple) It is more than likely that earlier Buddhist temples were built along the Silk Routes in what is today's Xīnjiāng (the path by which Buddhism entered China), but this is widely held to be the first officially sanctioned Buddhist temple built in China proper. Located 13km (7 miles) to the east of Luòyáng, this temple was built by the Eastern Hàn Míng Dì emperor (reigned A.D. 58–76) to honor and house two Indian monks who, the story goes, came from India bearing Buddhist scriptures on two white horses. Two stone horses (likely from the Sòng dynasty) stand guard outside the gate to today's temple, mostly a Míng construction. Just inside the main entrance in the southeastern and southwestern corners of the complex are the tombs of the two Indian monks. In the impressive Yuán dynasty Dàxióng Diàn (Great Hall), there are 18 arhats (disciples) of ramie cloth.

Báimǎ Sì Lù. Admission ¥25 ($3). Apr–Oct 7am–7pm; Nov–Mar 7:30am–5:30pm. Bus: no. 56 (from Xīguā stop on Zhōngzhōu Zhōng Lù).

Gǔmù Bówùguǎn (Ancient Hàn Tombs) ★ This fascinating museum features 25 reconstructed underground ancient tombs dating from the Western Hàn dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 9) to the Northern Sòng dynasty (960–1127). By the Eastern Hàn dynasty (25–220), the use of hollow bricks with painted designs had given way to larger stone vault tombs made of more solid carved brick. Eleven of the tombs also have elaborate wall murals, the most famous of which is the Western Hàn "Expelling the Ghost Mural Tomb" which features a faded but still gorgeous fresco of celebrants holding a feast before the exorcism. The tombs are about 10km (6 miles) north of town on the road to the airport.

Jīchǎng Lù. Admission ¥15 ($1.80). 8:30am–6pm. Bus: no. 83 (Gǔmù Bówùguǎn stop).

Luòyáng Bówùguǎn (Luòyáng Museum) Standouts in this museum of local relics include a section dedicated to the Xià (2200–1700 B.C.) and Shāng dynasties (1700–1100 B.C.), with an emphasis on items excavated at Èrlǐtóu (an important Shāng site 30km/18 miles east of Luòyáng), including jade, bronzes,

and pottery artifacts; Hàn dynasty exhibits of painted pottery and tomb frescoes; and some fine Táng dynasty glazed pottery.

Zhōngzhōu Zhōng Lù 298. Admission ¥10 ($1.25). 8am–6:30pm. Bus: no. 4, 11, 50.

Wángchéng Gōngyuán Every April during the Luòyáng Peony Festival (Apr 15–25), this park, built on the former site of a Zhōu dynasty city, Wángchéng, is awash in a riot of colors: red, white, black, yellow, purple, pink, blue, green, and every shade in between. Luòyáng produces the best peonies China has to offer, so don't miss paying a visit if you're in town then.

Zhōngzhōu Zhōng Lù. Admission ¥2 (25¢). 6:30am–6:30pm. Bus: no. 4, 11, 50.

WHERE TO STAY

Luòyáng has several low-quality four-star rated hotels with reasonable prices. Most hotels regularly give 20% to 30% discounts unless otherwise noted. There is usually a 5% city tax but no additional service charge. If you're going to be in town for the Peony Festival, book a room in advance.

MODERATE

Luòyáng Mǔdān Dàjiǔdiàn (Luòyáng Peony Hotel) Located 1.5km (1 mile) west of the city center, this 15-story hotel, newly renovated in 2002, offers comfortable accommodations at reasonable prices. Rooms are small but are clean and pleasantly decorated with blue furniture and comfortable chairs. Bathrooms are spacious and clean.

Zhōngzhōu Xī Lù 15. ✆ **0379/485-6699.** Fax 0379/485-6999. 200 units. ¥480–¥550 ($60–$68) standard room; ¥830 ($103) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; indoor pool; health club; sauna; concierge; tour desk; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Mǔdān Chéng Bīnguǎn (Peony Plaza) ★ This four-star hotel offers some of the flashiest and most modern accommodations in town. A wall of smoked blue glass on the outside, the 28-story tower has a massive three-story atrium lobby, a revolving rooftop restaurant, and a wide range of facilities. Guest rooms are cozy enough but the furniture is showing wear. Bathrooms are a good size and come with scales. Service is not quite up to four-star international standards but is adequate. A Western buffet breakfast is served.

Náncāng Lù 2. ✆ **0379/493-1111.** Fax 0379/493-0303. 163 units. ¥547 ($68) standard room; ¥782 ($97) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; lounge; indoor pool; health club; sauna; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar.

INEXPENSIVE

Xīn Yǒuyì Bīnguǎn (New Friendship Hotel) Located in the western part of town, this three-star annex to the old Friendship Hotel, renovated in 2000, has pleasant, modern rooms. Units come with the usual nondescript brown furniture but beds have clean linens and are comfortable. Bathrooms are small but clean. The hotel also has a Western restaurant, part of its entertainment center that includes a pool table, coffee bar, and shuffleboard.

Xīyuán Xī Lù 6. ✆ **0379/468-6666.** Fax 0379/491-2328. 120 units. ¥358–¥458 ($45–$57) standard room; ¥716 ($89) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; sauna; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, fridge.

WHERE TO DINE

For Western food, hotel dining offers the most reliable fare. The **Luòyáng Peony Hotel** (✆ **0379/485-6699;** see above) has a Western dining room that

serves fish and chips, pizzas, and lamb chops for dinner at ¥20 to ¥40 ($2.50–$5) per entree. There's a **KFC** at Zhōngzhōu Zhōng Lù 251 and a **McDonald's** at the Shànghǎi Shìchǎng Bùxíng Jiē (pedestrian street).

MODERATE

Churrascaria Do Brasil BRAZILIAN This Chinese-style Brazilian barbecue offers all-you-can-eat lunch and dinner buffets. Choose from any number of meats, including beefsteak, lamb, chicken wings, cuttlefish, even spicy vegetarian chicken. Chefs will deliver the grilled skewers right to your table, accompanied by a variety of cold Chinese dishes, dim sum, dumplings, and fruit.

Jīnghuá Lù 278 (near north entrance of Workers Cultural Palace). ✆ **0379/492-2839.** Lunch ¥38 ($4.50) per person; dinner ¥45 ($5.80) per person. No credit cards. 11am–2pm and 6–9pm.

Zhēn Bù Tóng ★ LUÒYÁNG The specialty at this popular restaurant housed in a huge five-story Chinese-style building is the famous *Luòyáng Shuǐxí* (Water Banquet), consisting of 8 cold and 16 hot dishes variously cooked in broth, soup, or juice (examples include *zhēnyāncài,* a soup made of ham, radish, mushrooms, and eggs; and *mìzhī tǔdòu,* sweet potato fries in syrup). The full complement of dishes, designed for a table of 10 people, costs ¥688 ($86), but happily, the first floor dining hall offers more reasonably sized four-dish or five-dish mini-banquets. The staff is a little surly, but this is a unique local dining experience that shouldn't be missed.

Zhōngzhōu Dōng Lù 369. ✆ **0379/395-5787.** Reservations recommended. Meal for 2 ¥40–¥80 ($5–$10). No credit cards. 9:30am–2:30pm and 4:30–9pm.

4 Kāifēng ★

Hénán Province, 70km (43 miles) E of Zhèngzhōu

Located in central Hénán Province, just 9km (6 miles) south of the Yellow River (Huáng Hé), Kāifēng has a history lasting more than 2,700 years as the capital of seven dynasties. Its heyday was during the Northern Sòng, when it was known as East Capital (Dōngjīng), the most prosperous city in the world, with a population of 1.5 million. Kāifēng is also believed to be the first place the Jews settled when they arrived in China. Having survived fire, earthquake, and flooding from the Yellow River, Kāifēng today is a sleepy but charming town not yet overtaken by massive development.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The nearest major **airport** is at Zhèngzhōu. Frequent **trains** serve Kāifēng from Zhèngzhōu (50 min.), Xī'ān (2 daily; 9 hr.), and Shànghǎi (3 daily; 13 hr.). Kāifēng's railway station is in the south part of town.

Buses run to Zhèngzhōu (every ½ hour 7am–7pm; 1 hr., 20 min.; ¥12/$1.40) from the **Kèyùn Xī Zhàn (West Bus Station)** on Yíngbīn Lù. Less frequent buses also head there from the **long-distance bus station (Qìchē Zhōngxīn Zhàn)** across from the railway station. Private **taxi** rental between Zhèngzhōu and Kāifēng costs around ¥300 ($37) round-trip.

GETTING AROUND **Taxis** cost ¥5 (60¢) for 3km (2 miles), then ¥1 (15¢) per kilometer. Between 11pm and 6am, the rate increases to ¥5.60 (70¢) for 3km (2 miles), then ¥1.20 (15¢) per kilometer. All **buses** cost ¥1 (15¢) per ride. **Tricycle taxis** cost ¥2 (25¢) for most places within the city walls.

Bus no. 1 runs from the railway station through the center of town to the Dragon Pavilion and Iron Pagoda. Bus no. 15 connects Po Pagoda in the

southeast to the Dragon Pavilion in the northwest. Kāifēng is also an easy city to get around by **bike,** which you can rent at a small stand just north of the CITS office on Yíngbīn Lù for ¥10 ($1.25) per day (¥100/$13 deposit).

VISITOR INFORMATION Kāifēng's **Tourism Bureau** (**Lǚyóujú; ✆ 0378/398-9388,** ext. 6507) can answer basic questions about accommodations and sights. For information on Kāifēng's Jewish history or to see the Jewish stelae in the museum, contact **CITS** (Yíngbīn Lù 98; ✆ **0378/393-9032**), actually a subsidiary of the Tourism Bureau.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs There's a **Bank of China,** equipped with ATMs, at Zhōngshān Lù 32. It's open March through May and September through November from 8am to 6pm; December through February from 8am to 5pm; and June through August from 8am to 6:30pm.

Post Office The main post office is at Zìyóu Lù 33. It's open from 8am to 6:30pm.

Visa Extensions The **PSB** is at Zhōngshān Lù Zhōngduàn 86 (✆ **0378/532-2242;** Mon–Fri 8:30am–noon and 3–6pm, 8:30am–noon and 2:30–5:30pm in winter).

EXPLORING KĀIFĒNG

Dà Xiàngguó Sì Originally built in A.D. 555, this temple, one of China's more famous Buddhist shrines, had its heyday during the Sòng dynasty (960–1279), when there were 64 Sutra Halls on the premises. Destroyed in the flood of 1642 and rebuilt in 1766, the temple's main attraction is the magnificent four-sided statue of Avalokitesvara (the male Indian bodhisattva who became transfigured over the years into the female Guānyīn), with a thousand hands and a thousand eyes (all-seeing and compassionate), who stands surrounded by 500 arhats. Weighing 2,000 kilograms (2.2 tons), the 7m (23-ft.) high statue was said to have been carved from the trunk of a thousand-year-old ginkgo tree and required 58 years to complete.

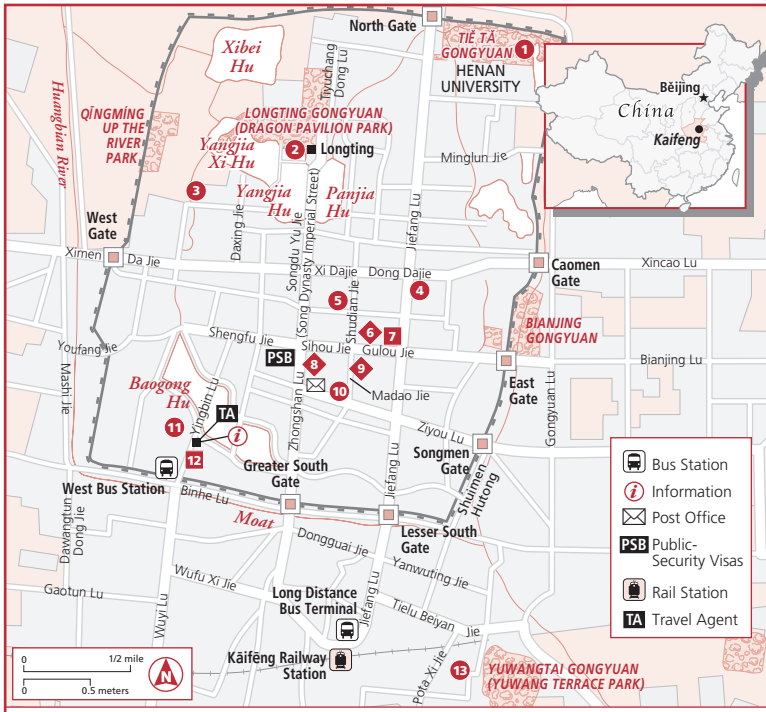
Ziyóu Lù 54. Admission ¥20 ($2.50). 8am–6pm.

Kāifēng Bówùguǎn (Kāifēng Museum) Located just south of Lord Bāo Lake (Bāo Gōng Hú), this rather dilapidated and neglected museum is ordinarily not worth visiting, but the fourth floor houses two stone tablets that record early Jewish history in Kāifēng. In order to see the stelae, you must first contact either the Kāifēng Tourism Bureau (Lǚyóujú; ✆ 0378/398-9388, ext. 6507) or CITS (Yíngbīn Lù 98; ✆ 0378/393-9032) to secure a permit (¥50/$6.25 per person).

Yíngbīn Lù 26. Admission ¥10 ($1.25). Tues–Sun 8:30–11:30am and 3–6pm. Bus: no. 1, 7, 12.

Lóngtíng Gōngyuán (Dragon Pavilion Park) This park sits on the site of the former imperial palaces of six dynasties from the time of the Later Liáng dynasty (907–923) through part of the Jīn dynasty (1115–1234). The park's entrance is at the northern end of **Sòngdū Yùjiē (Imperial Street of the Sòng Dynasty),** once exclusively reserved for use by the emperor, imperial family, and aristocrats. Inside the park's main entrance, the imperial way continues past two lakes, Pānjiā Hú to the east and Yángjiā Hú to the west, and ends at the foot of Lóng Tíng (Dragon Pavilion), reconstructed in 1692 for worship of the emperor. Seventy-two steep steps to the top reward you with views of Kāifēng.

Zhōngshān Lù Běiduàn. Admission ¥25 ($3). Nov–Mar 7am–6:00pm; Apr–Oct 7am–6:30pm. Bus: no. 15.



ACCOMMODATIONS ■

Dōngjīng Dàfàndiàn **12**
东京大饭店

Yùxiáng Dàjiǔdiàn **7**
玉祥大酒店

DINING ◆

Dìyīlóu Bāozǐ Guǎn (Number One Dumpling Restaurant) **8**
第一楼包子馆

Nightmarket **9**
夜市

Xīnshēng Měishíyuán **6**
新生美食园

ATTRACTIONS ●

Dà Xiàngguó Sì **10**
大相国寺

Former Kāifēng Synagogue **4**
开封犹太教堂遗址

Kāifēng Bówùguǎn (Kāifēng Museum) **11**
开封博物馆

Lóngtíng (Dragon Pavilion) **2**
龙亭

Pō Tǎ **13**
繁塔

Qīngmíng Shànghé Yuán **3**
清明上河园

Shānshǎngān Huìguǎn **5**
山陕甘会馆

Tiě Tǎ (Iron Pagoda) **1**
铁塔

Pō Tǎ ★ Tucked away in a maze of alleys in the southeastern corner of town, this hexagonal pagoda, the oldest standing building in Kāifēng, was originally built in 974 with nine floors. The 37m (121-ft.) tall, three-story Míng dynasty pagoda is covered both inside and out with gray brick tiles, each meticulously carved with a Buddha image. There are 108 such images, including those of Sakyamuni, Amitabha, and various bodhisattvas and apsarases. Hiring a taxi is the easiest way to reach the pagoda.

Pō Tǎ Xī Jiē 30. Admission ¥5 (60¢). 8am–6pm. Bus: no. 15 (ask to be dropped off at Pō Tǎ Xī Jiē, then follow the red arrows on the walls).

Kāifēng's Jews

The origins of Kāifēng's Jewish community are a mystery. Three stone tablets (dated 1489, 1663, and 1679) from Kāifēng's old synagogue record different dates of arrival. Although inscriptions on the 1663 stele points record the arrival of Jews during the Zhōu dynasty (1100–221 B.C.), it is now more widely accepted that the early Jews likely came from Persia via the Silk Routes sometime in the late 10th century during the Sòng dynasty. According to the 1489 stele, the first arrivals were traders who were invited to stay on in Kāifēng by the Sòng emperor, who also bestowed his surname and those of his six ministers on the Jews who were said to have arrived with 73 surnames, and who subsequently took on the Chinese surnames of Zhào, Lǐ, Ài, Zhāng, Gāo, Jīn, and Shí. A synagogue was established in 1163 but was often rebuilt, usually after natural disasters like the Great Flood of 1642, which damaged much of the town.

By most accounts, the Jews in Kāifēng did not retain any contacts with other Jews outside of China. The first Western report of their existence came from Jesuit priest Matteo Ricci in 1605 when he met Ài Tiān, a Kāifēng Jew who had come to Běijīng seeking office. Ricci later sent one of his Chinese converts to Kāifēng who confirmed Ài Tiān's story that the town had many Israelite families, and a magnificent synagogue containing the five books of Moses.

The Jewish community continued to worship in Kāifēng until the flood of 1852 again destroyed their synagogue, which was never rebuilt after that. Evidence indicates that the remaining Jews became completely assimilated. Today, with renewed interest in the Jews of Kāifēng, there are a few self-identified Chinese Jews making themselves known again, the most notable being Zhāng Xīngwàng, who has been working with the Kāifēng Museum to preserve the history of Kāifēng's Jews. He can be contacted through CITS or the Kāifēng Tourism Bureau (Lǚyóujú; ✆ 0378/398-9388, ext. 6507). In the United States, information about Kāifēng's Jewish heritage, sometimes including special-interest tours, is available through the Sino-Judaic Institute, 232 Lexington Dr., Menlo Park, CA 94205 (www.sino-judiac.com).

Qīngmíng Shànghé Yuán ★ Just west of the Lóng Tíng Gōngyuán, this manufactured theme park is modeled after the famous 12th-century scroll painting *Qīngmíng Shànghé Yuán* (Festival of Pure Brightness on the River)—now hanging in the Forbidden City in Běijīng—that depicts Kāifēng at its height. The park contains reconstructed traditional restaurants, shops, and bridges, and hosts performances by dancers and musicians that re-enact Sòng dynasty rituals. Young women demonstrating traditional embroidery emulate skilled artisans in the imperial workshops who embroidered the emperor's robes using silk threads that were one-fifth the thickness of today's threads, and pulled by needles as thin as human hairs.

The highlight of the park for interested Western visitors is the **Jewish Cultural Exhibit Center (Yóutài Wénhuà Zhǎnlǎnguǎn),** located in the western part of the park behind the Wáng Yuánwài Jiā building. The history of Jews in the city (see "Kāifēng's Jews," above) is documented in four rooms, with exhibits on early Jewish life in the city, as well as photographs of Jewish graves and synagogues that once stood in Kāifēng. If you're here when the center is closed, check with the Tourist Service Center just before the park's main entrance. The eager-to-please staff will often open up the Jewish Center for inquiring Western guests. For ¥5 (60¢) with a ¥20 ($2.50) deposit, the Tourist Service Center also provides an occasionally clumsy but nevertheless helpful audio tour of the park in English.

Lóng Tíng Xī Lù 5. Admission ¥30 ($3.75); public holidays and festivals ¥40 ($5). 8:30am–6pm; Jewish Cultural Center Fri–Mon 9–11:30am and 2:30–6pm. Bus: no. 15.

Shānshǎngān Huìguǎn ★ This magnificent guild hall was built during the reign of the Qiánlóng emperor (1736–1796) by businessmen from the three provinces of Shānxī, Shaǎnxī and, later, Gānsù, who were living in Kāifēng. All the buildings, from the stage, bell tower, and drum tower, to the double-eaved, three-gate archway and the Main Hall, are decorated with overwhelmingly vivid and exquisite wood, brick, and stone carvings.

Xúfǔ Jiē 85. Admission ¥10 ($1.25). 8am–6:30pm.

Tiě Tǎ (Iron Pagoda) ★ Kāifēng's most famous landmark is located in the northeast corner of town. This beautiful 11th-century pagoda is actually a brick structure whose facade of glazed brown tiles gives the impression of cast iron. Originally built in 1049, the building has survived earthquakes, fires, and the great flood of 1642, which buried the base under several meters of silt. The 13-story, 55m (180-ft.) tall, octagonal structure has brick panels featuring exquisite designs of apsarases, *qílín* (Chinese unicorns), dragons, and flowers. For another ¥10 ($1.25), you can climb the 168 steps to the top, though the experience can be a bit claustrophobic.

Jiěfàng Lù 175. Admission ¥20 ($2.50). 7am–7pm. Bus: no. 1.

WHERE TO STAY

Dōngjīng Dàfàndiàn Located across from the West Bus Station, this sprawling hotel had a portion of its rooms renovated in 2002. The new rooms are clean and comfortable, and come equipped with classical upholstered furniture and the usual amenities. Bathrooms are small but clean. Cheaper rooms are available, but they are older and unrenovated, and the bathrooms need a good scrubbing. The staff doesn't speak much English but tries to be helpful.

Yíngbīn Lù 99. ✆ **0378/398-9388.** Fax 0378/393-8861. 200 units. ¥200–¥328 ($25–$41) standard room. MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; indoor pool; health club; sauna; concierge; tour desk; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge.

Yùxiáng Dàjiǔdiàn Located steps from Kāifēng's famous night market, this three-star hotel, which generally caters to high-end tour groups from Asia, is the newest (2000) and tallest (18 stories) hotel in town. Guest rooms are unremarkable but adequate, fitted with comfortable beds and the usual brown furniture. Bathrooms are slightly worn but acceptable.

Nántǔ Lù 1. ✆ **0378/599-5588.** Fax 0378/599-5566. 140 units. ¥318 ($40) standard room. 40% discounts. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; lounge; concierge; tour desk; business center; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

WHERE TO DINE

Hotels catering to foreigners all have Chinese restaurants that offer decent if forgettable fare, with a meal for two averaging ¥40 to ¥80 ($5–$10). The **Dìyīlóu Bāozi Guǎn (Number One Dumpling Restaurant)** at Sìhòu Jiē 8 (✆ **0378/565-0780;** open 10:30am–11pm) is a local institution specializing in dumplings and buns. Their *xiǎolóng bāo,* small dumplings filled with pork and a hint of broth, are a must-try. A bit further to the east at Gǔlóu Jiē 66 is another informal diner, the **Xīnshēng Měishíyuán** (✆ **0378/596-8918**), which offers a wide variety of noodles, kabobs, stir-fries, pastries, and snacks. There is no English menu, but purchase your meal tickets for ¥8 ($1) and up, then go around to the different stalls and order. The Dōngjīng hotel also has a **fast-food eatery** out front that offers convenient and inexpensive dining for ¥4 to ¥8 ($1 and under) per person. Just point to your choices from the many buffet dishes that are constantly being replenished.

For the more adventurous, the **night market,** which starts around 7pm on Sìhòu Jiē and closes early in the morning, offers delicious local snacks such as *wǔxiāng shāobǐng* (five-spice roasted bread) and *zhīma duōwèi tāng* (sesame soup). The shish kabobs, especially the *yángròu chuàn* (spicy lamb kabob), are grilled over an open fire and are especially tasty.

SHOPPING

Sòngdū Yùjie[li (Imperial Street of the Sòng Dynasty) is lined with shops that sell souvenirs, embroidery, silk screen paintings, calligraphy, paintings, seals, and ink stones.

5 Jī'nán

Shāndōng Province, 497 km (308 miles) S of Běijīng

With few tourist attractions, the capital of Shāndōng Province is a major rail and air junction that's best used as a base for exploring more worthwhile attractions in nearby towns such as Tài'ān, Qūfǔ, and Zībó. *Note:* For Chinese translations of selected establishments listed in this section, please turn to Appendix A.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Jī'nán is connected by **air** to many Chinese cities, including Běijīng (1 hr.), Shànghǎi (1 hr., 40 min.), Xī'ān (1½ hr.), Guǎngzhōu (2½ hr.), Chóngqìng (2 hr.), Zhèngzhōu (1 hr.), and Hong Kong (2½ hr.). CAAC buses (1 hr.; ¥15/$1.90) depart for the airport 40km (25 miles) to the east from the CAAC office at Luòyuán Dàjiē 198 every hour from 6:10am to 6:10pm. Buses also meet incoming flights but end their run at the long-distance bus station (chángtú qìchē zhàn) in the northern part of town at Běiyuán Lù. Plane tickets can be purchased at the **CAAC office** (✆ **0531/601-0333**) from 7am to 9:30pm. **China Eastern Airlines** is at Jīngshí Lù 408 (✆ **0531/796-5623;** open 8am–8pm).

From Jī'nán's main **railway station** (✆ **0531/242-8862**) in the west of town, trains run to Běijīng (4½–7 hr.), Shànghǎi (9–14 hr.), Tài'ān (1 hr.), Yánzhōu (2 hr.), Qūfǔ (3 hr.), Zībó (1 hr.), Wéifāng (2½ hr.), Qīngdǎo (5 hr.), and Xī'ān (19 hr.). Train tickets can be bought 5 days in advance at the railway station.

From the **long-distance bus station** (**chángtú qìchē zhàn;** ✆ **0531/594-1472**) in the northern part of town, buses depart for Tài'ān (every 20 min. 6:30am–6:30pm; 1–2 hr.; ¥13/$1.50), Qūfǔ (every 20 min. 6:30am–6:30pm;

2½–3 hr.; ¥21/$2.80), Qīngdǎo (every 30 min. 6am–6:30pm; 5 hr.; ¥50–¥95/$6–$12), Zībó (every 30 min. 6:10am–6:40pm; 1 hr., 40 min.; ¥20–¥30/$2.50–$3.75), and Wéifāng (every 30 min. 6:30am–5pm; 3 hr.; ¥32–¥40/$4–$5).

GETTING AROUND Most **taxis** charge ¥6 (75¢) for 3km (2 miles), then ¥1.20 (15¢) per kilometer until 6km (4 miles), after which the price rises to ¥1.80 (25¢) per kilometer. From 10pm to 5am, the cost after 3km (1¾ miles) is ¥1.40 (15¢) per kilometer, then ¥2 (25¢) per kilometer after 6km (3¾ miles).

TOURS The **China Shāndōng Travel Service (Zhōngguó Shāndōng Lǚxíngshè)** at Lìshān Lù 185 (✆ **0531/260-8598**) can arrange customized tours of other Shāndōng destinations like Tài Shān, Qūfù, Wéifāng, and Zībó.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China** at Luòyuán Dàjiē 22 is open for foreign exchange Monday through Friday from 8am to noon and 1:30 to 6pm.

Post Office The main post office (open May–Sept 8am–7:30pm and Oct–April 8am–7pm.is in the old part of town at Jīngèr Lù 162 (corner of Wéièr Lù).

Visa Extensions The local **PSB** is in the old part of town at Jīngsān Lù 145 just east of Wéiwǔ Lù (✆ **0531/508-2453;** open Mon–Fri 8–11:30am and 2–5:45pm.). The surly staff at counters 2 and 3 can process visa extensions; allow 5 business days.

EXPLORING JÌ'NÁN

Jì'nán is known for its 72 famous **springs** around town, which are really only worth visiting during the rainy season (July–Aug) when water levels are actually high enough to produce any activity. The most famous and also the first of the 72 springs is **Bàotū Quán (Bàotū Spring),** located in the center of town at Bàotū Quán Nánlù 1; admission is ¥15 ($1.90). The Qīng Qiánlóng emperor drank from the spring waters and declared it the "First Spring Under Heaven" *(Tiānxià Dìyī Quán).* The park is open May through October from 7am to 7pm, and November through April from 7am to 6pm.

More interesting is a walk around the western part of town near the railway station. This area was the **old German Concession,** which came into being when Jì'nán was opened to foreign trade in 1906. There are still a number of German-style buildings around, but you'll have to look for them under webs of telephone poles and wires, and years of grime and soot.

WHERE TO STAY

EXPENSIVE

Crowne Plaza Guìhé Jì'nán (Guìhé Huángguān Jiǔdiàn) ★★★ This latest arrival (June 2002) on Jì'nán's luxury hotel scene, a handsome structure with thick Western-style columns and arches, sits atop six floors of the Guìhé Shopping Center and offices. Arranged around a square atrium coffee shop, rooms are large and beautifully appointed, with full amenities. Marble bathrooms are brightly lit and spacious, and come with separate tub and shower. The only flaw seems to be that some of the bathrooms are already showing cracks. Service is efficient.

Tiāndìtǎn Lù 3. ✆ **0531/602-9999.** Fax 0531/602-3333. www.sixcontinentshotels.com. 306 units. ¥1,079–¥1,245 ($130–$150) standard room; ¥1,494–¥1,826 ($180–$220) suite. 40%–60% discounts online. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; bar; lounge; indoor pool; health club; sauna; concierge; airport shuttle service; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; 24-hr. room service; massage; babysitting; same-day

laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, broadband Internet access, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Sofitel Silver Plaza Ji'nán (Suǒfēitè Yínzuò Dàfàndiàn) ★★★ Until the arrival of the Crowne Plaza, this was *the* hotel at which to stay, and it continues to attract a large percentage of the foreign market with its good service and luxurious facilities. In the center of town, this modern 49-story edifice incorporates classical European elements in its decor, from chandeliers and thick columns in the lobby to traditional furniture in the rooms. Guest rooms are spacious and offer impeccable luxury and comfort, high above Ji'nán. The marble bathrooms, which come with separate tub and shower, are on the small side. The hotel is a tightly run operation with friendly and obliging staff.

Luóyuán Dàjiē 66. ✆ **0531/606-8888.** Fax 0531/606-6666. www.accorhotels.com/asia. 326 units. ¥913 ($110) standard room; ¥1,328 ($166) suite. Discounts up to 40%. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 6 restaurants; bar; lounge; nightclub; indoor pool; health club; sauna; concierge; airport shuttle service; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; 24-hr. room service; massage; laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, broadband Internet access, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

MODERATE

Quánchéng Dàjiǔdiàn This three-star hotel in the heart of town offers modest accommodations at reasonable prices. Rooms in the south tower, renovated in 2002, are elegant and have modern furniture and comfortable beds with pristine white comforters. The marble bathrooms are on the small side, but are bright and clean. North tower rooms are large though the furniture and carpets are worn. Service is adequate and some staff members speak a little English.

Nánmén Dàjiē 2. ✆ **0531/692-1911.** Fax 0531/692-3187. Quancheng@jn-public.sd.cninfo.net. 400 units. ¥380–¥660 ($47–$82) standard room; ¥480–¥980 ($60–$122) suite. 20%–30% discounts. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; nightclub; exercise room; sauna; concierge; airport shuttle service; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; massage; laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Qílǔ Bīnguǎn ★ Located in the southern part of town, this four-star outfit is rather bland and tired on the outside, but the lobby, decorated in dark woods, is quite elegant. Guest rooms are average, aged with faded pink carpets, but otherwise functional and clean as are the clashing yellow and green marble bathrooms. The hotel has been preparing to open a five-star 42-story wing for some time now, but no one seems to take them seriously.

Qiānfó Shān Lù 8. ✆ **0531/296-6888.** Fax 0531/296-7676. qlhotel@public.jn.sd.cn. 255 units. ¥298–¥398 ($37–$49) standard room; ¥1,680 ($210) suite. 40% discounts possible. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; lounge; health club; sauna; bowling alley; concierge; airport shuttle service; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; massage; laundry/dry cleaning; clinic. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

INEXPENSIVE

Ji'nán Tiědào Dàjiǔdiàn Conveniently located right next to the railway and bus stations, this three-star hotel offers surprisingly plush accommodations with an elegant marble lobby. Guest rooms are more sedate and come with rather worn, unexciting brown furniture, while bathrooms are small but acceptably clean. Rooms in the front can be a little loud from the noise in the square, so avoid those if you want to sleep.

Chēzhàn Jiē 19. ✆ **0531/601-2118.** Fax 0531/601-2188. 260 units. ¥280–¥380 ($35–$47) standard room; ¥680 ($85) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; nightclub; exercise room; sauna; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; massage; laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV.

WHERE TO DINE

The top hotels offer the most reliable, if expensive, Western food. **Kentucky Fried Chicken** is at Cháoshān Jiē opposite Silver Plaza, and **McDonald's** is at Quánchéng Lù 180. There is a **bakery,** Dàsānyuán, at Cháoshān Jiē Běishǒu; it's open from 8am to 9pm.

Inexpensive Chinese food is available 24 hours a day at **Lán & Bái (Blue & White),** (Hēihú Quán Xī Lù 109; ✆ **0531/691-0628**), a fast-food diner around the corner from the Crowne Plaza. Simply point to your choices from the usual array of cold appetizers, eggplant, tofu, vegetables, chicken, noodles, and soups, priced from ¥3 to ¥10 (40¢–$1.25) per dish. On the western side of town, **Jì'nán Fǔ Dàpáidàng** (Jīngqī Lù 223; ✆ **0531/691-7648,** ext. 0126**;** open 11:30am–2:30pm and 6–10pm) has several "stalls" serving everything from stir-fries and casseroles *(shāguō)* to Hong Kong–style dim sum, dumplings, noodles, and a delicious flaky pastry *(zhuābǐng).* Purchase your meal tickets at the middle counter, then exchange them for any number of dishes. A meal for two averages ¥50 ($6.25).

6 Tài Shān & Tài'ān

Shāndōng Province, 66 km (40 miles) S of Jì'nán; 68km (42 miles) N of Qūfǔ

Inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1987, Tài Shān (Great Mountain) is the most famous of the five daoist sacred mountains in China, located midway between Běijīng and Shànghǎi. Its base, in the town of Tài'ān, is 150m (492 ft.) above sea level, and its summit is at 1,545m (5,068 ft.). With annual visitors numbering over 4 million, Tài Shān is and has always been the most climbed mountain in China. The first emperor of China scaled it. From the summit, Confucius declared that "the world is small," while Máo Zédōng proclaimed that the "East is Red." Today, tourists and pilgrims, young and old, continue to make the journey, accompanied practically each step of the way by vendors peddling everything from snacks to souvenirs. Neither the highest nor the most impressive mountain in China, Tài Shān attracts visitors because of its cultural and historical significance, much of which, along with the colorful legends surrounding the different sights along the way, is lost on Westerners. However, the mountain still offers scenic vistas, interesting cultural immersion, and a good workout. During the annual International Tài Shān Climbing Festival in early September, hundreds of runners race up the mountain. Check with CITS or Tài'ān Tourism (see below) for the exact dates.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The nearest major airport to Tài Shān is at Jì'nán. From the **Tài'ān railway station** (✆ **0538/864-1122**) located just west of the center of town, trains run to Běijīng (7 hr.), Jì'nán (1 hr.), Shànghǎi (11 hr.) and Qīngdǎo (6 hr.). There are also frequent **buses** to Jì'nán (every 20 min. 6am–6pm; 1 hr., 10 min.; ¥13/$1.50) and Qūfǔ (every 30 min. 6am–6:30pm; 1 hr., 10 min.; ¥13/$1.50) that depart from the square in front of the railway station. From the **Tài'ān long-distance bus station** (**chángtú qìchēzhàn;** ✆ **0538/833-2656**) in the western part of town on Dōngyuè Dàjiē Xīshǒu, buses run to Běijīng (8:30am and 9:10am; 4½ hr.), Shànghǎi (7 and 8pm; 10 hr.), and Jì'nán (every 30 min. 6:20am–6:40pm; 1 hr.).

GETTING AROUND **Taxis** are plentiful in town and charge ¥5 (60¢) for 2km (1¼ miles), then ¥1.50 (20¢) per kilometer. From 10pm to 5am, the price

The Great Mountain

The significance of Tài Shān to the Chinese can be traced to their creation myth in which Pán Gǔ, after creating the sky and earth, died from exhaustion, his head and limbs falling to earth as five sacred mountains. Tài Shān, formed from the head and situated in the east (an auspicious direction signifying birth), became the most revered of the sacred mountains. The other four mountains are Sōng Shān in Hénán (center), Héng Shān Běi in Shānxī (north), Héng Shān Nán in Húnán (south), and Huá Shān in Shǎnxī (west). Although Tài Shān is not particularly high, the ancient Chinese came to regard it as the symbol of heaven. Historically, the Chinese emperor was considered to be the son of heaven, and many emperors, starting from China's first, the Qín Shǐ Huángdì emperor, climbed the mountain to perform sacrificial ceremonies to express their gratitude for being chosen to lead all below them, and to report to heaven on their progress. This also served to legitimize the emperors' power, as only those able to scale the mountain successfully were considered legitimate rulers. Today, hundreds, if not thousands of historical relics, carved inscriptions, temples, and sacrificial altars provide a fascinating record of the imperial presence on the mountain. Countless ordinary Chinese have also made the pilgrimage to this holiest of holy mountains. They believed that the god of Tài Shān ruled the heavens and the earth and governed life and death. Although he has continued to be greatly revered through the years, his daughter Bìxiá (Princess of the Azure Clouds) has for many years now surpassed him in popularity. Today's pilgrims, many of them elderly, female, and peasant, scramble up the mountain paths, stopping at every altar to light incense and pray to the goddess for blessings and protection.

rises to ¥5.80 (75¢) for 2km (1¼ miles), then ¥1.75 (20¢) per kilometer. **Bus** no. 3 (¥1/15¢) runs from the railway station to Dàzhòng Qiáo and also into town and up Hóngmén Lù to the main entrance of Tài Shān.

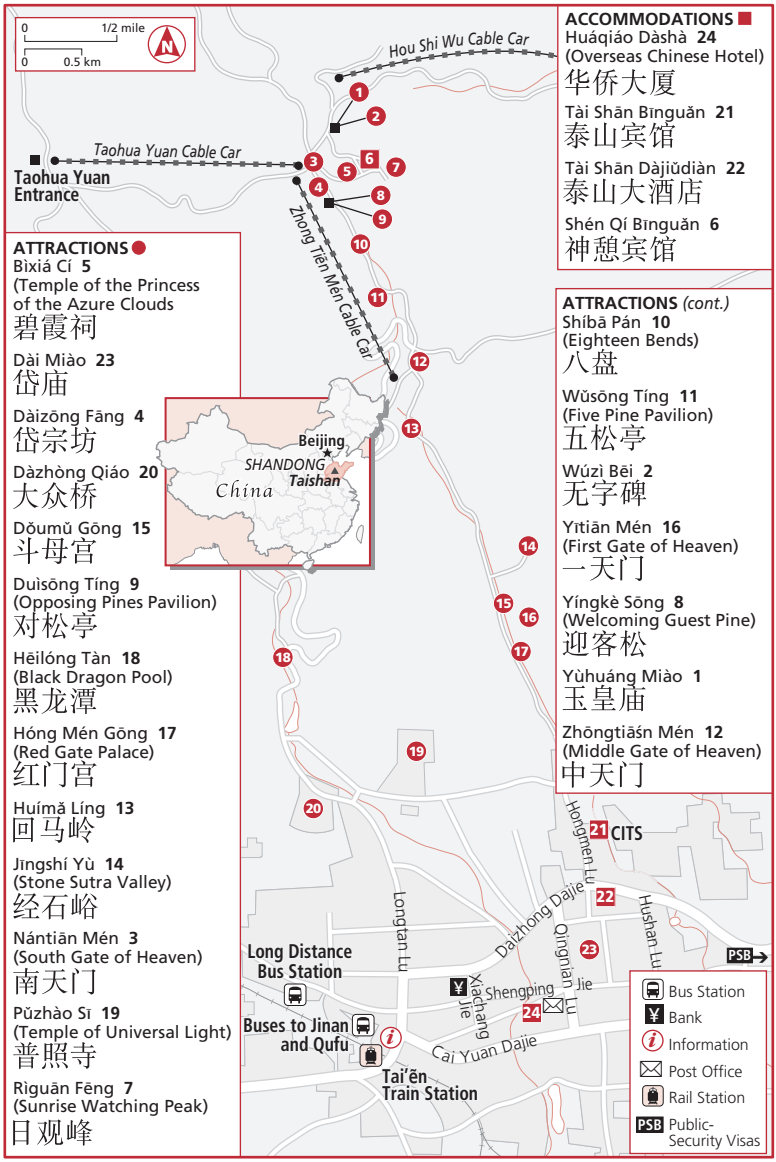
TOURS & GUIDES **CITS,** at Hóngmén Lù 22 (✆ **0538/822-3259;** fax 0538/833-2240), can arrange private guided tours of Tài Shān for around ¥700 ($88), including transportation, English-speaking guide, entrance fees, and lunch. They can also arrange accommodations and book tickets.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Tài'ān Tourism Bureau,** located just outside the railway station to the right as you exit (✆ **0538/827-2114**), can answer questions and direct travelers to hotels, sights, and travel agencies.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China** is located at Dōngyuè Dàjiē 48. Foreign exchange is available Monday through Friday from 8am to noon and 1:30 to 6pm. There are no ATMs here.

Internet Access There are **Internet cafes** along Hóngmén Lù north of Dàizōng Dàjiē. Most are open 24 hours and charge ¥2 to ¥3 (25¢–30¢) per hour. Dial-up is **163.**



Post Office The main post office (open Nov–Apr 8am–6pm, May–Oct 8am–7pm) is at Dōngyuè Dàjiē 5.

Visa Extensions The **Gōngānjú (PSB)** is in the eastern part of town at Dōngyuè Dàjiē Dōngshǒu (✆ **0538/827-5264;** open Mar–Oct Mon–Fri 8am–noon and 2:30–6:30pm and Nov–Feb Mon–Fri 8am–noon and 1:30–5:30pm). Allow 2 to 3 business days. Take a taxi or catch bus no. 4.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

Dài Miào Chinese emperors would come to this awesome temple at the southern foot of Tài Shān to offer sacrifices and pay homage to the god of Mount Tài before tackling the mountain. The present structures date mostly from the Sòng dynasty (A.D. 960–1127). Built in 1009, the awesome nine-bay **Tiānkuáng Diàn (Hall of Heavenly Gifts),** decorated with yellow glazed tiles, red pillars, and colorful brackets, houses a statue of the god of Tài Shān and a gorgeous, if faded, 62m (203-ft.) long **Sòng wall mural** depicting, from right to left, the Zhènzōng emperor (998–1023) as the god of Tài Shān embarking on an inspection tour. In the courtyard in front of the Hall of Heavenly Gifts, blindfolded visitors to the **Cypress of Loyalty** literally run circles around a nearby rock (3 times clockwise, 3 times counter-clockwise), after which they try to touch the fissure on the south side of the tree. It is said that those who succeed (and very few do) will have luck.

In the back of the complex is a lovely 1615 bronze pavilion, **Tóng Tíng,** which was formerly housed in the Bìxiá Temple on the mountaintop. West of the pavilion is an octagonal iron pagoda, **Tiě Tǎ,** originally built in 1533 with 13 stories, each one cast separately, but only three survive today. The northern gate of the temple marks the beginning of Hóngmén Lù and the imperial way up the mountain.

Shēngpíng Jiē. Admission ¥20 ($2.50). 7:30am–6pm. Bus: no. 1, 4.

CLIMBING THE MOUNTAIN

Tài Shān is a challenging but manageable climb. There are two trails up to the midway point, Zhōngtiān Mén (Middle Gate of Heaven): a shorter but less-often hiked **western route** (7.8km/4¾ miles) which starts at Dài Miào but detours west before Hóng Mén; and the much more popular **eastern route** (11km/6½ miles) which runs from Dài Miào up to the main entrance on Hóngmén Lù. As the former imperial way, the eastern route features more cultural and religious sights. The relatively fit should allow a total of about 4 to 5 hours to reach the summit: It's 2 hours to the halfway point, where there are some hotels and a cable car, and another 2 hours minimum to reach Nán Tiān Mén (South Gate of Heaven) near the summit. Water and snacks become increasingly expensive the higher you climb, so think about packing enough beforehand. A walking stick, which can be purchased in stores in town or at the mountain's entrance, can come in handy. Temperatures at the summit can differ considerably from Tài'ān's, so dress in layers. Climbing Tài Shān would not be complete without viewing sunrise from the summit. Some Chinese climb at night, making it to the top just in time to catch the first rays, but this is not advisable for the average foreigner. If you plan to overnight at the top, be sure to pack warm clothing and a flashlight.

BY BUS & CABLE CAR Those not inclined to climb day *or* night can now take one of three cable cars up to Nán Tiān Mén, though you'll still have to walk another 1.5km (1 mile) to the summit. The first and most popular option involves taking bus no. 3 (or a taxi) from the railway station to Dàzhòng Qiáo, where you transfer to a minibus (¥16/$2) to Zhōng Tiān Mén. (There are also direct buses to Zhōng Tiān Mén from the railway station, but these only run in the morning.) From Zhōng Tiān Mén, the 10-minute ride to Nán Tiān Mén on a six-person cable car costs ¥45 ($5.60) one-way. The second cableway runs between the Tiānjiē Suǒdào Zhàn and Táohuā Yuán (Peach Blossom Ravine) on the western flanks of the mountain and costs ¥20 ($2.50) one-way. The third

option connects the summit to the more rural Hòu Shí Wù (Rear Rock Basin) and Tiānzhú Fēng (Tiānzhú Peak) on the northeast side of the mountain; the cost is ¥20 ($2.50) one-way.

ENTRANCE FEES Ticket prices vary depending on your point of entry. Admission at the Hóngmén Lù main entrance favored by most climbers and at Hòu Shí Wù costs ¥60 ($7.50), or ¥45 ($5.60) November through January. At Táohuā Yuán and Dàzhòng Qiáo (used by buses and hikers of the western route), prices are ¥80 ($10); ¥60 ($7.50) November through January.

EASTERN ROUTE Heading north from Dài Miào, visitors soon pass through the Míng dynasty **Dàizōng Fāng,** a three-portal gate that leads to **Yī Tiān Mén (First Gate of Heaven),** which marks the beginning of the imperial ascent. Just inside is another arch commemorating the site where Confucius is said to have rested when he visited the mountain. North of the arch is **Hóng Mén Gōng (Red Gate Palace),** which is also the main entrance to the mountain. Purchase your ticket here. One kilometer (⅔ mile) further is **Dǒumǔ Gōng,** a daoist nunnery whose origins are obscure, though the temple was completely renovated in 1542; it houses a statue of the goddess Dǒumǔ with 24 heads and 48 hands and eyes in the hollows of her palms. Behind Dǒumǔ Gōng, a 1km (½-mile) detour to the east leads to **Jīngshí Yù (Stone Sutra Valley),** an enormous flat piece of rock carved with the text of the Buddhist *Diamond Sutra.* Another 1.8km (1 mile) further along the main path, an arch, **Huímǎ Líng,** commemorates the spot where the Táng Xuánzōng emperor had to dismount and continue by sedan chair when his horses could no longer navigate the steep twists and turns.

Less than a kilometer away, **Zhōng Tiān Mén (Middle Gate of Heaven)** marks the halfway point up the mountain (elev. 850m/2,788-ft.), as well as the intersection of the eastern and western routes. There are restaurants, snack shops, and very crude hostels, as well as a cable car that runs to Nán Tiān Mén. A little further on, those continuing on foot approach **Wǔ Sōng Tíng (Five Pine Pavilion),** where the Qín emperorShǐ Huángdì sought shelter from the rain in 219 B.C. He later conferred on the sheltering pine the title of fifth grade official, hence the name of this spot. Just to the north, **Yíngkè Sōng (Welcoming Guest Pine),** immortalized in countless paintings, extends a drooping branch in welcome. Recharge at **Duì Sōng Tíng (Opposing Pines Pavilion)** before the final assault on the daunting **Shíbā Pán (Eighteen Bends),** the steepest and most perilous 1,633 steps of the mountain. Allegedly built in the Táng dynasty (618–907), the steps lie at a gradient of 80 degrees and rise over 400m (1,312 ft.) in height. Emperors used to be carried up this final stretch in sedan chairs. Today's climbers can only cling to the side railings as you straggle up the steps.

At the top, **Nán Tiān Mén (South Gate of Heaven)** (elev. 1,460m/4,788 ft.) is probably the most welcome and most photographed sight of Tài Shān. Originally built in 1264, this two-story red arched gate tower was completely renovated in 1984. A little further on, the shop-lined **Tiān Jiē (Heavenly Lane)** brings you to a small Míng dynasty **Wén Miào (Temple to Confucius)** rebuilt in 1995, and above that the hotel Shénqí Bīnguǎn. Below, on the southern slope of the summit, is **Bìxiá Cí (Temple of the Princess of the Azure Clouds),** built in 1009 and renovated and expanded during the Míng and Qīng dynasties. Admission is ¥5 (60¢); hours are from 8am to 6pm. The roof of the main hall is covered with copper tiles, while those on the side chambers are cast with iron to protect the buildings from the fierce elements on the summit. Elderly and female pilgrims flock here to burn incense and pray to Bìxiá and her different

incarnations, Yǎnguāng Nǎinai (Goddess of Eyesight), and Sòngshēng Niángniang (Goddess of Fertility).

Northeast of the temple, **Dàguān Fēng** is a gigantic sheer cliff face carved with inscriptions by different emperors, including the Táng Xuánzōng emperor and the later Qīng Kāngxī and Qiánlóng emperors. A little further north of here is the highest point of Tài Shān, **Yùhuáng Dǐng** (elev. 1,545m/5,067 ft.). A temple, **Yùhuáng Miào,** houses a Míng dynasty bronze statue of the Jade Emperor, considered by many daoists to be the supreme god of heaven. Outside the temple is the 6m (19-ft.) high **Wúzì Bēi (Stele without Words).** One version has it that the first Qín emperor had this tablet erected in A.D. 219, but years of exposure to the elements have weathered away the text. Another story tells of the stele being erected by the sixth emperor of the Hàn dynasty, who modestly left it blank to suggest that the virtue of the emperor was beyond words. About 200m (656 ft.) to the southeast is **Rìguān Fēng (Sunrise Watching Peak),** where hundreds of bleary-eyed visitors wrapped in thick jackets congregate every morning around jutting **Tànhǎi Rock** to watch the sunrise. It is on this peak that emperors such as the Táng Gāozōng and Xuánzōng emperors and the Sòng Zhènzōng emperor conducted the Fēng and Shān ceremonies. In 1747, two boxes of jade inscriptions by the third emperor of the Sòng dynasty, once thought to be lost during the Míng dynasty, were unearthed here.

WESTERN ROUTE This route has fewer cultural attractions than the eastern route and emphasizes more natural sights such as pools and forests. The trail (not always clearly marked) converges at times with the main road running to Zhōng Tiān Mén. A little over 3km (2 miles) down from Zhōng Tiān Mén is **Shànzǐ Yá,** strangely shaped rock formations named for various animals they resemble. About 2km (1¼ miles) further down past Chángshòu Qiáo (Longevity Bridge) is the main attraction, **Hēilóng Tán (Black Dragon Pool),** a pleasant enough waterfall in the summer and early fall. Another kilometer (½ mile) brings you to Dàzhòng Qiáo and the terminus for the Zhōng Tiān Mén buses. The path continues to **Pǔzhào Sì (Temple of Universal Light),** a Buddhist temple built during the Northern and Southern dynasties (A.D. 420–589) and rebuilt in the Míng. Between 1932 and 1935, Féng Yùxiáng (1882–1948), the "Christian General," stayed in the hall in the back of the temple complex. Born in Ānhuī Province, Fēng was a warlord of the north who supported Sun Yat-sen but who later mounted a challenge to Chiang Kai-shek in 1929. He used to baptize his troops with a fire hose, and is buried on the southern slope of Tài Shān. From the temple, it's another 2km (1¼ miles) to the Dài Temple.

WHERE TO STAY

MODERATE

Huáqiáo Dàshà (Overseas Chinese Hotel) This 14-story hotel is supposed to be the most luxurious in town, but it is a rather colorless place even though its rooms and facilities meet the minimum standards for a four-star hotel. Guest rooms are fitted with large twin beds and standard nondescript brown furniture, and are comfortable enough for a night or two. The decent-size bathrooms are a little dark but clean.

Dōngyuè Dàjiē Zhōngduàn. ✆ **0538/822-8112.** Fax 0538/822-8171. 205 units. ¥480–¥680 ($60–$85) standard room; ¥780–¥880 ($97–$110) suite. 20% discounts possible. 10% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; lounge; indoor pool; health club; sauna; bowling alley; concierge; tour desk; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; massage; laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV (in-house movies), minibar, safe (select rooms).

Tài Shān Bīnguǎn A trusty old standby, this popular, well-located hotel between the main gate of Tài Shān and the Dài Temple is comfortable and reasonably priced. Last renovated in 1999, guest rooms come with high ceilings and basic but functional furniture. Bathrooms are clean. The whole place has a friendly feel to it and the staff seems to know what they're doing. CITS is conveniently located right next door.

Hóngmén Lù 26. ✆ **0538/822-5888.** Fax 0538/822-1432. 110 units. ¥300–¥420 ($38–$52) standard room; ¥680–¥1,080 ($85–$135) suite. 20% discounts possible. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; lounge; exercise room; sauna; concierge; tour desk; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; massage; laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, hair dryer.

Tài Shān Dàjiǔdiàn This modern 19-story hotel located a block east of the Dài Temple has some recently renovated (2001) rooms at ¥380 ($47); they are gaudily decorated in floral prints and come with small twin beds and generic brown furniture. Renovations notwithstanding, bathrooms are a little weathered but are spacious and clean.

Dàizōng Dàjiē 210. ✆ **0538/822-7211.** Fax 0538/822-6162. 183 units. ¥180–¥380 ($22–$47) standard room; ¥580–¥880 ($72–$110) suite. 30% discounts possible. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; Internet bar; lounge; nightclub; health club; sauna; concierge; airport shuttle service; business center; forex (US$, J¥, HK$ only); shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; massage; laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV.

ON THE MOUNTAIN

Shén Qí Bīnguǎn) This overpriced, overrated three-star hotel perched atop some steep steps is nevertheless the best place to stay at the summit. Rooms are somewhat dark but are clean enough and come with small twin beds and TVs that receive no stations. Bathrooms are small but clean. The hotel only has hot water between 8:30 and 11pm, but thick jackets are provided for the sunrise viewing. The staff will make sure you're awake in time.

1km (½ mile)from Nán Tiān Mén along Tiānjiē. ✆ **0538/822-3866.** Fax 0538/833-7025. www.shenqihotel.com. 66 units. ¥680 ($85) standard room. Discounts possible up to 20% except on Sat nights Apr–Oct. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; sauna; forex (US$ only); store; salon. *In room:* A/C, TV.

WHERE TO DINE

In Tài'ān, the **Bǎihuā Cāntīng** restaurant in the Tài Shān Bīnguǎn (✆ **0538/822-4678,** ext. 666; 10am–2pm and 5:45–9pm) offers decent Chinese food in a clean environment. Simply point to your choices from the many dishes on display on long counters. A meal for two runs ¥60 to ¥80 ($7.50–$10). **Huánqiú Xīshì Miànbāo Fáng** (Hóngmén Lù 7) sells pastries and snacks for the long hike. **McDonald's** is at Qīngnián Lù 62.

On the **mountain,** food is comparatively more expensive along the trail and on the summit than in town. Trailside vendors offer ice cream, bottled drinks, instant noodles, and boiled eggs. At the summit, **Shénqí Bīnguǎn** has a restaurant that serves both basic Chinese fare *(jiācháng cài)* as well as delicacies made from local ingredients such as pheasants, wild vegetables, and local medicinal herbs. A meal for two is ¥80 to ¥120 ($10–$15).

7 Qūfŭ ★

Shāndōng Province, 150km (90 miles) S of Jī'nán, 68km (42 miles) S of Tài'ān

Qūfŭ, the home of Confucius, is a small town of 630,000 people, 125,000 of whom are surnamed Kŏng (though few are direct descendents). The town is dominated by the magnificent Temple of Confucius, the Confucian Mansion,

Confucius Says . . .

Confucius's tremendous impact on Chinese society was not felt during his lifetime. Born Kǒng Qiū (also Kǒng Zhòngní) to a minor noble family, Confucius (551–479 B.C.) spent most of his life wandering the country as a teacher after the various feudal lords with whom he sought positions all rejected him. Confucius himself never wrote his teachings down. It was only later, over the course of several generations, when his disciples like Zēngzǐ and Mèngzǐ collected and compiled his teachings in *The Analects (Lún Yǔ),* that Confucianism began to take firm hold.

A philosophical tradition that has come to underpin much of Chinese society, Confucianism is a series of moral and ethical precepts about the role and conduct of an individual in society. Essentially conservative, Confucius was concerned about the breakdown in human, social, and political affairs he observed in the world around him during the Spring and Autumn Period of the Eastern Zhōu dynasty (770–221 B.C.). Expounding on the traditional rites and rituals set forth during the previous Western Zhōu dynasty (1100–771 B.C.), Confucius formulated a code of conduct governing what he saw as the five basic hierarchical relationships in society: between father and son, husband and wife, older and younger brothers, ruler and subject, and friend and friend. At its crux was the supreme virtue of benevolence *(rén),* and the ideal relationship was one in which the dominant figure (always the male) would rule benevolently over the subordinate, who would in turn practice obedience and piety *(xiào)* towards the authority figure. This concept of *xiào,* which so permeates Chinese familial relations (from parents to in-laws to siblings), is the glue that holds much of Chinese society together.

After an inauspicious beginning when the Qín dynasty Shǐ Huángdì emperor (China's first) rejected all things Confucian and implemented a

and the Confucian Forest, all UNESCO World Heritage sites. Qūfù is often visited as a somewhat hurried day trip from Jǐ'nán. If you would like a more leisurely appreciation of the sights or merely wish to soak up the rarefied air, consider staying overnight and combining this with a visit to nearby Tài Shān. If you like celebrations, the ideal time to visit is on the occasion of Confucius's birthday, September 28. During this time, there are parades and musical and dance performances throughout Qūfù. Book well in advance. *Note:* For Chinese translations of selected establishments listed in this section, please turn to Appendix A.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The nearest major **airport** is in Jǐ'nán. The **train** situation is a little confusing, as there are two railway stations: **Qūfù Zhàn,** about 5km (3 miles) southeast of the city center, where several trains a day stop between Běijīng and Rìzào and between Jǐ'nán and Rìzào. Train K51 from Běijīng (9 hr.) arrives in Qūfù at 7am, while the return K52 departs Qūfù at 9pm. Bus no. 5 runs from the railway station into town, though service is infrequent. **Yánzhōu Zhàn** (✆ **0537/341-5239**), 15km (9 miles) west of Qūfù, sits on the Běijīng–Shànghǎi rail line and sees much more traffic. From Yánzhōu,

book-burning campaign in 213 B.C., Confucianism became the official state philosophy from the Hàn dynasty (206 B.C.– A.D.220) until the fall of the Qīng in 1911, with different rulers seizing on different aspects of Confucius's teachings to justify their rules and methods. Over the years, Confucianism underwent many changes, but Confucian temples *(wén miào)* continued to proliferate and the stature of the Kǒng family continued to rise; by the Qīng dynasty, the Kǒng family had attained a status equal to that of the imperial family. To be sure, there were many detractors throughout the years too, none more so than during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) when, encouraged to reject tradition and authority, children openly criticized and humiliated their parents and teachers. The bonds of *xiào* were broken.

Today, Confucianism struggles to remain relevant. Some younger people scoff at it for being rigid and outdated, while a smaller group lays at its feet the onus of over 2,000 years of Chinese patriarchy. Indeed, where once the concept of *zhòngnán qīngnǚ* (the value of males over females), an extension of Confucius's emphasis on the importance of male heirs to continue the family lineage, was held absolute and paramount, today that practice is being very slowly, if not surely, challenged. Yet those fearing the imminent demise of Confucianism need only take a closer look at the family flying a kite in the park, at the crowds who show up to sweep the graves of their ancestors, at the teeming masses who burden the Chinese transportation system in the days leading up to the Spring Festival (Chūn Jié) so they can all rush home to celebrate the Chinese New Year with their family, at the peasant woman who is allowed to have a second child if her first one is a girl. For good or ill, tradition is alive and well, and the family is still the strongest and most important social unit in Chinese society.

there are daily connections to Tài'ān (1 hr.), Jǐ'nán (2 hr.), Běijīng (5 hr.), and Shànghǎi (10 hr.). There is a limited number of assigned berths on trains serving both stations, so be sure to book your ongoing ticket as soon as you reach town. To avoid the hassle of running back and forth between Yánzhōu and Qūfǔ, use a ticketing agency like the 24-hour **Qūfǔ Dàchéng Lǚxíngshè** on the first floor of the Lǚyóu Bīnguǎn at Jìngxuān Lù 1 (✆ **0537/448-3625**). They have the only computer booking system in Qūfǔ. The staff is friendly and can also arrange private car hire.

From the **Qūfǔ Qìchē Zhàn** (✆ **0537/441-1241**), located 1 long block south of the Temple of Confucius at the corner of Shéndào Lù and Jìngxuān Dōng Lù, **buses** run to Jǐ'nán (every 20 min. 5:40am–5:30pm; 2½–3 hr.; ¥21/$2.60), Tài'ān (every 30 min. 6:40am–5:30pm; 1 hr., 10 min.; ¥13/$1.60), Wéifāng (7:40am, 10am, 1:40pm; 4 hr.; ¥38/$4.75), and Qīngdǎo (every hour 7–11am and 7–11pm; 7 hr.¥61/$7.60). **Minibuses** run to the railway station at Yánzhōu (every 15 min. 6:30am–5:30pm; 25 min.; ¥3/35¢).

GETTING AROUND It is possible to tour temple, mansion, and cemetery on foot, though hiring a pedicab or horse-drawn taxi to the cemetery is an inexpensive option. Unmetered *miàndì* (minivan) **taxis** cost ¥5 (60¢) per 2km (1¼

miles). Around town, **horse-drawn carriages** cost ¥2 to ¥4 (25¢–50¢) per person, while a **tricycle taxi** costs ¥1 to ¥3 (15¢–35¢) per person. The infrequent **bus** no. 1 runs from the southwest of town past the bus station all the way up Gǔlóu Jiē to the Confucian Forest. Bus no. 2 travels an east–west route along Jìngxuān Jiē.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Qūfǔ Tourist Information Center** at Gǔlóu Běijiē 4 (✆ **0537/448-6500;** open 8am–6:30pm) can provide information and direct travelers to sights and accommodations.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China** is at Dōngmén Dàjiē 96 just east of Gǔlóu Běijiē. Foreign-exchange hours are Monday to Friday from 8am to noon and 3 to 6pm.

Internet Access Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office Located north of the Drum Tower at Gǔlóu Běijiē 8–1, the post office is open from 8am to 6:30pm.

Visa Extensions The **PSB (Shì Gōngānjú)** is at Wǔyúntǎn Lù 1 (✆ **0537/449-4523;** open Mon–Fri 8am–noon and 2:30–6pm). Take a taxi or bus no. 3 from the Kǒngfǔ Fàndiàn (Kǒngfǔ Hotel) at the corner of Dàtóng Lù and Jìngxuān Lù, and ask to be let off at Wǔyúntǎn.

EXPLORING QŪFǓ

Kǒng Miào (Confucius Temple) ★★★ One of the great classical Chinese architectural complexes (along with Běijīng's Forbidden City and Chéngdé's Imperial Summer Resort), the magnificent Confucius Temple was first built in 478 B.C. by the king of Zhōu, Lǔ Àigōng, who converted three rooms from Confucius's residence into a temple to offer sacrifices to the Sage. The temple grew from the Western Hàn dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 24) onwards due to the increasing number of titles conferred on Confucius. Many of today's structures, done in typical imperial fashion with red pillars and yellow-glazed tiles, and oriented on a north–south axis, date to the Míng and Qīng dynasties.

Over a kilometer long, the temple is first approached from the main south gate in Qūfǔ's city wall. Then, a series of gates and courtyards lead eventually to **Dàzhōng Mén,** a gate and former temple entrance (during the Sòng). In the next courtyard is the marvelous three-story, triple-eaved **Kuíwén Gé (Worship of Literature Pavilion),** first built in 1018 and rebuilt in 1191. This wooden building with stone pillars survived a major earthquake during the reign of the Qīng dynasty Kāngxī emperor (1654–1722) that destroyed much of the rest of Qūfǔ. In the next courtyard are **13 stelae pavilions** all constructed during different periods, from the Jīn (A.D. 265–420) to the Republican period (1914–1919), and housing stelae recording the visits of different emperors.

The central gate, **Dàchéng Mén,** leads into the heart of the temple complex and the magnificent **Dàchéng Diàn (Hall of Great Achievements)** ★★★, originally built on this site in 1021 and rebuilt in 1724. Constructed on a two-tiered sculptured marble terrace, the building is supported by 28 carved stone pillars and majestically capped by a double-eaved, yellow-tiled roof. Individually carved from whole blocks of stone, the 10 columns in front each depict two dragons playing with pearls amid a sea of clouds. The remaining 18 octagonal pillars each bear 72 smaller dragons. Inside the temple is a statue of Confucius flanked by four of his students. These statues, destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, were replaced in 1983. Also on display is a set of bronze vessels and

musical instruments that were used in ceremonial rites to honor the Great Sage, still occasionally performed here. In front is **Xìng Tán (Apricot Altar),** where it is said Confucius used to deliver lectures to his 72 disciples. Behind the Great Hall is the **Hall of Bedroom** used to honor Confucius's wife, Lady Yuángōng, who married him at the age of 19 and died 7 years before her husband.

Also noteworthy is a 3m (10-ft.) deep **well** in the eastern section of the complex from which Confucius is said to have drunk. East of the well, a screen wall, **Lǔ Bì,** commemorates the successful attempt by the ninth generation of Confucius's descendant Kǒng Fǔ to hide all the Confucian classics such as *The Analects* and *The Book of Rites* in the walls of Confucius's residence during Qín Shǐ Huángdì's book-burning campaign in 213 B.C. The books were later discovered during the Hàn dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220), when the residence was torn down in order to enlarge the temple.

Admission Mar–Nov ¥50 ($6.25); Dec–Feb ¥45 ($5.50). English-speaking guide (at temple entrance) ¥100 ($13). 7:30am–6pm.

Kǒng Fǔ (Confucian Mansion) ★★★ Up until 1949 the mansion on the northeast side of the Confucius Temple had been home to 77 generations of Confucius's direct descendants, although the mansion's present location dates only to the end of the 14th century and the complex really grew to its current size (with a total of 463 halls) only in the Míng and Qīng dynasties.

Here lived the Yǎnshèng ("Continuing the Line of the Sage") duke, a title first conferred upon the 46th-generation descendant of Confucius by the Sòng Rénzōng emperor in 1055, and subsequently passed down. During the Míng dynasty, the duke's stature grew, and by the time of the Qīng, he and the Kǒng family had attained a status equivalent to that of the imperial family. He was exempted from taxes, given power over his own court of law and subjects, and was the only one besides the emperor who could ride his horse within the Forbidden City. The Qīng Qiánlóng emperor (reigned 1736–1796) even married his daughter to a Yǎnshèng duke in 1772, because only marriage to someone from a family equal in stature could dispel the misfortune that had been predicted for her by fortunetellers on account of the mole on her face. To circumvent the law that prohibited Manchus from marrying the Chinese, Qiánlóng first gave her to a Chinese official, Yú Mínzhōng, for adoption, and her name was changed from Àixīn Juéluó to Lady Yú.

The mansion is divided into three sections. The front part is reserved for formal and public business, the second serves as private family quarters, and the third is a garden. Inside the main gate is a large courtyard with the free-standing **Chóngguāng Mén,** a gate built on eight stone drums which was only opened when emperors or imperial edicts arrived. In the three halls to the north, starting with the main hall, **Dà Táng,** the Yǎnshèng duke proclaimed imperial edicts, received visitors, and tended to business. In the second hall, where the duke received high-ranking officials, are seven tablets inscribed by various emperors, including one with the character *shòu* (longevity) inscribed by the Empress Dowager Cíxǐ. Northeast of the third hall is a small alley leading to a four-story **Bīnān Lóu (Tower of Refuge)** which was meant to shelter the duke in case of attack. It was never used.

Behind the third hall, the **Nèizhái Mén (Gate to the Inner Apartments)** marks the beginning of the private quarters restricted to family members and a handful of trusted, mostly female servants. Even the water carrier had to pour his well water through a tiny trough in the wall just west of the gate. Behind the

Front Reception Hall used for family banquets, weddings, and funeral ceremonies, the two-story **Qiántáng Lóu** was where the 76th duke, Kǒng Lìngyí, lived with his wife, Madame Táo, his two concubines, and his two daughters from Concubine Wáng. After the 76th duke's death, one concubine gave birth to the 77th duke, Kǒng Déchéng. It is widely held that Madame Táo, who produced no surviving heirs herself, poisoned his mother 17 days after she gave birth. The boy was to grow up with his sisters in relative isolation under the tyrannical Madame Táo, Qūfǔ's equivalent of the powerful and manipulative Empress Dowager Cíxǐ. As depicted in *The House of Confucius* by Déchéng's sister Kǒng Démào and Kē Lán, life in the Confucian Mansion in those days was full of intrigue and betrayal for the adults and loneliness and sadness for the children. Déchéng married and lived here until 1940, when he fled the Japanese invasion and then the communists, ending up in Táiwān; he was the last of Confucius's descendants to occupy the mansion.

A large garden in the rear occupies the rest of the mansion grounds. A complete tour of the mansion will take 2 hours.

Admission Mar–Nov ¥30 ($3.75); Dec–Feb ¥25 ($3). 7:30am–6pm.

Kǒng Lín (Confucian Forest & Cemetery) ★★★ Slightly over a kilometer (½ mile) north of the Confucian Mansion and Temple, Kǒng Lín is the burial ground for Confucius and his family, and is the largest and oldest cemetery park in China. Covering 2 sq. km (1¼ sq. miles), the forest has thousands of graves and over 20,000 trees, including cypresses, maples, and willows, many collected and planted by Confucius's disciples over the years. It is a place both large and atmospheric enough to lose yourself in for a few hours. It can be delightfully eerie in the morning before the fog lifts. A pleasant way to tour the forest is by bike, which can be rented at the entrance for ¥10 ($1.25).

The walkway leading to the forest from the south is lined with 73 trees on the right representing Confucius's age when he died, and 72 trees on the left signaling the number of his disciples. Passing through another two gates, visitors arrive at the forest proper, which is surrounded by a 3m (10-ft.) high and 5m (16-ft.) thick wall. To get to Confucius's grave, turn left inside the second entrance, walk along the **Imperial Carriageway** for about 200m (218 yd.), cross the Míng **Zhūshuǐ Bridge,** and continue along the "spirit way" *(shén dào),* which is flanked by four pairs of Sòng dynasty stone sculptures. At the end of the spirit way is **Confucius's tomb,** a mound of packed earth in front of which are two stelae. The front Míng dynasty tablet is inscribed with the characters DÀCHÉNG ZHÌ SHÈNGWÉN XUĀN WÁNG MÙ or "Tomb of the Ultimate Sage of Great Achievements." Local lore has it that the last two characters, *"wáng mù"* (king's tomb), are partially hidden from view by the stone altar in front to reassure visiting emperors who came to pay their respects that no matter how respected and exalted the Sage was, there was only one emperor. To the right (east) of Confucius's grave is that of his son Kǒng Lǐ, who died before his father. To the south lies the tomb of Confucius's grandson, Zǐsī, who was Mencius's (Mèngzǐ's) teacher and the author of *The Doctrine of the Mean.*

Following the main road to the left of Confucius's grave brings you to a group of Míng Tombs. Continuing to the north eventually leads you to an archway and **tomb for Lady Yú,** the Qiánlóng emperor's daughter. (While Confucian wives were allowed to be buried in the forest, Confucius's female descendants were restricted to burial outside the forest.) Not far to the east is the **Tomb of Kǒng Shāngrén** (1648–1718), a 64th-generation descendant and author of the

famous classical play *Táohuā Shàn (The Peach Blossom Fan).* East of Kŏng Shāngrén's tomb is the Tomb of the 76th Yănshèng duke, Kŏng Língyí, and his wretched wife Madame Táo. Concubine Wáng was also reburied here, despite laws prohibiting concubines from being buried within the forest. Following the road south brings you back to the main entrance.

Líndào Lù. Admission Mar–Nov ¥20 ($2.50); Dec–Feb ¥15 ($1.90). Mar–Nov 8am–6pm; Dec–Feb 8am–5:30pm. Bus: no. 1.

OTHER ATTRACTIONS

Shào Hào Líng (Tomb of Emperor Shào Hào) ★ Located 4km (2½ miles) east of town, this unusually shaped tomb was built in 1111 by the Sòng Huīzōng emperor to honor Shào Hào, one of the legendary five emperors who succeeded the even more legendary first Chinese emperor, Huáng Dì (the Yellow Emperor). This flat-topped pyramid-shaped structure capped by a small brick altar with a yellow-tiled roof was supposedly built from ten thousand pieces of stone. Also here are two 17m (56-ft.) tall stelae, **Wànrénchóu Jùbēi (Sorrow of Ten Thousand Stelae),** meant to honor the Yellow Emperor, but the Sòng dynasty was driven from power before the stelae could be erected. Lying face down since then, the tablets were hacked at by zealous Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution but were restored and set upright in 1992.

4km (2½ miles) northeast of Qūfŭ in Jiùxiàn Village. Admission ¥10 ($1.25). 8am–5pm. Shào Hào Líng is best reached by taxi (about ¥10–¥15/$1.25–$2) Bus: no. 2 from outside the bus station heading east on Jìngxuān Dōng Lù. Ask to be dropped of at "Shào Hào Líng," then head north for another 400m (436 yd.).

WHERE TO STAY

MODERATE

Quèlĭ Bīnshè (Quèlĭ Hotel) The best place to stay in town, this three-star hotel just east of the Confucius Temple has traditional Chinese buildings in a courtyard setting. Rooms, while not luxurious, are spacious, comfortable, and decorated in a style that combines traditional Chinese motifs with modern flourishes. Bathrooms have black marble walls and are a bit old but acceptably clean. Service is occasionally spotty but the hotel has a good restaurant that serves Confucian banquets and acceptable Western meals.

Quèlĭ Jiē 1. ✆ **0537/486-6818.** Fax 0537/441-2022. 160 units. ¥398 ($49) standard room; ¥988 ($123) suite. 20% discounts possible. MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; bowling alley; concierge; business center; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* AC, TV, fridge with beverages.

INEXPENSIVE

Qūfŭ Yóuzhèng Bīnguă (Qūfŭ Post Hotel) This two-star hotel just east of the Confucian Mansion is an acceptable alternative if the Quèlĭ is full. Rooms are clean and comfortable enough. Bathrooms are tired but otherwise clean. The staff doesn't speak English but tries to be helpful.

Gŭlóu Bĕijiē 8. ✆ **0537/448-3888.** Fax 0537/442-4340. 66 units. ¥260 ($33) standard room; ¥1,080 ($135) suite. 20%–40% discounts possible. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; salon; laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV.

WHERE TO DINE

The **Confucius Restaurant and Western Dining Room** in the Quèlĭ Hotel offers the best dining in a relatively clean environment, but watch out for shenanigans with prices. Just to the east of the Quèlĭ, the clean and well-lit **Kŏng Fŭ Dàjiŭjiā** (✆ **0537/441-1048**) has an English menu and serves local Confucian specialties like *yángguān sāndié* (chicken, vegetables, and egg folded

together like a fan), *dàizi shàngcháo* (stewed pork, chicken, chestnuts, and ginseng), and *shīlǐ yínxìng* (sweet ginkgo). A meal for two averages ¥80 to ¥160 ($10–$20). No credit cards. Further east along Wǔmǎcí Jiē, a lively **night market** proffers a variety of snacks, including delicious grilled kabobs, roasted nuts, and bean curd.

SHOPPING

Popular souvenirs include the "Four Treasures of the Study": seals, ink stones, calligraphy brushes, and rice paper, all of which are available at **Chūnqiū Gé** at Gǔlóu Běijiē 5 (open 8am–7:30pm). The store also sells ceramics, jewelry, cloisonné, and jade, and accepts international credit cards.

QŪFǓ AFTER DARK

The Quèlǐ Hotel (see above) has nightly **Confucian musical performances.** Tickets range from ¥50 to ¥100 ($6–$12) and are sold in the hotel lobby. From April to October, there are nightly "Confucius Dream" musical performances at 8pm at **Xìng Tán Jùchǎng,** where some of the rites mentioned in the *Analects (Lún Yǔ)* are performed. The theater is on Dàchéng Lù, about 800m (872 yards) south of Kǒng Miào (Confucius Temple). ✆ **0537/442-4095**. Tickets cost ¥40 ($5).

8 Qīngdǎo ★★

Shāndōng Province, 318km (197 miles) E of Jǐ'nán, 890km (551 miles) SE of Běijīng

Qīngdǎo's strategic location at the mouth of a natural inlet on the south coast of the Shāndōng Peninsula has long made it attractive to foreign powers. When two German missionaries were killed in the Boxer Rebellion at the end of the 19th century, that was all the excuse Kaiser Wilhelm II needed to wrest Qīngdǎo, then a small fishing town, from the weak Qīng government, which ceded the port to the Germans on November 14, 1897, for 99 years. The Germans moved in, set up the Tsingtao Brewery, established churches and missions, built a railway to Jǐ'nán, and stationed 2,000 men in the garrison. But they were forced out at the beginning of World War I in 1914, and the Japanese took over, staying on after the 1919 Treaty of Versailles granted them authority over all ex-German territories in China. The Japanese ceded Qīngdǎo back to the Guómíndǎng (Nationalist Government) in 1922 but occupied the town again from 1938 to 1945 during World War II.

Today, Qīngdǎo, which has retained much of its Teutonic architecture, remains one of China's more charming and relaxing cities. With its year-round mild climate, Qīngdǎo also hosts many fairs and festivals throughout the year, the most famous of which is the annual Qīngdǎo International Beer Festival, held the last 2 weeks of August and attracting upwards of a million visitors. Summers see the town packed with Chinese visitors, making spring and fall better times to visit if you hope to avoid the crowds. Tranquility will be more elusive in the coming years as Qīngdǎo gets ready to host the watersports events of the 2008 Summer Olympics.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Qīngdǎo is well connected by **air** to many Chinese cities, including Běijīng (1¼ hr.), Guǎngzhōu (2 hr., 45 min.), and Shànghǎi (70 min.). Tickets can be purchased at the **CAAC office (Mínháng Dàshà)** at Xiānggǎng Zhōng Lù 30 (✆ **0532/577-5555**). International destinations

Bus Station
Bank
Post Office
Rail Station
PSB Public-Security Visas
TA Travel Agent
Beach
Lighthouse
China
Beijing
Qingdao
0
1 Km
1 Mi
OLD QINGDAO
Passenger Ferry Terminal
Train Station
Boats for Huang Dao
No. 6 Bathing Beach
No. 1 Bathing Beach
No. 2 Bathing Beach
No. 3 Bathing Beach
Tsingtao Brewery
Taijing Shan Cable Car
TV Tower
Zhongshan Gongyuan
Qingdao Shan Gongyuan
Xinhao Shan Gongyuan
Lu Xun Gongyuan
Xiao Qingdao Gongyuan
BADAGUAN (EIGHT PASSES) AREA
CITS
CAAC
To Lao Shan (25 mi/40 km)
Qingdao Bay
Huiquan Bay
Taiping Bay
Fushan Bay
Zhongshan Lu
Zhejiang Lu
Hubei Lu
Taian Lu
Anhui Lu
Hunan Lu
Guangxi Lu
Longkou Lu
Congshan Lu
Daxue Lu
Jiangsu Lu
Jinggangshan Lu
Xianggang Lu
Nanhai Lu
Wenquan Lu
Xianggang Zhong Lu
Xianggang Xi Lu
Donghai Xi Lu
Nanjing Lu
Yunxiao Lu
Fuzhou Nan Lu
Shandong Lu
Ningxia Lu
Liaoning Lu
Dengzhou Lu
Xinjiang Lu
Sishuan Lu
PSB
TA

Qīngdǎo Key

ACCOMMODATIONS ■

Crowne Plaza Qīngdǎo (Qīngdǎo Yízhōng Huángguān Jiàrì Jiǔdiàn) **17**
青岛颐中皇冠假日酒店

Dōngfāng Fàndiàn **9**
东方饭店

Hǎitiān Fàndiàn **13**
海天饭店

Kǎilǎi Guójì Jiǔdiàn (Gloria Inn) **14**
凯莱国际酒店

Qīngdǎo Fàndiàn **3**
青岛饭店

Shāngri-La Hotel Qīngdǎo (Qīngdǎo Xiānggē Lǐlā Fàndiàn) **15**
青岛香格里拉饭店

DINING ◆

Chūnhé Lóu **1**
春和楼

Eden Café **4**
伊甸休闲餐厅

Gāoshì Jiǔdiàn (Steven Gao's Restaurant) **16**
高氏酒店

Tǔdàlì **12**
土大力

ATTRACTIONS ●

Huāshí Lóu **10**
花石楼

Huílán Gé **6**
回澜阁

Jīdū Jiàotáng (Protestant Church) **7**
基督教堂

Qīngdǎo Yíng Bīnguǎn (Qīngdǎo Welcome Guest House) **8**

Tiānzhǔ Jiàotáng (Catholic Church) **2**
天主教堂

Zhàn Qiáo **5**
栈桥

Zhàn Shān Sī **11**
湛山寺

served include Hong Kong, Seoul, Fukuoka, Tokyo, Pusan, and Bangkok. **Dragonair** (✆ **0532/577-6110**) has an office at the Hotel Equatorial, Xiānggǎng Zhōng Lù 28, as does **Japan Airlines** (✆ **0532/571-0088**). Qīngdǎo's **Liú Tíng Airport** (✆ **0532/484-2139**) is located 30km (19 miles) north of the city; the 40-minute taxi ride costs ¥80 to ¥100 ($10–$12). Airport shuttles charging ¥10 ($1.25) depart from the CAAC office every hour between 6am and 6pm, and also meet incoming flights.

There's an express overnight **train** from Běijīng (T25) which takes 10 hours, and a slow overnight train from Shànghǎi (2106) which takes 18½ hours. Several trains a day connect to Wéifāng (2 hr.), Zībó (3–4 hr.), Jǐ'nán (4–5½ hr.), Tài Shān (6 hr.), and Qūfù/Yánzhōu (7 hr.). Tickets can be bought at the railway station (✆ **0532/296-2777**) at Tài'ān Lù 2, 5 days in advance.

The long-distance bus station is in the northern part of town, but the **bus station** (✆ **0532/267-6842**) just outside the railway station should serve most travelers' needs. Intra-province buses depart from the lot south of the railway station for Wéifāng (every 40 min. 6:20am–5:30pm; 2 hr., 40 min.; ¥31/$3.80) and Jǐ'nán (every 30 min. 6am–5:30pm; 5 hr.; ¥50–¥95/$6–$12). Purchase your tickets at the little green kiosks. Long-distance sleeper buses depart from the front of the railway station for destinations further afield such as Shànghǎi (7pm; 10½ hr.; ¥180/$23) and Hángzhōu (3:50pm; 14 hr.).

There are **ferries** to Incheon in South Korea four times a week. Tickets can be bought at the **Qīngdǎo Port Passenger Terminal (Qīngdǎo Gǎng Kèyùn**

Zhàn) at Xīnjiāng Lù 6 (✆ **0532/282-5001**). **Orient Ferry Ltd.** (Hǎitiān Hotel, Xiānggǎng Xī Lù 48, room 1267/68; ✆ **0532/389-7636**) also operates regular ferries to Shimonoseki (40 hr.) in Japan; a one-way ticket costs between ¥1,230 and ¥4,785 ($154–$598).

GETTING AROUND Downtown and the German Quarter can be toured on foot, but taxis and buses are more convenient ways to get to some of the beaches and attractions further afield. **Taxis** charge ¥7 (85¢) for 3km (2 miles), then ¥1.50 (20¢) per kilometer until 8km (5 miles), when the price rises to ¥2.15 (25¢) per kilometer. **Bus** nos. 26 and 301 run from the railway station along the southern edge of the peninsula towards the commercial district on Xiānggǎng Zhōng Lù; the fare is ¥1 (15¢).

VISITOR INFORMATION A **Tourism and Information Service Center** (✆ **0532/296-2000;** open 9am–5pm) is located 200m (218 yd.) to the left when you exit the railway station. They can provide information and direct travelers to sights and accommodations.

TOURS & GUIDES **CITS** at Xiānggǎng Xī Lù 73 (✆ **0532/389-3002;** fax 0532/389-3013) can arrange tours of the Tsingtao Brewery with an English-speaking guide for ¥60 ($7.50) per person.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China** at Yúnxiāo Lù 1 is open for foreign exchange Monday through Friday from 8am to 5pm. An ATM is available here. Another branch at Zhōngshān Lù 68 has similar hours.

Internet Access There is a small **Internet cafe** across from the post office on Ānhuī Lù. It's open from 9am to midnight. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office Located at Ānhuī Lù 5 (open 8am–6pm) and another in the commercial district (open 8:30am–5:30pm) at Xiānggǎng Zhōng Lù 56.

Visa Extensions The **PSB** office for visa extensions (✆ **0532/579-2555,** ext 2860; open Mon–Fri 8:30–11:30am and 1:30–5:30pm) is inconveniently located in the eastern part of town at Níngxià Lù 272. Bus no. 301 runs there from the railway station.

EXPLORING THE CITY

GERMAN QĪNGDǍO

Many houses and shops in the former German Concession still retain their original European architecture. In addition to the sights that follow, other noteworthy buildings include the **Railway Station** at Tài'ān Lù 2, a classical European structure built in 1901 with a 35m (115-ft.) high bell tower; the former **Public Security Bureau** at Húběi Lù 29, built in 1904 to 1905 in the style of a medieval village church; and the **Princess House** at Jūyōngguān Lù 10, a villa built in 1903 by the Danish Consulate General for a Danish princess.

East of the old town near the Number Two Bathing Beach, the **Bà Dà Guān (Eight Passes)** area, named for the eight famous passes of the Great Wall, was and still is the toniest address in town. Unfortunately for the visitor, most of the well-preserved European mansions and villas here are hidden behind high walls and fences. Still, it's a lovely area to walk around, as the streets are wide and sheltered by a canopy of trees, with each street (or "pass") planted with a different bloom, including crab apples, peaches, pines, magnolias, and ginkgoes.

Tiānzhǔ Jiàotáng (Catholic Church) ★ This former St. Michael's Cathedral was designed by German architect Pepieruch in a Gothic and Roman style

and built between 1932 and 1934 with 60m (197-ft.) high twin bell towers housing four bronze bells. Much of the church's interior was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. Today, the inside has been given a new paint job and all the stained glass is new except for the small triangular panels in the round window in the eastern wall of the church.

Zhèjiāng Lù 15. Admission ¥5 (60¢). Mon–Sat 8am–5pm; Sun 9am–5pm. Bus: no. 26.

Jīdū Jiàotáng (Protestant Church) ★★ One of Qīngdǎo's more attractive sights, this simple but beautiful church was designed by German Curt Rothkegel in the style of a Western medieval castle and completed in 1908. A red tile roof and a pretty green bell tower with a three-sided clock face cap the squat yellow structure. Visitors can climb the tower to see the original bells that still toll here. More popularly known to locals as Zhōngbiǎo Lóu (Clock Tower), the building was spared destruction during the Cultural Revolution, as few knew it was a church.

Jiāngsū Lù 15. Admission ¥3 (35¢). Mon–Sat 8:30–11:30am and 1:30–4:30pm; Sun 1:30–4:30pm. Bus: no. 1 to Jiāngsū Lù.

Qīngdǎo Yíngbīnguǎn (Qīngdǎo Welcome Guest House) ★★★ Built between 1905 and 1908 in the style of an old fortress with Tudor motifs, this magnificent building, the former residence of the German governor general, looks like it leaped from a Grimm Brothers' fairy tale. In 1934, the house became a hotel and is now a museum. Visitors can see the office where Máo Zédōng slept during his month-long summer holiday in July 1957. Much of the stained glass, dark woods, and plush furnishings have survived, including an exquisite green marble fireplace with ornamental tiles in the study and an original 1876 German grand piano.

Lóngshān Lù 26. Admission ¥10 ($1.25). 8:30am–5pm. Bus: no. 25, 26, 214 to Dàxué Lù.

Huāshí Lóu ★ This Bavarian medieval castle built in 1903, with a tall round turret, chimneys, balconies, and Greek-style columns, was originally a Russian aristocrat's villa but was later taken over by the German governor general as a fishing retreat. In 1946, Chiang Kai-shek secretly retreated here to plan the Guómíndǎng's next moves. These days, the villa, a big hit with wedding parties, can't exactly be called quiet or relaxing. Climbing to the top affords the visitor a grand view of the surrounding Bà Dà Guān area.

Huánghǎi Lù 18. Admission ¥5 (60¢). 7am–5pm. Bus: no. 26, 31.

BEACHES

Qīngdǎo's beaches are a top attraction for many Chinese, attractive if you're coming from any one of China's many dull, gray, overcrowded cities. Just don't expect a white-sand tropical paradise. From June to September, the beaches are packed. All the main public beaches, seven in the urban area, have changing booths where you can shower for ¥3 (35¢), as well as medical stations and lifeguards on duty. Watersports range from water skiing to parasailing.

Starting from the western tip of the peninsula, the beach nearest the railway station is the **Number Six Bathing Beach (Dìliù Hǎishuǐ Yùchǎng);** its rocky terrain makes it the least desirable for sunbathing. The big attraction here, however, is Qīngdǎo's former pier, **Zhàn Qiáo,** (¥2/25¢; open 7am–8:30pm), originally built in 1892 for the Qīng army. It now juts 440m (1,300 ft.) into the bay and is popularly considered the city's symbol. At the end of the pier is the octagonal Huílán Gé (¥4/50¢), a pavilion which currently houses a small tacky aquarium with a coral exhibit.

Continuing east around the headland into the next bay past the aquarium, the 800m (872-yd.) long **Number One Bathing Beach (Dìyī Hǎishuǐ Yùchǎng)** is Qīngdǎo's longest, but the sand here is somewhat coarse and pebbly. Around the next headland is the **Number Two Bathing Beach (Dìèr Hǎishuǐ Yùchǎng)** ★, much nicer and more secluded than either numbers One or Six. Little wonder that this beach used to be popular with political figures like Máo Zédōng and other government officials. There's a ¥2 (25¢) entrance fee from 9am to 6pm, but at other times, it's free. In the next bay is the 400m (436-yd.) long **Number Three Bathing Beach (Dìsān Hǎishuǐ Yùchǎng)** ★, also nice, quiet, and a bit out of the way.

Far out to the west, half an hour by boat and then another half hour by bus, is the beach of **Huáng Dǎo** ★, cleaner and quieter than Qīngdǎo's beaches, and until recently known only to locals. Take the Qīngdǎo Huáng Dǎo Lúndù (ferry) (hourly 6:30am–9pm; 30 min.; ¥10/$1.25) from the local ferry terminal (Lúndù Zhàn) on Sìchuān Lù west of the railway station, then bus no. 1 to its terminus.

PARKS

Qīngdǎo has a multitude of parks, some of them worth exploring. **Zhōngshān Gōngyuán** (Xiānggǎng Xī Lù; ¥5/60¢ 6am–6pm) offers some pleasant strolls and is especially pretty during April and May when the cherry trees are in bloom. Northeast of the park is the **Tàipíng Shān Gōngyuán,** where visitors can take a cable car up to a TV tower at the summit. The cable-car fare is ¥10 ($1.25) one-way, ¥20 ($2.50) round-trip. At the summit you can see lovely views of the city. From there, you can hike down the way you came, take the cable car, or hike down the back of the mountain to **Zhàn Shān Sì** (Zīquán Lù 4), the largest Buddhist temple in Qīngdǎo. Admission to the temple is ¥5 (60¢); hours are from 8:30am to 4:30pm. Note that the cable-car terminus is still a 15-minute walk to Zhàn Shān Sì; the fare to Zhàn Shān Sì is ¥20 ($2.50) one-way, ¥35 ($4.25) round-trip.

Xìnhào Shān Gōngyuán (Signal Hill Park), at Lóngshān Lù, just west of the Qīngdǎo Welcome Guest House, was the location of a German navigating signal tower in 1898. Today the tower has been replaced by someone's bad idea of post-modernist architecture—three carbuncular mushroom-domed pink buildings meant to simulate signaling torches. Kitsch aside, the revolving viewing platform inside the main "mushroom" does afford some lovely views of Qīngdǎo. Admission is ¥2 (25¢) for the park only, ¥12 ($1.50) including tower entrance. Hours are from 7am to 7pm (to 6pm in winter). **QīngdǎovShān Gōngyuán,** northwest of Zhōngshān Gōngyuán, has the remains of an old German fort (or rather, the underground command post). Admission is ¥8 ($1); hours are from 8:30 to 11:30am and 2 to 5pm.

OTHER ATTRACTIONS

Qīngdǎo's most famous attraction, the **Tsingtao Brewery,** is unfortunately not open to the general public. The only way to visit the brewery is to book a tour through a travel agency such as CITS.

About 15km (9 miles) east of town, **Qīngdǎo Píjiǔ Chéng** (Xiānggǎng Dōng Lù and Hǎiěr Lù) is a European-themed amusement park only open during the 2-week International Beer Festival in September. In this Bavarian bacchanal, there's something for everyone, from amusement park rides for kids, to drinking contests for adults, to go-karting for the kid in the adult. Check with CITS for exact dates.

WHERE TO STAY

Qīngdǎo has a glut of upmarket hotels, many of which offer 20% to 30% discounts. All rooms are subject to a 15% surcharge unless otherwise noted.

VERY EXPENSIVE

Hǎitiān Fàndiàn ★★ Located just east of the Bà Dà Guān District and overlooking the sea, this five-star, 15-story, two-building Goliath of a hotel claims all its rooms have sea views except for a few singles in the back. Renovated in 2001, rooms are comfortable and stylishly decorated with sleek modern furniture. The marble bathrooms are small but are otherwise clean and stylish, and come with dedicated potable water.

Zhànshān Dàlù 39. ✆ **0532/387-1888.** Fax 0532/387-1777. 606 units. ¥1,400 ($175) standard room. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; indoor pool, tennis court, health club; sauna; bowling alley; concierge; tour desk; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; 24-hr. room service; massage; laundry/dry cleaning; newsstand. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Shangri-La Hotel Qīngdǎo (Qīngdǎo Xiānggélǐlā Fàndiàn) ★★★ Located in Qīngdǎo's commercial center, this used to be the top choice for many Western visitors. Lately, it's been regarded as a bit stodgy and old, especially when compared with the recently crowned five-star Crowne Plaza. Nevertheless, the signature Shangri-La luxury is still very much in evidence here. Business travelers and tour groups from Japan and Southeast Asia especially favor this hotel. All rooms are spacious and well fitted with comfortable beds, desks, and sofas. The hotel also offers a full range of facilities and fine dining. Staff is friendly and helpful.

Xiānggǎng Zhōng Lù 9. ✆ **800/942-5050** or 0532/388-3838. Fax 0532/388-6868. www.shangri-la.com. 502 units. ¥1,560 ($195) standard room; from ¥2,560 ($320) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bakery; bar; lounge; indoor pool; outdoor tennis court; health club and spa; Jacuzzi; sauna; concierge; airport shuttle service; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; 24-hr. room service; massage; babysitting; same-day laundry/dry cleaning; newsstand; nonsmoking rooms; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, broadband Internet access, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

EXPENSIVE

Crowne Plaza Qīngdǎo (Qīngdǎo Yízhōng Huángguān Jiàrì Jiǔdiàn) ★★★ Located in the heart of the commercial and shopping district, this latest addition to the five-star hotel scene, recently upgraded from the four-star Holiday Inn, is popular with Western independent and business travelers. Rooms are plush and tastefully decorated with all the expected amenities. Views of the sea are especially fine. Executive business rooms are the largest in town. With six restaurants on the premises, the hotel also has some of the most diversified dining choices.

Xiānggǎng Zhōng Lù 76. ✆ **0532/571-8888.** Fax 0532/571-6666. www.sixcontinentshotels.com. 388 units. ¥996 ($124) standard room; ¥1,411 ($176) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 6 restaurants; bakery; bar; lounge; indoor pool; health club and spa; sauna; bowling alley; concierge; free airport shuttle service; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; 24-hr. room service; massage; babysitting; same-day laundry/dry cleaning; newsstand; nonsmoking rooms; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, broadband Internet access, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Dōngfāng Fàndiàn ★ For those who don't require a beach location, this four-star hotel, about a 10-minute walk from the Protestant Church, is probably the best deal around. Many Western travelers give it good marks for its comfortable, clean rooms at reasonable prices. It's not luxurious, but there's a full range of facilities and the service is quite good overall. The helpful staff speaks some English.

Dàxué Lù 2. ✆ **0532/286-5888.** Fax 0532/286-2741. 146 units. ¥788 ($98) standard room; from ¥980 ($122) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; lounge; tennis court; health club; sauna; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Kǎilái Guójì Jiǔdiàn (Gloria Inn) This Hong Kong–managed three-star hotel catering mostly to Japanese, Korean, and domestic guests is the place to stay if you want to be closer to the sea and don't require luxurious amenities. An ugly white-tiled structure on the outside, the hotel has recently renovated rooms that are spacious, cozy, and comfortable. Bathrooms are bright and clean. Views from seaside rooms are somewhat restricted by apartment blocks, but they are pleasant enough. Staff is friendly.

Dōnghǎi Lù 21. ✆ **0532/387-8855.** Fax 0532/386-4640. 238 units. ¥1,000 ($125) standard room. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; indoor pool; health club; sauna; salon; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; airport shuttle service; limited room service; massage; babysitting; same-day laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar.

MODERATE

Qīngdǎo Fàndiàn Within walking distance of the railway station, this three-star hotel offers a wide array of rooms at attractive discounts. The more expensive rooms have been recently renovated and are quite comfortable. Bathrooms run small but are clean. Cheaper rooms have no carpets, are very basic but clean, and come with showers only. The staff here is friendly and a few of them speak decent English.

Zhōngshān Lù 53. ✆ **0532/289-1888.** Fax 0532/286-2464. 198 units. ¥230–¥498 ($28–$62) standard room. Discounts possible up to 40%. MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; exercise room; sauna; ticket agency; business center; forex; salon; limited room service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

WHERE TO DINE

Qīngdǎo's seafood and its variations of local Shāndōng cuisine *(lǔ cài)* are all worth trying. Two long blocks east of the Shangri-La Hotel along Xiānggǎng Zhōng Lù is **Yúnxiāo Lù,** a lively street of bars and restaurants serving all types of Chinese cuisine into the wee hours.

The most authentic Western fare is still to be found in hotels like the Crowne Plaza and the Shangri-La (see above). The **Eden Café** in Parkson department store on Zhōngshān Lu 44–60 (✆ **0532/202-1022**) serves some credible pizzas, pastas, burgers, and even a New Zealand beef tenderloin; main courses range from ¥28 to ¥88 ($3.50–$11). **McDonald's** and **Kentucky Fried Chicken** are well represented, with outlets in both the German Concession and the commercial center around Xiānggǎng Zhōng Lù.

Chūnhé Lóu SHĀNDŌNG This long-standing institution for Shāndōng cuisine is located in an old two-story corner building in the German Concession. The first floor serves casual fast food while the second floor has large tables and private rooms. Despite the modest ambience, the food has its devotees. House specialties include *yóubào hǎiluó* (fried sea snails), *sōngshǔ guìyú* (deep-fried sweet-and-sour fish), and *xiāng sū jī* (fragrant chicken).

Zhōngshān Lù 146. ✆ **0532/282-4346.** Meal for 2 ¥80–¥150 ($10–$18). No credit cards. 10:30am–2:30pm and 5–9:30pm; 1st floor 6am–2:30pm and 5–9:30pm.

Gāoshì Jiǔdiàn (Steven Gao's Restaurant) SEAFOOD/HOME-STYLE Guitars and posters of Jim Morrison and Axl Rose decorate the walls of this three-story restaurant located on food street Yúnxiāo Lù. Try the *jīngjiàng ròusī* (shredded pork Peking style), *suànxiāng gǔ* (fried pork chop with garlic), or *shāo*

Wild China: The Funeral Pits of Zībó

Once the capital of the Qí State—during the Spring and Autumn (722–481 B.C.) and Warring States periods (475–221 B.C.)—Zībó today is a dusty industrial town better known for its glass and ceramic production.

The town is located 116km (70 miles) east of Jī'nán in Shāndōng Province, but most of its worthwhile sights are actually in Línzī District about 35km (21 miles) east of Zībó. The **Línzī Zhōngguó Gǔchē Bówùguǎn (Lí Museum of Chinese Ancient Chariots)** ★★ (Qílín Zhèn, Hòulǐ Guānzhuāng), is about 6km (3½ miles) from the Línzī bus station. Admission is ¥25 ($3) and hours are from 8am to 6pm. Here you'll see two fascinating ancient horse-and-chariot funeral pits which predate Xī'ān's terra-cotta army by more than 280 years. The horses' remains, dating to the Spring and Autumn Period, have been left as they were found. The first pit contains the remains of 10 chariots and 32 horses, all facing west. From the positions of the horses, with bronze bits still intact, archaeologists concluded that the animals were either anesthetized or otherwise rendered unconscious before burial. The second pit features the bones of four horses plus six chariots, which remain buried underneath the horses. Visitors can get a close look, which is a fascinating, if eerie, experience.

Ten minutes to the northwest, **Xūn Mǎ Kēng (Ancient Horse Relics Museum)** ★ (Héyátóu Cūn; ¥10/$1.25; 7:30am–6:30pm) is a series of over 20 tombs believed to have belonged to Qí Jǐng, the 25th monarch of the Qí State. The tombs contain the fossils of 600 horses. Only **Tomb 5** (106 horses) in the southwestern section is open, however. Unearthed in 1982, the horses are arranged in two rows with their heads facing outwards. No other funerary objects were found, as the tombs were long ago robbed.

Ceramic production developed around Zībó as early as the period of the Hòulǐ culture 8,000 years ago. Four exhibit halls at the town's ceramics museum, **Zībó Zhōngguó Táocí Guǎn** ★ (Xīncūn Xī Lù; ¥20/$2.50; May–Oct 9–11:30am and 3–6pm; Nov–Apr 9–11:30am and 2–5pm), trace the evolution of Zībó's ceramics from the Neolithic Lóngshān and Hòulǐ cultures to its zenith in the Táng and Sòng dynasties with the development of celadon ware and black glaze porcelain. Notable items on display include the dainty eggshell earthenware of the Lóngshān

èrdōng (sautéed mushrooms with asparagus); or choose from the tanks of fresh seafood out front.

Yúnxiāo Lù 38. ✆ **0532/573-6676.** English menu. Meal for 2 ¥60–¥120 ($7.50–$15). V. Open 24 hr.

Tǔdàlì KOREAN Located just west of the Shangri-La Hotel, this late-night Korean barbecue diner has a cozy and informal feel, with its exposed wooden beams and plenty of wall graffiti from happy and appreciative patrons. Barbecued meat and vegetable skewers are the main attractions here, along with other tasty Korean staples like kimchi fried rice and *chap chae* (stir-fried yam noodles).

Xiānggǎng Xī Lù 52. ✆ **013583229720.** Picture menu. Meal for 2 ¥30–¥60 ($3.75–$7.50). No credit cards. 4pm–4am.

culture and the rare "Blue and Yellow Celestial Dragon" patterned porcelain reserved strictly for use by the emperor. The store here (open 8–11:30am and 2:30–6pm/5pm in winter) sells surprisingly inexpensive locally produced vases, cups, and individual sculptures. Only cash is accepted.

GETTING THERE From Zībó's **railway station** (✆ **0533/258-2522**) in the southern part of town, daily trains run to Jì'nán (1½ hr.), Wéifāng (1 hr.), Qīngdǎo (3½–4 hr.), and beyond. From Zībó's **bus station** (✆ **0533/288-0239**), just west of the railway station, buses run to Jì'nán (every 20–30 min. 5:30am–6:40pm; 1½ hr., ¥20–¥30/$2.50–$3.75), Qīngdǎo (every half hour 6:30am–4:30pm; 3½ hr.), Wéifāng (every half hour 6:30am–5:30pm; 1½ hr.), and Tài'ān (every half hour 6:30am–5:20pm).

GETTING AROUND Take bus no. 6 or minibus no. 20 for ¥3 (35¢) from Dōngyī Lù just east of the railway station to its terminus at Línzī Bus Station; then take tourist bus no. 5, which stops at all the main sights listed here (¥4/50¢ for the entire loop). Alternatively, a **taxi** from Zībó will cost ¥60 to ¥80 ($7.50–$10) one-way. In town, taxis charge ¥5 (60¢) per 3km (2 miles), then ¥1.20 (15¢) per kilometer.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE Located in its own garden compound in the center of town, the four-story, four-star **Zībó Bīnguǎn** (Zhōngxīn Lù 189; ✆ **0533/228-8688;** fax 0533/218-4990) offers rooms that lack charm but are comfortable, and the bathrooms are clean. Rooms go for ¥380 to ¥460 ($45–$57); older budget rooms in a three-star wing are ¥280 ($35). The 31-story **Zībó Fàndiàn** ★ (Zhōngxīn Lù 177; ✆ **0533/218-0888;** fax 0533/218-4800) was the town's first four-star hotel (1999). What it lacks in charm is made up for with a host of modern conveniences. Rooms costing ¥460 ($57) have large, comfortable beds and standard four-star furnishings, though the carpets are old. The spacious marble bathrooms are dark but clean. The hotel's revolving restaurant on the 31st floor offers Shāndōng cuisine (also known as "Lǔ") in one of the city's more elegant settings. The Demeanor Bar serves real cappuccino and Colombian coffee, plus cocktails and imported wine. **Western fast food** is available at McDonald's (Zībó Shāngshà at Zhōngxīn Lù and Měishí Jiē) and at Kentucky Fried Chicken (Měishí Jiē 17).

QĪNGDǍO AFTER DARK

For all its activity during the day, Qīngdǎo has a surprisingly quiet nightlife. One exception is the area along **Yúnxiāo Lù,** off Xiānggǎng Zhōng Lù, where a number of restaurants and bars stay open till the wee hours. **Xìngfú Shíguāng Jiǔbā (Scott's Beer Bar)** at Yúnxiāo Lù 7–9 (✆ **0532/575-9960**) is a casual place to unwind at the end of the day and is popular with expats.

A NEARBY ATTRACTION

Láo Shān ★★ Located 40km (24 miles) east of Qīngdǎo, Láo Shān is a mountain range that is part daoist sanctuary, part natural wonder, with waterfalls, streams, and walking trails snaking through wooded hills, and jagged cliff

faces rising dramatically from the blue sea. Daoism spread to the mountain during the Western Hàn dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 9), and emperors throughout the ages have dispatched envoys to scale the mountain in search of the elixir of life. While the water that originates from here didn't perform any miracles, today it is famous and is used in brewing Tsingtao beer.

Admission to Láo Shān is ¥50 ($6.25) April 15 through October 15, and ¥30 ($3.75) October 16 through April 14. The most popular sightseeing route is the **southern route,** which takes in daoist temples, caves, and ponds, with stupendous sea views along the way. The main daoist temple here is **Tàiqīng Gōng,** first built in 140 B.C., now with over 140 rooms and an equally mind-boggling number of gods from the daoist pantheon. Admission is ¥10 ($1.25); hours are from 8am to 6pm. East of the temple, a trail leads up to **Yǎkǒu,** where you can either take a cable car or continue on foot up to Yáo Lake and Míngxiá Cave, where admission is ¥4 (50¢). The trail down leads past **Shàngqīng Gōng** (¥2/25¢), another daoist temple; and the impressive waterfall, **Lóngtàn Pù.**

To get to Láo Shān, tourist buses depart from the eastern end of Qīngdǎo's railway station square every half hour from 6:30am to 6pm. The 1-hour trip costs ¥12 ($1.50). Public bus no. 304 runs from the Ferry Terminal (Lúndù) on Sìchuān Lù all the way to Yǎkǒu. The Tàiqīng Gōng cable car costs ¥50 ($6.25) round-trip (¥40/$5 in low season).

9 Nánjīng ★★

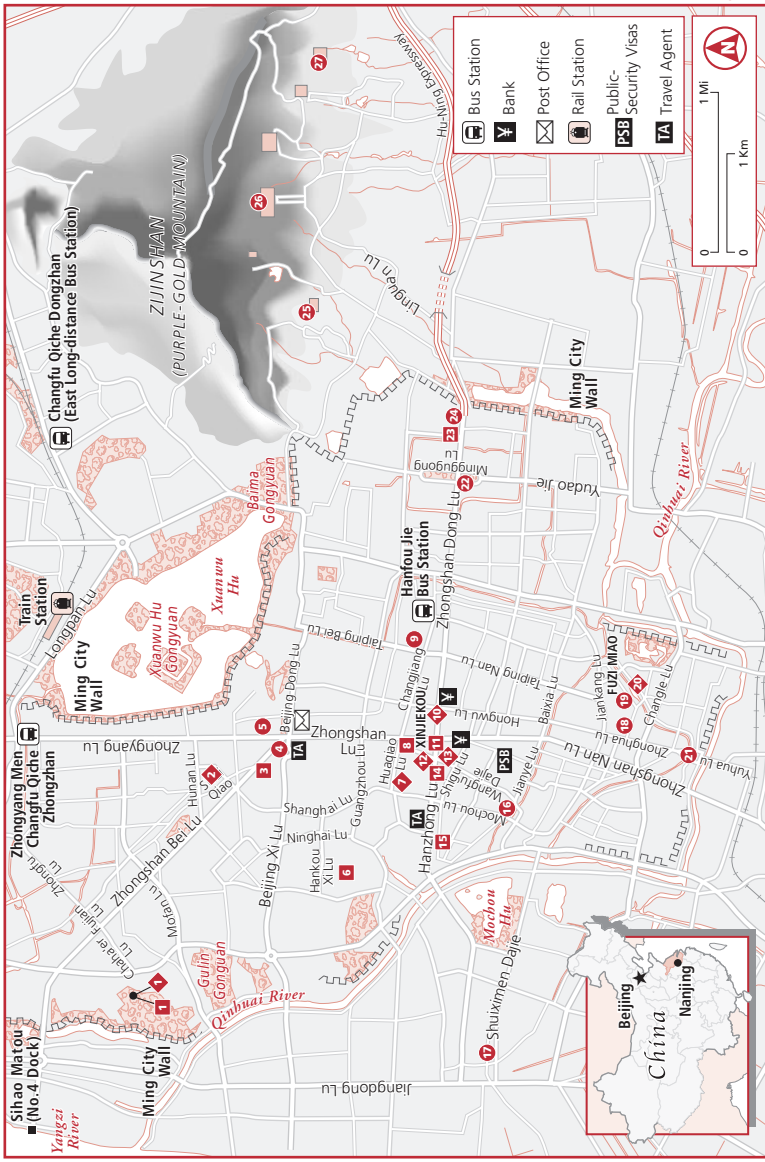
Jiāngsū Province, 306 km (189 miles) NW of Shànghǎi

First the nation's capital in the early years of the Míng dynasty (A.D. 1368–1644), then the capital of the Republic of China from 1911 to 1937, and now capital of Jiāngsū Province, this bustling city of 6 million is left off many China itineraries, lacking many visible reminders of what has in fact been a highly tumultuous and storied past. Except for Zhōngshān Lín, the tomb of Sun Yat-sen, the scope of Nánjīng's attractions do not accurately reflect the magnitude and importance of its place in China's history, which is a shame, because the city deserves at least a day or two of your time. In addition to some Míng dynasty attractions, there are reminders that Nánjīng was also the seat of the Tàipíng Rebellion and the site of one of history's most brutal massacres. Spring and fall are the best times to visit, as Nánjīng in the summer is well known as one of China's three furnaces.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE From Nánjīng's airport, just under 50km (31 miles) southwest of the city, daily **flights** connect to Běijīng, Guǎngzhōu, Wǔhàn, Chéngdū, Kūnmíng, Guìlín, and Hong Kong. There are also twice-weekly flights to Macau and Bangkok. Tickets can be purchased at hotel tour desks and at the **CAAC** at Hànzhōng Lù 180 (domestic ✆ **025/660-2902;** international ✆ **025/652-5730**). **China Eastern** has a 24-hour office at Zhōngshān Dōng Lù 402 (✆ **025/445-4325**), while **Dragonair** offices are at Hànzhōng Lù 2, nos. 751–753 (✆ **025/471-0184**). CAAC airport shuttles depart from the CAAC office every 30 minutes from 6am to 6:30pm, and also meet arriving flights. The trip takes 50 minutes and costs ¥25 ($3). ***Note:*** The bus leaves once full; those left behind must take taxis. A metered **taxi** into the Xīnjiēkǒu area should run about ¥140 ($18), including toll.

When construction ends on Nánjīng's **railway station** (Shàoshān Lù 264; ✆ **025/582-2222**) sometime in 2004 or 2005, it will be linked to Nánjīng's subway. The city is an important rail junction along the Běijīng-to-Shànghǎi



railway line. Trains heading east to Shànghǎi (3 hr.) connect to Wúxī (2–2½ hr.) and Sūzhōu (2½–3 hr.). There is no direct train to Hángzhōu, although train 701 goes there via Shànghǎi. Heading west, there are trains to Huángshān (6½–10 hr.). You can buy tickets on the second floor of the three-story annex west of the station's exit. A special window selling only Shànghǎi tickets is marked in green; its hours are from 7 to 11am and from 11:30am to 6:30pm. You can also buy tickets at the Gǔlóu ticket-booking office at Zhōngshān Lù 293 (✆ **025/330-1692**).

Nánjīng Key

ACCOMMODATIONS ■

Central Hotel (Zhōngxīn Dàjiǔdiàn) **8**
中心大酒店

Crowne Plaza Nánjīng Hotels and Suites (Jīnyīng Huángguān Jiǔdiàn) **14**
金鹰皇冠酒店

Hilton Nánjīng (Nánjīng Xīèrdūn Guójì Dàjiǔdiàn) **23**
南京希尔顿国际大酒店

Hotel Sheraton Nánjīng Kingsley Hotel and Towers (Nánjīng Jīnsīlì Xīláidēng Jiǔdiàn) **15**

Jīnlíng Fàndiàn **11**
金陵饭店

Nánshān Bīngguǎn **6**
南山宾馆

Ramada Plaza Yíhuá Hotel (Nánjīng Huáměidá Yíhuá Jiǔdiàn) **3**
南京华美达怡华酒店

Shāngri-La Dīngshān (Dīngshān Xiānggélǐlā Dàjiǔdiàn) **1**
丁山香格里拉大酒店

DINING ◆

Bella Napoli (Bèilānàpōli Yìdàlì Cāntīng) **10**
贝拉那波利意大利餐厅

Henry's Home **7**
享利之家西餐厅

Jīnhé Tài Cāntīng (Golden Harvest Thai Opera Café) **2**
金禾泰餐厅

Jīnyīng Dàjiǔlóu **13**
金鹰大酒楼

Lán & Bái (Blue and White) **12**
蓝&白

Míng Yuán **1**
明园

Wǎnqíng Lóu **20**
晚晴楼

ATTRACTIONS ●

Cháotiān Gōng **16**
朝天宫

Dàzhōng Tíng **5**
大钟亭

Gǔlóu **4**
鼓楼

Jiāngnán Gòngyuàn Lìshǐ Chénlièguǎn **19**
江南共院历史陈列馆

Línggǔ Sī **27**
灵谷寺

Míng Xiào Líng (Míng Filial Tomb) **25**
明孝陵

Míng Gùgōng **22**
明故宫

Nánjīng Bówùguǎn (Nánjīng Museum) **24**
南京博物馆

Nánjīng Dàtúshā Jìniànguǎn (Memorial to the Victims of the Nánjīng Massacre) **17**
南京大屠杀纪念馆

Tàipíng Tiānguó Lìshǐ Bówùguǎn (Tàipíng Heavenly Kingdom Historical Museum) **18**
太平天国历史博物馆

Zhōnghuá Mén Chéngbǎo **21**
中华门城堡

Zhōngshān Líng **26**

Zǒngtǒng Fǔ **9**

Nánjīng has seven **long-distance bus stations,** but the main one, Nánjīng Zhōngyāng Mén Chángtú Qìchē Zǒngzhàn, at Jiànníng Lù 1 (✆ **025/550-4973**), just west of the Nánjīng Railway Station, should serve most travelers' needs. From here, large, air-conditioned buses run to Sūzhōu (every 20 min.; 2 hr., 40 min.; ¥46–¥64/$5.75–$8), Shànghǎi (every half hour; 3½ hr.; ¥82–¥88/$10–$11), Hángzhōu (hourly; 5 hr.; ¥98/$12). The Hànfǔ Jiē Bus Station (Chángtú Qìchē Zhàn) at Chángjiāng Lù 296 (✆ **025/454-0786**) also serves the same destinations. The East Long-distance Bus Station (Chángtú Qìchē Dōng Zhàn) at Huāyuán Lù 17 services Yángzhōu (every half hour; 1 hr.; ¥25/$3) and Yíxīng (every 20 min. 6:20am–6:40pm; 2½ hr.; ¥44/$5.50). There are also express "business" buses for ¥88 ($11) that leave for Shànghǎi at 8, 9, and 10am and 2, 3:30, and 4:30pm from the back entrance of the Jīnlíng Hotel.

For those with time to spare, **boats** run to Shànghǎi (daily; 19 hr.), Chóngqìng (daily; 6 days,) and all points in between, from the rather forlorn **Sìhào Mǎtóu** (**No. 4 Dock;** ✆ **025/881-3284**) at the northwest edge of town. Ticketing hours are from 7 to 11am and from 12:30 to 8:30pm. Few travelers choose this option.

GETTING AROUND Nánjīng is a sprawling city not particularly conducive to walking, with sights scattered in different directions. Until the subway is ready in 2005, travel may be delayed by all the construction going on about town. Flagfall for **taxis** is ¥7 (90¢) for 3km (2 miles), then ¥2.40 (30¢) per kilometer. From 11pm to 6am, the price rises to ¥2.70 (35¢) per kilometer after 3km. Rickety motorcycle taxis charge ¥3 (40¢) for the first kilometer, after which you're on your own with your powers of negotiation. Be sure to agree on a price beforehand.

Buses are a convenient and cheap way to get around Nánjīng, although they are almost always full. Pay ¥2 (25¢) for air-conditioned buses and ¥1 (15¢) for all others. No change is given. Some of the main bus routes include: 1: Nánjīng Railway Station–Xīnjiēkǒu–Fūzǐ Miào; Y1: Nánjīng Railway Station–Xīnjiēkǒu–Zhōngshān Líng; Y2: Yǔhuātái–Zǒngtǒng Fǔ–Zhōngshān Líng

TOURS **Jiāngsū Zhōngshān International Travel Service** (Zhōngshān Běi Lù 204; ✆ **025/342-1573**) works with the major hotels to offer a standard 1-day tour of Nánjīng, including visits to Zhōngshān Líng (Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Mausoleum), Zǒngtǒng Fǔ (the Presidential Palace), and Cháotiān Gōng (Worshipping Heaven Palace), among other places. The cost of ¥150 ($18) includes entry fees and the use of a guide and bus driver.

VISITOR INFORMATION ***MAP,*** the free local English-language monthly magazine featuring the latest on dining and entertainment in Nánjīng, is available in any of the top hotels or in Western restaurants.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The main branch of the **Bank of China** is located at Zhōngshān Nán Lù 148. Hours for foreign exchange are Monday through Friday from 8:30am to noon and 2 to 5pm. ATMs accept international cards. Another branch is at Hóngwǔ Lù 29 with the same hours.

Internet Access **China Telecom,** Zhōngyāng Lù 2 on the second floor (open 8:30am–5:30pm, ¥2/25¢ per hr.). Bring your passport or ID. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The main post office (8am–6:30pm) is at Gǔlóu, Zhōngshān Lù 366.

The Tàipíng Heavenly Kingdom

During the mid-19th century, natural disasters, catastrophic floods and famines, Western excesses, and Qīng government neglect and corruption had all coalesced to create widespread unrest in China. It was in such a setting that the largest uprising in modern Chinese history occurred. Known as the **Tàipíng Rebellion,** its impact continues to be felt even today.

The Tàipíng Rebellion started in the mind of Hóng Xiùquán (born Hóng Huǒxiù, 1814–1864), a teacher and a farmer's son from Guǎngdōng Province. After Hóng failed his civil-service exams for the third time, he had a feverish dream of a bearded man and a younger man, whom he later decided were God the Father and Jesus. Hóng also kept seeing part of his own name, "Huǒ" in the Christian tract, which he interpreted as another divine calling. Convinced that he was God's son and Jesus's younger brother, and his mission from God was to "slash the demons"—the twin demons of the Manchu government and the traditional Chinese folk religion—Hóng formulated his own ideology, a mix of Christian ideals and Confucian utopianism. He soon amassed a large anti-Manchu, anti-establishment following in the south and in 1851 led a group of 20,000 followers to establish the **Tàipíng Heavenly Kingdom,** with Hóng himself as king. Using their army and any number of ragtag peasant militias they could muster along the way, the Tàipíngs swept up through south and central China and established themselves in Nánjīng in 1853, renaming the city Tiānjīn (Heavenly Capital).

The Tàipíngs preached a new order based on the equal distribution of land, equality between the sexes, monotheism, and the existence of small communities ruled by religious leadership, an order that, save for

Visa Extensions The **PSB** is located at Hónggōngshì 1 (✆ **025/442-0005;** Apr–Sept Mon–Fri 8:30–11:30am and 3–5:30pm; Oct–May Mon–Fri 8:30–11:30am and 2:30–5pm). Same-day visas are possible. From Xīnjiēkǒu, walk 5 minutes south on Zhōngshān Nán Lù, then head west onto Sānyuán Xiāng for about 300m (980 ft.).

EXPLORING NÁNJĪNG

HISTORICAL SIGHTS

Sadly, Nánjīng's Míng legacy can be found in only a few buildings and ruins today. In the center of town, the drum tower **Gǔlóu** was built in 1382 and contained a series of drums used to mark the night watches, welcome guests, and occasionally warn of approaching enemies. Close by is a pavilion, **Dàzhōng Tíng,** which houses a 23,000-kg (25-ton) bronze bell from 1388. Towards the eastern part of town are the ruins of the first Míng dynasty imperial palace, **Míng Gùgōng.** All that remains of the once massive palace, destroyed in the Tàipíng Rebellion, are the Wǔ Mén (Meridian Gate) that once marked the front gate of the palace wall, five small marble bridges, and 12 large plinths that were once the foundation of another large gate. Sections of the Míng **city wall** are still visible.

the religious bit, was to prefigure some of the tenets of the Chinese Communist movement. Feudalism, slavery, concubinage, arranged marriages, opium smoking, foot binding, prostitution, idolatry, and alcohol were all to be abolished (at least in theory). While women under the Tàipíng were allowed a greater degree of freedom (there was even a Tàipíng army made up entirely of female troops), Tàipíng morals continued to stress obedience and chastity in women. Hóng Xiùquán and other Tàipíng leaders also continued to keep harems, in that way no different from any of China's emperors or even Máo Zédōng, who was known to maintain his own.

In the end, however, the Tàipíngs were doomed by a combination of internecine struggles, corruption, defections, flawed policies, and external forces made up of a reconstituted Qīng army aided by Western powers who had apparently decided they would rather deal with the devil they knew (the Qīng government) than contend with the uncertainties of a strong Tàipíng force, even though they were closer to them in ideals. The counterattack was brutal and merciless, and by the time the Chinese army succeeded in crushing the revolt 14 years after it began, a reported 30 million lives had been lost. Hóng Xiùquán himself died of illness in 1864 but his successor, his 14-year old son, was killed by Qīng troops.

It is uncanny how so many facets of the Tàipíng Rebellion would be echoed in later Chinese events. The ability of one man to command such a large fanatical uprising and sustain it for so long would later be paralleled in Máo's Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). The effects of such large mass uprisings also help explain the current Chinese leadership's fear of them.

Zhōnghuá Mén Chéngbǎo ★ Located in the southern part of town, this is the biggest and best-preserved of the city wall's original 13 gates. Built by the Hóngwǔ emperor between 1366 and 1386, the wall, at 33km (20 miles), was the longest city wall in the world, made of uniform bricks cemented with a mortar of lime, sorghum, and glutinous rice. Zhōnghuá Gate, first built in 1386, actually consists of four rows of gates, the first one 53m (173 ft.) long. Each gate entrance had a vertically sliding stone door lifted with a mechanical winch. Twenty-seven arched vaults inside the first gate could house up to 3,000 soldiers, who were set to ambush the enemy should the latter be so unfortunate as to be trapped within the gates. Climb to the top for some good views of the city. Along the way, watch for bricks that still bear the carvings of their maker and supervisor.

Zhōnghuá Mén. Admission ¥10 ($1.25). 8am–10pm.

Zǒngtǒng Fǔ ★★ As the seat of government of the Liǎngjiāng viceroy's office (1671–1911), the Tàipíng Heavenly Kingdom (1853–1864), Sun Yat-sen's provisional government (1912), and the Nationalist government (1927–1937; 1946–1949), this fascinating but often overlooked site has borne witness to all the important events and personalities in Nánjīng's history.

Though this presidential palace dates to the Míng dynasty, today's buildings were all built after 1870. Just inside the main entrance, the Great Hall marked by the words TIĀN XIÀ WÉI GŌNG (The world belongs to all) used to be the first in a series of nine magnificent halls during the Tàipíng Heavenly Kingdom. On January 1, 1912, provisional president of the new Chinese republic Sun Yat-sen held his inauguration here.

After the second hall, the next series of rooms were used by Chiang Kai-shek, elected president in 1948, to receive foreign guests, among them U.S. Gen. George Marshall, who was attempting to broker a truce between Chiang and Máo Zédōng. In the back, Chiang Kai-shek's former office has an interesting old-fashioned hand-operated Otis elevator, which has now been restored. In Xūyuán, the garden on the western side of the compound, a stone boat is the only remaining original artifact from the days of the Tàipíng Heavenly Kingdom.

Chángjiāng Lù 292. Admission ¥30 ($3.75). English-speaking guides ¥60 ($7.50). Apr–Oct 7:30am–6pm; Nov–Mar 8am–4:30pm. Bus: no. 29, 44.

Fūzǐ Miào (Confucian Temple) *Overrated* Kitsch, anyone? Though it may once have been a place of intense study and quiet contemplation, today's Fūzǐ Miào is a loud and showy market square, but to the right (east) was once the Jiāng Nán Gòngyuàn, an academy first built in 1169 and which later became the largest imperial civil examination halls during the Míng and Qīng dynasties, with over 20,000 cells for examinees. Today, a handful of rooms have been restored into a museum, the **Jiāngnán Gòngyuàn Lìshǐ Chénlièguǎn.** Tourists can reenact part of the examination process by donning period robes and Míng dynasty hats and sequestering themselves in the cells which have white walls, bare concrete floors, and two boards stretched across the cells as a seat and a table.

Jiànkāng Lù. Confucian Temple ¥15 ($1.90); museum ¥10 ($1.25). 8am–10pm (last ticket sold at 9pm). Bus: no. 1 from Nánjīng Railway Station and Xīnjiēkǒu to Fūzǐ Miào.

Cháotiān Gōng One of the earliest documented sites in Nánjīng, this former foundry and soldier training ground during the Spring and Autumn Period (722–481 B.C.) was a temple used by the Hóngwǔ emperor (1382–1398) as a ceremonial place of worship, hence Cháotiān or "heaven-worshipping." The place was rebuilt in the Qīng dynasty as a Confucian temple and academy. Today, the main hall, Dàchéng Diàn, houses a fascinating **Six Dynasties museum.** Exhibits include a locally unearthed Roman glass, a compass vehicle, and immortality pills, which obviously didn't work. The English explanations are quite good.

Cháotiān Gōng 4. Admission ¥30 ($4). 8am–5pm. Bus: no. 4 from Fūzǐ Miào to Cháotiān Gōng.

MEMORIALS & MUSEUMS

ZǏJĪN SHĀN

Zǐjīn Shān (Purple Gold Mountain), located on the eastern edge of town, got its name from the mountain's purple shales, which were said to have lent the place a mysterious purple aura at dawn and dusk. Covered with dense forests and dotted with the occasional lake, the mountain has always been a pleasant retreat for locals seeking relief from Nánjīng's heat. It's also home to some important historical sites. Spend the day if you can, but if you have limited time, then the highlight is surely Zhōngshān Líng.

Zhōngshān Líng ★★★ This magnificent mausoleum for Dr. Sun Yat-sen (Sūn Zhōngshān), widely revered as the founder of modern China, has become a mecca for Chinese tourists seeking to pay their respects. Sun Yat-sen died in

Běijīng in 1925 but wasn't interred here until 1929, when construction of the mausoleum was complete. (In 1912, while hunting with friends in Zǐjīn Shān, Sun had expressed his wish to be buried here.) The tomb itself is at the end of a long, steep approach beginning with a Memorial Archway made of white Fújiàn marble and capped by blue glazed tiles. Symbolizing the white sun on the blue background of the Guómíndǎng flag, the colors also marked a departure from the yellow tiles used to honor all of China's previous emperors. At the top of the 392-step grand tomb passage, a white marble statue of Dr. Sun sits under the pretty mosaic roof of the Memorial Hall. The Republican government's constitution is inscribed on the side walls. Dr. Sun's marble coffin lies in the hushed domed chamber in the back.

Admission ¥25 ($3). Apr–Nov 6:30am–6:30pm; Dec–Mar 7am–5:30pm. Bus: no. Y1 (from the Nánjīng Railway Station) or 9 (from Xīnjiēkǒu). Shuttles service Míng Xiào Líng and Línggǔ Sì within the park (¥1/15¢).

Míng Xiào Líng (Míng Filial Tomb) A 40-minute walk west of Zhōngshān Líng, the tomb of the founder of the Míng dynasty, Zhū Yuánzhāng (1328–1398), also known as the Hóngwǔ emperor, was the prototype for the subsequent Míng and Qīng emperors' tombs in Běijīng. Zhū Yuánzhāng was the only Míng emperor to be buried in Nánjīng. Originally enclosed by a large vermilion wall 22.5km (14 miles) in circumference, the tomb, which was started in 1381 but completed some 40 years later, has suffered a great deal of damage. What remains today—a few dilapidated gates, bridges, stone animals, and buildings, not to mention a large, unexcavated burial mound—hardly excites. Restoration plans are underway, however, as the site is applying to be a UNESCO World Heritage listing.

More interesting is **Shíxiàng Lù,** a pleasant winding walkway lined with stone carvings of 12 pairs of animals. The second half of the passageway, flanked by pairs of soldiers and mandarins, leads to Jīnshuǐ Qiáo (bridge). Further on, Hóngwǔ's coffin was carried to his underground palace along Shénxiān Qiáo. Behind the Míng Lóu (tower) with its double eaves and yellow-tiled ridged roofs is a forbidding stone wall marking the burial mound.

Shuttles arriving from town or from Zhōngshān Líng deposit visitors right in the middle at Jīnshuǐ Qiáo. To save time, see the second half of the tomb first, then walk about 100m (328 ft.) west from Jīnshuǐ Qiáo and pick up at Shíxiàng Lù.

Admission ¥15 ($1.90). Apr–Nov 6:30am–6:30pm; Dec–Mar 7am–6pm. Bus: no. Y2, Y3.

Línggǔ Sì Hidden amid the tall conifers east of Zhōngshān Líng, the fascinating Wúliáng Diàn (Beamless Hall), the only surviving edifice of the original Míng dynasty temple, is notable for having been built entirely from bricks without a single wood beam. For most visitors to this still active temple, the biggest draw, if you believe the claim, is that the temple houses remains of the skull of the Táng Buddhist monk Xuánzàng, one of the early monks who helped bring Buddhism to China from India. To see for yourself, head through the courtyard in the back and turn right. The hall to the left has a statue of Xuánzàng, behind which is a little pagoda containing the "remains," which bear a curious resemblance to broken pottery.

Admission ¥15 ($1.90); temple ¥2 (25¢). Apr–Nov 6:30am–6:30pm; Dec–Mar 7am–6pm.

OTHER ATTRACTIONS

Nánjīng Bówùguǎn (Nánjīng Museum) ★ This is the third largest museum in China and worth at least an hour or two of your time. Standouts

include the Lacquerware Hall with an exquisitely carved Qīng dynasty throne; the Jadeware Hall featuring an Eastern Hàn dynasty jade burial suit sewn together with silver; and the Fabric Embroidery Hall, where visitors can view a demonstration of cloud pattern brocade weaving on an old-fashioned loom. The museum shop has a wide selection of art and crafts.

Zhōngshān Dōng Lù 321. Admission ¥20 ($2.50). 9am–4:30pm. Bus: no. Y1, Y2, 9 to Zhōnghuá Mén.

Nánjīng Dàtúshā Jìniànguǎn (Memorial to the Victims of the Nánjīng Massacre) ★★★ Do not leave town without visiting this museum commemorating the atrocities suffered by the Chinese during the Japanese invasion of Nánjīng in 1937. Located at Jiāng Dōng Mén, which was itself an execution and mass burial site during the invasion, the museum consists of an outdoor exhibit, a coffin-shaped viewing hall containing some excavated victims' bones, and pictures and artifacts documenting the Japanese onslaught, the massacre, and the aftermath. Photographs of tortures and executions, many taken by Japanese army photographers, are quite gruesome, as are reproductions of the blood-soaked clothing of the victims. The final room documents the reconciliation, however tenuous, between the Chinese and Japanese.

Cháting Dōng Jiē 195, Jiāng Dōng Mén. Admission ¥10 ($1.25). 8am–5pm. Bus: no. Y4, 7.

Tàipíng Tiānguó Lìshǐ Bówùguǎn (Tàipíng Heavenly Kingdom Historical Museum) The largest uprising in modern Chinese history, the Tàipíng Rebellion, is documented here in pictures and artifacts including Tàipíng maps, coins, and weapons. The museum itself is located in **Zhàn Yuán,** a garden that

The Nánjīng Massacre

On December 13, 1937, Japanese troops invaded Nánjīng. What followed were the darkest 6 weeks of Nánjīng's history, as over 300,000 Chinese were bayoneted, shot, burned, drowned, beheaded, and buried alive. The city was looted and torched, and corpses were thrown into the Yángzī River. Women suffered the most: During the first month of occupation, 20,000 cases of rape were reported in the city. Many of those who survived were often tortured.

During this time, a small number of Western businessmen and American missionaries, who stayed behind when their compatriots fled after the departing Chinese government, used their privileged status as foreign nationals to create a 3.9-sq.-km (1½ sq. mile) safety zone covering today's Hànzhōng Lù in the south, Zhōngshān Lù in the east, Shānxī Lù in the north, and Xīkàng Lù in the west. Around 250,000 Chinese found safe haven in 25 refugee camps inside it. The head of the safety zone was German businessman John Rabe, chosen in part because he was a Nazi. Often described as the Oskar Schindler of China, Rabe's initial determination to save his Siemens Chinese employees eventually took on a larger purpose as he even sheltered hundreds of Chinese women in his own backyard. There were countless individual moments of courage too, as Chinese clawed their way out of mass graves, crawled to hospitals with bullet wounds, or sheltered their brethren at great risk to themselves.

was the residence of the Tàipíng "Eastern Prince," Yáng Xiùqīng, and the young "Western Prince," Xiāo Yǒuhé.

Zhànyuán Lù 128. Admission ¥10 ($1.25). Museum 8am–5:30pm; park 8am–11pm. Bus: no. Y2 to Chánglè Lù.

WHERE TO STAY

The glut of upmarket hotels in Nánjīng has resulted in generous discounts, averaging between 30% and 50% in low season (plus a 15% service charge).

VERY EXPENSIVE

Shangri-La Dīngshān (Dīngshān Xiānggélǐlā) ★★★ Although its location in the northwest part of the city makes it less accessible to sights and restaurants in town, this classy hotel delivers the signature service of the Shangri-La name. Rooms, all tastefully furnished in a mix of contemporary and Asian styles, are the largest and most luxurious in Nánjīng: each has a private balcony, separate study area, and large bathroom. There is also a four-star annex with smaller and slightly less luxurious rooms, but offering the same friendly and efficient service.

Cháhāěr Lù 90. ✆ **025/880-2888.** Fax 025/882-1729. www.shangri-la.com. 453 units. ¥1,810 ($220) standard; from ¥2,900 ($350) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; lounge; nightclub; indoor pool; health club and spa; sauna; concierge; shuttle service to town; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; massage; laundry/dry cleaning; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, broadband Internet access, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

EXPENSIVE

Crowne Plaza Nánjīng Hotels and Suites (Jīnjīng Huángguān Jiǔdiàn) ★★ Suites are this hotel's specialty, which accounts for its popularity with business travelers, but tourists love it, too, for its prime location a block west of Xīnjiēkǒu. Sharing space with offices and shops, the hotel has its entrance and concierge on the first floor, its lobby and other facilities on the seventh and ninth floors, and its guest rooms on the 37th to 58th floors. Guests are treated to a personalized sit-down check-in, then whisked up to your room high above the city center. Look down from the city's tallest building and understand why the hotel prides itself on its views, especially at night when the daytime smog gives way to twinkling neon lights. Guest rooms are classically furnished and bathrooms have separate shower and tub.

Hànzhōng Lù 89. ✆ **025/471-8888.** Fax 025/471-9999. www.crowneplaza.com. 300 units. ¥864 ($108) standard room; ¥1,264–¥1,504 ($158–$188) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; bar; lounge; nightclub; indoor pool; health club; sauna; concierge; airport shuttle; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; 24-hr. room service; massage; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, broadband Internet access, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Hilton Nánjīng (Nánjīng Xīěrdùn Guójì Dàjiǔdiàn) ★ Inconveniently located at the eastern end of town at Zhōngshān Mén, the Hilton is showing signs of age. There's noticeably fewer staff than in competing hotels, but the Hilton folks try to make up for any inconvenience by being extra helpful and offering huge discounts. Rooms are very comfortable but they are not always well fitted for the modern, connected traveler (there's a distinct shortage of electrical outlets in the regular rooms, for example).

Zhōngshān Dōng Lù 319. ✆ **025/480-8888.** Fax 025/480-9999. www.hilton.com. 561 units. ¥1,440 ($200) standard room. Discounts possible up to 60%. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; deli; bar; lounge; disco; indoor pool; tennis courts; health club and spa; sauna; bowling alley; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; laundry/dry cleaning; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, broadband Internet access (Plaza and executive rooms); minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Hotel Sheraton Nánjīng Kingsley Hotel and Towers (Nánjīng Jīnsīlì Xīláidēng Jiǔdiàn) ★★ Located about 1km (½ miles) west of Xīnjiēkǒu, this modern glass tower with a state-of-the-art elevator control system (makes a maximum of 3 stops per run) is a popular choice with foreign business travelers. The Sheraton also boasts the largest hotel swimming pool and health club in town. Rooms are tastefully decorated and comfortable, and afford good views of the city; those on executive floors come with personal butler service. Bathrooms are large and contain separate shower and tub.

Hànzhōng Lù 169. ✆ **025/666-8888.** Fax 025/666-9999. www.sheraton.com/nanjing. 350 units. ¥1,494 ($180) standard room; ¥1,660–¥2,490 ($200–$300) suite. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; bar; lounge; disco; indoor pool; tennis court; health club and spa; sauna; salon; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; limited room service; massage; laundry/dry cleaning; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, broadband Internet access, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Jīnlíng Fàndiàn ★ As the only all state-owned and -managed five-star hotel in Nánjīng, the 37-story Jīnlíng has been a local institution since it opened in 1983. Its exalted status has made it arrogant on occasion but its wide range of facilities and shops, not to mention its ideal location right at the city center, make it the place to be for many business travelers and tourists. Standard rooms run small but are functional, and some are decorated in a smart, minimalist style with sliding screens instead of curtains. Bathrooms are sparkling clean.

Xīnjiēkǒu. ✆ **025/471-1888.** Fax 025/471-1666. www.jinlinghotel.com. 600 units. ¥1,410 ($176) standard room; ¥2,490–¥3,485 ($311–$435) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 7 restaurants; bar; lounge; karaoke; disco; cigar bar; indoor pool; health club and spa; simulated golf driving range; bowling alley; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; laundry/dry cleaning; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, broadband Internet access, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

MODERATE

Central Hotel (Zhōngxīn Dàjiǔdiàn) ★ Looking somewhat weathered on the outside, this popular four-star hotel in the round still draws visitors with its spacious, recently renovated rooms, competitive prices, and great location a block north of Xīnjiēkǒu. Amenities, however, do not seem particularly standardized in the rooms, so be sure to request rooms containing whatever specific item you may need. Bathrooms are clean.

Zhōngshān Lù 75. ✆ **025/473-3888.** Fax 025/473-3999. 320 units. ¥880–¥980 ($110–$123) standard room; ¥2,200 ($275) suite. 40% discounts possible. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 5 restaurants; bar; lounge; nightclub; outdoor pool; health club; sauna; bowling alley; game room; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, broadband Internet access (select rooms), minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Ramada Plaza Yíhuá Hotel (Nánjīng Huáměidá Yíhuá Jiǔdiàn) Independently owned and operated by a local company under license from Ramada since 1999, this 31-story four-star hotel is a 10-minute walk from the Gǔlóu area. Because this hotel was formerly the Holiday Inn, the staff is remarkably conversant in English and is very friendly to boot. Rooms are on the small side, though they offer a full range of in-room amenities and clean bathrooms. Even executive rooms and suites run smaller than those in competing hotels.

Zhōngshān Běi Lù 45. ✆ **025/330-8888.** Fax 025/330-9999. www.ramadahotels.com. 272 units. ¥ 960 ($120) standard room; from ¥1,344 ($168) suite. Discounts up to 50%. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; nightclub; indoor pool; health club; sauna; concierge; 24-hr. business center; meeting rooms; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; massage; laundry/dry cleaning; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

INEXPENSIVE

Nánshān Bīnguǎn Located in the southwestern corner of the Nánjīng Normal University campus about a 15-minute taxi ride northwest of Xīnjiēkǒu, this hotel is a no-frills budget choice that's nevertheless clean and comfortable. The hotel also houses foreign students studying at the university. Rooms are spartan but the small bathrooms are clean.

Nínghǎi Lù 122. ✆ **025/371-6440.** Fax 025/373-8174. 200 units. ¥198 ($25) standard room; ¥268–¥588 ($33–$73) suite. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Cafeteria; Internet bar; ticket service; salon. *In room:* A/C, TV.

WHERE TO DINE

EXPENSIVE

Jīnhé Tài Cāntīng (Golden Harvest Thai Opera Café) ★ THAI Located in the Húnán Lù dining area known as Shīzi Qiáo, this restaurant serves excellent authentic Thai food and is very popular with Nánjīng's expats. A golden Buddha statue outside greets arriving guests, while the decor inside is tasteful and subdued. Besides the usual solid curries and *pad thai,* Golden Harvest features several specialties, including the finger-licking-good fried crab with Thai curry sauce and the baked king prawns with vermicelli in casserole.

Húnán Lù Shīzǐ Qiáo 2. ✆ **025/324-1823.** Reservations recommended. English menus with pictures. ¥150–¥250 ($19–$31). No credit cards. 10:30am–2:30pm and 5–10:30pm.

Jīnyīng Dàjiǔlóu ★ HUÁIYÁNG Started in 1998 with only eight tables, this restaurant has since grown into a top establishment with two locations. The house specialty is *Tiānmùhú yútóu,* a delicious white fish head soup made with fish from nearby Tiānmù Lake. Other tasty dishes here include *shuǐjīng xiārén* (tender sautéed shrimp) and *pánsī yú* (deep-fried fish-tail filets in sweet-and-sour sauce).

Wángfǔ Dàjiē 9. ✆ **025/470-7995.** ¥120–¥250 ($15–$31). No credit cards. 11:30am–2:30pm and 5:30–10pm.

Míng Yuán ★★★ DĪNG SHĀN/HUÁIYÁNG For amazingly good cuisine that's unique to Nánjīng, head out to the Shangri-La Hotel located on a small hill, Dīng Shān, in the northwest part of town. Created here by chefs more than 20 years ago, Dīng Shān cuisine has become an integral part of Nánjīng's culinary lore. Among the restaurant's many specialties, the drunken crab Dīng Shān style (crab steeped in wine, honey, and spices for a week and served raw) is exquisite, as is the sautéed Yúnnán mushroom with crab paste (crab and wild mushrooms served in a spicy sauce). Finish with the signature fish noodle, very fine handmade noodles cooked in a rich fish broth.

Shangri-La Dīng Shān, Cháhāěr Lù 90. ✆ **025/880-2888.** Reservations recommended. Main courses from ¥160 ($20). AE, DC, MC, V. 11:30am–2pm and 5:30–10pm.

MODERATE

Bella Napoli ITALIAN The fine homemade pasta and wood-fired pizzas at this classic-style Italian eatery should satisfy anyone's craving for home. Naples-born chef Giuseppi Parisi offers up to 98 dishes, including the not-quite-Italian king prawns and T-bone steak, but his signature dish is his own creation, the Mezza-Luna, a half-moon pizza that's part calzone. Bella Napoli is located 1 block east of Xīnjiēkǒu.

Zhōngshān Dōng Lù 75. ✆ **025/471-8397.** Main courses ¥45–¥128 ($5.60–$16). AE, DC, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 11am–2pm and 5–10:30pm; Fri–Sat 11am–midnight.

Henry's Home WESTERN This casual and relaxing place, located a block north of Xīnjiēkǒu, is a great place to unwind after a long day; diners linger after

their meal is done. All the basics, like burgers, pastas, fajitas, pizzas, and ribs, are on the menu. Some of the friendly staff speak English, though service is sometimes a bit spotty. There's a full bar with live music every night.

Xīnjiēkǒu, Huáqiáo Lù 33. ✆ **025/470-1292.** Main courses ¥38–¥98 ($4.75–$12). No credit cards. 9:30am–10:30pm. Bus: no. 29 to Huáqiáo Lù.

Wǎnqíng Lóu NÁNJĪNG/HUÁIYÁNG Although this brightly lit and often crowded restaurant just south of the Confucian Temple at Fūzǐ Miào features typical Huáiyáng dishes, put down the menu and treat yourself, sight unseen, to the specialty here: *bājué shíliùdào.* Sixteen of Nánjīng's traditional appetizers and meat dishes will arrive in pairs, one a dry dish, another in a soup. A tiny sliver of succulent pork rib will be served with shredded bean curd in a chicken broth; a lotus paste bun will arrive with a bowl of glutinous rice in wine. This set is available at lunch and dinner. In the evenings, you'll be treated to local folk dancing on the second floor by the restaurant's staff.

Wǎnqíng Lóu Měishíjiē, Fūzǐ Miào. ✆ **025/662-6950.** ¥60 ($7.50) per person for *bājué shíliùdào.* AE, DC, MC, V. 11am–2pm and 5–9pm. Bus: no. 1.

INEXPENSIVE

Lán & Bái (Blue & White) CHINESE FAST FOOD This kind of cafeteria-style, point-and-choose dining offers immediate gratification with a minimum of fuss. Pick from a variety of cuisines, including Hong Kong–style dim sum, local pastries, spicy stews, and rice and noodle staples. There's no ambience to speak of, but the place is clean and it's popular with locals.

Guǎnjiā Qiáo 59 ✆ **025/470-3790.** ¥4–¥10 (50¢–$1.20) per person. No credit cards. Open 24 hr.

SHOPPING

Nánjīng's biggest **art gallery,** Jīnyīn Yìshù Zhōngxīn Huàláng (Golden Eagle Art Center), located at Hànzhōng Lù 89, 11th floor, has a large collection of traditional Chinese ink paintings, calligraphy, and modern oil paintings.

Nánjīng Yúnjūn Yánjiūsuǒ (Brocade Research Institute) at Chátíng Dōng Lù 240 (open 8:30am–4:30pm) sells **cloud dragon brocade** once reserved exclusively for use by emperors. Prices are high but this is the real deal.

The Nánjīng Gōngyì Měishù Dàlóu Gòuwù Zhōngxīn at Běijīng Dōng Lù 31; 9am–5:40pm) has two floors of fairly expensive **handicrafts** from all over China, including jade, silk embroidery, fans, lacquerware, pottery, and jewelry. At the other end of the price and taste spectrum, shops at Fūzǐ Miào sell all kinds of local products, including rain flower pebbles, rain flower tea, hanging ornaments, and Nánjīng salted duck.

The trendy **night market** on Húnán Lù between Zhōngshān Běi Lù and Zhōngyāng Lù sells everything from Tibetan silver jewelry and tattoo patches to rock-bottom priced CDs and DVDs. The smaller but calmer night market at Yúnnán Lù hosts vendors who sell ethnic batik arts, embroidered bags, jewelry, underwear, and household items.

NÁNJĪNG AFTER DARK

To find out what's happening in the arts, pick up a copy of the free English-language monthly *Map.*

Chinese *kūn jù* opera is usually performed at the **Jiāngnán Theater** (Yánlíng Xiāng 5; ✆ **025/440-4281**), while traditional Běijīng Opera is performed at the **People's Theater** (Yánggōngjǐng 25; ✆ **025/450-1314,** ext. 8009). Performances usually begin at 7:30pm.

Danny's Irish Pub (Dānní'ěr Ài'ěrlán Jiǔbā), located on the fourth floor of the Sheraton Hotel, Hànzhōng Lù 169 (open 6:30pm–2am) is the most popular bar with Nánjīng's expatriates. For dancing, **Time Tunnel (Shíguāng Suìdào),** at Tàipíng Nán Lù 354, has the largest dance floor in Nánjīng and a nightly laser show to boot. The wild **Scarlet (Luànshì Jiārén),** at Gǔlóu Chēzhàn Dōngxiāng 29, has been known to give foreigners a discount on entry fees in order to entice the locals.

10 Yángzhōu ★★

Jiāngsū Province, 240km (149 miles) NW of Shànghǎi, 100km (62 miles) NE of Nánjīng

Located at the junction of the Yángzǐ River and the Grand Canal, Yángzhōu was known during the Suí and Táng dynasties as the economic and cultural center of southern China, home to scholars, painters, poets, literati, and merchants. It was also the playground of the rich and famous, starting with the 6th-century Suí Yángdì emperor, who visited courtesans here. The Qīng Qiánlóng emperor visited six times. Today Yángzhōu is a charming town with broad, tree-lined boulevards and a network of canals and lakes. Known for its handicrafts, cuisine, and landmarks, Yángzhōu certainly has enough to keep you occupied for a couple of days, but it can also be a day trip from Nánjīng.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The nearest airport is in Nánjīng and the closest railway station is in Zhènjiāng. **Buses** serve Zhènjiāng (every 15 min. 6:30am–6:25pm; 1 hr.; ¥13/$1.50) and Nánjīng (every 20 min. 6:30am–6pm; 1½ hr.; ¥25/$3) from the **West Bus Station (Yángzhōu Xī Zhàn; ✆ 0514/786-1812**) in the southwest of the city. Buses to Shànghǎi (7 daily 6:40am–3pm; 3–3½ hr.; ¥70–¥84/$9–$11) and Sūzhōu (7 daily 7:15am–4:40pm; 2 hr.; ¥57/$7) depart from the **long-distance bus station (chángtú qìchē zhàn)** in southeast Yángzhōu on Dùjiāng Nán Lù 27 (**✆ 0514/781-3658**).

GETTING AROUND Most of Yángzhōu's sights are clustered in the north of town. **Taxis** charge ¥6 (75¢) for 3km (2 miles), then ¥1 (15¢) per kilometer until 10km (6 miles), after which the price rises to ¥1.50 (20¢) per kilometer. **Bus** no. 5 (¥1/15¢) runs from the long-distance bus station in the southwest of town up Huáihǎi Lù to Dàmíng Sì.

TOURS & GUIDES **China Travel Service (CTS)** at Wénchāng Zhōng Lù 200 (**✆ 0514/734-0524;** Mon–Fri 7:30am–8pm) can arrange accommodations, plane tickets, and city tours. English-speaking guides will cost around ¥200 ($25) a day, transportation not included.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China** at Wénchāng Zhōng Lù 279 conducts foreign exchange Monday to Friday from 8:30 to 11:45am and 3 to 5:30pm. An ATM is located here.

Internet Access There's a **24-hour Internet cafe** at Liùhú Lù 34. It charges ¥2 (25¢) per hour. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office Located at Wénchāng Zhōng Lù, it is open from 8am to 6:30pm.

Visa Extensions The **PSB** is at Huáihǎi Lù 100, **✆ 0514/734-2097** (open Mon–Fri 8am–noon and 3–6pm; 2:30–5:30pm in winter).

EXPLORING YÁNGZHŌU

GARDENS

Shòu Xī Hú (Slender West Lake) ★★ Located in the northwest part of town, Yángzhōu's premier attraction got its name during the Qīng dynasty, when Hángzhōu poet Wáng Kāng, on passing through the area, noted that it resembled a slender version of Hángzhōu's West Lake (Xī Hú). The most popular

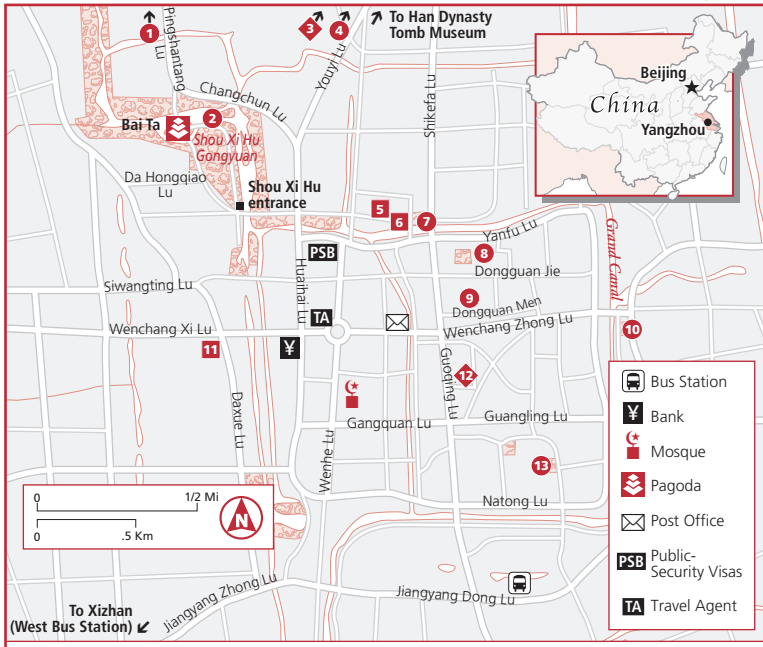
The Grand Canal

At 1,800km (1,116 miles), the Grand Canal (Dà Yùnhé) is the longest canal in the world. Together with the Great Wall of China, this waterway, which runs from Běijīng to Hángzhōu, is one of China's great engineering feats. The first 85km (52 miles) were constructed as early as 495 B.C., but the Herculean task of linking the Yellow River and Yángzǐ River began in earnest in the early 7th century, when the second Suí dynasty Yáng Dì emperor had the waterway dug from his capital at Luòyáng to Běijīng in the north and to the Yángzǐ River basin. Due to the differences in terrain and water levels, locks and dams had to be built along the way.

The original purpose of the canal was to transport the plentiful grains of the affluent south to the poorer north, but over the course of the years, the canal became a major trade conduit as commodities such as tea, silk, porcelain, lacquerware, and salt were all shipped up north. By the time of the Yuán dynasty (1206–1368), the final stretch of the canal was completed, linking Běijīng all the way to Hángzhōu. Many of the bricks and stones used to build Běijīng's temples and palaces arrived via the canal. By the time of the Southern Sòng dynasty (1127–1279), political power had shifted south to Jiāngsū and Zhèjiāng provinces, as the Sòng emperors moved their capital to Hángzhōu and the Míng emperors established themselves in Nánjīng.

The canal only fell into disuse in the early 20th century, thanks to constant flooding from the Yellow River, silting, and the development of rail lines. Today, the navigable sections are primarily south of the Yángzǐ River in the region known as Jiāngnán, which includes the cities of Wúxī, Yángzhōu, Sūzhōu, and Hángzhōu. Even here, some sections are so shallow and narrow that they are accessible only to small, flat-bottomed boats. North of the Yángzǐ, much is silted up and impassable.

Tourists wanting to experience life on the canal can sail between Hángzhōu and Sūzhōu and/or Wúxī. In Sūzhōu; canal boat passage can be booked at travel agencies or directly at the dock, Nán Mén Lúnchuán Kèyùn Mǎtóu, at Rénmín Lù 8 (✆ **0512/6520-5720**). Boats, which are bare-bones basic, depart from the Sūzhōu Boat Terminal daily at 5:30pm, arriving in Hángzhōu at around 7am. The reverse voyage also departs Hángzhōu at 5:30pm and gets into Sūzhōu at around 7am. Tickets either way cost the same and can be purchased in Hángzhōu at the Wǔlín Mén Kèyùn Mǎtóu (✆ **0571/8515-3185**). For information on boats to and from Wúxī, see "Getting There" in the Wúxī section.



ACCOMMODATIONS

Grand Metropole Hotel (Yángzhōu Jīnghuá Dàjiǔdiàn) **11**
扬州京华大酒店

Xīyuán Dàjiǔdiàn **5**
西园大酒店

Yángzhōu Bīnguǎn **6**
扬州宾馆

DINING

Chuàng Yuán Jiǔjiā **3**
创元酒家

Fùchūn Cháshè **12**
富春茶社

ATTRACTIONS

Dàmíng Sì **1**
大明寺

Gè Yuán **8**
个园

Hàn Mù Bówùguǎn (Hàn Dynasty Tomb Museum) **4**
汉墓博物馆

Hé Yuán **13**
何园

Píng Shān Táng (Mountain Flattening Hall) **1**
平山堂

Pǔhādīng Yuán **10**
普哈丁园

Shòu Xī Hú (Slender West Lake) **2**
瘦西湖

Wàng Shì Xiǎo Yuàn **9**
汪氏小苑

Yángzhōu Shì Bówùguǎn (Yángzhōu City Museum) **7**
扬州市博物馆

photo spot is the impressive **Wǔ Tíng Qiáo (Five Pavilion Bridge),** built in 1757 by a salt merchant who, in anticipation of the Qiánlóng emperor's arrival, modeled the bridge after one in the imperial resort (Bìshǔ Shānzhuāng) in Chéngdé, Héběi. Many Qīng dynasty salt merchants competed with each other to build gardens in order to impress the emperor.

Bái Tǎ (White Dagoba), a white Tibetan-style stupa, was built by another ingratiating salt merchant more than 200 years ago. The story goes that during one of his six visits to the lake, the Qiánlóng emperor remarked on the area's

Follow the Leader

When the Qīng Qiánlóng emperor (1736–1795) visited here, he traveled between Yángzhōu's many gardens and sights on a waterway constructed just for him. Today's visitors can repeat this same "royal" experience by embarking on private boats from a jetty in front of the Tiānníng Sì temple. The 2-hour boat ride takes in 24 scenic attractions, including Shòu Xī Hú, and ends up at Dàmíng Sì. The cost is ¥1,300 ($162) for 8 to 10 persons per boat.

resemblance to Běihǎi Park in Běijīng and inquired if there was a similar dagoba here. Eager to please, the salt merchant said yes, then spent the whole night panicking when the emperor insisted on seeing the dagoba. Finally, the merchant hit upon the idea to have a dagoba made out of salt, a tactic that apparently worked the next day when Qiánlóng saw the white structure from afar. Thereafter, the merchant commissioned a real dagoba to be built. The **Diàoyú Tái (Angler's Terrace)** on **Xiǎo Jīn Shān (Small Golden Hill)** is where Qiánlóng came to fish, although he was such a terrible angler that the merchants took to putting fish on his hooks in order to avoid imperial wrath.

Dà Hóngqiáo Lù 28. Admission ¥40 ($5). 6:30am–6pm.

Gè Yuán ★ This garden was built over 160 years ago as part of a salt merchant's residence. It features a ponderous rockery section quite cleverly designed according to the four seasons. "Summer," for example, features Tài Hú rocks designed to resemble clouds in the sky after a storm; magnolia trees provide welcome shade. There's also a variety of exotic bamboo here, including purple, turtle, and yellow bamboo.

Yánfù Dōng Lù 10. Admission ¥15 ($1.90). 8am–6pm.

Hé Yuán Smaller and less distinctive than Gè Yuán, this garden in the southeast part of town is more residence than garden but still has its share of rockeries, pavilions, and ponds. Trees, plants, and an elevated walkway are used rather ingeniously to make the garden appear much larger than it really is, a tactic employed in many classical southern Chinese gardens.

Xúníngmén Jiē 77. Admission ¥15 ($1.90). 7:30am–6pm.

Wàng Shì Xiǎo Yuàn ★★ Located in the center of town on Dōng Quān Mén, the street of preserved historic homes (including that of former Chinese president Jiāng Zémín), this impressive late Qīng dynasty residence of a local salt merchant is simple and understated from the outside but has almost 100 rooms inside, with the main rooms situated on a central axis. The furnishings are fine and reflect the wealth and status of the owner. The main Chūn Huī Shì (Spring Hall), for example, contains a German chandelier, expensive marble wall panels whose patterns resemble Chinese landscapes, and a poem by Táng dynasty poet Bái Jùyì.

Dōngquān Mén Lìshǐ Jiēqū 14. Admission ¥10 ($1.25). 8am–6pm.

OTHER ATTRACTIONS

Dàmíng Sì ★ Built more than 1,600 years ago, this major Buddhist temple is today best known for its **Jiàn Zhēn Memorial Hall,** dedicated to a Táng

dynasty abbot of the temple, Jiàn Zhēn (688–763), who in 742 was invited to teach in Japan. After five unsuccessful attempts to cross the ocean in a wooden boat, Jiàn Zhēn finally made it to Japan in 753, old and blind. He spent the next 10 years introducing Chinese Buddhism, medicine, language, and architecture to the Japanese. The Jiàn Zhēn Memorial Hall, built in 1974, is modeled after the main hall of the Toshodai Temple in Nara, Japan, which Jiàn Zhēn built. A cedarwood statue of the teacher stands in the hall and there are still religious and cultural exchanges between Nara and Yángzhōu.

South of the temple is **Píng Shān Táng (Mountain Flattening Hall),** where famous Sòng dynasty writer Oūyáng Xiū (1007–1072) came to drink wine and write poetry when he was governor of Yángzhōu. From here, his perspective was on the same level as the nearby hills, hence the hall's name.

Píng Shān Táng 1. Admission ¥20 ($2.50). Apr–Nov 7:30am–5:30pm; Dec–Mar 7:30am–4pm. Bus :no. 5.

Hàn Mù Bówùguǎn (Hàn Dynasty Tomb Museum) ★★★ This fascinating Western Hàn tomb of the king of Guǎnglíng Kingdom, Liú Xū, the fifth son of the Hàn Wǔ Dì emperor (140–86 B.C.), is worth visiting. Sixty years in the making, Liú Xū's tomb is a grand five levels deep. The second air-tight layer is made up of 840 *nánmù* (cedarwood) bricks linked to each other lengthwise by tiny hooks on the inside surfaces. These bricks could only be dissembled, and the wall breached, by locating the first brick. On the third level was the warehouse, while the living quarters occupied the fourth level; the fifth and bottom level contained a coffin on wheels. In the northwest part of the tomb, there is even a bathroom, making this the first Hàn tomb to contain such! Despite the seemingly impenetrable defenses, the tomb was actually robbed about a hundred years later. The thieves were able to dig right down to the residential level with relative ease, suggesting that the tomb was robbed by descendants of the very people who built it. East of Liú Xū's tomb is that of his wife, who died 10 years after him. Three levels deep, the queen's tomb, also made from *nánmù,* is approached from the bottom level.

Yǒuyì Lù 16 (3km/2 miles north of town). Admission ¥15 ($1.90). 8:30am–4:30pm. Bus: no. 5.

Pǔhādīng Yuán The central tomb at this Sòng dynasty Muslim graveyard belongs to Pǔhādīng, 16th descendant of the prophet Muhammad, who visited Yángzhōu to help spread Islam. He built the Crane Mosque (Xiān É Sì) in town, and was buried in this graveyard in 1275 in a simple, stepped stone grave enclosed in a rectangular structure with a vaulted roof. Also here are the tombs of Muslim traders and other Arabs from the Yuán to the Qīng dynasties.

Jiěfàng Nán Lù 17. Admission ¥8 ($1). 8am–5pm.

Yángzhōu Shì Bówùguǎn (Yángzhōu City Museum) ★ Just east of the Yángzhōu Hotel, this museum is housed in a temple complex dedicated to a local hero, a late Míng dynasty official named Shǐ Kěfǎ, who led Yángzhōu's citizenry against the advancing Qīng army. Shǐ was killed when he refused to surrender, his body cut up into five pieces and strewn to the wind. In the 10 days after his death, which came to be known as "Ten Days in Yángzhōu," Qīng troops killed 80,000 Yángzhōu residents. Shǐ's jade belt, clothes, and cap are buried in the tumulus behind the hall. The museum itself features some Hàn coffins, a Táng canoe, and a jade funeral suit with copper threads.

Fènglè Shàng Jiē 2. Admission ¥10 ($1.25). 8:15–11:30am and 2:30–5:30pm.

WHERE TO STAY

EXPENSIVE

Grand Metropole Hotel (Yángzhōu Jīnghuá Dàjiǔdiàn) There's not much individual charm to this modern four-star outfit with joint Hong Kong management, but it does offer all the standard conveniences and comfortable, clean rooms. The staff is used to dealing with foreign business travelers and can usually handle most travelers' needs.

Wénchāng Xī Lù 1. ✆ **0514/732-3888.** Fax 0514/736-8999. 242 units. ¥805 ($100) standard room; ¥1,035 ($129) executive room. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; pastry shop; bar; lounge; health club; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade, salon; limited room service; laundry/dry cleaning; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

MODERATE

Xīyuán Dàjiǔdiàn With an ideal location—you can walk to many sights including Shòu Xī Hú or simply stroll along the nearby canals—and an interesting history—supposedly constructed on the site of Qiánlóng's imperial villa—this four-star hotel is the most popular choice with Western tour groups and independent travelers. Units are furnished with comfortable beds, clean bathrooms, and the usual amenities, though some rooms show signs of age. Service is acceptable, but nothing more.

Fènglè Shàng Jiē 1. ✆ **0514/734-4888.** Fax 0514/723-3870. 253 units. ¥500–¥680 ($62–$85) standard room; ¥1,600 ($200) suite. 30%–40% discounts possible. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; indoor swimming pool, tennis court; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; laundry/dry cleaning; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Yángzhōu Bīnguǎn This three-star hotel next to the city museum is another uninspired but acceptable Chinese hotel if you're not particular about your luxuries. Some of the rooms were renovated in 2002 and offer significantly greater comfort and cleanliness. Bathrooms are still a bit musty, though. The staff can't muster much English.

Fènglè Shàng Jiē 5. ✆ **0514/780-5888.** Fax 0514/734-3599. 145 units. ¥388–¥480 ($48–$60) standard room; ¥680 ($85) suite. 20% discounts possible. V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Huáiyáng Cuisine

As one of the four major schools in Chinese cooking, Huáiyáng cuisine (referring to the region between the Yángzǐ River and the Huái River in northern Jiāngsū) has its origins in Yángzhōu, even though it has been as much influenced these days by the different regional cooking styles of Jiāngsū and Zhèjiāng provinces. The Míng dynasty Hóngwǔ emperor employed a chef from Yángzhōu, as did the famous 20th-century Chinese opera singer Méi Lánfāng. Unlike Sìchuān cooking with its reliance on peppers, Huáiyáng cuisine aims to preserve the basic flavor of ingredients in order to achieve balance and freshness. River fish, farm animals, birds, and vegetables feature prominently. Some of the more famous dishes include *xièfěn shīzitóu* (lightly braised meatballs with crabmeat, also known as Lion's Head Meatballs), *chāihuì liányútóu* (stewed fish head with tofu, greens, and radish), and *bāshāo zhěngzhūtóu* (stewed pig's head in a red glaze).

WHERE TO DINE

The Xīyuán and Grand Metropole hotels both have restaurants serving decent Western food. Western fast food is also available at **Kentucky Fried Chicken** (Wénhé Běi Lù 48), **McDonald's** (Wénhé Lù 3), and **Pizza Hut** (Wénhé Nán Lù 120).

EXPENSIVE

Chuàng Yuán Jiǔjiā ★ HUÁIYÁNG Located on the northwest outskirts of town on the road to the Hàn tombs, this quiet restaurant opposite the Yíng Bīnguǎn, the official government hotel, is used to serving demanding government officials, so you can count on the quality of food here, even if the ground-floor dining hall lacks atmosphere. House specialties include *xièfěn shīzitóu* (crabmeat lion's head meatballs), *fěicuì tíjīn* (braised pork thigh), and *yǎngyóu báichǎo xiārén* (stir-fried fresh shrimp). There is no English menu, but the staff, none of whom speak English, try to be helpful.

Yǒuyì Lù (opposite Yíngbīnguǎn). ✆ **0514/733-9290.** Meal for 2 ¥120–¥200 ($15–$25). No credit cards. 11am–2:30pm and 5–9pm. Bus: no. 5.

INEXPENSIVE

Fùchūn Cháshè ★ TEAHOUSE/DUMPLINGS Indulge in one of Yángzhōu's favorite pastimes, drinking morning tea, at one of Yángzhōu's oldest teahouses. The ritual starts with a pot of tea and a round of nine different snacks, including Yángzhōu's famous *bāozi* (steamed buns), which come with chicken, bamboo shoots, shrimp, crabmeat, tofu, or a variety of bean pastes. These steamed buns are also available at dinner, as are a variety of *jiǎozi* (dumplings).

Déshēng Qiáo 35 (off Guóqìng Lù). ✆ **0514/723-3326.** Meal for 2 ¥20–¥50 ($2.50–$6.25). No credit cards. 6am–9pm.

SHOPPING

Yángzhōu is famous for its **lacquerware,** which has a tradition stretching back to 475 B.C. Red lacquered vases, mother-of-pearl inlaid screens, ink slabs, fans, jewelry, teapots, and lacquered furniture can all be purchased at the **Yángzhōu Qīqì Yǒuxiàn Gōngsī** at Yánhé Jiē 50 (open 8:30–11:45am and 2–6pm). Prices range from the reasonable for small handicrafts to the thousands of dollars (yes, dollars) for the larger pieces of furniture. International credit cards are accepted.

11 Wúxī, Tài Hú & Yíxīng

Jiāngsū Province, 128km (79 miles) NW of Shànghǎi

Located in the southern part of Jiāngsū Province, Wúxī, literally "without tin," was once "yǒu xī" ("has tin"). The town changed its name during the Hàn dynasty when nearby deposits of tin were mined out. A Grand Canal port, Wúxī itself is not an exciting city but it's the best base for a visit to Tài Hú (Lake Tài), one of China's four largest freshwater lakes and its most fabled body of water. On the west shore of Tài Hú is Yíxīng, famous for its purple clay pottery.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Wúxī has a small airport which is seldom used. Shànghǎi offers the nearest major **airline** connections. Wúxī is connected by daily trains to Shànghǎi (90 min.), Sūzhōu (25–35 min.), Hángzhōu (4½ hr. via Shànghǎi), and Nánjīng (2 hr.). The **railway station** (✆ **0510/230-1217**) is in the northern part of town (counters 7–9 sell same-day tickets for Shànghǎi, Sūzhōu, and Hángzhōu).

From the **Wúxī Qìchē Zhàn (Wúxī Bus Station)** (✆ **0510/230-0751**) just north of the railway station, buses head to Shànghǎi (every 20 min. 6:30am–7pm; 2 hr.; ¥30–¥43/$3.75–$5.40), Sūzhōu (every 15 min. 6:50am–6:15pm; 45 min.; ¥18/$2.25), Hángzhōu (every 40 min. 7am–5:20pm; 4 hr.; ¥64–¥78/$8–$9.75), Yíxīng (every 15 min. 6:10am–6pm; 90 min.; ¥11/$1.40), Nánjīng (every 20 min. 6am–7pm; 2 hr.; ¥40–¥52/$5–$6.50), and Yángzhōu (every 45 min. 7am–5:30pm; 90 min.; ¥42–¥51/$5.50–$6.25).

To get to Hángzhōu along the Grand Canal, a **boat** departs daily from the Húbīn Mǎtóu (Húbīn Dock) on Húbīn Lù at 5:30pm and arrives in Hángzhōu the next morning at 7am. A berth in a double costs ¥114 ($14); in a quad ¥82 ($10). Conditions are spartan at best. Tickets can be bought at the **Hángyùn Dàshà** (**Ferry Building;** ✆ **0510/587-8542;** open 7:30am–5:30pm) at the dock.

GETTING AROUND **Taxis** cost ¥8 ($1) for 3km (2 miles), then ¥2.30 (30¢) per kilometer, then ¥2.80 (35¢) per kilometer after 8km (5 miles). Public **bus no.** 1 (¥1/15¢) and tourist bus no. G1 (same fare) run from the railway station to Yuántóuzhǔ. Bus no. 2 from the railway station stops at Xíhuì Gōngyuán.

TOURS & GUIDES **China Travel Service (CTS),** located directly across from the railway station at Chēzhàn Lù 88 (✆ **0510/230-0613;** fax 0510/230-4143), can arrange customized tours around the city and to the pottery shops and caves in Yíxīng County. The shamelessly exorbitant rate is about ¥1,500 ($188) in high season for a 2-day, 1-person tour of Wúxī and Yíxīng with private car, English-speaking guide, and lunch, although there's room for bargaining.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China** at Zhōngshān Lù 258 conducts foreign exchange Monday through Friday from 8am to 5pm. There is an ATM inside the bank.

Internet Access Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office There's a post office (7:30am–6:30pm) on Rénmín Zhōng Lù, west of Zhōngshān Lù.

Visa Extensions The **Gōngānjú (PSB)** is located on the second floor at Chóngníng Lù 56 (✆ **0510/270-5678,** ext. 22215) and is open Monday through Friday from 8 to 11:30am and 1:30 to 5:30pm (2:30–5:30pm July–Sept). Allow 5 business days.

EXPLORING WÚXĪ

Note: For Chinese translations of selected establishments listed in this section, please turn to Appendix A.

Tài Hú (Lake Tài) With its northern banks grazing the southwest edge of Wúxī, China's most fabled body of fresh water is the main attraction in town. Covering over 2400 sq. km (950 sq. miles) with an average depth of only 2m (7 ft.), the lake is dotted with islands, fishing trawlers, low cargo boats, and small sampans. Often shrouded in mist, Tài Hú is also the source of many fantastically shaped limestone rocks which were submerged for years to achieve the desired effect, and which now decorate many a classical Chinese garden. It is said that the Huìzōng emperor of the Sòng dynasty nearly bankrupted the country's treasury in pursuit of increasingly bizarre Tài Hú rocks. For all its fabled status and storied history, however, today's lake, at least the parts accessible to tourists

from Wúxī, is a bit of a disappointment, unashamedly geared as it is to the mass tourist trade.

The lake's most popular scenic spot is the peninsula **Yuántóuzhǔ (Turtle Head Isle).** From the park's entrance, most tourists head straight for the ferry docks at the western edge of the peninsula. You can walk, take the tourist train (¥6/75¢ one-way, ¥10/$1.25 round-trip), or ride the elevated tram (¥10/$1.25 one-way, ¥16/$2 round-trip) to the docks. The area south of the docks has some pleasant trails and is worth exploring if you have the time. A lighthouse marks the westernmost tip of the peninsula.

From the docks, ferries shuttle visitors to **Sān Shān Dǎo,** a hilly island connected by causeways to two flanking islets. The 15-minute boat ride, the highlight of a visit to Tài Hú, is usually refreshing, though you're likely to find yourself on a boat with chattering schoolchildren and loud tourists. The island itself is a tacky, commercialized affair complete with pushy vendors and wretched performing monkeys. All the structures here date to the mid-1980s, when the island was first opened to tourists.

Yuántóuzhǔ. Admission ¥50 ($6.25) (includes ferry ride). 6:30am–6pm. Bus: no. 1, G1.

Xīhuì Gōngyuán This park in the northwestern part of town is dominated by two hills that have become symbols of Wúxī: **Xī Shān** after which the city was named, and **Huì Shān** to the west. It's a bit of a climb up to the seven-story octagonal brick-and-wood **Lóngguāng Tǎ (Dragon Light Pagoda)** atop Xī Shān, but there are some good views of the Grand Canal snaking through the city. From 8:30am to 5pm you can also ride a chairlift (¥15/$1.90 one-way, ¥22/$2.75 round-trip) from the bottom of Xī Shān to the peak on Huì Shān. The ride offers even more commanding views of the surrounding area.

At the foot of Huì Shān is the famous Míng dynasty garden, **Jìchàng Yuán,** laid out in classical southern style with walkways, rockeries, ponds, and pavilions. The garden is said to have so captivated the Qiánlóng emperor on one of his visits south that he commissioned a copy of it to be built in the Yíhé Yuán (Summer Palace) in Běijīng. Just southwest of the garden is the **Second Spring Under Heaven (Tiānxià Dìèr Quán),** three wells containing the putative second-best water source in China for brewing tea, according to Lù Yǔ's Táng dynasty *Chá Jīng (Tea Classic).* From May to October, nightly traditional music performances are held in the garden.

Huìhé Lù. Admission to park ¥10 ($1.25); Jìcháng Garden ¥15 ($1.90) or ¥20 ($2.50) 6–10pm. Park: Apr–Oct 5am–6pm; Nov–Mar 5:30am–5:30pm. Jìchàng Garden: May–Oct 7am–10pm; Nov–Apr 7am–6pm. Bus: no. 2.

WHERE TO STAY

Most hotels regularly offer 20% to 30% discounts, and add a 15% service charge.

EXPENSIVE

Húbīn Fàndiàn ★★ Completely rebuilt in 2002 to be a five-star hotel, this 10-story European-style luxury hotel on the shores of Lake Tài, in the southeastern part of town, boasts whitewashed walls, elegant marble floors, and wrought-iron balustrades and balconies. Rooms are surprisingly average, although they do have thick carpets, redwood furniture, and some gorgeous views of the lake. Bathrooms are small and slightly worn.

Húbīn Lù 388. ✆ **0510/510-1888.** Fax 0510/510-7274. 281units. ¥850–¥1,000 ($106–$125) standard room; ¥1,500 ($187) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; lounge; outdoor pool; tennis court; health club and spa; sauna; bowling alley; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; massage; laundry/dry cleaning; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Sheraton Wúxī Hotel & Towers (Xīláidēng Dàfàndiàn) ★★★ This five-star hotel in the center of town offers all the luxuries of a top international hotel. Even though it's showing signs of age, it's still the best place to stay for efficient service and first-rate facilities. Rooms are spacious, comfortable, and equipped with a full range of amenities, including robe and slippers. Marble bathrooms are bright and clean. The hotel's four restaurants offer reliable fine dining. Staff is friendly and very helpful.

Zhōngshān Lù 443. ✆ **0510/272-1888.** Fax 0510/275-2781. www.sheraton.com. 396 units. ¥1,185 ($143) standard room; from ¥1,869 ($224) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; bar; lounge; cigar bar; indoor pool, health club and spa; Jacuzzi; sauna; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; 24-hr. limited room service; massage; same-day laundry/dry cleaning; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, dataport, broadband Internet access (select rooms), minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Tài Hú Fàndiàn ★ Somewhat inconveniently located 10km (6 miles) west of the city center, on the northern banks of Lake Tài across from Yuántóuzhǔ, this five-star resort offers a blissful escape from city bustle, but it's not very practical for the individual traveler. The hotel's sprawling grounds also contain private villas, landscaped gardens, and the resort's private dock, with plans underway for an 18-hole golf course. For such luxury, the standard rooms are surprisingly small and simply decorated, though all the usual amenities are here. Bathrooms are also on the small side but are clean.

Huánhú Lù, Méiyuán. ✆ **0510/551-7888.** Fax 0510/551-7784. www.taihuhotel.com. 257 units. ¥700–¥1,280 ($87–$160) standard room; from ¥1,500 ($187) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; bar; lounge; 2 pools; 18-hole golf course; tennis courts; health club and spa; Jacuzzi; sauna; bowling alley; concierge; tour desk; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; massage; limited room service; laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

MODERATE

New World Courtyard Wúxī (Wúxī Xīnshìjiè Wànyí Jiǔdiàn) ★★ This hotel, without official rating, is the equivalent of a top four-star hotel catering mostly to business travelers and a few tour groups. Located in the heart of town, the hotel prides itself on having the largest standard guest rooms around. Rooms are tastefully decorated and fitted with a full range of amenities. Bathrooms are spacious and clean. Service is friendly and efficient.

Zhōngshān Lù 335. ✆ **0510/ 276-2888.** Fax 0510/276-3388. www.courtyard.com. 266 units. ¥660 ($82) standard room; ¥1,250 ($156) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; lounge; health club and spa; sauna; concierge; tour desk; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; massage; laundry/dry cleaning; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, broadband Internet access, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

The top hotels all offer reliable dining. Western fast food is readily available in the center of town, with three **KFC outlets** (9:30am–10:30pm) within a block south of Jiěfàng Lù, and a **Pizza Hut** at Rénmín Zhōng Lù 127 (10am–10:30pm). **McDonald's** is at Zhōngshān Nán Lù 217 (8am–11pm). Bǎibǎibàn (Yaohan Department Store) at Zhōngshān Lù 168 has a **food court** on the sixth floor.

MODERATE

Chuān Mèizi ★ SÌCHUĀN This restaurant serves authentic fiery Sìchuān cuisine in a large dining room complete with fake trees and dark wood furnishings. Specialties here include the delicious *suànxiāng jīn chǎo xiè* (stir-fried crab with garlic) and *chuānmèi hóngfú jī* (house spicy chicken), as well as *chuānmèi dìyī gǔ* (house special spare ribs). Happily, the fine food trumps the brusque service.

Wild China: The Water Village of Tónglǐ

Now that Sūzhōu, once the "Venice of the East," has grown into a modern city; visitors searching for a more traditional Yángzǐ River delta water town should visit the Sòng dynasty town of **Tónglǐ,** 20km (12 miles) southeast of Sūzhōu and 80km (49 miles) west of Shànghǎi. The entrance fee for all sights is ¥50 ($6.25); hours are from 8am to 5pm. (Zhōu Zhuāng, another delta town, has unfortunately evolved into a massive tourist trap.)

The main attraction in Tónglǐ is **Tuìsī Yuán (Retreat and Reflection Garden)** ★, in the center of the old town. Built in 1886 by a dismissed court official, the garden contains the family's residences in the west, meeting and entertaining rooms in the center, and a small but cleverly designed landscaped garden in the east. The use of winding walkways with different shaped windows, jutting pavilions, and a reflecting pond make the garden appear larger than it is.

West of the garden are two of the town's better preserved traditional residences. **Jiāyīn Táng,** built in the 1910s as the residence of a famous local scholar, Liú Yàzǐ, has high white walls and doorways fronted by upturned eaves. The highlight at **Chóngběn Táng,** also with four courtyards and three doorways, is the refined brick, stone, and wood carvings of propitious symbols such as cranes and vases. Connecting the two residences are three bridges: **Tàipíng Qiáo (Peace Bridge), Jílì (Luck) Qiáo,** and **Chángqìng (Glory) Qiáo.** It was the custom in the old days to carry a bride in her sedan chair over all three. Today, tourists can don proper wedding finery and also be carried across the bridges in an old-fashioned sedan chair.

GETTING THERE From the bus station *(qìchē zhàn)* in the new part of town on Sōngběi Gōng lù, **buses** run to Sūzhōu (hourly 7am–5pm; 1 hr.; ¥12/$1.50). In Shànghǎi, the Jǐnjiāng Optional Tours Center at Chánglè Lù 191 (✆ **021/6466-2828**) can organize a private tour with an English-speaking guide, air-conditioned car, and lunch for about ¥1,200 ($150) for one person and ¥650 ($81) each for two. Alternatively, a Tónglǐ tourist bus (2 hr.; ¥110/$13 round-trip) leaves from the Shànghǎi Stadium at 9am (returns at 4pm) and 10am (returns at 4:30pm).

WHERE TO DINE Several small restaurants along **Míngqīng Jiē** serve basic *jiācháng cài* (Chinese home-style cooking) at reasonable prices; a meal for two averages about ¥30 to ¥50 ($3.50–$6). **Nányuán Cháshè,** located in a restored Qīng dynasty building, serves tea and local snacks. Local specialties include *zhuàngyuán tí* (the Tónglǐ version of braised pig's trotters), *xiǎo xūnyú* (small smoked fish), and *mín bǐng* (a sweet glutinous rice pastry).

Rénmín Dōng Lù 13. ✆ **0510/282-4148.** Meal for 2 ¥80–¥160 ($10–$20). No credit cards. 11am–9:30pm.

Wúxī Kǎoyāguǎn (Wúxī Roast Duck Restaurant) ★★ WÚXĪ This popular four-story restaurant serves its excellent signature Wúxī roast duck in two ways: with steamed bread, chives, cucumbers, and sweet sauce; and as a soup.

Wild China: Xúzhōu

This historical Hàn dynasty town, located 649km (402 miles) from Shànghǎi in the northwest corner of Jiāngsū Province at the junction of three other provinces (Hénán, Shāndōng, and Ānhuī), has always been a contested site. More than 200 wars have been fought here, the most recent being an important showdown between the Guómíndǎng (Nationalists) and the Communists from November 1948 to January 1949 in the battle of Huáihǎi. The Communists won. Today, this mid-size industrial city is an important rail junction with a few hidden gems awaiting discovery.

The **Xúzhōu Hàn Bīngmǎyǒng Bówùguǎn (Xúzhōu Terracotta Army Museum)** ★★, Dōngjiāo Shīzi Shān in the southeastern part of town, contains a fascinating miniature army of terra-cotta horses and soldiers (all under 40cm/1½-ft. tall) that are more than 2,000 years old. Discovered in 1984, the six pits containing over 4,000 clay figures had been built to guard the tomb of Liú Wǔ, the third duke of the state of Chǔ. Pit One has 1,000 figures of armor-wearing foot soldiers, chariot drivers, mounted guards, and archers all in military formation. History indicates that chariot units were eliminated from the Chinese military shortly thereafter, making this find of the early Western Hàn dynasty especially important. Admission to the museum is ¥12 ($1.50); hours are from 8am to 5:30pm (to 4:30pm in winter). Three hundred meters (327 yd.) to the east is **Chǔwáng Líng Dìgōng (Mausoleum of King Chǔ)** (Shīzi Shān), with an unusual bottleneck-shaped tomb passage leading to the inner halls and the coffin chamber. Over 2,000 burial items were excavated here, including silver seals, a jade coffin, and an exquisite jade burial suit made from 2,500 pieces of jade sewn together with silver thread.

Other specialties include *Tàihú yínyú* (deep-fried Lake Tài fish) and the mouthwatering *Wúxī xiǎolóng* (Wúxī dumplings). Service is friendly.

Zhōngshān Lù 222. ✆ **0510/270-3210.** Reservations recommended. English menu. Meal for 2 ¥90–¥200 ($11–$25). No credit cards. 11am–2pm and 5–9pm.

INEXPENSIVE

Wángxìng Jì DUMPLINGS One of Wúxī's most famous and popular places for casual dining, this restaurant has no decor to speak of, but who cares when the crabmeat dumplings *(xièfěn xiǎolóng)* or pork wontons *(xiānròu húntun)* are so delicious and cheap? A variety of noodles is also available here. Don't expect much from the occasionally apathetic service.

Zhōngshān Nán Lù 221. ✆ **0510/272-6484.** Meal for 2 ¥20–¥40 ($2.50–$5). No credit cards. 7am–9pm.

SHOPPING

Wúxī's famous folk-art **Huìs Hān clay figurines,** which some consider rather ugly, are available at the **Huì Hhān Clay Figurine Factory** store at Xīhuì Lù 26 (open 8:30am–5pm daily). Credit cards are accepted.

A SIDE TRIP TO YÍXĪNG

Located 60km (37 miles) southwest of Wúxī on the western shores of Tài Hú, Yíxīng is famous for its "Yíxīng ware" pottery, specifically small teapots and

Admission is ¥25 ($3); hours are from 8am to 5:30pm. Also worth visiting in the northern outskirts of town is **Guīshān Hàn Mù** ★ (Jiǔlǐ Shān Jisù Kāifāqū). This tomb of the sixth generation duke of the state of Chǔ, Liú Zhù (reigned 128–116 B.C.) and his wife follows the principles of geomancy, with Liú Zhù and his wife buried in separate but connected coffin chambers. Items excavated include the emperor's silver seal, weapons, horse carriages pulled by terra-cotta horses, and jade and bronze articles for daily use. Admission to the tomb is ¥30 ($3.75); hours are from 8am to 5:30pm (to 5pm in winter).

GETTING THERE From Xúzhōu's **Guānyīn Airport** (✆ **0516/373-4096**), flights connect to Běijīng (1 hr.), Chónggìng (2 hr.), Shànghǎi (1 hr.), and Xī'ān (1½ hr.). Purchase tickets at the airport, or in town at Jiànguó Xī Lù 88 (✆ **0516/569-7333**). Xúzhōu is also connected by train to Běijīng (10 hr.), Shànghǎi (6½–8 hr.), Xī'ān (11–14 hr.), and Jì'nán (4 hr.). Tickets may be purchased at the **railway station** (✆ **0516/392-2522**) up to 5 days in advance at counters 4 through 7.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE The relatively new (2000), 30-story **Jiàlì Guójì Jiǔdiàn** ★ (Jīnpǔ Xī Lù 202; ✆ **0516/392-8888;** fax 0516/392-8999) is located next to the railway station. The nicest place to stay in town, it has spacious guest rooms (¥528/$66), comfortable beds, and bright, clean bathrooms. Staff is professional, and discounts of 30% are the norm. The hotel has two Chinese restaurants and the full range of four-star hotel facilities. In general, stick to hotel dining, although cravings for Western fast food can be satisfied at Kentucky Fried Chicken (Zhōngshān Nán Lù 1; 9am–11pm) and McDonald's (Huáihǎi Xī Lù 12–6; 8am–11pm).

decorative objects made from a distinctive dark red clay (often referred to as "purple sand" due to a high level of iron in the soil). You can see a collection of Yíxīng pots, flasks, and urns from over 6,000 years ago, as well as the latest vases and teapots from contemporary masters, at the ceramics museum **Yíxīng Táocí Bówùguǎn** (Dīngshān Běi Lù 150; ¥10/$1.25; 7:30am–5pm) in Dīngshū Town, 15km (9 miles) southwest of Yíxīng. The museum has a store (8am–5pm) where you can purchase a certified Yíxīng teapot set (teapot with 6 cups) for ¥200 to ¥300 ($25–$38). Outside are workshops where visitors can watch ceramics artisans at work. Across the highway is a large pottery market, where an average-size teapot can cost ¥20 to ¥200 ($2.50–$25).

Yíxīng also has some karst caves near Dīngshū Town. **Shànjuǎn Dòng,** (¥38/$4.75; open 7:30am–5pm) located 25km (15 miles) southwest of Yíxīng, has three main chambers of oddly shaped rocks. Visitors may climb to the upper cave or take the more interesting short ride on a flat-bottomed boat in the lower cave along a 120m (393-ft.) long underground stream that leads out to a tacky temple complex commemorating China's Romeo and Juliet, Liáng Shānbó and ZhùYīngtái. Twenty-two kilometers (13 miles) southwest of town, a daoist temple fronts the large **Zhānggōng Dòng** (¥30/$3.80; 7:30am–5:30pm) which contains a labyrinthine 72 halls. The Hall of the Dragon King

has wide steps that run all the way to the top of the hill, where there's a view of the dusty countryside.

From the **Yíxīng Bus Station** (**Shěng Qìchē Zhàn; ✆ 0510/794-5031**), buses depart regularly for Wúxī (90 min.; ¥11/$1.40) and Nánjīng (2½ hr.; ¥44/$5.50). Once in Yíxīng, tourist bus no. Y1 (¥5/60¢) will take you from the bus station to the ceramics museum and Zhānggōng Dòng (Zhānggōng Cave), while tourist bus no. Y2 heads to Shànjuǎn Dòng (Shànjuǎn Cave).

Yíxīng is usually a day trip from Wúxī or Nánjīng, but for those who wish to stay over, the newly renovated three-star **Yíxīng Guójì Fàndiàn (Yíxīng International Hotel)**, Tōngzhèngguān Lù 52 (**✆ 0510/791-6888;** fax 0510/790-0767) has clean and comfortable rooms for ¥420 to ¥580 ($52–$72). The rooms are fitted with all new furniture, fridge, and satellite TV. The hotel has three restaurants serving decent fare.

12 Héféi

Ānhuī Province, 615km (381 miles) NW of Shànghǎi, 321km (199 miles) NW of Huáng Shān

As the provincial capital of Ānhuī, this industrial city of 1.3 million has few attractions for the tourist but sees a constant flow of business travelers. Héféi is also home to the University of Science and Technology, where Chinese dissident Fāng Lìzhī was vice-president until he sought asylum in the West after the 1989 Tiānān Mén Square massacre. *Note:* For Chinese translations of selected establishments listed in this section, please turn to Appendix A.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Héféi has daily **flights** to Běijīng (2 hr.), Guǎngzhōu (3 hr.), Xī'ān (1½ hr.), Hángzhōu (50 min.), Shànghǎi (1 hr.), and Qīngdǎo (1 hr.), and several flights a week to Guìlín (90 min.), Huángshān (50 min.), Hong Kong (2 hr.), Jī'nán (1 hr.), and Zhèngzhōu (1 hr.). Tickets may be purchased at the 24-hour **CAAC Booking Center (Míngháng Shòupiào Zhōngxīn)** at Měilíng Dàdào 458 (**✆ 0551/288-6626**). **Taxis** (20 min.; ¥20/$2.50) are your best option for getting to Héféi's airport, which is about 10km (6 miles) south of town. There are no airport buses, but public **bus** no. 11 runs there from the railway station.

From Héféi's railway station (**✆ 0551/423-2732**) in the northeast part of town, **trains** run to Běijīng (12 hr.), Zhèngzhōu (9 hr.), Shànghǎi (7–10 hr.), Huáng Shān (8 hr.), Xī'ān (18 hr.), and Hángzhōu (8 hr.). Tickets can be purchased at the railway station or, more conveniently, at ticket outlets in town at Chángjiāng Zhōng Lù 376 (**✆ 0551/264-0000**).

Héféi has several bus stations, but the **long-distance bus station** (**chángtú qìchē zhàn; ✆ 0551/429-7013**) at the corner of Shènglì Lù and Míngguāng Lù should serve most travelers' needs. Buses run to Shànghǎi (every 40 min. 6:20am–5:40pm; 6½ hr.; ¥120/$15), Zhèngzhōu (9:30am, 3:50pm; 10 hr.; ¥87/$11), Huáng Shān (7:40am; 6 hr.; ¥63/$8), and Nánjīng (7:10, 9, and 11:40am and 12:40 and 3:30pm; 2½ hr.; ¥52/$6.50).

GETTING AROUND **Taxis** charge ¥5 (60¢) for 3km (2 miles), then ¥1.20 (15¢) per kilometer. From 11pm to 5am, prices rise to ¥6 (75¢) for 3km, then to ¥1.45 (20¢) per kilometer.

Most public **buses** (¥1/15¢ flat fee) require exact change. Bus no. 1 runs from the railway station down Shènglì Lù onto Chángjiāng Zhōng Lù before heading

south on Jīnzhāi Lù. Bus no. 11 runs from the railway station to the airport along Chángjiāng Zhōng Lù.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China** is at Chángjiāng Zhōng Lù 313. Foreign exchange is available at all counters Monday through Friday from 8am to noon and 2:30 to 6pm (2–5:30pm Nov–Apr). An ATM is located here.

Internet Access Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The post office (8am–8pm) is at Chángjiāng Zhōng Lù 146.

Visa Extensions The **Héféi Municipal Administration Service Center (Shì Xíngzhèng Fúwù Zhōngxīn)** is at Jiǔ Shīqiáo Jiē 45 (✆ **0551/262-4550**). Open year-round Monday to Friday from 8am to noon; May to October 3 to 6pm and November to April 2:30 to 5:30pm.

EXPLORING HÉFÉI

Héféi's nicest park, **Bāo Hé Gōngyuán** in the center of town, has an arched bridge over a placid lake, whispering willows on the shores, and schools of fish in lily ponds, all making for some pleasant strolls. Entrance is free and the park is open 24 hours The park is also home to **Bāo Gōng Mùyuán (Lord Bāo's Tomb)** at Wúhú Lù 58. It commemorates one of China's most respected iconic figures, local son Bāo Zhěng (999–1062), a conscientious and impartial Northern Sòng dynasty judge who fought for the common folk. Admission to the tomb is ¥15 ($1.90).

North of the park along the pedestrian street **Shāngyè Bùxíng Jiē** is **Lǐ Hóngzhāng Gùjū** (Huáihé Lù 208; ¥15/$1.90; 8:30am–5:30pm). This is the former residence of Lǐ Hóngzhāng (1823–1901), a highly successful Qīng dynasty military commander who is perhaps best known as one of the chief architects of the destruction of the Tàipíngs. His former residence has been well preserved, complete with beautiful lattice windows and Qīng dynasty furniture.

The **Ānhuī Shěng Bówùguǎn (Ānhuī Provincial Museum)** at Ānqīng Lù 268 (¥10/$1.25; Tue–Sun 8:30–11:30am and 2:30–5pm), is a rather forlorn place. It has a modest bronze collection, some Hàn tomb engravings, and a fairly comprehensive display on the Huīzhōu-style architecture of southern Ānhuī. The museum closes early if there are no visitors, which is often.

WHERE TO STAY

EXPENSIVE

Holiday Inn Héféi (Héféi Gǔjǐng Jiàrì Jiǔdiàn) ★★ Just east of the commercial heart of town, this luxurious five-star 29-story hotel has rooms that are large, well appointed, and decorated with classical furniture. The marble bathrooms are a bit small but very clean. Rooms on the higher floors provide panoramas of the city. Service is professional and efficient.

Chángjiāng Dōng Lù 1104. ✆ **0551/429-1188.** Fax 0551/429-1166. hihfe@mail.hf.ah.cn. 338 units. ¥678–¥768 ($84–$96) standard room; from ¥828 ($103) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; bar; lounge; disco; cigar bar; indoor pool; health club; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; massage; laundry/dry cleaning; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, broadband Internet access, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Novotel Héféi (Héféi Nuòfùtè Qíyún Shānzhuāng) ★★ Renovated in 2002, the trendy four-star Novotel has standard rooms that are a little small but

perfectly comfortable. They are fitted with modern light wood furniture and all the expected amenities. Bathrooms are sparkling clean. Consider upgrading to a superior room, which is spacious and refreshingly decorated with hip blue and orange futon sofas. Service is excellent and the staff is professional and exceedingly friendly.

Wúhú Lù 199. ✆ **0551/288-7777.** Fax 0551/288-9278. www.accorhotels.com/asia. 245 units. ¥677 ($84) standard room; ¥777 ($97) superior; ¥1,150 ($143) suite. Discounts possible up to 50%. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; pastry shop; bar; lounge; health club; concierge; tour desk; airport shuttle; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; 24-hr. room service; massage; laundry/dry cleaning; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, broadband Internet access, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

MODERATE

Huáqiáo Fàndiàn (Overseas Chinese Hotel) This mid-range three-star hotel has a great location right in the heart of town and a bewildering variety of rooms for every budget. The nicest and most comfortable rooms are in Building C, while those in Building B are fairly large but have stained carpets and forgettable brown furniture. Skip Building A unless you like run-down rooms. In general, bathrooms are clean enough, save for the occasional stained bathtub.

Chángjiāng Zhōng Lù 98. ✆ **0551/265-2221.** Fax 0551/264-2861. 268 units. ¥300–¥550 ($38–$68) standard room. 30%–50% discounts possible. V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; concierge; business center; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer.

WHERE TO DINE

All the top hotels catering to foreigners serve very credible Western and Chinese food. For Western fast food, there's a **Pizza Hut** at Huáihé Lù 77 and a **McDonald's** at the intersection of Sūzhōu Lù and Chángjiāng Lù.

Jīn Mǎn Lóu Huāyuán Jiǔdū ★ CHÁOZHŌU/CANTONESE This popular, clean restaurant offers reliable and tasty fare at very reasonable prices, though service is uneven. Start with a cold dish of spicy mushrooms with broad beans or the house specialty, *tàijí sùcài gēng,* a puréed vegetable soup. Graduate to the *huǒshì xiǎochǎo,* a light stir-fry mix of pork, leeks, and bean curd strips. Also try *suànzhēng shànbèi,* garlic steamed scallops with glass noodles.

Tóngchéng Lù 96. ✆ **0551/287-7777.** Meal for 2 ¥40–¥120 ($5–$15). No credit cards. 11am–2pm and 4–9pm.

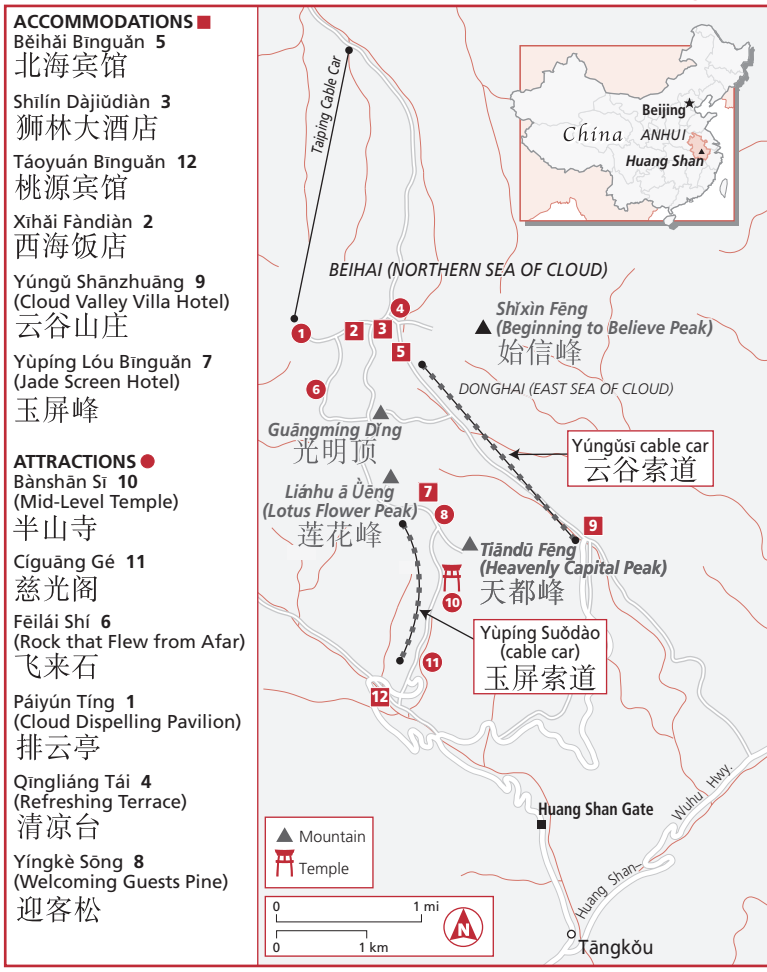
Sīdǎopǔ Miànguǎn (Noodle Stop) ★ NOODLES Located in the Novotel Hotel, this 24-hour noodle house will satisfy hunger pangs at any time of day or night. There's a noodle for practically every taste, from the simple *zhájiàng miàn* (noodles with meat sauce) to Japanese udon to a spicy Thai *tom-yum* flavored noodle soup.

Novotel Héféi, Wúhú Lù 199. ✆ **0551/288-7777.** Meal for 2 ¥20–¥60 ($2.50–$7.50). AE, DC, MC, V. Open 24 hr.

13 Huáng Shān ★★★

Ānhuī Province, 501km (315 miles) SW of Shànghǎi, 65km (40 miles) NW of Túnxī

If you climb one mountain in China, let it be Huáng Shān (Yellow Mountain). Located in southern Ānhuī Province, and inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1990, Huáng Shān, with its 72 peaks, is China's most famous mountain for scenic beauty. Having no religious significance, the mountain is known instead for its sea of clouds, strangely shaped rocks, unusual pine trees, and bubbling hot springs—four features that have mesmerized and inspired countless painters and poets for over 1,500 years.



Huáng Shān is enshrouded in mist and fog 256 days a year, while snow covers the mountain peaks 158 days a year. Trails are usually packed with hikers from May to October, so April is often cited as the best time to visit. Local tourism authorities, however, like to boast that each season highlights a uniquely different aspect of Huáng Shān, and have taken to pushing Huáng Shān winter tours, when hotel, restaurant, and ticket prices are at least lower. Whenever you visit, allow at least 2 days for the mountain, and another day or two for the attractions around **Túnxī.**

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The nearest airports and railway stations are at Túnxī, 65km (40 miles) and a 1½-hour bus ride away. In Tāngkǒu, the nearest town serving the mountain, buses leave for Túnxī from the **long-distance bus station** (**chángtú qìchē zhàn;** ✆ **0559/556-2590**) just before the main gate to Huáng Shān and from the main bridge area in town. Tickets may be purchased at the

bus station or at the **Lìdū Hotel** (**Lìdū Jiǔdiàn; ✆ 0559/556-2289**). Slow long-distance buses also run to Héféi (6:50am–7:10am, 3–3:40pm; 6 hr.; ¥63/$7.50), Shànghǎi (6:20am; 8 hr.; ¥101/$12), and Hángzhōu (6am–8am, 2pm, 5:20pm; 6 hr.; ¥55/$6.80).

GETTING AROUND *Miàndī* (van) taxis charge ¥3 to ¥5 (35¢–60¢) for trips in town. The start of the Eastern Mountain Trail (Eastern Steps) or the cable car at Yúngǔ is another hour away by minibus (¥5/60¢) or taxi (approximately ¥30/$3.75 per trip or ¥10/$1.25 per person depending on the number of people). The Peach Blossom Hot Springs area and the start of the Western Mountain Trail (Western Steps) will require a 30-minute walk or a taxi ride from the Tāngkǒu bus station (¥10–¥15/$1.25–$2). If you want to take the cable car up the western slopes, take a minibus for ¥5 to ¥10 (60¢–$1.25) or a taxi for around ¥40 ($5), subject to bargaining, from Tāngkǒu to the Mercy Light Temple (Cíguāng Gé).

EXPLORING THE MOUNTAIN

ORIENTATION & INFORMATION

Buses from Túnxī usually drop off passengers in Tāngkǒu by the bridge or at the bus station in upper Tāngkǒu near the Huáng Shān Front Gate.

There are two main trails up the mountain. The 7.5km (4½-mile) long **Eastern Steps** (3–4 hr. hike) are compact and steep and are generally considered less strenuous than the 15km (9¼-mile) long **Western Steps** (4–6 hr. hike), which are longer and steeper but which have some of Huáng Shān's most spectacular vistas. For the fit, it's entirely possible to climb the mountain in the morning and descend in the afternoon in about 10 hours. But an overnight stay at the summit would allow a more leisurely appreciation of the sights and views along the way.

Sedan chairs can be hired on both routes and can cost up to ¥500 ($62) for a one-way trip, though there is plenty of room for bargaining. Just be very clear beforehand on all the terms of the deal, including exact starting and ending points, and the price per passenger. If you hire a porter to tote your bags, be clear as to whether you're being charged by the piece or by weight. If the latter, insist, if you can, that the items be weighed *before* you embark so you have an idea of the total cost, and not when you're at the end point, for the load at the end has an uncanny way of weighing three times more than you'd imagined.

For those preferring the path of least resistance, there are two **cable cars** going up the mountain: the Eastern Trail's **Yúngǔ Sì cable car** (Mar 15–Nov 15, 6:30am–4:30pm; otherwise 8am–4pm) has a waiting line for the 6-minute ascent that can take up to 1 to 2 hours. The Western Trail's **Yùpíng cable car** (Mar 15–Nov 15, 6:30am–5pm; otherwise 8am–4pm) runs from Cíguāng Gé (Mercy Light Temple) to Yùpíng Lóu, which is just over halfway up the western slope. The one-way cost of both cable cars is ¥66 ($8.25); or ¥56 ($7) from November 16 to March 14. There is a third, less often used cable car on the north side of the mountain that runs from Páiyún Tíng (Cloud Dispelling Pavilion) west of the summit to Sōnggǔān in Tàipíng Village; the trip back to Tāngkǒu takes 1 hour by taxi or infrequent minibus.

When climbing the mountain, always carry layers of clothing: sweaters and raincoats as well as T-shirts. Hats and umbrellas are useful, too, as temperatures, even in summer, are subject to sudden changes due to the altitude and winds. You might also consider packing your own food and drink, as these become considerably more expensive the higher you climb.

From March 10 to November 15, the park entrance fee is ¥130 ($16); from November 16 to March 9 it's ¥85 ($11).

EASTERN STEPS At 7.5km (4½ miles) long, these paved, cut-stone stairways are considerably easier to negotiate than the Western Steps, though this is definitely not a walk in the park. Shortly after the start of the trail, considered the Yúngǔ Sì cable car terminus, see if you can spot Eyebrow Peak (Méimao Fēng) to the south, said to resemble what else but a pair of eyebrows. When you're not huffing and puffing, the climb, which takes you past bubbling streams and pretty pine and bamboo forests, is quite pleasant.

WESTERN STEPS Most hikers begin their assault on the 15km (9-mile) Western Steps at **Cíguāng Gé,** where you can burn incense and offer prayers for safe trails, not a bad idea considering that the serpentine Western Steps, hewn out of the sheer rock face, can be precipitously steep and narrow at places. There are rest stops along the way at the **Yuèyá Tíng (Crescent Moon Pavilion)** and the **Bànshān Sì** (**Mid-Level Temple,** a misnomer—it should be the Quarter-Way Temple, for that's about where you are).

The real mid-point of the trail is **Yùpíng Fēng (Jade Screen Peak),** with the Yùpíng Lóu Bīnguǎn nestled like a jewel among the pointed vertical peaks. About 20 minutes by foot to the west is the upper terminus for the Yùpíng *suǒdào* (cable car). Before you reach Jade Screen Peak, however, a narrow path hewn between two large rocks named **Yī Xiàn Tiān** (literally "A Thread of Sky" because only a sliver of sky is visible through this passage) leads to the distinctive **Yíngkè Sōng (Welcoming Guests Pine),** which extends a long tree branch as if in greeting.

South of Jade Screen Peak, an incredibly steep and exposed stairway (often called the Áoyú Bèi—Carp's Backbone) snakes its way to the magnificent **Tiāndū Fēng** ★★★, the third highest peak at 1,810m (5,937 ft.). Young lovers often bring padlocks inscribed with their names to affix to the railings at the peak in proof and hope of being "locked" together in eternal love. The **views** from this "heavenly capital" are simply extraordinary. If you suffer from vertigo or agoraphobia, give this peak a pass. At press time, Tiāndū Fēng was closed for maintenance, and no date was set for reopening.

Past the Jade Screen Hotel is Huáng Shān's highest summit, **Liánhuā Fēng** (**Lotus Flower Peak;** elev. 1,873m/6,143 ft.), so named because it resembles a lotus shoot among fronds. From here it's another 20 to 30 minutes or so to the second highest peak, **Guāngmíng Dǐng** (elev. 1,860m/6,100 ft.), where there's a weather station and a hotel. A little further along is the famous **Fēilái Shí (Rock that Flew from Afar),** a large vertical rock standing on a tapered end. Another half hour brings you to the Běihǎi Bīnguǎn.

ON THE SUMMIT The highlight at the summit is the **Běihǎi Sunrise** ★★, the only reason for overnighting on the summit. Weather permitting, the moment when the first golden ray hits and spills onto the sea of clouds is truly breathtaking. Be forewarned, however, that you'll be sharing this special moment with hundreds of other chattering tourists bundled up in the thick jackets provided by the summit hotels. The **Qīngliáng Tái (Refreshing Terrace),** less than 10 minutes from the Běihǎi Bīnguǎn, is the best place to view the sunrise. Alternatively, the **Páiyún Tíng (Cloud Dispelling Pavilion)** between the Fēilái Shí and the Xīhǎi Fàndiàn is the place to catch the equally pretty sunsets. Another popular photo op is the **Shǐxìn Fēng (Beginning to Believe Peak)** between the Běihǎi Bīnguǎn and the Yúngǔ cable car terminus.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE

Tāngkǒu's hotels are not quite up to international standards but are adequate in a pinch. Hotels at the hot springs are generally overpriced, and staying there only makes sense if you plan to indulge in the waters or if you plan an early-morning assault on the Western Trail. The Yúngǔ Sì area is more remote, and hotels there generally cater to large tour groups. Although prices are significantly higher on the summit, spending a night at the top in order to catch the famed Běihǎi sunrise is highly recommended. Phone ahead for reservations, particularly May through October, when rooms are difficult to come by.

TĀNGKǑU

There's a **bakery,** Wèitèjiā Miànbāofáng, on Yín Shí Jiē, the main street under the bridge. Next door is a mini-**supermarket** where you can stock up on snacks, groceries, and drinks for the climb.

Hóngdàshī Jiǔdiàn This relatively new (2001) two-star hotel just down the street from the Zhōunán Hotel has unremarkable rooms with firm beds and forgettable furniture, but at least the rooms are very clean and the furniture is still new. Bathrooms are basic but clean and there's 24-hour hot water. The staff can't muster much English, but they put on a nice game face.

Yánxī Jiē. ✆ **0559/556-2577.** Fax 0559/556-1888. 35 units. ¥320–¥380 ($40–$48) standard room. 20% discounts possible, up to 40% in low season. No credit cards. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; lounge; concierge; store; salon; limited room service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Mr. Chéng's Restaurant Currently located at Yánxī Jiē, this restaurant (which will likely have moved by the time you read this) dishes up big portions of familiar favorites like *gōngbǎo jīdīng* and fried spare ribs in soya sauce. For something local, try *Huáng Shān èrdōng,* a stir-fry of winter mushrooms and bamboo shoots picked from the surrounding hills. The very friendly, English-speaking Mr. Chéng can also help with tour information and with booking accommodations and train tickets.

Yánxī Jiē. ✆ mobile **013085592603.** English menu. Meal for 2 ¥40–¥80 ($5–$10). No credit cards. 7am–10pm (to midnight Mar 10–Nov 15).

Zhōunán Dàjiǔdiàn This two-star hotel east of the bridge has basic but clean rooms with comfortable beds and the standard no-frills amenities. But there's a hair dryer in every room! The staff speaks minimal English but tries to be helpful.

Yánxī Jiē. ✆ **0559/556-3517.** Fax 0559/556-3519. 77 units. ¥340–¥380 ($42–$47) standard room. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; tour desk; store; salon; limited room service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer.

WĒN QUÁN (HOT SPRINGS)

Táoyuán Bīnguǎn This large three-star hotel is the inn of choice and is where the Western Trail begins. Rooms were renovated in 2002, so the furniture and carpeting are fairly new. Bathrooms, however, are still small and dark. The staff can handle the basics, but not much more.

Huáng Shān Fēngjǐng Qū Wēnquán. ✆ **0559/558-5666.** Fax 0559/558-5288. 108 units. ¥600 ($75) standard room; ¥1,880 ($235) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; lounge; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

YÚNGǓ SÌ (CLOUD VALLEY TEMPLE) CABLE CAR STATION

Yúngǔ Shānzhuāng (Cloud Valley Villa Hotel) Down the road from the Yúngǔ Sì cable car, this remote three-star hotel popular with Taiwanese tour

groups is nicely designed in the traditional Huīzhōu architectural style, with stark white walls and gray tiled roofs. Rooms are a little dark and damp, but are otherwise furnished with the basic amenities.

Yúngǔ Sì. ✆ **0559/556-2466.** Fax 0559/556-2346. 100 units. ¥580 ($72) standard room; ¥880 ($110) suite. 20% discounts possible. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; lounge; sauna; concierge; business center; forex (US$ only); salon; limited room service; laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV.

SUMMIT AREA

Běihǎi Bīnguǎn As the oldest hotel (1958) on the mountain, this three-star outfit has at least staked out the best position and is closest to the sunrise-viewing spot. Front rooms, which have good views of Starting To Believe Peak, are otherwise quite drab. Rooms in the back wing are newer and nicer and fitted with Chinese furniture, comfortable beds, and jackets for the sunrise-viewing. Service is uneven.

Běihǎi Fēngjǐng Qū. ✆ **0559/558-2555.** Fax 0559/558-1996. 230 units. ¥700–¥850 ($87–$106) standard room. 10% discounts possible. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; lounge; concierge; salon; limited room service. *In room:* TV, heater.

Shīlín Dàjiǔdiàn The newest (1998) of the summit hotels, this four-star hotel has rooms that are small but cozy and furnished with the usual amenities. Bathrooms are small but clean and come with showers only. The hotel's restaurant can serve Western breakfasts upon request. Service is adequate if not particularly memorable.

Běihǎi Fēngjǐng Qū. ✆ **0559/558-4040.** Fax 0559/558-1888. www.shilin.com. 142 units. ¥960 ($120) standard room. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; laundry; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar.

Xīhǎi Fàndiàn A nicer but pricier option is this Swiss-designed hotel, which garnered a four-star rating in 2002 and is popular with American, European, and Japanese tour groups. Rooms, resembling ship cabins, are fitted with comfortable beds and rattan furniture. Some bathrooms are a little run down. Staff is friendly and helpful.

Xīhǎi Fēngjǐng Qū. ✆ **0559/558-8987.** Fax 0559/558-8988. 125 units. ¥960 ($120) standard room; ¥1,730 ($216) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; concierge; business center; forex (US$ and yen only); store; salon; limited room service. *In room:* Satellite TV, minibar, heater.

14 Túnxī

Ānhuī Province, 67km (41 miles) SE of Huáng Shān, 27km W of Shè Xiàn

After arriving in Túnxī, the gateway to Huáng Shān, it used to be that visitors would bypass this small town and head directly for the mountain. Nowadays, however, the beautiful countryside around Túnxī, with its paddy fields and gorgeous traditional architecture, provides a draw in its own right, and a visit here is well worth combining with your trip to Huáng Shān. *Note:* For Chinese translations of selected establishments listed in this section, please see Appendix A.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Located about 8km (5 miles) northwest of town, **Túnxī airport** has daily flights to Shànghǎi (1 hr.), Běijīng (2 hr.), Guǎngzhōu (1½ hr.), and Hángzhōu (1 hr.); and less frequent flights to Hong Kong (2 hr.), Héféi (½ hr.), Guìlín (1½ hr.), and Xī'ān (3 hr.). Tickets can be bought at the **CAAC office (Míngháng Shòupiàochù)** at Huáshān Lù 23 (✆ **0559/293-4111**). Taxis to the airport cost ¥20 ($2.50).

There are two trains a day connecting Túnxī to Shànghǎi (12 hr.; ¥171/$21 soft sleeper, ¥103/$13 hard sleeper). Tickets can be bought at the **railway station** (✆ **0559/211-6222**), at CITS, or at hotel tour desks.

Tāngkǒu-bound **buses** (1½ hr.; ¥13/$1.60) regularly leave from Túnxī's bus station (qìchē zhàn) and the square in front of the railway station. They start as early as 6:30am to catch arriving train passengers and run until around 6pm. Buses become less frequent in the afternoon and only depart when full.

GETTING AROUND **Taxis** charge ¥5 (60¢) for 2km (1¼ miles), then ¥1.80 (25¢) per kilometer thereafter until 10km (6 miles), then ¥2.70 (35¢) per kilometer. Smaller *miàndī* (van) taxis charge ¥3 (40¢) per 2km (1¼ miles) or ¥5 (60¢) for destinations in town. Private taxi rental out to Yī Xiàn will run around ¥300 ($38), subject to negotiation.

TOURS & GUIDES **CITS** at Bīnjiāng Xī Lù 1 (✆ **0559/251-5618;** fax 0559/251-5255) can arrange private day trips to surrounding areas like Yī Xiàn and Shè Xiàn. Car hire for a day (guide not included) will run ¥300 to ¥400 ($38–$50) depending on your itinerary; an English-speaking guide will cost another ¥100 to ¥200 ($15–$25). Unless you look Chinese or have some *guānxi* (connections) with the local PSB, it's easier to have CITS get your permit for ¥60 ($7.50) to visit Yī Xiàn, even if you use none of their other services.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China** at Xīnān Běi Lù 9 is open for foreign exchange Monday through Friday from 8am to noon and 2:30 to 5:30pm. There is an ATM outside the bank.

Internet Access There is a **24-hour Internet cafe** at the southern end of Xiānréndòng Lù. It charges ¥2 (25¢) per hour. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The post office (open 8am–8pm) is in the southern part of town at Qiányuán Nán Lù 39.

Visa Extensions The **PSB** is at Cháng Gān Lù 108 (✆ **0559/231-8768;** Mon–Fri 8–11:30am and 3–5:30pm).

WHERE TO STAY

EXPENSIVE

Huáng Shān Guójì Dàjiǔdiàn (Huáng Shān International Hotel) ★ This four-star hotel in the northwestern part of town is still the most popular choice with Western visitors, although it's starting to show signs of age. Rooms are spacious, comfortable, and equipped with extra amenities like robes, bathroom scale, and in-house movies. Bathrooms are bright and clean, and the service is quite friendly and efficient.

Huáshān Lù 31. ✆ **0559/256-5678.** fax 0559/251-2087. 215 units. ¥680 ($80) standard room; from ¥1,280 ($150) suite. 20% discounts possible; 40% discounts possible Nov–Mar. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; outdoor tennis court; health club; concierge; tour desk; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer (4th floor & up), safe (select rooms).

Huáng Shān Guómài Dàjiǔdiàn) ★ Five minutes south of the railway station, this modern 11-story hotel has the most convenient in-town location of the four-star establishments. Business travelers seem to favor this hotel, which has classy rooms equipped with comfortable beds and the standard amenities. The staff speaks some English and can be helpful when they're not harried.

Qiányuán Nán Lù 25. ✆ **0559/235-1188.** Fax 0559/235-1199. 153 units. ¥680 ($85) standard room; ¥1,280–¥3,800 ($160–$475) suite. 10% discounts possible. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; lounge; health club; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; laundry/dry cleaning; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Jiànguó Shāngwù Jiǔdiàn (Jiànguó Garden Hotel) ★ Located near the International Hotel on the road to the airport, this relatively new (2000) four-star hotel catering mostly to Asian tour groups is a modern but charmless white-tiled affair on the outside. Happily, rooms are more tastefully decorated with comfortable beds and inoffensive furnishings. The clean bathrooms have weighing scales and the basic amenities. The friendly staff speaks a little English.

Jīchǎng Dàdào 6. ✆ **0559/256-6688.** Fax 0559/235-4580. www.hs.jg.com. 130 units. ¥680–¥780 ($85–$97) standard room; ¥1,380–¥4,800 ($172–$600) suite. 20% discounts possible. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; outdoor pool; outdoor tennis court; health club; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer.

MODERATE

Huáng Shān Huāxī Fàndiàn Located in the southwest part of town near Túnxī's Old Street, this three-star hotel used to be one of the main outfits catering to foreigners before all the new four-star hotels. Today, it still has its appeal and is often fully booked. Rooms in the main building were renovated in 2002 and are simply furnished but comfortable. Bathrooms are basic but clean.

Xīzhèn Jiē 1. ✆ **0559/251-4312.** Fax 0559/251-4990. 282 units. ¥480–¥680 ($60–$85) standard room; ¥1,280 ($160) suite. 20% discounts possible. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; lounge; concierge; business center; shopping arcade; salon; limited room service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

WHERE TO DINE

Bǎo Húlu DUMPLINGS/NOODLES This no-frills but clean eatery in the western part of town is very popular with locals for breakfast and lunch. Popular menu items include *zhēngjiǎo* (steamed dumplings), *niúròu miàn* (beef noodles), and *Yángzhōu chǎofàn* (Yángzhōu fried rice).

Yánān Lù 81. Meal for 2 ¥15–¥25 ($2–$3). No credit cards. 7am–10pm.

Lǎo Jiē Diyī Lóu ★ HUĪZHŌU Housed in a traditional three-story Huīzhōu-style building at the eastern end of Old Street, this is a clean and therefore excellent place to try Huīzhōu cuisine, which is typically strong and pungent, emphasizing spicy and salty flavors. Specialties include *Huáng Shān sùwèiyuán* (stir-fried mountain vegetables, tofu, pumpkin, bamboo shoots, mushrooms, and medicinal herbs), *wǔcǎi shànsī* (eel stir-fried with peppers, mushrooms, and bamboo shoots) and *chòu dòufu* (smelly tofu). The food is tasty but service is a bit uneven.

Lǎo Jiē 247. ✆ **0559/253-9797.** Meal for 2 ¥50–¥100 ($6–$12). No credit cards. 9am–2pm and 4:30–9pm.

SHOPPING

In the southwestern part of town 1 block north of the river is **Lǎo Jiē (Old Street),** a 1.3km (¾ mile) street lined with restored Sòng dynasty wooden houses and shops. The usual souvenirs are here, from ethnic batik and Máo buttons to Chinese paintings and dried foodstuffs. Shops are open from 8am to 10pm. This is a fun place to stroll even if you're not in the buying mood.

AROUND TÚNXĪ

Formerly known as Huīzhōu (from which Ānhuī derived part of its name), this region was home to many wealthy salt merchants who in the Míng and Qīng

dynasties built many memorial arches and residences in such a unique style as to create a distinct regional *Huīzhōu* style of architecture. The district of Huīzhōu and the counties of Shè Xiàn and Yī Xiàn are famous for their well-preserved memorial arches *(páifang),* memorial halls *(cítáng),* and traditional villages lined with narrow streets and flowing streams.

Yī Xiàn is approximately 50km (30 miles) northwest of Túnxī, while the **Huīzhōu District** and **Shè Xiàn** are to the north and northeast. All three can easily be visited as separate day trips, but a combination of the three will be trickier. It is possible to visit both Shè Xiàn and Yī Xiàn in a long day, but you'll most likely only be able to visit one or two sights in each place and you won't have time to linger. You'll also have to rent a private taxi or car for the day (see "Tours & Guides," above), since public transportation to and between sights is slow and infrequent. If you have some command of Chinese or would simply like to brave it on your own, you can hire a taxi in Túnxī for the day to **Xīdì, Hóngcūn,** and **Nánpíng** in Yī Xiàn for ¥250 to ¥300 ($30–$38), and to **Shè Xiàn, Qiānkǒu,** and **Chéngkǎn** for around ¥280 ($35). Minibuses also leave for Shè Xiàn (30 min.; ¥4/50¢) and Yī Xiàn (1 hr.; ¥8/$1) from the bus station and the roundabout in front of the railway station. Note that you will have to get a **permit** for ¥60 ($7.50) to visit Yī Xiàn (deemed a "sensitive" area because of some nearby military bases), which you can do either at the PSB (Gōngānjú)

Huīzhōu Architecture

The main courtyard in Huīzhōu houses is flanked on three sides by buildings with downward sloping roofs, meant to aid the collection of rainwater, which symbolized wealth. This open-air courtyard provides the only illumination as there are few, if any, outside windows. Buildings typically have two or three overhanging stories; these upper floors were the havens (or prisons) of the women of the house, who had to rely on peepholes and small windows in the closed-off verandas to survey the goings-on in the courtyard below.

The average family home had a single courtyard, but those of higher status were allowed two or even three courtyards. Because building courtyards beyond one's rank was a punishable offense, many owners attempted to enhance their prestige by building more side rooms and by improving the ornamental and decorative fixtures in the house. As a result, many of Huīzhōu's houses have some of the best stone, brick, and wood carvings in China.

Huīzhōu houses are also separated from each other by high, crenellated walls called **horse-head walls *(mǎtóu bì),*** so named because the wall is said to look like a horse's head with its convex-shaped, black-tiled gable roof over stark white or gray stones. These walls were used both to prevent fires and to deter burglars and bandits, especially when the merchants were away on business.

Stone **memorial archways *(páifáng)*** built to honor ancestors typically have calligraphic inscriptions detailing the reason for the arch, have two or four supporting posts, and have anywhere from two to five tiered roofs.

or through CITS. The PSB requires that individuals applying for a permit have a sponsoring agency, which can sometimes, though not always, be the taxi driver you hire for the day.

YĪ XIÀN

The first village you encounter on the way to Yī Xiàn (7km/4 miles away) is **Xīdì** ★ (¥50/$6.25; open 8am–6pm), a UNESCO World Heritage site famous for its over 300 well-preserved ancient residences. The houses, with their amazingly ornate stone, brick, and wood carvings, are really the highlight here at this boat-shaped village which dates to the Northern Sòng dynasty (960–1127) but which developed into its present size during the Míng and Qīng dynasties. The memorial archway (built in 1578) which greets visitors when you first arrive is the sole remaining archway in the village and is said to have survived the Cultural Revolution because it was covered with Máo slogans.

Another UNESCO World Heritage site, **Hóngcūn** ★★, (¥55/$6.50; open 8am–5:30pm), located 11km (7 miles) northeast of Yī Xiàn town, is probably the most picturesque of the towns, with two spots in the village vying for top honors: the exterior view with an arched bridge across a large lily pond; and the crescent-shaped pond Yuèzhǎo Táng, whose reflection of the surrounding traditional houses on a clear day is truly magnificent. If these vistas appear familiar, it is probably because the two locations were used in the movie *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon.* Water is the main feature at this village, with the two large ponds connected to a series of flowing streams and canals which pass by every house, providing water for washing, cooking, and bathing, and which taken altogether are said to outline the shape of a bull.

Just over 5km (3 miles) west of Yī Xiàn, **Nánpíng** ★ (¥20/$2.50; open 8am–5:30pm) is a late Táng–early Sòng dynasty town that served as the location for Zhāng Yìmóu's 1990 film *Jú Dòu.* All the houses in the village have concave corners that bow inwards, the absence of rigid sharp edges symbolizing the avoidance of quarrels in the community. With 72 lanes that seem to double back on each other like an Escher maze, the village is best visited with a local guide (included in the price of admission), even though he or she speaks practically no English.

SHÈ XIÀN

Although Shè Xiàn has 94 memorial arches scattered throughout the county, **Tángyuè Páifang Qún (Tángyuè Memorial Arches)** ★, with its collection of seven four-pillared arches, is the best place to view these impressive structures. Located about 6km (3¾ miles) west of Shè Xiàn, the arches may be viewed from 6:30am to 6:30pm for a fee of ¥35 ($4.30). The arches were built by a salt merchant family named Bāo over the course of 400 years in the Míng and Qīng dynasties. If you're coming by minibus (¥4/50¢) from Túnxī, ask to be dropped off at the archways. From there, it's another 1.5km (1 mile) to the arches. Walk or take a tricycle taxi for ¥5 to ¥10 (60¢–$1.20).

Shè Xiàn claims the only eight-pillared memorial archway in China, the **Xǔguó Shífáng (Xǔguó Stone Archway)** ★★. Built in 1584 to honor a local scholar named Xú Guó, this magnificent structure has eight pillars decorated with carved lions, phoenixes, and *qílín* (Chinese unicorns). Up the hill from the archway and down a left side street is **Dòushān Jiē,** (¥10/$1.25), a narrow alley lined with traditional houses and shops.

HUĪZHŌU QŪ (HUĪZHŌU DISTRICT)

The highlight at **Chéngkǎn** village ★★ (¥35/$4.30 Mar 16–Nov 15; ¥25/$3 otherwise; 7am–5:30pm; 8am–4:30pm Nov 16–Mar 15), 34km (20 miles) north of Túnxīis **Bǎolún Gé (Bǎolún Hall)** ★★, an impressive building alone worth the trip. Located in the back of the **Luó Dōngshū Cí (Luó Dōngshū Ancestral Hall),** the bottom half of the structure, with stone square pillars supporting exquisitely painted (though now faded) wooden beams and brackets, was built in the Míng dynasty to honor the Luó family ancestors. The top half, with wooden windows and tiled roof, was built 70 years later to honor the emperor. At Zhōngyīng Jiē 12 is a Qīng dynasty house worth visiting for its intricately carved wooden doors and panels.

Qiánkǒu village has a Museum of Ancient Residences (¥10/$1.25; open 7:30am–6pm), a collection of 12 Míng dynasty Huīzhōu-style residences formerly scattered throughout Shè Xiàn County but relocated here and restored to their original state. This museum provides a comprehensive overview of the local architecture if you don't have time to tour individual towns.

A FINAL MYSTERY

The chief conceit at **Huā Shān Míkù** (**Mysterious Caves of Flower Mountain;** ¥35/$4.25; open 8am–5pm) located 14km (8½ miles) east of Túnxī, is the mysterious origin of these 36 underground caves (only 4 are currently open), whose chiseled rocks and pillars have many convinced that these caves are not the result of natural erosion. To date, the mystery of how the rocks were quarried and to what use they were applied (grotto no. 2, for example, has about 60,000 cubic meters of stone hewn from it) has not been resolved, since geologic tests on all nearby constructions and on all of China's major structures have not turned up a match. If you fancy a crack at the mystery, minibuses bound directly for Huā Shān Míkù or Shè Xiàn leave from the Túnxī Bus Station. Shè Xiàn-bound buses will drop you off on the main road, from where it's another 4km (2½ miles) to the caves' entrance.

8

Shànghǎi

by J. D. Brown

During the 1990s, Shànghǎi was torn apart and rebuilt, showcasing an economic boom that shook China to its foundations. But it is now a city that a visitor can enjoy and explore comfortably for the first time since those romantic days of the 1930s, when old Shànghǎi was a notorious playground for foreign adventurers, taipans (foreign business owners), and exploiters.

Today there are large neighborhoods of foreign architecture, wonderful for a stroll, where Europeans, especially the French, once resided. Shànghǎi's great river of commerce, the Huángpǔ, a tributary of the mighty Yángzǐ River, is lined with a gallery of colonial architecture, known as the Bund, grander than any other in the East, much of it recently refurbished and open to the curious visitor. The mansions, garden estates, country clubs, and cathedrals of the Westerners who made their fortunes here a century ago are scattered throughout the city, and there is even a synagogue. Shànghǎi's foreign legacy is epitomized by the Peace Hotel on the Bund, the 1929 creation of a Jewish millionaire and an Art Deco masterpiece. These are not the typical monuments of China, but they are typical of Shànghǎi.

A walk through downtown also turns up traditional treasures: a teahouse that exemplifies all that was old China; a classical garden as superb as any in Běijīng or Sūzhōu; an "Old Town" as quaint and chaotic as any in China; active temples and ancient pagodas; and a museum of Chinese art and artifacts that is acclaimed as one of China's best.

Across the Huángpǔ River, which served as old Shànghǎi's eastern border, a truly new Shànghǎi is taking shape. Known as Pǔdōng, this area boasts its own modern attractions: the tallest hotel in the world with one of the highest observation decks in Asia, China's largest stock exchange, and the space-age Oriental Pearl TV Tower.

Sipping a cocktail in a new Continental restaurant positioned among the rooftops over the Bund, you can look across the river into the future of China, at the burgeoning Manhattan of skyscrapers in Pǔdōng where a decade ago there was nothing but mud flats, rice fields, and village huts.

Within an easy day trip of Shànghǎi are two superb destinations that should not be missed. To the north is Sūzhōu, the "Venice of China," with China's foremost gardens and canals. To the south is Hángzhōu, renowned for beautiful West Lake and the surrounding tea plantations. Many travelers to either Sūzhōu or Hángzhōu book a group tour with an English-speaking guide to smooth the way, but that's entirely optional. *Note:* Unless otherwise noted, hours listed for attractions and restaurants are daily.

1 Orientation

ARRIVING

BY PLANE Shànghǎi has an older airport to the west, **Hóngqiáo International Airport,** and a newer airport to the east, **Pǔdōng International Airport,** which began operations late in 1999. Virtually all of the international carriers, except some based in China, use the Pǔdōng airport, arriving from Amsterdam, Bangkok, Chicago, Chung Ju, Detroit, Frankfurt, Fukuoka, Hiroshima, Hong Kong (still international from an aviation and departure-tax point of view), Istanbul, Kathmandu, Kuala Lumpur, London, Los Angeles, Macau (still international), Madrid, Manila, Moscow, Munich, Nagasaki, Nagoya, Niigita, Okayama, Okinawa, Osaka, Paris, Phnom Penh, Pusan, San Francisco, Sapporo, Seoul, Seri Bagawan, Singapore, Sydney, Taegu, Tokyo, Vancouver, and Vladivostok. Every major city in China is served with multiple daily flights, mostly to and from Hóngqiáo, but the most important, such as Běijīng, also have services to Pǔdōng.

The **Pǔdōng International Airport** (✆ **021/6834-1000**), your likely point of arrival, is located about 45km (28 miles) east of downtown Shànghǎi. Transfers into the city take 45 minutes to 1 hour. The international arrivals hall (ground level) contains hotel counters (to your left), bank counters for money exchange (directly across from the baggage-area exits), and several ATMs (just outside the arrivals doors).

The older **Hóngqiáo Airport** (✆ **021/6268-8899**), now largely reserved for flights within China, is located 19km (12 miles) west of the city center. Go to the left, where the walls are lined with hotel counters, and either confirm your hotel transfer or register to get aboard your hotel's shuttle. A **Tourist Service Center** in the international arrivals hall, open from 10am to 9:30pm (✆ **021/6268-8899**), provides maps and information (in English).

GETTING INTO TOWN

FROM THE AIRPORT

Hotel Shuttles Many of Shànghǎi's hotels maintain service counters along the walls in the main arrivals halls in both airports, and offer free (mostly Hóngqiáo) or relatively inexpensive (mostly Pǔdōng) shuttle buses.

Airport Taxis The legitimate taxis are lined up just outside the arrivals halls of both airports. Taxis into town from Hóngqiáo Airport take anytime from 20 to 40 minutes depending on traffic and should cost between ¥30 and ¥80 ($3.75–$8). Taxi transfers on the new highway to hotels in Pǔdōng and downtown Shànghǎi run between 45 minutes and 1½ hours for ¥160 ($20) and up. Insist on seeing the meter started.

Metro The world's first commercially operating maglev (magnetic levitation) line uses German technology to whisk you the 31km (19 miles) between Pǔdōng Airport and the Lóngyáng Lù metro station in 8 minutes (some services began in 2003 and are due to become fully operational by 2004). Metro line 2 then inexpensively serves nearly every hotel district of Shànghǎi and Pǔdōng. The old metro will connect directly with the old Hóngqiáo Airport sometime in the near (but uncertain) future, too.

Airport Buses There are many buses making transfers from **Pǔdōng** airport into town: Airport bus line no. 1 goes to Hóngqiáo Airport; airport bus line no. 2 (Jīchǎng Èr Xiàn) goes from Pǔdōng to the City Air-Terminal Building (Chéngshì Hángzhàn Lóu) at Nánjīng Xì Lù 1600 every 15 to 20 minutes, from 6am to 7pm, with taxis providing the final link to hotels. Bus no. 3 goes to

Zūnyì Lù (with a stop at the Renaissance Yangtze Hotel); and bus no. 5 goes to the Shànghǎi Railway Station. Fares range from ¥17 to ¥25 ($2–$3). Check at the airport bus counter in the arrivals hall for the number and schedule of the bus that stops at your hotel or at the one nearest it.

From **Hóngqiáo,** several buses also make the run into town. A CAAC shuttle, Mínháng Zhuānxiàn (Airport Special Line), goes to the Chéngshì Hángzhàn Lóu (City Air-Terminal Building) at Nánjīng Xīlù 1600, just west of the Shànghǎi Centre. Buses depart Hóngqiáo every 20 minutes from 6am to 8:30pm. The airport bus line no. 1 (Jīchǎng Yīxiàn) goes to Pǔdōng Airport (buses depart every 20 min. from 6am–9pm). Bus no. 941 goes to the railway station and bus no. 925 runs to People's Square (Rénmín Guǎngchǎng).

BY TRAIN

Shànghǎi Station (✆ **021/6354-3193** or 021/6317-9234) is massive but modern, and a counter dispenses tourist information in English. You will have to walk a block to the metro (follow the signs) or hail a taxi at the queues outside the terminal (unless your hotel has agreed to pick you up here or you are staying at the Holiday Inn Downtown, which is just a block south, across the shopping plaza). Four express trains (T13, T21, T103, T109) run every evening overnight from Běijīng Zhàn, arriving from 8am (13hr; ¥327/$40 hard sleeper; ¥499/$63 soft sleeper); there's a new two-bed class with private bathroom—inquire. The K100 arrives on alternate days from Hong Kong's Hung Hom Station at 3:54pm (25 hr.; HK$530/$69 hard sleeper, HK$825/$108 soft sleeper, HK$1,039/$135 deluxe soft sleeper—2 beds but no private bathroom). There are trains to and from every other major city in China, as far away as Ürümqi.

BY SHIP

There are regular international sailings from **Japan** to the International Passenger Terminal at Tàipíng Lù 1. Ships of the **Japan-China International Ferry Co (Chinajif)** line leave either Osaka or Kobe every Saturday, arriving in Shànghǎi about 48 hours later; they leave Shànghǎi for alternately Kobe or Osaka every Tuesday. See **www.fune.co.jp/chinjif/jikoku.html** for the schedule, and **www.fune.co.jp/chinjif/sennai.html** for pictures of the spotless ship interiors. The **Shànghǎi Ferry Co. Ltd.** has a weekly sailing from Osaka on Friday, and to Osaka on Tuesday; see **www.shanghai-ferry.co.jp** (in English). There's no more appropriate way to enter Shànghǎi, and the price is considerably less than the air fare, with berths costing the equivalent in yen or yuán of between $170 and $430. **Chinajif** tickets can be bought in Shànghǎi at the terminal or from travel agents (and from the CITS International Booking Office in the Běijīng International Hotel in Běijīng). Shànghǎi Ferry has an office at Room BCF 4F, The Panorama Shànghǎi, Huángpǔ Lù 53 (✆ **021/6537-5111;** fax 021/6537-9111; sfco@shanghai.cngb.com).

There are also sailings to Dàlián (36 hr.; every 4 days) departing from the **Gōngpíng Lù Passenger Terminal** at Gōngpíng Lù 50. Those bound for Chóngqìng (7 days, at 9am daily) and for Pǔtuó Shān leave from the **Shíliùpǔ Mǎtóu** (**Shíliùpǔ Wharf;** ✆ **021/6326-1261**) south of the Bund. Tickets can be bought at the respective terminals or at travel agencies such as CITS.

VISITOR INFORMATION

The official **Tourism Hotline** (✆ **021/6439-0630**) can be helpful, but even better is the 24-hour **Tourist Information Line** maintained by Spring Travel Service (✆ **021/6252-0000**). There's about a dozen **Travel Information**

Service Centers (TIC) in the city, and they appear to only sell tours and book hotels but, depending on who's behind the desk, you may get some guidance. The main office is at Zhōngshān Xī Lù 2525, Room 410 (✆ **021/6439-9806;** www.shanghaitour.net).

The best sources of **current information** about Shànghǎi events, shopping, restaurants, and nightlife are the free English-language newspapers and magazines distributed to hotels, shops, and cafes around town, such as *that's Shanghai, City Weekend,* and *Metro. Shanghai Daily* (www.shanghaidaily.com) provides the sanitized official view.

CITY LAYOUT

Shànghǎi, with one of the largest urban populations on Earth (13.3 million permanent residents, plus 3 million registered migrants), is divided by the Huángpǔ River into Shànghǎi East (Pǔdōng) and Shànghǎi West (Pǔxī). **Downtown Shànghǎi** occupies the west side of the river, but on the other side, to the east, there's a new Shànghǎi being built. Known as the **Pǔdōng New Area,** this eastward extension of old Shànghǎi into the new century is epitomized by its skyscraping monuments to modernism, from the Oriental Pearl TV Tower to the 88-story Jīn Mào Building, which houses the highest hotel in the world.

Shànghǎi's grid of streets and parks has long borne a Western imprint. Following the First Opium War in 1842, Shànghǎi became a Treaty Port, and the British, French, Germans, Americans, and other foreign powers occupied the city, establishing and remodeling their own concessions. Colonial Shànghǎi is especially visible downtown, along the western shore of the Huángpǔ River up and down the **Bund.**

For the visitor, the Bund is the center of the city, with downtown to the west. The Peace Hotel with its green pyramid dome marks the start of **Nánjīng Lù,** Shànghǎi's number-one shopping avenue, which runs due west from the Bund for several miles. Southwest of the Bund is the historic **Nánshì District,** Shànghǎi's Old Town. Thoroughly Chinese in appearance, rather than colonial, Old Town is the location of Yù Garden and the Húxīntíng Teahouse.

A mile or so west of the Bund and south of Nánjīng Lù, Shànghǎi's **French Concession** commences, another historic area with its own colonial architecture and attractions. Farther west still is the **Hóngqiáo Development Zone,** where modern commercial and industrial development was concentrated beginning in the 1980s. The Hóngqiáo area continues west past the Shànghǎi Zoo to the Hóngqiáo International Airport.

Between the French Concession and the Bund, just south of Huáihǎi Lù, is Shànghǎi's newest, most upscale, and trendiest neighborhood, a mega-development of top restaurants and shops known as **Xīntiāndì.**

While sightseeing is concentrated in downtown Shànghǎi and the French Concession, **north Shànghǎi** has a scattering of interesting sights, including the Jade Buddha Temple, the Lǔ Xùn Museum, and the Ohel Moshe Synagogue. **South Shànghǎi** has the Lónghuá Pagoda, the Shànghǎi Botanical Garden, and the cafes and shops of Héngshān Lù.

NEIGHBORHOODS IN BRIEF

The Shànghǎi municipality consists of 15 districts, 4 counties, and the Pǔdōng New Area, and covers an area of 6,341 sq. km (2,448 sq. miles), with its urban area measuring 2,643 sq. km (1,020 sq. miles). The 8 main urban districts, running from east to west, are identified here.

Pǔdōng The Pǔdōng New Area was formerly a backwater beginning on the east bank of the Huángpǔ River directly across from the Bund and downtown Shànghǎi. Rapid urbanization began in 1990.

Huángpǔ (Downtown Shànghǎi) The city center of old Shànghǎi lies in a compact sector west of the Huángpǔ River and south of Sūzhōu Creek. It extends west to Chéngdū Běi Lù (the North–South Elevated Highway) along Nánjīng Road and encompasses the Bund, People's Square, and the Shànghǎi Museum.

Nánshì (Old Town) Immediately south of downtown and the Bund, between the Huángpǔ River and Xīzàng Nán Lù, this area includes the old Chinese city, the Yù Garden, and the Confucian Temple.

Hóngkǒu (Northeast Shànghǎi) Immediately north of downtown Shànghǎi, across Sūzhōu Creek, this residential sector along the upper Huángpǔ River was part of the International Concession in colonial days.

Lúwān (French Concession) Beginning at People's Square (Xīzàng Lù) and continuing west to Shǎnxī (Shaanxi) Nán Lù, this was the domain of the French colonial community (up until 1949).

Jìng Ān (Northwest Shànghǎi) North of the French Concession, this district has its share of colonial architecture, Chinese temples, and the modern Shànghǎi Centre.

Xúhuì (Southwest Shànghǎi) West of the French Concession and south along Héngshān Lù, this is one of the city's top addresses for cafes, bars, and shops.

Chángníng (Hóngqiáo Development Zone) Starting at Huáihǎi Xī Lù, directly west of the Xúhuì and Jìngān districts, this corridor of new international economic ventures extends far west of downtown, past the Shànghǎi Zoo, to the Hóngqiáo Airport.

2 Getting Around

BY METRO

The Shànghǎi metro *(dìtiě)* is the fastest and cheapest way to cover longer distances: just ¥2, ¥3, or ¥4 (25¢, 35¢, or 50¢) per ride, depending on the number of stops. Operating from 5am to 11pm daily, the metro now has two lines. **Metro line 1,** the red line with 18 stops, winds in a roughly north–south direction beginning at the Shànghǎi Railway Station. Its central downtown stop is People's Square near Nánjīng Road West, which is where it connects with **metro line 2,** the green line, which runs east–west across downtown Shànghǎi. See the map on the inside back cover for all stops.

NAVIGATING THE METRO Using the metro is easy. Determine your fare by consulting the fare map posted in the metro station. Buy an electronic ticket at the ticket counter or at vending machines in the station, slip it into the slot at the gate, push through the gate, and retrieve your ticket as it pops up on your right. You'll need the ticket to check out of the metro, so hang onto it. Metro maps are posted in each station and over each door inside the metro cars.

Note: The new Light Rail, which currently circles the western outskirts of the city, is seldom useful for sightseeing, although it does stop near Lǔ Xùn Park, where the Metro lines do not extend.

BY TAXI

With over 40,000 taxis in the streets, this is the visitor's most common means of getting around Shànghǎi. Taxis congregate at leading hotels, but are better hailed from street corners. Your best bets for service and comfort are the turquoise-blue taxis of **Dà Zhōng Taxi** (✆ **021/6258-1688**), the yellow taxis of **Qiáng Shēng Taxi** (✆ **021/6258-0000**), and the green taxis of **Bāshì Taxi** (✆ **021/6445-8484**). Regardless of the company, the fare is ¥10 ($1.20) for the first 3km (1¾ miles), and ¥2 (25¢) for each additional kilometer. There's a 30% surcharge for trips after 11pm. Expect to pay about ¥20 to ¥35 ($2.40–$4.20) for most excursions in the city and up to ¥60 ($7.20) for longer cross-town jaunts.

BY BUS

Public buses *(gōng gòng qì chē)* charge ¥1 (15¢) per ride (¥2/25¢ if air-conditioned), but they are more difficult to use and less comfortable than taxis or the metro. Tickets are sold on board by a roving conductor. Be prepared to stand and be cramped during your expedition, and take care with backpacks and purses, as these are inviting targets for thieves.

BY BRIDGE, BOAT & TUNNEL

To shift the thousands of daily visitors between east and west Shànghǎi, there are six main routes. By bridge, the 3.7km (2⅓-mile) long **Nánpǔ Bridge,** the first to connect Pǔdōng to the city center, handles 45,000 vehicles a day, while the 7.7km (4¾-mile) long **Yángpǔ Bridge** handles some 50,000 a day; the bridge toll is ¥10 ($1.20). A third route (and the cheapest) is by water, via the **passenger ferry** favored by ordinary workers. The most popular ferry terminals are at the southern end of the Bund on the west shore (ticket price: ¥.80/10¢) and at the southern end of Riverside Avenue at Dōngchāng Lù on the east shore (no ticket required from Pǔdōng). Other ferry routes are marked on maps. Three more routes across the river make use of tunnels (¥15/$1.80 toll): **Yán'ān Dōng Lù Tunnel** is plied by motor vehicles; the new **metro line 2** is filled with German-made metro cars; and the very new **Bund Sight-Seeing Tunnel** is equipped with glassy tram cars that glide through a subterranean 3-minute light show with music and narrative. The Sight-Seeing Tunnel is open from 9am to 9:30pm and costs ¥20 ($2.40) one-way, children half-price.

FAST FACTS: Shànghǎi

If you don't find what you're looking for in these listings, try the **Tourist Hotline** (✆ **021/6252-0000**) or inquire at your hotel desk.

American Express Holders of an American Express card can make inquiries about currency exchange, emergency card replacement, personal check cashing, and 24-hour access to an ATM at Room 206, Shànghǎi Centre, Nánjīng Xī Lù 1376 (✆ **021/6279-8082;** fax 021/6279-7183). An American Express Cash Dispenser is installed near the office in Shànghǎi Centre. The office is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5:30pm. Tickets, bookings, and tours are not handled directly by American Express in their Shànghǎi office.

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs Convenient **Bank of China** locations for currency exchange and credit card cash withdrawals are located on the Bund at Zhōngshān Dōng Yī Lù 23 (✆ 021/6329-1979), at Nánjīng Xī

Lù1221 (✆ 021/6247-1700), at Yán'ān Xī Lù 2168 (✆ 021/6278-5060), at Huáihǎi Zhōng Lù 1207 (✆ 021/6437-8753), and at Hóngqiáo Lù 2550 (✆ 021/6268-8866). Bank hours are Monday to Friday from 9am to noon and 1 to 5pm, and Saturday from 9am to noon. There are also branches of **Hongkong and Shanghai Bank** at Suite 504, 5/F Shànghǎi Centre, Nánjīng Xī Lù 1376; and at G/F, HSBC Tower, Yīn Chéng Dōng Lù 101, Pǔdōng. Branches of **Citibank** are located at Marine Tower, Pǔdōng Dàjiē 1, and conveniently in the North Building of the Peace Hotel at Zhōngshān Dōng Yi[il] Lù 19. All have 24-hour **ATMs,** which accept many international cards.

Doctors & Dentists Hotels usually have in-house or on-call doctors, and some maintain small health clinics. The following medical clinics and hospitals specialize in treating foreigners and provide international-standard services. **World Link Medical and Dental Centers,** Suite 203, Shànghǎi Centre, Nánjīng Xī Lù 1376 (✆ **021/6279-7688**), and **Unit 30,** Mandarin City, Hóng Xǔ Lù 788, Hóngqiáo District (✆ **021/6405-5788**), have 24-hour emergency services, offer Western dental care, and maintain a website (www.worldlink-Shanghai.com); walk-in hours at both branches are from 9am to 7pm Monday through Friday, from 9am to 4pm Saturday, and from 9am to 3pm Sunday. The **Huá Shān Hospital,** Wūlǔmùqí Zhōng Lù 12, Jìng Ān District (✆ **021/6248-9999,** ext. 1921), has a special Foreigners' Clinic on the 19th floor.

Dental care for foreign visitors and expatriates is provided by **Dr. Harriet Jin's Dental Surgery,** Room 17C, Shēn Tōng Infoport Plaza, Huáihǎi Xī Lù 55 (✆ **021/5298-9799**), open from 9am to 6pm Monday through Friday, from 9am to 1pm Saturday. Dental care is also provided by the Canadian-managed **Sino-Canadian Shànghǎi Dental Medical Center** on the seventh floor of the Ninth People's Hospital, Zhìzàojú Lù 639 (✆ **021/6313-3174**), which is closed Sunday; and by **DDS Dental Care,** 2nd floor, Táojiāng Lù 1 (✆ **021/6466-0928;** www.ddsdentalcare.com). DDS Dental Care has multilingual Western-trained dentists, a lab, and a 24-hour emergency number (✆ **1301/288-1288**).

Embassies & Consulates The consulates of many countries are located in the French Concession and Jìng Ān districts several miles west of the city center. The consulates are open Monday through Friday only, and often close for lunch from noon to 1pm. The consulate of the **U.S.** is at Huáihǎi Zhōng Lù 1469 (✆ **021/6433-6880;** fax 021/6433-4122). The consulate of **Canada** is at Suite 668, West Tower, Shànghǎi Centre, Nánjīng Xī Lù 1376 (✆ **021/6279-8400;** fax 021/6279-8401). The consulate of **New Zealand** is at 15A Qǐhuá Tower, Huáihǎi Zhōng Lù 1375 (✆ **021/6471-1108;** fax 021/6431-0226). The consulate of **Australia** is at Nánjīng Xī Lù 1168 (✆ **021/5292-5500;** fax 021/5292-5511). The consulate of the **U.K**. is at Suite 301, Shànghǎi Centre, Nánjīng Xī Lù 1376 (✆ **021/6279-8400;** fax 021/6279-7651).

Hospitals See "Doctors & Dentists," above.

Internet Access Try the **Intercafe** on the second floor of **Shànghǎi City of Books,** Fúzhōu Lù 465 (✆ **021/6352-2222,** ext. 5209); it's open Monday to Thursday from 9:30am to 6:30pm; Friday to Sunday from 9:30am to 9pm. Intercafe charges ¥14 ($1.70) per hour. The **Shànghǎi Library,** Huáihǎi Zhōng Lù 1550 (✆ **021/6445-5555,** ext. 2001), has an Internet room on the ground floor of the library; its entrance is west of the library's main

entrance. Access is from 9am to 8:30pm, for ¥6 (70¢) per hour and it's always packed with Chinese students. There are a number of **dial-up** options, including **169.** Ask your hotel reception what's currently fastest.

Maps & Books Shànghǎi's book mega-mall is **Shànghǎi City of Books,** Fúzhōu Lù 465 (tel] **021/6352-2222;** metro: Hénán Zhōng Lù). The city's most charming coffeehouse-cum-bookstore is **Old China Hand Reading Room,** open from noon to midnight; it's at Shàoxīng Lù 27, Lúwān (✆ **021/6473-2526**). Take the metro to Shǎnxī (Shaanxi) Nán Lù.

Pharmacies The best outlet for Westerners is **Watson's Drug Store** at Huáihǎi Zhōng Lù 787–789 (✆ **021/6474-4775**). It's open from 9am to 10pm. Prescriptions can be filled at the **World Link Medical Center,** Suite 203, Shànghǎi Centre, Nánjīng Xī Lù 1376 (✆ **021/6279-7688**).

Post Office The main international post office, Běi Sūzhōu Lù 276 (✆ **021/6324-0069**), is at the intersection of Sìchuān Běi Lù, in downtown Shànghǎi just north of Sūzhōu Creek. It's open from 7am to 10pm. To send international parcels, go around the corner to Tiāntóng Lù 395.

Taxes Most hotels levy a 15% tax package on rooms (including a city tax), and many restaurants and bars add a 15% service charge to bills. There is no sales tax.

Taxis See "Getting Around," earlier in this chapter.

Visa Extensions The **PSB** office for visa extensions is at Wúsōng Lù 333, north of the Bund (✆ **021/6321-1997**).

Weather Shànghǎi's weather number is ✆ **121.**

3 Where to Stay

With so many international chains and new luxury hotels, Shànghǎi offers excellent accommodations, but few bargains. The room rates listed are rack rates, but you'll be able to negotiate much better rates in person. Prices do not include a service charge of 15% per night and a city development tax of ¥8 to ¥17 ($1–$2) per night. All rooms have TVs with foreign channels unless otherwise noted.

HUÁNGPǓ (DOWNTOWN)

VERY EXPENSIVE

The Westin Shànghǎi (Shànghǎi Wēi Sī Tīng Dàfàndiàn) ★★ *Kids*

Downtown's newest and most stunning hotel, the 26-story Westin tower brings modern five-star luxury to the Bund side of the river. The large guest rooms show Westin at its best, with its patented Heavenly Beds, plush furnishings, large work desks, high-speed Internet access, and deluxe bathrooms that include separate shower stall with two heads. The Westin Kids Club has an adjoining outdoor terrace and paddle pool. All rooms have interesting views, with those looking eastward to the river and the Bund especially attractive at night.

Bund Center, Hénán Zhōng Lù 88 (3 blocks west of the Huángpǔ River). ✆ **88/WESTIN-1** or 021/6335-1888. Fax 021/6335-2888. www.westin.com. 301 units. ¥2,075 ($250) standard room; from ¥2,490 ($300) suite. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Hénán Zhōng Lù. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; deli; 2 lounges; indoor/outdoor pool; state-of-the-art health club and spa with Jacuzzi and sauna; children's programs; concierge; tour desk; 24-hr. business center; salon; 24-hr. room service; in-room massage; babysitting; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

EXPENSIVE

Peace Hotel (Héping Fàndiàn) ★ The best of Shànghǎi's historic hotels—known in its heyday as the Cathay Hotel—the Peace was built in 1929. The lobby is an Art Deco masterpiece. The rooms are spacious, with large closets and high ceilings; some retain their old furnishings, but most have been modernized. The public areas are splendid and romantic, the location on Nánjīng Road and the Bund is tops, but the amenities and service barely rise to the four-star level (even though the hotel is rated 5 stars).

Nánjīng Dōng Lù 20 (on the Bund). ✆ **021/6321-6888.** Fax 021/6329-0300. www.shanghaipeacehotel.com. 279 units. ¥1,330–¥1,825 ($160–$220) standard room. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Hénán Zhōng Lù. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 lounges (jazz bar, rooftop bar); tiny health club with sauna; game room; concierge; tour desk; small business center; salon; 24-hr. room service; massage; babysitting; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; non-smoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

Sofitel Hyland Hotel (Hǎilún Bīnguǎn) ★★ This Accor-managed 30-story tower in the heart of the pedestrian sector of Nánjīng Road has a superb downtown location. The rooms, renovated in 1998, are quite small. Entrance from Nánjīng Road is via stairs and an elevator to the second-floor lobby. There's a European, even French feel to the hotel. Service is efficient, if brusque at times.

Nánjīng Dōng Lù 505 (on Nánjīng Rd. Pedestrian Mall). ✆ **800/221-4542** or 021/6351-5888. Fax 021/6351-4088. www.accorhotels.com. 400 units. ¥1,575 ($190) standard room. Children under 12 stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Hénán Zhōng Lù. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; deli; 2 lounges; health club with Jacuzzi and sauna; bike rental; concierge; tour desk; 24-hr. business center; salon; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

INEXPENSIVE

YMCA Hotel (Qīngnián Huì Bīnguǎn) ★ *Value* This historic brick building really was the YMCA in colonial times; now it's one of the best budget hotels in the city. The lobby, a few steps down from the street, sparkles, although the rooms, while modernized, are drab and not well maintained. Each room comes with a small TV on the desk, a coffee table with two chairs, and a thermos of hot water. Dorm rooms, each with two wooden bunks, have shared bathroom facilities.

Xīzàng Nán Lù 123 (on Tibet Rd., south of People's Park, north of Huáihǎi Zhōng Lù). ✆ **021/6326-1040.** Fax 021/6320-1957. www.ymcahotel.com. 150 units. ¥125 ($15) dorm room (per person); ¥531–¥565 ($64–$68) standard room; ¥680 ($82) executive room; ¥1,204–¥2,490 ($145–$300) suite (with 10% rather than 15% service charge). Children under 12 stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: People's Square. **Amenities:** Restaurant; cafe; karaoke rooms; health club; game room; small business center; salon; 24-hr. room service; in-room massage; next-day dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar.

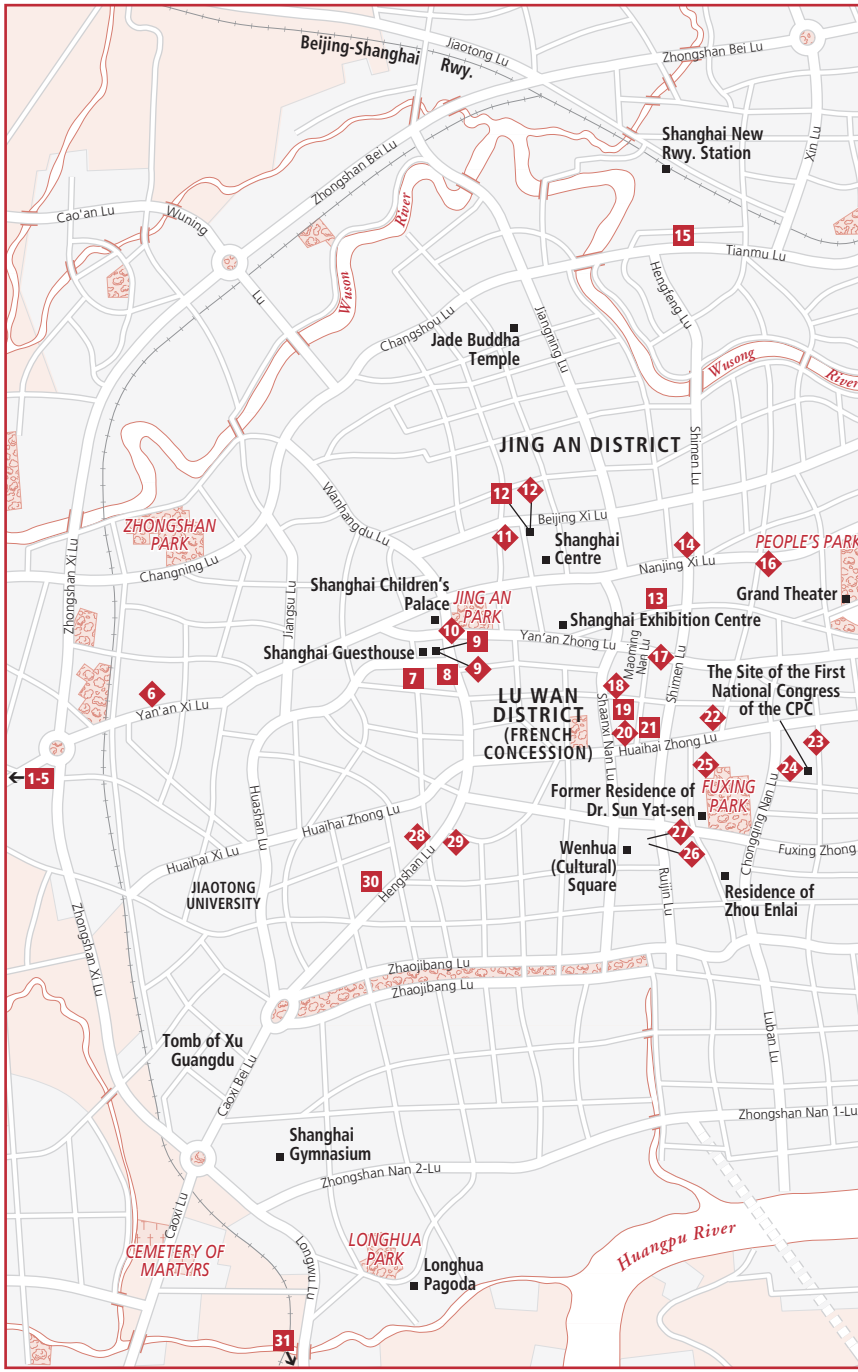
LÚWĀN DISTRICT (FRENCH CONCESSION)

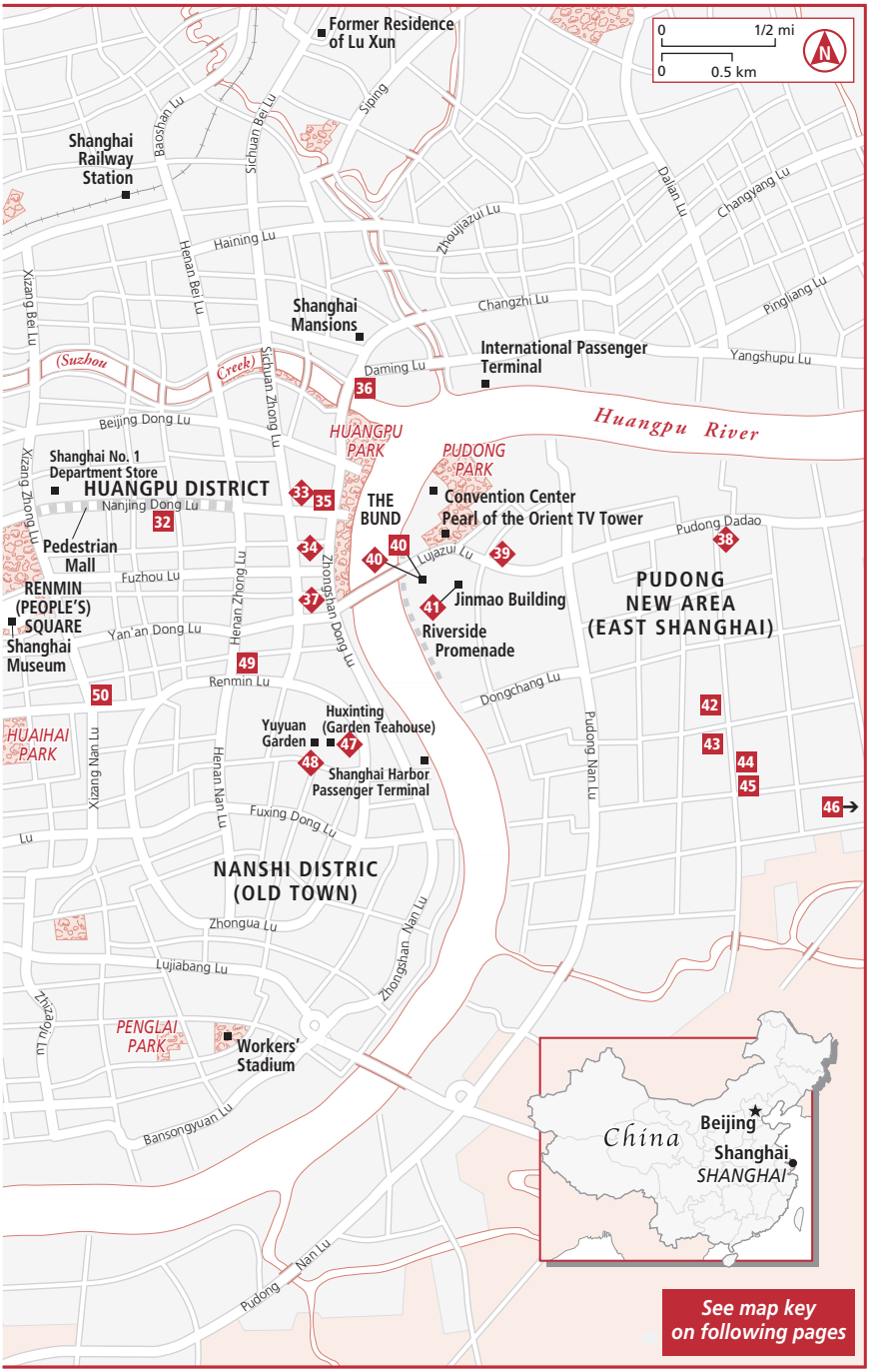
VERY EXPENSIVE

Okura Garden Hotel Shànghǎi (Huā Yuán Fàndiàn) ★★ Built in 1990 on the site of the 1920s French Club and Cercle Sportif, the Okura Garden Hotel has preserved the Art Deco features of the original structure in its west lobby and ballroom, as well as the old garden to the south. This Japanese-managed, 34-story tower, impeccably maintained and elegant throughout, is favored by Japanese visitors. The rooms, renovated in 1998, are of average size, with white marble bathrooms that contain phones and potable tap water.

Màomíng Nán Lù 58 (1 block north of Huáihǎi Zhōng Lù). ✆ **212/755-0733** or 021/6415-1111. Fax 021/6415-8866. www.gardenhotelShanghai.com. 500 units. ¥2,240 ($270) standard room; ¥2,820 ($340) executive level. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Shǎnxī Nán Lù. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; cafe; 3 bars; 25m/82-ft. swimming pool; 2 lighted outdoor tennis courts; health club with Jacuzzi and sauna; concierge; tour desk; business center; salon; 24-hr. room service; in-room massage; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, hot-water maker, hair dryer, safe.

Shànghǎi Accommodations & Dining




Former Residence of Lu Xun
0 1/2 mi
0 0.5 km
N
Shanghai Railway Station
Baoshan Lu
Sichuan Bei Lu
Siping
Dalian Lu
Changyang Lu
Haining Lu
Zhoujiazui Lu
Henan Bei Lu
Xizang Bei Lu
Shanghai Mansions
Changzhi Lu
Pingliang Lu
(Suzhou Creek)
Sichuan Zhong Lu
Daming Lu
International Passenger Terminal
Yangshupu Lu
36
Huangpu River
Beijing Dong Lu
HUANGPU PARK
PUDONG PARK
Shanghai No. 1 Department Store
Xizang Zhong Lu
HUANGPU DISTRICT
Nanjing Dong Lu
33
35
THE BUND
Convention Center
Pearl of the Orient TV Tower
Pudong Dadao
32
34
40
40
39
38
Pedestrian Mall
Fuzhou Lu
Zhongshan Dong Lu
Lujazui Lu
PUDONG NEW AREA (EAST SHANGHAI)
RENMIN (PEOPLE'S) SQUARE
37
Jinmao Building
41
Yan'an Dong Lu
Henan Zhong Lu
Riverside Promenade
Shanghai Museum
49
Renmin Lu
Dongchang Lu
50
42
Huxinting (Garden Teahouse)
HUAIHAI PARK
Yuyuan Garden
47
43
Xizang Nan Lu
48
44
Shanghai Harbor Passenger Terminal
Henan Nan Lu
45
Fuxing Dong Lu
Pudong Nan Lu
46
Lu
NANSHI DISTRIC (OLD TOWN)
Zhongua Lu
Zhongshan Nan Lu
Lujiabang Lu
Renmin Dadao Lu
PENGLAI PARK
Workers' Stadium
Bansongyuan Lu
China
Beijing
Shanghai
SHANGHAI
Pudong Nan Lu
See map key on following pages

Shànghǎi Accommodations & Dining Key

ACCOMMODATIONS

Courtyard by Marriott **43**
(Qí Lǔ Wàn Yí Dà Jiǔdiàn)
齐鲁万怡大酒店

Four Seasons Hotel Shànghǎi **13**
(Shànghǎi Sìjì Jiǔdiàn)
上海四季酒店

Grand Hyatt **41**
(Jīn Mào Kǎi Yuè Dàjiǔdiàn)
上海金茂凯悦大酒店

Hilton Hotel **9**
(Jìngān Xīěrdùn Dàjiǔdiàn)
静安希尔顿酒店

Holiday Inn Downtown Shànghǎi **15**
(Shànghǎi Guǎngchǎng Chángchéng Jiàrì Jiǔdiàn)
上海广场长城假日酒店

Holiday Inn Pǔdōng **45**
(Pǔdōng Jiàrì Fàndiàn)
浦东假日酒店

Hotel Equatorial (Guì Dū Dà Fàndiàn) **8**
国际贵都大酒店

Hotel Inter-Continental Pǔdōng Shànghǎi **42**
(Xīnyǎ Tāngchén Zhōujì Dàjiǔdiàn)
上海新亚汤臣洲际大酒店

Jǐn Jiāng Fàndiàn **21**
新锦江大酒店

Okura Garden Hotel Shànghǎi **19**
(Huā Yuán Fàndiàn)
花园饭店(上海)

Peace Hotel (Hépíng Fàndiàn) **35**
和平饭店

Portman Ritz-Carlton Hotel **12**
(Bōtèmàn Dàjiǔdiàn)
上海波特曼丽斯卡尔顿酒店

Pǔdōng Shangri-La Hotel **40**
(Pǔdōng Xiānggé Lǐlā Fàndiàn)
浦东香格里拉大酒店

The Pǔjiāng Hotel (Pǔjiāng Fàndiàn) **36**
浦江饭店

Ramada Plaza Pǔdōng **46**
(Shànghǎi Pǔdōng Huáměidá Dàjiǔdiàn)
南新雅大酒店

Regal International East Asia Hotel **30**
(Fù Háo Huán Qiú Dōng Yà Jiǔdiàn)
富豪环球东亚酒店

Renaissance Yangtze Shànghǎi Hotel **2**
(Yángzǐ Jiāng Dà Jiǔdiàn)
扬子江万丽大酒店

Shànghǎi Bīnguǎn **7**
上海宾馆

Shànghǎi International Airport Hotel **3**
(Guójì Jīchǎng Bīnguǎn)
上海国际机场宾馆

Shànghǎi Marriott Hotel Hóngqiáo **4**
(Fàndiàn)
上海万豪虹桥大酒店

Sheraton Grand Tài Píng Yáng **1**
(Xī Lái Dēng Háo Dá Tài Píng Yáng Dà Fàndiàn)
喜来登豪达太平洋大饭店

Sofitel Hyland Hotel **32**
(Hǎilún Bīnguǎn)
海仑宾馆

St. Regis Shànghǎi **44**
(Ruì Jí Hóng Tǎ Dà Jiǔdiàn)
上海瑞吉红塔大酒店

The Westin Shànghǎi **49**
(Shànghǎi Wēi Sī Tīng Dàfàndiàn)
上海威斯汀大饭店

YMCA Hotel **50**
(Qīngnián Huì Bīnguǎn)
青年会宾馆

Yuán Lín Bīnguǎn **31**

DINING ◆

Art 50 **38**
旋宫

Bali Laguna **10**
巴厘岛

Café Studio **17**
N/A

Canton **41**
粤珍轩

Da Vinci's **9**
达芬奇餐厅

The Door **5**
乾门西餐音乐酒吧

Dynasty **2**
扬子江饭店

Gino Café **33**
季偌

Giovanni's **1**
太平扬大饭店

Gōngdélín **16**
功德林

Hànkǒu 50 **34**
隆合美食有限公司

Harn Sheh **28**
寒舍泡沫红茶坊

Hazara **26**
阿萨拉

Irene's Thai **11**
泰国餐厅

JJ Mariachi **18**
锦江玛雅西音乐餐厅

Lan Kwai Fong at Park 97 **25**
97复兴公园

Lan Na 27
兰纳泰国餐厅

Lǜ Bō Láng 48
绿波廊

Lùlù 39
鹭鹭酒家

Méilóngzhèn 14
梅陇镇酒家

M on the Bund 37
米氏西餐厅

Sasha's 29
萨莎西餐厅

Shāng Palace 40
香宫

Sōng Yuè Lóu 47
松月楼

Summer Pavilion 12
夏苑

Sumo Sushi 22
缘禄寿司

Tandoor 20
印度餐厅

Tiffin 23
人文美学素食咖啡馆

1221 6
1221饭店

Xīntiāndì Restaurant Mall 24
新天地

EXPENSIVE

Jīn Jiāng Fàndiàn ★ The most famous hotel in the French Concession, the Jīn Jiāng Hotel opened its doors in 1929 as the Cathay Mansions. It is remembered as the location of the signing of the Shànghǎi Communiqué by then-U.S. President Nixon in 1972, re-establishing U.S.–China relations. The complex includes three major edifices: the 1929 North Building, now called Castle Mansions, remodeled as a five-star hotel; the central Grosvenor House, with its facade an imitation of the Barclay–Vessey Building in New York City, recently redone as a five-star all-suite deluxe hotel; and the old South Building, an aging three-star facility with worn guest rooms at ¥830 ($100) per night.

Màomíng Nán Lù 59 (1 block north of Huáihǎi Zhōng Lù). ✆ **021/6258-2582.** Fax 021/6472-5588. www.jinjianghotelshanghai.com. 515 units. ¥1,495–¥2,075 ($180–$250) standard room (North Building). AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Shǎnxī Nán Lù. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; food street; 20m/66-ft. indoor swimming pool; 6-lane bowling alley; health club with Jacuzzi and sauna; concierge; tour desk; business center; shopping street; salon; 24-hr. room service; massage; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; nonsmoking rooms; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

JÌNG ĀN DISTRICT (NORTHWEST SHÀNGHǍI)

VERY EXPENSIVE

Four Seasons Hotel Shànghǎi (Shànghǎi Sìjì Jiǔdiàn) ★★ A stunning new addition (2002) to Shànghǎi's luxury hotel scene, the 37-story Four Seasons emphasizes highly efficient, intimate service. Each guest room is lavishly furnished; all bathrooms are paved in marble and feature separate showers and tubs. Butler service is provided for each guest on a 24-hour basis. Best rooms for the dollar are the Four Seasons rooms, which are small suites nearly twice the size of deluxe standard rooms (but only $30 more). Nánjīng Road is a 5-minute walk away, the Shànghǎi Museum a 10-minute stroll.

Wēihǎi Lù 500 (at Shímén Yī Lù, between Nánjīng Xī Lù and Yán'ān Zhōng Lù). ✆ **800/819-5053** or 021/6256-8888. Fax 021/6256-5678. www.fourseasons.com. 443 units. ¥2,575–¥2,820 ($310–$340) standard room; from ¥3,237 ($390) suite; ¥580 ($70) extra for executive lounge benefits. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Shímén Yī Lù. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; lounge; jazz bar; 20m/66-ft. indoor pool; state-of-the-art health club and spa with Jacuzzi and sauna; concierge; 24-hr. business center; salon; 24-hr. room service; massage; babysitting; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; executive-level rooms, butler service. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

Hilton Hotel (Jìngān Xīěrdùn Dàjiǔdiàn) ★★★ *Value* Shànghǎi's first foreign-owned hotel (1987), the Hilton still rates among the very best of the city's hotels, and it's a favorite of Western business travelers. The services are top-notch; the competent staff takes the initiative when needed. Guest rooms, renovated in 1997, are spacious and bright.

Huáshān Lù 250 (1 block south of Yán'ān Zhōng Lù). ✆ **800/445-8667** or 021/6248-0000. Fax 021/6248-3848. www.hilton.com. 772 units. ¥2,075–¥2,240 ($250–$270) standard room. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Jìng Ān Temple. **Amenities:** 5 restaurants; deli; 2 lounges; large indoor swimming pool; outdoor tennis court; outdoor squash court; state-of-the-art health club and spa with Jacuzzi and sauna; concierge; 24-hr. business center; 24-hr. room service; massage; babysitting; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; nonsmoking rooms; executive-level rooms; medical clinic. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

Portman Ritz-Carlton Hotel (Bōtèmàn Dàjiǔdiàn) ★★★ One of Shànghǎi's top hotels, the Portman is tenaciously guarding its position with a $30-million renovation (2000). Located within Shànghǎi Centre, the 50-story hotel has direct access to numerous airline offices, a supermarket, a medical clinic, Shànghǎi's most upscale boutiques, and the city's top business center. To top it off, the rooms are large and the service is at a truly international level.

Nánjīng Xī Lù 1376 (Shànghǎi Centre). ✆ **800/241-3333** or 021/6279-8888. Fax 021/6279-8800. www.ritzcarlton.com. 564 units. ¥2,075 ($250) standard room. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Jìng Ān Temple. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; 2 lounges; indoor/outdoor 20m/66-ft. swimming pool; indoor tennis court; 2 indoor squash courts; indoor racquetball court; 3-story health club; Jacuzzi; sauna; concierge; 24-hr. business center; shopping arcade; grocery; salon; 24-hr. room service; in-room massage; babysitting; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; rooms for travelers with disabilities; nonsmoking rooms; executive-level rooms; World Link Medical Center. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

EXPENSIVE

Hotel Equatorial (Guì Dū Dà Fàndiàn) ★★ This four-star hotel, located just north of the Hilton, has many of the facilities of a five-star lodging. Guest rooms, renovated in 1998, are bright and airy, with just enough room in each for a work desk, coffee table, and two chairs. The English-speaking staff is very helpful.

Yán'ān Xī Lù 65 (south of Jìng Ān Temple, Nánjīng Rd. W.). ✆ **021/6248-1688.** Fax 021/6248-1773. www.equatorial.com. 509 units. ¥1,743 ($210) standard room; ¥1,992 ($240) executive floor. Children 18 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Jìng Ān Temple. **Amenities:** 5 restaurants; deli; 2 lounges; indoor swimming pool; lighted outdoor tennis court; squash court; bowling alley; health club with Jacuzzi and sauna; game room; concierge; tour desk; business center; shopping arcade; salon; 24-hr. room service; massage; babysitting; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; nonsmoking rooms; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

INEXPENSIVE

Shànghǎi Bīnguǎn Remodeled from 1999 to 2000, this 30-story tower is now under local management. Most guests are Chinese, but the staff can handle foreigners as well. For a hotel rated at just three stars, it has some nice touches, if few extra facilities. Guest rooms are fully modernized.

Wūlǔmùqí Běi Lú 505 (west of the Hilton, south of Yán'ān Zhōng Lù). ✆ **021/6248-0088.** Fax 021/6248-1056. 540 units. ¥747 ($90) standard room. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Jìng Ān Temple. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; small health club with Jacuzzi and sauna; tour desk; business center; shopping arcade; 24-hr. room service; next-day dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hot pot, hair dryer.

CHÁNGNÍNG (HÓNGQIÁO DEVELOPMENT ZONE)

VERY EXPENSIVE

Sheraton Grand Tài Píng Yáng (Xī Lái Dēng Háo Dá Tài Píng Yáng Dà Fàndiàn) ★★★ This is the best hotel in a cluster of good hotels in the heart of the Hóngqiáo Development Zone (halfway between the old airport and downtown). Business travelers love it for the highly efficient service and the lush yet homey atmosphere. Americans and other Westerners make up the majority of guests. The standard rooms, renovated in 1999, are decorated rather like plush B&B rooms.

Zūnyì Nán Lù 5 (1 block north of Yán'ān Xī Lù). ✆ **800/325-3535** or 021/6275-8888. Fax 021/6275-5420. www.sheratongrand-shanghai.com. 496 units. ¥1,909–¥2,324 ($230–$280) standard room; ¥2,614 ($315) executive-level standard room; from ¥3,884 ($468) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. No metro station. **Amenities:** 5 restaurants; deli; 3 lounges; indoor swimming pool; health club with Jacuzzi and sauna; game room; concierge; business center; salon; 24-hr. room service; massage; babysitting; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; rooms for travelers with disabilities; nonsmoking rooms; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, iron, safe.

EXPENSIVE

Renaissance Yangtze Shànghǎi Hotel (Yángzǐ Jiāng Dà Jiǔdiàn) ★★ Under new management since 2001, this is the first Renaissance hotel on mainland China. The decade-old, four-star tower is poised to go head-to-head with its rival next door, the five-star Sheraton Grand Tài Píng Yáng. A massive refurbishment of guest rooms is designed to raise the hotel to full five-star status.

Rooms that were once small and plain are now larger, brighter, and better stocked with fine amenities, including work desks with desktop-level controls.

Yán'ān Xī Lù. 2099 ✆ **800/228-9290** or 021/6275-0000. Fax 021/6275-0750. www.renaissancehotels.com. 544 units. ¥1,535 ($185) standard room; ¥2,116 ($255) executive floor; from ¥2,905 ($350) suite. Children under 12 stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. No metro station. **Amenities:** 5 restaurants; deli; lounge; small outdoor swimming pool; health club with Jacuzzi and sauna; concierge; tour desk; business center; salon; 24-hr. room service; in-room massage; babysitting; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

XÚHUÌ (SOUTHWEST SHÀNGHǍI)

EXPENSIVE

Regal International East Asia Hotel (Fù Háo Huán Qiú Dōng Yà Jiǔdiàn) ★★ The best luxury hotel in the district, the Regal has all the trappings of a grand hotel, from its expansive white marble lobby to superb fitness facilities. This 22-story hotel, managed by an international team, has bright, modern guest rooms with all the amenities of a five-star establishment. Its Shànghǎi International Tennis Center offers Shànghǎi's best facilities.

Héngshān Lù. 516 ✆ **800/222-8888** or 021/6415-5588. Fax 021/6445-8899. www.regal-eastasia.com. 300 units. ¥1,825 ($220) standard room; ¥2,240 ($270) executive level. Children under 12 stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Héngshān Lù. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; lounge; 25m/82-ft. indoor pool; simulated golf machine; 10 championship tennis courts; indoor squash court; 12-lane bowling alley; extensive health club and spa with Jacuzzi and sauna; game room; concierge; tour desk; business center; salon; 24-hr. room service; massage; babysitting; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; nonsmoking rooms; 4 executive-level floors. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

MODERATE

Yuán Lín Bīnguǎn ★ *Value* Perhaps because it is so far south of the city, this suburban hotel is the best value for the money among the few three-star international hotels in Shànghǎi. Its facilities (although aging) and its staff are those of a good four-star hotel, but at lower prices. The guest rooms in the six-story main building are small, plain, and basic, but modern and clean. A free downtown shuttle connects to the nearest metro station.

Bǎisè Lù 201 (next to Shànghǎi Botanical Garden, west off Lóngwú Lù). ✆ **800/221-4542** or 021/5436-1688. Fax 021/6470-0008. 324 units. ¥996–¥1,162 ($120–$140) standard room. Children under 12 stay free in parent's room. AE, MC, V. No metro. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 bars; indoor lap pool; 2 outdoor tennis courts; health club with sauna; game room; concierge; tour desk; business center; salon; 24-hr. room service; babysitting; next-day dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

HÓNGKǑU DISTRICT (NORTHEAST SHÀNGHǍI)

MODERATE

Holiday Inn Downtown Shànghǎi (Shànghǎi Guǎngchǎng Chángchéng Jiàrì Jiǔdiàn) ★ *Value* One of the best deals in Shànghǎi, the Holiday Inn Downtown is new (2001), very close to the metro, and virtually undiscovered. Its facilities are those of a four-star hotel, although the service is not always of international caliber. Room rates are virtually the same at the Plaza Wing (east side) and Great Wall Wing (west side), although the Plaza Wing is quieter and slightly more upscale.

Héngfēng Lù 585 (south side of Shànghǎi Railway Station). ✆ **800/465-4329** or 021/6353-8008. Fax 021/6354-3019. www.sixcontinentshotels.com. 481 units. ¥830 ($100) standard room; ¥1,204–¥1,495 ($145–$180) executive level. Children under 19 stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Shànghǎi Railway Station. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; 2 lounges; bowling alley; health club with sauna; game room; concierge; 24-hr. business center; salon; 24-hr. room service; massage; babysitting; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; rooms for travelers with disabilities; nonsmoking rooms; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

INEXPENSIVE

The Pǔjiāng Hotel (Pǔjiāng Fàndiàn), Huángpǔ Lù 15 (northeast side of Sūzhōu Creek, north of the Bund; ✆ **021/6324-6388;** fax 021/6324-3179), with interiors reminiscent of a ruined mansion, is a favorite of backpackers. Guest rooms, including some standard rooms with basic modern bathrooms, have seemingly ducked real maintenance for decades (¥332/$40 standard room; ¥58/$7 dorm).

PǓDŌNG (EAST OF RIVER)

VERY EXPENSIVE

Grand Hyatt (Jīn Mào Kǎi Yuè Dàjiǔdiàn) ★★★ Currently the world's tallest, running from the 54th to the 88th floors of the Jīn Mào Tower, the Grand Hyatt is an ultraluxurious hotel with some of the city's highest-priced rooms. The views of the Bund just across the river are astonishing, as are the guest rooms, which combine Art Deco and traditional Chinese motifs with high-tech designs.

Shìjì Dà Dào 88 (Century Blvd.), 54th floor, Jīn Mào Tower (southeast of the Oriental Pearl TV Tower). ✆ **800/233-1234** or 021/5049-1234. Fax 021/5049-1111. www.hyatt.com. 555 units. ¥2,656–¥2,780 ($320–$335) standard room; ¥3,029–¥3,154 ($365–$380) executive-level rooms; from ¥4,233 ($510) for suites. Children under 12 stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Lùjiāzuǐ. **Amenities:** 6 restaurants; food pavilion; 2 lounges; nightclub; indoor "skypool" (world's highest swimming pool); health club with Jacuzzi and sauna; concierge; tour desk; 24-hr. business center; salon; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; butlers; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

Hotel Inter-Continental Pǔdōng Shànghǎi (Xīnyǎ Tāngchén Zhōujì Dàjiǔdiàn) ★★ Formerly known as the New Asia Tomson Hotel, Pǔdōng's first international five-star hotel (1996), this property was taken over by Inter-Continental in 2002 and given an extensive remodeling. The large, elegant rooms encircle a 21-story atrium with its own interior garden. All guest rooms contain separate showers and bathtubs. The facilities are excellent; the service (as yet unproven) is expected to be so, too.

Zhāngyáng Lù 777 (at intersection of Dōngfāng Lù, in the heart of downtown Pǔdōng). ✆ **800/327-0200** or 021/5831-8888. Fax 021/5831-7777. www.interconti.com. 400 units. ¥2,282–¥2,465 ($275–$297) standard room; ¥3,012 ($363) executive floor; from ¥3,286 ($396) suite. Children under 18 stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Dōngfāng Lù. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; 2 lounges; indoor pool; nearby golf course; 24-hr. health club with Jacuzzi and sauna; game room; concierge; tour desk; 24-hr. business center; salon; 24-hr. room service; massage; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

Pǔdōng Shangri-La Hotel (Pǔdōng Xiānggé Lǐlā Fàndiàn) ★★★ With the best location in Pǔdōng and a marvelous view of the Bund across the river, especially at night, the five-star Shangri-La, which opened in 1998, couldn't be more convenient. It is also quite luxurious, with some of the most spacious rooms in the city.

Fùchéng Lù 33 (southwest of the Pearl of the Orient TV Tower, adjacent to Riverside Ave. on the Huángpǔ River). ✆ **800/942-5050** or 021/6882-8888. Fax 021/6882-6688. www.shangri-la.com. 612 units. ¥2,575–¥2,820 ($310–$340) standard room; ¥2,988–¥3,154 ($360–$380) executive level; from ¥4,316 ($520) suite. Children under 18 stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Lùjiāzuǐ. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; deli; lounge; nightclub; indoor lap pool; tennis court; fine health club with Jacuzzi and sauna; concierge; tour desk; large business center; 24-hr. room service; massage; babysitting; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, fridge, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

St. Regis Shànghǎi (Ruì Jí Hóng Tǎ Dà Jiǔdiàn) ★★ Only the second St. Regis to open in China, the Shànghǎi version is the last word in luxury, with every guest served by a butler. Standard rooms, the largest in the city (48 sq.m/157 sq. ft.), are equipped with oval writing desks, high-speed Internet access,

and "pillow-top" mattresses. The butler service is British in style and training; the butlers function as personal concierges and housekeepers.

Dōngfāng Lù 889 (south central Pǔdōng). ✆ **800/325-3589** or 021/5050-4567. Fax 021/6875-6789. www.stregis.com. 318 units. ¥2,656 ($320) standard room; from ¥3,071 ($370) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Dōngfāng Lù. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; 2 lounges; indoor pool; tennis court; state-of-the-art health club and full-service spa with Jacuzzi and sauna; game room; concierge; tour desk; business center; salon; 24-hr. room service; massage; babysitting; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; 24-hr. butler service; 1 room for travelers with disabilities. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

EXPENSIVE

Holiday Inn Pǔdōng (Pǔdōng Jiàrì Fàndiàn) ★ *Value* This fairly new 32-story, four-star Holiday Inn is thoroughly Western. The guest rooms are quite spacious and bright, each with nice bird's-eye maple furniture and a work desk. The white tile bathrooms are spotless. Many of the guests are Westerners, most doing business in Pǔdōng, but with the opening of a metro station within walking distance, the Holiday Inn now appeals to tourists, too.

Dōngfāng Lù 899 (south central Pǔdōng). ✆ **800/465-4329** or 021/5830-6666. Fax 021/5830-5555. www.sixcontinentshotels.com. 320 units. ¥1,494 ($180) standard room; ¥1,992 ($240) executive level; from ¥2,158 ($260) suite. Children under 12 stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Dōngfāng Lù. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; deli; pub; bar; outdoor heated pool; large health club with Jacuzzi and sauna; game room; concierge; tour desk; business center; salon; 24-hr. room service; in-room massage; babysitting; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; rooms for travelers with disabilities; nonsmoking rooms; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

MODERATE

Courtyard by Marriott (Qí Lǔ Wàn Yí Dà Jiǔdiàn) ★ *Finds* Opened in 2002, the Courtyard is a small, modern hotel catering to business travelers, most of whom are Asian. The comfortable rooms are of average size, each with space for a work desk. The metro is just 2 blocks away, meaning a nonbusiness traveler can stay here comfortably, especially if a bargain room rate is secured through Marriott reservations ahead of time.

Dōngfāng Lù 838 (off Dōngfāng Lù on Wéifāng Lù). ✆ **800/228-9290,** 800/321-2211, or 021/6886-7886. Fax 021/6886-7889. www.courtyard.com. 218 units. ¥996–¥1,495 ($120–$180) standard room. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Dōngfāng Lù. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; lounge; fitness center with sauna; concierge; business center; salon; 24-hr. room service; babysitting; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

NEAR THE AIRPORTS

VERY EXPENSIVE

Shànghǎi Marriott Hotel Hóngqiáo (Fàndiàn) ★ After a year in operation, this grand eight-story Marriott was awarded official five-star status in 2002. It appeals to upscale conference delegates and travelers whose business takes them to western Shànghǎi. The guest rooms are large and gracefully appointed, making this the top hotel address near the Hóngqiáo Airport.

Hóngqiáo Lù 2270 (6km/4 miles west of Hóngqiáo Airport). ✆ **800/228-9290** or 021/6237-6000. Fax 021/6237-6275 or 021/6237-6222. www.marriott.com. 316 units. ¥1,909 ($230) standard room; ¥2,490 ($300) executive level. AE, DC, MC, V. No metro. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; deli; lounge; sports bar; indoor pool; outdoor tennis court; health club with Jacuzzi and sauna; concierge; business center; salon; 24-hr. room service; massage; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

EXPENSIVE

Ramada Plaza Pǔdōng (Shànghǎi Pǔdōng Huáměidá Dàjiǔdiàn) The nearest major hotel to the new Pǔdōng International Airport, the Ramada offers

reliable facilities and a helpful staff. Rooms are contemporary, clean, and equipped with work desks.

Xīnqiáo Lù 18 (19km/12 miles west of Pǔdōng International Airport in the Jīnqiáo Export Processing Zone). ✆ **800/854-7854** or 021/5055-4666. Fax 021/5032-8999 or 021/5032-3322. www.ramadahotels.com. 269 units. ¥1,370–¥1,453 ($165–$175) standard room; ¥1,868 ($225) suite. Children under 12 stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. No metro. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; deli; bar; indoor swimming pool; tennis court; health club with Jacuzzi and sauna; game room; concierge; business center; salon; 24-hr. room service; massage; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV/VCR, dataport, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

MODERATE

Shànghǎi International Airport Hotel (Guójì Jīchǎng Bīnguǎn) *Value*
The nearest major hotel to the Hóngqiáo Airport, this eight-story, three-star hotel has benefited from an efficient Japanese-managed staff since opening in 1988. A free shuttle is available to downtown Shànghǎi and to the Hóngqiáo Airport. The rooms are cozy, modern, and clean.

Hóngqiáo Lù 2550 (10-min. walk from Hóngqiáo Airport). ✆ **021/6268-8866.** Fax 021/6268-8393. www.siah.com. 304 units. ¥888–¥1,012 ($107–$122) standard room. Hourly rate 6am–4pm: $20 1st 2 hr., $5 per additional hr. AE, DC, MC, V. No metro. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; game room; tour desk; small business center; salon; 24-hr. room service; next-day dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer.

4 Where to Dine

Dozens of promising, mostly upscale, international restaurants and cafes open every month, too many to keep up with. The emphasis is on Shànghǎi's own renowned cuisine. The most celebrated Shànghǎi dish is hairy crab, a freshwater delicacy that reaches its prime every fall. The rich crabmeat is generally steamed and dipped in a gingery vinegar sauce, but Drunken Crab is also popular (the crabs are literally salted away for a week or so and drowned in the local Shàoxīng rice wine before cooking).

The boom in Shànghǎi restaurants has brought with it a dramatic increase in Japanese, Thai, European, and American restaurants, too, with the international fast-food chains, from Starbucks to McDonald's, seemingly on every corner. For restaurant locations, see the map on p. 408.

HUÁNGPǓ (DOWNTOWN)

VERY EXPENSIVE

M on the Bund ★★★ CONTINENTAL This is the mainland's branch of Hong Kong's M at the Fringe, situated on top of a stately 1923 bank building right on the Bund, and the restaurant that put Shànghǎi dining on the world map, drawing top international reviews. In 2001 M opened the "Glamour Room" (open for drinks 6–10:30pm), an Art Deco extension with a picture-window view, while maintaining the main "Dining Room" for dining. The menu is broadly Mediterranean, with a Middle Eastern salt-encrusted leg of lamb, and an ethereal Pavlova, among the best-loved dishes.

7th floor, 5 The Bund (entrance on side street at Guǎngdōng Lù 20). ✆ **021/6350-9988.** Reservations required. Main courses ¥150–¥220 ($18–$26). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 6–10:30pm; Tues–Fri 11:30am–2:30pm; Sat–Sun brunch 11:30am–3pm. Metro: Hénán Zhōng Lù.

EXPENSIVE

Hànkǒu 50 ★ CONTINENTAL Occupying a refurbished bank building just off the Bund, this is an elegant but informal spot for Western dining. The

decor is mostly Indonesian; the menu features oysters from Australia, liver paté, and Caesar salads, with European standards like baked escargot.

Hànkǒu Lù 50 (just east of the Bund). ✆ **021/6323-8383.** Reservations recommended on weekends. Main courses ¥150–¥300 ($18–$36). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:30am–2:30pm and 6–10:30pm; Sat–Sun 11am–3pm (brunch) and 6–10:30pm. Metro: Hénán Zhōng Lù.

MODERATE

Gōngdélín ★ *Overrated* VEGETARIAN CHINESE Shànghǎi's oldest and most famous vegetarian restaurant has been serving up mock duck and other imitation meat entrees for half a century. The decor is bland, but the fun is in the presentation of the foods, artfully molded to mimic classic Chinese dishes that normally employ seafood, fowl, and pork.

Nánjīng Xī Lù 445 (south side of Nánjīng Xī Lù, between People's Park and Chéngdū Běi Lù). ✆ **021/6327-0218.** Reservations recommended on weekends. Main courses ¥75–¥200 ($9–$24). AE, DC, MC, V. 6:30–9:30am, 11am–2pm, and 5–8pm. Metro: Shímén Yī Lù.

INEXPENSIVE

Gino Café ★ ITALIAN With superb food for the money, excellent service, a sparkling bistro decor, and the best pan pizza in town (and good pasta, too), this rates as Shànghǎi's best fast-food chain. Other branches are in the Parkson department store (Huáihǎi Zhōng Lù 918; ✆ 021/6415-5245) and in the Nextage department store (Zhāngyáng Lù 501, Pǔdōng; ✆ 021/5830-0809).

2nd floor, Nánjīng Dōng Lù 66 (half a block from the Bund). ✆ **021/6361-2205.** Main courses ¥40–¥75 ($4.80–$9). AE, MC, V. 8am–midnight. Metro: Hénán Zhōng Lù.

NÁNSHÌ DISTRICT (OLD TOWN)

EXPENSIVE

Lǜ Bō Láng ★ *Overrated* SHÀNGHǍI This gorgeous red and white classical Chinese pavilion with upturned tile eaves soars three stories above the teahouse, pond, and Yù Garden at the heart of the historic Chinese Old Town, and it has been soaring financially ever since world leaders began patronizing it. The Shànghǎi dishes aren't bad, from the snacks to the full shark's fin and crab banquet, but they are overpriced.

Yù Yuán Lù 115-131 (south shore of teahouse lake). ✆ **0271/6328-0602.** Reservations required. Main courses ¥120–¥250 ($14–$30). AE, DC, MC, V. 10am–10pm. Metro: Hénán Zhōng Lù.

INEXPENSIVE

Sōng Yuè Lóu DIM SUM There's been a two-story pastry restaurant here since about 1910. It runs along the entire western shore of the pond at the center of Old Town, affording great views from its smudgy windows. The meal to buy here is simple: dim sum pastries (most filled only with vegetables) and tea. The whole joint is often jammed to the rafters.

Jiù Jiào Chǎng Lù 99 at Bǎilíng Lù (west shore of teahouse lake). ✆ **021/6355-3630.** Meals ¥40–¥80 ($4.80–$9.60). AE, DC, MC, V. 6:30am–8pm. Metro: Hénán Zhōng Lù.

LÚWĀN DISTRICT (FRENCH CONCESSION)

VERY EXPENSIVE

Lan Kwai Fong at Park 97 ★★★ INTERNATIONAL One of Shànghǎi's trendiest restaurant complexes, the very chic Park 97 features four Hong Kong imports. **Baci Italian Cuisine** serves fresh pasta dishes and thin-crusted pizzas in a setting with high ceilings and long mirrors. Weekday set lunches and weekend brunches are available. **Tokio Joe** has sushi creations and delicious rolls, with three-course moderately priced set meals. **Indochine,** a top Hong Kong

restaurant, features elegant Vietnamese meals, such as salt-and-pepper soft-shell crabs, and affordable set lunches—and a terrace that opens to the park. **California Club** is a smart disco that opens onto Baci.

Gāolán Lù 2 (inside west gate of Fùxīng Park). ✆ **021/5383-2328** (Baci/Tokio Joe/California Club), **021/5383-2208** (Indochine). Reservations recommended on weekends. Main courses ¥50–¥250 ($6–$30). AE, DC, MC, V. Baci open 11:30am–11pm. Tokio Joe open Mon–Fri 11:30am–2:30pm and 6–11pm; Sat–Sun 11:30am–11pm (lunch served until 6pm). Indochine open 11:30am–3pm and 6pm–midnight. California Club open Sun–Thurs 7pm–midnight; Fri–Sat 9pm–late. Metro: Huángpí Nán Lù.

Xīntiāndì Restaurant Mall ★★★ INTERNATIONAL A new Starbucks stands at its entrance, the First National Congress of the Communist Party at its flanks, and in its midst, brilliant restorations of Shànghǎi's colonial Shíkù Mén (stone gate) architecture. The place is **Xīntiāndì** (literally "New Heaven and Earth"), an upscale cultural mall where the moneyed East meets the moneyed West. Here you'll find the city's hottest dining spots. Located downtown a block south of the Huángpí Nán Lù Metro station, Xīntiāndì is a 2-block pedestrian mall with great eating spots, including:

T8 ★★★ (✆ **021/6355-8999;** lunch Wed–Mon 11:30am–2:30pm; dinner daily 6:30–11:30pm), the restaurant whose service and chefs have quickly rivaled those at M on the Bund.

Star East ★★ (✆ **021/6311-4991;** 11:30am–2am), international film star Jackie Chan's slick Cantonese cafe and bar, with action videos.

La Maison ★★ (✆ **021/3307-1010;** 11:30am–12:30am), a strictly French cafe, with its own fine bakery.

Va Bene ★★ (✆ **021/6311-2211;** 11:30am–2:30pm and 5–11:30pm), an upscale Italian diner with the freshest ingredients.

Latina ★★ (✆ **021/6320-3566;** 11:30am–3pm and 5:30–11:30pm), a lively new branch of one of the city's most popular and best South American barbecue restaurants.

KABB ★ (✆ **021/3307-0798;** Mon–Fri 9:30am–midnight; Sat–Sun 9:30am–2am), a spiffy American bar and comfort-food cafe.

Yè Shànghǎi ★ (✆ **021/6311-2323;** 11am–2:30pm and 5:30–10:30pm), more than a touch of old Shànghǎi (by way of modern Singapore), with fine local-style crab dishes.

Zen ★ (✆ **021/6385-6395;** 11:30am–11:30pm), a modern Cantonese restaurant by way of Hong Kong, with excellent dim sum for lunch.

EXPENSIVE

Hazara ★★ INDIAN Superb dining in a superb colonial Shànghǎi setting, Hazara is the city's second great Indian restaurant, newly established on the gorgeous grounds of the historic, romantic 1930s Ruìjīn Guest House.

Ruìjīn Èr Lù 118 (Building 4, Ruìjīn Guest House, between Yǒngjiā Lù and Fùxīng Zhōng Lù). ✆ **021/6466-4328.** Reservations required. Main courses ¥60–¥160 ($7.20–$19). AE, DC, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 5:30–10:30pm; Fri–Sat 5:30–11pm. Metro: Shǎnxī Nán Lù.

JJ Mariachi ★ MEXICAN Shànghǎi's top Mexican restaurant is decorated to the hilt with south-of-the-border theme and icons. Mexican dancers and musicians from Guadalajara in costume perform nightly. The fajitas are excellent, as are the seafood plates and salsa dips.

Màomíng Nán Lù 59 (Jǐn Jiāng Hotel Gourmet St.). ✆ **021/6258-2582,** ext. 9380. Reservations recommended on weekends. Main courses ¥100–¥200 ($12–$24). AE, DC, MC, V. 11am–3pm and 6pm–midnight. Metro: Shǎnxī Nán Lù.

Lan Na Thai ★★★ THAI Shànghǎi's best Thai restaurant is located on the second floor of a beautiful old mansion on the north end of the Ruìjīn Guest House estate. Look for signs to Faces, which is the elegant lounge on the main floor. The service is gracious; the chicken soup and crab dishes, superb.

Ruìjīn Èr Lù 18 (Building 4, Ruìjīn Guest House; south of Fùxīng Zhōng Lù). ✆ **021/6466-4328.** Reservations recommended on weekends. Main courses ¥120–¥240 ($14–$29). AE, DC, MC, V. 11:30am–2:30pm and 5:30–11pm. Metro: Shǎnxī Nán Lù.

Tandoor ★★★ INDIAN Shànghǎi's top Indian restaurant gets its management, its chefs, and most of its ingredients directly from India. Classical dancers from India entertain nightly. Vegetarian entrees are available, but the signature dish is delicious tandoori chicken marinated in yogurt.

Màomíng Nán Lù 59 (South Building, Jǐn Jiāng Hotel). ✆ **021/6472-5494.** Reservations required. Meals ¥130–¥250 ($16–$30). AE, DC, MC, V. 11:30am–2pm and 5:30–10:30pm. Metro: Shǎnxī (Shaanxi) Nán Lù.

MODERATE

Tiffin ★★ *Finds* VEGETARIAN New challenger to the staid and ancient state-run Gōngdélín in vegetarian dining, the Tiffin more than holds its own with a smart, bright decor, attentive service, and some increasingly inventive fusion dishes. This is a pleasant place for a nice dinner or special lunch.

Huáihǎi Zhōng Lù 111 (Room 301B, Shànghǎi Times Sq.). ✆ **021/6391-0639.** Main courses ¥40–¥120 ($4.80–$14). No credit cards. 11:30am–9:30pm. Metro: Huángpí Nán Lù.

INEXPENSIVE

Sumo Sushi *Value* JAPANESE A great bargain, with cheap set lunches and dinners. The real deal is a la carte, or rather a la carousel, a moving belt from the kitchen along the counter. From 11am to 4pm and from 10pm to closing, you can grab as much as you can stuff in for ¥58 ($6.95).

Huáihǎi Zhōng Lù 668 (at Sīnán Lù). ✆ **021/5306-9136.** Meals ¥28–¥58 ($3.35–$6.95). No credit cards. 11am–11:30pm. Metro: Shǎnxī (Shaanxi) Nán Lù.

JÌNG ĀN DISTRICT (NORTHWEST SHÀNGHǍI)

VERY EXPENSIVE

Da Vinci's ★★★ ITALIAN The superb Italian restaurant in the Hilton has been one of Shànghǎi's very best international dining choices for years. The service is highly professional. Although there are plenty of pastas on the menu, the showpiece main courses emanate largely from the grill, where there's a choice of beef (sirloin, T-bones, and so on) and fish (sea bass and king prawns).

Huáshān Lù 250 (lobby, Hilton Hotel). ✆ **021/6248-0000,** ext. 1850. Reservations required. Main courses ¥150–¥275 ($18–$33). AE, DC, MC, V. 6–10:30pm. Metro: Jìng Ān Temple.

Summer Pavilion ★★ CANTONESE Aiming to be Shànghǎi's premier Cantonese restaurant, the Summer Pavilion certainly has the setting (bright, plush, open dining area with tasteful Chinese gold and red trim) and service (expert, attentive) to become just that. The Hong Kong chefs are top-notch.

2nd floor, Nánjīng Xī Lù 1376, Ritz-Carlton Portman Hotel (in Shànghǎi Centre). ✆ **021/6279-8888,** ext. 4770. Reservations required. Main courses ¥80–¥340 ($9.60–$41). AE, DC, MC, V. 11:30am–2:30pm and 5:30–10:30pm. Metro: Jìng Ān Temple.

EXPENSIVE

Café Studio, the Four Seasons' 24-hour lobby cafe (500 Wēihǎi Lù; ✆ **021/6256-8888**), is bright, elegant, and a cut above most lobby cafes anywhere in the world.

Bali Laguna ★ *Finds* INDONESIAN A promising new Indonesian eatery, Bali Laguna has an exquisite setting, perched over the classic garden pond in the heart of Jìng Ān Park. There are few more romantic places to sip an evening drink in Shànghǎi, and the Balinese dishes and Indonesian snacks are terrific.

Huá Shān Lù 189 (inside southwest entrance to Jìng Ān Park). ✆ **021/6248-6970.** Reservations recommended on weekends. Meals ¥80–¥240 ($9.60–$30). AE, DC, MC, V. 11am–10pm. Metro: Jìng Ān Temple.

Irene's Thai ★★ THAI This is Shànghǎi's first modern Thai restaurant, and it is still one of the best. The interior of this wooden house is exquisite, with decorations imported from Thailand. The salads, which use fruits such as papaya, are famous in Shànghǎi.

Tóngrén Lù 263 (2 blocks northwest of Shànghǎi Centre). ✆ **021/6247-3579.** Reservations recommended on weekends. Main courses ¥120–¥240 ($14–$29). AE, DC, MC, V. 11am–2pm and 6:30–10:30pm. Metro: Jing Ān Temple.

Méilóngzhèn ★ SHÀNGHǍI Established in 1938, Méilóngzhèn is a Shànghǎi institution, deservedly so for its classic decor and regional cuisine. Occupying the headquarters of the Chinese Communist Party (during the 1930s), it retains the old elegance of the colonial period. The Sìchuān duck is wonderful, as is the Méilóngzhèn Special Chicken, served in small ceramic pots.

Building 22, Lane 1081, Nánjīng Xī Lù (east of Shànghǎi Centre at Jiāngníng Lù). ✆ **021/6253-5353.** Reservations recommended on weekends. Main courses ¥120–¥240 ($14–$29). AE, DC, MC, V. 11am–2pm and 5–10pm. Metro: Shímén Yī Lù.

XÚHUÌ DISTRICT (SOUTHWEST SHÀNGHǍI)

EXPENSIVE

Sasha's ★★ *Kids* CONTINENTAL Beautifully situated behind a wrought-iron fence in a mansion in the Soong family's old compound (and once home to Chiang Kai-shek, then later to Máo's wife), Sasha's brings country club dining to Shànghǎi—in the summer, the front garden opens with tables under white umbrellas. There are tables on the overhanging balconies and in the back garden, too, when weather permits.

House 11, Dōngpíng Lù 9 (intersection with Héngshán Lù). ✆ **021/6474-6166.** Reservations required. Meals ¥150–¥300 ($18–$36). AE, DC, MC, V. 10am–1am. Metro: Héngshān Lù or Chángshú Lù.

INEXPENSIVE

Harn Sheh ★ *Value* CONTINENTAL/ASIAN The perfect retreat from the frenzy of Héngshān, Harn Sheh is a relaxing and luxurious modern teahouse. Take a table by the huge windows on busy Héngshān and watch the world rush by. Choose from among flavorful iced drinks and inexpensive munchies from East and West, such as spaghetti, curry chicken rice, or fried chicken with rice.

Héngshān Lù 10 (at Táojiāng Lù). ✆ **021/6474-6547.** Most items under ¥40 ($5). No credit cards. 9:30am–4am. Metro: Héngshān Lù or Chángshú Lù.

CHÁNGNÍNG DISTRICT (HÓNGQIÁO DEVELOPMENT ZONE)

VERY EXPENSIVE

The Door ★★ CONTINENTAL This luxurious grand dinner spot, new on the west Shànghǎi scene, is proving popular with those in search of an upscale evening of relaxed dining. The interiors are extravagant and the menu is international, mostly French, but with some Asian fusion dishes.

Hóngméi Lù 1468 (near Gǔběi New Town, off Yán'ān Xī Lù, on 3rd floor). ✆ **021/6295-3737** or 021/6295-8001. Reservations recommended on weekends. Set dinners ¥380–¥580 ($46–$70). AE, DC, MC, V. 6pm–2am.

Giovanni's ★★★ ITALIAN This upscale bistro with a big view is plush yet homey, with top service and dishes. The calamari is good, the pastas and antipasti great, and the crème brûlée extraordinary. One of Shànghǎi's best.

Zūnyì Nán Lù 5 (27th floor, Sheraton Grand Tài Píng Yáng Hotel). ✆ **021/6275-8888,** ext. 4276. Reservations required. Meals ¥240–¥360 ($29–$43). AE, DC, MC, V. noon–2pm and 5:30–10pm.

EXPENSIVE

Dynasty ★★ CANTONESE Long regarded as Shànghǎi's top Cantonese restaurant, Dynasty defends its title with an elegant setting and extensive menu. The dishes are prepared by the same chefs (many from Hong Kong) who routinely cater dinners for visiting heads of state at special banquets and luncheons. You can't go wrong with the fresh seafood dishes.

Yán'ān Xī Lù 2099 (3rd floor, Renaissance Yangtze Shànghǎi Hotel). ✆ **021/6275-0000,** ext. 2230. Reservations required. Meals ¥160–¥340 ($19–$41). AE, DC, MC, V. 11am–2:30pm and 6–10:30pm.

1221 ★ SHÀNGHǍI Very chic, this is a very popular place among resident foreigners and business travelers for fine Shànghǎi dining at reasonable prices. The dishes are Shànghǎi in origin, but made less oily by a Cantonese sensitivity. The Drunken Chicken is a signature dish, as are the Lionhead Meatballs and the dishes simmered in clay pots, such as the lamb.

Yán'ān Xī Lù 1221 (between Pānyú Lù and Dìngxī Lù). ✆ **021/6213-6585.** Reservations recommended on weekends. Meals ¥100–¥250 ($12–$30). No credit cards. 11am–2pm and 5–11pm.

PǓDŌNG NEW AREA

VERY EXPENSIVE

Canton ★★★ CANTONESE With a 360 degree view from this grand height, elegant decor, impeccable service, and master chefs from Hong Kong, the Grand Hyatt's Canton is the most luxurious restaurant for haute Cantonese cuisine in Shànghǎi. The shark's fin and bird's nest soups are superb; the abalone and other seafood dishes are surprisingly delicate; and the dim sum dumplings are wonderful. Reserve a window seat in advance.

Shìjì Dà Dào 88 (55th floor, Jīn Mào Tower, Grand Hyatt Hotel). ✆ **021/5047-1234,** ext. 8898. Reservations required. Meals ¥200–¥400 ($24–$48). AE, MC, V. 11:30am–2:30pm and 5:30–10pm. Metro: Lùjiāzuǐ.

EXPENSIVE

Shāng Palace ★★ CANTONESE This is just the place for a fine night of dining on southern Chinese cuisine prepared expertly by Hong Kong chefs and attentively served by a skilled staff. An extensive menu ranges from sizzling vegetable dishes to excellent seafood, including shark's fin, crab, and lobster choices. Some of the best food is Hong Kong–style dim sum dumplings, the feature of Saturday and Sunday buffets from 11am to 2pm.

Fùchéng Lù 33 (2nd floor, Shangri-La Pǔdōng Hotel, south of Oriental Pearl TV Tower). ✆ **021/6882-8888,** ext. 22. Reservations recommended on weekends. Meals ¥160–¥240 ($19–$29). AE, DC, MC, V. 11am–2:30pm and 5–10pm. Metro: Lùjiāzuǐ.

MODERATE

Art 50 ★ CONTINENTAL The revolving restaurant atop the new Novotel Atlantis is high enough (50th floor) to provide a view of Pǔdōng all the way to old Shànghǎi on a clear day, and its inventive fusion menu is worth the trip out beyond the fringes of the metro.

Pǔdōng Dà Dào 728 (at Fúshān Lù). ✆ **021/5036-6666,** ext. 1688. Main courses ¥80–¥120 ($9.60–$14). AE, DC, MC, V. 11:30am–2pm and 6–10pm.

Lùlù *Value* CANTONESE This small, crowded, strangely fashionable cafe is the Pǔdōng favorite for home-cooked meals (Cantonese dishes with a Shànghǎi approach), especially among the city's yuppie residents. It's noisy and smoke-filled, and has a local flavor. Lùlù is best known for its shredded pork and scallions wrapped in pancakes, its tofu dishes, and a nice *cài fàn* (rice with vegetables scramble).

2nd floor, Lùjiāzuǐ Lù. 66 ✆ **021/5882-6679.** Meals ¥40–¥120 ($4.80–$14). AE, MC, V. 11am–3:30pm and 5–10pm. Metro: Lùjiāzuǐ.

5 Exploring Shànghǎi

THE BUND (WÀI TĀN)

The Bund (Embankment) refers to Shànghǎi's famous waterfront running along the west shore of the Huángpǔ River, forming the eastern boundary of old downtown Shànghǎi. Today it consists of a marvelous pedestrian promenade, stretching from Sūzhōu Creek in the north to Jīnlíng Lù in the south, the perfect platform for strolling along the busy river. Barges, fishing boats, ocean liners, and cargo ships slip past each other in this mighty channel to the Yángzǐ River and Pacific Ocean that has made Shànghǎi China's largest port.

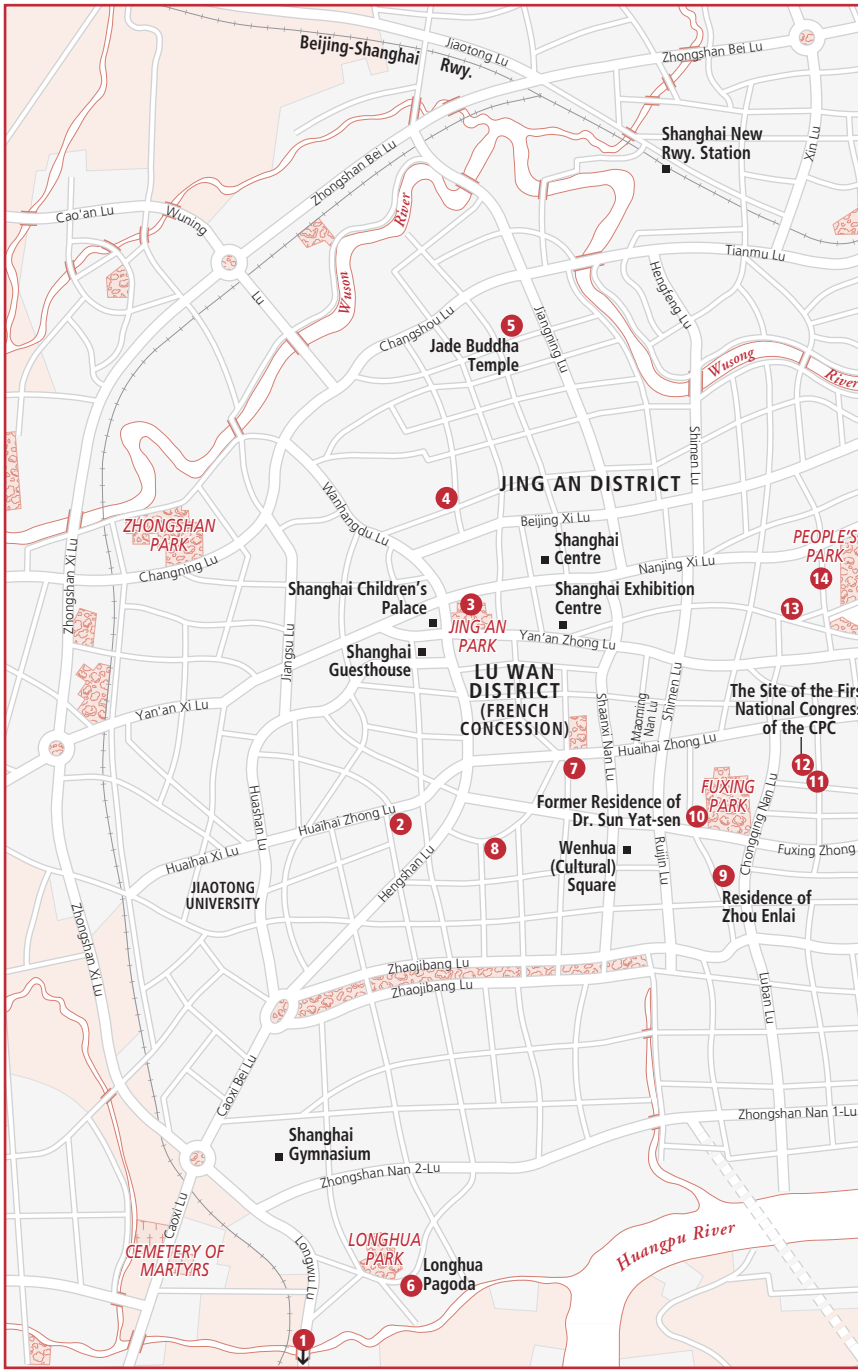
On the far side of the river, casting the shadow of Shànghǎi's future over its colonial past, are the modern towers of the city's remarkable economic boom: the skyscrapers of the Pǔdōng New Area. On the near side, just across the wide avenue (Zhōngshān Dōng Yī Lù) that parallels the promenade, is Shànghǎi's signature cityscape, a long wall of colonial-era European buildings erected by foreign governments, trading houses, and expatriate millionaires mostly during the 1920s and 1930s.

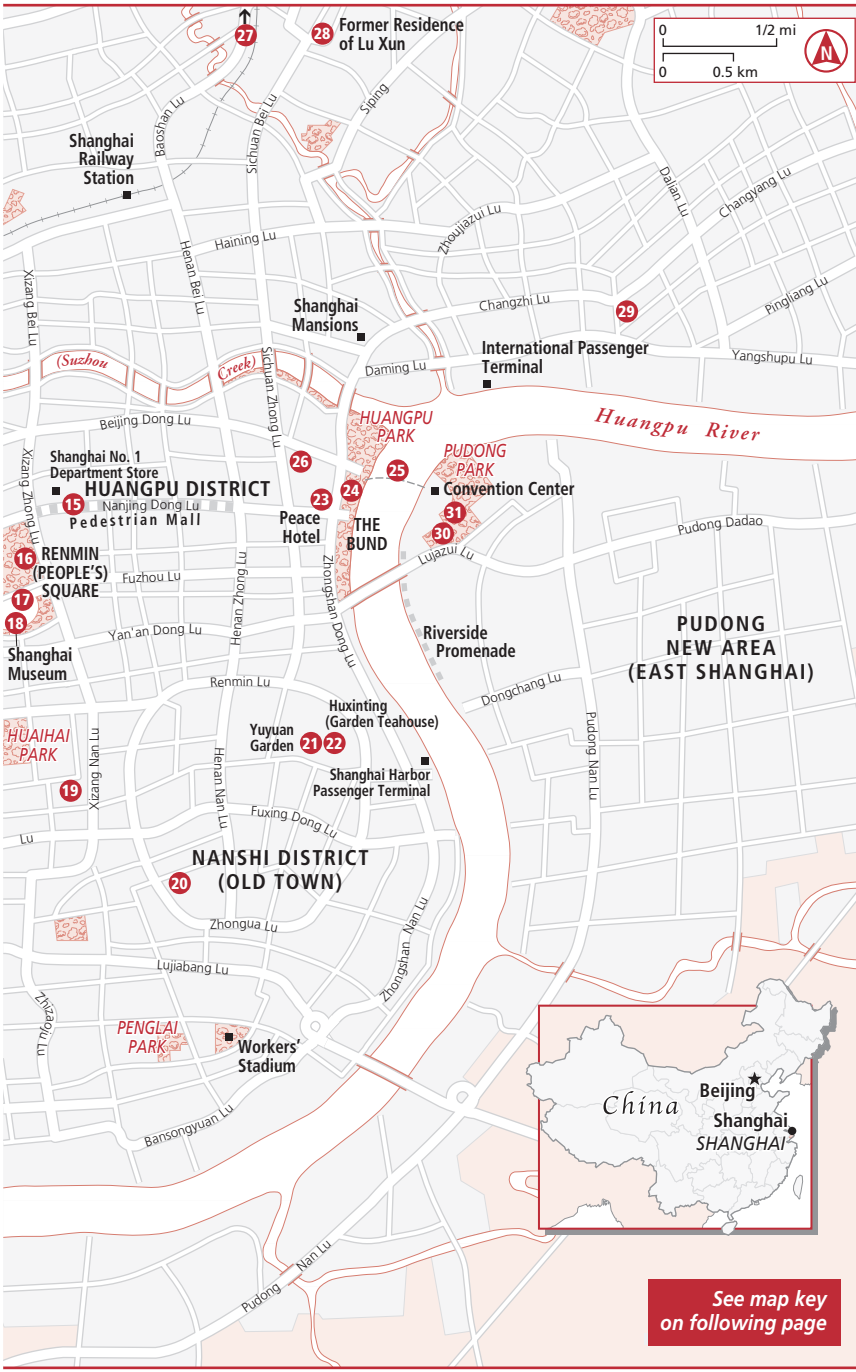
The chief colonial buildings, running north to south, include: **NYK Building** (No. 31), a stone edifice currently empty; **Banque de L'Indo-Chine** (No. 29), built in 1914; **Glen Line Building** (No. 28), built in 1922 as a German bank; **Jardine Matheson & Co** (No. 27), 1927, a former trading office; **Yangtze Insurance Building** (No. 26), 1916, with a fine restored lobby; **Bank of China** (No. 23), dating from 1937; **Peace Hotel** (No. 20), the former Cathay Hotel (1929), worth a tour in its own right for its spectacular Art Deco interiors; **Palace Hotel** (No. 19), 1906, built by the Sassoon family; **Chartered Bank of India, America, and China** (No. 18), 1923, now unoccupied but slated for preservation; **North China Daily News Building** (No. 17), built in 1921; **Bank of Táiwān Building** (No. 16), built in 1924 as a Japanese bank; **Russo-Chinese Bank Building** (No. 15), dating from 1901; **Bank of Communications Building** (No. 14), an "ultra-modern" 1940 edifice; **Shànghǎi Customs House** (No. 13), dating from 1927 and still operating; **Hongkong and Shanghai Bank** (No. 12), dedicated in 1923, with its not-to-be-missed restored lobby dome just inside; **Hospital of the Shànghǎi Navigation Co.** (No. 7), built in 1907; **China Merchants Bank** (No. 6), the former City Hall, built in 1897; **Union Insurance Co. Building** (No. 4), 1922, currently empty; **Shànghǎi Club** (No. 2), 1910, former home of the legendary Long Bar.

YÙ GARDEN (YÙ YUÁN)

Yù Garden is one of China's loveliest private classical gardens. Its name means "Garden of Contentment," and it is indeed a pastoral world set apart from modern, hectic Shànghǎi. Its construction was completed in 1577 by an official, Pān Yǔnduān, as the private estate for his father, who served in the Míng dynasty as

Shànghǎi Attractions




0 1/2 mi
0 0.5 km
N
27
28 Former Residence of Lu Xun
Shanghai Railway Station
Baoshan Lu
Sichuan Bei Lu
Siping
Haining Lu
Henan Bei Lu
Zhoujiazui Lu
Dalian Lu
Changyang Lu
Pingliang Lu
Yangshupu Lu
Xizang Bei Lu
Shanghai Mansions
Changzhi Lu
29
International Passenger Terminal
Daming Lu
(Suzhou Creek)
Sichuan Zhong Lu
Beijing Dong Lu
HUANGPU PARK
Huangpu River
PUDONG PARK
Shanghai No. 1 Department Store
Xizang Zhong Lu
HUANGPU DISTRICT
Nanjing Dong Lu
Pedestrian Mall
15
26
25
Convention Center
24
23
Peace Hotel
THE BUND
31
30
Pudong Dadao
Lujiazui Lu
16 RENMIN (PEOPLE'S) SQUARE
Fuzhou Lu
17
18
Yan'an Dong Lu
Henan Zhong Lu
Zhongshan Dong Lu
Riverside Promenade
PUDONG NEW AREA (EAST SHANGHAI)
Shanghai Museum
Renmin Lu
Dongchang Lu
Huxinting (Garden Teahouse)
HUAIHAI PARK
Yuyuan Garden
21
22
Pudong Nan Lu
Xizang Nan Lu
19
Henan Nan Lu
Shanghai Harbor Passenger Terminal
Fuxing Dong Lu
Lu
NANSHI DISTRICT (OLD TOWN)
20
Zhongua Lu
Lujiabang Lu
Zhongshan Nan Lu
Zhaojia Lu
PENGLAI PARK
Workers' Stadium
Bansongyuan Lu
China
Beijing
Shanghai
SHANGHAI
Pudong Nan Lu
See map key on following page

Shànghǎi Attractions Key

Bird & Flower Market **13**
花鸟市场

The Bund (Wài Tān) **24**
外滩

Bund Sight-Seeing Tunnel **25**
人行观光隧道

Confucius Temple (Wén Miào) **20**
孔庙

Dōngtái Antiques Market **19**
东台路市场

Friendship Store **26**
友谊商店

Húxīntíng Teahouse **22**
(Húxīntíng Cháshì)
湖心亭茶楼

Jade Buddha Temple (Yùfó Sì) **5**
玉佛禅寺

Jìng Ān Sì (Jìng Ān Temple) **3**
静安古寺

Lónghuá Sì **6**
龙华寺

Lǔ Xùn Park and Memorial Hall **28**
(Lǔ Xùn Gōngyuán)
鲁迅公园

Museum of Ancient Chinese Sex Culture **4**
(Zhōngguó Gǔdài Xìng Wénhuà Bówùguǎn)
华夏性文化博物馆

Nánjīng Road Pedestrian Mall **15**
南京路步行街

Ohel Moshe Synagogue **29**
(Móxī Huìtáng)
摩西会堂

Oriental Pearl TV Tower **30**
(Dōngfāng Míngzhū Diànshì Tǎ)
东方明珠广播电视塔

Peace Hotel (Hépíng Fàndiàn) **23**
和平饭店

People's Square
(Rénmín Guǎng Chǎng) **17**
人民广场

Shànghǎi Art Museum **14**
(Shànghǎi Měishùguǎn)
上海美术馆新馆

Shànghǎi Botanical Gardens **1**
(Shànghǎi Zhíwùyuán)
上海植物园

Shànghǎi Bówùguǎn **18**
(Shànghǎi Museum)
上海博物馆

Shànghǎi Circus World **27**
上海马戏团

Shànghǎi Municipal History Museum **31**
(Shànghǎi Shì Lìshǐ Bówùguǎn)
上海历史博物馆

Shànghǎi Museum of Arts and Crafts **10**
(Shànghǎi Gōngyì Měishù Yánjiūsuǒ Jiùgōngyìpǐn Xiūfù Bù)
上海工艺美术研究所

Shànghǎi Urban Planning Centre **16**
上海城市规划中心

Site of the First National Congress **12**
of the Communist Party
(Zhōnggòng Yīdàhuìzhǐ)
中国共产党第　次
全国代表大会会址纪念馆

Soong Ching-ling's Former Residence **2**
(Sòng Qìnglíng Gùjū)
宋庆龄故居

Sun Yat-sen's Former Residence **10**
(Sūn Zhōngshān Gùjū)
孙中山故居

Xiāngyáng Clothing Market **7**

Xīntiāndì Restaurant Mall **12**
新天地

Yù Garden (Yù Yuán) **21**
豫园

Zhōu Ēnlái's Former Residence **9**
(Zhōu Gōng Guǎn)
周恩来故居

the Minister of Punishments. The portion known as the Inner Garden (Nèi Yuán) was added in 1709. It is a remarkable maze of gorgeous Míng dynasty pavilions and elaborate rockeries, arched bridges, and goldfish ponds, encircled by a massive, undulating dragon wall. Occupying just 2 hectares (5 acres), it nevertheless seems as expansive as a small town, with room for 30 pavilions.

Located in the heart of Old Town (Nánshì), a few blocks southwest of the Bund in downtown Shànghǎi (nearest metro: Hénán Zhōng Lù), Yù Garden has a ticket window on the north shore of the Húxīntíng Teahouse pond (✆ **021/6326-0830**). The garden is open from 8:30am to 5pm; admission is ¥25 ($3).

Strolling through Yù Garden is rather like strolling through a miniature version of the Forbidden City, confusing but enthralling. The traditional layout of the estate has produced several dozen gardens-within-gardens, each partially concealed by white walls but connected to the next sector by arched bridges and curving pathways. From the main entrance, you should head straight into the northwest sector of the garden, and then proceed clockwise to the east along the pavilions on the north wall. Next, turn south along the west wall and continue from hall to hall, ending up in the impressive Inner Garden in the southwest sector.

Halls and pavilions of note (in clockwise order from the north entrance) include the **Hall for Viewing the Grand Rockery (Yǎngshān Táng),** a graceful two-story tower serving as the entrance to the marvelous rock garden, which consists of 2,000 tons of rare yellow stones pasted together with rice glue and designed by a famous garden artist of the Míng dynasty, Zhāng Nányáng; the **Hall of Heralding Spring (Diǎn Chūn Táng),** the most famous historical building in the garden, where in 1853 the secret "Society of Little Swords" (Xiǎodāo Huì) plotted to join the peasant-led Tàipíng Rebellion and help overthrow the Qīng dynasty; and the **Hall of Jade Magnificence (Yù Huá Táng),** opening to the most celebrated stone sculpture in the garden, the **Exquisite Jade (Yù Líng Lóng),** which was originally procured by an emperor of the Northern Sòng at the beginning of the 12th century. This honeycombed slab is highly treasured in China as the perfect "Tài Hú" rock—that is, a stone that has been aged and naturally carved by the waters of nearby Tài Lake to achieve its bizarre appearance. Such rocks represent mountain peaks in classical Chinese garden design. Past the **Inner Garden (Nèi Yuán),** where local artists and calligraphers often display and sell their works, is the main exit.

SHÀNGHǍI BÓWÙGUǍN ★★★

Frequently cited as the best museum in China, the Shànghǎi Museum's 11 state-of-the-art galleries and three special exhibition halls are arranged on four floors, which encircle a spacious atrium in the center. The exhibits are tastefully displayed and well lit, and explanatory signs are in English as well as Chinese. The museum draws upon 120,000 historic artifacts, fewer than in the world-renowned Chinese collections in Běijīng, Taipei, and Xī'ān, but more than enough to fill the galleries on any given day with outstanding treasures, presented in grand style for an international audience.

Located on the south side of People's Square (Rénmín Guǎng Chǎng), downtown, west of the Bund, at Rénmín Dà Dào 201, the museum has its main entrance at the top of the stairway on the north side of the building, facing the three monumental structures that now occupy the north half of the square (Grand Theatre to the west, City Hall in the middle, Shànghǎi Urban Planning

Exhibition Center to the east). Metro lines 1 and 2 both have their main stations on the northeast corner of People's Square. The Shànghǎi Museum is open Sunday through Friday from 9am to 5pm (no tickets sold after 4pm) and on Saturday from 9am to 8pm (no tickets sold after 7pm). Admission is ¥20 ($2.40), free on Saturday from 5 to 7pm. You can rent an audio phone (¥10/$1.20 plus ¥100/$12 deposit), available at the counter to your left as you enter the lobby. It provides a narrative in English of the major exhibits, each of which has a number you can key into the device.

The first floor contains major galleries displaying bronzes and stone sculptures. The second floor has wonderful displays of ceramic ware. The third floor has separate galleries for paintings, calligraphy, and personal seals. The fourth floor has exhibits of jade, coins, furniture, and minority cultures. The Stone Sculpture Gallery (1st floor) and the Jade Gallery (4th floor) are the most impressive, but the museum is also renowned for its holdings of paintings, calligraphy, and bronzes.

HUÁNGPǓ RIVER CRUISE

The Huángpǔ River dividing the two Shànghǎis, east and west, past and future, serves as the city's shipping artery both to the East China Sea and the mouth of the Yángzǐ River, which the Huángpǔ joins 29km (18 miles) north of downtown Shànghǎi. The Bund and its promenade are landmarks of Shànghǎi's 19th-century struggle to reclaim a waterfront from the bogs of this river (which originates in nearby Tài Lake) and the streams that feed it. The Pǔdōng New Area on the river's opposite shore (east) is evidence in glass and steel of the financial power of the river.

The Huángpǔ's wharves are the most fascinating in China. The port handles the cargo coming out of the interior from Nánjīng, Wǔhàn, and other Yángzǐ River ports, including Chóngqìng, 2,415km (1,500 miles) deep into Sìchuān Province. From Shànghǎi, which produces plenty of industrial and commercial products in its own right, much of China's trade with the rest of the world is conducted each year.

Mornings and afternoons, tour boats make the 3½-hour voyage up the Huángpǔ to the Yángzǐ River delta. The main ticket office for cruises is the Shànghǎi Huángpǔ River Cruise Company, Ltd., at Zhōngshān Dōng Èr Lù 229 (✆ **021/6374-4461**), located on the southern end of the Bund Promenade; they also have a ticket office at street level (Zhōngshān Dōng Èr Lù 219) and another office further north up the same street at Zhōngshān Dōng Èr Lù 153. They are open daily, and the schedule usually includes a full morning cruise from 9am to 12:30pm, and a full afternoon cruise from 2 to 5:30pm. Cruise schedules vary depending on the season, and on weekends additional cruises are sometimes added, so check ahead. Prices for the full cruise start at ¥45 ($5.40) and top out at about ¥100 ($12).

The granite offices, banks, consulates, and hotels of Shànghǎi's past colonial masters form a stately panorama along the Bund, while the Oriental Pearl TV Tower, the Jīn Mào Tower, and other new skyscrapers soar on the Pǔdōng side, as well as drydocks, factories, and power plants.

What overwhelms river passengers even more than the long industrial shoreline is the traffic slinking up and down the waterway. The Huángpǔ is, on average, just 183m (600 ft.) wide. It is like a superhighway without visible lanes, glutted with gigantic freighters, tugs, tiny sampans and, above all, the undulating trains of unpainted wooden barges, tied together to save fuel, forming serpentine

dragons on a serpentine river. More than 2,000 oceangoing ships compete with the 20,000 barges, fishing junks, and rowboats along the Huángpǔ every year.

The Huángpǔ eventually empties into the mighty Yángzǐ River at **Wúsōng Kǒu,** where the harbormasters wait beneath a ghostly pale clock tower, its hands frozen. This marks the end of Shànghǎi's little river and the beginning of China's largest one as they converge near the Pacific Ocean. The estuary is as vast as an ocean itself, where an armada of vessels, large and small, waits in the estuary for a sea change, for shipments to be readied, for a turn at the Shànghǎi docks.

The tour boats from Shànghǎi venture only far enough out into this twilight zone of tides and currents to pivot slowly and turn back into the narrowing passageway of the Huángpǔ. The return trip is more relaxed.

TEMPLES

Confucius Temple (Wén Miào) *Finds* Built in 1855 on the site of an earlier clan temple, and most recently restored to celebrate the 2,550th birthday of Confucius in 1999, this temple honoring China's Great Sage is a quiet refuge. Inside are statues of Confucius flanked by his two disciples, Mencius (Mèngzǐ) and Yán Huí; the Zūjīng (Scripture Esteeming) Tower, a former library now containing a display of miniature rock gardens in pots; and, near the entrance, Kuíxīng Gé, a three-story, 20m (66-ft.) high pagoda, the only original structure left.

Wénmiào Lù, Nánshì District (north side of Wénmiào Lù, 1 block east of Zhōngshān Lù). Admission ¥8 (95¢). 8:30am–4:30pm. No Metro.

Jade Buddha Temple (Yùfó Sì) ★★ *Overrated* Although only dating from 1918, this temple seems centuries older, and is among the most popular with Shànghǎi visitors. It's an active Buddhist monastery, but the real emphasis appears to be on tourism. The chief attraction is the White Jade Buddha, located up a narrow set of old stairs on the second floor of the Wén Táng (hall). Carved in Burma and brought to Shànghǎi in 1881 by Huìgēn, a Chinese pilgrim, it is twice life-size (weighing 205kg/455 lb. and measuring 2m/6 ft. 7 in. tall in seated position).

Ānyuán Lù 170, Pǔtuó District (northwest Shànghǎi, Jiāngníng Lù, and Shǎnxī [Shaanxi] Běi Lù). Admission ¥15 ($1.80). 8–11am and 1–5pm. No Metro.

Jìng Ān Sì Always lively and crowded, this small, garishly decorated temple has the longest history of any shrine in Shànghǎi: about 17 centuries. Its chief antiquities are a Míng dynasty copper bell (the Hóngwǔ Bell) that weighs in at 3,175 kilograms (3.5 tons), and stone Buddhas from the Northern and Southern States Period (A.D. 420–589).

Nánjīng Xī Lù 1686, Jìng Ān District (corner of Huáshān Lù). ✆ **021/6248-6366.** Admission ¥5 (60¢). 9am–5pm. Metro: Jìng Ān Temple.

Lónghuá Sì ★★ Shànghǎi's largest temple features the city's premier pagoda (Lónghuá Tǎ). The seven-story, eight-sided, 1,000-year-old pagoda is gorgeous, but it is not open for visits. The temple is active, its main halls impressive, its courtyards crowded with incense-bearing supplicants.

Lónghuá Lù 2853, Xúhuì District. Admission ¥5 (60¢). 7am–5pm. Metro: Shànghǎi Stadium/Wàn Tǐ Guǎn (a long, unpleasant walk; take a taxi).

PARKS & GARDENS

Shànghǎi Botanical Gardens (Shànghǎi Zhíwùyuán) ★ *Kids* The city's premier garden, covering 81 hectares (200 acres), is divided into spacious sectors specializing in magnolias, peonies, azaleas, roses, osmanthus, ferns, bamboo,

maples, and conifers. The hallmark section is the "Pénjǐng Garden" (requiring a separate ¥5/60¢ admission), with hundreds of bonsai displayed in a large complex of corridors, courtyards, pools, and rockeries.

Lóngwú Lù 1111, Xúhuì District (near Novotel Yuán Lín Hotel). Admission ¥8 (95¢). 7am–5pm summer, 8am–4pm winter. Metro: South Railway Station (Xīnlónghuá), about 1.6km (1 mile) away.

MUSEUMS & MANSIONS

Lǔ Xùn Park and Memorial Hall (Lǔ Xùn Gōngyuán) Named for China's best-known 20th-century writer, Lǔ Xùn (1881–1936), who lived in this neighborhood from 1927 until his death, this park contains Lǔ Xùn's mausoleum and a new museum devoted to his life, the Lǔ Xùn Memorial Hall.

Jiāngwān Dōng Lù 146, Hóngkǒu. ✆ **021/5696-2894.** Admission ¥2 (25¢); includes Lǔ Xùn's tomb. 6am–6pm. Lǔ Xùn Memorial Hall (2288 Sìchuān Běi Lù; ✆ 021/6540-2288; admission ¥5/60¢) is open 9am–4pm. The Former Residence of Lǔ Xùn, 9am–4pm, is nearby, at 9 Dàlù Xīncūn, Shānyīn Lù), Continental Terrace Lane 132, Hóngkǒu; admission ¥4 (50¢). No Metro. Light Rail: Hóngkǒu Stadium.

Museum of Ancient Chinese Sex Culture (Zhōngguó Gǔdài Xìng Wénhuà Bówùguǎn) Although seemingly unthinkable in this puritanical empire, where the sale of pornography is still punishable by death, Shànghǎi has nevertheless become the location of China's first official sex museum (opened in 1999). Also known as the Huá Xià Sex Museum, it is the creation of Professor Liú Dálín of Shànghǎi University, and displays most of his private collection of over 1,200 sex artifacts; a retail store and coffee shop are also on the premises.

Wǔding Lù 1133. Admission ¥30 ($3.60). 10am–6pm. Metro: Jìng Ān Temple.

Ohel Moshe Synagogue (Móxī Huìtáng) Shànghǎi experienced several waves of Jewish immigration, beginning with the arrival of Sephardic Jews in the late 1840s. This synagogue, built in 1927 by the Ashkenazi Jewish community of Shànghǎi, no longer serves as a synagogue, but as a museum devoted to the Jews in Shànghǎi. The best way to visit this, as well as other sites in the Hànkǒu District that formed Shànghǎi's "Little Vienna," is on the **"Tour of Jewish Shànghǎi"** ★ conducted by appointment with Georgia Noy (✆ **021/6268-9051;** cellphone 0130/0214-6702; Shanghaijews@hotmail.com).

Cháng Yáng Lù 62, Hóngkǒu District. Free admission. Mon–Fri 9am–4:30pm. No metro.

Shànghǎi Art Museum (Shànghǎi Měishùguǎn) ★ Recently relocated to the historic library building on the northwest end of People's Park, the museum is more to be seen for its monumental interior architecture than for its art. The fastidiously restored interiors of this 1933 five-story landmark with its prominent clock tower recall colonial times when People's Park was a racecourse and the grandstand (1863) stood where this museum is now.

Nánjīng Lù 325, Huángpǔ (at Huángpí Lù). ✆ **021/6327-4030.** Admission ¥20 ($2.40). 9am–5pm. Metro: Rénmín Park.

Shànghǎi Municipal History Museum (Shànghǎi Shì Lìshǐ Bówùguǎn) ★★ Newly relocated from west Shànghǎi, this modern museum tells the story of Shànghǎi, with special attention to the colonial period from 1860 to 1949. Over 1,000 relics are housed here. Exhibits include a collection of trolley cars; dioramas of the Huángpǔ River, the Bund, and foreign concessions, evoking the street life of the period; and dozens of models of Shànghǎi's classic avenues and famous buildings. Signs are in English and Chinese.

Gate 4 (west side), Oriental Pearl TV Tower (museum is in the basement), Pǔdōng. ✆ **021/5879-3003.** Admission ¥35 ($4.20). 9am–9pm. Metro: Lùjiāzuǐ.

Shànghăi Urban Planning Centre ★ *Finds* One of the world's largest museums dedicated to showcasing urban development, this exhibit is more interesting than its dry name suggests. On the third floor is a showstopper: a vast scale-model of urban Shànghăi present and future that is subjected to an hourly light show and commentary (in Chinese only). Here is urban Shànghăi in a nutshell.

Rénmín Dà Dào 100, Huángpŭ (northeast of the Shànghăi Museum; entrance on east side, not out front). Admission ¥20 ($2.40). Wed–Sun 9am–4pm. Metro: People's Square.

Site of the First National Congress of the Communist Party (Zhōnggòng Yīdàhuìzhĭ) This stunning building of brick and marble contains the room where on July 23, 1921, Máo Zédōng and 11 other Chinese revolutionaries organized the Communist Party. Supposedly the original teacups and ashtrays remain on the organizing table.

Huángpí Nán Lù 374, Lúwān (south end of Xīntiāndì Mall on Xīngyè Lù). Admission ¥3 (40¢). 9am–4pm. Metro: Huángpí Nán Lù.

Soong Ching-ling's Former Residence (Sòng Qìnglíng Gùjū) ★ Soong Ching-ling (1893–1981) is revered throughout China as a loyalist to the Communist cause. Born in Shànghăi to a wealthy family, she married the founder of the Chinese Republic, Dr. Sun Yat-sen, in 1915. This house served as her residence from 1948 to 1963. The 1920s villa is little changed; the rooms are much as Soong left them. There are even books from her college days in Wellesley, Massachusetts.

Huáihăi Zhōng Lù 1843, Xújiāhuì (near Tiāngpíng Lù). Admission ¥8 (95¢). 9–11am and 1–4:30pm. No metro.

Sun Yat-sen's Former Residence (Sūn Zhōngshān Gùjū) ★ Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925), beloved founder of the Chinese Republic (1911), lived here with his wife, Soong Ching-ling from 1918 to 1924, when the address would have been 29 Rue de Molière. Here Sun's wife later met with such literary stars as Lŭ Xùn and George Bernard Shaw, and political leaders including Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh. Visitors enter through the kitchen on the way to the dining room. The backyard has a charming garden.

Xiāngshān Lù 7, Lúwān (west of Fùxīng Park at Sīnán Lù). www.sh-sunyat-sen.com. Admission ¥8 (95¢). 9am–4pm. Metro: Shănxī (Shaanxi) Nán Lù.

Zhōu Ēnlái's Former Residence (Zhōu Gōng Guăn) China's most revered leader during the Máo years, Premier Zhōu Ēnlái (1898–1976), moved to this house in 1946. His old black Buick is still parked in the garage. Inside there are numerous photographs of Zhōu, although all explanatory signs are in Chinese only.

Sīnán Lù 73, Lúwān (2 blocks south of Fùxīng Zhōng Lù). Admission ¥2 (25¢). 9–11:30am and 1–5pm. Metro: Shănxī (Shaanxi) Nán Lù.

SPECIAL ATTRACTIONS

Húxīntíng Teahouse (Húxīntíng Cháshì) ★★ China's quintessential teahouse has floated atop the lake at the heart of Old Town, in front of Yù Gardens, since 1784. Many visitors believe it was the original model for Blue Willow tableware; at the very least, it looks the part. Take time to idle over a cup of green tea, seating yourself in front of an open window.

Yùyuán Lù 257, Nánshì (at pond in center of Old Town Bazaar). Free admission. 8:30am–10pm. Metro: Hénán Zhōng Lù.

Oriental Pearl TV Tower (Dōngfāng Míngzhū Diànshì Tă) ★ Asia's tallest structure, this high-tech tower with its rising spheres (known locally as

"twin dragons playing with pearls") affords startling panoramic views of all of Shànghǎi. High-speed elevators make a rapid ¼-mile ascent to the top where the circular observation deck (elev. 468m/1,550 ft.), equipped with telescopes, gives a view of Shànghǎi old and new, east and west, that borders on the vertiginous. However, the view from the 88th-floor observation deck of the neighboring Jīn Mào tower (high-speed elevators from basement) is even better now.

Lùjiāzuǐ Lù 2, Pǔdōng. ✆ **021/5879-1888.** Admission ¥50–¥100 ($6–$12), depending on sections visited. 8:30am–9pm. Metro: Lùjiāzuǐ.

Peace Hotel (Hépíng Fàndiàn) ★★★ Shànghǎi's number-one architectural landmark, this is an Art Deco palace, with a lobby, suites, ballroom, and rooftop that define romantic colonial Shànghǎi. It began as the Sassoon House in 1929, the private residence of Ellice Victor Sassoon, and became the Cathay Hotel, one of the world's finest international hotels in the 1930s. Stroll the wings of the old lobby, then take the elevator to the top to see the "Nine Nations" suites, usually open for viewing and each decorated in a national style. Walk from here up to the roof for a superb view.

Nánjīng Dōng Lù 20, Huángpǔ (on the Bund). Free admission. Open 24 hr. Metro: Hénán Zhōng Lù.

Shànghǎi Museum of Arts and Crafts (Shànghǎi Gōngyì Měishù Yánjiūsuǒ Jiùgōngyìpǐn Xiūfù Bù) ★ This French Concession mansion gives a fine, unretouched picture of how the colonials lived in old Shànghǎi. For many years this was the location of the Shànghǎi Arts and Crafts Research Center, and its many rooms were converted to workshops in which you could watch craftspeople produce traditional handicrafts and artwork, including paper cuts and embroidery. A few artists' studios remain, along with a formal museum of the crafts produced in Shànghǎi over the past 100 years.

Fēnyáng Lù 79, Lúwān District (at intersection of Yuèyáng Lù and Táojiāng Lù). ✆ **021/6437-3454.**Free admission. 8:30am–4:30pm. Metro: Chángshú Lù.

TOURS

Most Shànghǎi hotels have tour desks that can arrange a variety of day tours for guests. These tour desks are often extensions of **China International Travel Service (CITS),** Jīnlíng Dōng Lù 2 (✆ **021/6323-8770**). Its best branch for independent travelers is located near Shànghǎi Centre at Běijīng Xī Lù 1277 (✆ **021/6289-5400,** 021/6289-8899, or 021/6284-0025; www.scits.com).

Group tours are overpriced, but ideal if you have little time. These tours cost about ¥250 to ¥400 ($30–$48) per person. The **Jǐn Jiāng Optional Tours Center,** located near the Jǐn Jiāng and Okura Garden hotels at Chánglè Lù 191 (✆ **021/6445-9525** or 021/6466-2828), offers a typical group tour of Shànghǎi by bus, with English-speaking guide and lunch, for ¥250 ($30). Hotel desks have a wider range of group-tour itineraries to select from, but at yet higher prices. New to Shànghǎi is **Gray Line Shànghǎi,** located at Héngshān Lù 2 (✆ **021/6474-1284;** www.grayline.com), part of the international chain.

6 Shopping

Shànghǎi's top street to shop has always been **Nánjīng Road,** enhanced recently by the creation of the **Nánjīng Road Pedestrian Mall** downtown, where the most modern and the most traditional modes of retailing commingle. More popular with locals, however, is **Huáihǎi Zhōng Lù,** the wide avenue south of Nánjīng Road and parallel to it. The modern shopping malls here have better prices than you'll find on Nánjīng Road.

Some of the most interesting shopping in the French Concession is concentrated in the **Màomíng Lù** area, while the **Old Town Bazaar** is the best place to shop for local arts and crafts and for antiques.

To preview what's available and for last-minute purchases, try the **Friendship Store** at Běijīng Dōng Lù 40 (✆ **021/5308-0600;** Metro: Hénán Zhōng Lù). It's open from 9:30am to 10pm.

There are 250 **antiques** stalls located in the basement of the **Huá Bǎo Building** on "Shànghǎi Old Street" near the Temple of the Town God at Fāngbāng Zhōng Lù 265, Nánshì (✆ **021/6355-2272;** Metro: Hénán Zhōng Lù), but the chances of buying something authentic are as slim as anywhere else in China. For antique fabrics, robes, and embroidery, the best selection is at **Zhāng's Textiles,** open from 10am to 9pm at 202A Shànghǎi Centre, Nánjīng Xī Lù 1376 (✆ **021/6279-8587;** Metro: Jìng Ān Temple).

For **ceramics,** the largest shop, complete with its own museum, is the **Jǐngdézhèn Ceramics Shànghǎi Art Centre,** open from 9am to 5pm at Dàdùhé Lù 1253, Chángníng, on the west side of Chángfēng Park (✆ **021/6385-6238;** no metro). A more convenient outlet is **Shànghǎi Jǐngdézhèn Porcelain Artware,** open from 9am to 9pm at Nánjīng Xī Lù 1185 (✆ **021/6253-3178;** Metro: Jìng Ān Temple).

Pearls, jade, gold, and silver jewelry can be found at **Amy's Pearls** in Gǔběi New Town, open from 9am to 7pm at Gǔběi Lù 1445 (✆ **021/6275-3954;** no metro); and at **Lǎo Fèng Xiáng Jewelers** on the north side of the Nánjīng Road Pedestrian Mall, open from 9am to 9pm at Nánjīng Dōng Lù 438 (✆ **021/6322-0033;** Metro: Hénán Zhōng Lù). Note that there is no such thing as a bargain in precious stones and metals with an international market value, and you should not shop for such items unless you are well-versed in prices and quality standards at home, and fully equipped to tell fake from real.

Silk and wool yardage, along with a good selection of shirts, blouses, skirts, dresses, ties, sheets, and other finished silk goods, have make **Silk King** the top silk retailer in Shànghǎi. A favorite stop for visiting heads of state and other VIPs, the "King" features the local "Qífāng" brand of silk garments. Silk or wool suits can be custom tailored in as little as 24 hours. There are Silk King branches at Nánjīng Dōng Lù 66 (✆ 021/6321-2193; Metro: Hénán Zhōng Lù); at Nánjīng Xī Lù 819 (✆ 021/6215-0706 or 021/6215-3114; Metro: Shímén Yī Lù); and elsewhere in the city.

MARKETS & BAZAARS

BIRD & FLOWER MARKET ★ Located on Jiāngyīn Lù, a narrow lane connecting Huángpí Lù to Chéngdé Lù and parallel to (but south of) Nánjīng Xī Lù, just a block west of the Grand Theatre and People's Square, this market doesn't have too many birds or flowers these days, but it does have goldfish, woodcarvings, bird cages of cane, and carvers of stone chops (personal seals) in abundance. The curving street is one of the more colorful in downtown Shànghǎi. There are dozens of sidewalk vendors here, many without stalls; and there are plenty of vendors selling snacks. Generally open dawn to dusk.

DŌNGTÁI ANTIQUES MARKET ★ This market has hundreds of stalls and many permanent shops along a short lane, located on Dōngtái Lù and Liùhé Lù, 1 block west of Xīzàng Nán Lù, Lúwān (about 3 blocks south of Huáihǎi Lù). Dealers specialize in antiques, curios, porcelain, furniture, jewelry, baskets, bamboo- and wood carvings, birds, flowers, goldfish, and nostalgic bric-a-brac

from colonial and revolutionary days (especially Máo memorabilia). The market is open from 9am to 5pm.

XIĀNGYÁNG CLOTHING MARKET ★ *Finds* At the intersection of Huáihǎi Zhōng Lù and Xiāngyáng Lù, Xúhuì (between the Shǎnxī [Shaanxi] Nán Lù and Chángshú Lù metro stations), you'll find Shànghǎi's version of Běijīng's famous Silk Alley—and it is a real find. In Shànghǎi there are fewer tourists, the starting prices are noticeably lower, and the range of goods is broader than in Běijīng. This is an outdoor market, but many of the stalls are covered. Designer-label clothing and accessories are the draw. The Western-brand merchandise (jeans, shirts, coats, shoes, handbags) sells for a fraction of retail, but seconds and fakes abound, so check every button. Open from 8am to 9pm.

7 Shànghǎi After Dark

Well into the 1990s, visitors retired to their hotels after dark, unless they were part of a group tour that had arranged an evening's outing to see the Shànghǎi acrobats. Recently, however, the possibilities for an evening on the town have multiplied, and foreign residents insist that nightlife in Shànghǎi is far more exciting than in Běijīng.

THE PERFORMING ARTS

Shànghǎi acrobatics are world-renowned, and a performance by one of the local troupes makes for a diverting evening. These days the juggling, contortionism, unicycling, chair-stacking, and plate-spinning have entered the age of modern staging; performances are beginning to resemble the high-tech shows of a Las Vegas–style variety act. That's exactly what you'll see at the new **Shànghǎi Circus World,** Gònghé Xīn Lù 2266 (✆ **021/6652-1196**), a circus of many acts, headlined by acrobats. The Shànghǎi Acrobatic Troupe, one of the world's best, tours the world, but can often be found performing here at home. The **Shànghǎi Centre Theatre (Shànghǎi Shāngchéng Jùyuàn**), at Nánjīng Xī Lù 1376 (✆ **021/6279-8663**), stages a 2-hour variety show almost nightly with about 30 standard and inventive acts, from plate-spinning to magic.

Shànghǎi has its own **Chinese opera** troupe that performs Běijīng opera (*Jīng Jù*) regularly at the Yìfū Theatre at Fúzhōu Lù 701, Huángpǔ (✆ **021/6351-4668**). Most opera performances these days consist of abridgements lasting 2 hours or less (as opposed to 5 hr. or more in the old days), and with their martial arts choreography, spirited acrobatics, and brilliant costumes, these performances can be a delight even to the unaccustomed, untrained eye. Regional operas, including the Kūnjù form, are also performed in Shànghǎi. Check with your hotel desk for schedules.

JAZZ BARS

Shànghǎi was China's Jazz city in the pre-revolutionary days (before 1949), and the place to meet for drinks to music was the Peace Hotel bar—a tradition that continues to this day in the **Peace Hotel Old Jazz Bar** at 8pm nightly (Nánjīng Dōng Lù 20; ✆ **021/6321-6888**). This colonial legacy in jazz has been revived at a number of bars and cafes, including the **Ritz-Carlton Bar** (2nd floor, Nánjīng Xī Lù 1376, Shànghǎi Centre; ✆ **021/6279-8248,** ext. 5777) and the **Mezzanine Lounge** in the St. Regis Hotel (Pǔdōng; Dōngfāng Lù 889; ✆ **021/5050-4567,** ext. 6300). The **Shànghǎi International Jazz Concert Series** has been held the second week of November each year since 1996; ask your hotel

concierge for details. Visitors can also hear live jazz year-round at such spots as the **Cotton Club,** Fùxīng Xī Lù 8 (✆ **021/6437-7110**), and nightly in the stylish **House of Jazz and Blues,** Màomíng Nán Lù 158 (✆ **021/6437-5280**).

DANCE CLUBS, DISCOS & BARS

Some of the top spots to dance the night away are the Hong Kong–style **California Club** (Gāolán Lù 2, Lan Kwai Fong at Park 97); **Club Typhoon** (Yán'ān Xī Lù 2308, Gǔběi New Town), popular with ravers; **Duomo** (Nánjīng Xī Lù 1649), a dance hangout in a cathedral setting at the southeast end of Jìng Ān Park; the venerable and familiar **Hard Rock Cafe** (Nánjīng Xī Lù 1376) at Shànghǎi Centre; **Judy's Too** (Màomíng Nán Lù 176), popular with Western expatriates; and the spectacular nightspot complex in the Grand Hyatt Hotel on the Pǔdōng side, **Pu-J's** (Podium 3, Jīn Mào Tower).

Among the best bars are **Cloud Nine** and the **Sky Lounge** on the 87th and 88th floors of the Grand Hyatt Hotel/Jīn Mào Tower, Pǔdōng; the romantic **Face** (building 4, Ruìjīn Èr Lù 118) in the heart of the French Concession; **Glamour Room** (in M on the Bund, 7th floor, Guǎngdōng Lù 20), with great views; **Malone's** (Tóngrén Lù 255 near Shànghǎi Centre), Shànghǎi's best American-style pub; and **O'Malley's** (Táojiāng Lù 42, off Héngshān Lù), China's best Irish-style pub, with good food, too.

Gay-friendly nightspots (subject to change, as the scene shifts but never disappears) include **Asia Blue,** Gāolán Lù 18, near Sīnán Lù (✆ **021/5382-0680,** ext. 1999); the long-running **Eddy's 1924 Bar,** Rénmín Dà Dào 100, Basement, Urban Planning Exhibition Hall, People's Square (✆ **021/6318-1405**); **Èr Dīng Mù,** Sìpíng Lù 67 at Hǎilún Lù (✆ **021/5671-0803**); **KM,** Hǎifáng Lù 513, Jìng Ān (✆ **021/6256-4209**); and **Vogue in Kevin's,** no. 40, Lane 946, Chánglè Lù at Wūlǔmùqí Běi Lù (✆ **021/6248-8985**).

8 Sūzhōu

81km (50 miles) NW of Shànghǎi

Sūzhōu's interlocking canals, which have led it to be called the "Venice of the East," its classic gardens, and its embroidery and silk factories, are the chief surviving elements of a cultural capital that dominated China's artistic scene for long periods during the Míng and Qīng dynasties. Despite modernization, Sūzhōu remains one of the most beautiful cities in China. *Note:* For Chinese translations of selected establishments listed in this section, please turn to Appendix A.

GETTING THERE

The most popular **trains** for day-trippers from Shànghǎi include the K818 which leaves Shànghǎi at 7:40am and arrives at 8:38am; and the 5068, which departs at 8:28am and arrives at 9:37am. Return trains to Shànghǎi in the afternoon include the T731, which departs at 5:07pm and arrives at 6:30pm; and the T715, which departs at 5:54pm and arrives at 6:42pm. The **railway station, Sūzhōu Huǒchē Zhàn** (✆ **0512/6753-2831**), is in the northern part of town on Chēzhàn Lù, just west of the Rénmín Lù intersection.

Sūzhōu is also well connected by **bus** to Shànghǎi, Wúxí, and Hángzhōu. There are two main bus stations: the **Qìchē Běi Zhàn** (✆ **0512/6753-0686**) in the north; and the **Qìchē Nán Zhàn** (✆ **0512/6520-4867**) in the south. From the North Bus Station, buses depart for Shànghǎi (every 20 min. 7am–6:20pm;

90 min.; ¥26–¥30/$3.25–$3.75), Wúxī (every 30 min. 7:15am–5:50pm; 1 hr.; ¥18/$2.25), and Hángzhōu (every hour 5:30am–6:50pm; 3–4 hr.; ¥31–¥52/$3.90–$6.50).

Sūzhōu is also linked to Hángzhōu to the south by overnight passenger **boats** on the Grand Canal. Tickets cost ¥60 to ¥130 ($7.50–$16) per berth depending on class of service. They can be bought at CITS, at hotel tour desks, and at the dock itself, **Nánmén Lúnchuán Kèyùn Mǎtóu (Nánmén Passenger Boat Terminal)** at Rénmín Lù 8 (✆ **0512/6520-5720**); it's open from 6:30am to 5:30pm and is located in the southern part of town.

Check with your hotel tour desk to book a bus tour of Sūzhōu. The **Jīn Jiāng Optional Tours Center,** Chánglè Lù 191, near the Okura Garden and Jīn Jiāng hotels (✆ **021/6445-9525**), offers a convenient if overpriced 1-day group bus tour with an English-speaking guide and lunch, departing at 8am every Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, and returning in the late afternoon. The price is ¥350 ($42) for adults, ¥175 ($21) for children 2 to 11, and free for children under 2. The same tour operator can also arrange a private tour (on any day) with a guide, air-conditioned car, lunch, and door-to-door service (¥1,400/$168 for one person; ¥800/$96 each for two; ¥600/$72 each for three or four; ¥500/$60 each for five or six).

EXPLORING SŪZHŌU

Central Sūzhōu, surrounded by remnants of a moat and canals linked to the Grand Canal, has become a protected historical district, 3km by 5km (2 miles by 3 miles) across, in which little tampering and no skyscrapers are allowed. Here the outlines of old Sūzhōu are still clearly imprinted on its chessboard of canals and bridges. More than 170 bridges arch over the 32km (20 miles) of slim waterways within the moated city. The poetic private gardens number about 70, with a dozen of the finest open to public view. No other Chinese city contains such a concentration of canals and gardens.

CLASSIC GARDENS

Sūzhōu's magnificent collection of formerly private gardens, the finest surviving examples of the classic tradition, are small, exquisite jewels of landscaping art, often choked with visitors, making a slow, meditative tour difficult. Designed on principles different from those of the West, a Chinese garden fuses landscape painting and literary composition to create an art of its own in which nature is shaped but not tamed. These private classic gardens, especially those listed below, are Sūzhōu's most prized possessions.

FOREST OF LIONS GARDEN (SHĪ ZI LÍN YUÁN) ★★ Founded in 1336 by a Buddhist monk and last owned by relatives of renowned American architect I. M. Pei, this garden consists of four small lakes, a multitude of buildings, and random swirls of tortured rockeries that resemble the manes of lions. These rocks and rockeries (Sūzhōu's most elaborate) evoke the mountains of the natural world, just as the ponds evoke lakes or seas. The garden is located at Yuánlín Lù 23. Hours are from 7:30am to 5pm; admission is ¥10 ($1.20).

HUMBLE ADMINISTRATOR'S GARDEN (ZHUŌ ZHÈNG YUÁN) ★★ Usually translated as "Humble Administrator's Garden," but also translatable as "Garden of the Stupid Officials," Zhuō Zhèng Garden, which dates from the 16th century, makes complex use of the element of water. The maze of connected pools and islands seems endless. The creation of multiple vistas and the dividing of spaces into distinct segments are the garden artist's means of expanding the

compressed spaces of the estate. As visitors stroll through a small garden, new spaces and vistas open up at every turn. The garden is located at Dōng Běi Jiē 178. Hours are from 7:30am to 5pm; admission is ¥30 ($3.60).

LINGERING GARDEN (LIÚ YUÁN) ★★ This garden is the setting for the finest Tài Hú rock in China, a 6m (20-ft.) high, 5-ton contorted castle of stone called Crown of Clouds Peak. Lingering Garden is also notable for its viewing pavilions, particularly its **Mandarin Duck Hall,** which is divided into two sides: an ornate southern chamber for men and a plain northern chamber for women. Lingering Garden is located at Liúyuán Lù 80 and is open from 8:30am to 5pm; admission is ¥20 ($2.40).

MASTER OF THE NETS GARDEN (WǍNG SHĪ YUÁN) ★★★ The most perfect of Sūzhōu's gardens, this is a masterpiece of landscape compression. Hidden at the end of a blind alley, its tiny grounds have been cleverly expanded by the placement of innumerable walls, screens, and pavilion halls, producing a maze that seems endless. The halls invite rest and meditation. The most lavish hall, **Diànchūn Cottage,** furnished with palace lanterns, dark chairs and tables, and hanging scrolls, served as the model for the Astor Chinese Garden Court and Míng Furniture Room constructed in 1980 in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Master of the Nets Garden is located off Shíquán Jiē and is open from 8am to 4:30pm; admission is ¥10 ($1.20). In the summer, nightly performances by traditional music and dance troupes are staged in the garden at 7:30pm for ¥60 ($7.20).

TIGER HILL (HǓ QĪU SHĀN) ★★★ Sūzhōu's best park contains not only gardens in the classic style, but a famous pagoda and theme-park robotic figures as well. These modern additions have jazzed up the park and appeal to young children and their parents, it seems, but they are really just so much garish frosting. At the very top of Tiger Hill is the remarkable leaning pagoda **Yúnyán Tǎ (Cloud Rock Pagoda),** a seven-story work dating from A.D. 961, now safely shored up by modern engineering, although it still leans. Under the pagoda is the legendary grave of Sūzhōu's founder, Hé Lǚ, a 6th-century B.C. leader whose arsenal of 3,000 swords is also said to be buried in the park, protected by a white tiger. The most remarkable site at the foot of the Tiger Hill pagoda is a natural ledge, the **Ten Thousand People Rock,** where according to legend a rebel delivered an oratory so fiery that the rocks lined up to listen. Tiger Hill is located 3km (2 miles) northwest of the city at Hǔqiū Shān 8. It's open from 8am to 6pm; admission is ¥30 ($3.60).

WATER GATES & CANALS

Sūzhōu is not only the city of gardens, but of canals. **Pán Mén,** at Dōng Dà Lù 2, once operated as a water gate and fortress when the Grand Canal was the most important route linking Sūzhōu to the rest of China. Built in A.D. 1351, Pán Mén is the only major piece of the Sūzhōu city wall to survive. Nearby is a large arched bridge, **Wúmén Qiáo,** over the Grand Canal—the finest place to view the ever-changing traffic—and a small arched bridge over a feeder canal that connects to Pán Mén. Pán Mén also has excellent vistas of the old city. Its hours are from 8am to 5pm. The Pán Mén gatekeepers now levy an admission fee of ¥15 ($1.80), which includes a ticket to an uninteresting, recently restored royal mansion and a new, uninspiring amusement park adjacent.

Uptown, Sūzhōu is laced by narrow canals. The backs of the white houses still open to the water, and quite a bit of commerce is conducted here. The gondoliers

of Sūzhōu evoke little of the romance of vanished dynasties, but demonstrate the hard physical labor that hundreds of millions of Chinese do each day.

SILK FACTORIES

Sūzhōu is synonymous not only with gardens and canals, but also with silk. Its silk fabrics have been among the most prized in China for centuries, and the art of silk embroidery is still practiced at the highest levels. The **Museum of Sūzhōu Embroidery,** Jíngdé Lù 262, is both a factory and sales outlet that contains the most accomplished silk embroideries you'll find in China. The museum is open from 9am to 5pm; admission is free.

Another display of Sūzhōu's silk industry is offered by the wonderful **Sūzhōu No. 1 Silk Mill,** Nán Mén Lù 94, open from 9am to 6pm with free admission. This is the site of a 60-year-old silk factory where you can still see the old looms in operation. The complete history of silk and the process of its manufacture are explained by English-speaking guides. There are extensive sales rooms with silk clothing and souvenirs.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE

If you plan to spend the night in Sūzhōu, the top hotel is the five-star **Sheraton Sūzhōu Hotel & Tower (Xīláidēng Dàjiǔdiàn),** Xīn Shì Lù 388, near Pán Mén in southwest Sūzhōu (✆ **800/325-3535** or 0512/510-3388; fax 0512/510-0888). Standard rooms start at ¥1,600 ($192). Another good choice is the **Gloria Plaza Hotel Sūzhōu (Kǎilái Dàjiǔdiàn),** east of the city center at Gànjiāng Dōng Lù 535 (✆ **0512/521-8855;** fax 0512/521-8533); a standard room costs ¥1,230 ($150).

Hotel restaurants offer the best food in town and accept credit cards. An alternative, with excellent local fare, is **Sōnghèlóu (Pine and Crane Restaurant),** Guànqián Jiē 141 (✆ **0512/727-7006**), a downtown establishment that claims to have been in business since the Qiánlóng emperor visited Sūzhōu in the 18th century. The menu is strictly Sūzhōu specialties, with braised eel, sea cucumber, duck, and pork dishes. Prices are ¥30 to ¥120 ($3.60–$14) per dish. Hours are from 8am to 9pm.

9 Hángzhōu

185km (115 miles) SW of Shànghǎi

Seven centuries ago, Marco Polo pronounced Hángzhōu "the finest, most splendid city in the world . . . where so many pleasures may be found that one fancies oneself to be in Paradise." Today, Hángzhōu's claim to paradise does not lie in its streets, which are ordinary, but in its shoreline and the surrounding countryside.

The focus of Hángzhōu's exceptional beauty is **West Lake (Xī Hú).** It's a small lake, about 5km (3 miles) across and 14km (9 miles) around. You can walk the circumference in under 4 hours—longer if you linger at a temple, pavilion, cafe, or park. Two causeways—one running on the north shore, the other on the west shore—vary and shorten the journey. The islets and temples, pavilions and gardens, causeways and arched bridges of this lake have constituted the supreme example of lakeside beauty in China ever since Hángzhōu served as China's capital during the Southern Sòng dynasty (A.D. 1127–1279). *Note:* For Chinese translations of selected establishments listed in this section, please turn to Appendix A.

GETTING THERE

Dragonair and China Eastern offer between them four **flights** daily directly from Hong Kong, taking just over 2 hours. There are direct flights from most major cities across China, including at least nine daily from Běijīng, daily flights from Macau, and twice-weekly flights to Bangkok. The new Hángzhōu airport is a 30-minute drive from downtown. Taxi fare is about ¥130 ($16) including tolls. A well-signposted, air-conditioned bus service (¥20/$2.50) runs from outside the terminal to the main railway station and on to the Marco Polo hotel (not part of the Hong Kong luxury hotel group), which is also the nearest stop to Hángzhōu's premier hotel, the Shangri-La. For airport info call ✆ **0571/8666-1234.**

From Shànghǎi the fastest **train** is the T701 at 11:43am, arriving at 2pm. Soft-seat train tickets cost about ¥50 ($6) plus a typical ¥20 ($2.50) service charge if purchased from hotel tour desks. The no. 7 bus connects the railway station to downtown and to the Shangri-La Hotel for ¥1 (15¢), and its air-conditioned version, the K7, connects them for ¥2 (25¢). For train information, call ✆ **0571/5672-0222;** ticket booking is from 8am to 5pm (✆ 0571/8782-9983). **Bus** services are quicker and more frequent. There are regular departures from the East Bus Station to Shànghǎi until 7pm. There are also connections with Sūzhōu, Shàoxīng Níngbō, and Wēnzhōu.

Hángzhōu is also served by overnight passenger **boats** on the Grand Canal from Sūzhōu. The return trip to Sūzhōu is also overnight, departing daily from the Wǔlín Mén Kèyùn Mǎtóu at 5:30pm, arriving at 7:30am the next morning. Berths cost ¥65 to ¥95 ($8–$12). For information and bookings, call ✆ **0571/8515-3185.**

Check with your hotel tour desk to book a **bus tour** of Hángzhōu. The **Jǐn Jiāng Optional Tours Center,** Chánglè Lù 191, near the Okura Garden and Jǐn Jiāng hotels (✆ **021/6445-9525**), offers a convenient if expensive 1-day group bus tour with an English-speaking guide and lunch, departing at 8am every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, and returning in the late afternoon. The price is ¥500 ($60) for adults, ¥250 ($30) for children 2 to 11, and free for children under 2.

EXPLORING HÁNGZHŌU

The city surrounds West Lake, which is gorgeous. **Strolling** the lakeshore and its causeways and visiting the tiny islands by tour boat should not be missed. **Taxis** are mostly Santanas and a few Fùkāng. Flagfall is ¥10 ($1.25) for 4km (2½ miles), then ¥2 (25¢) per kilometer. Add 20% after 8km (5 miles). A taxi to the airport is around ¥130 ($16) including tolls. The flat fare for buses is ¥1 (15¢). Air-conditioned versions of the same bus route numbers preceded by a "K" are ¥2 (25¢). K7 runs from the railway station around the top of West Lake. Bus no. 27 runs out to Lóngjǐng Cūn (Dragon Well Village).

SOLITARY ISLAND (GŪSHĀN DǍO) ★ Situated just off the lake's northwest shore, this big island is connected to it by the **Xīlíng Bridge,** leading to a pavilion dedicated to poet Sū Xiǎoxiǎo, who was entombed here in A.D. 501. A roadway sweeps eastward across Solitary Island toward the city skyline, past monumental tile-roofed halls built in the style of Qīng dynasty palaces. One of these buildings is the **Zhèjiāng Provincial Museum (Zhèjiāng Shěng Bówùguǎn),** which contains the oldest grains of cultivated rice in the world,

developed 7,000 years ago in a nearby Hémǔdù village. The museum is open from 8:45am to 4pm; admission is ¥10 ($1.25).

BAI CAUSEWAY (BÁI DĪ) ★★ Solitary Island is connected to downtown Hángzhōu by Báidī, one of the two great man-made causeways that divide West Lake into three parts, and which provide the finest walking around West Lake, scenic and serene. Composed of silt dredged from the lake, this causeway runs east for half a mile, rejoining the north shore road (Běishān Lù) at **Broken Bridge (Duàn Qiáo).**

LAKESHORE PROMENADE ★ This combination walkway and roadway encircles West Lake. At Broken Bridge it joins the Bái Causeway and runs parallel to the western edge of downtown Hángzhōu. The downtown portion of the promenade is dotted with pavilions that are jammed at dawn with devotees of the latest recreational craze, Western ballroom dancing, as well as with practitioners of *tàijíquán.*

CRUISING WEST LAKE ★★ All along the lakeshore, but particularly on Húbīn Lù (Lakeside Ave.) downtown and near Solitary Island (northwest corner of West Lake), there are boats for hire, from 3m (10-ft.) heavy wooden rowboats, to small junks propelled by the owner's single oar, to full-fledged ferries—flat-bottomed launches seating 20 under an awning. To tour the lake in a small junk, you have to bargain for the fare (usually about ¥60/$7.50 for an hour on the water). The passenger ferries sell tickets for ¥35 to ¥45 ($4.40–$5.60), which includes entrance to the Island of Small Seas (below). There are ticket booths across the street from the Shangri-La Hotel and around the east side of the lake.

ISLAND OF SMALL SEAS (XIǍO YÍNG ZHŌU) ★★★ Make sure your boat docks on this island at the center of West Lake. The **Island of Small Seas** was formed during a silt-dredging operation in 1607. As a Chinese saying goes, this is "an island within a lake, a lake within an island." Its form is that of a wheel with four spokes, its bridges and dikes creating four enclosed lotus-laden ponds. The main route into the hub of this wheel is the **Bridge of Nine-Turnings,** built in 1727. Occupying the center is the magnificent **Flower and Bird Pavilion,** an exceedingly graceful structure notable for its intricate wooden railings, lattices, and moon gates. It isn't an ancient work, dating only from 1959, but it's a superb rendition of the best in traditional Chinese architecture. The pavilion is open from 8am to 5pm; admission is ¥20 ($2.40).

THREE POOLS MIRRORING THE MOON ★★ Located just off the southern shore of the Island of Small Seas, this monument consists of three little water pagodas, each about 2m (6 ft.) tall. They have "floated" like buoys on the surface of West Lake since 1621. Each pagoda has five openings. On evenings when the full moon shines on the lake, candles are placed inside. The effect is of four moons shimmering on the waters. Even by daylight, the three floating pagodas are a startling touch.

SŪ CAUSEWAY (SŪ DĪ) ★★ The best land view of the Three Pools Mirroring the Moon is from the Sū Causeway (Sūdī), the great dike that connects the north and south shores along the western side of West Lake. This pathway across West Lake has vistas as rewarding as those along the east–west Bái Causeway, but the Sū Causeway is three times as long (running nearly 3km/2 miles). Lined with weeping willows, peach trees, and shady nooks, it crosses six arched stone bridges. Locals fish and picnic along its hems.

LÍNGYǏN TEMPLE Located in the lush hills just west of West Lake, Língyǐn Temple (Temple of the Soul's Retreat) has been rebuilt a dozen times since its creation in A.D. 326. It's open from 7am to 4:30pm, to 5pm in summer; admission is ¥15 ($1.90).

The real attraction on the way to the temple is a limestone cliff, called the **Peak That Flew from Afar (Fēilái Fēng),** so named because it resembles a holy mountain in India seemingly transported to China. The peak, nearly 150m (500 ft.) high, contains four caves and about 380 Buddhist rock carvings. The most famous carving here is of a Laughing Buddha, carved in the year A.D. 1000. Scholars have deemed these stone carvings the most important of their kind in southern China.

The present temple buildings go back decades rather than centuries, but they are immense—some of the grandest temples in China. The Great Hall contains an image of Buddha, created in 1956 from 24 sections of camphor and gilded with nearly 3,000 grams (104 oz.) of gold—not a bad modern re-creation.

DRAGON WELL TEA VILLAGE West of West Lake is the village of **Dragon Well,** the capital of Hángzhōu's famous **Lóngjǐng tea,** grown only on these hillsides and revered throughout China as cool and refreshing—a favorite summertime quencher. The best tea here is still picked and processed by hand. A popular stop near the village is the **Chinese Tea Museum (Zhōngguó Cháyè Bówùguǎn),** open from 8am to 6pm. Here you can comb through its extensive displays of Chinese teas, pots, cups, and ceremonial tea implements. The admission fee of ¥10 ($1.25) includes a tea sampling and demonstration of the Chinese tea ceremony in a private tearoom.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE

If you're spending the night, the best hotel is the five-star **Shangri-La Hotel Hángzhōu (Hángzhōu Xiānggélǐlā Fàndiàn),** Běishān Lù 78, on the north shore of West Lake (✆ **800/942-5050** or 0571/8797-7951; fax 0571/8799-6637). A standard room with a hillside view goes for ¥1,650 ($198), while a room with a view of West Lake costs ¥2,000 ($240) and up. Another good choice is the **Holiday Inn Hángzhōu (Hángzhōu Jiàrì Fàndiàn),** Jiànguó Běi Lù 289, in the new central business district of northeast Hángzhōu (✆ **800/465-4329** or 0571/8527-1188; fax 0571/8527-1199), where standard rooms start at ¥1,000 ($125).

For dining, try the traditional **Lóu Wài Lóu (Pavilion Beyond Pavilion),** Gūshān Lù 30 (✆ **0571/8796-9023;** fax 0571/8702-9023), on Solitary Hill Island, between the Xīlěng Seal Engraving Society and the Zhèjiāng Library. Hours are from 11:30am to 2pm and from 5 to 8pm. Specialties, such as Beggar's Chicken, cost about ¥100 ($12) here, but a main course of local *dōngpō* pork costs half that. The Shangri-La Hotel's signature restaurant, **Shāng Palace** (✆ **0571/8797-7951**), is more elegant and also more expensive, with a dinner buffet priced at ¥200 ($24).

9

The Southeast

by Peter Neville-Hadley

The Chinese have a long tradition of considering themselves superior to everyone else, while simultaneously importing ideas, cultural traditions, religions, technology, and goods from their "barbarian" neighbors as much as any other people with long land borders. Trade was usually declared to be merely the receiving of tribute and the generous donation of gifts.

But in the Táng, Sòng, and (foreign) Yuán dynasties, vigorous exchanges with Arabs and other seafaring nations for a while turned some coastal ports in **Guǎngdōng, Fújiàn, Zhèjiāng,** and the Yángzǐ ports of **Jiāngxī Province** into bustling cosmopolitan metropolises.

With the exception of the voyages of the eunuch Muslim admiral, Zhèng Hé, between 1405 and 1433, the Chinese did little ocean-going themselves, and were content to sit, as they saw it, at the center of things, and let the barbarians come to them.

But the arrival of the "Western Ocean barbarians," first as a trickle of 17th- and 18th-century Portuguese and Dutch, and then the 19th century's superpower, Great Britain, changed all that. Guǎngdōng, Fújiàn, and Zhèjiāng provinces were eventually forced by two "Opium Wars" to offer foreigners more than the restricted seasonal trading they'd been getting in Guǎngzhōu, and from the 1840s and 1860s to open designated coastal and then Yángzǐ (Yangtze) River towns for the permanent residence and unrestricted trade of foreigners. These were known as **treaty ports.** Jiāngxī chinaware and Fújiàn tea flowed out through them, and eventually the Chinese themselves went across the Pacific by the tens of thousands to provide cheap labor and to found the West's Chinatowns.

Rapid development has laid to waste some former treaty ports, but others have taken care to preserve their Western heritage, and some of those laced by canals have preserved areas of ancient waterfront housing of considerable charm. An hour or two inland, you'll see that farming remains as primitive as ever, but it's quite picturesque.

Railway lines are few, and shipping routes are mostly superseded by new highways cruised by rapid luxury air-conditioned buses.

Summers are hot and extremely humid around the coast; the mild months of October to March are the best times to visit, although some offshore islands are appreciated year-round for their breezes. Inland Jiāngxī suffers from drier but furnace-like summers and chilly dank winters, making spring and autumn the best times to travel. *Note:* Unless otherwise noted, hours listed for attractions and restaurants are daily.

1 Shàoxīng

Zhèjiāng Province, 58km (36 miles) SE of Hángzhōu, 128km (80 miles) W of Níngbō

Chairman Máo said, "Shàoxīng is the home of celebrities," by which he meant a lineup of officially sanctified educators, writers, proto-revolutionaries, and Communist cadres, some of whom had fame thrust upon them for propaganda reasons, but whose houses and mansions have as a result been preserved and

opened to the public. A quiet, relaxed, waterside town, Shàoxīng is the alternative to Zhèjiāng's capital, Hángzhōu (p. 438), with less reputation but with more to see. It's yet another "Venice of China," and one which you can actually explore by boat. It doesn't receive the volume of visitors it deserves.

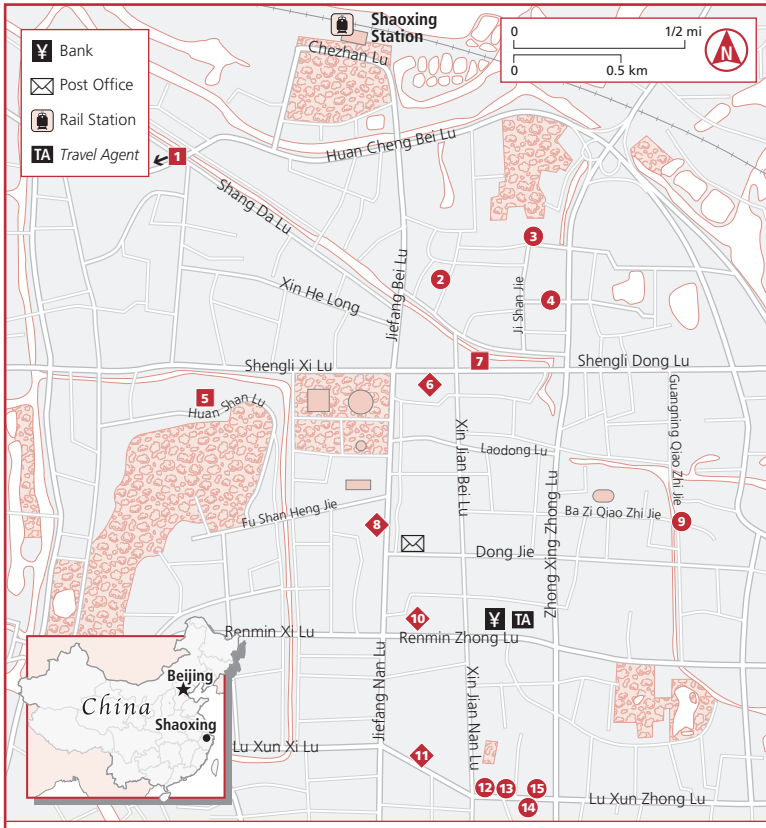
Redevelopment has been far kinder here than in most towns, and the main north–south shopping street has been rebuilt with five-story buildings that retain traditional black and white tones and other hints of local style, while housing several Hong Kong–clothing names and a lot more besides. But behind all this, many of the older streets survive in areas of ramshackle (and occasionally restored) ancient housing that unexpectedly crop up squeezed between waterways and newer construction.

The gondolas of this "Venice" are the black-awning boats *(hēi péng chuán),* narrow craft with arched, woven bamboo awnings (painted black), propelled by wiry boatmen acrobatically using hands and feet to work the oars.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The nearest **airport** is at Hángzhōu, and there's a bus from there to Shàoxīng's Wángcháo Jiǔdiàn; the trip takes 1½ hours. To get to the Hángzhōu airport from Shàoxīng, there are seven services a day between 8:30am and 5:10pm. Shàoxīng is on the **railway line** from Shànghǎi via Hángzhōu to the terminus at Níngbō but the railway carries little traffic, and buses are more frequent. There are five train services from Hángzhōu between the K869 at 7:30am and the K867 at 7:18pm. The trip takes about 2¼ hours; soft seat costs ¥19 ($9.50). Taxis are lined up to the left as you leave the railway station; buses into town leave from the right (bus nos. 1, 2, and 4 take you into the center). Leaving Shàoxīng, rail travel for longer distances involves changing at Hángzhōu; and in the case of coastal destinations to the south, it also involves long, slow loops through the interior. For train information, call ✆ **0575/802-2584;** for ticket booking, ✆ **0575/514-4422.** Agents ask a ¥10 ($1.25) commission for tickets from Shàoxīng to Hángzhōu and Shànghǎi, but ¥30 ($3.75) for hard sleepers and ¥50 ($6.25) for soft sleepers for departures from Hángzhōu—book at least 3 days in advance. Try the **Zhèjiāng Kuàijī Mountain Tour Co Ltd.,** Rénmín Zhōng Lù 45 (✆ **0575/513-9886**), which is also the main **air ticket** agency, just east of the Bank of China. Or try **CTS** at Shàoxīng Rénmín Zhōng Lù 367 (✆ **0575/511-6282**). CTS also offers English-speaking guides for a ridiculous ¥300 ($37) per day.

The main **Long Distance Bus Station (Kèyùn Zhōngxīn)** to the northeast of the city center offers highly comfortable *háohuá gāosù kōngtiáo chē,* the luxury high-speed air-conditioned buses that are a better choice than trains down the coast. Departures are announced in astonishingly clear English. Tickets are on sale at the bus station from 5:30am to 7:30pm (✆ **0575/801-8852**). Buses arrive here directly from Shànghǎi, Hángzhōu, Sūzhōu, and Wēnzhōu. There are plentiful taxis, or bus no. 3 will take you along Shènglì Dōng Lù to Jiěfàng Běi Lù at the main town square (Chéngshì Guǎngchǎng). The bus trip to Hángzhōu's **Qìchē Dōng Zhàn (East Bus Station)** is 60km (28 miles) and costs ¥19 ($2.30).There are departures every 40 minutes for Níngbō between 6:40am and 6pm, for ¥38 ($4.75); the fare for a regular bus is ¥18 ($2.20). The 239km (149-mile) bus trip to Sūzhōu costs between ¥20 and ¥51 ($2.50–$6.30), depending on the quality of bus and route taken. Shànghǎi is 230km (144 miles) by the expressway and costs ¥60 to ¥70 ($7.50–$8.75), but as little as ¥18



ACCOMMODATIONS ■

Shàoxīng Fàndiàn **5**
绍兴饭店

Shàoxīng Guójì Dàjiǔdiàn (Shàoxīng International Hotel) **1**
绍兴国际大酒店

Wángcháo Dàjiǔdiàn (Dynasty Hotel) **7**
王朝大酒店

DINING ◆

Shàngdǎo Kāfēi **10**
上岛咖啡

Shàoxīng Jiǔdiàn Xiǎochī Chéng **8**
绍兴酒店小吃城

Xiánhēng Jiǔdiàn **11**
咸亨酒店

Yuánlín Dàjiǔdiàn **6**
园林大酒店

ATTRACTIONS ●

Bā Zì Qiáo **9**
八字桥

Cài Yuánpéi Jìniànguǎn **2**
蔡元培纪念馆

Jièzhū Sì **3**
戒珠寺

Lǔ Xùn Jìniànguǎn **13**
鲁迅纪念馆

Lǔ Xùn Gùjū (former residence) **12**
鲁迅故居

Lǔ Xùn Zǔjū (ancestors' residence) **15**
鲁迅祖居

Sān Wèi Shūwū **14**
三味书屋

Shūshèng Gùlǐ (The Master Calligrapher's Native Place) **4**
书圣故里

($2.20) by regular bus on regular roads. The trip to Wēnzhōu is 350km (219 miles) and costs ¥108 ($13).

GETTING AROUND Santana and Fùkāng **taxis** have a flagfall of ¥5 (65¢) which includes 4km (2½ miles); after that, it's ¥2.20 (30¢) per kilometer. There are no "one-way" extras or night surcharges, and as a result, ***sānlúnchē*** (cycle rickshaws) tend to take over at night. They also provide all-day access to narrower streets at typically ¥3 (40¢) minimum per trip. **Buses** charge a flat fee of ¥1 (15¢) upon boarding, or up to ¥3 (40¢) on longer journeys with a conductor. Shàoxīng's center is small enough to tackle on foot, Jiěfàng Běi Lù and Jiěfàng Nán Lù being the main north–south arteries, but buses are useful for access to the Long Distance Bus Station (bus no. 9) and the railway station (bus no. 1 or 7), and for reaching sights just out of town.

VISITOR INFORMATION The official Shàoxīng website is at **www.sx.gov.cn/english/index.asp**; or call ✆ **0575/860-6879** or 0575/512-0742.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The main **Bank of China** (open 7:30am–5pm) is at Rénmín Zhōng Lù 201, west of the junction with Zhōng Xīng Zhōng Lù.

Internet Access Dial-up **163.**

Post Office The post office (open 7:30am–9:30pm) is at Dōng Jiē 27, just east of Jiěfàng Nán Lù.

FLOATING AROUND SHÀOXĪNG

According to local theory, the rivers run north–south through the town, and the streams east–west, and it's still possible to travel between certain points by boat. However, only tourists do this, and mostly at the East Lake (Dōng Hú) just outside town. But being propelled through the town itself beneath some of its ancient bridges is rather more enjoyable.

Lǔ Xùn Jìniànguǎn Lǔ Xùn is often considered China's greatest 20th-century writer, but this museum doesn't do him justice. The main point in visiting here is to buy the *tào piào,* a ticket that allows access to several neighboring Lǔ Xùn-related sites, all of which are much more interesting. The museum claims to be devoted to Lǔ Xùn's "ideological development," but fortunately there are no labels in English to put you to sleep. Still, you can see it all here, from the author's desk to his death mask, plus period clothing and models of traditional festivals.

Lǔ Xùn Zhōng Lù 393. Admission ¥30 ($3.75), which includes 2 neighboring buildings owned by his family, and where he went to school—see below. 8am–4:45pm. The museum is a 5-min. walk east of the Xiánhēng Jiǔdiàn; you'll pass the Gùjū (former residence) on the way. Bus: no. 1 from station or anywhere in Jiěfàng Lù.

Lǔ Xùn Gùjū ★ Turn right as you leave the Lǔ Xùn museum and walk back to Lǔ Xùn's former residence, almost next door. This is one of the most pleasant old buildings open to the public in Shàoxīng, dating from the early 1800s. Lǔ Xùn was born here in 1881 and lived here until his family sold the building in 1918. Alterations were made, but the layout has been "reconstructed according to the description of Lǔ's relatives and friends." The long, slender building has a series of black-pillared, white-walled courtyards on two axes, and is brightened by red-painted window screens and plants. That's the original pearwood bed in his bedroom, and it was here that he wrote his first story, *Memories of the Past.*

The Straight Story

The big bust of Lǔ Xùn (1881–1936) in the entrance hall of the Lǔ Xùn Jìniànguǎn has a Stalinesque air, but the writer wasn't one to follow Stalin's line that art should represent class struggle (even though other Chinese writers sympathetic to communism were doing so). Often labeled China's greatest 20th-century writer, Lǔ Xùn is one of the few to gain both Communist Party approval and admiration even from the Party's greatest critics. His short stories are unforgettable, bite-size pieces of pure bitterness, in which his characters' good intentions are always followed by backsliding, their attempts to change society are always thwarted by its inertia, and they are swept away by circumstances beyond their control. His most famous creation, the hapless subject of *The True Story of Ah Q,* manages to end up in front of a firing squad without having the first idea how or why, and represents the witless state of the nation as a whole.

Lǔ Xùn flays the weaknesses of Chinese character, which he blames for both China's miseries in general and for the result of the 1911 revolution, which he saw as merely the replacement of one set of scoundrels with another. Had he not died before the Communist triumph of 1949, he would have been making the same point all over again (and this museum wouldn't be here). He remains popular today even with educated young people otherwise more interested in China's emerging sex, drugs, and hanging-out-with-Westerners genre (mostly banned in China), or in books which more accurately depict the lawless underbelly of modern Chinese society than the officially approved accounts.

Lǔ Xùn's works can be picked up in English translation at many Xīnhuá Bookstores, and some can be read online at www.chinese literature.com.cn/modernliterature/ml.htm. The infrastructure may have changed, but the mind-set hasn't, and though Lǔ Xùn may have been dead for nearly 70 years, he tells it like it is.

The **Bǎi Cǎo Yuán (Hundred Grasses Garden)** at the rear was originally for vegetables but was left wild in Lǔ Xùn's day. A desire for authenticity hasn't prevented it from becoming a market garden again.

The return is down the second axis, whose rooms contain pictures of Lǔ's ancestors and other rare photographs of events during his lifetime, such as the Japanese occupation of Běijīng.

See Lǔ Xùn Jìniànguǎn listing above for admission times and fees.

Sān Wèi Shūwū Cross the road from the Lǔ Xùn Gùjū and turn left (east). The Sān Wèi Study, where Lǔ Xùn was a student from age 12 to 17, is a short way along just across a bridge to the right, beneath which several *hēi péng chuán* wallow waiting for business.

This was a private school in a late-Qīng building, of which you can see three brick-floored white-walled rooms filled with old furniture; one piece is helpfully

labeled THIS IS LŬ XÙN'S DESK. There's a brick board used for teaching calligraphy, and it's not difficult to imagine a dozen or so little pig-tailed heads bowed over trying to copy it. At the exit there's the inevitable shop, but appropriately with a calligrapher who will write whatever you like on fans. Watch how he holds the brush, hand bent upright at the wrist and rigidly gripping it partway down, his whole arm moving to make each stroke.

Admission by ticket purchase at museum or across the road at the Lŭ Xùn Zŭjū—see museum entry for times and prices.

Lŭ Xùn Zŭjū Lù's real family name was Zhōu, and for generations this was the family residence, now converted into a small but moderately interesting museum of folk customs. Some of the rooms here are labeled in English, such as the main family hall for ancestor worship, and the room where the children were given their primary education. There's a series of seven interlocking courtyards with dark, black pillars and white walls; they are quiet and cool—you could sit for hours. Intricate miniature waxworks are used to illustrate marriage customs, teahouse life, and other traditions.

Lŭ Xùn Zhōng Lù. Admission ¥30 ($3.75), which includes the 3 preceding sights. 8am–4:45pm. Bus: no. 1 from station or anywhere in Jiěfàng Lù.

Bā Zì Qiáo It is claimed that Shàoxīng has 229 bridges, but the one "in the shape of the character for 'eight'" is perhaps the most famous, and can be reached by boat or on foot from several directions, perhaps best from the south. From Rénmín Zhōng Lù, head north up the right bank of the canal. The bridge ahead at Dōng Jiē is attractive, and once you've climbed up to road level and gone down the other side on ramps, there's ancient housing to the left and right. The Bā Zì Qiáo, rebuilt during the Southern Sòng era in 1256, is straight ahead and attractively bearded with creeper, its eightness the result of long ramps with a gentle gradient to either side.

After you recross the bridge and turn left, the canal-side path runs between one- and two-story white houses up to and over the seven-sided arch of the **Guăngníng Qiáo** of 1574, then abandons the canal (which swings left), narrows,

Tips Winning the Boat Race

Puttering about the narrow backwaters of the town in one of Shàoxīng's black-awning boats is more entertaining than boating at the overrated East Lake. Pricing for the black-awning boats is regulated, so don't let any boatman persuade you otherwise. The boat takes up to three people, at a fixed rate, to each destination. Once you've finished with the Sān Wèi Shūwū and the Lŭ Xùn Zŭjū opposite, consider a trip from there to the Bā Zì Qiáo (Bridge in the Shape of the Character for "Eight") for ¥65 ($8). Compare the characters on the map key (p. 445) with those on the signboard to check current rates, but for now the prices from here are: East Lake (Dōng Hú) ¥68 ($8.50), Lŭ Xùn Wénhuà Guăngchăng (the square at the junction of Lŭ Xùn Zhōng Lù and Jiěfàng Lù, not far west of here) ¥26 ($3.25); or potter around wherever you like for ¥65 ($8) per hour. Other destinations include the less romantic Long Distance Bus Station (Kèyùn Zhōngxīn) for ¥80 ($10). Even the price of having your picture taken on a boat is regulated: ¥2 (25¢).

Honk if You Like Calligraphy

Wáng Xīzhī (ca. 303–361), known as the Sage of Calligraphy, was an official of the Eastern Jin dynasty, whose family moved to Shàoxīng in his youth. Tradition provides him with the usual perfect childhood, in which he spent so much time studying calligraphy that he would absent-mindedly dip food instead of brush into the ink when eating.

Accounts of his adult life are both more believable and more entertaining. Wáng had a penchant for geese—which seems obvious until you remember that the Chinese didn't use quills. The birds were allowed to roam his house, where they would sometimes swallow valuables, including on one occasion a string of pearls. Once he offered a monk a copy of a key Daoist text executed in his own hand and priceless even then, in order to acquire an entire flock of pedigree geese. He traveled to see a bird rumored to have a particularly beautiful call, only to find that its owner had prepared her VIP guest a goose dinner. He was miserable for days afterwards.

Although he was also skilled in formal characters and in *cǎo* (grass) style (in which characters are often scribbled with a single continuous stroke of the brush), his fame rests principally on his *xíng* (walking) style of calligraphy—a semi-cursive, free-flowing, very personal style which was to become a model for generations of student scribes.

What particularly ties him to the Shàoxīng area is what is said to be the finest calligraphy ever, the *Lán Tíng Jí Xù (Preface to the Orchid Pavilion Collection).* In 353 he invited 41 guests to a literary drinking session at the Lán Tíng (just outside town—see below), where they sat on either side of a stream down which small cups of wine were floated. Guests had to compose a poem in the time it took for the cup to float past them, and if they failed they had to drink up. One river of wine later, 26 participants had produced a volume of 35 poems, for which a warmed-up Wáng dashed off an elegant 28-line, 324-character masterpiece about what a good time they'd had. Subsequently, when sober, he was unable to reproduce the same form.

Three hundred years later, the Táng Tàizōng emperor was so taken by this document that he had copies made, and then was buried with the original. This dog-in-the-manger approach ensured immortality for Wáng and his *Preface,* although the poems it introduced are now rarely read.

and squeezes between houses. Through open doors people can be seen playing cards or mahjong, and vendors on tricycles sing out their wares (little cakes, *dòufu* skin). This alley, Guǎngníng Qiáo Zhí Jiē, ends at Shènglì Dōng Lù. A taxi, bus no. 6, or your feet can take you west to the main square.

Bā Zì Qiáo Zhí Jiē runs east from Zhōng Xīng Zhōng Lù. To follow the route above, take bus no. 22 from Jiěfàng Běi Lù to Értóng Gōngyuán stop. Continue east on the north side of the road, and take the 1st left turn after Mǎ Lòng.

Shūshèng Gùlǐ (The Master Calligrapher's Native Place) ★ Among several areas of ancient housing left standing in Shàoxīng, this is perhaps the most

pleasant, although it's been tidied up for tourists. The best entry point is from Zhōng Xīng Zhōng Lù along Qiáo Zhí Jiē, just north of the junction with Shènglì Dōng Lù, at the memorial arch *(páifang)*.

The two-story houses are constructed of stone and wood, painted white, often with their fronts to the stone-flagged street, and their backs to the waterways. At the first main junction, across the bridge, turn right into Fǔ Shān Jiē, at the top of which lies the **Jièzhū Sì** (¥5/65¢, open 8am–5:30pm), a single hall five bays wide with circular stone screens at either end carved with images of playful deer. Once the residence of Wáng Xīzhī, the Master Calligrapher himself, the hall contains a small exhibition on his life, and copies of his work.

As you return down Fǔ Shān Jiē, make your first left into a narrow street and you'll come immediately to a bridge giving views of people washing their clothes, and traditional housing hung with washing and lanterns. Across the bridge, the path at water level to the right offers plenty of photo ops and brings you back to Qiáo Zhí Jiē again. Turn back onto Fǔ Shān Jiē and left onto Bǐjià Qiáo (Pen Rack Bridge) at the end of which, past a carpenter who makes paddles and boats, you should turn left onto Bǐfēi Lòng (Flying Brush Alley) to the **Cài Yuánpéi Jìniànguǎn** (¥8/$1, open 8am–5:30pm). Another of Shàoxīng sons, Cài Yuánpéi is an official communist hero, and so his entire life (1898–1940) was apparently perfect. Nevertheless, he was genuinely a force for good in China. Although a product of the traditional Confucian imperial education system, earning its highest honors, he went on to pioneer education reform and independent thinking during the Republic, decrying traditional rote learning as vulgar, disordered, superficial, fearful, discouraging, and deceptive. However, you're here not for the hagiography but for the house, where kitchen, dining room, study, and bedroom are preserved intact.

AROUND SHÀOXĪNG

Dōng Hú (East Lake) *Overrated* Not to be mistaken for Hángzhōu's Xī Hú, although that's how it would like to be seen, the East Lake is a product of stone quarrying which produced both caves and cliffs, and a dike used to form the lake. Chinese tour groups are shuttled out here to ride in the black-awning boats. The boat fare is ¥36 ($4.50) for up to three people one-way along the lake (STRICTLY BAN ANY BOATMAN TO ASK FOR TIP FROM TOURISTS, says a helpful sign). The round-trip is ¥60 ($7.50), but one-way is fine with a 20-minute stroll back. A gnarled peasant gondolier will join a long procession of boats and take you, buzzed by dragonflies, underneath camelback bridges and in and out of hollows in the cliffs. It has all the authenticity of a fairground ride.

A short distance east of town along Yúndōng Lù. Admission ¥25 ($3). 7am–10pm. Bus: no. 1 from the station or Jiěfàng Běi Lù. You can also arrive by black-awning boat.

WALKING TOUR ĀNCHĀNG GǓ ZHÈN ★★

Getting There:	**Take bus no. 5 from Jiěfàng Nán or Běi Lù, and switch to the no. 118 after passing the Guójì Dàjiǔdiàn. The no. 118 takes about 45 minutes to reach its terminus, passing through rural-cum-industrial areas full of the textile factories which drive the local economy, as well as rice paddies, duck farms, and the sham European-style villas of the *nouveaux riches*.**
Start:	**Village entrance**
Finish:	**Same**
Time:	**3 to 4 hours**
Best Times:	**Weekdays**

Ānchāng is a charming and sleepy little waterside village northwest of Shàoxīng with much of its original architecture, which gives you some idea of what Shàoxīng must once have looked like. It receives few foreign visitors and, outside weekends and major national holidays, not many Chinese, either. Not calcified by tourism, it's a living place.

The bus drops you at the entrance, clearly marked with a *páilóu* (arch), at a left fork of the main road. A signboard shows the rough layout of the town. Walk straight into the village alongside the water.

❶ Chénghuáng Diàn

The hall of the City God (open 8am–5pm) is almost immediately on the right, and worth a brief look. Here you can also pick up your *tào piào,* allowing entry to all sights for a total of ¥20 ($2.50). Individual sights are ¥5 (65¢).

The temple is of modern reconstruction, although it was founded in 1471. It's active and, as in many small communities, it quietly doubles as a kind of community center. Offerings at the garishly decorated shrine include oil in plastic Sprite bottles.

Leaving the building, turn right, and follow the path alongside the water to:

❷ Suìkāng Qiánzhuāng

This former private bank, the Suìkāng "money manor," is a few minutes' walk past people doing their washing in the slightly stagnant green waters. You pass through a long street of wood- and brick-fronted shops, old ladies hand-sewing traditional cloth slippers, and food stalls. There are humpback bridges to the left, and white-and-gray two-story shop-houses to the right, whose wooden extensions provide shade. Explore narrow right turns to ancient housing at will as you go, one of which (see map on back of ticket) will lead you to the bank, which operated from 1850 to 1949.

Small compared to the grand-mansion banks of Píngyáo (p. 220), this bank has a pretty little plum tree in the courtyard, which the attendants say has good fruit. Its dark, woody interior contains abacuses, cash boxes, and strings of copper cash on desktops, and Sun Yat-sen glaring from samples of Nationalist-era bank notes. It's usually so quiet here that you can not only enjoy the displays, but also bird song.

Return to the main path and turn right.

The shop overhangs are supported by thin beams. You'll pass *Xiǎomàibù* (convenience stores), a pharmacy (with original wooden drawers on one side, and modern antibiotics in glass cases on the other), and a dental practice with state-of-the-art equipment, which seems completely out of place. Watch out for chickens as you stroll.

Just past the Cài Chǎng Lù turning, there's a man carving cups and other items from fragrant wood—possible souvenirs.

A teahouse on the corner at the next turn, Běi Jǐng Nòng, offers an assortment of dumplings in a shady interior. Like most operations here, it closes for a while in the early afternoon heat. There's a well-marked toilet just to the right.

A little further straight on is the town's most pleasant house, no. 6 on the ticket's map:

❸ Sīgān Táng

This is a complete delight (open 8:30am–4:30pm), with three two-story courtyards, all of which can be explored. Period beds and chairs inlaid with mother-of-pearl have no ropes to ward you off, which makes the place seem recently abandoned.

There are brief displays concerning Ānchāng's famous sons, old photos, and displays of calligraphy.

Outside, turn left and cross the water by a narrow bridge which doubles as a plant stand and a place for drying fish. Boatmen ask ¥10 ($1.25) to take you for a jaunt around the village or back to where you entered. Turn left to reach the main museum.

❹ Bǎo Shù Táng

Unless you visit this museum of local history and culture (open 8:30am–4:30pm) in April, May, September, or October, when things are busier, chances are they'll have to turn the lights on for you. There's nothing in English, of course, but the collection of farm implements, looms, beautiful old furniture, and gorgeous textiles, set in an elegant house with old lanterns and carved beams, is very attractive.

Outside, turn right, and choose any bridge to return to the village entrance; or wander at will, tracking down the remaining numbers on the map. Buses back to town leave from across the road about every 10 minutes until 6pm.

THE LÁN TÍNG & THE YUÈGUÓ WÁNG LÍNG

The major out-of-town trip pushed at visitors is the journey to the Dà Yǔ Líng, the tomb of the mythical Yǔ the Great, supposedly the tamer of the Yángzǐ River. Far more interesting, but almost unknown, is the tomb of the real-life king of the Yuè State at Seal Mount. On the way there, you can also see the leafy site of the literary party that produced the *Preface to the Orchid Pavilion Collection* (see box, "Honk if You Like Calligraphy," above).

Lán Tíng (Orchid Pavilion) This well-kept and fragrant garden, a short bus ride southwest of the city, is named for a 5th-century B.C. orchid plantation. It is full of stands of feathery bamboo and banana palms which surround temples and pavilions of fairly recent construction. Some house imperial stelae eulogize the Master Calligrapher, others have rubbings of stelae showing the poets sitting on streamside rugs, and the walls of one structure are lined with copies of the Orchid Pavilion poems. The literary event itself has been re-created annually in March since 1984.

Down a zigzag path and across a bridge is a museum of calligraphy, where there are claims that calligraphy has a 6,000- to 7,000-year history. Samples on display begin with early rune-like characters.

The stream used for the drinking game (see the "Honk if You Like Calligraphy" box, above) meanders through the site, and there's a goose pond that would have pleased Wáng Xīzhī. Just at the start of the path to the museum are stone tablets on which you can use the brushes provided to practice your characters in water—the ultimate palimpsest.

About 14km (9 miles) and 30 min. southwest of town. Admission ¥25 ($3). 7:30am–5pm. Bus: no. 3 from Jiěfàng Lù (¥1.50/20¢). 1st bus out at 6am; last bus back at 6:58pm.

Yìn Shān Yuèguó Wáng Líng ★ The 20m (55-ft.) high tomb mound, known as Seal Mount, is approached down a path between neat rice and tea plantations. At the base of the stairs, you turn right to reach the main entrance around the base of the hill. Excavation of this 2,500-year-old site began in 1998, and the center of the hill has been replaced with a modern structure that allows light straight down to the main coffin chamber.

Visitors are shown a video of the excavation process before viewing the odd coffin chamber, shaped like a giant wooden Toblerone. The coffin itself was carved from a single log, and the chamber was layered with charcoal, clay, bark, and mortar. The Yuè king buried here died in 478 B.C., and the tomb was robbed sometime before 206 B.C., although the modern excavation found a few

jade, stone, bronze, lacquer, bamboo, and wooden items, now in a small display to one side.

Admission ¥18 ($2.25). 8:30am–4:30pm. Free minibus service runs on the hour (or more frequently if people are waiting) the 2km (1¼ miles) from a turning just across the road from the Lán Tíng's main entrance.

SHOPPING

Shàoxīng souvenirs include *chòu dòufu* ("stinky" tofu), invented here, and Shàoxīng "yellow wine" (made from rice, and some of it distinctly red rather than yellow), both available in ornate jars. Shàoxīng makes 250,000 tons of wine a year, but as with the tofu, you may prefer the jar to the contents. The rear of the ground floor of the **Huáyì Gōngsī,** just south of the central square on the east side of Jiěfàng Běi Lù, has a useful market with many types of wine in ordinary bottles at supermarket prices (as well as travel snacks). Hours are from 8:30am to 9pm.

The lively **Fǔhé Jiē Shìchǎng** street market runs parallel to Jiěfàng Nán Lù on the east side, south from Lǔ Xùn Zhōng Lù. It's worth visiting more for local color than for actual shopping, although you can look out for the black felt hats *(wǔ zhān mào)* favored by the boatmen.

WHERE TO STAY

Low season, from November to March, brings significant discounts.

Shàoxīng Fàndiàn This is an attractive hilltop collection of low-rise buildings of brick and wood in local style, all white walls and curling eaves, arranged around pools stocked with fish and the odd black-awning boat for local color. Once the big official place to stay (for big officials), it has managed to keep up with the times. Buildings 1 and 3 have smaller rooms, building 5 is more upmarket with larger rooms with wooden floors, and building 6 is more luxurious still. Bathrooms stay a standard small size, but grow in amenities. The hotel has three stars but its VIP building has an upper-four-star ambience, and much of the complex was refurbished in 2000.

Huán Shān Lù 9. ✆ **0575/515-5888.** Fax 0575/515-5565. 210 units. ¥350 ($44) single room; ¥400)–¥550 ($50–$69) standard room; ¥900–¥2,600 ($113–$325) suite. Rates include breakfast. Discounts 30% or 40% (no breakfast). AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; fitness room; sauna; bowling alley; business center (Internet ¥10/$1.25 per hr.). *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge.

Shàoxīng Guójì Dàjiǔdiàn (Shàoxīng International Hotel) This four-star hotel, an oval tower with 23 floors (the top floor is a restaurant with expansive views), sits in the middle of a small lake surrounded by extensive gardens. It's Shàoxīng's best address. Guest rooms are plain but bright and fresh with pale color schemes and standard bathrooms. Higher floors have higher prices. The Chinese restaurant on the 23rd floor is surprisingly affordable, with well-prepared local dishes.

Fǔ Shān Xī Lù 100. ✆ **0575/516-6788.** Fax 0575/516-6778. sxint@mail.sxptt.zj.cnet. 308 units. ¥420–¥650 ($52–$81) standard room; ¥720–¥1,880 ($90–$235) suite. 10% tax. Discount 40%. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; indoor swimming pool; tennis courts; exercise room; sauna; bowling alley; concierge; business center. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, broadband Internet access (¥30/$3.75 per day), fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Wángcháo Dàjiǔdiàn (Dynasty Hotel) This 26-floor circular glass tower wants to be the International Hotel but it isn't, although it is the town's best three-star. Haggle to make sure breakfast is included. "Junior" rooms have no windows but can be bargained down to ¥150 ($19). Some superior twins have interesting triangular shapes, larger-than-average bathrooms and, on one side of

the hotel, views over an area of preserved old houses. Refurbished in 2002, guest rooms and bathrooms, while standard, are fresh. There's a battered rooftop "English pub" with views, and an "English corner" where students practice their English (with beer) on Thursday.

Shènglì Dōng Lù. ✆ **0575/512-5888.** Fax 0575/512-5798. dynastyh@mail.sxptt.zj.cn. 149 units. ¥260 ($33) junior room; ¥345–¥400 ($43–$50) standard room; ¥648 ($81) suite. 10% tax (usually not charged). Discounts 30%–40%. AE, DC, M, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; pool; exercise room; tour desk; airport shuttle; business center. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Xiánhēng Jiǔdiàn (Old Xiánhēng Hotel) Opened in 1998, this three-star is in battered but acceptable condition for the price (after bargaining). It's a five-story concrete building with hints of local style, handy for a lively street market and the Lǔ Xùn-related sights. Rooms are functional. The restaurant in the hotel is poor, although the one outside (see Xiánhēng Jiǔdiàn below) is of more interest.

Lǔ Xùn Zhōng Lù 179. ✆ **0575/511-6666.** Fax 0575/512-6179. 64 units. ¥280 ($35) single; ¥350–¥420 ($44–$53) standard room; ¥480 ($60) triple. Rates include breakfast. Discount 40%. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 1 from the station. **Amenities:** Restaurant; business center. *In room:* A/C, TV.

WHERE TO DINE

Eat before 7:30pm. Most kitchens close at 8pm. The Shàoxīng Guójì Dàjiǔdiàn offers a decent Western breakfast in its ground-floor coffee shop for ¥65 ($8), along with assorted Italian and Asian dishes.

Shàngdǎo Kāfēi WESTERN Branches of this Taiwanese joint venture are far better choices for something familiar than the usual American fast-food chains. Green sofas and decent coffee at Western prices (in fact, the coffee costs as much as a meal) are the signature, together with an assortment of one-plate dishes, Western and Chinese, which include hefty portions of very buttery spaghetti and decent sandwiches. **Omar Coffee,** just west of the Dynasty Hotel, is a detailed copy of the formula, with the same gauche charm.

Rénmín Zhōng Lù 239. ✆ **0575/514-0890.** Main courses ¥20–¥60 ($2.50–$7.50), mostly at the lower end. No credit cards. 8am–2am.

Shàoxīng Jiǔdiàn Xiǎochī Chéng CHINESE FAST FOOD Wander around downstairs and choose what you want, noting prices, then return to the desk next to the entrance and buy tickets to exchange for the food and drink. Any remaining tickets can be returned for a refund. All the usual snacks are well done here, *jiǎozi,* wontons *(húntun/shuǐjiǎo),* noodle dishes, and so on. There's a fuller menu and indifferent waitress service in a bright and clean upstairs space from 9:30am to 8pm. Try "drunken" chicken *(zāo xiāng yuè jī)* or shredded radish pan-fried with local fish *(luóbo sī jiān dàiyú).*

Nánguān Shízì Shíyóu Dàshà 1 Lóu. No phone. Main courses ¥20–¥60 ($2.50–$7.50). No credit cards. 6am–midnight.

Xiánhēng Jiǔdiàn SHÀOXĪNG To the right as you face the hotel of the same name, this simple, concrete-floored restaurant with moon gates between rooms is of more literary than epicurean fame, but it attempts to re-create a 19th-century wine-shop atmosphere. Originally set up in 1894 by some distant relatives of Lǔ Xùn, it became famous through his mournful short story about the eponymous intellectual bum, Kǒng Yǐjǐ. Buy tickets from a desk in the center, then point to dishes at a counter to the left, such as local specialty *chòu dòufu* ("stinky" tofu). Order a measure of rather dark, sweet, sherry-like "wine" *(tài diāo jiǔ)* from a front counter.

The restaurant actually inside the hotel has indifferent service. The dishes are cooked with Shàoxīng wine, but the prices are high for what you get. Try "stinky" tofu steamed with mincemeat (called "rotten thousand sheet steamed meat cake" or *méi qiān zhāng zhēng ròu bǐng*), and "drunken" bamboo shoots *(jiǔ niàng zāo sǔn).*

Lǔ Xùn Zhōng Lù 179. ✆ **0575/511-6666.** Meal for 2 ¥40 ($5). No credit cards. 7:30am–8pm.

Yuánlín Dàjiǔdiàn SHÀOXĪNG This large, high-ceilinged hall with modern rippled ceilings and upmarket decor is belied by inept service and tiled floors. But the local dishes are good. Try *qīng zhēng chòu dòufu* (steamed "stinky" tofu), *ròu tiáo mèn cài* (pork strips with vegetables), *Xiāo Shān luóbo gān* (shredded radish), *Yuèzhōu zāo jī* ("drunken" chicken), and *yóu zhá chòu dòufu* (fried "stinky" tofu).

Shènglì Dōng Lù 58. ✆ **0575/522-0788.** Meal for 2 ¥60 ($7.50); more for seafood. No credit cards. 10:50am–1:30pm and 4:50–8:30pm.

2 Níngbō

Zhèjiāng Province, on the coast, 186km (116 miles) E of Hángzhōu

Although Níngbō seems proud of its long history of foreign trade, the last remnants of its treaty-port-era architecture around the port were coming down as this book went to press, except for a few token buildings at the city's central Y-shaped river confluence, Sān Jiāng Kǒu.

In the Táng and Míng dynasties Níngbō was the main port for trade with Korea and Japan. At the end of the first Opium War in 1842, Britain forced the opening of Níngbō as one of five "treaty ports," and posted a consul here, who was followed by representatives of eight other nationalities.

For the visitor there's not much here to delay a trip onwards to Pǔtuó Shān or south to Fújiàn Province, beyond the odd pagoda and preserved house. The city is bustling and prosperous, and looks best at night with bridges and the old Catholic church colorfully illuminated. The center is being rebuilt in part with a brisk modernism that resembles a Silicon Valley high-tech campus more than a standard Chinese town. *Note:* For Chinese translations of selected establishments listed in this section, please turn to Appendix A.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Níngbō is connected with Běijīng (5 flights daily), Hong Kong (daily with China Eastern and occasionally with Dragonair), Guǎngzhōu (3 daily), and Shànghǎi (5 daily). There are also daily flights to major cities across the southeast. Airport buses meet arrivals and bring them to the CAAC office southeast of the center at Xīngníng Lù 91 for ¥8 ($1); the ride takes 25 minutes. Outbound buses leave from 6am to 6pm on the hour, except 1pm. Take a bus 2 hours before your flight. CAAC has telephone numbers for booking tickets with free delivery; call ✆ **0574/8783-6750** or 0574/8783-4202. For **airport inquiries,** call ✆ **0574/8742-7700.** The stylish modern **railway station** sits at the end of the line from Hángzhōu via Shàoxīng. Destinations further afield usually involve changing at Hángzhōu, so trains to Hángzhōu are comfortable all-seat daytime services: Hángzhōu ¥29 ($3.50) hard seat, ¥44 ($5.50) soft seat; Shàoxīng ¥17 ($2.10) hard, ¥28 ($3.50) soft. The ticket office (open 5:50am–7:55pm) is to the right of the railway station's main entrance. There's a left-luggage office (open 6:30am–8pm) inside the main hall. For **train**

inquiries, call ✆ **0574/8731-2084.** Ticket windows are open from 5:50am to 7pm. The main **South Bus Station** (**Qìchē Nán Zhàn;** ✆ **0574/8713-1834**) has several competing companies offering rapid luxury services to points south and west, including Hángzhōu (¥42/$5.35) every 10 minutes from 6am to 7:30pm; Shànghǎi (¥96/$12; both Héngfēng Lù and Xújiāhuì stations are served) every 15 to 20 minutes from 6:20am to 7pm; and Wēnzhōu (11 daily; ¥116/$14). A 36km (23-mile) bridge across Hángzhōu Bay, to be completed in 2005, will cut the journey from Shànghǎi by 120km (75 miles) to 179km (112 miles). The main ticket office of the South Bus Station is open from 5:20am to 7pm, but there's a separate side entrance for some departures, to the right as you face the building. Bus services in Zhèjiāng Province are punctual, comfortable, and very well run. The **Zhèjiāng Quik (Zhèjiāng Kuàikè)** company is particularly good, serving Hángzhōu and Wēnzhōu (✆ **0574/8714-2846**). The **East Station (Qìchē Dōng Zhàn)** in Yáo'ài Lù, reached by bus no. 514 from the railway station, has minibuses to out-of-town sights. Níngbō also has a variety of **sea connections** to and from Pǔtuó Shān, the easiest of which is the ¥58 ($7.25) bus-and-speedboat combination, which leaves from the **Lúnchuán Mǎtóu** (Ferry Dock), reached by bus no. 1 from the railway station. See Pǔtuó Shān, later, for more information. For **ferry inquiries** call ✆ **0574/8735-6332.**

GETTING AROUND Taxis cost ¥8 ($1) for 4km (2½ miles), then ¥1.80 (25¢) per kilometer, and 50% more after 6km (3¾ miles). Add 20% more from 10pm to 5am. Most **buses** charge a flat fare of ¥1 (15¢).

VISITOR INFORMATION For tourist information, call ✆ **0574/8885-5555.**

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs A **Bank of China** (open 8am–5:15pm; 8:40am–5:05pm weekends and holidays) is in Zhōngshān Dōng Lù, opposite a KFC. At Yàoháng Jiē 139, another Bank of China (open 8:30–11:20am, 2–5:30pm), windows 10–12 offer foreign exchange. There are no ATMs accepting foreign cards.

Internet Access The **Piàojǐng Wǎngbā** (open 8am–9pm) on Huálóu Jiē, just off Kāimíng Jiē, charges ¥3 (40¢) per hour, as do most other Internet cafes in town. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The main post office (open 7:30am–8pm) is at Sān Jiāng Kǒu, at Zhōngshān Dōng Lù and at Líng Qiáo Lù.

Visa Extensions Extensions are available from the office to the left of the **PSB**'s main tower at Zhōng Xīng Lù 658 (✆ **0574/8706-2000;** open Mon–Sat, 8:30–11am, 2–5pm).

SEEING THE SIGHTS

Sights at **Sān Jiāng Kǒu** include the **Tiān Hòu Gōng** devoted to the protector of sailors (open 8am–5pm; ¥10/$1.25) and the French-built **Catholic church** of 1872, near opposite ends of the Jiāng Xià Qiáo (bridge).

Tiān Yī Gé Bówùguǎn ★ This 16th-century library is the most famous of a collection of ancient buildings housing a fine museum of local culture and various oddities, unusually well-lit and displayed. It's not exactly crowded—if you enter from the west through the Xī Dà Mén, you may have to wake the attendant in order to buy a ticket.

The Tiān Yī Gé (1561–1566), the oldest surviving library building in China, is past some beautifully carved screens, old residences containing an unexciting literary exhibition, and a gelatinous pond. In the Níngbō style, it's six bays wide, which makes the entrance off-center.

Surrounding pavilions, in various degrees of modernization, contain exhibitions of painting and calligraphy of modest interest, but the **Bǎi É Tíng,** a pavilion made entirely of stone in imitation of wood, from bracket sets to carvings of writhing dragons, is remarkable.

The **main exhibitions** ★ are in Qīng-era (1644–1911) ancestral halls on the south side of the site (there's a map on the back of the ticket), through a passage beneath a rockery, and they concentrate on local culture and history. There's a second entrance here (the Xīnán Mén), and the displays are ordered accordingly, so walk through and start on the south side. The exhibitions include an entertaining account of the history of mahjong, labeled in English, with a series of courtyards set out with giant mahjong tiles and explanations of the origins of their symbols. A substantial bronze has three life-size characters playing the game, and you can sit to be photographed as the missing fourth. The empty chair has a promising hand, but there's no way the Chinese would miss this opportunity to triumph over foreigners, and their own man (there's also a Westerner and a Japanese in the game) is just in the process of winning with a particularly high score. The rear hall has an excellent display of sets of bone, bamboo, bronze, and plastic.

The neighboring **theatre stage *(xìtái)*** ★ suggests great wealth. Its canopy has vast upturned pointed eaves. Superb water dragons, fish, and other figures on the roof are supported by fabulously complicated bracket sets beautifully gilded and carved. Little potted plants add a further splash of color to the already fabulous red and gold detailing. The historical relics exhibition in surrounding halls has some fine objects, including bizarre urns carved with lively figures, delicate Sòng celadon ware, and an ornately detailed bridal sedan chair, all in a nicely air-conditioned if English-free interior.

Tiān Yī Jiē. Admission ¥20 ($2.50). Apr 21–Oct 21, 8am–5pm; Oct 22–Apr 20, 8am–4:30pm.

AROUND NÍNGBŌ

Bǎoguó Sì ★ Set in a leafy hillside site, this temple, founded in 845, has a Táng dynasty stele and a main hall (dated 1013), which is claimeded to be the oldest surviving wooden structure south of the Cháng Jiāng (Yángzǐ). Surrounding structures dating from the Míng and Qīng dynasties house 17 small but interesting exhibitions.

In the main hall, three caissons sit on seven layers of gradually angled bracket sets in one of the most intricate roofing structures you'll see in China. Supporting *guāléng* ("melon-like division") pillars are ribbed with eight segments, and lean alarmingly. Higher halls hold displays that include 108 statues of Guānyīn, and a 724-volume limited-edition sutra collection. The rearmost hall has a small exhibition devoted to Mínzhōu marriage customs, including a magnificent bridal sedan chair.

Admission ¥12 ($1.50). 7am–5pm. Bus: no. 332 from Xīn Mǎlù north of the ferry port to terminus (¥1/15¢; every 30 min. 5:50am–5pm).

WHERE TO STAY

Several hotels here, even modest two stars, have notices at their entrances requiring smart clothing: DRESSED IN RAGS, PLEASE DON'T ENTER. But they are just the same as shabby hotels elsewhere in China. A new Hyatt is on the way.

Jīngǎng Dàjiǔdiàn (Golden Port Hotel) Popular with Japanese tours, and well positioned close to the port for those moving on to Pǔtuó Shān, this four-star tower has superb views over the confluence of the rivers at Sān Jiāng Kǒu.The standard rooms are very plain, and the pricier rooms have bizarre pseudo-European furnishings. Still, the guest rooms are well maintained and a good size, the bathrooms standard, and the building within walking distance of the last remnants of the old foreign quarter.

Yángshàn Lù 51. ✆ **0574/8766-8888.** Fax 0574/8767-8888. www.jingang-hotel.com. 260 units. ¥580–¥960 ($73–$120) standard room; ¥1,800–¥6,800 ($225–$850) suite. 50% discounts typical. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; 2 lounges; outdoor tennis court; fitness room; sauna; bowling alley; game room; concierge; business center (Internet ¥12/$1.50 for 10 min.); forex; salon; 24-hr. room service; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, broadband Internet access (¥20/$2.50 per day), fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Nányuàn Fàndiàn This Chinese five-star hotel in a slick crinkle-fronted 28-story tower with a three-story marble-columned lobby opened in 1998, and is Níngbō's best (at least until the Hyatt shows up). The guest rooms have plain, modern furniture and well-fitted bathrooms, some with an added shower room. The hotel is Chinese-run, though, and its unrealistic pricing targets Japanese and Taiwanese on business visits. Demand is not seasonal, so aim for deep discounts.

Língqiáo Lù 2 (5 min. southeast of railway station). ✆ **0574/8709-5678.** Fax 0574/8709-7788. www.nanyuanhotel.com. 311 units. ¥860–¥1,120 ($47–$140) standard room; ¥1,210 ($151) deluxe room; ¥1,320–¥1,420 ($165–$178) executive floor; ¥1,980–¥3,380 ($248–$423) suite. A side wing has much cheaper rooms from ¥360 ($45). 15% service (not charged). 30% discounts. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; deli; 2 lounges; indoor pool; fitness room; sauna; bowling alley; game room; concierge; ticket desk; car-rental desk; business center; forex; salon; 24-hr. room service; babysitting; laundry service; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, broadband Internet access, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Níngbō Fàndiàn This dated three-star hotel with rather brown rooms delivers surprisingly good service, and is obviously aware of the need to compete with newer, glitzier addresses. Amazingly for this level, there's free in-room broadband Internet access. Guest rooms are a decent size, and bathrooms are standard and functional.

Mǎyuán Lù 65 (2 blocks north of the railway station). ✆ **0574/8709-7888.** Fax 0574/8709-7868. http://nbhotel.cnnb.net. 105 units. ¥270 ($34) single room; ¥375–¥660 ($47–$82) standard room; ¥1,100 ($138) suite. 10% service (not usually added). Discounts 30%–45%. AE, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; game room; concierge; ticket desk; car-rental desk; business center; salon; limited room service. *In room:* A/C, TV, broadband Internet access, fridge.

Yàzhōu Huāyuán Bīnguǎn (Asia Garden Hotel) Directly opposite the Níngbō Fàndiàn, this three-star wins points for the relative newness of its infrastructure (refurbished in 2001), but it loses points for service. The rooms are equally dull but adequately maintained. Some bathrooms include a proper shower cubicle.

Mǎyuán Lù 71 (2 blocks north of the railway station). ✆ **0574/8711-6888.** Fax 0574/8711-2138. 172 units. ¥380 ($48) single room; ¥520–¥680 ($65–$85) standard room; ¥1,080–¥2,800 ($135–$350) suite. 10% service charge (not usually added). Discounts 30%. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; coffee shop; concierge; business center (Internet access ¥1/15¢ per min.); salon; limited room service. *In room:* A/C, TV, broadband Internet access, fridge, hair dryer.

WHERE TO DINE

There's plenty of seafood flopping about in buckets or tanks at the entrances to restaurants, but nothing spectacular, so you might as well eat in your hotel.

There are several all-day or 24-hour **fast-food outlets** around the South Bus Station/Railway Station/Níngbō Hotel area, offering noodles from ¥3 (40¢). In

the evenings, Uighurs produce kabobs on Huálóu Jiē. The usual Western fast-food outlets are highly visible, including **McDonald's** on Zhōngshān Dōng Lù just east of the river. There's a branch of the Taiwanese **Shàngdǎo Kāfēi,** with its green sofas and usual mix of sandwiches and pastas, just south of the Níngbō Fàndiàn.

Y-Town Club (Wàitān Huìguǎn) WESTERN & JAPANESE The staff say this two-story colonnaded brick building was a French-built hospital, and it retains its colonial flavor not only in the architecture, but in the presence on the menu of pan-Asian expat favorites such as beef curry rice (including soup of the day). The interior is modern and sophisticated, and includes a piano bar and a teppanyaki restaurant. Seating on the lantern-hung balcony overlooking the town-center river confluence is pleasantly cool in the evening, and there's plenty of chilled beer to enjoy here or at tables by the water's edge.

Wài Mălù 17(on the river bank behind the old Catholic church). ✆ **0574/8735-1638.** www.y-town.com. Main courses from ¥30 ($3.75). No credit cards. 11am–midnight or later if busy.

3 Pŭtuó Shān

Zhèjiāng Province, a small island offshore from Níngbō

Pŭtuó Shān is regarded as the earthly address of Guānyīn, the Goddess of Mercy (originally Avalokitesvara, and male, turned female in China en route to Japan, where she is the equally female Kannon). The characteristic of infinite compassion for the suffering of those on earth, and a willingness to give active assistance to those who turn to him/her in extremis, have made Guānyīn the most popular figure in the Chinese Buddhist pantheon, and made the relatively low-rise Fódĭng Shān, more holy hill than holy mountain, among the most important in China.

There are multiple legends to explain the connection between the bodhisattva and this undistinguished outcrop, all dating from the 9th century, and all involving the rescue or assistance of monks, Indian, Chinese, and Japanese. In one tale, a monk taking a Guānyīn statue from Wŭtái Shān to Japan was caught in a storm, and promised to build a monastery to Guānyīn if he was rescued. An invisible hand guided his boat to Pŭtuó Shān, and he built Pŭjì Sì.

Pŭtuó Shān is a small island about 6.4km (4 miles) long, usually reached by a combination of bus and fast ferry from the mainland port of Níngbō. It's a summertime weekend holiday resort for urbanites from Shànghăi trying to escape the heat, who fly into Zhōu Shān airport on the neighboring island of Zhūjiājiān and take boats from there. Summer periods, as well as weekends for most of the year, should be avoided because hotel prices are extortionate then, as are prices in restaurants. Whatever its traditional devotion to religion, the island is now more devoted to tourism, although three Guānyīn-related ceremonies, in mid-February, June, and September, still attract the devout, and more than 500 monks are said to be resident on the island. Year-round, pilgrims can also be found prostrating themselves on the route up to the hilltop temple, Huìjì.

There's an entrance fee of ¥60 ($7.50), payable as you alight from the boat. Individual temples and other sights have charges in addition to this, of between ¥2 and ¥16 (25¢–$2).

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE There are **flights** to the nearest airport (on Zhōu Shān, a neighboring island) from major cities that include Bĕijīng (4 weekly), Shànghăi (2 or 3 daily), Xī'ān (4 weekly), and Xiàmén (daily). Returning, departure tax for

the short hop to Shànghǎi is only ¥10 ($1.25). Buses take passengers to a ferry to Pǔtuó Shān. For tickets out, try the **Pǔtuó Shān Jīchǎng Shòupiào Chù** in the main square, across from Pǔjì Sì, near the exit to the bus station. The ferry/bus link to the airport costs ¥12 ($1.50). Call ✆ **0580/609-3101** for bookings. **China Eastern** airlines has an office in the Xīlěi Xiǎo Zhuāng hotel (✆ **0580/609-1931**). Peak season is July through September.

There are regular **sailings** to Pǔtuó Shān from Níngbō, although the first half of the 2-hour, 20 minute journey is done by bus (11 departures, 6am–4:30pm), the rest by passenger speedboats called *kuàitǐng* (¥58/$7.25). The Lúndù Mǎtóu is in Wài Mǎlù, just north of Níngbō's Yǒng Jiāng and Xīn Jiāng bridges. The port *(kèyùn zhàn)* at Pǔtuó Shān has a left-luggage office in the ticket office to the left as you leave. The road up to the left is the quickest one to town, or take the bus for ¥3 (40¢) to Pǔjì Sì and neighboring hotels. A cheaper but longer sea route is via **Shěnjiāmén;** luxury buses depart from Níngbō's North bus station (Běi Zhàn) 26 times a day from around 7:10am to 4:30pm and arrive at a bus station opposite the port at Shénjiāmén, for about ¥30 ($3.75). Boats leave every 30 minutes from Pǔtuó Shān between 7am and 8pm for a fare of ¥15 ($1.90).Shěnjiāmén also has 11 daily buses directly to and from Shànghǎi; the 6-hour trip costs ¥120/$15).

There are daily direct boats to and from **Shànghǎi** taking 12 hours for ¥79 to ¥720 ($9.90–$90), and a twice-daily combination of 2½ hours by speedboat and 2 hours by bus for ¥180 to ¥220 ($23–$28). Tickets for all sailings can be bought at the pier on Pǔtuó Shān, in Shànghǎi at the main ferry ticket office on the Bund, or through agents.

GETTING AROUND **Taxis** and **pedicabs** are tiresome and unreliable, but the **minibus** service is well-regulated. Each major stop has its own line, with signs in English and clearly written prices of ¥2 to ¥6 (25¢–75¢). For those who don't want to make the penitential trudge up Fódǐng Shān (not a serious climb in holy mountain terms—under an hour), Huìjì Sì is now accessible in 10 minutes by a smart European **cable car** system.

TOURS Hotels advertise 1-day tours from ¥150 ($19) per person, but English-speaking guides are hard to find.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China** (open 8–11am, 1–4:30pm) is on Méi Cén Lù opposite the Bǎotuó Hotel.

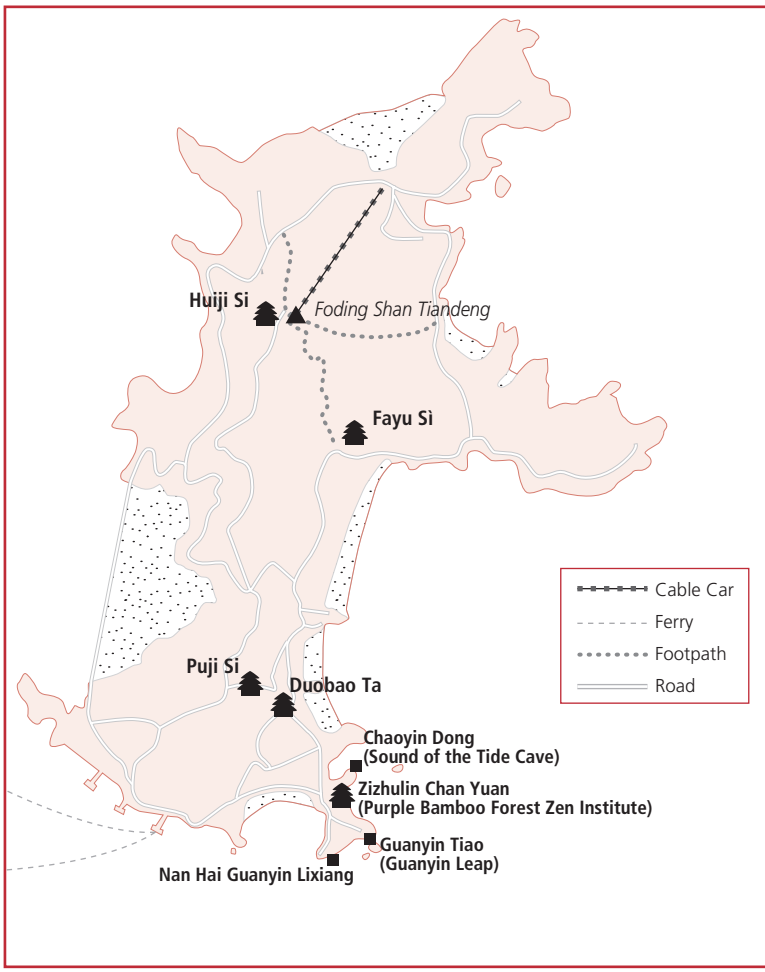
Internet Access Dial-up **163** works, but other Internet access is limited.

Post Office Located on Méi Cén Lù, the post office is open from 7:30am to 4:40pm.

A QUICK TRIP AROUND A SMALL ISLAND

Pǔtuó Shān's attractions consist of several Buddhist temples of ancient foundation but modern restoration, modern attractions designed to extract a few more *kuài* from visitors, and some scenic pleasures.

The center of activity is an area of stone-edged lotus ponds, crossed by bridges and surrounded by a number of hotels, reached by bus or by a 1km to 2km (½ mile–1¼-mile) walk from the dock. **Pǔjì Sì** (open 5:30am–6pm, ¥5/65¢) stands on the west side. Yellow roofs indicate past imperial approval, and the sound of recorded chanting reveals the temple's active and commercial bent. Inside there's a mixture of the devout, those going through the motions (just in



case), and those merely having fun. But the four heavenly kings in the first hall are good and gaudy, and the large main hall is filled with kneelers and lit-up gilded statues, all modern.

From the northeast corner of the square, walk past the battered finger of the 14th-century **Duōbǎo Tǎ** and a hotel belonging to a tobacco company, and you'll find a collection of bus stands with English signs. You can take a bus to the **Fǎyǔ Sì** and start a climb to the top of **Fódǐng Shān,** or stay on the bus a little further to the cable car *(suǒdào)* station. The cable car makes the 10-minute trip to the summit from 6:30am to 5pm for a fare of ¥25 ($3) up, ¥15 ($1.90) down, ¥35 ($4.40) round-trip. Walk uphill and turn right to reach **Huìjì Sì;** try to avoid tripping over those who've done it the hard way—a procession of muddy figures who throw themselves prostrate, stand up at the point their heads have reached, and throw themselves prostrate again, effectively measuring the entire length of the route with their bodies in a combined test of spiritual and physical fitness.

The temple (open 5am–6:30pm; ¥5/65¢) contains four particularly enormous and gaudy heavenly kings, the two white-faced ones looking rather jolly, and the same mix of piety, devotion, and sightseeing as down below. But full-scale ceremonies are also held here, with persistent percussion and chanting.

The route out of the temple is lined with souvenir sellers whose principal sales pitch is *"Lái!"* (Come!). At the junction, before taking the pilgrimage route down to **Fǎyǔ Sì,** walk 5 minutes up to **Fódǐng Shān Tiāndēng** (beacon), which is little more than a stone plinth next to a military installation bristling with aerials. But the views make the effort and the ¥2 (25¢) fee worthwhile. Particularly on a humid day, when the mist is caught between the other islands, you'll be reminded of Chinese scroll paintings, and you can see most of the other spots you might visit on the island stretched out below you, as well as "1,000 Steps Beach" and "100 Steps Beach."

Fǎyǔ Sì (open 5am–6:30pm; ¥5/65¢) is a 30-minute descent down paths and uneven stone stairs, past many a cold-drink seller. This brings you to a side door, and you do the temple in reverse. The main hall has a very large seated Buddha figure, and very lively dragons dangle from the beams. Statues of particularly life-like *luóhàn* shout, preach, beg, and grimace.

From outside the temple, buses charging ¥3 (40¢) will take you to the **Zǐzhúlín Chányuàn** (**Purple Bamboo Forest Zen Institute;** open 4:30am–6pm; ¥5/65¢), a collection of modern yellow temple buildings of dizzying gaudiness. There's a substantial recumbent Buddha, and some fine perforated stone screens at the rear exit—note the expressive faces of the figures—which heads to an imitation Táng-style hall, above the **Cháoyīn Dòng (Sound of the Tide Cave).** When the sea rushes in, the cave reproduces the sound of chanting (if you have a highly active imagination).

Back beyond the main entrance, paths lead left to the **Guānyīn Tiào** (**Guānyīn Leap;** open 6am–6pm; ¥2/25¢)**,** a prominent rock which was once a popular suicide spot. A helpful sign now prohibits this. A little further on is a brand-new but impressive 33m (109-ft.) tall statue of Guānyīn, the **Nán Hǎi Guānyīn Lìxiàng** (open 6am–6:30pm; ¥16/$2) visible for miles.

SHOPPING

Lanes leading away from the main square are packed with stores selling plaster saints, rosaries, karaoke chanting VCDs (which you may already have experienced on the boat over), dried starfish, and gewgaws galore. There are also several convenience stores with travel snacks, drinks, and mineral water.

WHERE TO STAY

Traditionally canny Chinese seem remarkably easy to fool when away from their home environment, and they will tell you that it's impossible to get a hotel room on Pǔtuó Shān for less than ¥400 ($50)—which in Chinese terms is a lot of money. July, August, and September; the first weeks of May and October; and weekends for much of the rest of the year are indeed very busy, and the hotels charge what they like. But off peak, and avoiding weekends, demand discounts of 50%, which may rise to 70% if you negotiate amiably. Even at peak times, discounts of 20% to 50% may be available.

Many hotels on Pǔtuó Shān are not open to foreign visitors. The general quality of those that are open to foreigners is above average for Chinese-run hotels, but prices are still disproportionate to the quality of service provided. The three-star, 159-room **Xīlěi Xiǎo Zhuāng,** Xiānghuá Jiē 1 (✆ **0580/609-1505;** fax

0580/609-1812), is one of the better hotels, not least because it is less greedy than some others at the more comfortable end of the scale. Built in 1991 and refurbished in 2001, the hotel is a collection of buildings, with block no. 1 the best and approaching a Chinese four-star in quality. Staff speak some English, foreign credit cards are accepted, and rooms are in general small but well-appointed. Standard rooms cost ¥493 to ¥792 ($62–$99), and suites cost ¥2,080 to ¥3,800 ($260–$475). The two-star **Bǎotuó Bīnguǎn,** Méi Cén Lù 118 (✆ **0580/609-2090;** fax 0580/609-1148), has rooms renovated in 2001 that were still fresh and comfortable at press time and were worthy of three stars elsewhere. Standard and triple rooms cost from ¥400 to ¥560 ($50–$70), and suites cost ¥1,080 ($135); off season, prices are 50% less.

If budget matters to you, talk to the people who will approach you at the dock, offering **private rooms** with common bathroom facilities for a bargainable ¥40 ($5) a bed. The legality is in doubt but a brisk business is done, and photo albums are ready with photos of the accommodations, so there seem to be no problems. If peak weekends are unavoidable, take the route from Níngbō via Shěnjiāmén, and stay there. There are several modest hotels near the port bus station, and more upmarket accommodations in the center of town, near the main bus station (at which buses to the port first stop).

WHERE TO DINE

Fresh seafood is plentiful on menus on Pǔtuó Shān. It's at its cheapest at small, open-fronted restaurants on the two roads leading up from the docks, and in the cluster of store-filled alleys north of Pǔjì Sì. What you will eat will be still squirming, flopping, or slithering in tubs and bowls at the entrance until you order it.

Hotel restaurants tend to take advantage of tourists by offering both high prices and small portions, but the restaurant in the **Xīlěi Xiǎo Zhuāng** (✆ **0580/609-1505,** ext. 502; open 6:30–9am, 12:50–2pm, and 5–9pm) has a wide variety of standard Chinese dishes and a respectable vegetarian menu. A meal for two will cost around ¥100 ($13).

In the square outside Pǔjì Sì, the **Báihuà Cháyì Sùzhāi Guǎn** (✆ **0580/609-1208**) has a pleasant interior. It offers a broad vegetarian menu as well as standards, for about ¥80 ($10) for two.

4 Wēnzhōu

Zhèjiāng Province, 470km (294 miles) S of Hángzhōu, 436km (272 miles) N of Fúzhōu

Hemmed in by mountains and looking to the sea, Wēnzhōu, with its own peculiar local dialect, is an unlovely modern trading creation based on an early treaty port. It sits on a small seaside plain laced with canals, but it is no Shàoxīng. Opened by an Anglo-Chinese convention of 1876, it never amounted to much. According to early British consuls, it had once been a major trading port until the Míng dynasty but was then sunk in "hopeless apathy," 30% of the male population being opium addicts, and another 30% occasional users.

After 1949, the town was not only tainted by its foreign connections, limited as they may have been, but was seen as within striking distance of the enemy in Táiwān. Starved of government input, once private enterprise began to be permitted, it led the way. There's now often talk of "the Wēnzhōu model," which, like "socialism with Chinese characteristics," is a way of talking about raw capitalism without having to admit to the Communist Party's U-turn in so many words.

Wēnzhōu manufactures everything, particularly clothes and shoes, and is one of the world's largest producers of sex toys. It's also famous as a source of fake everything—it's said that within a week of the latest *prêt-à-porter* fashions appearing in Paris, there are knock-off versions on sale here. There's even a fake McDonald's (Màidāngláo) and KFC (Kěndéjī) combination called Màikěnjī.

Wēnzhōu taxi drivers are all said to be failed businessmen, and indeed they seem to have even less road sense than most others, racing around as if they all want to qualify for Formula 1.

The main sight is an island with a pagoda and some restored temples, and where the original British consulate has become a hotel.

Wēnzhōu is an unavoidable stopover for those heading south to Fújiàn overland, but it is also the base from which to see an extraordinary collection of corridor bridges (see "The Bridges of Tàishùn County," below). *Note:* For Chinese translations of selected establishments listed in this section, please turn to Appendix A.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Wēnzhōu is connected by **air** to 38 Chinese cities as farflung as Ürümqi, including Běijīng (2–3 flights daily), Guǎngzhōu (4–5 flights), Hángzhōu (4–5 flights), Shànghǎi (both airports 6–7 flights), and Shēnzhèn (3–5 flights). There are also five flights a week from Hong Kong. The main **CAAC ticket office (Wēnzhōu Mínháng Shòupiào Chù)** is at the junction of Mínháng Lù and Jínxiù Lù (✆ **0577/96555** domestic, **0577/883-24311** international—only Hong Kong from Wēnzhōu). Prices include ticket delivery. The airport is 25km (16 miles) east of town, served by an airport bus that makes 13 trips from 5:40am to 8pm for a fare of ¥10 ($1.25). Wēnzhōu has a **railway station** but not many useful connections; these are all to the interior, notably to Wǔchāng. The ticket office (open 8am–7pm) is at the far left side as you face the station. Left luggage is to the right; it's open from 6am to 11:40pm and charges ¥5 (65¢) per piece. The fastest way along the coast north or south is by luxury **bus** on the new coastal highways. Buses from Níngbō and Shàoxīng (4 hr.) mostly arrive at the **Xīnchéng Kèyùn Zhōngxīn Zhàn** (✆ **0577/8891-1927**), well to the southeast of the center and northeast of the railway station. This is the main station for the excellent Zhèjiāng Quik company's connections with Níngbō (13 departures 7:30am–5:10pm; ¥116/$14), Shàoxīng (9:30am and 2:40pm; ¥108/$13), and Hángzhōu (25 departures 6:40am–6:20pm; ¥120/$15). The **Wēnzhōu Kèyùn Zhōngxīn Zhàn,** south of the center, has buses to Tàishùn, a winding 191km (119 miles) away (5 hr.; ¥54/$6.50), with departures at 7am, 9am, 1:30pm, and 3:30pm. Call the operator direct at ✆ **0137/678-8822.** Despite the rural destination, the bus is large and comfortable, but tickets can only be bought on the day of travel. There are also minibuses that arrive every 30 minutes from 8am to 2pm. The ticket windows are to the left of the entrance. The **Xīn Nán Zhàn,** just west of the railway station, has buses to Fújiàn Province, but as elsewhere in China, cross-border services are more limited. The best bus to Fúzhōu is a luxury daytime sleeper bus at 8:30am (8 hr.; ¥154/$19). The bus station automatically adds ¥2 (25¢) in insurance. There's also an overnight sleeper service. The bus is a surprise: Shoes must be taken off and placed in a bag provided. Berth allocation is random, so come early. There are also services from here to Nánjīng, Shànghǎi, Guǎngzhōu, and beyond.

GETTING AROUND **Taxis** have a flagfall of ¥10 ($1.25) which includes 4km (2½ miles); after that, it's ¥1.50 (20¢) per kilometer, and 50% more after

6km (3¾ miles). Add another 20% from midnight to 5am. Public **buses** have a minimum fare of ¥1.50 (20¢); most charge that as their flat fare. There are **ferries** to Jiāngxīn Island (see below) from the Jiāngxīn Mǎtóu (dock), well-marked in English on Wàng Jiāng Dōng Lù. From the dock there are also **tourist river trips** for ¥50 ($6.25) at 6:30pm (✆ **0577/8819-9073**).

VISITOR INFORMATION For information, call ✆ **0577/8825-2269;** for complaints, call ✆ **0577/96118.** There's also a tourist information office inside the main railway station entrance on the left. No English spoken in any case.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The main branch of the **Bank of China** (open 8am–6pm) is at the east end of Rénmín Xī Lù at Xīnhé Jiē. Go to counter 4/5 *opposite* the foreign exchange sign.

Internet Access *Wǎngbā* are few and far between. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The main post office branch (open 7:30am–5:30pm) is at Xǔ Shān Lù 73. There's also a branch just east of the railway station, beyond the Wànháo Grand Hotel.

Visa Extensions The city **PSB** Aliens Entry-Exit Bureau (✆ **0577/8808-9888;** open Mon–Fri, 8:30am–noon, 2–5:30pm) is at the end of an alley on the west side of Rénmín Guǎngchǎng at Guǎngchǎng Lù Xī Gōngxié 86.

AROUND CENTRAL WĒNZHŌU

The warren of streets north of **Wǔ Mǎ Jiē,** particularly between (and along) Jiěfàng Běi Lù and Fǔqián Jiē, has a number of ancient facades and a labyrinth of girly shopping with a faint air of London's Carnaby Street in the 1960s. Wǔ Mǎ Jiē itself has been pedestrianized and received a heavy-handed restoration, although several faintly Art Deco buildings sport slightly unlikely mid-19th-century dates.

Jiāngxīn Gū Yǔ ("solitary island in the heart of the river" in a very literal translation) makes for a pleasant stroll despite the piped music from speakers in the trees and, in the evenings, the howls of the damned from the opposite shore. Or it may just be karaoke.

Small as the island is, it has a central lake and is dotted with pavilions outlined in gaudy lights, a Sòng dynasty well, a temple or two, Soviet-style heroic monuments to the People's Liberation Army, and two pagodas. The **Dōng Tǎ,** at the eastern end, built in 869 and restored in the Míng and Qīng dynasties, reportedly owes its topless state to a consular complaint about the noise of roosting birds. The local mandarin simply removed the roof. The lighthouse here, established by foreign residents, was included by the International Association of Lighthouse Authorities in 1997 on a world list of 100 historical lighthouses, and is still in service. In roughly the middle of the island's southern side, the **Xī Tǎ** was built in 969 and its most recent restoration was in 1982. Its seven six-sided stories look like freshly poured concrete. Ferries leave for the island every 30 minutes from the Jiāngxīn Mǎtóu in Wēnzhōu, from 8am to 11:30pm for ¥10 ($1.25) round-trip.

WHERE TO STAY

There are plain and simple budget accommodations around the railway station for about ¥200 ($25).

Fán Dōng Bīnguǎn An unappealing, nominally three-star hotel in a white-tile building directly opposite the Xīnnán Bus Station, just west of the railway

station, this is among the better budget accommodations in this neighborhood, and will do for those merely passing through. Modest functional guest rooms have decent bathrooms with shower cubicles. Cheap point-to-order fast food to one side, and a convenience store to the other, enable those faced with the 8-hour trip to Fúzhōu to prepare for the journey.

Wēnzhōu Dàdào, Huǒchē Zhàn Xī Shǒu. ✆ **0577/8678-5588.** Fax 0577/8678-3732. 60 units ¥228–¥318 ($28–$40) standard room; ¥358 ($45) triple. Discounts up to ¥110 ($14). No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Jiāngxīn Liáoyǎngyuàn *Finds* A rare opportunity (see also Xiàmén, p. 486) to stay in an old colonial consulate building, this one is British and dates from 1894 (the manager says 1886); it was once a workers' sanatorium. This is far from the highest class of hotel you'll see in China, but it has the merit of relative peace and quiet on Jiāngxīn Island, with views across to the city. There are only six very oddly shaped rooms, the best of which is vast and high-ceilinged with a modern bathroom and shower cubicle, and a balcony with a view across the water. Others are small with simple (or sometimes common) bathrooms. A former consular residence building to one side has dorm beds for ¥80 ($10), which includes three meals of unknown quality.

Jiāngxīn Yǔ. ✆ **0577/8820-1269.** Fax 0577/8820-1213. 6 units. Various rooms ¥200–¥500 ($25–$63). 50% discounts weekdays off peak. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant. *In room:* A/C, TV. Above on the right as you exit the ferry.

Wànháo Shāngwù Dàjiǔdiàn (Wànháo Grand Hotel) *Value* This is a smarter-than-average Chinese four-star, opened in June 2002, just east of the railway station. Although the location isn't so attractive from a visitor's point of view (*shāngwù* means "commerce"), this 16-floor tower is far and away superior to most of the dowdy, longer-established four-stars in the city center. Here there's a bright, white-marble, richly furnished oval lobby; comfortable modern furnishings in the guest rooms; shining bathrooms; and staff with that eagerness to please.

Wēnzhōu Dàdào, Huǒchē Zhàn Dōngshǒu. ✆ **0577/8808-9888.** Fax 0577/8808-9222. 201 units. ¥678–¥858 ($85–$107) standard room; ¥980–¥1,428 ($122–$178) suite. Rates include Western and Chinese breakfast plus 15% tax and service charge. 50% discounts common. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; lobby bar; tennis court; fitness room; concierge; business center with ethernet; forex (US$ cash only); salon; limited room service; 2 executive floors. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

The Taiwanese coffee shop and snack chain **Shàngdǎo Kāfēi** has six branches across Wēnzhōu, including the one at Wēndí Lù, Chéngkāi Huāyuàn 10 (✆ **0577/8865-3063**). **KFC** and **McDonald's** outlets are dotted around town, and there's a **Pizza Hut** on Wǔ Mǎ Lù.

Hǎigǎng Měishí Fáng Like all coastal towns, Wēnzhōu ought to have good seafood. This floating restaurant has brainless service, an Astroturf-like floor, and plastic chairs, but the *qīngzhēng* (steamed) fish is perfect, and there are plenty of Chinese standards on the menu. Choose your fish or seafood from the display on ice at the entrance (sold by weight) and mention a cooking method. Examples of other dishes sit on shelves, so ordering is easy.

Wàng Jiāng Dōng Lù, between the dock for ferries to Jiāngxīn Gū Yǔ and the top of Jiěfàng Běi Lù. ✆ **0577/8819-7888.** Meal for 2 ¥80 ($10). No credit cards. 10am–1:30pm and 5pm–1:30am.

Jīnwàng Jiǎo Dàjiǔdiàn This is a restaurant with ideas above its station (it serves beer in brandy glasses). It has a lifeless decor but a bustling atmosphere.

Just across the road from the river, close to the Hǎigǎng Měishí Fáng, it lacks the views and the open-air setting, but gains points for the service and the air-conditioning. Fish and seafood are sold by weight, and other dishes are displayed for point-to-choose selection. Easy.

Wàng Jiāng Dōng Lù, Jiāng Nán Lóu. ✆ **0577/819-7008.** Meal for 2 ¥80 ($10). No credit cards. 9am–2am.

THE BRIDGES OF TÀISHÙN COUNTY ★★★

Yes, corridor bridges *(láng qiáo)*—a few are the simple roofed horizontal spans as seen in *The Bridges of Madison County* (which was a big hit in China), but with Chinese characteristics. Other bridges are the spectacular, writhing affairs the Chinese call *wúgōng qiáo*—"centipede bridges"—which rear up over rivers, sometimes incorporating two-story shrines in their off-center humps. Some stand incongruously beautiful in the middle of hideous small towns, some are at rural dead ends reached by unmetalled roads and surrounded by Míng-era housing, and still others are deep in the countryside, reachable by walking down steep stone staircases—until last century the regions' highways, and still the routes by which farmers get their goods to market. The area gains no stars for its accommodations (it's often hard to pay more than ¥20/$2.50 for a bed) or its transport. But its rickety buses wind on flagstoned routes past water buffaloes pulling ploughs, guided by peasants in *suōyī*—rainwear made from tree bark. For every Lìjiāng (p. 636) and Yángshuò (p. 588) mutilated by tourism, there are a thousand other rural backwaters awaiting discovery by those willing to escape the repetitious routes of standard tours. This is one of them.

Take this trip and you're unlikely to see another foreigner. There are no forex facilities or working ATMs, and few luxuries of any kind. Although Tàishùn (also known as Luóyáng Zhèn) can be reached by sleeper bus from other points in Zhèjiāng, it's best to start from Wēnzhōu and travel light. Use your Wēnzhōu hotel or the railway station left-luggage office, and bring just a day pack. This is a quick 3- to 4-day trip, covering about four towns and 10 bridges (out of a possible 19 or 27, depending on who's counting). The best times to travel are in March and from August to October.

Catching a morning bus to **Tàishùn** will get you there in the early afternoon. It's a bustling, unprepossessing market town, and there's a chance to move straight on to peaceful **Zhōulǐng** if you wish at 2:30pm (the last departure). But a night here is worthwhile in order to see the **Xiānjū Qiáo,** and to make other preparations. You may well be accosted by accommodation touts as you leave the bus station, but turn left to find for yourself a number of small **hotels** with clean simple rooms, private bathrooms, and usually fans or air-conditioning (for which you may have to pay extra). Rooms with two or three beds cost ¥50 to ¥70 ($6.25–$8.75) after bargaining. Selecting one a little further from the bus station will make for a more peaceful night. Turn right out of the bus station and continue around to the right at the traffic circle onto Dōng Dàjiē, and you'll shortly find a Xīnhuá Shūdiàn (bookshop) on your right selling an essential map of the town and of the area for ¥5 (65¢). The next left onto Guǎngchǎng Lù will take you past a decent **bakery** (on the left—buy supplies for the journey) and the **post office** to the slightly more upmarket but overpriced **Tàishùn Bīnguǎn,** of standard dullness but with a simple point-to-choose restaurant. The newer wing has rooms with bigger-than-average bathrooms for ¥268 ($33), and triples for ¥288 ($36), with a negotiable 20% discount. A *bèngbèngchē* (onomatopoeia for motorized three-wheelers) can take you there from the bus station for ¥3 (40¢).

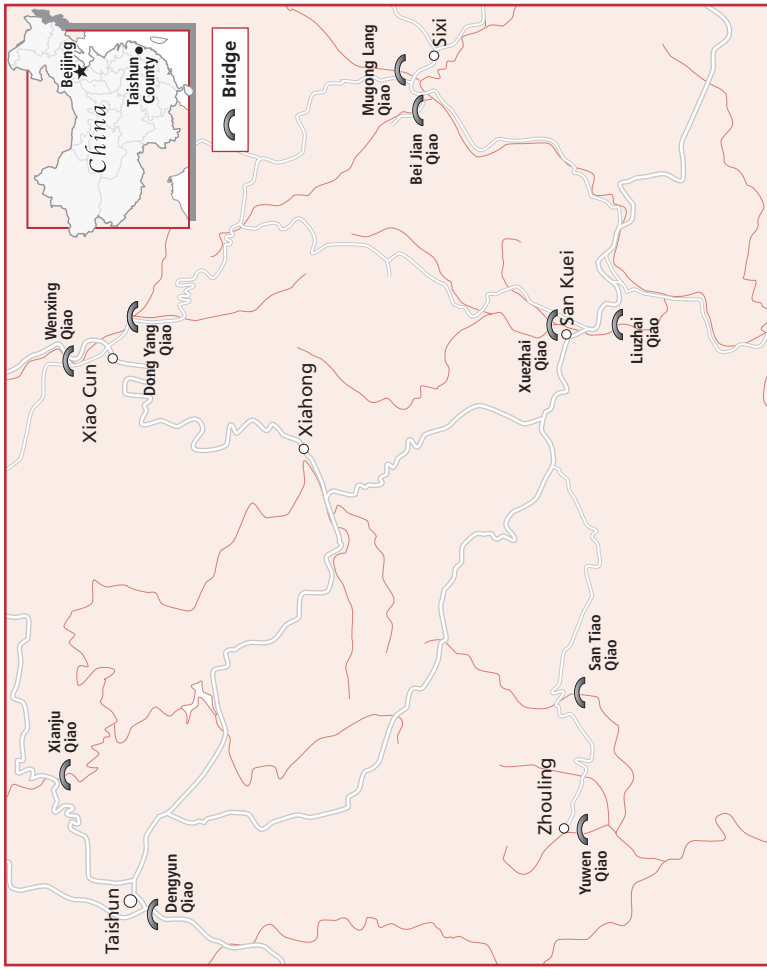
To reach the **Xiānjū Qiáo,** about 8km (5 miles) northeast, move swiftly. Surly taxis outside the bus station will take you, wait, and bring you back for the asking price of ¥50 ($6.25), but they will accept ¥30 ($3.75). Local buses to Xiānrěn will also take you down the winding road and drop you where a modern, parallel bridge provides good views of the Míng one. Repaired with some sensitivity in 2002—as much as possible of the original timber was kept, much as it probably has been in many overhauls since its Míng dynasty creation—its tiled roof forms a gentle arc, while its lower portion wears slatted skirts to protect the long timbers supporting it, and it leaps gracefully from one intricately assembled stone platform to the other.

The last bus back to town passes at about 4pm, but you may not mind. There's little traffic on the road, although you may meet a duck herder and his charges. As you wind back up the hill, there are columns of wood smoke from distant farmhouses, the loudest noise is of crickets, and the road turns from dust to ancient flagstones, passing large "armchair" tombs set in the lush hillside.

Back in town, the **Dēngyún Qiáo (Nán Mén Qiáo)** is a short walk south of the center along the bank of the stream which flows through the town, and past the revolutionary martyrs' memorial. Despite a slightly poetic name (Bridge Which Climbs the Clouds), this is a considerably more prosaic edifice—a short, level bridge like an extended, slightly shaggy garden shed supported by a central stone pontoon. The bridge is still in use by those who live nearby. *Láng qiáo* come in many different shapes and sizes, and the best are yet to come.

Buses to **Zhōulǐng** leave at 8am, 10am, and 2:30pm. The 48km (30-mile) trip takes 2¼ hours and costs ¥10 ($1.25). To see the bridge with the prettiest location, take the 8am bus and, shortly before Zhōulǐng, ask to be let off at the **Sān Tiáo Qiáo,** about 6km (3¾ miles) and 20 minutes before the village. This gives you 2 hours before the next bus passes (although you can also visit it as an excursion from the village or, with an early start, on the way back). The bridge is a 30-minute walk through lush countryside. Steps lead up the embankment to meet a cart track which winds around steep-sided hills laced with thread-like waterfalls. After a few minutes, take some shallow stone steps to the left and follow the edges of paddy fields (look lost, and farmers will direct you). The path drops away steeply, becoming a long stone staircase past rice terrace after rice terrace and the occasional mournful tethered goat bleating a greeting. Wildflowers are sprinkled at the edges of the paddies, whose waters reflect the sky, and frogs scatter at your footsteps. Finally, the bridge comes into view, looking like a small house that woke up, yawned, and stretched across the river, linking three of the beautifully stone-stepped paths which would have been the highways of their time (which is why the bridge is called "three roads bridge"). Inside, as with all the bridges, there are benches where peasants put down their bamboo shoulder poles for a rest in the shade before attempting the climb. Although plain, the bridge is perhaps Tàishùn County's oldest, first erected in the Táng dynasty (618–906). The rushing of the river, bird song, and the chirping of crickets provide the only sounds. Fújiàn Province is nearby, and you might want to wait for the afternoon bus (which should pass at about 3pm) or take one of those winding staircases and see just how far you can go.

The road, already surfaced, ends at the hamlet of **Zhōulǐng,** and the bus stops outside the only accommodation, the **Zhōulǐng Xiāng Lǚshè** (✆ **0577/6768-2368**). There's a simple restaurant and shop at the front with ridiculously cheap home cooking. Rooms on two floors above are reached through the kitchen and



entered from balconies overlooking a square mainly populated by ducks and chickens. The best beds cost ¥20 ($2.50). There are two or three beds to a room, with fan, TV, and common bathroom. Everything's clean, but the showerhead on the bathroom wall is not particularly practical. The friendly owner is also a schoolteacher and wannabe travel agent, except that there's as yet no business to speak of. His parents do the cooking and may volunteer to show you ancient Míng dynasty mansions, some of which are vast affairs home to dozens, all with the same family name. The odd slogan on the walls shows that the Cultural Revolution did reach here (*Zédōng sīxiǎng wàn suì!*—Long live [Máo] Zédōng thought!), but unlike in urban China, where the whole period is an embarrassment, no one could be bothered to erase them. The post office is in someone's front room. Chickens wander through the bank. It's desperately quiet—at least until dawn rouses a large population of cockerels, and the 6am, 7am, and 8am buses (one of which you'll want to catch) give blasts of the horn before departure.

The town's own *láng qiáo,* the **Yùwén Qiáo,** is a squarish, two-story house-like bridge, with a wooden superstructure built over a conventional stone semi-circular arch. It's only 5 minutes from the hostel along a stone-flagged path which quickly becomes no more than the lip of rice paddies. There's a rapidly rushing brown and white river a few feet below. Everything has the orderliness of the countryside, which is always in such contrast to the disorder of the cities; the iridescent green of the freshly sprouted rice and salad vegetables are arranged in neat rows. Peasants bent over paddies wear the stiff clothing woven from tree bark that gives them a slightly bat-like appearance, topped with a pointed straw hat. Much of the hillside here is covered with a local fern that manages to look like a vast flock of green birds just taking flight. A wooden staircase partway across the bridge leads to the upper story, but this is locked. Beyond the stairs, behind panes of glass, are plaster gods with bowls of incense in front of them. An enticing stairway leads up the hillside from one end of the bridge, but at the other an unpaved road passes through the end of it. A concrete lip directs traffic, but there are huge dents and scratches in the ancient pillars, some of which are knocked off-center.

Sān Kuí, on the way to Zhōulǐng, is only 1¼ hours back. It's an unlovely small town ruined by hideous new construction. But it contains a *láng qiáo* larger than others yet seen. Beds go for ¥15 ($1.90) in hostels around the bus station, but it's best to move on after seeing the two bridges here. The first bridge, the **Xuēzhái Qiáo,** is a 5-minute *bèngbèngchē* ride (¥3/40¢) from the bus station. It is bizarrely located in surroundings of ramshackle modern drabness, which would make the bridge itself drab were it not for its flamboyant roof, deep skirts, and colorful ceramic fishes on the roof, tails up, spouting water to repel fire. The bridge launches itself off steep stone buttresses to either side, and is still in use.

The **Liúzhái Qiáo** is a ¥4 (50¢) ride (fee includes waiting time and return to the bus station) back past the bus station and onward about the same distance again (it would take a maximum of 30 min. to do all this on foot). When you can't go any further due to the narrowness of the way, the driver directs you down a path past ancient houses where toothless old ladies are ankle-deep in chickens. Around past the edges of paddies, dragonflies dart at you and ducklings paddle amid the rice plants. The bridge, hidden behind a substantial three-story mud building, is only seen at the last moment. The most colorful yet, it has curly upturned eaves and resembles two gabled mansions with a horizontal two-story connecting section. The bridge is topped with yellow-bodied, blue-headed dragons with large pointed teeth and tails thrashing the air.

Dating back to 1405, the bridge is a little ramshackle and hardly looks as if it's been restored at all, except for new stonework in a buttress at one end. Benches inside give you views across trickling waters to banana palms and rice paddies, sheds of mud brick, and elegantly precise dry-stone walls retaining the rice paddies. Only a 10-minute walk from the drop-off point, the bridge is completely beyond the range of the town's rather negative atmosphere.

Wait at the station for a bus passing to **Sìxī,** which takes a beautiful winding mountain road past several modern stone bridges not lacking in elegance, and one stepping-stone river crossing. Look for the **Běi Jiàn Qiáo** on your right as you enter Sìxī. The bus will drop you at the crossroads in the center; the trip takes 30 minutes and costs ¥5 (65¢). Turn right onto Yǒng'ān Dōng Lù, and walk past an armchair grave which has had its *fēngshuǐ* seriously compromised

by white-tile construction opposite. On the right, the **Fúlín Fàndiàn** (✆ **0577/6764-1868**), two-star at best, offers standard rooms with fans and simple private bathrooms but without phone for ¥50 ($6.25). A metal-working shop across the road keeps rather late hours and competes with a karaoke operation on the ground floor. There's a simple restaurant across the road a little to the right with, typically for this area, no menu—point to some dish names from this book, or at the ingredients you want cooked, which are on display.

To reach the **Běi Jiàn Qiáo** (also known as the Xià Qiáo, or lower bridge), return to the crossroads and turn left onto Sìshuǐ Zhōng Lù, following the canyon-like street around to the right. Just outside of town, a path down to the left leads along the edge of the river to the bridge, which stands at a confluence. Two vast old trees grow from the stone base on which some ancient housing sits; the trees almost seem to be holding up the bridge and houses. The red-skirted bridge has a separate central roof with sharply pointed upturned eaves, and on its ridge there's a face-off between two lively lime-green dragons. The complexity of the interior bracketing gives this away as a Qīng rather than Míng construction. Triple niches midway house a small Buddha figure. A petition in angry red characters (making them hostile to the Chinese eye) but in respectful language is addressed to every agency conceivable, asking them to halt construction of a dam that would damage this bridge. At press time, the petition had been up for more than a year—astonishing in a country where the ruling elite brooks no dissent, and where local officials mainly run things for their own benefit.

The **Mùgǒng Láng Qiáo** (Wooden Arch Corridor Bridge)**,** also known as the Dōng Xī Qiáo (Bridge Over the East Stream) and Shàng Qiáo (Upper Bridge), is back in town and a short walk past the central crossroads within the built-up area. The broad spread of the eaves at its entrances still draw pedestrians to make the climb over the arch despite the horizontal road bridge directly alongside. The separate central roof is even more pronounced, each sharply upturned corner and each end of the ridge decorated with thrashing fish. Three interior niches are painted with dragons and *kylin* (the "Chinese unicorn," although it has 2 horns).

From the central crossroads there are two buses a day to **Xiǎo Cūn,** which pass by at around 6am and 11:30am. The 25km (15-mile) trip takes 1 hour and costs ¥8 ($1). Again, the bus will drop you at a crossroads. On Yuè Shān Xī Lù to the left is the **Ā Guó Fàndiàn** (✆ **0577/6763-5118**), with a few clean beds with common bathroom, tiled floors, and fans. The rate is ¥20 ($2.50) per bed. Below is a popular restaurant with good food at low prices. The friendly owners are keen to promote knowledge of their local *láng qiáo,* one of which, the **Wénxīng Qiáo,** is indeed the most spectacular to be seen on this trip.

The bridge is reached by turning right out of the hotel, and left at the crossroads down Wángfèng Nán Lù. There's a lively market here on the 7th, 17th, and 27th of every lunar month, full of modern misses in see-through blouses, tight jeans, and gold high heels, with mobile phones, who seem to spring out of nowhere. Busy at 8am, it's all over by 11am.

Walk out of town for 2km (1¼ miles), until at the 5.5km marker stone you see a path down to the left which winds around the paddies' edges. The Wénīng Qiáo is not a centipede, but a stretching cat. From steep stone steps the bridge makes a gradual rise, levels out, swoops to the top, and then drops steeply to the stone steps on the other side. As a result, the two-story center section with its turned-up eaves has a drunken tilt.

The central shrine seems to be fully active, and incense is lit to its three gods (responsible, from left to right, for land, the world, and domestic affairs) on the 1st and 15th of the each lunar month. You'll find a bamboo canister of sticks (*shén gōng pàn jí,* roughly "God impartially judges your luck" written on the outside) with which to tell your fortune. Shake the canister, pick a stick at random, read the number carved on the flattened end, and find the matching numbered couplet on the wall. Five signboards from different dates recount the shrine's repairs and who paid for them, which inadvertently tells you something about China's modern history: One is dated by the year of the then-reigning emperor, another suggests they don't know who's in charge, another dates to the 19th year of the Republic, and finally, in 1987, the date is from the Gregorian calendar. Currencies change, and the characters go from traditional full form to the post-reform modern simplified form.

The bridge is busy on market day, with everyone from little old ladies going shopping, to wiry farmers carrying goods to sell on shoulder poles (ducks hanging upside down by their webbed feet), to young women in spangled shoes carrying umbrellas to shade themselves from the sun. (In New China no young woman wants to be mistaken for a peasant—not even a peasant woman.) Across the bridge is a small guardhouse; above it, a path to the right leads to a charming meadow above the bridge perfect for photography.

The **Dōng Yáng Qiáo** is down Yuè Shān Dōng Lù—turn right out of the hotel and proceed straight at the crossroad. The bridge is less than 3km (less than 2 miles) out of town—a three-wheeler out here will cost ¥3 (40¢), or with waiting time and a return trip, it will cost a maximum of ¥9 ($1.10). At the .9km stone after the 41km stone, there's a small turn to the left, from which a path alongside a stream leads left to the bridge. It's buzzed by fast-moving violet butterflies and lumbering orange ones, the 747s of the butterfly world.

Dating only from the 10th year of the Republic (1921–2), the bridge is in complete contrast to its flamboyant neighbor but is of considerable charm. A narrow staircase rises parallel to the stream; turn right from it onto the short, level bridge, which has a higher central roof section and is supported by a stone pier midstream. No shrine or boards with names of donors here—the red characters stenciled on one wall mean, "It is prohibited to fish using electricity."

You can walk back to, or be dropped at, an area of ancient housing at the edge of town called **Xú Ào.** Its mid-Qīng wooden courtyard houses have remained almost completely undisturbed except by the occasional telephone and electricity pole and, in the past, by two fires—one 6, one 60 years ago. The dark wooden mansions sit on carefully assembled dry-stone bases and seem deserted except for the odd filament of wood smoke, washing hung out to dry, and recently bundled brushwood leaning against the walls of the courtyards, where ducklings wander. In neighboring fields, peasants have pulled the rice and now they're churning the fields with water-buffalo-drawn ploughs driven by rhythmic shouts and calls to turn the beast left and right.

Buses for Tàishùn pass through the crossroads every few minutes. The 36km (23-mile) trip takes 1 hour and costs ¥7.50 (90¢). The luxury buses to Wēnzhōu leave from Tàishùn at 8am, 9:10am, 1:30pm, and 2:20pm (✆ **0137/678-8822**). There are also sleeper services to Hángzhōu, Shànghǎi, Níngbō, and Xiàmén, all several hundred kilometers and a few centuries away.

5 Fúzhōu

Fújiàn Province, 436km (272 miles) S of Wēnzhōu, 310km (194 miles) N of Xiàmén

Fúzhōu is a more attractive city than Wēnzhōu to the north, but it's not of a great deal of interest. It's a useful starting point for reaching Wǔyí Shān; otherwise, proceed south to Quánzhōu or north to Zhèjiāng Province.

One of the first five treaty ports, Fúzhōu had brief success trading principally tea. Foreign tea-tasters worked long, frantic days for 6 to 9 weeks during the tea-tasting season, and idled away much of their time for the rest of the year with alcohol and billiards. Even still, they had half of their salaries left, some of which they invested in the firms for which they worked and turned into small fortunes.

At the height of the tea trade, fortunes were quickly won and lost, and tea traders lived in substantial mansions, but by 1885 all was in decline. Still, the words *tea* in English, *thé* in French, *tè* in Italian, *té* in Spanish, and *tee* in German, all indicate that tea first reached them from Fújiàn, where the local language says *te.* The old-fashioned U.K. English slang *char,* Portuguese *chá,* and so on originated in Cantonese and ports further south. *Note:* For Chinese translations of selected establishments listed in this section, please turn to Appendix A.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Shuttle buses from the **airport** run 55km (34 miles) to a turning opposite the CAAC ticketing office, which is south of the city center on Wǔyī Zhōng Lù. The shuttles depart from 6am to 7pm and cost ¥20 ($2.50). Fúzhōu has connections to 43 mainland cities, plus Hong Kong, Macau, and Bangkok (twice weekly). Mainland destinations include Běijīng (7–8 daily) Shànghǎi (1–2 daily), Guǎngzhōu (4 daily), and Xiàmén (2–5 daily). The **CAAC** office (✆ **0591/334-5988** domestic, 0591/331-4957 international), open from 8am to 8pm, gives decent discounts when they're available and delivers tickets free of charge, but check prices with other agents. Bus nos. 36 and 37 from the city center stop outside.

There's nowhere in Fújiàn Province you can't reach more quickly by bus than by **train,** since the line goes several hundred kilometers inland before turning north or south, then has to travel back out to the coast again. Wǔyí Shān is an option, with four trains daily in each direction. There's a daily train to Shànghǎi, the K164 at 2:48pm (19 hr.; ¥379/$48 soft sleeper, but the number of tiresome touts suggests there may often be a premium to pay); and a daily train to Nánjīng West, the 2002 at 11:26am (24 hr.; ¥438/$55). There's a sleeper ticket office straight ahead as you enter the ticket hall (to the left of the station as you face it). It sells tickets up to 5 days in advance from 8am to noon and 3 to 5pm. Main ticket windows are open from 8am to 7pm. Ticket agencies in town typically want a ¥10 ($1.25) commission for local destinations (Wǔyí Shān, Xiàmén) and ¥30 ($3.75) for longer distances. Left luggage is on the left of the station forecourt as you leave.

Buses from Wēnzhōu in Zhèjiāng Province arrive at the **Chángtú Qìchē Běi Zhàn** on the north side of town (✆ **0591/758-0118**) from 5:30am to 10:40pm. Connections to the north include Wēnzhōu (436km/272 miles; ¥115/$14 at 8:30am, ¥163/$20 sleeper bus at 6:15pm) and Hángzhōu (906km/565 miles; ¥260/$33 at 4pm). To the south, buses depart for Quánzhōu (13 departures 7am–7:20pm, ¥69/$8.60; and 11 departures on smaller buses 7:30am–5:40pm, ¥52/$15) and Xiàmén (310km/194 miles; every 20–30 min. 7am–7:20pm;

¥70–¥80/$8.75–$10). You can get a Mandarin speaker to call the Wēnzhōu bus operator directly at ✆ **130/5775-8315.** The **South Bus Station** on Wǔyī Zhōng Lù, open from 5:30am to 5:30pm, has tickets to all the same destinations, plus to Wǔyí Shān (369km/231 miles; ¥81–¥103/$10–$13). But the most useful services are from an efficient private operation outside the Mǐn Jiāng Fàndiàn, the (wait for it) **Fújiàn Zhōngyǒu Mǐn Jiāng Gāosù Gōnglù Kèyùn Shǐfā Zhàn** at the junction of Wǔsì Lù and Hú Dōng Lù. Inside the ticket office, open from 6am to 11pm, are photographs of all the different buses, complete with destinations and prices: Xiàmén (57 departures 6:15am–11pm, which will also drop you at Quánzhōu) and beyond, to Guǎngzhōu and Shēnzhèn. There's one sleeper service to Hong Kong (5:30pm; ¥388/$49). For bookings call ✆ **0591/760-8848** (up to 7 days in advance). There's also a useful **air ticket agency** here (✆ **0591/753-6250** domestic, 0591/754-6815 international).

GETTING AROUND Xiàlì and some Fùkāng **taxis** charge ¥7 (90¢) for 3km (1¾ miles), then ¥1.40 (20¢) per kilometer up to 5km (3 miles), and ¥2.10 (25¢) per kilometer thereafter. Santanas charge ¥8 ($1), ¥1.80 (25¢), and ¥2.70 (35¢) respectively. All taxis add 20% from 11pm to 5am. **Buses** charge a flat fare on entry (¥1/15¢, or ¥2/25¢ if air-conditioned).

VISITOR INFORMATION For tourist complaints call ✆ **0591/760-1364.**

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The main **Bank of China** (open 8am–5:45pm Mon–Fri; 8:30am–5pm weekends and holidays) is at Wǔsì Lù 136. There's an ATM outside the bank. Most other Bank of China ATMs in the city accept foreign cards, too. (If you are heading north to Zhèjiāng, note that there are almost no useful ATMs there whatsoever.)

Internet Access There are plenty of Internet cafes, usually open 24 hours and charging ¥3 (40¢) per hour. The **Jīntài Wǎngbā** is centrally located on Jīntài Lù just east of Bāyīqī Běi Lù. Dial-up is **8163.**

Post Office The main post office (open 7:30am–7:30pm) is on the corner of Dōng Jiē and Bāyīqī Běi Lù.

Visa Extensions Extensions are available at the **Provincial PSB** at Huálín Lù (✆ **0591/709-3486**). Go to the office to the left of the gate to sign in, then cross to the right for the visa office (open Mon–Fri, 8am–noon and 3–6pm).

EXPLORING FÚZHŌU

Fúzhōu's attitude towards its **treaty port** history is ambivalent. The drive south down Bāyīqī Lù towards the Jiěfàng Bridge over the Mǐn River demonstrates this well, while it also indicates the threadbare nature of China's supposedly vast economic growth. South of the junction with Gōngyè Lù, the street narrows and there are ramshackle shop-houses in wood, with the odd 100-year-old European-influenced building. On the east side, after a stretch of particularly fine higgledy-piggledy three-story wooden buildings, there's a sudden broadening of the street with halted construction to either side, then vast mansions with neoclassical porticoes and domes from mixed periods and out of scale with each other. There's shiny shopping at ground level, but it's deserted.

Just before the bridge there are even larger and more grotesque examples of petty theft from a Western architectural pattern book, including something that looks like it was supposed to turn into a large church before construction was once again halted.

"Méi yǒu qián!" says the taxi driver. "No money!" It's always like this in China, he complains. *"Kāi kāi tíng tíng, kāi kāi tíng tíng,"*—stop and start, stop and start.

Beyond the bridge, old mansions, consulates, and other buildings of the former European residents still stand, including several churches and religious institutes. Some of the old buildings have been adapted for modern purposes, their spires, turrets, crenellations, porticoes, and pillars the models for the hideousness on the north side of the river. After crossing the bridge, take any climbing path that suits you into the labyrinth around **Yāntái Shān Gōngyuán (Beacon Hill Park).** Keep your eyes open for Home Counties chimneys behind high walls topped with barbed wire or bougainvillea.

The official sights include the vast new Provincial Museum under construction in **Xī Hú Gōngyuán,** and the **City Museum** on Yú Shān, currently undergoing renovation, but check both. The cluttered and messy **Yú Shān** would once have given views over the city, but the city is now higher than the hill. A climb up a curiously modern-looking octagonal white pagoda (open 8:30am–5pm; ¥2/25¢) helps the view slightly. Of remaining temples around town, the Kāiyuán Sì is also being rebuilt, and there's little else of significance. The **Lín Zéxú Jìniànguǎn** (open 8:30am–5pm; ¥5/65¢) at Àomén Lù 16, a memorial hall for the Qīng official whose actions in confiscating and destroying foreign opium stocks in Guǎngzhōu in 1839 set off the First Opium War, is of some interest. The hall was first built in 1905 and contains the usual hagiographic displays, including a statue of the man in the "Upholding Virtue Hall" and a model depicting the famous opium burning. This is put into a modern context with a horrific exhibition of drug-related crime and suffering, including photographs of suicides still a-swing. North of the memorial hall, up Nán Hòu Jiē, there's a long stretch of surviving older housing.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE

As provincial capital, Fúzhōu has several Chinese five-star hotels, but you'd be better off staying at the brand-new **Ramada Plaza** (or, from early 2004, a new **Shangri-La**). The **Ramada (Měilún Huáměidá Guǎngchǎng Dàjiǔdiàn),** on the North Ring Road at Běi Huán Xī Lù 108 (✆ **0591/788-3999;** fax 0591/786-9613; www.ramadainternationalhotel.com), has 323 units with every modern convenience and a number of foreigners working where it matters, particularly in the restaurants. The Ramada's Plaza Café serves good Western and Asian buffets, and a Hong Kong chef in the hotel's Fortune Hall Cantonese restaurant ensures high standards there. Standard rooms cost from ¥500 ($63) and suites from ¥1,600 ($200), plus a 15% service charge, but they can be bargained well down.

Among the Chinese five-stars, the **Golden Resources International Hotel (Jīnyuán Guójì Dàjiǔdiàn),** Wēnquán Gōngyuán Lù 59 (✆ **0591/708-8888;** fax 0591/708-8999), opened in 2001, has vast and glitzy public areas and attentive staff with English speakers. Comfortably furnished guest rooms come with movie channels, piped drinking water in the bathrooms, and piped geothermally heated water in the bathtubs. The hotel is popular with businesspeople visiting the neighboring exhibition center. Standard rooms cost from ¥800 ($100), and suites cost from ¥1,380 ($172), plus a 15% service charge, with 30% discounts.

A wide range of three-star accommodations accept foreigners, including the **Jùchūnyuán Dàjiǔdiàn,** right in the center of town at Dōng Jiē 2 (✆ **0591/750-2328;** fax 0591/750-2228; www.jcy-hotel.com.cn). The hotel itself is

almost outdone by its restaurants, which overwhelm the multistory lobby—a KFC, a branch of the ubiquitous Shàngdǎo Kāfēi on the lower level, and upstairs the Jùchūnyuán restaurant, which specializes in *Fó tiào qiáng* ("Buddha jumping over the wall"). Dating back to the Míng dynasty, the dish is a kind of all-purpose stew with over 20 ingredients more connected to the dish's price than to its exceptional flavor. It includes shark's fin, abalone, and sea cucumber, and one serving costs about ¥210 ($26). The hotel's 125 surprisingly large rooms are furnished with four/five-star extras such as video-on-demand. Standard rooms cost from ¥338 ($42), but it's worth paying a little more for a higher floor—the hotel is right at the heart of the city's bustle. Triple rooms are ¥488 ($61) and suites ¥880 ($110). The service charge of 10% is not usually added, and discounts of 25% are usually available. Like the bigger hotels, this one accepts the usual foreign credit cards, but unlike them it has no forex service.

For those in a hurry for something familiar, there's a **McDonald's** and a **Pizza Hut** near the Jùchūnyuán. A row of wannabe-Western bars on Wēnquán Gōngyuán Lù, opposite the Golden Resources Hotel, have Scottish, Wild West, and Harley Davidson themes.

6 Wǔyí Shān

Fújiàn Province, 369km (231 miles) NW of Fúzhōu, 364km (228 miles) SE of Nánchāng

It's the resort area you'll need, rather than the town, and the airport and the railway station are between the two. The resort is a large village, half of which is hotels, on the east bank of the Chóngyáng Xī, with a little spillover onto the west bank, where the Fēngjǐng Qū (scenic area) can be found. This is prime Chinese tourist territory—avoid summers, the weeklong public holidays at the beginning of May and October, and weekends between those two holidays. But in November, daytime temperatures are a pleasant 59°F (15°C), just right for walking, and the trees change color prettily. *Note:* For Chinese translations of selected establishments listed in this section, please turn to Appendix A.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The **airport** is served by flights from Běijīng (at least 1 daily), Fúzhōu (daily), Guǎngzhōu (at least 1 daily), Shànghǎi (2 daily), and Xiàmén (daily). There are occasional flights from other cities. Bus no. 6 passes the airport entrance and runs the 8km (5 miles) in to the resort for ¥1 (15¢). The **railway station** is a little further from the resort, also passed by bus no. 6, and three-wheelers run a shuttle the few hundred meters to the main road. There are useful train services from Hángzhōu (509km/318 miles; ¥205/$25 soft sleeper), Nánchāng (364km/221 miles; ¥159/$20), Jiǔjiāng (499km/312 miles; ¥205/$25), Shànghǎi (710km/444 miles; ¥276/$34), Xiàmén (590km/369 miles; ¥232/$29), Quánzhōu (593km/371 miles; ¥232/$29), and other cities. Ticket offices are open from 3:30 to 5:30am, 8:30am to noon, 1:30 to 5:30pm, and 8:30 to 11:30pm. Agents in Wǔyí Shān want a ¥35 ($4.40) commission for rail tickets.

GETTING AROUND Within the resort, everything is walkable. **Bus** no. 6 is the most useful of all; coming from Wǔyí Shān town, it passes both the railway station and the airport, runs through the middle of the resort down Chóngyáng Dào, turns west along Wàngfēng Dào, crosses the Chóngyáng Xī (river), and continues to Xīngcūn. Minibuses in fairly good condition with air-conditioning cost a little more, but rides are typically ¥1 (15¢). *miàndī* (minivans) to most

destinations are ¥2 (25¢) if you use them like buses, with others hopping on and off; you can use them to get to Xīngcūn for the *zhúfá* (bamboo rafts), to get to the airport, or to get to the railway station. Bus no. 5 runs to the railway station when trains are scheduled, but not frequently. *Sānlúnchē* three-wheelers are everywhere and tiresome; they charge ¥1 (15¢).

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China** (open 8am–5:30pm) is at Sān Gū Jiē It has a working ATM outside.

Internet Access There are *wǎngbā* (open 8am–midnight; ¥2–¥4/25¢–50¢ per hr.) in back streets south of Wàngfēng Dào. As you walk east from the river, look for the *wǎngbā* characters on your left.

Post Office The post office (open 7:50am–9pm summer; 8am–5:30pm winter) is on Wàng Fēng Lù.

WŬYÍ SHĀN FĒNGJĬNG QŪ

The scenic area spreads across the river west of the resort, and is best appreciated either from the top of one of the peaks or from a bamboo raft *(zhúfá or zhúpái)* on **Jiŭ Qŭ Xī (Nine Bend Stream).**

There's a constant stream of buses (¥1/15¢) and minivans (¥2/25¢) from Chóngyáng Dào or Wàngfēng Lù to the village of **Xīngcūn;** they drop you off either in the village center or at the dock itself. If you are dropped off in the center, fork right, follow the road to the left, and take the first major right turn down toward the river. The ticket office is down on the right, about 5 minutes' walk altogether. The *zhúfá* depart in groups intermittently between 7:30am and 4pm. Tickets are on sale about 20 minutes before each departure; they cost ¥100 ($13) plus an optional ¥1 (15¢) for insurance.

The rafts themselves are Old China adapted for modern tourism—eight fat tubes of bamboo lashed together, the forward end blackened from having been held against fire while it was bent up. Three pairs of chairs are lashed on board, and orange life jackets are issued to each passenger. Each raft has a registration plate. The boatmen and -women wear uniforms of carefully stitched blue jackets and pointed peasant hats, and use poles to steer. The rafts are sometimes slightly submerged by the weight of passengers and crew, but there's a rung for your feet on the chair in front of yours.

The river ride of about 9.5km (6 miles) takes an hour and 40 minutes. The river is only a meter deep in some parts, and is clear enough to let you see the bottom. It's at its highest in July, and if it rises to a 2m (5½-ft.) height, trips are suspended.

The scenery is a slightly scaled-down version of that around Guìlín, but more interesting due to the tilted strata which give the cliffs the look of a sandwich with everything on it. Various rocks are said to resemble an elephant trunk, a turtle, a frog, and two lions playing with a ball, but you'd never be able to say which was which without assistance. In common with the Yángzĭ trip, there are cliffside burial places. Two large caves high up, which are supposed to contain 3,800-year-old tombs along with some wooden remains, can be seen protruding from the cliffs, more easily visible than those elsewhere. The river winds sinuously around its nine bends, bird song echoes between the cliffs, the metal tips of the bamboo poles rattle against the river bottom, flights of widgeon whir past, and there's the occasional brilliant flash of a kingfisher. Some stiller water is supposed to run deep indeed—down to 28m (92 ft.).

The disembarkation point is just before the river's confluence with the Chóngyáng Xī, in manicured gardens a short walk from the base of **Dà Wáng Fēng.** You have the option of returning to the road to flag down a passing bus back to the resort, or you can walk towards the peak past various tawdry shopping opportunities and purchase one of two *tào piào.* One of the tickets is for the immediate area, which includes the two most commonly climbed peaks; it's valid for 2 days and costs ¥62 ($7.75). The other ticket offers wider access around the scenic area from 6am to 8pm.

Climbing **Dà Wáng Fēng** officially takes 1½ hours, but it can be scaled by the moderately fit in an hour. At the top, the views are principally over the confluence of the rivers and the not particularly attractive sprawl of the resort. As you climb, you have several choices of route, which all lead eventually to the top; the routes include two horizontal galleries cut into the rock, the higher of which involves slightly less bending. It can be slippery when wet. The lower stairways wind wonderfully, but in some cases they are only wide enough for one—awkward when you encounter tour groups. At some points, the only thing that will catch you if you fall is a stand of bamboo.

Near the entrance, an exhibition of bonsai is followed by a sequence of models made from the stones of various mountains covered in this book For example, Wǔtái Shān and Pǔtuó Shān come complete with miniature staircases and are stocked with grasses and ferns representing bushes, as well as tiny trees. This is a better experience than the other sights in the area, including the nearby rebuilt **Wǔyí Gōng** (palace), dedicated to a 12th-century neo-Confucian sage.

You'll probably want to climb **Tiānyóu Shān,** further east and included in your ticket, on another day. The turnoff is about halfway to Xīngcūn, and the entrance to the mountain about 5km (3 miles) from the resort. A *miàndī* will bring you here for ¥10 ($1.25), dropping you a 10- to 15-minute walk from the gate. If you're fit, the climb will not take more than about 30 minutes.

The slogan "If you haven't climbed Tiānyóu Shān, you haven't seen Wǔyí Shān," is much bandied about, and this is the one peak all the tour groups climb, mostly in the morning—so leave it until the afternoon. The paths are more solid, are broader, and have more handholds than the paths of Wǔyí Shān. Views are pretty, and you look down to the loop of the river's fifth and sixth bends, around which might drift some rafts. Halfway up, a pretty waterfall, multi-threaded and glued to the cliff face, moves in slow motion. Near the top are a house built for Chiang Kai-shek's wife, Soong Mei-ling, and a flat open space with teahouses. As you jostle your way to the top, the views show you why you should consider extending your stay—the peak opposite also has a staircase snaking up it, but no sign of modern concrete additions, and no people.

SHOPPING

Various gift shops around town sell mountain produce such as dried roots, berries, and mushrooms, and specialist shops sell supposedly medicinal products (yes, including snake oil).

WHERE TO STAY

Hotels are legion (more than 60 in the resort area alone), most of them the elevator-free four-story kind. Most date from a building boom in 1995, but others are just 2 or 3 years old, and more are going up all the time. The resort is very busy at Spring Festival (Chinese New Year) and during the first weeks of May and October. But on weekdays for the remainder of the May-to-October period,

supply still outstrips demand, and you can pay half price. Outside those times you need not pay more than a third of the first asking price. Almost all the hotels have two or three stars; in addition to the choices below, glance into a few others. Avoid those with beauty parlors too full of beauties, and those with karaoke. Although temperatures are well above freezing even in December, make sure that your hotel has the heat turned on and has hot water 24 hours during low season.

One hotel undergoing renovation but worth further investigation is an extraordinary modern version of a Hakka round house, called the **Yùnǚ Dàjiǔdiàn (Jade Maid Hotel),** off Wàngfēng Dào (✆ **0599/525-2988**).

Bǎodǎo Dàjiǔdiàn Centrally located next to the bank, this is another friendly three-star, with an odd circular central atrium which allows the odd wail of karaoke to drift up from the basement. The lobby is full of furniture carved from tree trunks, but the guest rooms are less imaginative. Still, the general standard of decor is higher than that of the Wŭyí Shān Jiŭdiàn, and there's a wide range of room types.

Wàngfēng Lù. ✆ **0599/525-2818.** Fax 0599/5251818. 150 units. ¥380 ($48) single; ¥420–¥480 ($53–$60) standard room; ¥528 ($66) triple; from ¥1,800 ($225) suite. 60% discount off season. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; forex. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge.

Wŭyí Shān Jiŭdiàn This standard three-star is off the main road and thus a little quieter (karaoke buried well in the basement). The hotel opened in 2000, and the usual brown furnishings are not yet too battered, the bathrooms are simple but adequate, and the staff is pleasant and helpful. Some rooms have views of a small lake.

Just west of Chóngyáng Dào, north of Wàngfēng Lù. ✆ **0599/525-7888.** Fax 0599/525-7866. 60 units. ¥480–¥690 ($60–$86) standard room; ¥1,698 ($213) suite. 70% discount off season; 40% otherwise. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; forex. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge.

Wŭyí Shānzhuāng (Wŭyí Mountain Villa) ★ The resort's best hotel is just across the Chóngyáng Xī, in a peaceful location at the foot of the Dà Wáng Fēng. It's a collection of chalet-style buildings set around well-maintained gardens, the newest of which is four stars. One restaurant overlooks a pool, which is seen through a waterfall that runs off the roof. This is the choice of visiting senior officials and the occasional foreign luminary. Guest rooms are large, bright, and spotless, and bathrooms are larger and better fitted than usual. While there are plenty of luxury suites, there are also simpler, tiled-floor standard rooms that are quite cheap.

Wŭyí Gōng. ✆ **0599/525-1888.** Fax 0599/525-2567. 167 units. ¥280 ($35) basic room; ¥528 ($66) standard room; ¥638 ($80) standard room in new wing; ¥1,388–¥1,888 ($173–$236) suite. 30% discount in off season. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; teahouse; small outdoor pool; sauna; tour and ticket desk; forex; limited room service; massage. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

The most comfortable dining is inside hotels, overpriced and of modest, if acceptable, quality. (Most three-star hotels charge under ¥100/$13 for a meal for 2.) The Wŭyí Shānzhuāng's restaurants offer a snake feast (that *sake blood* on the menu is missing an "n") and an 18-course banquet of dishes all made with tea. Off Wàngfēng Lù towards the Wŭyí Shān Jiŭdiàn, there's a whole street of food stalls with covered seating areas behind them. The awnings proclaim the owners' varying origins in the hope that the Chinese people's natural clannishness will draw them to stalls from their own provinces. But the same

basic ingredients are used, and the dishes vary little—spicier for Sìchuān, more vinegary for Shānxī, and so on. On display are the usual ingredients you'd expect for a mountain area—many varieties of mushrooms, pheasant, snake, and bee larvae.

7 Quánzhōu

Fújiàn Province, 593km (371 miles) SE of Wǔyí Shān, 109km (68 miles) N of Xiàmén

Quánzhōu was once Zaytun, "one of the two greatest havens in the world for commerce," according to Marco Polo. "Twice as great as Bologna," said Franciscan friar Odoric da Pordenone, who was in China from 1323 to 1327. "The harbour of Zaitún is one of the greatest in the world—I am wrong; it is *the* greatest. I have seen there about an hundred first-class junks together; as for small craft, they were past counting," said Moroccan Ibn Battuta, who visited the area in 1345 to 1346. The Franciscan bishop of Zaytun wrote of Genoese merchants in 1326, and the city had other foreigners, including many Arabs.

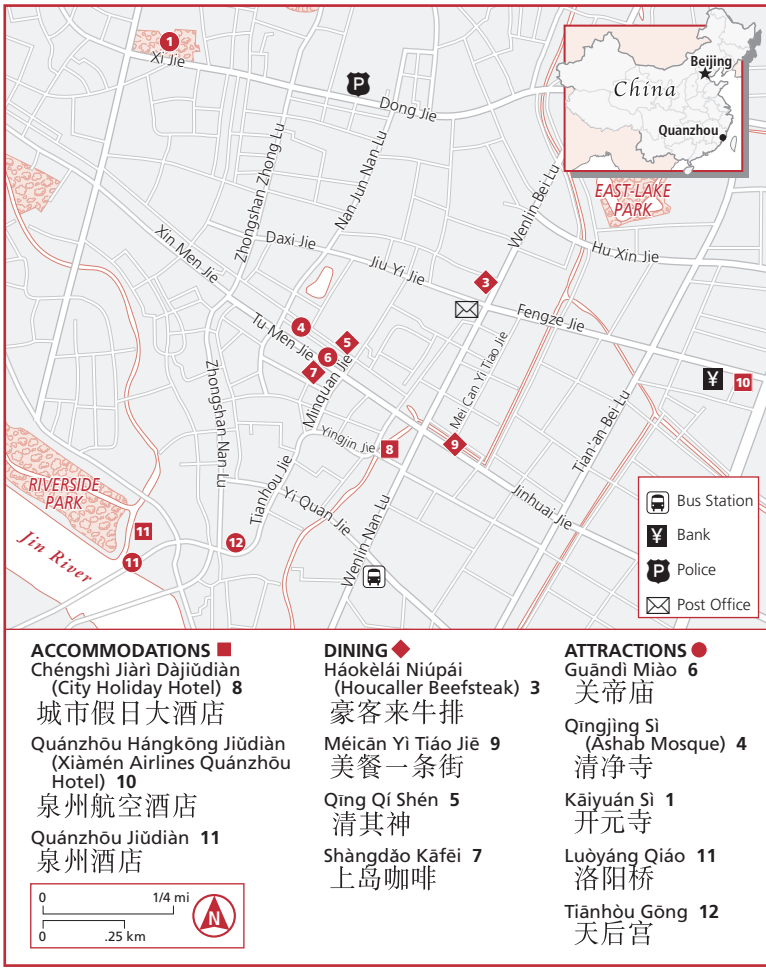
But after the Míng expulsion of the Mongol Yuán dynasty in 1368, China gradually closed itself up, and by the time of Europe's next contact, via the Portuguese in the 16th century, Zaytun had withered. In the 19th and 20th centuries, while almost all its neighbors became treaty ports with resident foreigners and trading, Quánzhōu was overlooked.

Today Quánzhōu's center has been largely rebuilt with four- to six-story blocks of brick and stone, using hints of local architectural vernacular in sagging rooflines and herringbone-patterned brick (even if the pattern is sometimes painted on). Streets behind the new frontages are on a small and human scale and often have Internet bars and cheap restaurants. The remains of Quánzhōu's extensive Arab connections and Muslim background can be found in China's oldest remaining mosque and the tombs of 7th-century Islamic missionaries.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The nearest **airport** is at Xiàmén, 40km (25 miles) away, and many bus services there pick up and drop off at its entrance. The railway line down to Quánzhōu is new, and the **railway station** is in the northeast suburbs. Bus nos. 19 and 23 run from the railway station to the center of town. Train tickets are on sale from 6:30 to 11:30am, 1:30 to 5pm, and 6:30 to 8:30pm. Trains to Zhèjiāng and elsewhere in coastal Fújiàn have to perform long loops. However, there are useful rail services to Wǔyí Shān: The K986 departs at 8:23pm and arrives at 9:14am; or the early riser can enjoy the winding mountain line by taking the K955 at 6:32am and arriving at 4:53pm (K9856 and K955: 594km, ¥149/$19 hard sleeper, ¥232/$29 soft sleeper).

The main bus station,the **Kèyùn Xīn Zhàn** is full of yelling louts and has buses to Wǔyí Shān (but train is better); to Xiàmén (20 departures 6:35am–5:40pm; ¥19–¥20/$2.30–$2.40; luxury bus ¥32/$4); and to Fúzhōu (12 departures 8:05am–5:25pm; ¥34–¥41/$4.20–$5). There are also sleeper buses to Jiāngxī destinations, Tàishùn, Wēnzhōu, Shàoxīng, and Hángzhōu. Some express buses to Xiàmén drop off passengers at the airport entrance. Some luxury services from and to Fúzhōu terminate next to the **Huáqiáo Dàshà,** as do luxury buses to Shēnzhèn (✆ **0595/228-7158**) and a daily bus to Guǎngzhōu and Zhūhǎi for Macau (✆ **0139/6022-9688**). The same Huáqiáo Dàshà office has tickets for **flights** from Xiàmén (✆ **0595/218-2573**).



ACCOMMODATIONS

Chéngshì Jiàrì Dàjiǔdiàn (City Holiday Hotel) **8**
城市假日大酒店

Quánzhōu Hángkōng Jiǔdiàn (Xiàmén Airlines Quánzhōu Hotel) **10**
泉州航空酒店

Quánzhōu Jiǔdiàn **11**
泉州酒店

DINING

Háokèlái Niúpái (Houcaller Beefsteak) **3**
豪客来牛排

Méicān Yì Tiáo Jiē **9**
美餐一条街

Qīng Qí Shén **5**
清其神

Shàngdǎo Kāfēi **7**
上岛咖啡

ATTRACTIONS

Guāndì Miào **6**
关帝庙

Qīngjìng Sì (Ashab Mosque) **4**
清净寺

Kāiyuán Sì **1**
开元寺

Luòyáng Qiáo **11**
洛阳桥

Tiānhòu Gōng **12**
天后宫

GETTING AROUND Motorcyclists will beep at you and wave spare helmets until you want to hit them. Jetta **taxis** are ¥6 (75¢) for 2km (1¼ miles), then ¥1.60 (20¢) per kilometer up to 4km (2½ miles), then ¥1.80 (25¢) per kilometer up to 30km (18½ miles), then ¥2 (25¢) per kilometer up to 50km (31 miles), and after that, ¥2.20 (30¢) per kilometer. At night, from 11pm to 5am, rates begin at ¥1.80 (25¢) per kilometer. To get to the suburbs, **buses** charge a flat fare of ¥1 (15¢) on entry; buses without air-conditioning but with conductors charge ¥2 (25¢).

VISITOR INFORMATION For complaints, call ✆ **0595/227-4888.**

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The main branch of the **Bank of China** (open Mon–Fri, 8–11am and 2:30–6pm) is in Fēngzé Jiē just west of the Xiàmén Airlines Hotel. Counter 14 handles checks and credit-card withdrawals

it also handles cash exchanges during the same hours, 7 days a week. ATMs at branches around town all accept foreign cards.

Internet Access The **Dàdì Wǎngbā** (open 8am–3am; ¥2–¥3/25¢–40¢ per hr.) is just east of the PSB on Dōng Lù. The **Huánqiú Wǎngbā** is at Zhuàngyuán Jiē 127, and another *wǎngbā* is opposite it at no. 138. Dial-up is **8163.**

Post Office The main post office (open 8am–8pm) is at Wēnlíng Běi Lù 209, at the junction of Jiǔyī Lù.

Visa Extensions Extensions are harder to obtain here than in most places. The **PSB** on Dōng Lù (✆ **0591/218-0323;** open Mon–Fri, 8–11am, 3–6pm) requires evidence of the possession of $100 per day, for a single extension of up to 30 days.

EXPLORING THE CITY

Quánzhōu has its fair share of the hideous white-tiled buildings that infest most cities, but as at Shàoxīng in Zhèjiāng, there's been an attempt in the center to keep new building to a lower scale (4–6 stories) and incorporate hints of traditional architecture. In Túmén Jiē, in the middle of this area, the **Guāndì Miào** is a Daoist temple of modern construction, full of incense smoke and suspect piety, but it is also the heart of a complex with souvenir shopping, an excellent teahouse and, sometimes in the evening, free live opera performances.

Qīngjìng Sì (Ashab Mosque) This is the oldest surviving mosque (though roofless) in China, dating to 1009 and renovated in 1310. Islamic preachers followed Arab trade contacts here as early as the Táng Wǔdì reign (618-626). The entirely Middle Eastern domed entrance gate is carved with scriptures in Arabic; the main worshipping hall, once topped by a large dome, is now a grassy space dotted with pillars. Neighboring buildings hold an exhibition on the history of Islam in the area, along with much propaganda about politics and freedom of religious belief. At the rear, the only Chinese-style buildings include real space for worship.

One attendant says there are many Huí (descendants of the original Chinese Muslims) in Quánzhōu, but few real Muslims. About 50 come on Friday.

Túmén Jiē. Admission¥3 (40¢). 8am–6pm.

Kāiyuán Sì This large and once celebrated temple suffered terrible destruction in the 20th century, but its large main courtyard dotted with stelae is pleasant and shady. Gaudy apsarases support the beams of its main hall, which holds five Buddhas, behind which the 18 *luóhàn* stand on either side of a Guānyīn. In a hall further back, deeper than it is wide, a three-tiered terrace supports a seated figure on a "thousand Buddha"-studded lotus; a canopy overhead is carved with clouds and gilded birds. To either side of stairs on four sides are large bug-eyed figures with raised fists. The ceiling is fantastically ornate, with layers of brackets in ever-diminishing sizes to a central circle.

Further west, a 1,300-year-old mulberry is locked away for its own protection. The registers of a plump squat stone pagoda of five stories is carved with figures; its solid stone brackets imitating wood are home to generations of swallows. There's another, similar pagoda on the east side.

In the northeast corner of the site, north of the east pagoda, the battered, filthy **Maritime Museum** (**Hǎiwài Jiāotōng Shǐ Bówùguǎn;** open 8:30am-6pm; ¥2/25¢) houses the hull of a large Southern Sòng trading vessel. On display are

its contents and those of another ancient ship found in the Quánzhōu vicinity, including spices and ceramics. The neighboring **Museum of Buddhism (Fójiào Bówùguǎn)** has dragon-carved pillars rivaling those of Qūfǔ (p. 343), and displays Buddhist statuary, printing plates, ceramics, bells, and more. Admission is free and hours are from 9 to 11am and 2 to 5pm.

Xī Jiē. Admission to temple ¥3 (40¢). 6am–6pm. Bus: no. 26 from Túmén Jiē.

Luòyáng Qiáo ★ At the edge of the northeastern suburbs, this impressive 11th-century bridge is reached by a short walk from the terminus of bus no. 19, up winding Fèngguān Jiē, through a village of mixed modern and ancient housing, down to where the bridge runs for 1.1km (¾ mile) across shining mud flats laced with channels navigated by puttering small boats.

Built between 1053 and 1059, this is no technological marvel. It consists of 46 spans of 11m (36-ft.) beams between large, boat-shaped piers. But its length is impressive, and it weaves slightly on its way from bank to bank as if strong tides have succeeded in dragging some of its massive piers out of place. There are guardian figures at the entrance and ancient stelae on an island a short way across, where there's also a memorial to the bridge's architects. The mud flats are alive with fiddler crabs, and farmers sink thigh-deep in the ooze checking tubular nets and slabs of stone that attract the mollusks; the crabs are said to act as a living glue within the crevices of the piers, holding them together.

Admission ¥2 (25¢). Bus: no. 19 from center (passes new bus station, Tombs of the Islamic Saints, and railway station) to terminus at Qiáo Nán (about 40 min.).

Yīsīlán Jiào Shèng Mù (Tombs of the Islamic Saints) At the northeast edge of the city, the tombs are easily visited in combination with Luòyáng Qiáo. The way to the tombs is marked by an Islamic arch, through which a road leads to the entrance—a 5-minute walk. The two small loaf-shaped tombs are reached by stone stairways and are surrounded by stelae. Known as the Tombs of the Third and Fourth Worthies (the 1st went to Guǎngzhōu and the 2nd to Yángzhōu), they contain the remains of two Islamic missionaries who came to Quánzhōu in the 7th century. A stele records in Arabic the restoration of the tombs in the 14th century by local Muslims seeking merit. Paths beyond lead to fresh Muslim tombs; elsewhere on the hill, Buddhist and Christian graves can also be found.

Off Dōng Hú Jiē. Admission ¥3 (40¢). 8am–7pm. Bus: no. 19 or 23 to Shèng Mù.

Qīng Yuán Shān This hilly spot boasts nine Buddhist and Daoist statues, more Islamic tombs, and inscriptions (as befits a seaport) praying for wind. The Lǎo Jūn Yán, a Sòng dynasty statue of Daoism's semi-mythical founder, Lǎozǐ, at the base of the hill near the ticket office, is almost a symbol of the town—a benevolent, balding, bewhiskered, and big-eared seated figure, broader (8m/26 ft.) than he is high, and of considerable charm.

Admission ¥15 ($1.90) Lǎozǐ statue only, ¥30 ($3.75) for all but the statue, ¥40 ($5) whole park. 5am–6pm Bus: no. 3, 15 min. from center to terminus (¥2/25¢).

Tiānhòu Gōng All around the southeast coast are temples to Māzǔ, also known as Tiānhòu (or Tin Hau and A-Ma in Hong Kong and Macau), a Fújiàn native born in 960, around whom elaborate myth has been woven concerning her natural weather-forecasting ability and medical talents. She's now the Daoist patron saint of sailors, who spread her cult around the coast. Since she is particularly

important in both Fújiàn and in what the Běijīng government likes to call Táiwān Province, there's a political angle to her, too.

The Quánzhōu temple claims to be both the largest of 3,000 or so temples to Māzǔ in China, and the oldest (founded in 1196). It now has the feel of a community center, where old men sit and chat in the gate's shade. The gate, bell and drum towers, and other buildings are all the last word in the ornate southern style, their curved ridges alive with ceramic decorations, and their colorful eaves turned up and rolled back on themselves.

The main hall has a triple-layered roof supported by fine dragon pillars. An opera stage is used during celebrations of Māzǔ's birthday on the 23rd day of the third lunar month (mid-Apr) and during celebrations of her death on the ninth day of the ninth lunar month (Oct), which attract large numbers of Taiwanese.

The rearmost hall has a simplicity and unpainted state with simple dark bracketing that suggest true antiquity. It has excellent displays of Mín Nán (southern Fújiàn) cultural artifacts—pottery figurines, local crafts, domestic and religious items, furniture, musical instruments, and puppets. There's a brief note on treaty port–era foreign residents, with a photo of an old Spanish house, but the main purpose of the display is to show that Fújiàn and Táiwān have the same culture, and are thus indivisible. Even maps bought in the street show the island of Jīnmén (a mere 1.8km/1 mile from Xiàmén when the tide is out, but nevertheless under Taiwanese control) as being part of Quánzhōu. The eastern side of the site has an exhibition of stone figures, traditional costumes, ceramics, and wooden figures, poorly lit but well-chosen, labeled "Folk Art of Fújiàn and Táiwān."

Tiānhòu Lù 1. Admission free. 7:30am–6pm.

A WALK AROUND THE WALLS OF CHÓNGWǓ ★★

A little over 50km (30 miles) from Quánzhōu, Chóngwǔ has one of the best-preserved city walls in China. Measuring 2.5km (1½ miles) long and dating from 1387, it is not yet the victim of much official recognition, and consequently is more natural than walls at Píngyáo (p. 220).

The bus ride there departs from the main bus station every 30 minutes from 7am, with the last one heading back at 6pm; the fare is ¥8.50 ($1). The bus takes an indirect route through towns and villages almost entirely devoted to stonemasonry. Stone is the traditional building material in this area and is still used in preference to concrete; stacked beams everywhere look like a rough-hewn giant's Jenga tower. Houses are blockish, plain, and flat-roofed, the occasional external stairway giving them a decidedly Middle Eastern look, reinforced by the tendency of local women to wear headscarves.

Modern Chóngwǔ, reached after 1½ hours, is typically unlovely, but walk straight from the bus terminus, and where the road swings right, go straight on up the narrower street of small shops. Continue uphill until you arrive in less than 10 minutes at the modest east gate of the old walls, its enceinte still intact. Through that gate, turn immediately right into an alley called Cuì Shí Xiàng that is barely wider than your shoulders, and find steps up. Turn right and walk clockwise.

The wall is very solid, with varied construction styles much less regular than walls elsewhere. It's sometimes overgrown, but accessible. At each gate in the wall the enceinte is entered from one side with a turn forcing you to pass through the wall itself. You can look down on the passage of beeping motorbikes, and on meat

sold from open trestles in the shade. Elsewhere, geese, ducks, and hens in backyards look up startled at your passage.

After the north gate the wall has been cleared a little and rises to views of the sea across the roofscape. There's a modern statue of a heroic defender looking out to sea, and a little temple on the wall topped with marvelous dragons with green bodies and red tails and faces. Firecracker residue and incense ash indicate the temple's popularity. Another temple below is worth descending to see, its walls papered with lists of contributors to its restoration, and its hall again topped with rampant polychromic dragons.

Below the east gate, a group of bad modern statuary looks out over broad sand beaches, and there's a modern lighthouse at the southeast corner. On the south side there's more beach, neat topiary-lined pathways, and sun shades. At the south gate, the **Nán Mén Guāndì Miào** is a new but remarkably elaborate temple, its stone pillars carved fantastically into dragons. The ceiling inside is finely carved and gilded, and interior pillars are fabulously carved with birds and figures giving great liveliness to dead stone.

A ticket office at the base of the gate is unmanned but would attempt to charge ¥2 (25¢) to visitors entering from the beach side if anyone could be bothered. The exterior of the wall here is bearded with creeper, and beyond it are cold drink and ice-cream sellers, cheap fresh seafood restaurants, horse rides, lookout points labeled as suitable for photography, and more bad statuary.

The final section is more overgrown but there's a clear path, where you scatter crickets underfoot while ducking under branches.

WHERE TO STAY

Hotels in Quánzhōu are unexceptional, and many at the three- and four-star levels are overpriced considering their dowdiness. Much renovation and new construction are going on, and there may be more choices by the time you arrive.

Chéngshì Jiàrì Dàjiǔdiàn (City Holiday Hotel) This fresh, modern three-star has a slightly superior idea of service, compromised by the presence of very active karaoke and massage operations, but ask for a room on a higher floor and that won't be a problem. Slightly odd geography means that you sometimes have to take a lift to the floor above and walk down a half flight of stairs to reach your room, which will have standard fittings but will be better cared for than most. Good value when the standard rooms are bargained down to ¥168 ($21).

Wēnlíng Lù Nán Duàn. ✆ **0595/298-9999.** Fax 0595/298-5555. 80 units. ¥338 ($42) standard room; ¥588–¥1,288 ($74–$161) suite. 10% service (fee not charged). AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; karaoke bar; forex; massage (including in-room). *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge.

Quánzhōu Hángkōng Jiǔdiàn (Xiàmén Airlines Quánzhōu Hotel) An upper-end three-star hotel, with a free shuttle bus to Xiàmén Airport, this fresh, modern, 16-story tower with well-maintained rooms has above-average service. Larger and with more facilities than the City Holiday, it has higher prices to match.

Fēngzé Jiē. ✆ **0595/216-4888.** Fax 0595/216-4777. 177 units. ¥560 ($70) standard room; ¥998 ($125) suite. Rates include breakfast. 10% service fee not charged. 40%–50% discounts available. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; fitness room; business center (Internet ¥30/$3.75 per hr.). *In room:* A/C, TV, video on demand, broadband Internet access (on floors 12 and 16; ¥30/$3.75 per day), minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Quánzhōu Jiǔdiàn This is one of those rare long-standing state-owned hotels that has actually made some attempts to stay refreshed and train its staff,

but even with a discount it's overpriced. There's an older three-star building (renovated in 2001), a four-star building (opened in 1994), and a five-star building on the way. The four-star rooms have furniture that's old but in good condition, and comfortable-enough standard bathrooms. Choose a room with a view of the twin pagodas of Kāiyuán Sì. Conference facilities make the hotel popular with businesspeople and unbusinesslike officials both. Rooms in the three-star wing are about half price.

Zhuāngfǔ Xiàng 22. ✆ **0595/228-9958.** Fax 0595/218-2128. www.quanzhouhotel.com. 295 units. ¥515–¥915 ($65–$115) standard room; ¥1,245–¥5,893 ($155–$737) suite, 15% service charge in 4-star wing, and 10% in 3-star wing. 30% discounts available. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants, bakery; indoor pool; outdoor tennis court; fitness room; sauna; bowling alley; game room; concierge; tour desk; business center; forex; salon; limited room service; massage. *In room:* A/C, TV, video on demand, broadband Internet access, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

Food in Quánzhōu is surprisingly lackluster, even in the better hotels (and there's a nasty tendency to add a service charge there, even if one isn't added to the room rate). The staff in the otherwise decent restaurant in the Xiàmén Airlines Quánzhōu Hotel look puzzled at a request for local dishes and can only offer *Xiàmén hǎilì jiān* (Xiàmén-style baby oysters), which means with eggs as a kind of oyster pancake, but that's rather good. The excellent local wheat beer, Huìquán, will please anyone fond of Hoegaarden.

The liveliest eating is in the **Měicān Yì Tiáo Jiē (The Beautiful Food Street)** running north from the arch on Jīnhuái Jiē, 1 block east and parallel to Wēnlíng Běi Lù. Here rows of food stalls with tables and chairs in the open air or in air-conditioned interiors compete for your business until the small hours. There's seafood in buckets, *niúpái* (beefsteak—a local favorite), dumplings, kabobs, hot pot, Sìchuān food, and even Lánzhōu "pulled" noodles.

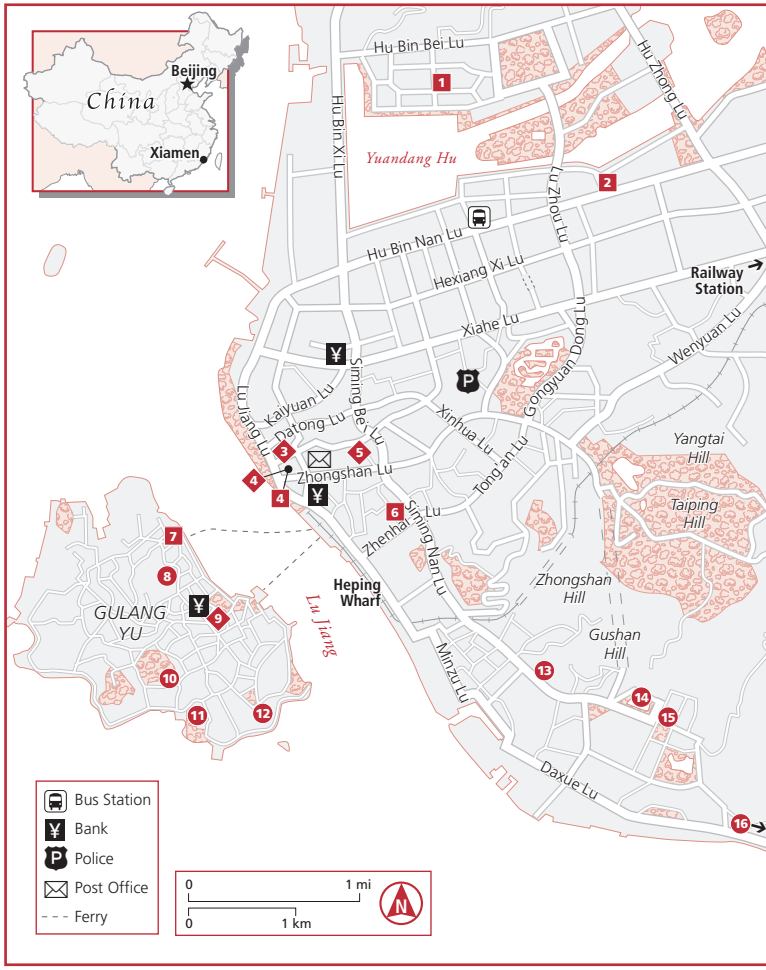
Those craving Western food will find McDonald's, KFC, and Pizza Hut around the center, along with a branch of the ubiquitous **Shàngdǎo Kāfēi,** Túmén Jiē (✆ **0595/219-2070**), with its nearly English menu, nearly spaghetti, sandwiches, and excellent if pricey coffee. An unusual alternative is **Háokèlái Niúpái (Houcaller Beefsteak)** in Wēnlíng Běi Lù north of the post office (✆ **0595/219-5779**), which has a brightly lit fast-food interior but offers intelligent service and an English menu. Set meals such as pork chop, salad, bread, soup, tea, and a small glass of a pinkish spirit called *kāiwèijiǔ*—which would literally translate as "start the stomach alcohol"—for a *digestif* are ¥25 to ¥50 ($3–$6.25).

Qīng Qí Shén, behind the Guāndì Miào in Túmén Jiē, is a very pleasant teahouse in a traditional multi-courtyard setting, where people sit playing board games beneath caged songbirds or watch the performance of a storyteller, and order snacks and tea from a bamboo slat menu: Oolong (Wūlóng) is ¥70 ($8.75) per pot; ordinary tea from ¥8 ($1).

8 Xiàmén ★★

Fújiàn Province, 109km (68 miles) S of Quánzhōu, 770km (481 miles) E of Guǎngzhōu

The island of Xiàmén, then better known to foreigners by its Fújiàn name of Amoy, became a foreign concession in 1903, with most of the foreigners living on the tiny islet of Gǔlàng Yǔ just off Xiàmén itself. By the 1930s there were about 500 resident foreigners and nine consulates, several of which still stand, as



do the vast, Europeanized mansions of Chinese who returned wealthy from overseas.

Here, more than at any other former treaty port including Shànghǎi, there seems to be something left of the foreign presence and the colonial era, in the largest and best-preserved warren of colonial-era shop-houses in mainland China, and on Gǔlàng Yǔ the largest and best-preserved collection of colonial mansions. People also seem remarkably relaxed and law-abiding—there's little spitting, little shouting at foreigners, and an unusual tendency to obey road signs.

Much of the island is a hideous white-tiled wasteland to match anything else in China, but even so, the odd turret and spire reflect the city's pride in its stock of original European architecture. The rest of the island is a refreshing change and full of character—narrow alleys connecting sinuous streets are laced together with power and telephone cables, and house DVD shops, noodle

Xiàmén Key

ACCOMMODATIONS ■
Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza Harbourview (Jiàrì Hǎijǐng Dàjiǔdiàn) **6**
假日海景大酒店
Jīnquán Bīnguǎn **7**
金泉宾馆
Jīnyàn Jiǔdiàn **2**
金雁酒店
Lùjiāng Bīnguǎn **4**
鹭江宾馆
Marco Polo Xiàmén **1**
厦门马哥孛罗

DINING ◆
Banana **9**
Shǔxiāng Yuán Chuān Cài **5**
蜀香园川菜
Guān Hǎi Cāntīng **4**
观海餐厅
Chá Cāntīng Homely Fast Food **3**
茶餐厅

ATTRACTIONS ●
Huáqiáo Bówùguǎn (Overseas Chinese Museum) **13**
华侨博物馆
Húlǐ Shān Pàotái **16**
胡里山炮台
Jīnquán Qiánbì Bówùguǎn **12**
金泉钱币博物馆
Nán Pǔtuó Sì **14**
南普陀寺
Rìguāng Yán (Sunlight Rock) **10**
日光岩
Shūzhuāng Gōngyuán **11**
菽庄花园
Xiàmén Dàxué **15**
厦门大学
Xiàmén Shì Bówùguǎn (City Museum) **8**
厦门市博物馆

restaurants, and hair salons where no hair is ever cut. Vehicle-free Gǔlàng Yǔ, a few minutes away by ferry, is all pleasant strolls and quiet back streets full of mansions overgrown with brilliant bougainvillea.

In short, Xiàmén is the largely overlooked gateway to China that provides the softest landing of all. The comfortable cruise around the coast from Hong Kong provides the ideal overture to a mainland visit, with Xiàmén a halfway house between orderly former colony and the bedlam that is most mainland cities.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Xiàmén's **Gāoqí International Airport** (✆ **0592/602-8940**) is on the north side of the island only 20 minutes from the downtown area. Airport taxis cost little more than ¥30 ($3.50) to downtown, and there's a shuttle to the railway station from the right of the terminal as you leave that charges ¥6 (75¢). The Crowne Plaza and Marco Polo have free shuttles for guests. There are international connections to Bangkok, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Osaka, Singapore, and Tokyo, with an assortment of domestic and foreign airlines including JAL, Philippine, ANA, and Dragonair; and regular flights to all major Chinese cities, including Běijīng (5–6 flights daily), Guǎngzhōu (5–6 daily), and Shànghǎi (9 daily). While most airlines maintain offices in the Crowne Plaza or Marco Polo hotels, or in the Yínháng Zhōngxīn at the corner of Húbīn Xī Lù and Xiàhé Lù, you are better off purchasing your

tickets from independent agencies, preferably away from your hotel. **Xiàmén Airlines** (✆ **0592/222-6666**) has a 24-hour ticketing and check-in desk for its own passengers and those of China Southern in the Jīnyàn Jiǔdiàn. It also sells tickets for other airlines with reasonable discounts. Its shuttle service is free for guests and for Xiàmén/China Southern passengers; there are eight departures from 5:20am to 7:20pm. Reserve a seat on the shuttle in advance at ✆ **0592/221-8888,** ext. 34 or 6110.

At the airport, an **ATM** that accepts foreign cards is upstairs at international departures, as is a **Bank of China** forex counter open from 8:30am to 4:30pm.

On routes to neighboring coastal cities and to Hong Kong, luxury long-distance bus services are quickest, but there are useful **train** connections from Nánchāng (3 daily; 837km/523 miles; ¥302/$37 soft sleeper), Wǔyí Shān (K985/988; 587km/367 miles; ¥232/$29), and Shànghǎi (K175; 1,395km/872 miles; ¥472/$59). The mostly single-track route through mountainous Fújiàn Province is pretty and winding, passing sugar-cane plantations and banana palms with bags tied over the fruit to help it ripen. There are also direct services from Běijīng, Nánjīng, and Xī'ān. For **train inquiries,** call ✆ **0592/581-4340;** for **bookings,** ✆ **0592/398-8662,** up to 12 days in advance. The railway station is a 10-minute cab ride east of the ferry dock, which can also be reached on bus no. 1. Ticket windows are open from 8am to 8:30pm, with tickets available up to 5 days in advance including day of travel. As you face the railway station, booking and left luggage are to the right of the entrance. The **Nánfāng Lǚxíngshè** inside the Hépíng Wharf has computer access to the railway system, and charges a ¥10 ($1.25) service fee per ticket.

Southern China's new highway system is now cruised by air-conditioned **buses** with frequent services, many of them luxury foreign makes with attendants and lavatories. For all coastal destinations north in Fújiàn and into Zhèjiāng, as well as south into neighboring Guǎngdōng Province, these buses are far quicker than trains. The main **long distance bus station** (**chángtú qìchē zhàn;** ✆ **0572/221-5238**) is on Húbīn Nán Lù, just north of downtown. It sells tickets from 5:30 to 10pm.However, many of the best services also have agencies conveniently opposite the main ferry terminal to Gǔlàng Yǔ. Try **Lúndù Shòupiào Chù** (✆ **0592/213-5051**), next to the Spring Sunlight Hotel, where several services pick up passengers and which has a small waiting room. Sample bus routes: Guǎngzhōu (770km/481 miles; ¥180/$22), Shēnzhèn (680km/425 miles; ¥180/$22). There's even a direct bus route to Hong Kong (830km/519 miles; ¥350/$44). You can also board most bus lines at the **Wúcūn Qìchē Zhàn,** opposite the railway station and a little north (✆ **0592/581-5525**). Most services starting here go on to the main bus station, but buses from Fúzhōu and Quánzhōu generally terminate here. Services include Wēnzhōu (¥163/$20); Tàishùn (¥150/$19); Wǔyí Shān (¥124/$15) at 8:10am and 1:50pm; Guǎngzhōu (17 departures; ¥110–¥180/$14–$23) from 7:50am to 10:10pm; Shēnzhèn (14 departures; ¥100–¥200/$13–$25) from 8am to 10:30pm; and Quánzhōu (more than 50 departures; ¥32/$3.75) from 6:20am to 9:10pm. The **Fúzhōu Express** (✆ **0592/221-8591**) takes only 3 hours and 40 minutes to reach Fúzhōu (13 departures 6:30am–6:30pm; ¥80/$10). One Hong Kong service, the **Eternal East Cross-Border Coach Mgt. Ltd.** (✆ **0592/202-3333,** 852/2723-2923 in Hong Kong; www.eebus.com), can be booked and boarded at the Crowne Plaza, with daily departures at 7:30am. Although most coastal **ferry** routes are long gone, the service from Hong Kong survives, and makes for a soft landing in

mainland China. Service is now provided by the 250-cabin *Wasa Queen* of the **Hong Kong Cruise Ferries** company (www.cruise-ferries.com.hk). Services leave Xiàmén at 6pm on Thursday and arrive in Hong Kong at 3pm the next day. From Hong Kong they leave at noon on Wednesday and arrive in Xiàmén at 10am. One-way fares for cabin berths range from HK$320 to HK$1,120 ($41–$143) per person for individual travelers and couples, and about 20% of those fares for each of the third and fourth persons in any group. Prices payable in Xiàmén are local currency equivalents. Prices rise 50% around Chinese New Year. Check the website for up-to-date schedule details, or call Hong Kong (24 hr.) at ✆ **852/2957-8188,** Xiàmén at 0592/202-2517. Xiàmén departures are from the Hépíng Wharf, just south of the Gǔlàng Yǔ ferry terminal.

GETTING AROUND Both the old town and Gǔlàng Yǔ are easily explored **on foot,** and the other main sights are short **taxi** rides away. Flagfall for taxis is ¥8 ($1) including 3km (2 miles), then ¥2 (25¢) per kilometer up to 8km (5 miles), then ¥3 (40¢) per kilometer. Add 20% from 11pm to 5am. **Buses** are frequent and reliable, with fare boxes into which you deposit ¥2 (25¢) for air-conditioned service, ¥1 (15¢) without. A few non-air-conditioned buses have conductors. There are several **ferry** routes between the **Ferry Dock (Lúndù Mǎtóu)** and Gǔláng Yǔ. The 5-minute main route is free outbound, but ¥3 (40¢) to return. There's an optional ¥1 (15¢) charge to sit on the top deck in either direction. Ferries run roughly every 10 to 15 minutes from 5:30am, every 20 to 30 minutes after 9pm; the last sailing is at 12:20am. To the right of the ferry boarding point are windows for a **daytime cruise** around Gǔlàng Yǔ and to see Taiwanese Jīnmén Dǎo. The 35-minute cruise departs roughly every 30 minutes from 7:40am to 5pm; call ✆ **0592/202-3493.** The next windows offer a **night cruise** (✆ **0592/210-4896;** 1 hr., 50 min.; ¥118/$15 including snacks). There are also night trips to see the Hǎicāng Dà Qiáo, a large, illuminated suspension bridge just to the north; the 40-minute trip is offered May through October from 8 to 8:45pm for ¥10 to ¥20 ($1.25–$2.50). At the end farthest to the right is a second ferry service to Gǔlàng Yǔ, running to Sān Qiū Tián, a little east of Gǔlàng Yǔ's main dock, beneath the former U.S. Consulate. Ferries depart every 30 minutes from 7:15am to 9:40pm; throughout the night, they depart roughly every hour.

VISITOR INFORMATION For travel complaints, call ✆ **0592/206 3715.** American Express has an office in the Crowne Plaza, room 212 (✆ **0592/212-0268;** Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm). The staff isn't terribly helpful, but with some prodding they can at least tell you where to find the check-cashing service.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs All **Bank of China** ATMs take foreign cards, from the airport, via Gǔlàng Yǔ (at Hǎitān Lù 2), to the convenient Zhōngshān Lù branch (open 8:30am–noon, 2:30–5:30pm) close to the Gǔlàng Yǔ ferry dock in the center of town, which also has forex at counters 2 to 6. There's another Bank of China with forex and ATM in the Yínháng Zhōngxīn on the corner of Húbīn Xī Lù and Xiàhé Lù. Just next door is a branch of the **Hongkong and Shanghai Bank (HSBC),** whose ATMs take almost any card invented.

Internet Access Dial-up is **8163.** There are Internet cafes dotted around the old town, such as on Kāiyuán Lù.

Post Office The main post office (open 7:30am–7:30pm) is in Zhōngshān Lù opposite the Bank of China. There's also a useful branch in Lóngtóu Lù on Gǔlàng Yǔ.

Visa Extensions The **PSB** (Gōng'ānjú; open Mon–Sat, 8–11:45am and 3–5:45pm) is in Chū Mí Yán (✆ **0592/2262-2207**).

EXPLORING XIÀMÉN

The narrow streets of the **old quarter,** which has the mainland's largest and best-preserved area of treaty port–era shop-houses in a labyrinth of curling streets and narrow lanes, is bounded to the north by Xiàhé Lù and to the south by Zhōngshān Lù, which leads to the ferry docks. Wander at random, taking the narrowest turning you see (there are far more than maps indicate) and looking up to enjoy hints of Art Deco and other European influences. Look down, too, to make sure you don't trip over a party of mahjong players in undershirts and shorts, squatting on low stools.

GǓLÀNG YǓ

Amoy, as Xiàmén was then known, was one of the first five treaty ports to be opened to foreign residence and trade after the First Opium War, and a British Consulate was opened in 1843. The first foreign settlements were on Amoy proper, but the town was then famously noisome, its alleys, some too narrow to allow the opening of an umbrella, funneling an extravagant palette of aromas from sewers inadequately concealed beneath the pavements. Surprisingly clean now, Xiàmén was then reputed to be the filthiest city in China.

The foreign community therefore moved to Gǔlàng Yǔ but grew slowly (37 residents in 1836), although in 1852 the site became the first of the "concessions"—areas of land formally set aside for foreign residence, then parceled out to British citizens. By 1880, the now multinational foreign population was around 300 and sustained a daily English newspaper, an ice factory, a club, and tiger shooting (25 were bagged at the beginning of the 1890s alone). Amoy's main export was coolies, the British having forced the Qīng to permit Chinese emigration, and between 1883 and 1897 an estimated 167,000 left for labor overseas, founding Chinatowns around Asia and North America.

In treaty port days all transport was on foot, and no wheeled vehicles were allowed, a rule still enforced with the exception of some quiet electric carts used to take tourists on a circuit round the island. As you alight from the ferry, an office to the right (✆ **0130/5551-9326**) offers ferry trips to see Jīnmén Island for ¥96 ($12). There are 12 departures between 8:20am and 3:10pm. An option is a motorboat ride for ¥100 ($13) around Gǔlàng Yǔ, or for ¥200 ($25) out to other islands. The new buildings straight ahead built roughly to scale and with bizarre hints of European style contain a McDonald's, a few other restaurants, and much shopping. But the small maze of streets behind is more interesting, full of simple seafood restaurants with catches out front in buckets. Some are ready for the unwary tourist, so confirm prices carefully.

An office straight ahead as you dock offers a ¥80 ($10) ticket giving entrance to a variety of tawdry modern entertainments such as a fun fair and a laser show, so turn left instead to where the electric cars are parked. Proceed uphill straight to the area of finest mansions, on serpentine Fújiàn Lù and Lùjiāo Lù. The best examples are signposted and marked with unhelpful plaques giving construction dates but not usually nationalities or purposes, although the former Japanese

Consulate is marked. Look out for the Catholic church of 1917 at Lùjiāo Lù 34. Some sources claim that 30% of the island's residents are still practicing Christians. It's also a tradition that there are more pianos here than anywhere else in China, and tourism promoters claim that Gǔlàng Yǔ is known as "Piano Island," although no one seems to have told the locals this. Bach and Clementi can often be heard being hammered out rhythmically if unimaginatively, but only from a music school higher up the hill.

Fújiàn Lù 32 is particularly impressive—a vast porticoed mansion built in 1928 by a Vietnamese-Chinese real estate tycoon; the mansion later served as a hospital during the Japanese occupation of World War II, and today is the Art Vocation University of Xiàmén. Dozens of families now occupy a range of such mansions and have bricked up entrances, walled in balconies to add floor space, and left gardens to turn wild. Pretty winding paths between mansions are now overgrown with hawthorn, but despite the sometimes dismaying crush on the ferry, the island has generous amounts of what China generally lacks—peace and quiet.

Further on, clockwise around the island, is the **Jīnquán Qiánbì Bówùguǎn,** a museum of ancient coins housed in the handsome British Consulate, originally built in 1843 and the earliest foreign building on the island. Recently opened, its hours and entrance fee seem not yet set, but beyond the building is one of the best lookout points back to Xiàmén.

Further around, the **Gǔlàng Yǔ Piano Museum** inside the Shūzhuāng Garden is where all the old pianos have ended up—70 of them from Britain, France, Germany, America, Austria, and Australia.

Follow signs down to the beach below. Chinese now paddle where foreigners once held bathing parties that inexplicably involved eating ginger biscuits and drinking cherry brandy. Luxury mini-speedboats are available to race you around the island and back to Xiàmén for ¥100 ($13) (up to 5 passengers) or to Húlǐ Shān (see below) for ¥180 ($23)

Just past the beach are shady benches beneath the trees, beyond which a short tunnel takes you through to the next beach. Immediately after that on the left, steps lead up the hillside through gardens to **Rìguāng Yán (Sunlight Rock),** a lookout point perhaps used by pirate and Míng loyalist Zhèng Chénggōng (1624–1662), also known as Koxinga, a Dutch corruption of a title awarded him by the expiring Míng. He's an official state hero for having kicked the Dutch off Táiwān in 1624, and a dull museum to his memory is laced with the usual propaganda about how Táiwān has always been "an inseparable part of the motherland." It's a stiff climb (although there's a cable car alternative) and the entrance fee is hefty: ¥60 ($7.50).

If you proceed straight on instead, there's a beach with barbecue rental, and a pier called the Lúndù Lǚyóu Yùn Mǎtóu; the pier offers a further ferry to Xiàmén hourly from 8:10am to 9:10pm for ¥3 (40¢). Fishing boats bob nearby. Past the beach, a right turn before a further tunnel leads you into a maze of old mansions, but signs will direct you to the **Xiàmén Shì Bówùguǎn (City Museum)** at Gǔxīn Lù 43, (open 8:30am–5pm, ¥10/$1.25). The museum is located in possibly the grandest of all the mansions, the swaggering, three-story, cupola-topped Bā Guà Lóu or Eight Trigrams Building of 1907, designed by an American for a Taiwanese businessman. The ground floor has early examples of the Mǐn Nán region (Quánzhōu/Zhèngzhōu/Xiàmén) specialty ware, *blanc de chine,* mostly Qīng. There's other material on the Opium War and the Japanese

occupation, as well as on the Communist forces' drive to Xiàmén, which forced the Nationalists to Táiwān. The small matter of Jīnmén Island, which sits uncaptured less than 2km (1¼ miles) from the mainland (despite being the subject of 2 major offensives), receives no comment. The museum is dusty, echoing, forgotten, and rarely visited, but there are good views from upper balconies (hung with the attendants' washing) for a fraction of the cost of views from Sunlight Rock. A new building to one side has well-presented displays on fishing, local customs, and tea.

Other random wandering reveals various tunnels cut through the rock for anti- Táiwān defense reasons; they are now public passageways that allow you to pop up unexpectedly at places you had thought far apart. You'll also come across the former American Consulate, now a hotel (see below).

AROUND XIÀMÉN

Southeast of the center, a series of sites make a pleasant excursion when seen together. Start by taking a taxi or bus no. 2 or 22 from Sīmíng Lù to the **Húlǐ Shān Pàotái,** a platform (open 8:30am–5pm; ¥25/$3) with a vast Krupp 280mm cannon overlooking the island-dotted ocean and offering a different kind of seashell. The huge gun, one of two originally sited here in 1893, sits on a vast rotating chain-driven mechanism and is credited with sinking a Japanese warship in 1937. When it was first fired, several nearby houses collapsed, too. The surrounding sunken barracks area has been turned over to the exhibition of peculiar stones and ancient weaponry that includes a rusty pistol said to have belonged to opium warrior Lín Zéxú. A boat at the pier below also offers 1-hour trips to see Jīnmén and Little Jīnmén islands for ¥96 ($12). Call ✆ **0592/208-3759.**

Cross the road opposite the cannon and turn left until you find the gate to the university, **Xiàmén Dàxué.** This is one of China's older and most pleasant campuses, founded around 90 years ago and heavily funded by donations from Chinese overseas. Wander straight on past substantial brick buildings to a major left turn to the main gate—students will point you in the right direction if you look lost. Just outside the campus, on the right, is **Nán Pǔtuó Sì** (open 3am–6:30pm; ¥3/40¢). It's a temple of little antiquity but fully functional as a place of worship, with the devout on their knees reading scriptures and surely nearly asphyxiated by all the incense smoke. Monks bustle about, and wooden blocks are tossed to obtain the answers to important questions. There's an excellent vegetarian restaurant. There's also rock-cut calligraphy, modern stupas containing the remains of recently interred monks, 18 particularly animated *luóhàn* statues, and a "thousand-armed" Guānyīn.

A 20-minute walk west back into town will bring you to the **Huáqiáo Bówùguǎn (Overseas Chinese Museum),** devoted mainly to praise for the influence emigrants had on other Asian cultures where they settled, and praise for those who brought wealth back to China or donated it for good works. It's closed for renovation until 2005.

SHOPPING

The back streets of Xiàmén are packed with clothing shops of the cheap and cheerful kind, although if you're a larger Western size you'll be out of luck. Try Júkǒu Jiē between Zhōngshān Lù and Sīmíng Xī Lù. The **Dōngfāng Qípáo (China East Qípáo Co. Ltd.)** shop at Shēngpíng Lù 56 (✆ **0592/210-3448;** www.df-qipao.com) has a selection of these traditional high-collared, side-slit dresses, as well as modern dresses and jackets influenced by traditional styles.

WHERE TO STAY

Xiàmén has a variety of shiny business hotels scattered around the island, but at four-star level the two to choose are the Marco Polo and the Crowne Plaza. Upmarket hotels add a 10% to 15% service charge. There's abundant budget accommodations along the waterfront north of the Lùjiāng Bīnguǎn, and some on Gǔlàng Yǔ (much quieter), including an unusual opportunity to sleep in a former American Consulate. A trade fair makes September through the first part of October a little busier. Visitor numbers pick up again March through May, after which Chinese tourism drops to almost nothing, and only the odd foreigner is seen in midsummer. Typically, 40% off rack rates is available; more in lower-level accommodations.

EXPENSIVE

Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza Harbourview (Jiàrì Hǎijǐng Dàjiǔdiàn) Rooms on the upper floors of this tapering 22-story tower, visible across the city, are bright and sunny and have good views. The building dates from 1992 but a continuous refurbishment program has kept it fresh. All facilities are of a conventional four-star standard, and service is both attentive and efficient. The hotel is a conveniently short walk from the Hépíng Wharf (for Hong Kong ferries), 5 minutes from the warren of the old town, and a 15-minute stroll along the harbor front from the main ferry to Gǔlàng Yǔ.

Zhènhǎi Lù 12–8. ✆ **0592/202-3333.** Fax 0592/203-6666. www.crowneplaza.com. 349 units. ¥1,280–¥2,080 ($160–$260) standard room; ¥2,800–¥6,560 ($350–$820) suite. 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants, 24-hr. coffee shop; cocktail bar; outdoor swimming pool; fitness room; sauna; concierge; tour desk (and American Express office); free airport shuttle; business center (Internet ¥90/$1 per hr.); forex; salon; 24-hr. room service; babysitting; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; executive floor. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, dataport, broadband Internet access (¥50/$6.25 per day), minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Jīnyàn Jiǔdiàn This smarter-than-average Chinese four-star, opened in 2001, is excellent value when the usual discounts are applied. The palm-tree-stocked lobby is swish, and the service remarkably attentive. The guest rooms and bathrooms have pleasing modern fittings (although pale carpets are perhaps a mistake) and are of a regular size, but spotless. Corner rooms have two windows and are particularly bright and sunny. Those at the rear have lake views. There's a 24-hour airline ticketing service and a highly convenient check-in counter for some domestic airlines.

Húbīn Nán Lù. ✆ **0592/221-8888.** Fax 0592/221-7777. jyhotel@public.xm.fj.cn. 316 units. ¥800–¥1,440 ($100–$180) standard room; ¥1,600–¥7,840 ($200–$980) suite. Rates include breakfast. 15% service charge. Rates typically discounted by 50%. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; 24-hr. Western coffee shop; 2 lounges; outdoor pool; fitness room; billiards room; concierge; tour desk with 24-hr. airline ticketing; airport shuttle; business center (Internet ¥15/$1.90 per hr.); forex; salon; 24-hr. room service; executive floor. *In room:* A/C, TV, video on demand, free broadband Internet access, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Marco Polo Xiàmén Many of the rooms are arranged on eight floors around a central atrium, but a wing off to one side is a better choice for peace and quiet. The guest rooms are well appointed and meet four-star standards, with broadband Internet access and larger-than-average bathrooms. The concierge desk is particularly well-staffed with good English speakers, both eager to help and capable of doing so. The center of town is only a few minutes away by taxi.

Jiànyè Lù 8 (off Húbīn Běi Lù on the north shore of Yuàndàng Lake). ✆ **0592/509-1888.** Fax 0592/509-2888. www.marcopolohotels.com. 350 units. ¥1,280–¥2,000 ($160–$250) standard room; ¥1,600–¥7,840 ($250–$980) suite. 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; lobby lounge; poolside bar

with views across the lake to the city skyline; outdoor swimming pool; fitness room; sauna; concierge; tour desk; free airport shuttle; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; 24-hr. room service; babysitting; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

MODERATE TO INEXPENSIVE

Jīnquán Bīnguǎn *Finds* Here's a chance to sleep in a former U.S. Consulate, built in 1928 with bricks imported from the States at a cost of $200,000 (the first consulate burned down). The neoclassical portico (with an oddly Egyptian touch to the tops of its pillars) has been glassed in and the upper floor extended into the space. The building was refitted and opened as a hotel in 1999. What was veranda is now lobby, and upstairs suites have a plate-glass wall, excellent light, and good views. There's a variety of room shapes, some with views of both the sea and the gardens. This is a solid brick building in a far quieter location than can be found on Xiàmén's main island. There are no luxuries here, but it deserves its three stars.

Sān Yuè Lù 26 (on Gǔlàng Yǔ, a short walk to the right from the main ferry dock, and served less frequently by ferries to a dock immediately beneath it). ✆ **0592/206-5621.** Fax 0592/206-4273. 29 units. ¥460 ($57) standard room; ¥660 ($82) suite. 30% discounts typical. ¥280 ($35) simple standard rooms in separate newer building. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant (open intermittently); 2 outdoor tennis courts. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge.

Lùjiāng Bīnguǎn This six-story building is in good condition for a three-star. Its wide variety of units include some large, oddly shaped rooms without ocean views. Its waterfront location opposite the Gǔlàng Yǔ ferry pier is unbeatable, and it's rarely necessary to pay more than 60% of the over-optimistic rack rates. Service is reasonable, although not enthusiastic.

Lùjiāng Dào 54 (opposite main ferry pier for Gǔlàng Yǔ). ✆ **0592/202-2922.** Fax 0592/202-4644. LUJIHTL@public.xm.fj.cn. 153 units. ¥410 ($51) single room; ¥468–¥760 ($58–$95) standard room; ¥830–¥1,360 ($104–$170) suite. 10% service charge (not usually applied). Discounts of 40%. No credit cards. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon. *In room:* A/C, TV with video on demand; fridge.

WHERE TO DINE

Unsurprisingly for a port city, Xiàmén is known for its fresh fish, and seafood can be found for next to nothing in the back streets of the old quarter or at small, hole-in-the-wall restaurants just up from the dock on Gǔlàng Yǔ. Lunch will still be swimming or crawling in plastic tubs set out in the street, and is priced by weight. Júkǒu Jiē (see "Shopping," above) has very cheap Sìchuān and Taiwanese restaurants. Try the basic **Shǔxiāng Yuán Chuān Cài** for authentic Sìchuān, upstairs at no. 63, on the west side near the junction with Sīmíng Xī Lù. It stays open as long as there are shoppers; a meal for two costs about ¥40 ($5).

There's plenty of reliable if more expensive eating within the big hotels. The moderately priced rooftop restaurant in the Lùjiāng Bīnguǎn, called **Guān Hǎi Cāntīng** (✆ **0592/202-2922,** ext. 709), is open from 7:30am to 2pm and 5:30 to 11pm. It has excellent seafood dim sum morning and evening, views across to Gǔlàng Yǔ, and a wide range of well-executed Chinese standards, along with local specials such as *gāli xiān yóu* (curried squid) and *hǎilì jiān* (pan-fried oysters). A meal for two costs about ¥100 ($13).

Good Western food is still only available in the bigger hotels (the pan-Asia expat favorites at both the Marco Polo and Crowne Plaza are excellent), but there are two **McDonald's** and a **KFC** in Zhōngshān Lù alone. A waterfront **Pizza Hut** on the 24th floor of a tower in Lùjiāng Dào, visible for miles, has correspondingly excellent views once you get up there. There's more fast food,

Wild China: The Earth Houses of Yǒngdìng

About 205km (128 miles) inland from Xiàmén, Yǒngdìng is a heartland of the **Hakka** people—Hàn who migrated south from near Kāifēng in five waves beginning more than a thousand years ago, and who were kept moving around southern China by civil war, famine, and discrimination by earlier Hàn arrivals. They often ended up with the worst farming land on the highest ground. Unlike other Hàn, their women did not bind their feet and worked alongside men in the fields, and so tended to marry only other Hakka. They also maintained what they claim is something close to early Chinese but is unintelligible to speakers of Mandarin, Cantonese, and Mǐn Nán Huà.

Now an officially recognized minority, known as the **Kèjiā** or "guest people," their long exile and continued sense of being outsiders has produced both tangible and intangible benefits for visitors. The Hakka claim to be more hospitable to outsiders than other Chinese, but the need to protect themselves against others has produced the magnificent multistory fortresses called *tǔlóu* or "earth buildings," some home to hundreds, all sharing a single family name.

The *tǔlóu* are spread around nearly 50 counties on the Guǎngdōng–Fújiàn–Jiāngxī border. The concentration easiest to reach, and the one most prepared for visitors, is that at **Húkēng,** where a bus will drop you right outside the ticket office. A fee of ¥40 ($5), valid for 2 or 3 days, includes access to four officially open major *tǔlóu* and another containing a museum, although no one seems to mind if you wander in anywhere else. Helpful English signs are quite common, and there's a primitive hotel in the middle of the village (summer only), but you would be better off having the full experience by staying in an actual *tǔlóu.* Residents with rooms to let (typically for ¥20/$2.50 or so) will persistently approach you, as will motorbike and *sānlúnchē* owners wanting to take you to other villages.

The vast fortresses nestle together on either side of a river in a narrow green valley, and in autumn their khaki tones have splashes of color as crops of plums and persimmons are spread out to dry on flat surfaces. The "earth" is in fact a tamped mixture of sand, lime, and dirt, giving the walls a textured surface. The best-known building is the marvelous circular **Zhènchéng Lóu** of 1912, consisting of an outer four-story ring with each floor divided into 44 rooms and two halls; an inner, two-story ring divided into eight sections; and two tobacco workshops outside, bringing the total number of rooms to 222. As with other *tǔlóu,* windows to the outside world begin two stories up. Balconies run around the interiors, providing access and light. The inner ring joins at a hall for worshipping ancestors, marriage ceremonies, greeting distinguished guests, and other events.

The battered **Huánxīng Lóu** is not an official sight, but it dates from around 1550 and is the oldest in this village. It has walls more than 1.8m (5 ft.) thick, and two sets of vast and heavy wooden doors, the first secured by a set of wooden beams, and the second by stone ones. The squealing of tussling pigs reveals that the inner ring retains its original use, but it has gaps caused by past flooding. An earthquake a century

ago also lozenged one section of the outer ring, and another has lost its inner surface and interior floors. A hole through one section was blasted during the Tàipíng Rebellion (p. 364). One resident claims that the occupants, numbering 500 only 20 years ago, could survive for a year under siege. There are still 200 residents, all called Lǐ. Persimmons, plums, and vegetables hang out to dry over the balconies of the upper stories, having been washed in the stream outside. The ground floors contain the kitchens, the rooms above are for storage, and the upper two floors are for living and sleeping. But there are few people around under 40—they've already left for accommodations in the new town, or become part of the drifting migrant economy of 150 million or so.

Tǔlóu also come in half-moon, pentangle, "five phoenix," and other shapes. The square, fortress-like **Kuíjù Lóu,** dating from 1834, is, at 6,000 sq. m (1½ acres) even bigger than the circular buildings. It has an interior of brick and wood more like that of a conventional mansion. The 7,000-sq.-m (1¾-acre) **Fúyù Lóu** of 1880, whose residents are all called Lín, has multiple axes, and a five-story earthen tower at the rear. Its beams and pillars are beautifully carved, and it also has some fine inlaid screens, as well as a teahouse and rooms to let.

The last official *tǔlóu* (although residents don't mind if you wander into several others) is the charming **Rúshēng Lóu,** built sometime between 1875 and 1908. It's a single 23m (63-ft.) diameter ring-shaped dollhouse in comparison to the others, which have three stories each of 16 rooms. Finally, the **museum** occupies a rectangular *tǔlóu,* where the music of traditional instruments echoes around the two floors of one courtyard, given over to displays of tobacco knives, tools used in building, and photographs of festivals and other *tǔlóu* which may have you planning trips to other villages. You may see dried persimmons being roasted and pressed into cakes—a local specialty called *shìbǐng.*

GETTING THERE The best route is by **bus** from Xiàmén, first to **Lóngyán** (4 hr.; ¥55/$6.90) every 45 minutes from 7am to 6:30pm, and then by Iveco minibus to **Húkēng** (13 departures; 2 hr.; ¥15/$1.90) from 7am to 4:50pm. There's also a daily service to Lóngyán from Nánchāng. There are limited **train** services to **Yǒngdìng,** 37km (23 miles) and ¥7 (90¢) by minibus from modern Húkēng, and then a short taxi ride to the old town. But timings are highly inconvenient.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE Owners of lodgings will find you, and you get what you pay for. Insist on clean bedding, but expect a single light bulb, a thermos of boiling water, and a chamber pot to be the sum total of facilities. Make careful note of the locations of the pit toilet and a tap with running water, both down at ground level, before it gets dark. Simple food will be offered, to be eaten in the ground-floor room. Three plain dishes, cooked over wood fires, will cost around ¥20 ($2.50). Take supplementary snacks from Xiàmén. After dark it's eerily quiet, especially in the now sparsely inhabited **Zhènchéng Lóu.** Lín Hóngyuán, ✆ **0130/6245-7844,** is among those with rooms there; Lín Qínmíng also has rooms at the **Fúyù Lóu,** ✆ **0130/6245-7844.** There's slightly less basic accommodations in the new town 5km (3 miles) away.

both Chinese and Western, close to the ferry dock on Gǔlàng Yǔ. A currently out-of-place cafe is nevertheless perhaps a harbinger of further trendiness to come, the Hong Kong–owned coffee shop called **Banana** at Lóngtóu Lù 54C, open from 10am to 10pm. It serves Horlicks, pancakes, and egg sandwiches in a pastel-colored interior hung with Mark Rothko prints.

Those in search of something resembling a Western breakfast outside big hotels should try the cafeteria-style **Chá Cāntīng Homely Fast Food,** in the old town at Shēngpíng Lù 50, close to the ferry dock, which does a Western-ish breakfast including ham and eggs, buttered toast, and milk tea from 8 to 11am, and Chinese and Hong Kong–style fast-food favorites until 1am.

Vegetarians are well served at the **Nán Pǔtuó Sì.** Tickets must first be purchased from the "Vegetable Dishes Booking Office," signposted in English; it's open from noon to 4pm and 5 to 7pm. Individual dishes cost from ¥8 ($1), but three-dish set meals from ¥30 ($3.75) per person make life easier. The surroundings are undistinguished and practical, but the food is prepared with a sensitivity to each ingredient's strengths, and is excellent value. Try *xiāng ní cáng zhēn* (vegetables mashed into a paste—much more attractive than it sounds), *luóhàn zhāi* (a stew of pine nuts, cabbage, cucumber, corn, mushrooms, and fresh coriander), *dāngguī miànjīn tāng* (Chinese angelica and gluten soup), and *lúsǔn dòufu tāng* (asparagus and tofu soup).

Gǔlàng Yǔ has its own **specialty snack,** made on the island, called *wāng jì xiànbǐng*—small pastries stuffed with a variety of sweet fillings (vegetarian and even vegan versions available), usually sold in pretty souvenir boxes of 12. Just below Xiàmén Museum, a corner shop called **Qín Dǎo Quán Xià Tèchǎn Shāngdiàn,** at Quánzhōu Lù 85, has a large selection.

9 Jǐngdézhèn

Jiāngxī Province, 280km (174 miles) NE of Nánchāng, 430km (267 miles) E of Wǔhàn

Jǐngdézhèn is a smallish town in the throes of growing up but without quite the economic clout to do so. For now, areas of ramshackle housing still survive behind the typical white-tile shopping streets but are clearly not due to be around much longer. The main attraction is the pottery industry, but the town doesn't present itself too well and its museum collections are weak, although the Táocí Lìshǐ Bówùguǎn (Ceramic Historical Exhibition Area) is excellent.

During the Sòng dynasty, Jǐngdézhèn came to dominate porcelain production and gained its name from a decision by the Sòng Jǐngdé emperor (reigned 1004–1007) to upgrade it to a town. It dominated world porcelain production for nearly 1,000 years, not least because Jiāngxī Province has Asia's purest deposits of clay suitable for firing, and Jǐngdézhèn was surrounded by wooded hills providing plentiful quantities of the right kind of firewood. The Yángzǐ to the north, and river systems leading south to Guǎngzhōu, enabled the town to get its wares around China for sale, and later, via the treaty ports, to an increasingly enthusiastic European market. Imperial support also helped—some kilns were employed solely for the making of wares for the emperors and their officials. The first kiln site to produce white china and to use certain underglaze painting techniques, Jǐngdézhèn reached its peak of technical brilliance during the mid-17th to late 18th century with the gaudy full- colored enamel overglaze illustrations of *famille vert* and *famille rose* china.

Statues at the end of Zhū Shān Jiē show the process of working the clay, blowing on glazes, carrying items to kilns, and more.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The **airport** is only 8km (5 miles) out of town, but it has a very limited number of flights only to Shànghǎi, Běijīng, Xiàmén, Chóngqíng, and Shēnzhèn. For more choices, head to Nánchāng's Chāngběi Airport. A **shuttle bus** runs to the Jīchǎng Shòupiào Zhōngxīn (✆ **0798/822-3907;** ticket office, 8am–5:30pm), in the center of town at Zhū Shān Lù 127. The shuttle fare is ¥5 (65¢) and it leaves for the airport 1½ hours before each flight. A taxi ride costs about ¥20 ($2.50).

Rail services are also fairly limited, although there are three trains daily from Běijīng Xī (West), one from Běijīng, two from Shànghǎi, two from Xiàmén, and two from Fúzhōu. However, none start at Jǐngdézhèn, so ticket availability is limited. Nánchāng and Jiǔjiāng, both best reached by express bus from Jǐngdézhèn, have far more trains. Ticket windows at the station are open from 7:45am to 8pm, with brief breaks.

The **Main Bus Station** (**Kèyùn Zhōngxīn;** ✆ **0798/858-0990**) is on the northwest side of town and is open from 6am to 7pm. Buses to Bōyáng for ferries (see below), and express buses using the highway to Jiǔjiāng and beyond, arrive and depart from here. Destinations include Jiǔjiāng (134km/84 miles; 12 departures 7:30am–6:30pm; ¥30/$3.75), Nánchāng (280km/175 miles; 14 departures 6:30am–7:10pm; ¥60/$7.50 for the best bus), and Wǔhàn (430km/269 miles; 4 departures 7:30am–4:30pm; ¥100/$13), as well as Wēnzhōu, Hángzhōu, Shàoxīng, and Nánjīng. Another bus station (✆ **0798/820-8156**) opposite the railway station, open from 6:20am to 5:30pm, also serves Jiǔjiāng and Nánchāng.

GETTING AROUND **Taxis** are locally made box-like Suzukis. Flagfall of ¥5 (65¢) includes 2km (1¼ miles), after which the fare is ¥1 (15¢) per kilometer up to 6km (3¾ miles), then ¥1.50 (20¢) per kilometer thereafter. From 11pm to 5am the fare is ¥1.80 (25¢). **Buses** charge a ¥1 (15¢) flat fare deposited in the slot. Bus no. K35 starts at the Kèyùn Zhōngxīn and goes south past the Jīnyè Dàjiǔdiàn and then east along Zhū Shān Zhōng Lù.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs There's a useful **Bank of China** (open 8am–6pm, 5:30pm winter) opposite city hall on Zhū Shān Lù. There are no useful ATMs.

Internet Access *Wǎngbā* such as the one on the south side of Zhū Shān Lù, near the junction of Cídū Dàdào, usually charge ¥2 (25¢) per hour. Dial-up is **8163.**

Post Office The main post office (open 8am–7pm summer, 6:30pm winter) is on Zhū Shān Lù.

Visa Extensions The **PSB** (open Mon–Fri, 8:30–11:30am, 2:50–5:30pm) is on the west side of Cídū Dàdào well south of the Zhū Shān Lù junction, in a tall white building with pink steps.

PUTTERING AROUND TOWN

Táocí Lìshǐ Bówùguǎn (Ceramic Historical Exhibition Area) ★ This is easily the best of several exhibitions devoted to ceramics, and includes several old kilns, areas demonstrating the production process, and ancient houses and temples. The site is down a winding country lane off an urban main street, providing an abrupt transition from town to countryside. The entrance to the left of the ticket office leads to rebuilt ancient kiln types in reddish brick, and a fine

old mansion in local style, with black pillars, white walls, and richly carved and gilded interior beams. Glass cases in its three courtyards hold modest displays of ceramics. English signs guide you around the site.

The **Tiānhóu Gōng** behind the mansion has been heavily reconstructed and is now just a souvenir shop, but beyond that it is a curious temple dedicated to the three deified founders of porcelain making, venerated as the source of Jǐngdézhèn's past wealth—the discoverer of china clay, the inventor of forming techniques, and the inventor of firing—worship of whom is unique to Jǐngdézhèn. The temple is about 300 years old and seems not to have been renovated since, giving it a rather distressed charm. Blue and white porcelain panels give an account of traditional production techniques, and there are statues of the founders at the rear. The one with a red face has not been drinking *bái jiǔ,* but has spent too much time close to the kiln. Offerings of plastic fruit and fake ingots suggest the founders are not yet entirely forgotten.

A second entrance to the right of the ticket office leads to an area where, in theory, you can watch the production process in a series of sheds, which begins with pools of clay and continues with racks of pieces in various stages of preparation. But the kiln is no longer fired, there are weeds growing from the clay pits, and this is all for show and shopping.

Behind this area, what looks at first like a dry-stone wall is a large pile of firewood built into the shape of a cottage. Pine wood was carefully cut and stacked this way to guard against rain and spontaneous combustion, and to save the cost of building storage sheds, but the result is a work of art. The duck's-egg–shaped kiln to the right, one of Jǐngdézhèn's oldest, occupies only about a quarter of the area of a large barn-like building. The ground floor is a small forest of curved pillars which seem to be largely unfashioned tree trunks, between which are stacked piles of saggars, the rough ceramic outer cases into which pieces were placed for firing. A series of wall-mounted illustrations shows the process.

At the end of the low-ceilinged hall there's a ramp up through a narrow entrance into the arched brickwork of the kiln space itself, where the firewood would have been stacked in patterns depending on the effect required, and saggars containing porcelain requiring different temperatures would have been placed in different positions.

Cídū Dàdào (southeast of the center). 8am–5pm. Admission ¥38 ($4.75). Bus: no. 19 to the end of the route. Taxi: about ¥6 (75¢).

Sān Bǎo Shuǐduì (Water-powered Hammers) ★ A short way into the countryside, some fascinating primitive technology can be seen. Take bus no. K35 for ¥1 (15¢) to the east and alight at the Hútián stop shortly before the terminus where the bus swings right; walk on for 2.5km (1½ miles), or take a taxi. The route leads past shuttered factories and smokeless chimneys peeping from among the green hills. Those few premises still in operation seem to be making saggars rather than finer material, but large trucks still pass, brimful of white clay. The *shuǐduì* can be heard before they are seen, an irregular solid clunking from beneath a thatched hut to the left. Just past it, follow a path that crosses a stream and then swings around to the left to the hut. Inside, four giant wooden mallets with long heads and pointed noses, ingeniously driven by a small water wheel and among the last of their kind, pound soggy masses of clay.

Bus: no. K35 to Hútián; follow directions above.

Táocí Bówùguǎn (Museum of Porcelain) "China is one of China people's contrivance," says an introductory sign helpfully. This old-style (dusty, ill-lit)

museum sets out 1,000 years of Jǐngdézhèn production, beginning with early shards, proceeding through modest examples of blue-and-white, five-color, and other wares, and ending with the gaudiest although technically impressive modern productions (a vase of flowers in which every single petal, including those of a wilted chrysanthemum, is ceramic, for example).

Liánshè Lù (east side, north of Zhū Shān Lù). 9am–5pm. Admission ¥15 ($1.90).

Xiángjí Lòng Mín Zhái Also called the **Píntáo Zhái,** this is one of what should eventually be a series of restored Míng-era merchants' houses demonstrating the wealth generated by imperial and private kilns. This sturdy mansion, with its brown pillars and black beams with gold trim, was originally constructed sometime between 1435 and 1449, and contains a small exhibition of photographs of the local area.

Just off the east side of Zhōngshān Běi Lù, immediately north of Zhū Shān. 8:30am–5pm. Admission ¥10 ($1.25).

SHOPPING

Long-distance sleeper buses of the cheaper, more primitive kind leave groaning with vast quantities of rope-bound packages of china. A vast, modern complex opposite the Porcelain Museum has dozens of shops selling nothing but porcelain. Most hotels and museums sell it, too. Even the KFC has it on display.

WHERE TO STAY

The **Jīnyè Dàjiǔdiàn,** in Cídū Dàdào (✆ **0798/858-8888;** fax 0798/8566-2233; jd668899@public1.jd.jx.cn), is the best choice (opened in 2002). A three-star in nice condition, it has 21 stories and 228 rooms, but it could do with a few more elevators to reach them. The guest rooms are comfortable and the bathrooms clean. Standard rooms are ¥358 to ¥458 ($45–$57), and suites ¥788 to ¥1,588 ($99–$199), usually with a 30% discount. The usual credit cards are accepted, but there's no foreign exchange. Some "overseas Chinese" tour groups stay here. The restaurant is good value. Of the many budget options along the main street, Zhū Shān Lù, the two-star **Jīnshèng Bīnguǎn** at no. 29 (✆ **0798/827-1818;** fax 0798/820-7818) is the best choice, refurbished in 2002. Carpetless standard rooms with common bathroom are ¥80 ($10); standard rooms, modest but not too battered, are ¥138 to ¥288 ($17–$36); and triple rooms are ¥180 ($23). Discounts of 15% are easily negotiated. There's a restaurant but no forex service, and credit cards are not accepted. The cheaper standard rooms have bathrooms which double as shower cubicles, but the more expensive rooms have proper bathrooms. April through November is the busy season.

WHERE TO DINE

The restaurant at the **Jīnyè Dàjiǔdiàn** (✆ **0798/858-7777;** open 6:30–9:30am, 5–9pm, 9:30pm–2am)offers *Gàn cài* (Jiāngxī dishes) and Chinese standards. The hot dishes (Jiāngxī food is spicy) are labeled *huǒ là*—fiery hot. Try *sāngná niúròu,* "sauna" beef—tender slices in a garlicky, peppery oil, served in a clay pot and cooked by putting small heated stones in the liquid (some Yúnnán dishes are made like this, too). Also try *jǐnggāng lǎobiǎo sǔn,* a peppery dish of solid, chewy, bamboo shoots, with dried tofu. All are good value at around ¥60 ($7.50) for two. **KFC** has made a recent appearance on Zhū Shān Lù, as has the copycat **CFC** or China's Fried Chicken, with identical typeface on the logo. The **Dìyī Lú Miànbāo** (**No. 1 bakery;** open 7am–10:30pm) at the corner of Zhōngshān Lù, has fresh bread and cakes to take on your onward journey.

10 Jiǔjiāng

Jiāngxī Province, 184km (115 miles) N of Nánchāng, 728km (455 miles) W of Shànghǎi

Jiǔjiāng, a nondescript former treaty port which did little business in its heyday and doesn't seem to do much now either, was part of a later wave of foreigner demands. The Treaty of Tiānjīn led to the opening of Jiǔjiāng and two other Yángzǐ River towns as treaty ports in 1861. Most of the coastal treaty ports had failed to do much business, and it was thought there was a need to head inland. The cotton merchants of Manchester petitioned the British government to take over the whole of the Yángzǐ as a protectorate, but at Jiǔjiāng the British merely took over a small stretch of waterfront and bunded it (built embankments). In the end, the city became best known as the transit point for the summer retreat then known as Kuling on top of neighboring **Lú Shān,** still the main draw today. Complete control was returned to China in 1927.

The town has done nothing to preserve its treaty port heritage, and has yet to refit its shopping or to acquire the glitz of small towns nearer the coast. The Yángzǐ oozes by, and ferries on the route between Shànghǎi and Chóngqìng stop here, but none of the upmarket tourist boats do. *Note:* For Chinese translations of selected establishments listed in this section, please turn to Appendix A.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The nearest useful **airport** is at Nánchāng. The **China Eastern** agent (✆ **0139/704-9980;** open 8am–7pm) next to the Wǔ Fēng Bīnguǎn offers good discounts, and delivers tickets for free. The **railway station**, south of the center, is on the main north–south Běijīng-to-Jiǔlóng route. The T167 is the best choice from Běijīng, departing at 6pm and arriving in Jiǔjiāng at 7:50am; and the T168 at 7:30pm is the best return. There are also rail services from Guǎngzhōu Dōng (East), Shēnzhèn, and Xiàmén. The 24-hour left-luggage office is at the far left-hand end of the railway station as you face it, and the ticket office at the far right-hand end. Porters for hire at the railway station still use bamboo shoulder poles *(tiáo)* to carry luggage.

The **main bus station (chángtú qìchē zhàn)** just east of the center on Xúnyàng Dōng Lù is open from 5:30am to 9pm. It can be reached by bus no. 1. There are services to Nánchāng (184km/115 miles; 2 hr.; ¥30/$3.75) every 30 minutes or so from 6am to 7pm; to Jǐngdézhèn by deluxe bus (156km/98 miles; 2 hr.; ¥40/$5) every 30 minutes from 6:30am to 5:30pm; and to Lú Shān (40km/25 miles; 1 hr.; ¥7.70/$1) from 6:45am to 4:30pm (8 services). There are also longer runs to Nánjīng, Shànghǎi (728km/451 miles), Shēnzhèn, and Wǔhàn.

No cruise ships dock at Jiǔjiāng's conveniently central Kèyùn Mǎtóu (open 8am–10pm). However, regular **ferry** services run as far as Chóngqìng upstream and Shànghǎi downstream, with a vast range of classes, of which passengers who like modest comfort will want to take the first. The following list begins with first-class prices. Upstream ferries go to Chóngqìng (1,543km/964 miles; ¥1,398–¥152/$175–$19) and to Hànkǒu (part of Wǔhàn; 269km/168 miles; ¥217–¥30/$27–$3.75). Downstream ferries go to Shànghǎi (856km/535 miles; ¥379–¥85/$47–$11) and to Nánjīng (464km/290 miles; ¥351–¥45/$44–$5.75). River traffic is in decline, and the dam and fog also confuse schedules. Call ✆ **0792/812-4998** or 0792/822-2087 to check for details. The left-luggage office here is open from 8am to 10pm.

GETTING AROUND Suzuki, Xiàlì, and Alto taxis are all the same price (so avoid the tiny Alto). The ¥5 (65¢) flagfall includes 2km (1¼ miles); after that the fare is ¥1.20 (15¢) per kilometer; from 10pm to 5am it's ¥1.45 (20¢) per kilometer. The little minivans or *miàndì* charge ¥3 (40¢) for 2km (1¼ miles), then ¥1 (15¢) per kilometer; ¥1.20 (15¢) from 10pm to 5am. Buses require a flat fare of ¥1 (15¢) in the slot. Most of what's useful to visitors is squeezed into a strip of land between the river and Gāntáng Hú (lake).

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The most convenient **Bank of China** (open 8am–6pm, 5pm in winter) is on Lú Shān Lù, on the west side of Gāntáng Hú (lake). It also has an ATM.

Internet Access Bars in side streets offer access for ¥2 (25¢) per hour. Dial-up is **8163.**

Post Office There's a useful post office (open 8am–6pm) on Xúnyàng Lù opposite the Yānshuǐ Tíng.

EXPLORING JIŬJIĀNG

There's little left of Jiŭjiāng's treaty port era, but there are a few remains on the streets between the waterfront and Dà Zhōng Lù. A new Customs house appears to have been built on an old Western model; its clock has a Westminster chime. The **Yānshuǐ Tíng** (**Misty Water Pavilion;** open 8am–5:30pm; ¥10/$1.25) is a group of small halls occupying a tiny island in Gāntáng Hú and reached by a zigzag bridge from Xúnyàng Lù. The latest incarnation is late Qīng, and contains small exhibitions of clothing, ceramics, and a history of foreign aggression with interesting early photographs of Western buildings. **Néngrén Chán Sì** on Yŭliàng Nán Lù (open 6am–5pm; ¥10/$1.25), is an active and gaudy Zen Buddhist temple with colorful statuary and a white pagoda on which much foliage has taken root.

A KULING RETREAT TO LÚ SHĀN

By the beginning of the 20th century the British had begun to establish Chinese "hill stations" to match the summer retreats they had established in India to escape the inferno there. The most celebrated of these was the artfully named Kuling, established in the late 19th century by the Reverend Edwin Selby Little, an Englishman missionary-cum-property speculator. He bought land and resold it to other foreigners in lots, laying out streets and naming them after Cambridge and Oxford. Around these streets, hotels, churches, boarding schools, a post office, and a cemetery sprang up. Consular, trading, missionary, and Customs establishments would gather here from all over northern China to escape the sweltering summer heat and to trade gossip. Rows of villas and bungalows among the pines retain a Home Counties feeling to this day, and while praised by some as a relaxing retreat, even in its heyday Kuling was also noted for its monotony and slavish imitation of England.

Lú Shān is the modern name, and Gŭlĭng merely the small town at one end of the hilltop. But this retreat remains the main reason to pass through Jiŭjiāng, from where there are eight buses a day even in low season; the trip takes just over an hour and costs ¥7.70 ($1). If you want to return to Jiŭjiāng between departures, tiny rattletrap yellow vans do the run back for the same price as the bus, but will first cruise the streets of Gŭlĭng until full. Lú Shān is cool in summer but wet much of the time, and very wet in winter. June through September is

peak period, when Lú Shān's hotels, most of which are very modest, charge ridiculous prices and are filled with Chinese tour groups.

Admission to Lú Shān is an extortionate ¥85 ($11), and individual sight entry fees are *extra.* The bus then passes through a tunnel and turns left into the bus station. Turn left out of the bus station to find ugly battered modern hotels, but a little further on, a pedestrian street up to the right has more of the flavor of the original town. It also has a **Bank of China** (open 8am–noon, 2:30–6pm), a **post office** (open 7:30am–9:30pm), an **Internet cafe,** convenience stores, and cheap **restaurants** serving simple dishes for clearly marked prices. **Maps** of the resort are widely on sale for ¥2.80 (35¢). **Taxis** on the mountaintop decline to use their meters, and drivers are keen to overcharge foreigners as much as possible.

An early start on a clear day is best; tackle the resort on foot and take advantage of the paths that lace the hillsides and which are clearly marked on the map. During the Republican era, this was a haunt of Chiang Kai-shek, and during the Communist era a haunt of Máo and his henchmen, who held various meetings here. Most of the museums are tediously devoted to this topic, and old villas are often marked with signs to say which leader was once in residence. Almost all are strung within a 30-minute walk downhill to the southwest—straight through the town and main villa area on Héxī Lù and Hédōng Lù. Modern attractions include an ever-increasing assortment of cable cars and ropeways leading to high points around the resort, as well as a scenic railway on the northwest side, all marked on the bilingual map.

Only a short distance downhill, the **Měi Lú Biéshù** (open 8am–5pm; ¥15/$1.90), a squat stone villa with green trim, was a country retreat of Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek and his wife Soong Mei-ling from 1934 to 1948, and Máo Zédōng stayed here in 1959 and 1961. Apparently none of them had any taste in furnishings.

Máo also stayed at **Lú Lín,** further downhill along Huán Hú Lù, which runs around the south side of Lú Lín Hú (lake). The villa was built as late as 1960 and is now home of the **Lú Shā Bówùguǎn** (open 8am–5pm; ¥10/$1.25), which "displays many precious photos and objects," but more about the various Communist Party committee meetings than about the foreigners who founded the resort. Further on still, best reached by uphill paths, is China's first proper **Botanical Garden,** with pines, cypresses, azaleas, and tea gardens. Two of Lú Shān's many cable cars and ropeways are just beyond the garden, running to viewing platforms. April through October, one of them charges ¥60 ($7.50) round-trip, ¥45 ($18) one-way; the second charges ¥50 ($6.25) round-trip, ¥30 ($3.75) one-way. But for much of the year there's nothing to view, as Lú Shān is famously misty, and here the vapor mixes with wood smoke from cooking fires at little restaurants.

Lú Shān can easily be visited as a day trip from Jiǔjiāng. The quality of hotels is not high, being in many cases the moldering remains of accommodations from the resort's original foundation which haven't seen a refit since; or else very modest two-star hotels which have taken a beating from the immense volume of traffic at high season, but which still want to charge ¥400 ($50) for a standard room. There are several of these two-stars in Gǔlǐng close to the bus station, best inspected to see which is currently in the best condition. Most hotels shut in October and reopen in April, but some stay open into December, although few have heating. Other than in midsummer, bargain to pay no more than 50% of rack rates, which in many cases is still too much.

The threadbare three-star **Lú Shān Hotel (Lú Shān Bīnguǎn),** Héxī Lù 446 (✆ **0792/828-2060;** fax 0792/828-2932), has helpful staff and a wide range of room types (but all of them large) between ¥540 and ¥900 ($68–$113). There are a number of villas around the hillside behind the hotel. A major refurbishment is planned, as well as the construction of a new four-star building next door, which might bring Lú Shān from the 19th into the 21st century. Similar, but with a quieter location, is the **Lú Lín Hotel (Lú Lín Fàndiàn)** on the south side of Lú Lín Lake, past the museum (✆ **0792/828-2424**). Rooms here are ¥400 to ¥560 ($50–$70). Credit cards are accepted at both these hotels, but at few others. An existing Chinese four-star hotel, the **Tiělùdū Lú Shān Xī Hú Bīnguǎn** (✆ **0792/828-2991**), was not open for inspection.

Other than the cheap dining in Gǔlǐng itself, the best eating is inside the larger hotels, although the food is overpriced at around ¥150 to ¥200 ($19–$25) for two.

WHERE TO STAY

Jiǔjiāng itself boasts just one four-star hotel, the 232-room **Qí Shì Jiǔjiāng Dàjiǔdiàn,** which would be unlikely to obtain the rating anywhere else. It's located at Bīnjiāng Lù 68 (✆ **0792/823-3388;** fax 0792/812-1288), overlooking the sluggish Yángzǐ, just east of the ferry pier. Although the lobby has pretensions to grandeur, the rooms have a worn, three-star feeling and need refurbishing, although the hotel only opened in 1999. Both the Chinese and Western restaurants are well spoken of, however. Standard rooms are ¥428 to ¥448 ($48–$56), and suites are ¥688 to ¥788 ($86–$99), with discounts of 20% outside peak season. Xúnyàng Lù, which runs through the center of town, has some newer three-stars; the best rooms are those on the newly renovated floors of the **Báilù Bīnguǎn** at no.133 (✆ **0792/822-2818;** fax 0792/822-1915). There are three standard room types, as well as single and triple rooms. The unrenovated rooms are cheap and but very battered, and you'll need to pay around ¥365 ($46) for something fresh (20% discounts). The equally new if less polished rooms of the **Wǔ Fēng Bīnguǎn,** in two buildings a little further east at no.129, are more open to negotiation, down to as little as ¥180 ($23) with persistence. The guest rooms are simple and straightforward, with wooden floors and small but fully functional bathrooms. There are many other hotels along the street, some cheaper but all overpriced. All three above take the usual credit cards and have forex services.

WHERE TO DINE

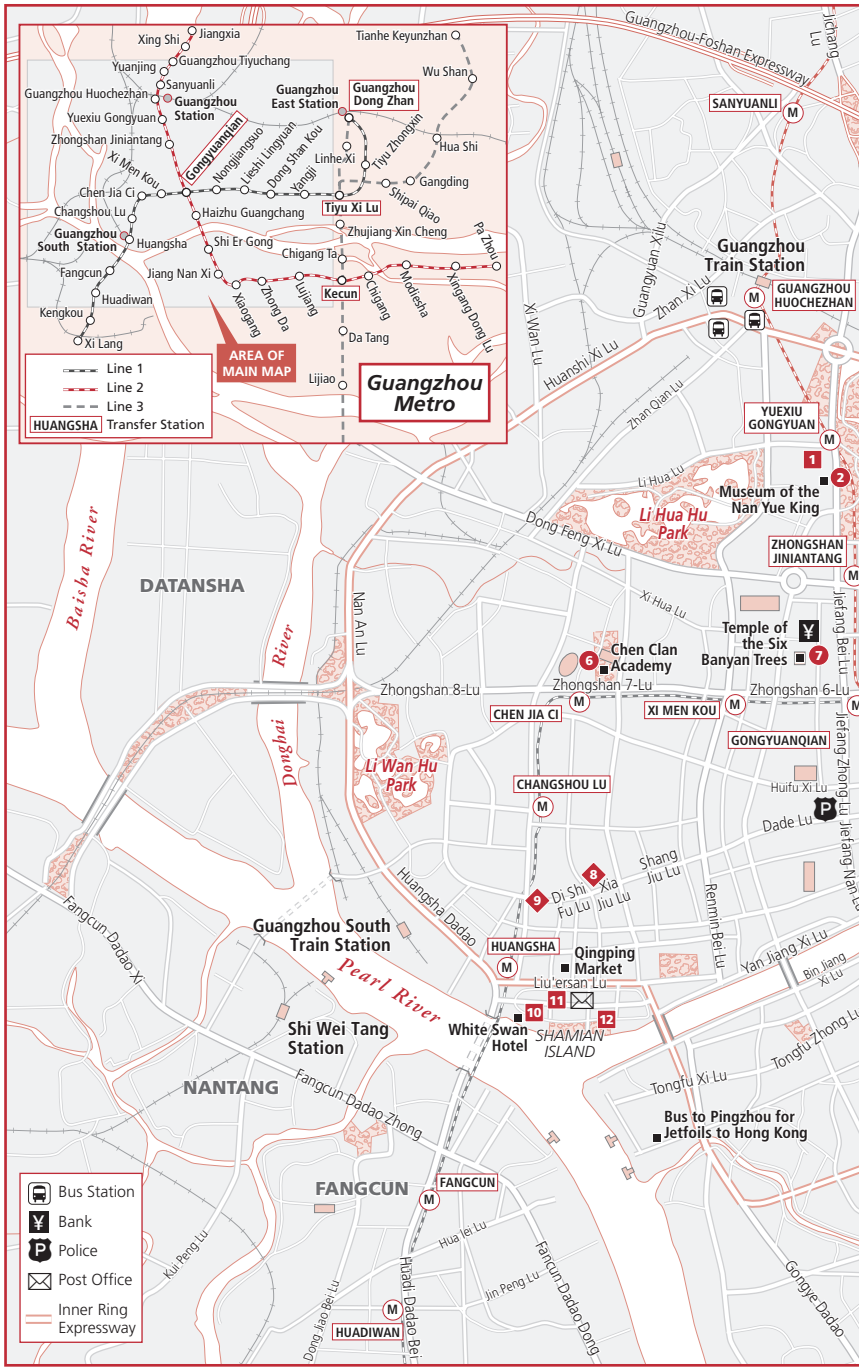
The **Xīn Tàizǐ Dàjiǔdiàn,** immediately east of the Wǔ Fēng Bīnguǎn (whose own restaurant should be avoided), has a bright, bustling, and comfortable upstairs dining room. Try *xiāng jiān mǐfěn ròu,* minced pork in rice flour—a popular Kèjiā (Hakka) dish, but more peppery in this *Gàn cài* version. The desperate can find **KFC** at the traffic circle at the east end of Xúnyàng Lù, along with various bakeries and department stores with basement fast-food outlets and supermarkets.

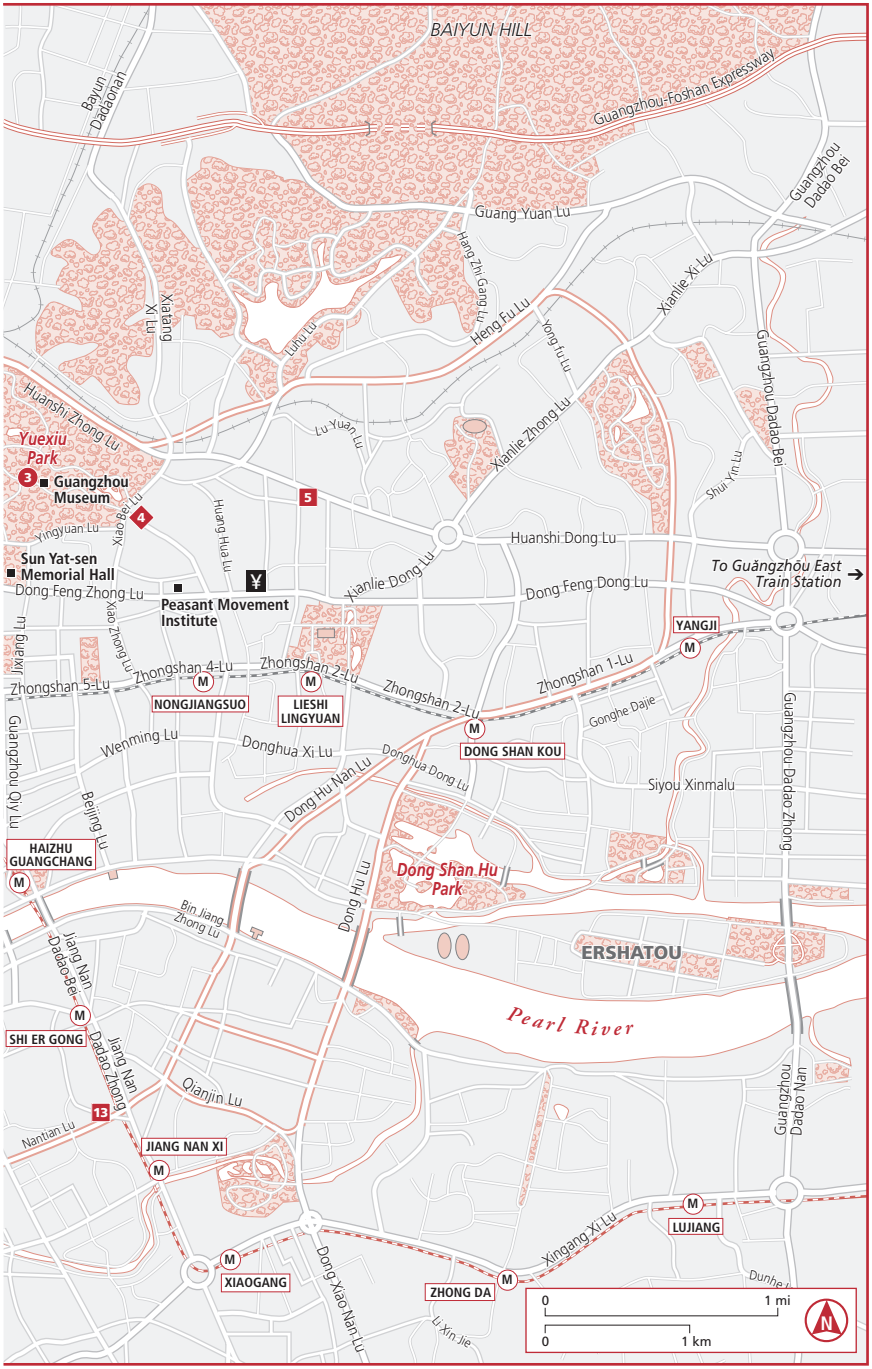
11 Guǎngzhōu

Guǎngdōng Province, 163km (102 miles) NW of Hong Kong, 165km (103 miles) NE of Macau

It's a shame that for many visitors Guǎngzhōu is their first and sometimes their only view of mainland China—a 1- to 2-day side trip from Hong Kong. While it escapes the rigid grids that dominate other major cities, and while it has genuine

Guǎngzhōu


Guangzhou-Foshan Expressway
Jichang Lu
SANYUANLI
Guangzhou Train Station
GUANGZHOU HUOCHEZHAN
Guangyuan Xi Lu
Zhan Xi Lu
Xi Wan Lu
Huanshi Xi Lu
Zhan Qian Lu
YUEXIU GONGYUAN
Museum of the Nan Yue King
Li Hua Lu
Li Hua Hu Park
Dong Feng Xi Lu
ZHONGSHAN JINIANTANG
Xi Hua Lu
Temple of the Six Banyan Trees
Jiefang Bei Lu
Chen Clan Academy
Zhongshan 8-Lu
Zhongshan 7-Lu
Zhongshan 6-Lu
CHEN JIA CI
XI MEN KOU
GONGYUANQIAN
Jiefang Zhong Lu
Jiefang Nan Lu
Huifu Xi Lu
Dade Lu
CHANGSHOU LU
Li Wan Hu Park
Shang Jiu Lu
Di Shi Fu Lu
Xia Jiu Lu
Renmin Bei Lu
Yan Jiang Xi Lu
Bin Jiang Xi Lu
Tongfu Zhong Lu
Tongfu Xi Lu
Bus to Pingzhou for Jetfoils to Hong Kong
Baisha River
DATANSHA
Nan An Lu
Dongchai River
Huangsha Dadao
Fangcun Dadao Xi
Guangzhou South Train Station
HUANGSHA
Qingping Market
Liu'ersan Lu
Pearl River
Shi Wei Tang Station
White Swan Hotel
SHAMIAN ISLAND
NANTANG
Fangcun Dadao Zhong
FANGCUN
Hua Lei Lu
Jin Peng Lu
Fancun Dadao Dong
Gongye Dadao
Kui Peng Lu
Huadi Dadao Bei
Dong Jiao Bei Lu
HUADIWAN
Bus Station
Bank
Police
Post Office
Inner Ring Expressway
Xing Shi
Jiangxia
Tianhe Keyunzhan
Yuanjing
Guangzhou Tiyuchang
Wu Shan
Guangzhou Huochezhan
Sanyuanli
Guangzhou East Station
Guangzhou Dong Zhan
Guangzhou Station
Yuexiu Gongyuan
Zhongshan Jiniantang
Gongyuanqian
Nongjiangsuo
Lieshi Lingyuan
Dong Shan Kou
Linhe Xi
Tiyu Zhongxin
Hua Shi
Xi Men Kou
Yangji
Gangding
Chen Jia Ci
Shipai Qiao
Changshou Lu
Haizhu Guangchang
Tiyu Xi Lu
Guangzhou South Station
Huangsha
Shi Er Gong
Zhujiang Xin Cheng
Pa Zhou
Chigang Ta
Fangcun
Jiang Nan Xi
Modiesha
Xingang Dong Lu
Huadiwan
Xiaogang
Zhong Da
Kecun
Chigang
Kengkou
Xi Lang
Da Tang
AREA OF MAIN MAP
Lijiao
Guangzhou Metro
Line 1
Line 2
Line 3
HUANGSHA Transfer Station


BAIYUN HILL
Baiyun Dadaonan
Guangzhou-Foshan Expressway
Guangzhou Dadao Bei
Guang Yuan Lu
Hang Zhi Gang Lu
Heng Fu Lu
Yong Fu Lu
Xianlie Xi Lu
Xiatang Xi Lu
Liuhu Lu
Huanshi Zhong Lu
Yuexiu Park
3
Guangzhou Museum
4
Lu Yuan Lu
Xianlie Zhong Lu
Shui Yin Lu
Guangzhou Dadao Bei
5
Yingyuan Lu
Xiao Bei Lu
Huang Hua Lu
Huanshi Dong Lu
Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall
Dong Feng Zhong Lu
Xianlie Dong Lu
Dong Feng Dong Lu
To Guangzhou East Train Station
Peasant Movement Institute
Xiao Zhong Lu
YANGJI
Liuhang Lu
Zhongshan 4-Lu
Zhongshan 2-Lu
Zhongshan 1-Lu
Zhongshan 5-Lu
NONGJIANGSUO
LIESHI LINGYUAN
Zhongshan 2-Lu
Gonghe Dajie
Guangzhou Dadao Zhong
Wenming Lu
Donghua Xi Lu
DONG SHAN KOU
Donghua Dong Lu
Dong Hui Nan Lu
Siyou Xinmalu
Guangzhou Qiyi Lu
Beijing Lu
HAIZHU GUANGCHANG
Dong Shan Hu Park
Dong Hu Lu
Bin Jiang Zhong Lu
ERSHATOU
Jiang Nan Dadao Bei
Pearl River
SHI ER GONG
Jiang Nan Dadao Zhong
Qianjin Lu
Guangzhou Dadao Nan
13
Nantian Lu
JIANG NAN XI
LUJIANG
Xingang Xi Lu
XIAOGANG
Dong Xiao Nan Lu
ZHONG DA
Li Xin Jie
0
1 mi
0
1 km
N

Guǎngzhōu Key

ACCOMMODATIONS ■

China Hotel (Zhōngguó Dàjiǔdiàn) **1**
中国大酒店

The Customs Conference and Reception Centre (Hǎiguān Huìyì Jiēdài Zhōngxīn) **12**
海关会议接待中心

The Garden Hotel (Huāyuán Jiǔdiàn) **5**
花园酒店

The Guǎngdōng Victory Hotel (Guǎngdōng Shènglì Bīnguǎn) **11**
广东胜利宾馆

Rosedale Hotel and Suites (Pǒlì Jiǔdiàn) **13**
珀丽酒店

White Swan Hotel (Bái Tiān'é Bīnguǎn) **10**
白天鹅宾馆

DINING ◆

Běi Yuán Jiǔjiā **4**
北园酒家

Guǎngzhōu Jiǔjiā **8**
广州酒家

Táotáo Jū **9**
陶陶居

ATTRACTIONS ●

Chén Jiā Cí (Chen Clan Academy) **6**
陈家祠

Guǎngzhōu Bówùguǎn **3**
广州博物馆

Liù Róng Sì (Temple of the Six Banyan Trees) **7**
六榕寺

Museum of the Western Hàn Dynasty Mausoleum of the Nán Yuè King (Xī Hàn Nán Yuè Wáng Mù Bówùguǎn) **2**
西汉南越幕博物馆

wealth rather than the skin-deep glamour of many other former treaty ports, the city's sprawl is disproportionate to the number of places of interest it has to offer, and those venturing further inland should not mind missing it altogether. From Hong Kong, if the choice is Shēnzhèn or Guǎngzhōu for a brief visit, choose Guǎngzhōu. But consider Xiàmén and Kāipíng as more appealing entry points, or **Kāipíng** as an essential side trip.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Guǎngzhōu's current **airport,** Báiyún, is only 12km (7½ miles) or 30 minutes to the north, reached by a new metro line, and is served by flights from every major city in China. ***Tip:*** For those heading from elsewhere in China to Hong Kong, it's often considerably cheaper to fly here or (even better) to Shēnzhèn instead, and then take a bus, train, or boat. Guǎngzhōu is also connected internationally to Amsterdam, Bangkok, Fukuoka, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Los Angeles, Melbourne, Osaka, Phnom Penh, Seoul, Singapore, Sydney, and

Tokyo. As elsewhere, tickets are best bought from agents rather than directly from airlines. **CITS** (✆ **020/8669-0179** air tickets; ✆ **020/8666-4661** train tickets; Mon–Fri, 8:30am–6:30pm; Sat and Sun, 9am–5pm) to the right of the main railway station as you face it is unusually helpful, with some English spoken. Air ticket prices can be bargained down. Buses run to and from CITS to the airport every 30 minutes for ¥3 (40¢). In July 2004, the New Báiyún International Airport will open, well to the south.

Most **trains** arrive at the main railway station **Guăngzhōu Huŏchē Zhàn,** which has services from Běijīng Xī, Chéngdū, Xī'ān, Shíjiāzhuāng, Zhèngzhōu, Chóngqìng, Níngbō, Lánzhōu, Wēnzhōu, and many more cities. There are a few services to Shēnzhèn. For information, call ✆ **020/6135-7412** or 020/6135-8952. There's an information counter towards the right-hand end of the railway station as you face it, open from 5am to midnight. The 24-hour ticket windows are at the far right-hand end. Buy up to 12 days in advance. The 24-hour left-luggage windows are in the middle.

Direct trains from **Hong Kong** arrive at **Guăngzhōu Dōng Zhàn (East Station),** which is conveniently at the end of the first metro line (exit D), and will be at the end of the third line from 2006. This station is on the express line from Běijīng Xī through Jiŭjiāng with direct trains that continue to Hong Kong on alternate days There are also direct services to Chángchūn, Tiānjīn, Qīngdăo, Nánchāng, and other cities. There are seven train departures a day for **Hong Kong** between 9:50am and 5:20pm; the trip takes 1½ to 2 hours and costs from HK$180 (US$23). For more information, see www.kcrc.com/eng/services/services/itts_shedule.asp. There's also a very high-speed train service to **Shēnzhèn,** with departures every few minutes, some of which cover the 139km (87 miles) in under an hour and drop you right next to the border crossing to Hong Kong at Luó Hú/Lo Wu. (A few slower services run to and from the main railway station.) The railway station has a customer service center (open 5:30am–11:40pm), a number of air ticket agents (some surprisingly competitive), and a counter selling tickets for Shànghăi, Tàiyuán, Jiŭjiāng, and Běijīng Xī (West). The main ticket windows, open from 5:50am to 9:40pm with short breaks, are set back on the right opposite the left-luggage office (open 8:30am–6:30pm). The Hong Kong ticket office (open 7:30am–6pm) is at the far end of the concourse, on the right. The entrance to Hong Kong trains, via Customs, is just beyond that.

Guăngzhōu has multiple **long distance bus stations.** Luxury buses provide more frequent and rapid connections than trains to all parts of Guăngdōng Province, southern Fújiàn, and eastern Guăngxī. The three most useful stations are all near the main railway station. The **Liúhuā Chēzhàn** (open 5am–10:30pm) is reached by an underpass across the station forecourt and to the right. It has buses to Shēnzhèn (15 departures 6am–10:30pm; ¥60/$7.50; and a few more expensive services); and to Zhūhăi (60 departures 5:45am–10pm; ¥35–¥45/$4.40–$5.60). From the far right-hand corner of the station forecourt as you leave it, turn right along Huánshì Xī Lù, and the 24-hour **Shĕng Qìchē Kèyùn Zhàn** is a couple of minutes further on the right. It has services to Shēnzhèn (¥60/$7.50) every 12 minutes from 6:15am to 11pm; to Zhūhăi Gŏng Bĕi for Macau (¥55/$6.90) every 20 minutes from 6:30am to 8:30pm; and to Kāipíng (¥35/$4.40) every 40 minutes from 6:30am to 7pm. There are also services to Guìlín, Nánníng, and Bĕihăi. The **Shì Qìchē Kèyùn Zhàn** opposite, over the footbridge, has more departures to the same destinations.

There are also direct bus services to **Hong Kong airport,** picking up at the China Hotel, White Swan, Garden Hotel, International Hotel, Holiday Inn, and other hotels (8 services 5:45am–4:25pm, HK$250/$32; buses to Guǎngzhōu depart 10:05am–5:15pm from the CTS counter at Hong Kong Airport; call ✆ **020/8333-6888,** ext. 5384, in HK ✆ 852/2764-9803). Buses also run from the Garden Hotel to Hung Hom Station or Prince Edward MTR in Hong Kong; there are 16 departures from 8am to 7:15pm, and the cost is HK$120 ($16). There are also services to Macau two to three times daily for HK$53 ($7).

There's a twice-daily **TurboJET** service to Hong Kong at 10:30am and 4:30pm, taking around 2 hours to reach Hong Kong, for the local equivalents of HK$189 to HK$1,704 ($24–$218), depending on the class chosen. A shuttle bus picks up passengers at the Garden and International Hotels. See www.turbojet.com.hk for more information. Departures to Guǎngzhōu from Kowloon's China HK Ferry Terminal cost slightly more and leave at 7:30am and 2pm. There's also a **catamaran** service to Hong Kong at 9:15am and 4pm, taking around 2¾ hours, for HK$168 to HK$258 ($22–$33) or the *yuán* equivalent, with a shuttle bus from the now closed Zhōutóuzuǐ wharf in Hòudé Lù, just across the Rénmín Bridge from Shāmiàn, to the Nánhǎi wharf in Píngzhōu. The bus picks up passengers outside a small shop at the gate of the old wharf, which also sells tickets. Call ✆ **0757/677-2417** in Píngzhōu for details, or call the ticket office in Guǎngzhōu at ✆ **020/8441-2267** or 020/8444-8218.

GETTING AROUND **Taxi** fares are among China's most expensive, but taxis are still your best choice for getting around. Flagfall is ¥7 (90¢) including 2km (1¼ miles), then ¥2.60 (30¢) per kilometer up to 15km (9 miles), then 50% more. There are no extra nighttime charges, but beware the 5 to 7pm rush hour, which will add significantly to your costs. The **metro** is the most convenient way to get through Guǎngzhōu's heavy traffic. The useful line no. 1 (red on maps) passes Shāmiàn Island (Huángshā Station) and two or three other major sights, ending up at Guǎngzhōu East railway station. Line no. 2 (green) opened in 2003 and will eventually reach the current airport; it passes the main railway station and one or two useful hotels. A third line is scheduled to open in 2006. Tickets costs ¥2 to ¥5 (25¢–65¢) according to the distance to be traveled, as shown on a color-coded sign above ticket machines. Stored-value cards allowing multiple journeys are also available from the metro station ticket desks. The system runs from around 6am to 11pm. Oddly, the metro stations are fairly well signposted, but the entrances are overly discreet. There are English on-board announcements. Guǎngzhōu's **bus** fleet is surprisingly old and battered. Ordinary buses charge a flat fare of ¥1 (15¢); newer air-conditioned versions charge a flat fare of ¥2 (25¢).

TOURS & GUIDES Organized tours in Guǎngzhōu are not really useful, as they tend to include remarkably dull sights glorifying the revolutionary credentials of the city and not necessarily the truly ancient and interesting, or the former foreign enclave of Shāmiàn. Hotel tour desks merely add a service charge to put you on an already overpriced tour. See www.ctcol.com for an example, or call the **Guǎngzhōu Tourism Information Line** at ✆ **020/8666-1275.**

VISITOR INFORMATION Guǎngzhōu supports several free magazines containing every cliché English can provide, obtainable from hotel lobbies and expat hangouts. They contain reviews of new restaurants, clubs, and bars (often paid for), and intermittently accurate listings. *that's Guangzhou* is marginally

better than *South China City Talk,* although the latter has useful maps. *Guangzhou Today* is advertorials from cover to cover. **American Express** (✆ **020/8331-1311;** fax 020/8331-1616) has a branch in the office building of the Guăngdōng International Hotel. It's open Monday through Friday from 9am to 5pm. For official tourist information, call ✆ **020/8668-7051;** for complaints call ✆ **020/8667-8043;** and for emergency rescue (!) call ✆ **020/8666-6330.**

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs Most of the many branches of the **Bank of China** (open 9am–noon, 2–5pm) have forex services and ATMs accepting foreign cards, including the branch just west of the Peasant Movement Institute on Dōng Fēng Zhōng Lù, the branch on the west side of Jiĕfàng Bĕi Lù just south of the Nán Yuè Mausoleum, the branch on the west side of Liù Róng Lù just north of the Liù Róng Sì, the branch on the west side of Línhé Xī Lù just south of Guăngzhōu Dōng Zhàn (different hours: 9am–4pm), and the branch next to the Friendship Store opposite the Garden Hotel. There's a branch of the **Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank** at room 105–108, HSBC Guăngzhōu Building, Dōng Fēng Xī Lù 148–9.

Consulates The consulate of **Australia** is in room 1509 in the main building of the Guăngdōng International Hotel (✆ **020/8335-5911**). The consulate of **Canada** is in Suite 801 of the Office Tower in the China Hotel (✆ **020/8666-0569**). The consulate of the **U.K.** is on the second and seventh floors of the Guăngdōng International Hotel (✆ **020/8333-6520**). The consulate of the **U.S.** is at Shāmiàn Nán Jiē 1 (✆ **020/8121-8418**). Onward visas for **Vietnam** are available on the second floor of B Building North at the Landmark Hotel, Qiáoguāng Lù 8 (✆ **020/8330-5911**); hours are Monday through Friday from 9am to noon and 2 to 5pm. Cambodia, Denmark, France, Italy, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, The Philippines, Poland, Thailand, and The Netherlands also have consulates in Guăngzhōu.

Internet Access Dial-up is **163,** or the faster **96169.**

Post Office There's a useful post office (open Mon–Sat, 9am–5pm) in Sān Jiē on Shāmiàn.

Visa Extensions The **PSB** is at Jiĕfàng Nán Lù 155 (✆ **020/8311-5808;** open Mon–Fri, 8:50–11:30am, 2:30–5pm) at the corner of Dà Dé Lù. Pick up an application form upstairs on floor M1 (open 8–11:15am, 2:20–4:45pm) then continue past various travel agencies mostly selling overseas travel to Chinese (air tickets from Guăngzhōu and Hong Kong airports) to the fourth floor, where there can be long queues. Extensions take 5 working days to obtain.

EXPLORING GUĂNGZHŌU

Those making a brief trip to Guăngzhōu from Hong Kong should concentrate on the excellent **Mausoleum of the Nán Yuè King** and the **Chén Clan Academy,** perhaps ending your visits with a stroll on **Shāmiàn Island.** For those with more time, the **Guăngzhōu Bówùguăn** (museum) inside Yuèxiù Park offers modest pleasures, as does the **Liù Róng Sì** and its pagoda. But the Provincial Museum, the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall, the Peasant Movement Institute, and other revolutionary sites are all dull and avoidable.

Museum of the Western Hàn Dynasty Mausoleum of the Nán Yuè King (Xī Hàn Nán Yuè Wáng Mù Bówùguăn) ★★ In 1983, excavations to the mid-town Elephant Hill turned up a 2nd-century B.C. tomb which, astonishingly,

had not been robbed. The hill is now a small but intelligently designed museum incorporating the excavated tomb chambers and display halls for the more than 1,000 treasures discovered in them. On the climb up from the main entrance, halls to either side hold temporary exhibitions, as well as an extraordinary permanent display of 200 ceramic pillows, many beautifully decorated with pictures of tigers or with poems. At the top of the staircase, a passage leads around the now flattened hilltop to the original entrance to the cluster of tomb chambers, including antechambers, music room, and kitchen, now lit through a glass pyramid overhead. Fortunately for us, the Nán Yuè (137–122 B.C.) kings believed that they *could* take it with them, and treasures on display in subsequent halls include the earliest jade burial suit yet discovered, made from 2,291 pieces now reassembled into its original robotic shape, and held together with silk thread. The chattels of 15 sacrificial victims, including guards, concubines, a eunuch, and a musician, also form part of the display—the jewelry and cooking pots have survived rather better than the instruments, now reduced to the odd string and peg. The king also took with him ingredients for a "perpetual youth medicine," some actually poisonous. His jawbone, a few teeth, and other odds and ends remain, but he's really not looking his best.

Jiěfàng Běi Lù 867, just south of the China Hotel. 9am–4:45pm. Admission ¥12 ($1.50). Metro: Yuèxiù Gōngyuán on line no. 2.

Chén Jiā Cí (Chen Clan Academy) ★ Between 1890 and 1894, branches of the Chén clan from across Guǎngdōng Province jointly funded the construction of this multi-courtyard ancestral hall, which now houses the Guǎngdōng Folk Art Museum. A riot of decoration, including the frontage with its fabulously carved and perforated brink murals, would alone repay hours of study and be worth the modest entrance fee. Inside, the beams, roofs, and balustrades writhe with miniature figures and are covered with scenes from myth and landscape in carved wood, brick, stone, cast iron, and gaudy ceramics. There are exhibitions of cloisonné, enamel, ceramics, embroidery, carved ivory, and stone carved to the point that it resembles wire, with reasonable English labels. Of particular note are gaudy yet exquisite ancestral tablet shrines of 1889, every square inch carved with tiny figures, and inset with wire work.

Zhōngshān Qī 7. 8:30am–5pm. Admission ¥10 ($1.25). Metro: Chén Jiā Cí.

SHĀMIÀN ISLAND ★

Forced to relinquish a permanent trading base to the hated barbarians (us) at the end of the First Opium War in 1841, the Guǎngzhōu authorities probably sniggered as they palmed off a sandbar to the British and French. Perhaps they sniggered less when it was promptly bunded (made secure with artificial embankments); was provided with proper streets, drainage, and imposing buildings; and became home to a prosperous foreign enclave with everything from tennis courts to a yacht club, employing many Chinese in service roles. The rest of Guǎngzhōu lacked even properly surfaced roads well into the 20th century. Shāmiàn still retains some of its former grandeur in the mansions which were the foreign residences, business premises, banks, and consulates. The mansions were taken over by dozens of families after 1949, but they were recently restored in many cases to former splendor, with each major building labeled as to its former purpose. Now partly pedestrianized, its broader boulevards are like long thin gardens with a lot of topiary. A line of bars and cafes on the southwest side with views over the Pearl River serves modern expats. Dozens of small businesses

close to the modern White Swan Hotel aim to entrap those on organized tours who wander out of the hotel by themselves and think they are being brave. Souvenir stalls, tailoring stores, and teahouses all have inflated prices, and all offer "special discounts" to those with children—the U.S. Consulate on the island is the one specializing in adoption matters, and wannabe parents fan out from here to collect their new daughters (almost always daughters) and return to do the paperwork. One or two of the old mansions are roofless and boarded up, but others are open as restaurants, shops, or hotels. Indeed, peaceful Shāmiàn is the ideal place to stay in noisy Guăngzhōu (whether with infants or not).

Metro: Huángshā on line no. 1.

Guăngzhōu Bówùguăn This museum occupies a tower called the Zhèn Hăi Lóu, which sits in the sprawling Yuèxiù Gōngyuán and is best reached from that park's west entrance on Jiĕfàng Bĕi Lù. It's open from 6am to 10pm; admission is ¥5 (65¢). The five-story tower was restored in 1928, which means that wood was replaced with concrete. On display, with occasional English labels, are items ranging from early tomb figurines to a fire engine of the early 20th century. Points of interest include Yuán dynasty clepsydra (water clocks) with taps in the form of dragons to allow the water to flow from one bucket to another (amusingly, the Mandarin for tap is *shuĭlóngtóu*—"water dragon's head"), samples of merchandise sent overseas, and early photographs of Guăngzhōu.

Yuèxiù Shān. 10:15am–4pm. Admission ¥6 (75¢). Metro: Yuèxiù Gōngyuán on line no. 2.

Liù Róng Sì (Temple of the Six Banyan Trees) Originally founded in 537, the current, rather reduced version of the temple dates from as recently as 1983. The main attraction is the octagonal, apparently nine-story pagoda with 17 interior floors—a rather cramped but worthwhile climb.

Liù Róng Lù. Admission ¥1 (15¢), plus ¥10 ($1.25) to climb the pagoda. 8am–5pm. Metro: Gōngyuán Qián on line nos. 1 or 2.

THE LEANING TOWERS OF KĀIPÍNG ★★

Much of southern Guăngdōng is a sprawl of untidy and often grim manufacturing, where sweated labor produces the world's toys. But Kāipíng, 136km (85 miles) southwest of Guăngzhōu, 164km (102 miles) from the Macau border, and also reachable by sea directly from Hong Kong, is China at its most bucolic. Peasants in conical straw hats bend over their plants, and position hand-powered threshing machines on shoulder poles, much as in other provinces. But here they often toil beneath the gaze of extraordinary towers called *diāolóu,* which are partly Portuguese Gothic, like *Citizen Kane's* Xanadu broken into nearly 2,000 fragments and sprinkled across the county. Some squat brick fortresses dating back to the 17th century were intended as places of refuge for whole villages. But more alien watchtowers were mostly built by Chinese who traveled out through the treaty ports and returned wealthy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to buy land, build a house, and marry. Simple concrete towers were merely lookout points intended to provide warning of approaching bandits, but by the 1920s these had evolved into massive fortified residences up to nine stories high, sprouting turrets and loopholes, balconies and cupolas, borrowed from half-understood European styles encountered everywhere from Macau to Manila. Of around 3,000 originals, 1,833 still stand, towering over almost every village. A representative sample can be visited in a day by taxi, or Kāipíng town can used as a base for exploring by public transport and on foot.

There are around 50 buses daily to Kāipíng from Guǎngzhōu (about 2 hr.; last bus back at 6pm; ¥30/$3.75), and eight from the Macau border at Zhūhǎi Gǒng Běi (2½ hr.; last bus back at 6:30pm; ¥45/$5.60). A representative sample of towers can be seen in a day by chartering a taxi in Kāipíng or, with an early start, en route between Macau and Guǎngzhōu. There are also nine bus services from Shēnzhèn (299km/187 miles; ¥65/$8). Kāipíng makes a far more pleasant entry point to the mainland from Hong Kong than Shēnzhèn does, and there's a daily high-speed **catamaran** service from Hong Kong's China (HK) Ferry Terminal at 8:30pm (4 hr.; from HK$180/$23) to Kāipíng's Sānbù port, just east of the center (taxi around ¥12/$1.50), with the return to Hong Kong at 1:30pm costing from ¥160 ($20). See **www.cksp.com.hk** for more information.

The oldest surviving *diāolóu* is the **Yínglóng Lóu** at **Sān Mén Lǐ,** 15 minutes west on the main road and passed by many local buses. A narrow pine-lined path leads to the village, and the tower is through a narrow passage between ancient houses. It's a three-story solid brick place of refuge, the lower two reddish stories built sometime between 1436 and 1449, and the upper gray one added in 1919. The villagers suffered serious flooding in 1884 and 1908, took refuge in the upper stories, and survived. Their descendants are pleased by your interest and very proud that they kept their *diāolóu* when everyone else knocked theirs down (brick can be recycled for other uses—concrete cannot, so most survivors are of later date); they may unlock the tower so you can climb the bare interior.

The largest single collection of *diāolóu* is at **Zìlì Cūn.** Almost any bus passing SānMén Lǐ will drop you at the right-hand turn towards **Tángkǒu,** where there's a convenience store and some small restaurants. Motorbikes here will take you to Zìlì Cūn, turning right again where there's a gas station after 4km (2½ miles), and then going through Tángkǒu. Most buses from Kāipíng drop you at the gas station (every 20 min.; ¥4/50¢), from where it's a 5-minute walk into Tángkǒu and a 45-minute walk beyond that on a country lane which swings left into Zìlì Cūn at the last moment. Or you can stay on the bus until a closer stop, when you'll be pointed vaguely across the paddies and duck ponds to a visible cluster of towers. Taxis from Kāipíng charge about ¥70 ($8.75) per hour. They can also take you to Zìlì Cūn and wait for 1 hour for ¥80 ($10).

The 15 towers close together here, like a miniature city, are scheduled to be the first developed for tourism—a new road big enough to take tour buses is being built. This is a very impressive group of towers, with little stone paths weaving through the marshy ground on which they stand; the marsh no doubt contributes to the slight lean some of them display. Wooden signs indicate a viewing route, but you won't exactly be elbowing your way through hordes of other visitors, although there's sometimes a pause as a gaggle of ducks crosses from one damp patch to another. Villagers chop sugar cane, geese seek shade beneath banana palms, and crabs cluster beneath bridges. Most of the towers are three or four stories high, made of concrete, their top stories decked with arches and balustrades, ornamental urns, and turreted corners. Perhaps the most elegant is the taller **Míngshí Lóu,** on the right towards the rear of the village. There are plans to open this as a museum, as it retains late-Qīng furnishings and a top-floor ancestral shrine. The last bus back from the Tángkǒu turning is at 6pm.

Further southwest, about 35 minutes from Kāipíng on buses heading to **Chìkǎn** (¥4/50¢), **Xiābiān Cūn** has a rather different tower, the five-story **Shì Lóu** of 1924, to the left as you enter the village. Cement, unknown in mainland China, had to be imported from Hong Kong at considerable expense, and the

ingenious alternative was to make a tower of rammed earth, sugar, lime, and sticky rice. The clayey red soil has left its warm color in the pink-ochre walls, and the pits left by its extraction are now fishponds beside a row of ancient housing. Limited supplies of cement were reserved for the tower's top, with its balcony, pepper-potted corners, and domed pavilion.

Further southwest at **Xiāgāng,** 50 minutes and ¥4 (50¢) from Kāipíng, are perhaps the oddest tower and the most impressive tower of all. Motorbikes meet buses, but it's much more enjoyable to do this on foot. The first tower is about a 2.5km (1½-mile) walk. Cross the river bridge with views of river-going vessels, homes to their owners, with firewood stacked on their decks, and turn left onto Dōng Lóng Lù (East Dragon St.). After a short distance, the path passes a gate and shrinks to a track before reaching the unspoiled and friendly little village of Dōng Xī Cūn. The third narrow alley between the traditional houses leads to a vast European-influenced mansion, whose owners went back overseas again and are now said by the villagers to be in San Francisco. Carry straight on and descend to a decent, metalled road. Turn left, making a note of where to turn off on your return. Passing the occasional armchair grave, water buffalo wallowing in the paddies, rice and buffalo dung laid out to dry on the road, you reach the first major village on the left; the village of **Nán Xìng Lǐ** is beyond this one on the right. Here's China's answer to Italy's *Torre di Pisa,* a slender six-story concrete finger called the **Nán Xìng Xié Lóu (Leaning Tower of Nán Xìng),** 2m (5½ ft.) in height and inclined severely but very photogenically to one side. It is reflected attractively in the village pond. The tower's top is out of alignment, with an annual lean increase of 2cm (⅘ in.)—so though it has survived since 1902, you'd better see it while you can. Even when just completed, it was already leaning so far the watchman had to put bricks under one side of his bed.

Returning to Xiāgāng, turn right and recross the bridge, then turn left and walk straight out the other side of town; the narrow road wriggles between other *diāolóu* en route. Once you're in the fields, fork left. There are optional diversions into other villages, but swing left at a junction with a modern pavilion, and

the **Ruìshí Lóu** in **Jǐn Jiāng Lǐ** will shortly appear on the right across the waterlogged fields. The road leads past it to the village entrance and across the open area at the entrance, where people shoo pigeons away from drying rice. Any narrow alley between the ancient houses where shoeless children scurry among the chickens will take you to the tower's base. This is perhaps the most magnificent *diāolóu* of all, built by a man who ran a bank and herbal medicine store in Hong Kong. Completed in 1925, it took 3 years to construct using local labor but imported materials. The nine-story tower dominates the village, with its corners and windows decorated from top to bottom, a gallery with domed corners running around all four sides, and a two-story octagonal folly at the top. Nearly as elaborate, the neighboring **Shēngfēng Lóu,** completed in 1925 by a returnee from the U.S., has bizarre columns running up two stories of elevated galleries. A motorbike ride out to this village and back will cost around ¥4 (50¢), and to the two sites about ¥10 ($1.25).

There's much pleasure to be had just by rambling at will through the countryside, heading towards any toothy towers visible on the skyline. Few are still occupied, but many are used for storage, and sometimes the remarkably friendly local people, seeing your curiosity, will invite you to inspect the tower and climb to the roof for a panoramic view of the countryside. A small local government team is working to obtain UNESCO World Heritage listing for the towers, and they have already placed plaques with good English at these sites. But they are proceeding cautiously with tourism development, and for now, roads cannot accommodate tour buses. Schemes to control entry to the narrow spaces in the towers are being considered before any are opened as museums.

GETTING AROUND **Taxis** in Kāipíng are mostly Jettas or Santanas with a ¥5 (65¢) flagfall which includes 2km (1¼ miles), then a fare of ¥2 (25¢) per kilometer. From 11pm to 5am, flagfall is ¥6 (75¢). Rentals for trips out of town should not involve the meter, however. Bargain down from the first asking price of ¥70 ($8.75) per hour, especially if you plan to be out for a few hours. The first price for Tángkǒu, a 1-hour wait, and return is ¥80 ($10). **Buses** to Tángkǒu, Xiāgāng, and Chìkǎn leave from two green-arched parking bays at the rear of the bus station. The left is for Tángkǒu and the right for the other towns; there are about one to three buses an hour between about 6:30am and 5:30pm.

For those who want to stay overnight, Kāipíng is a pleasant small town at the confluence of two rivers. There are still sizable communities of émigré Kāipíngrén who return regularly, and many who retire here (buying specially built apartments rather than constructing towers). The five-star **Ever Joint Hotel (Tán Jiāng Bàndǎo Jiǔdiàn)** at Zhōngyín Lù 2 (✆ **0750/233-3333;** fax 0750/233-8333; www.jmtour.org/tanjiang) doesn't quite deserve its grade but, run by the White Swan people from Guǎngzhōu, it is surprisingly glitzy for such a small town, and is full of "overseas Chinese." Its tower, positioned at the tip of an island dividing the Tán River, has excellent views; standard rooms cost from ¥800 to ¥1,250 ($100–$156), suites from ¥1,200 to ¥8,000 ($150–$1,000). A 10% service charge is not usually added. Discounts of 20% are available year-round, and you can usually bargain from there. A short walk along Xī Jiāo Lù (opposite the bus station entrance) past a KFC, the **Guǎngshì Jiǔdiàn** (✆ **0750/221-2213;** fax 0750/229-8409) is a modest two-star whose best guest rooms and bathrooms have had a recent refit. "Luxury" rooms can be bargained from ¥173 to ¥138 ($22–$17), and surprisingly contain a VCD player, for which the hotel will loan free disks. This is the best of the budget hotels. The

Shìjì Zhī Zhōu Cāntīng (Ship of the Century), Yán Jiāng Xī Lù 18 (✆ **0750/222-2988;** open 9am–2am) is a two-story boat-shaped restaurant/cafe/bar on the river itself whose "sails" form an awning over a platform with pleasant views. There's an English menu, local and Western dishes (including breakfast), very cold beer, and decent coffee. Main dishes are around ¥20 ($2.50).

WHERE TO STAY

Guăngzhōu is quite expensive. Don't visit in April or October when the main trade fairs are on, as you may have to pay even above rack rates. Sweltering July and August are popular with tour groups. However, from November to March, rates drop, with a further dip in December and after Chinese New Year.

This is one of the last cities where the cavernous hotels with innumerable rooms and endless facilities have survived in any numbers. These are designed to serve the vast numbers of businesspeople attending the main trade fairs in the last 2 weeks of October and April. These have an effect on room rates as far away as Hong Kong, and the major hotels, despite their cavernous size, are likely to be full in that period and offering no discounts. Otherwise, expect to cut 20% to 50% from the prices quoted, although major hotels also add a 10% service charge and a 5% city tax. Lesser hotels conform to normal Chinese standards by not adding service and including city tax in the quoted price.

The larger hotels, with the exception of the White Swan, are in the busiest sections of a busy city, and even if you're used to staying at five-star and four-star accommodations, you should consider smaller, quieter hotels on Shāmiàn Island, which is largely pedestrianized, and where a little peace and quiet can be found. Some of those are conversions of old colonial buildings, of considerably more character than the average hotel, and on a smaller and more human scale.

EXPENSIVE

China Hotel (Zhōngguó Dàjiŭdiàn) This vast, U-shaped hotel is managed by Marriott, and its old infrastructure has received a ¥900 million ($113 million) face-lift since 1996. The rooms are adequate if unimaginative, rather better on the executive floor, and the cavernous building contains so many different facilities it's unnecessary to leave it. Restaurants include Cantonese, Japanese, a food street, a sports bar, a sake bar, a branch of the Hard Rock Cafe, and more. The location on the (new) metro and close to Yuèxiù Park is convenient. Several consulates have offices here, and it's often the choice of VIP visitors, both Chinese and foreign.

Liúhuā Lù (metro Yuèxiù Gōngyuán, opposite the China Export Commodities Fair). ✆ **020/8666-6888.** Fax 020/8667-7014. www.marriotthotels.com. 1,013 units. ¥1,184–¥1,800 ($148–$225) standard room; ¥1,800–¥12,000 ($225–$1,500) suite. Rates include breakfast, tax, and service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 12 restaurants and bars; outdoor pool; Guăngzhōu's largest health club; whirlpool, sauna, solarium; travel desk; business center; forex; salon; 24-hr. room service; babysitting; laundry and valet, executive floors. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, broadband Internet access (¥100/$13 per day), fridge.

The Garden Hotel (Huāyuán Jiŭdiàn) The 30-story Y-shaped Garden Hotel is another Chinese five-star colossus with every imaginable facility, and easily the grandest lobby in Guăngzhōu (reputedly the largest in Asia). Its level of service is among Guăngzhōu's best, and its rooms are slightly more imaginative than the China Hotel's. An interior waterfall and garden mimic those of the White Swan Hotel.

Huánshì Dōng Lù 368. ✆ **020/8333-8989.** Fax 020/8335-0467. www.gardenhotel-guangzhou.com. 1,038 units. ¥1,160–¥2,080 ($145–$260) standard room; ¥2,740–¥4,980 ($343–$623) suite. AE, DC, MC, V.

Amenities: 11 restaurants and bars; swimming pool; tennis and squash courts; fitness room; sauna; children's playground; tour and ticket desk; limousine service; forex; shopping arcade; salon; babysitting; dry cleaning; valet. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, fridge.

Rosedale Hotel and Suites (Pòlì Jiǔdiàn) The Hong Kong–managed Rosedale was formerly the Plaza Canton (built in 1988), and it still appears on some maps and in the minds of taxi drivers as such (Jiāng Nán Dàjiǔdiàn). The exterior of the tower looks its age, but the lobby has had a sumptuous refit, as have several floors, now in the smart modern style of its sister property in Hong Kong. The as-yet unrefurbished floors are as battered as the refurbished ones are elegant (bathrooms with glass bowls for basins) and generally receive overseas tour groups—pay a little more for a big jump in comfort. On the new metro line, and so giving swift access to the city center, this hotel will be also be ideally situated for business visitors once a vast new convention center is completed a little to the south.

Jiāng Nán Dà Dào Zhōng 348. ✆ **020/8441-8888.** Fax 020/8442-9645. www.rosedalegz.com.cn. 406 units. ¥880–¥1,480 ($110–$185) standard room; ¥1,580–¥8,880 ($198–$1,110) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Jiāng Nán Xī and Xiǎo Gǎng. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; lobby lounge bar; swimming pool; tennis; badminton; tour desk; free shuttle to Guǎngzhōu East Station; business center; forex; shopping arcade; valet; health center (awaiting refurbishment). *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, broadband Internet access ($16 per day), minibar.

White Swan Hotel (Bái Tiān'é Bīnguǎn) *Kids* This was one of China's first luxury hotels (1982)—a labyrinthine monster whose location on Shāmiàn Island and views over the Pearl River make it perennially popular. The more you pay, the higher your room. Refurbishment is a continuous process, and the hotel is unusual among long-standing hotels in keeping up standards and adding facilities. Some slightly larger rooms come with dataport, some with broadband Internet access, high ceilings, and new furniture. The slightly tacky lobby features a waterfall and fish-stocked pools crossed by bridges. Former guests include Queen Elizabeth II and former U.S. president George Bush, Sr. Many agencies organizing adoptions use the White Swan: Every floor is fully kitted with diaper service, parents get a free toy, and the hotel goes quiet at nap time.

Shāmiàn Nán Jiē 1 (on Shāmiàn Island). ✆ **020/8188-6968.** Fax 020/8186-1188. www.whiteswanhotel.com. 843 units. ¥2,320–¥2,800 ($290–$350) standard room; ¥2,960–¥3,440 ($370–$430) suite. Rack rates are halved outside trade fair periods, and can often be bargained down by a further 30%. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Multiple restaurants; nightclub; 2 swimming pools; golf driving range; 10 tennis courts; squash court; fitness room; sauna; extensive children's facilities; tour desk; business center; forex; extensive shopping arcade with bakery, florist, bookshop, and pharmacy; salon. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, dataport, broadband Internet access (select rooms: ¥150/$19 per 24 hr.), minibar, fridge.

MODERATE TO INEXPENSIVE

The Customs Conference and Reception Centre (Hǎiguān Huìyì Jiēdài Zhōngxīn) *Finds* Opened in 1999, this is a solid four-story building of unclear antiquity with a roughly neoclassical exterior and an interior that's had a four-star refit. Through the gleaming marble lobby is a five-story atrium, at the base of which, one story down, is a small garden with a stream. Rooms are fresh and bright with wooden floors, and bathrooms have proper shower cubicles as well as tubs. Suites are very affordable, and come with 1½ bathrooms.

Shāmiàn Dàjiē 35. ✆ **020/8110-2388.** Fax 020/8191-8552. 49 units. ¥500 ($63) standard room; ¥800 ($100) suite. Rates include service charge and tax. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; billiards room; table tennis; small business center (Internet access ¥18/$2.25 per hr.). *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge.

Guǎngdōng Victory Hotel (Guǎngdōng Shènglì Bīnguǎn) This hotel has two premises within 2 minutes' walk of each other, both in old colonial

buildings with some character. The "four-star" version renovated most floors to a good standard in 2002 (the 8th floor was omitted). The rooms have all the standard amenities, plus free TV-based Internet access. Suites have good bathrooms with proper shower cubicles. There are Western and Chinese restaurants and, bizarrely in such an old building, there's a rooftop swimming pool. The three-star building is the original Victory, with an excellent dim sum restaurant in one corner. The rooms are plainer but in better decorative repair than the average three-star. The cheapest have no windows, but the slightly more expensive ones are larger than average and come with small sitting rooms.

Shāmiàn Běi Jiē 53 (4 stars). ✆ **020/8121-6802.** Fax 020/8121-9889. www.gd-victory-hotel.com. 92 units. ¥360–¥530 ($45–$66) standard room; ¥780 ($98) suite. Also at Shāmiàn Dàjiē 54 (3 stars). ✆ 020/8186-2622. Fax 020/8186-2413. 118 units. ¥360–¥530 ($45–$66) standard room; ¥600 ($75) triple; ¥650 ($81) suite. Rates include service charge and tax. 40% discounts typically available. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** More than 20 restaurants; swimming pool; business center; forex. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge.

WHERE TO DINE

Not surprisingly perhaps, Guăngzhōu (Canton) offers Cantonese food as it should be—much plainer, more subtle, and more delicate than at home, with the flavors of the ingredients distinct on the tongue. It's said of the Cantonese that they eat anything with four legs except a table, and anything with wings except an airplane. Exotic items can frequently be seen on menus, but as they tend to be expensive are unlikely to be ordered by accident, even when no English translation is available. Foreigners often try snake (chicken with a tinned-tuna texture), and there are a number of restaurants where this is a specialty. A modern restaurant chain with a reputation for snake is the **Xīn Lìzhī Wān Jiŭlóu,** including one at Shāmiàn Nán Jiē 50, close to the White Swan Hotel (✆ **020/8121-6168**); and another in the Mayor's Plaza, near the East Railway Station, at Tiānhé Běi Lù 189 (✆ 020/8755-3668). You can try various snake dishes from ¥68 ($8.50), or chose from an English menu with tamer items for ¥20 to ¥30 ($2.50–$3.75) per dish. They're open 7:30am–2:30pm and 5–10:30pm.

Guăngzhōu has a big enough expat community to support a lively selection of wannabe-Western pubs and bars, although for those en route to or from Hong Kong, which has plenty of the real thing, there's little point. There are plenty of the familiar fast-food outlets here, too, as well as a branch of the international British burger chain, the Hard Rock Cafe (in the China Hotel).

Outside the White Swan, there's an area of small bars and restaurants with views across the Pearl River to, among other things, a Chinese area of what wants to be the same thing—glitzier, but different (and connected by cross-river ferries from just off Shāmiàn's western tip). There are a number of similar choices, the most obvious of which is **Lucy's** at Shāmiàn Nán Jiē 3 (✆ **020/8121-5106;** open 11am–2am). With a slightly seedy publike interior and tables outdoors on the riverbank, Lucy's turns out pasta, pizza, fish and chips, burgers, and more for those missing the waist-expanding comforts of home, and has the music to go with it (mainly *The Eagles*).

Běi Yuán Jiŭjiā CANTONESE The Cantonese seem to be the most raucous of all Chinese, and the main choices for classic Cantonese food, or for dim sum, are bedlam. The Běi Yuán dates back to the 1920s, although the current two-story building with courtyards is newer, built around a garden and pond. There's trolleyed dim sum here all day (about ¥4/50¢ per steamer) and a generous menu of Cantonese classics, with some English translations. Try *huā zhōuzhù jī* (chicken cooked in yellow wine—although some might argue this is really a

Zhèjiāng dish), *táng cù sū ròu* (sweet-and-sour pork), and *jiǔ huáng ròu sī* (sliced pork with yellow chives). The typically garish carpets, screens, and chandeliers are in odd contrast to a central green space. There are twin entrances—the left is for the traditional Cantonese dishes; the right is for a Cháozhōu (Chiu Chow) restaurant, with the roast goose dishes typical of that area of northeast Guǎngdōng.

Xiǎo Běi Lù 202. ✆ **020/8356-3365.** Meal for 2 about ¥80 ($10). No credit cards. 6:50am–4:30pm and 5:30pm–12:10am.

Guǎngzhōu Jiǔjiā CANTONESE Opened in 1939, this is one of the city's most celebrated restaurants. It's like the Běi Yuán but on three stories, and with an even larger assortment of dining rooms and menus. There's canteen-style service on one floor (just point to choose). One room specializes in hot pot (more usually associated with Sìchuān and Inner Mongolia), with set menus at ¥68 to ¥168 ($8.50–$21), and Cantonese set meals for as little as ¥38 ($4.75). The English menu tends to feature the most expensive dishes (shark's fin, abalone, crab, and so on) for as much as ¥280 ($35), but more straightforward main courses are much cheaper. Try baked spareribs in lemon sauce (*xī níng jú ròu pái—jú* in this case is a special local character meaning "cooked in a pot over a low heat"), stir-fried fresh shrimp with straw mushrooms *(xiān gū xiān xiā wán),* and some of the restaurant's dim sum, from ¥5 (65¢) or so (shrimp ¥9/$1.10).

Wén Chāng Nán Lù 2. ✆ **020/8138-0388.** www.gzr.com.cn. Main courses ¥20–¥25 ($2.50–$3); specialty dishes up to ¥280 ($35). No credit cards. 7am–10pm.

Táotáo Jū CANTONESE Near the Guǎngzhōu Jiǔjiā, this is more of the same. Behind an imposing frontage (next to a rather good bakery which has birthday cakes iced with mahjong tiles representing the most fabulous winning hands), there's more noisy dining on two floors. You might try snake here, in the form of *wǔ shé bāo lǎo jī* (boiled five snakes and old chicken in soup). The English-language menu is comprehensive, and there are many more conventional dishes, such as a warming *zhī shì niúyóu jú hǎixiān dōfu* (baked seafood and bean curd), and dim sum from ¥3.50 (45¢).

Dì Shí Fǔ Lù 20. ✆ **020/8139-6111.** Main courses ¥20–¥48 ($2.50–$6). No credit cards. 6:15am–midnight.

12 Shēnzhèn

Guǎngdōng Province on the border with Hong Kong, 163km (102 miles) SE of Guǎngzhōu

Shēnzhèn grew overnight from nothing to metropolis in the 1980s at the instigation of then-supreme leader Dèng Xiǎopíng, and remains the symbol of the reform and opening policy he initiated. It's equally a symbol of everything that's wrong with what China has become—a jostle of shanty-towers with a rootless, money-grubbing, temporary atmosphere. No one's a native, and many Chinese are here illegally. Far from finding the get-rich-quick scheme of their dreams, they end up in sweat shops or prostitution.

If you're in Hong Kong and are considering Shēnzhèn as a side trip, then don't bother. The main point of visiting here is to use its airport to get somewhere else. ***Warning:*** Although Hong Kong has "returned to the motherland," this is a full-scale **international border crossing** from 6:30am to midnight and is prohibited even to Chinese without the right documentation. Lines can be long, especially at holiday periods. In either direction, allow *at least* an hour, and be sure to collect immigration cards and fill them in while waiting in the queue in either

direction. There are lines for Hong Kong residents, mainland Chinese, and foreigners—you'll be sent to the back again if you join the wrong one. Full Chinese tourist **visas** cannot be obtained here. A 5-day permit allowing access *only* to Shēnzhèn can be purchased at the border by citizens of most developed nations for ¥100 ($13), but **not British citizens.** *Note:* For Chinese translations of selected establishments listed in this section, please turn to Appendix A.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE It is usually much cheaper to **fly** into Shēnzhèn from other mainland cities than it is to fly directly to Hong Kong, and there are 57 Chinese cities to choose from, including Běijīng (18 flights daily), Chéngdū (7 flights), Guìlín (4 flights), Hángzhōu (6 flights), Kūnmíng (5 flights), Shànghǎi (17 flights), Xiàmén (12 flights), and Xī'ān (4 flights). **Hong Kong** can be reached directly from the airport using TurboCAT (jetfoil/catamaran) services to Kowloon (6 sailings, 9am–5:15pm) and the Macau Ferry Terminal on Hong Kong Island (4:30, 6:30, and 7:45pm; HK$189–HK$289/$25–$38, can be paid in ¥RMB on the Chinese side). Shuttle buses take passengers the short distance to the pier, and the total journey time is around 55 minutes. There are also services to **Macau** at 9:30am and 1:30pm (HK$171–HK$271/$22–$34; can be paid in ¥RMB or Macanese patacas/MOP). For current times and services in each direction, see **www.turbocat.com/turbojet_sailing_rev.htm**.

Airport bus no. 330 (✆ **0755/99788**) runs from the airport to the Huálián Dàshà (a hotel and department store), just west of the center on Shēn Nán Zhōng Lù. The ride takes 40 minutes and costs ¥20 ($2.50); the buses run every 30 minutes from 6:30am to 8pm. When work on an extension to the KCR East Rail line is complete, buses will run to the railway station. For now it's a ¥20 ($2.50) taxi ride further. (Coming from Hong Kong, ignore touts at Luó Hú, and make for the signposted taxi rank.)

The **railway station** is 2 minutes' walk north of the Luó Hú/Lo Wu border and connected by elevated walkway. Tickets for Guǎngzhōu are on sale at this level, and for elsewhere on the floor below, from 7am to 8pm. The express trains directly from Kowloon to Běijīng and Shànghǎi pass through but do not stop here. Shēnzhèn has its own services from Běijīng Xī, of which the best is the T107 at 8:30pm, passing through Jiǔjiāng and Nánchāng, and arriving at 9:10pm the next day—not bad for 2,373km (1,483 miles). The cost is ¥467 ($58) hard sleeper, ¥720 ($90) soft sleeper. To Běijīng, the T108 leaves at 1:08pm. Tickets for this and many other **trains** from Shēnzhèn can be bought at CTS in Hong Kong, but there's a much greater choice of services and destinations from Guǎngzhōu. Departures by 200kmph express trains to Guǎngzhōu Dōng (East) leave 45 times a day from 7:18am to 8:45pm. They occasionally continue to the main station.

From **Hong Kong,** the easiest train route is via the KCR East Rail line from Hung Hom or Kowloon Tong to Lo Wu. The first train from Hung Hom is at 5:30am and the last at 11:07pm. *Only stay on for Lo Wu if you plan to cross the border, or you may be fined.* The long distance bus station**, Luó Hú Qìchē Zhàn,** is beneath Luó Hú Commercial City, to your right as you leave Customs. There are rapid bus connections with Guǎngzhōu, Zhūhǎi Gǒng Běi (the Macau border crossing, every 15 min. 7am–8:30pm), Kāipíng, and most other corners of Guǎngdōng Province. A cross-border coach service runs to the Shangri-La hotel directly from Hong Kong Airport's arrivals hall counter 4B; 16 services make the

2-hour trip from 10:30am to 8:30pm for HK$100 ($13). In the other direction, 10 services operate from 7:30am to 5:50pm. ***Warning:*** Access to Shēnzhèn is subject to extra controls. Have your passport ready if you're arriving or leaving by bus.

GETTING AROUND Few people get further than Luó Hú, with its border station, railway station, bus station, shopping, restaurants, and hotels, all close together. **Taxis** have high rates similar to those in Guǎngzhōu. *Never* deal with touts who approach you at the border. The taxi rank is signposted beyond Luó Hú Commercial City to your right. At the north end of the plaza, with the border on the south side and the station on the west, stands the Shangri-La hotel. The street leading north on the left side is Jiànshè Lù, and the street on the right side is Rénmín Nán Lù; between the two of them, they lead to everything you might want.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs There's a branch of the **Hongkong and Shanghai Bank** on the Rénmín Nán Lù side of the Century Plaza Hotel—you can't change money here but you can use its ATM outside.A branch of the **Bank of China** (open Mon–Fri, 8:30am–5:30pm; Sat, Sun, holidays 9am–4pm), which has foreign-exchange service and an outside ATM, is nearby to the right and beyond the Shangri-La hotel.

Internet Access The 24-hour **PC-War E-Cafe** even has a nonsmoking area. It's on the fourth floor of the Cybermart at Rénmín Nán Lù 3005 and charges ¥2 (25¢) per hour. Use the side entrance from 7pm to 9am. Dial-up **169.**

Post Office There's a useful post office (open 9am–noon, 12:30–5pm) at ground-floor level of the north end of Luó Hú Commercial City.

Visa Extensions Cross into Hong Kong and obtain a brand-new 3-month visa within 24 hours if need be (see chapter 10).

EXPLORING SHĒNZHÈN

Newly minted Shēnzhèn only has the face of modern China to show you, including tawdry and occasionally offensive theme parks. The *Minsk,* certainly out of the ordinary, can be seen as a day trip from Hong Kong.

Minsk World (Míngsīkè Hángmǔ Shìjiè) Kids Throughout mainland China there's a slightly chilling admiration for military power and for weaponry both high- and low-tech. Much of the admiration for the West (when admitted) is for its ownership of the kinds of munitions that, if our own generals are to be believed, double-check the address, knock politely, and ask for ID before deciding whether or not to explode. The Russian aircraft carrier *Minsk,* launched in 1978 and once the flagship of the Pacific Fleet, is of a more clockwork era, with not a microchip in sight, but its sheer scale and power are still impressive, as is the relentless marketing to which visitors are subjected from the moment they pass the monument to peace at the entrance, a-flutter with doves, to enter what is a large-scale celebration of the weapons of war.

The ticket office is in a vaguely St. Petersburgian fake palace, behind which are a shooting range where you can fire tennis balls at assorted objects, stalls selling animated military dolls, a row of MIG fighter planes, a tank or two, an inflatable Russian bear presiding over a number of centrifugal rides, and a Soyuz space capsule (the genuine article).

The carrier itself has been substantially refitted, with stirring Russian military music playing through a PA system. Your visit commences with a compulsory 10-minute cinema show on the history of aircraft carriers, into which you are ushered by pretty young women in naval uniforms, before you follow a clearly marked route through torpedo hall, bridge, deck, anchor room, missile elevators, and just about every other corner, with informative signage in good English. At every turn there's a souvenir stall (¥15/$1.90 for a postcard!), or a stall selling obsolete military equipment, or another stall selling radio-controlled toys. The deck has occasional re-enactments of Russian military parades; the officers' mess is a restaurant serving black bread and imitations of Russian food; and the main aircraft hanger is a disco with neon signs shaped like weaponry, flight simulator rides, and a stall selling popcorn. If you survive all this, then for ¥30 ($3.75) you can be whizzed around the ship at water level in a small motorboat.

Shātóujiǎo. ¥110 ($14). 9:15am–6pm. Minibus: no. 430, from a local bus terminal just north of Luó Hú Commercial City on the east side of Rénmín Nán Lù; it drops you at the gate of *Minsk* World in 30 min. for ¥4 (50¢). Walk a short distance back up to main road to catch returning buses, however.

SHOPPING

It's an increasingly popular view among residents of Hong Kong that Shēnzhèn is a cheap place to shop. Compared to Hong Kong, it *is* cheap, of course, at least for domestic items, but many proclaiming this view have never been anywhere else in China (and many Hong Kong people have never been to the mainland at all). Those who do go to shop often get no further than the overrated **Luó Hú Shāngyè Chéng (Luó Hú Commercial City),** five stories of shopping (open 8:30am–11pm) above the bus station to the right as you leave the border is where you find luggage, shoes, bags, CDs, clothes, toys, Chinese medicine, tea, tailoring services, portrait photography, bed linens, quilts, electrical goods, leather goods, pearls, jewelry, wigs, massages, pedicures, and even a Cantonese opera house. Of course, as elsewhere in the mainland, nearly everything is fake. "Where else can you get a cotton tailored shirt for around $9?" enthuses one shopping guide. To which the answer might be, "Name a mainland city where you can't—and usually cheaper." This mall's very proximity to rich Hong Kong, almost inside the border post, ought to warn you off in the first place. First asking price for a *fake* Fendi bag here is ¥500 ($63), and shoppers go away chirping happily that they bargained a third off the price. Even in the most tourist-haunted corner of Běijīng, the canny bargainer can get the same item for as little as ¥50 ($6.25).

WHERE TO STAY

Business-oriented Shēnzhèn tends to be expensive. But if you must spend a night, the best place to stay is the five-star **Shangri-La (Xiānggélǐlā Dàjiǔdiàn)** at Jiànshè Lù 1002 (✆ **0755/8233-0888;** fax 0755/8233-9878; www.shangri-la.com), visible straight ahead as you leave the border crossing, and 2 minutes from the railway station. This is a luxurious and fully outfitted business hotel with excellent service, four restaurants, and cozy, recently refurbished rooms fitted with everything that you could possibly want in order to shut out the bedlam of Shēnzhèn, including broadband Internet access, satellite TV channels, and in-house movies. Rack rates are from ¥1,865 to ¥4,420 ($233–$553), but special offers and on-the-spot bargaining can produce rates under US$100 (all plus 15%).

Of the budget hotels up Rénmín Nán Lù, the best is probably the **Guǎngxìn Jiǔdiàn,** on the west side, north of Chūnfēng Lù (✆ **0755/8223-8945**). The lobby is modern and stylish, which makes the grubby corridors beyond a bit of a shock, but refurbishment may have reached that far by the time you visit. Battered guest rooms and bathrooms are clean enough and larger than average, although they have few amenities. Standard rooms are ¥308 ($38), usually reduced to ¥228 ($28); triple rooms are ¥400 ($50), usually reduced to ¥350 ($44).

WHERE TO DINE

Street-level dim sum from 6 to 10:30am, outside the **Yáng Xī Jiǔdiàn** and just around the corner from the Shangri-La in Jiànshè Lù, makes a good and very cheap start to the day. There's Kèjiā food, *jiǎozi,* and familiar Hong Kong fast-food names such as Fairwood in the Luó Hú Commercial City. Keep clear of the restaurants in the railway station building, however, where the food and portions are both miserable, and where there's a 10% charge for nonexistent service. Venture further up Jiànshè Lù or Rénmín Lù to find an assortment of standard Chinese restaurants and Western fast-food chains. The rotating **Tiara** restaurant on the top (31st) floor of the Shangri-La has an excellent international buffet for around ¥150 ($19) per person, as well as constantly changing views that include the one across the barbed wire to the green New Territories of Hong Kong. The hotel's signature **Shāng Palace** restaurant has top-of-the-line Cantonese food at fair prices for the quality; a meal for two costs around ¥400 ($50). For burger and steak enthusiasts, the hotel also has a branch of the American chain **Henry J. Bean's,** with main courses for ¥100 ($13).

10

Hong Kong

by Beth Reiber

Viewed from Victoria Peak, Hong Kong surely rates as one of the most stunning cities in Asia, if not the world. In the foreground rise the skyscrapers of Hong Kong Island, while beyond them is the incredible bustle of Victoria Harbour, where all manner of water craft—from the historic Star Ferries to cruise liners, cargo ships, and wooden fishing vessels—compete for space. On the other side is the Kowloon Peninsula, growing by the minute with ambitious land-reclamation projects, housing estates, and ever-higher buildings, all set against a dramatic backdrop of gently rounded mountains.

Today's Hong Kong is a blend of the exotic and the familiar forged during its 156 years as a British colony—from 1842, when Britain acquired Hong Kong Island as a spoil of the first Opium War, to its 1997 handover to the Chinese. The Chinese government has given Hong Kong status as a Special Administrative Region (SAR), guaranteeing its capitalist lifestyle and social system for 50 years, so to the casual observer little seems changed. English is still an official language, the Hong Kong dollar remains legal tender, and entry formalities are largely the same. Although it's pricier than most other Asian destinations, the Asian financial crisis has made it more affordable for international visitors, with reduced hotel rates and restaurant prices.

Hong Kong boasts what is arguably the greatest concentration of Chinese restaurants in the world, along with top-notch restaurants serving dishes from around the globe. The city has also revved up its sightseeing attractions, offering museums, parks, temples, and other amusements. And Macau, with its fascinating blend of Portuguese and Chinese cultures, is just an hour's boat ride away.

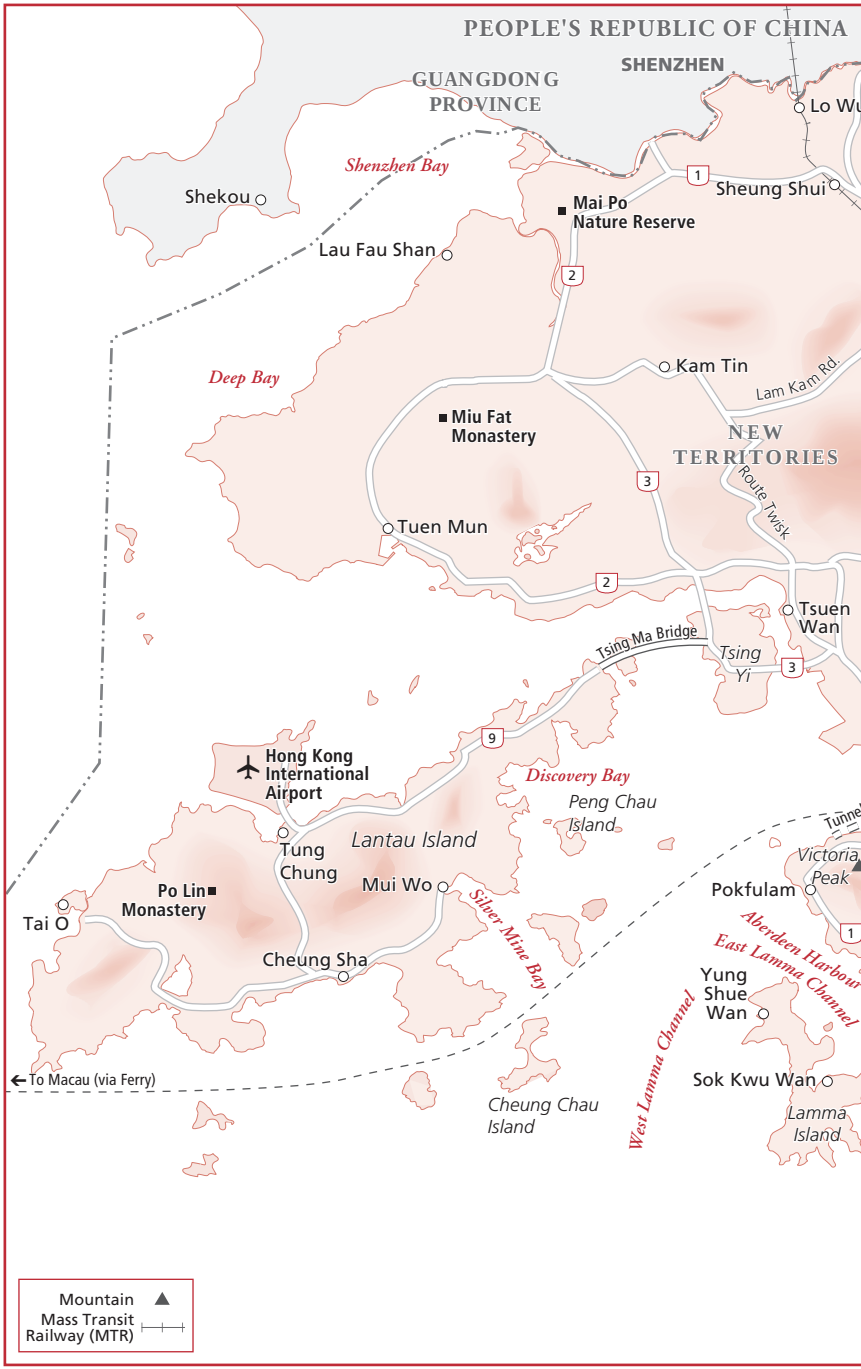
1 Orientation

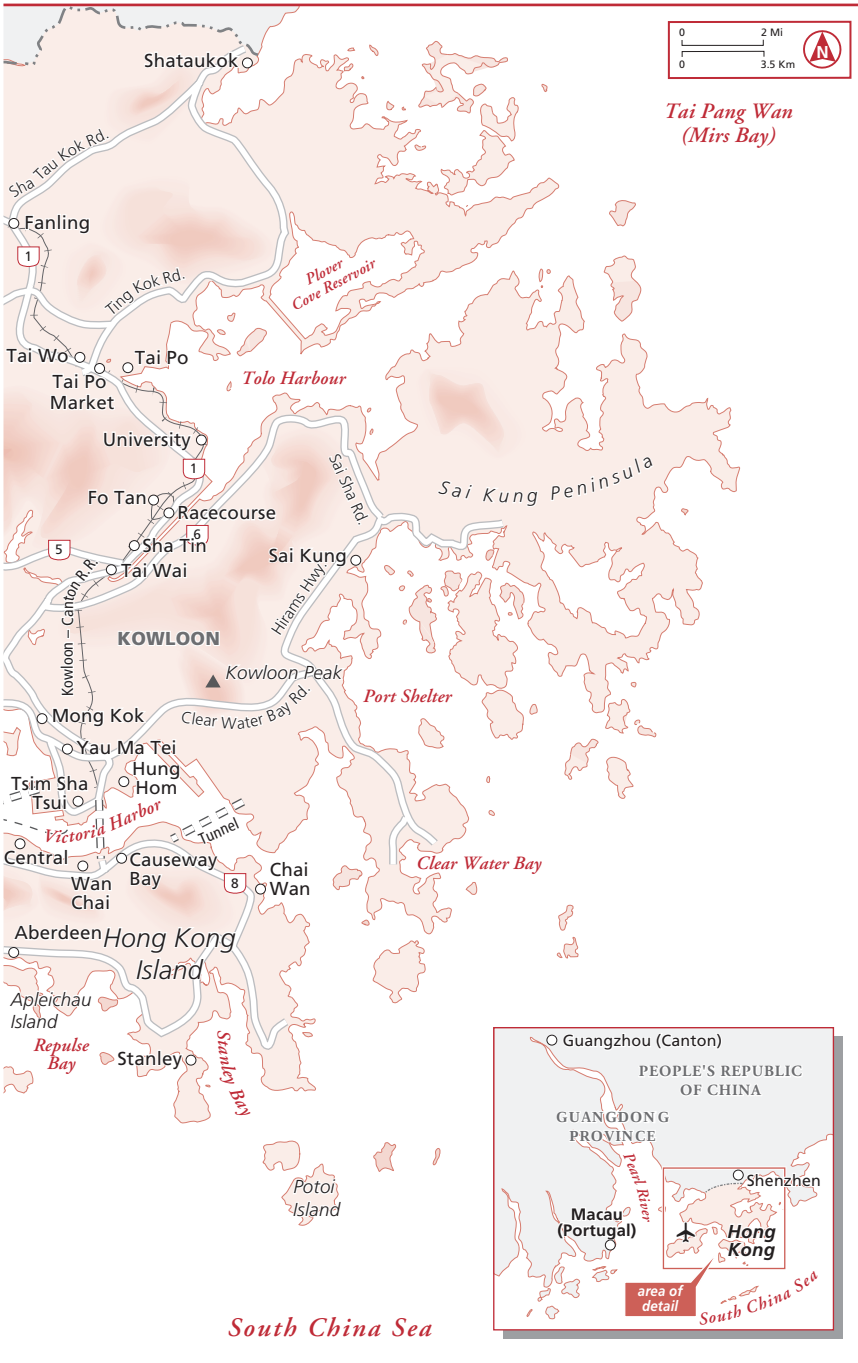
ARRIVING

BY PLANE

Hong Kong International Airport (✆ **852/2181 0000**) is located about 32km (20 miles) from Hong Kong's central business district. In the arrivals hall, just past Customs, visitors can pick up English-language maps and sightseeing brochures and get directions to your hotel at the **Hong Kong Tourist Board (HKTB),** open daily from 7am to 11pm. Also in the arrivals hall is the **Hong Kong Hotel Association,** open daily from 6am to midnight, with a free booking service to some 60 member hotels; and the **Macau Government Tourist Office,** open daily from 9am to 1pm, 1:30 to 6pm, and 6:30 to 10:30pm. You can also exchange money in the arrivals hall, although because of the unfavorable rates, it's best to change only what you need to get into town—about

Hong Kong


PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
SHENZHEN
GUANGDONG PROVINCE
Lo Wu
Shenzhen Bay
Shekou
Sheung Shui
Mai Po Nature Reserve
Lau Fau Shan
Deep Bay
Kam Tin
Lam Kam Rd.
Miu Fat Monastery
NEW TERRITORIES
Route Twisk
Tuen Mun
Tsuen Wan
Tsing Ma Bridge
Tsing Yi
Hong Kong International Airport
Discovery Bay
Peng Chau Island
Tunnel
Victoria Peak
Tung Chung
Lantau Island
Po Lin Monastery
Mui Wo
Pokfulam
Tai O
Silver Mine Bay
Aberdeen Harbour
East Lamma Channel
Cheung Sha
Yung Shue Wan
West Lamma Channel
To Macau (via Ferry)
Sok Kwu Wan
Cheung Chau Island
Lamma Island
Mountain
Mass Transit Railway (MTR)


0
2 Mi
0
3.5 Km
Tai Pang Wan
(Mirs Bay)
Shataukok
Sha Tau Kok Rd.
Fanling
1
Ting Kok Rd.
Plover
Cove Reservoir
Tai Wo
Tai Po
Tai Po
Market
Tolo Harbour
University
1
Sai Sha Rd.
Sai Kung Peninsula
Fo Tan
Racecourse
6
5
Sha Tin
Tai Wai
Sai Kung
Kowloon – Canton R.R.
Hiram's Hwy.
KOWLOON
Kowloon Peak
Port Shelter
Clear Water Bay Rd.
Mong Kok
Yau Ma Tei
Hung
Hom
Tsim Sha
Tsui
Victoria Harbour
Tunnel
Central
Causeway
Bay
8
Chai
Wan
Wan
Chai
Clear Water Bay
Aberdeen
Hong Kong
Island
Apleichau
Island
Repulse
Bay
Stanley
Stanley Bay
Potoi
Island
South China Sea
Guangzhou (Canton)
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC
OF CHINA
GUANGDONG
PROVINCE
Pearl River
Shenzhen
Macau
(Portugal)
Hong
Kong
area of
detail
South China Sea

US$50 should do it. It's much cheaper to use the **Hongkong and Shanghai Bank (HSBC)** ATM at the departures level, which takes almost any card—ask the HKTB staff for directions.

GETTING INTO TOWN The quickest way to get to downtown Hong Kong is via the sleek **Airport Express Line** (✆ **852/2881 8888;** every 10 min. 6am–1am), located straight ahead past the arrivals hall. Trains take 20 minutes to reach Kowloon Station and 24 minutes to reach Hong Kong Station, on Hong Kong Island. Fares are HK$90 (US$12) to Kowloon and HK$100 (US$13) to Central. From both the Kowloon and Hong Kong stations, free shuttle buses (every 20–30 min. 6am–11pm) deposit passengers at major hotels. If you're returning to the airport via the Airport Express Line, consider purchasing a **Hong Kong Transport Pass** for HK$300 (US$39), a stored-value pass that allows unlimited travel by MTR for 3 days, plus HK$20 (US$2.60) of travel on an assortment of ferries, buses, and trains; the pass includes two one-way Airport Express trips (see "Getting Around," below). The card can be returned upon departure for a refund of HK$50 (US$6.50) plus any unused value. An HK$220 (US$29) version includes just one Airport Express journey.

Airport Shuttle (✆ **852/2735 7823**) provides door-to-door airport bus service to major hotels for HK$120 (US$16); the shuttle departs every 30 minutes and takes 30 to 40 minutes to reach Tsimshatsui. Slower, with more stops, are **Cityflyer Airbuses** (✆ **852/2873 0818**), serving major downtown areas. Most important for tourists are **Airbus A21,** which travels through Mongkok, Yaumatei, and Jordan, and down Nathan Road through Tsimshatsui on its way to the Hung Hom Kowloon–Canton Railway Station; and **Airbuses A11** and **A12,** which travel to Hong Kong Island. Buses depart every 10 to 30 minutes, with fares costing HK$33 (US$4.30) to Kowloon and HK$40 to HK$45 (US$5.20–US$5.85) to Central and Causeway Bay.

On average, a **taxi** to Tsimshatsui will cost approximately HK$300 (US$39); a taxi to Central will cost about HK$350 to HK$400 (US$44–US$52). Expect to pay an extra luggage charge of HK$5 (US65¢) per piece.

TRAVELING TO & FROM THE MAINLAND

If you plan to spend most of your time in Hong Kong and are considering just a brief trip to the mainland, avoid the massively overpriced tours peddled by Hong Kong agents—trips to Guǎngzhōu and Shēnzhèn are easy to arrange for yourself. Neither of these cities should be picked as your sole experience of the mainland, however; nor, for longer stays, should they be your first choice as a point of entry. Instead, consider taking a ferry service to rural Kāipíng, or a proper oceangoing vessel around the coast to Xiàmén (perhaps providing the softest landing of all), and making easy connections up the coast.

A visit to mainland China requires advance purchase of a **visa,** but these are more easily obtainable in Hong Kong than anywhere else. Numerous agents are eager to act for you, but shop around—many agents within the tourist districts are also eager to charge you 50% to 100% more than you need to pay. The Hong Kong operation of **CTS (China Travel Service)** has 36 branches, the best known of which is at 27–33 Nathan Rd., Kowloon (1 floor up in Alpha House, entrance around the corner on Peking Rd.; ✆ **852/2315 7188;** fax 852/2721 7292; www.chinatravelone.com), open 365 days a year. Come here for commission-free ferry, train, and bus tickets to the mainland, as well as advance-purchase tickets for a limited selection of trains from Běijīng, Shànghǎi, Hángzhōu,

Guǎngzhōu, Xī'ān, Guìlín, and Shēnzhèn. Visa purchase here is slow and expensive, however. For air tickets, shop around the many budget-travel agents in the area, such as **Shoestring Travel,** also in the Alpha House, fourth floor (✆ **852/2723 2306;** fax 852/2721 2085; www.shoestringtravel.com.hk). Entry visas are cheaper here, too, but agents farther away from the main shopping streets are even cheaper. For the cheapest visas, go to **Grand Profit International Travel Agency,** a 15-minute walk east of Nathan Road (705AA, New East Ocean Centre, 7th Floor, 9 Science Museum Rd., Tsimshatsui; ✆ **852/2723 3288**). A single-entry tourist visa is available for HK$150 (US$19), available the next day if you hand in your passport before noon. That's the same price charged by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Visa Office, but 2 days quicker. Same-day service is HK$180 (US$23), which is considerably less than the visa office charges. Double-entry and multiple-entry 6-month visas are also easily available.

It is possible to visit **Shēnzhèn** for 5 days (but go no farther) without purchasing a visa in advance, if you take the option of walking across the border at Lo Wu—currently the northern end of the KCR East Rail, although an extension into the mainland is under construction. Thirty-day visas for the whole of China may be purchased on arrival by through train from Kowloon at Guǎngzhōu East Station, according to Guǎngzhōu PSB. Call ✆ **020/6130 0167** for more information from 10am to 6:30pm. Neither of these options is currently available to British citizens, but check with your consulate for the latest information. Citizens of all developed nations may buy 90-day tourist visas for HK$180 (US$23) at the land crossing between Macau and Zhūhǎi. Go to the **China Travel Service** office immediately on your left as you enter the immigration hall on the mainland side (✆ **0756/815 6466,** an international call from Hong Kong); it's open daily from 8am to 10pm.

BY PLANE

Various Chinese airlines fly to and from Běihǎi, Běijīng (6 daily), Chángchūn, Chángshā, Chéngdū, Chóngqìng, Dàlián, Fúzhōu, Guǎngzhōu (5 daily), Guìlín, Guìyáng, Hǎikǒu, Hángzhōu, Harbin, Héféi, Huáng Shān, Jǐ'nán, Kūnmíng, Nánchāng, Nánjīng, Nánníng, Níngbō, Qīngdǎo, Sānyà, Shànghǎi (10 daily), Shěnyáng, Shíjiāzhuāng, Tiānjīn, Wēnzhōu, Wǔhàn, Xiàmén, Xī'ān (once or twice a day), Zhèngzhōu, and other minor destinations. There are also flights with Hong Kong's more expensive **Dragonair** to Běijīng (6 daily), Chángshā, Chéngdū, Chóngqìng, Dàlián, Fúzhōu, Guìlín, Hǎikǒu, Hángzhōu, Kūnmíng, Nánjīng, Níngbō, Qīngdǎo, Sānyà, Shànghǎi (8 daily), Wǔhàn, Xiàmén, and Xī'ān. Shop around with travel agencies and bargain for discount fares. Do *not* book with Hong Kong agents in advance online—prices are outrageous. With the exception of rare special offers, it is almost always cheaper to fly from **Shēnzhèn** or Guǎngzhōu to domestic destinations. Be sure to factor in transportation costs to Hong Kong International Airport and to Shēnzhèn or Guǎngzhōu, as well as the mainland domestic departure tax of ¥50 (US$6.50), when making comparisons.

Shēnzhèn Airport has service to 57 Chinese cities, and can be reached directly using TurboJET services from Kowloon's China HK Ferry Terminal (8 sailings 7:30am–8pm) and the Macau Ferry Terminal on Hong Kong Island (1 sailing, 8am), for HK$189 to HK$289 (US$25–US$38). Shuttle buses take passengers the short distance from pier to airport, and the total journey time is around 55 minutes. For full up-to-date times and services in each direction, see www.turbocat.com/turbojet_sailing_rev.htm.

BY TRAIN

The T98 leaves for Běijīng at 3pm on alternate days, stopping at Dōngguǎn (Chángpíng), Guǎngzhōu East, Sháoguān, Chángshā, Wǔchāng, Hànkǒu, Zhèngzhōu, and Shíjiāzhuāng before arriving in Běijīng West at 6:05pm the next day. The K100 leaves for Shànghǎi at 3pm on alternate days, calling at Dōngguǎn (Chángpíng), Guǎngzhōu East, Sháoguān, and Hángzhōu East before arriving in Shànghǎi at 3:54pm the next day. Tickets can be bought at Hung Hom or any KCR East Rail station, or through travel agents (with no commission payable). Online agents overcharge by as much as 70%. To find out whether your train is departing on odd or even days of the month, go to www.kcrc.com/eng/services/services/itts_schedule.asp, or call the **Intercity Passenger Services Hotline** at ✆ **852/2947 7888,** which also has details on Guǎngzhōu services.

From Běijīng, fares are HK$1,191 (US$155) for *gāojí ruǎnwò*—a bed in a two-bed cabin—HK$934 (US$121) for a soft sleeper, and HK$601 (US$78) for a hard sleeper. From Shànghǎi, fares are HK$530 to HK$1,039 (US$69–US$135).

There are seven daily services to and from **Guǎngzhōu Dōng Zhàn (East Station)** for HK$190 to HK$230 (US$25–US$30); the trip takes 2 hours.

From Běijīng and Shànghǎi, passengers are required to alight with all baggage and go through Customs and Immigration procedures about an hour out from Kowloon's Hung Hom Station, at Chángpíng (Dōngguǎn). Leaving Hong Kong, don't bother to stow heavy baggage until after you reboard the train. To and from Guǎngzhōu, formalities are conducted at Guǎngzhōu Dōng station and on the train. Hong Kong Customs and Immigration procedures (including yet another X-ray of baggage) take place at Hung Hom station. Expect to spend about HK$30 (US$3.90) for a taxi to a hotel in Tsimshatsui or Tsimshatsui East.

There are also services every few minutes to and from Lo Wu, Hong Kong's border crossing to Shēnzhèn, the last stop on the KCR East Rail. See "Getting Around," below, and Shēnzhèn (p. 520) for details. You should only proceed as far as Lo Wu if you intend to cross the border, which is open from 6:30am to midnight. Lines can be long—allow an hour.

BY FERRY

Up-to-date schedules of TurboJET jetfoil sailings from Hong Kong can be found at www.turbocat.com/turbojet_sailing_rev.htm, or by calling ✆ **852/2859 3333** in Hong Kong or ✆ **853/790 7039** in Macau. In addition to the round-the-clock services to Macau from the Macau Ferry Terminal on Hong Kong Island and nine daily sailings from the China (HK) Ferry Terminal in Tsimshatsui in Kowloon (see "Macau," later in this chapter), there are eight daily sailings to Shēnzhèn (7 from Kowloon and 1 from Hong Kong), complete with free bus link to the Shēnzhèn airport (about 55 min. altogether), and two daily sailings to Guǎngzhōu (with a free bus link to the Garden and China hotels; about 2 hr.). Tickets to Shēnzhèn cost HK$189 to HK$289 (US$25–US$38) and to Guǎngzhōu HK$198 to HK$293 (US$26–US$38). There are also two daily sailings from Macau to Shēnzhèn for HK$172 to HK$272 (US$22–US$35). Tickets are sold at ferry terminals and at the Shun Tak Centre 3/F (200 Connaught Rd. Central, Hong Kong), the TurboJET Service Counter (Sheung Wan MTR Station exit D), the Macau airport, and China Travel Service branches. Telephone reservations via credit card can be made up to 28 days in advance at ✆ **852/2921 6688.**

The **Chu Kong Passenger Transport Co.** operates a catamaran service to **Guǎngzhōu** at 8:05am, taking 2¾ hours to reach Píngzhōu Wharf at Nánhǎi, with a free shuttle bus to Zhōutóuzuǐ, just south of Shāmiàn Island. The catamaran leaves from the China HK Ferry Terminal in Kowloon, and tickets are HK$168 to HK$284 (US$22–US$36). See www.cksp.com.hk or call ✆ **852/2859 1669** for details. The company also has service to various lesser ports around Guǎngdōng Province, notably **Kāipíng**'s Sānbù (p. 514) at 8:30am for HK$180 to HK$200 (US$23–US$26), taking 4 hours. Prices on all routes may rise during public holidays.

By far the best way to enter the mainland is to avoid Guǎngzhōu or Shēnzhèn altogether and to sail on the 250-cabin *Wasa Queen* of the **Hong Kong Cruise Ferries** company (www.cruise-ferries.com.hk), leaving at noon on Wednesday and arriving in Fújiàn Province's **Xiàmén** at 10am the next morning. Services leave Xiàmén at 6pm on Thursday, arriving in Hong Kong at 3pm the next day. One-way fares for berths in cabins range from HK$320 (US$41) to HK$1,120 (US$143) per person for individual travelers and couples, and about 20% of those fares for each of the third and fourth persons in any group. Prices rise 50% around Chinese New Year.

BY BUS

CTS sells tickets for a variety of cross-border bus services to destinations around Guǎngdōng Province and beyond, including Guǎngxī's Yángshuò and Guìlín (many more than appear on their website). There are services from Hung Hom and Prince Edward MTR station to the Garden Hotel in Guǎngzhōu (✆ **852/2789 5401**); and direct services from Hong Kong airport to Shēnzhèn (Shangri-La Hotel) and to Guǎngzhōu (White Swan, Garden Hotel, and several others; ✆ **852/2764 9803**). There are also direct services to **Xiàmén** run by **Eternal East Cross-Border Coach Mgt. Ltd.** (✆ **852/2723 2923;** www.eebus.com).

VISITOR INFORMATION

In addition to its tourist counter in the arrivals hall of Hong Kong International Airport, the **Hong Kong Tourist Board (HKTB)** maintains two offices in town, on both sides of the harbor. On the Kowloon side, there's a convenient office in Tsimshatsui right in the Star Ferry concourse, and another on Hong Kong Island at 99 Queen's Rd. Central, about a 10-minute walk west of the Star Ferry pier and Central MTR station. Both offices are open daily from 8am to 6pm. Otherwise, if you have a question about Hong Kong, you can call the **HKTB Visitor Hotline** (✆ **852/2508 1234**) from 8am to 6pm.

The HKTB publishes a wealth of excellent free literature, maps, and the weekly *What's On—Hong Kong. Where Hong Kong* and *bc* are other free monthly giveaways with listings.

THE LAY OF THE LAND

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) is located at the southeastern tip of the People's Republic of China, some 2,000km (1,240 miles) south of Běijīng. Hong Kong can be divided into four distinct parts: **Hong Kong Island;** the **Kowloon Peninsula;** the **New Territories,** which stretch north from Kowloon all the way to the mainland border; and 260 **outlying islands,** most of which are barren and uninhabited.

NEIGHBORHOODS IN BRIEF

Hong Kong Island

CENTRAL DISTRICT Central serves as Hong Kong's nerve center for banking, business, and administration. It also boasts some of Hong Kong's most innovative architecture, a couple of the city's poshest hotels, high-end shopping centers, and restaurants and bars catering to Hong Kong's white-collar workers.

LAN KWAI FONG Named after an L-shaped street in Central, this is Hong Kong's premier nightlife and entertainment district, occupying not only Lan Kwai Fong but overflowing into neighboring streets like D'Aguilar and Wyndham.

MID-LEVELS Located halfway up Hong Kong's Victoria Peak, the Mid-Levels is a popular residential area with swank apartment buildings, sweeping views of Central, lush vegetation, and slightly cooler temperatures. Serving white-collar workers who commute to Central is the Central–Mid-Levels Escalator, the world's longest people-mover.

SOHO This up-and-coming dining and nightlife district, flanking the Central–Mid-Levels Escalator, is named for being "**So**uth of **Ho**llywood Road." It has blossomed into an ever-growing neighborhood of cafe-bars and intimate restaurants specializing in ethnic and innovative cuisine, centered mostly on Elgin, Shelley, and Staunton streets.

WESTERN DISTRICT The Western District is a fascinating neighborhood of shops selling medicinal herbs, ginseng, medicines, dried seafood, and other Chinese products. It's also famous for Hollywood Road (long popular for its many antiques and curio shops) and for Man Mo Temple, one of Hong Kong's oldest.

WANCHAI Notorious for its sleazy bars and easy women, Wanchai has become a little more respectable with new, mostly business-style hotels, the huge Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, and a small but revitalized nightlife scene.

CAUSEWAY BAY Just east of Wanchai, Causeway Bay is popular as a shopping destination, with Japanese department stores; clothing, shoe, and accessory boutiques; and restaurants. On its eastern perimeter is the large Victoria Park.

ABERDEEN On the south side of Hong Kong Island, Aberdeen was once a fishing village but is now studded with high-rises and housing projects. It remains famous for its hundreds of sampans and junks, and for a huge floating restaurant.

STANLEY Located on the quiet south side of Hong Kong Island, this former fishing village is home to Hong Kong's most famous market, selling everything from silk suits to name-brand shoes, casual wear, and souvenirs.

Kowloon Peninsula

KOWLOON North of Hong Kong Island, across Victoria Harbour, is Kowloon, 7.7 sq. km (4¾ sq. miles) that were ceded to Britain in 1860. Kowloon includes the districts of Tsimshatsui, Tsimshatsui East, Yaumatei, Hung Hom, and Mongkok. Boundary Street in the north separates it from the New Territories.

TSIMSHATSUI Tsimshatsui boasts an excellent art museum, a cultural center for the performing arts, Kowloon Park, one of the world's largest shopping malls, a broad selection of international restaurants, a jumping nightlife, and Nathan Road, nicknamed the "golden mile of shopping."

TSIMSHATSUI EAST This area was built entirely on reclaimed land and is home to several hotels, shopping and restaurant complexes, museums and, on its eastern edge, the KCR Kowloon–Canton Railway Station, with train service to the New Territories and China.

YAUMATEI Just north of Tsimshatsui, Yaumatei has an interesting produce market, a jade market, and the fascinating Temple Street Night Market. It also has several moderately priced hotels.

MONGKOK This district north of Yaumatei is a residential and industrial area, home of the Bird Market and the Ladies' Market on Tung Choi Street.

2 Getting Around

Hong Kong is compact and easy to navigate, with street, bus, and subway signs clearly marked in English. Each mode of transportation—bus, ferry, tram, and train/subway—has its own fare system and requires a new ticket each time you transfer from one to another. However, if you're going to be in Hong Kong for a few days, consider purchasing the **Octopus** smart card, which allows users to hop on and off trains, trams, subways, and most (but not all) buses and ferries without worrying about purchasing tickets each time. Sold at all MTR subway stations and at some ferry piers, it costs a minimum of HK$150 (US$20), including a HK$50 (US$6.50) refundable deposit, and can be reloaded as necessary.

Otherwise, transportation on buses and trams requires the exact fare, making it imperative to carry lots of loose change wherever you go.

BY SUBWAY Hong Kong's **Mass Transit Railway (MTR)** is modern, easy to use, and very fast, consisting of four color-coded lines. Single-ticket, one-way fares range from HK$4 to HK$26 (US50¢–US$3.40), depending on the distance. Credit-card-size plastic tickets are inserted into slots at entry turnstiles, retrieved, and inserted again at exits.

There are no public toilets at any of the stations or on the trains. The MTR operates daily from 6am to 1am. For general inquiries, call the **MTR Hotline** at **✆ 852/2881 8888.**

BY TRAIN The **Kowloon–Canton Railway (KCR) East Rail** is useful for traveling north from Kowloon to the New Territories and China. You can board the train at the KCR Station in Hung Hom (near Tsimshatsui East) or at Kowloon Tong Station, also a subway stop. In 2004, a more convenient station will open in Tsimshatsui East that will link the MTR and KCR. Hung Hom offers express through-trains to Guǎngzhōu, Shànghǎi, and Běijīng, as well as local commuter service for towns in the New Territories. Sheung Shui is the last stop if you don't have a visa for China. Departing every 3 to 8 minutes daily from 5:30am to 12:25am, the commuter train from Kowloon to Sheung Shui takes only a half hour, and a one-way ticket costs HK$9 (US$1.15) for ordinary (2nd) class and HK$18 (US$2.35) for first class.

BY BUS HKTB has individual leaflets showing bus routes. Depending on the route, buses run from about 6am to midnight, with fares ranging from HK$1.20 to HK$45 (US15¢–US$5.85)—exact fare required. Few drivers speak English, so you may want to have someone at your hotel write your destination in Chinese. In rural areas, you must flag down a bus to make it stop.

BY TRAM Tramlines, found only along the north side of Hong Kong Island, are a nostalgic way to travel through the Western District, Central, Wanchai,

and Causeway Bay. Established in 1904, these old, narrow, double-decker affairs clank their way from Kennedy Town in the west to Shaukeiwan in the east, with one branch making a detour to Happy Valley. Regardless of how far you go, you pay the exact fare of HK$2 (US25¢) or use an Octopus card as you exit. Trams run daily from 6am to 1am.

BY STAR FERRY A 5-minute trip across Victoria Harbour on one of the white-and-green ferries of the Star Ferry Company, in operation since 1898, is one of Hong Kong's top attractions. It costs only HK$1.70 (US22¢) for ordinary (2nd) class; but everyone travels for HK$2.20 (US30¢) in first class on the upper deck. Ferries ply the waters between Central and Tsimshatsui daily from 6:30am to 11:30pm.

BY OTHER FERRIES Besides the Central-to-Tsimshatsui route, Star Ferries also run between Central and Hung Hom and between Tsimshatsui and Wanchai; hoverferries run between Central and Tsimshatsui East.

A large fleet also serves the many outlying islands and the northern part of the mainland, with most ferries departing from the Central Ferry Pier just west of the Star Ferry terminus in Central. Check out the latest schedules from HKTB (✆ **852/2131 8181;** www.nwff.com.hk).

BY TAXI Taxi drivers in Hong Kong are strictly controlled and as a rule are fairly honest. Fares start at HK$15 (US$1.95) for the first 2km (1¼ miles), then HK$1.40 (US18¢) for each 200m (275 yd.). Luggage costs an extra HK$5 (US65¢) per piece, and taxis ordered by phone add a HK$5 (US65¢) surcharge. Trips through tunnels cost extra: HK$20 ($2.60) for the Cross-Harbour Tunnel, HK$30 (US$3.90) for the Eastern Harbour Crossing and Lantau Link, HK$45 (US$5.85) for the Western Harbour Tunnel, and HK$5 (US65¢) for Aberdeen. Passengers taking taxis through harbor tunnels must pay *double* the tunnel toll, unless you're traveling in a Hong Kong– or Kowloon-based cab returning to its usual place of operation, in which case just one toll is payable. At major taxi ranks, there are separate lines for Kowloon and Island-side taxis. A 24-hour hot line handles complaints about taxis (✆ **852/2527 7177**).

BY MAXICAB & MINIBUS These small buses are the poor person's taxis. There are two types of vehicles: The green-and-yellow ones, called **maxicabs,** which follow fixed routes, charge fixed rates ranging from HK$2 to HK$23 (US25¢–US$2.90) depending on the distance, and require the exact fare as you enter; the red-and-yellow **minibuses** will stop wherever you hail them. Fares range from HK$2 to HK$20 (US25¢–US$2.60), and you pay as you exit. Just yell when you want to get off.

FAST FACTS: Hong Kong

American Express American Express offices are located up on the first floor of the Henley Building, 5 Queen's Rd. Central, in the Central District (✆ **852/2110 2008**); and at 48 Cameron Rd. (✆ **852/2926 1606**) in Tsimshatsui. Both offices are open Monday through Friday from 9am to 6pm and on Saturday from 9am to 12:30pm.

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs Although opening hours can vary among banks, banking hours are generally Monday through Friday from 9am to 4:30pm and Saturday from 9am to 12:30pm. Some banks stop their

transactions an hour before closing time. ATMs are everywhere, and almost all accept foreign cards.

Doctors & Dentists Most first-class hotels have medical clinics with registered nurses, as well as doctors on duty at specified hours or on call 24 hours (see individual hotel listings below). Otherwise, your concierge or the U.S. consulate can refer you to a doctor or dentist. In an emergency, dial ✆ **999** or call one of the recommendations under "Hospitals," below.

Embassies/Consulates The consulate of the **United States** is at 26 Garden Rd., Central District (✆ **852/2523 9011;** 852/2841 2211 for the American Citizens Service). The consulate of **Canada** is on the 12th to 14th floors of Tower One, Exchange Square, 8 Connaught Place, Central District (✆ **852/2810 4321**). The consulate of the **U.K**. is at 1 Supreme Court Rd., Central District (✆ **852/2901 3000;** 852/2901 3222 for passport inquiries). The consulate of **Australia** is on the 23rd and 24th floors of Harbour Centre, 25 Harbour Rd., Wanchai, on Hong Kong Island (✆ **852/2827 8881**). The consulate of **New Zealand** is on the 65th floor of Central Plaza, 18 Harbour Rd., Wanchai (✆ **852/2525 5044**). Most other nations also have representation in Hong Kong, including all of China's neighbors, even hermit kingdoms like North Korea and Bhutan. Collect onward visas here.

Hospitals Try **Queen Mary Hospital,** 102 Pokfulam Rd., Hong Kong Island (✆ **852/2855 3111**); and **Queen Elizabeth Hospital,** 30 Gascoigne Rd., Kowloon (✆ **852/2958 8888**).

Internet Access **Itfans,** open 24 hours at 12–13 Jubilee St., Central (near Central Market and HKTB), has 100 computers. They charge HK$18 (US$2.40) per hour Monday through Saturday, HK$12 (US$1.60) per hour Sunday and holidays, plus a HK$10 (US$1.30) membership fee. In addition, **Pacific Coffee** is a chain of coffee shops, several with computers offering free Internet access. Its shop no. 1022 in the International Finance Center (IFC), above Hong Kong Station in Central (✆ **852/2868 5100**), is open Monday through Saturday from 7am to 10pm, Sunday from 8:30am to 9pm. The Peak Tower branch on Victoria Peak (✆ 852/2849 6608) is open Monday through Thursday from 8am to 10:30pm and Friday through Sunday from 8am to 11pm.

Newspapers The *South China Morning Post* and the *Hong Kong iMail* (which carries mostly financial news) are the two local English-language daily newspapers. The *Asian Wall Street Journal, Financial Times, International Herald Tribune,* and *USA Today International* are also available.

Pharmacies There are no 24-hour drugstores in Hong Kong. One of the best-known pharmacies in Hong Kong is **Watson's,** with more than 90 branches, most of them open from 9am to 10pm.

Police You can reach the police for an emergency by dialing ✆ **999,** the same number as for a fire or an ambulance.

Post Offices Air-mail letters up to 20 grams and postcards cost HK$3 (US40¢) to the United States or Europe. Most hotels have stamps and can mail your letters for you. Otherwise, most post offices are open Monday through Friday from 9:30am to 5pm and Saturday from 9:30am to 1pm. The main post office is at 2 Connaught Place, Central District, Hong Kong Island, next to the Star Ferry concourse (✆ **852/2921 2222**). You can have

your mail sent here "Poste Restante," where it will be held for 2 months; be sure to bring along your passport for identification. On the Kowloon side, the main post office is at 10 Middle Rd., which is 1 block north of Salisbury Road (✆ **852/2366 4111**). Both are open Monday through Saturday from 8am to 6pm and Sunday from 8am to 2pm.

Weather If you want to check the day's temperature and humidity level or the 2-day forecast, dial ✆ **18501** or 187 8066.

3 Where to Stay

Hotel rates listed below are the hotels' official or "rack" rates, which you might end up paying if you come during peak season (Chinese New Year, Mar/Apr, Oct/Nov). Otherwise, you should be able to get a room for much less by calling the hotel directly to ask whether any promotional rates are available, or by checking the hotel's website.

Hong Kong's top hotels are among the best in the world, many with sweeping views of Victoria Harbour and superb service and amenities. Although the greatest concentration of hotels is on the Kowloon side, Hong Kong is so compact and easily traversed by public transportation that location is not the issue it is in larger, more sprawling metropolises. Moderate hotels comprise the majority of hotels in Hong Kong. They have rather small rooms compared to their American counterparts and cater largely to tour groups (mostly from mainland China). Inexpensive hotels offer just the basics. A 10% service charge and 3% government tax will usually be added to prices quoted below.

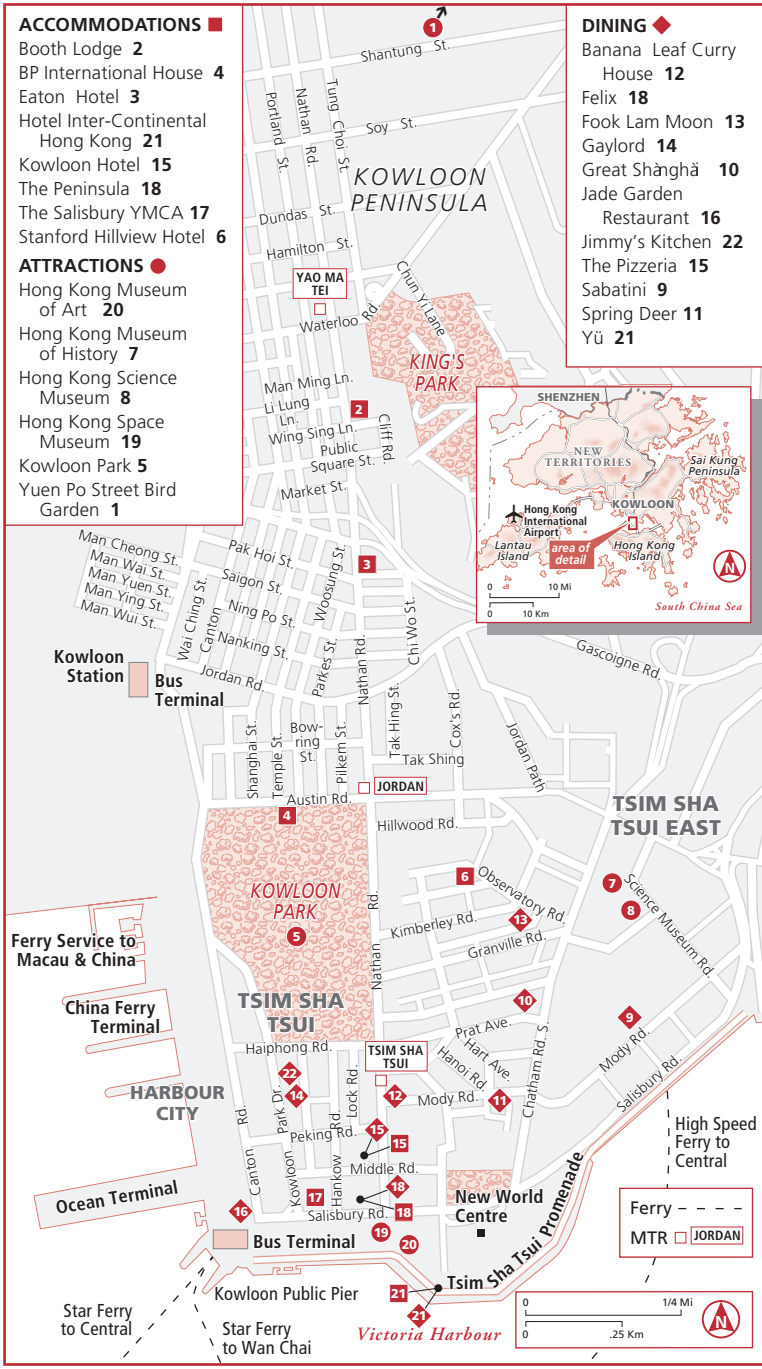
KOWLOON

EXPENSIVE

Hotel Inter-Continental Hong Kong (formerly The Regent Hong Kong) ★★★ The Inter-Continental has the best views of Victoria Harbour from Tsimshatsui. Built in 1981 and rising 17 stories, the hotel is located at the water's edge on reclaimed land. About 70% of its rooms command sweeping views of the harbor with floor-to-ceiling and wall-to-wall windows. Notable hotel features are spacious bathrooms with sunken bathtub, separate shower unit, and adjoining walk-in closet; an air purification system in all guest rooms; a spa renowned for its healing treatments; and wireless broadband that enables guests to access the Internet even from poolside.

18 Salisbury Rd., Tsimshatsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong. ✆ **800/327-0200** in the U.S. and Canada, or 852/2721 1211. Fax 852/2739 4546. www.interconti.com. 514 units. HK$3,100-HK$4,500 (US$403-US$584) single or double; HK$700 (US$91) extra for Club Floors; from HK$5,500 (US$714) junior suite. Children under 18 stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. MTR: Tsimshatsui. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; bar; lounge; outdoor pool and whirlpools overlooking Victoria Harbour; fitness room (open 24 hr.); spa; concierge; limousine service; business center; upscale shopping arcade; 24-hr. room service; massage; babysitting, same-day laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; executive-level rooms; house doctor. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV w/pay movies, wireless broadband service, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe, bathroom scale.

The Peninsula Hotel ★★★ *Finds* This is Hong Kong's most famous hotel and *the* place to stay. Built in 1928, it exudes elegance, from its white-gloved doormen to one of the largest limousine fleets of Rolls-Royces in the world. Its lobby, with high gilded ceilings, pillars, and palms, has long been Hong Kong's foremost spot for afternoon tea and people-watching. Its restaurants are among


ACCOMMODATIONS
Booth Lodge 2
BP International House 4
Eaton Hotel 3
Hotel Inter-Continental Hong Kong 21
Kowloon Hotel 15
The Peninsula 18
The Salisbury YMCA 17
Stanford Hillview Hotel 6
ATTRACTIONS
Hong Kong Museum of Art 20
Hong Kong Museum of History 7
Hong Kong Science Museum 8
Hong Kong Space Museum 19
Kowloon Park 5
Yuen Po Street Bird Garden 1
DINING
Banana Leaf Curry House 12
Felix 18
Fook Lam Moon 13
Gaylord 14
Great Shànghǎi 10
Jade Garden Restaurant 16
Jimmy's Kitchen 22
The Pizzeria 15
Sabatini 9
Spring Deer 11
Yù 21
KOWLOON PENINSULA
KING'S PARK
KOWLOON PARK
TSIM SHA TSUI
TSIM SHA TSUI EAST
HARBOUR CITY
Shantung St.
Portland St.
Nathan Rd.
Tung Choi St.
Soy St.
Dundas St.
Hamilton St.
YAO MA TEI
Waterloo Rd.
Chun Yi Lane
Man Ming Ln.
Li Lung Ln.
Wing Sing Ln.
Cliff Rd.
Public Square St.
Market St.
Man Cheong St.
Man Wai St.
Man Yuen St.
Man Ying St.
Man Wui St.
Pak Hoi St.
Saigon St.
Ning Po St.
Nanking St.
Jordan Rd.
Wai Ching St.
Canton
Woosung St.
Parkes St.
Nathan Rd.
Chi Wo St.
Kowloon Station
Bus Terminal
Shanghai St.
Temple St.
Bow-ring St.
Pilkem St.
Austin Rd.
JORDAN
Tak Hing St.
Tak Shing
Cox's Rd.
Jordan Path
Gascoigne Rd.
Hillwood Rd.
Observatory Rd.
Science Museum Rd.
Kimberley Rd.
Granville Rd.
Nathan Rd.
Ferry Service to Macau & China
China Ferry Terminal
Haiphong Rd.
TSIM SHA TSUI
Prat Ave.
Hart Ave.
Hanoi Rd.
Chatham Rd. S.
Mody Rd.
Salisbury Rd.
Park Dr.
Lock Rd.
Peking Rd.
Middle Rd.
Canton Rd.
Kowloon
Hankow
Ocean Terminal
Salisbury Rd.
New World Centre
Tsim Sha Tsui Promenade
High Speed Ferry to Central
Ferry
MTR
JORDAN
Bus Terminal
Kowloon Public Pier
Star Ferry to Central
Star Ferry to Wan Chai
Victoria Harbour
SHENZHEN
NEW TERRITORIES
Sai Kung Peninsula
KOWLOON
Hong Kong International Airport
Lantau Island
area of detail
Hong Kong Island
South China Sea
0 10 Mi
0 10 Km
0 1/4 Mi
0 .25 Km

the city's best. After land reclamation lost the Peninsula its harbor view, it remedied the problem in 1993 with the completion of a magnificent 32-story tower, offering fantastic views from guest rooms and its top-floor restaurant, Felix, designed by Philippe Starck. Spacious rooms are so wonderfully equipped that even jaded travelers are likely to be impressed.

Salisbury Rd., Tsimshatsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong. ✆ **800/462-7899** in the U.S. and Canada, or 852/2920 2888. Fax 852/2722 4170. . 300 units. HK$3,000–HK$4,900 (US$390–US$637) single or double; from HK$5,600 (US$727) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. MTR: Tsimshatsui. **Amenities:** 6 restaurants; 2 bars; lounge; gorgeous indoor pool with sun terrace overlooking the harbor; health club; spa; concierge; limousine service; business center; designer-brand shopping arcade; salon; 24-hr. room service; massage; babysitting, same-day laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; in-house nurse. *In room:* A/C, cable/satellite TV w/CD/DVD player (free CDs and movies), fax, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe, bathroom scale.

MODERATE

BP International House *Kids* This 25-story hotel has a spacious but utilitarian lobby and caters mainly to tour and school groups as well as budget-conscious business travelers. Built in 1993 at the north end of Kowloon Park, it's just a stone's throw from the park's indoor and outdoor public swimming pools and a short walk to a playground, making it good for families. Guest rooms, located on the 14th to 25th floors, are clean, pleasant, and modern. There are also very simple "family rooms" equipped with bunk beds that sleep four for HK$1,340 (US$170).

8 Austin Rd., Tsimshatsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong. ✆ **800/223-5652** in the U.S. and Canada, or 852/2376 1111. Fax 852/2376 1333. www.bpih.com.hk. 535 units. HK$990–HK$1,450 (US$129–US$188) single; HK$1,100–HK$1,500 (US$143–US$195) double; HK$1,600–HK$1,800 (US$208–US$234) corporate double room; from HK$3,100 (US$403) suite. Children under 13 stay free in parent's room. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. MTR: Jordan. **Amenities:** Coffee shop; lounge; room service (6:30am–10pm); babysitting, laundry/dry cleaning; coin-op laundry; nonsmoking rooms; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV w/pay movies.

Eaton Hotel ★★ *Finds* This accommodation has more class and facilities than most in its price range. A handsome, 21-story brick building, it's located above a shopping complex not far from the Temple Street Night Market. The lobby lounge is bright and cheerful, with a four-story glass-enclosed atrium that overlooks a garden terrace with a water cascade, where you can sit outside with drinks in nice weather. Another plus is the small but nicely done rooftop pool with sunning terrace. Guest rooms are small but welcoming, with all the basic creature comforts. The highest-priced deluxe rooms have curved, floor-to-ceiling windows giving views of a distant harbor.

380 Nathan Rd., Yaumatei, Kowloon, Hong Kong. ✆ **800/207-6900** in the U.S. and Canada, or 852/2782 1818. Fax 852/2782 5563. www.eaton-hotel.com. 460 units. HK$1,430–HK$2,130 (US$97–US$338) single or double; HK$2,430–HK$2,730 (US$316–US$355) executive room. AE, DC, MC, V. MTR: Jordan. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; lounge; small outdoor pool; exercise room; concierge; business center; shopping arcade; room service (7am–1am); babysitting; same-day laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV w/pay movies, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

Kowloon Hotel ★ If you like high-tech hotels but don't want to pay a fortune, the Kowloon is the place for you, right behind the Peninsula and just a few minutes' walk from the Star Ferry. The hotel has long offered the most technically advanced rooms in its price category, each equipped with an interactive telecenter, which provides free Internet access, up-to-the-minute flight details, word-processing capability (in-room fax machines double as printers), and much more. The downside: Rooms are minuscule and plagued by traffic noise.

19-21 Nathan Rd., Tsimshatsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong. ✆ **800/262-9467** in the U.S., or 852/2929 2888. Fax 852/2739 9811. www.peninsula.com. 736 units. HK$1,300-HK$2,550 (US$169-US$331) single; HK$1,400–HK$2,650 (US$182-US$344) double; from HK$3,700 (US$480) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. MTR: Tsimshatsui. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; access to nearby YMCA pool and a nearby health club (fee charged); limousine service; business center; shopping arcade; room service (6:30am-2am); babysitting; same-day laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV w/access to Internet, fax/printer, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

INEXPENSIVE

Booth Lodge ★ *Finds* About a 30-minute walk to the Star Ferry but close to the Jade Market, Temple Street Night Market, Ladies' Market, and MTR station, Booth Lodge is located just off Nathan Road on the seventh floor of the Salvation Army building. Recently renovated, it has a comfortable lobby and an adjacent coffee shop offering very reasonably priced dinner buffets. Rooms, all twins or doubles and either standard or larger deluxe, are spotlessly clean. Some that face Nathan Road have views of a harbor in the distance, though those facing the hillside are quieter. A bonus: Local telephone calls are free.

11 Wing Sing Lane, Yaumatei, Kowloon, Hong Kong. ✆ **852/2771 9266.** Fax 852/2385 1140. www.boothlodge.netfirms.com. 53 units. HK$620-HK$1,500 (US$81-US$195) single or double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, MC, V. MTR: Yaumatei. **Amenities:** Coffee shop; tour desk; laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, hair dryer.

The Salisbury YMCA ★★★ *Kids* For decades the number-one choice among low-cost accommodations, this YMCA offers 19 single rooms (none with harbor view) and more than 280 twins (the most expensive twins provide great harbor views), as well as suites with and without harbor views that are perfect for families. Although simple in decor, these rooms are on a par with those at more expensively priced hotels in terms of in-room amenities. For budget travelers, there are also 14 dormitory-style rooms, available only to visitors who have been in Hong Kong fewer than 10 days. Great for families is its sports facility boasting two indoor swimming pools (one a lap pool, the other a children's pool) and a fitness gym, two squash courts, and an indoor climbing wall, as well as a fourth-floor terrace with play equipment for children. Make reservations in advance, especially if booking for April or October.

Salisbury Rd., Tsimshatsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong. ✆ **800/537-8483** in the U.S. and Canada, or 852/2268 7000 (852/2268 7888 for reservations). Fax 852/2739 9315. www.ymcahk.org.hk. 363 units. HK$710 (US$92) single; HK$790-HK$990 (US$103-US$129) double; from HK$1,300 (US$169) suite. Dorm bed HK$210 (US$27). AE, DC, MC, V. MTR: Tsimshatsui. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 indoor pools; exercise room; Jacuzzi; sauna; squash courts; climbing wall; tour desk; limited room service; massage; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning; coin-op laundry; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite/cable TV w/complimentary in-house movies, dataport, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

Stanford Hillview Hotel ★ *Finds* This small, intimate hotel, built in 1991, is near the heart of Tsimshatsui and yet a world away, located on top of a hill in the shade of some huge banyan trees, next to the Royal Observatory with its colonial building and greenery. Knutsford Terrace, an alley with trendy bars and restaurants, is just a minute's walk away. Its lobby is quiet and subdued (quite a contrast to those in most Hong Kong hotels) and its staff friendly and accommodating.

13-17 Observatory Rd., Tsimshatsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong. ✆ **800/858-8471** in the U.S., or 852/2722 7822. Fax 852/2723 3718. www.stanfordhillview.com. 163 units. HK$880-HK$1,580 (US$114-US$205) single or double. AE, DC, MC, V. MTR: Tsimshatsui. **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; outdoor golf-driving nets; small exercise room; business center; 24-hr. room service; babysitting; same-day laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, cable TV w/pay movies, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer.

CENTRAL

EXPENSIVE

Island Shangri-La Hong Kong ★★★ *Finds* Hong Kong Island's tallest hotel offers the ultimate in extravagance and luxury, rivaling the grand hotels of Europe. More than 700 Viennese chandeliers, lush Tai Ping carpets, and paintings and artworks adorn the hotel. The 17-story atrium, which stretches from the 39th to the 56th floors, features a marvelous 16-story-high Chinese painting, drawn by 40 artists from Běijīng and believed to be the largest landscape painting in the world. Also in the atrium are a private lounge open only to hotel guests, and a two-story old-world-style library. Rooms, among the largest in Hong Kong, face either Victoria Peak or spectacular Victoria Harbour.

Pacific Place, Supreme Court Rd., Central, Hong Kong. ✆ **800/942-5050** in the U.S. and Canada, or 852/2877 3838. Fax 852/2521 8742. www.shangri-la.com. 565 units. HK$2,500–HK$3,650 (US$325–US$474) single; HK$2,700–HK$3,850 (US$351–US$500) double; from HK$5,800 (US$753) suite. Children under 18 stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. MTR: Admiralty. **Amenities:** 5 restaurants; 2 lounges; outdoor heated pool big enough for swimming laps; 24-hr. health club; spa; Jacuzzi; sauna; steam bath; concierge; tour desk; limousine service; free shuttle to Queen's Pier in Central and Convention Centre; 24-hr. business center; adjoining shopping arcade; salon; 24-hr. room service; babysitting, same-day laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; executive-level rooms; medical clinic. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV w/pay movies, fax, dataport; minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

Mandarin Oriental ★★ With so many newer hotels in Hong Kong, this 25-story 1963 landmark seems like a familiar old-timer. Still, the Mandarin is famed for its service and consistently rates as one of the top hotels in the world. Because of its great location in the heart of Central (not far from the Star Ferry), it attracts a mostly business clientele, yet it's also a good choice for those wanting to escape the tourist crowds of Tsimshatsui. In addition, the Mandarin's restaurants are among the best in Hong Kong. Elegant rooms, on the small side, come mostly with balconies (rare in Hong Kong and admittedly a bit noisy) and face either the harbor (complete with binoculars) or inland.

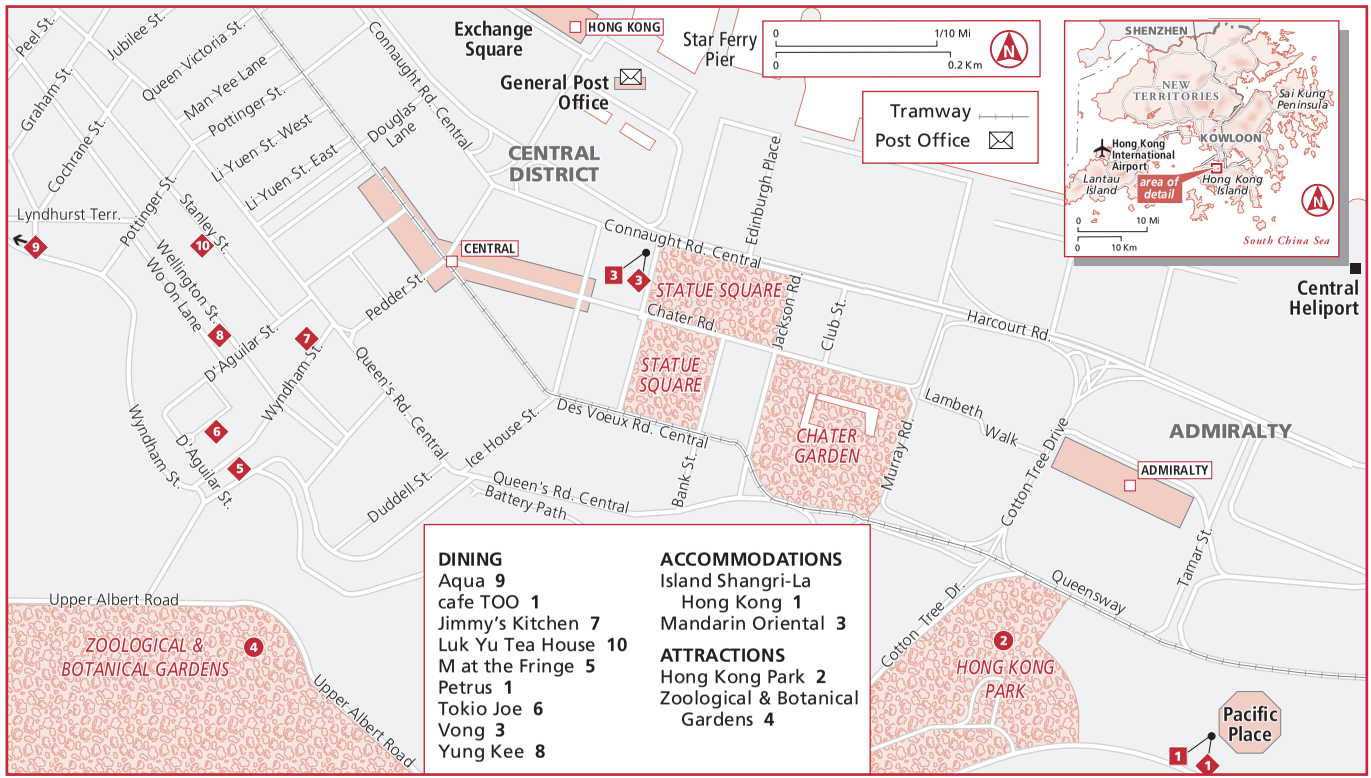
5 Connaught Rd., Central, Hong Kong. ✆ **800/526-6566** in the U.S. and Canada, or 852/2522 0111. Fax 852/2810 6190. www.mandarinoriental.com. 541 units. HK$2,950–HK$4,200 (US$383–US$545) single; HK$3,200–HK$4,450 (US$416–US$578) double; from HK$5,500 (US$714) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. MTR: Central. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; 3 bars; lounge; Cuban-style cigar divan; indoor pool; health club (open 24 hr.); Jacuzzi; sauna; concierge; tour desk; limousine service; business center; shopping arcade; salon; 24-hr. room service; babysitting, same-day laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV w/on-demand pay movies and Internet keyboard, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe, bathroom scale,.

MID-LEVELS

MODERATE

Bishop Lei International House ★ *Finds* Located in the Mid-Levels about halfway up Victoria Peak, this hotel makes up for its out-of-the-way location with free shuttle service to Central, and a half-dozen city buses stop outside its door. Opened in 1996, it offers tiny standard rooms (with even tinier bathrooms, most with showers instead of tubs) that have large windows letting in lots of sunshine but that face inland. If you can, spring for a more expensive room with fantastic harbor views.

4 Robinson Rd., Mid-Levels, Hong Kong. ✆ **852/2868 0828.** Fax 852/2862 1551. www.bishopleihtl.com.hk. 203 units. HK$1,080 (US$140) single; HK$1,280–HK$1,680 (US$166–US$218) double; from HK$1,880 (US$244) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 3B, 12, 12M, 23, 23A, or 40 to Robinson Rd. **Amenities:** Coffee shop; small outdoor pool; small exercise room; free shuttle bus to Central; business center; 24-hr. room service; same-day laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, cable TV, dataport, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.


Exchange Square
HONG KONG
Star Ferry Pier
General Post Office
CENTRAL DISTRICT
Tramway
Post Office
0 1/10 Mi
0 0.2 Km
SHENZHEN
NEW TERRITORIES
Sai Kung Peninsula
KOWLOON
Hong Kong International Airport
Lantau Island
area of detail
Hong Kong Island
0 10 Mi
0 10 Km
South China Sea
Central Heliport
Peel St.
Jubilee St.
Graham St.
Queen Victoria St.
Man Yee Lane
Pottinger St.
Cochrane St.
Li Yuen St. West
Li Yuen St. East
Douglas Lane
Connaught Rd. Central
Lyndhurst Terr.
Stanley St.
Wellington St.
Wo On Lane
D'Aguilar St.
Wyndham St.
Pedder St.
CENTRAL
Queen's Rd. Central
Ice House St.
Des Voeux Rd. Central
Duddell St.
Queen's Rd. Central
Battery Path
Bank St.
Edinburgh Place
Connaught Rd. Central
STATUE SQUARE
Chater Rd.
Jackson Rd.
Club St.
Harcourt Rd.
STATUE SQUARE
CHATER GARDEN
Murray Rd.
Lambeth Walk
Cotton Tree Drive
ADMIRALTY
ADMIRALTY
Tamar St.
Queensway
Cotton Tree Dr.
HONG KONG PARK
Pacific Place
Upper Albert Road
ZOOLOGICAL & BOTANICAL GARDENS
Upper Albert Road
DINING
Aqua 9
cafe TOO 1
Jimmy's Kitchen 7
Luk Yu Tea House 10
M at the Fringe 5
Petrus 1
Tokio Joe 6
Vong 3
Yung Kee 8
ACCOMMODATIONS
Island Shangri-La Hong Kong 1
Mandarin Oriental 3
ATTRACTIONS
Hong Kong Park 2
Zoological & Botanical Gardens 4

CAUSEWAY BAY/WANCHAI

EXPENSIVE

Grand Hyatt Hong Kong ★★★ *Kids* Walking into the lobby of the Hyatt International's Asian flagship hotel is like walking into the salon of a 1930s Art Deco luxury ocean liner, with huge black granite columns, massive flower arrangements, bubbling fountains, and furniture and statuettes reminiscent of that era. Located on the waterfront near the Convention Centre and only a 5-minute walk from the Wanchai Star Ferry pier where passengers embark for Tsimshatsui, it offers smart-looking, contemporary rooms, and marble bathrooms with separate bathtub and shower areas. Some 70% of the rooms provide a harbor view, while the rest have views of Hong Kong's largest outdoor hotel pool and garden with partial glimpses of the harbor.

1 Harbour Rd., Wanchai, Hong Kong. ✆ **800/233-1234** in the U.S. and Canada, or 852/2588 1234. Fax 852/2802 0677. www.hongkong.hyatt.com. 572 units. HK$3,600-HK$4,300 (US$467-US$558) single; HK$3,850-HK$4,550 (US$500-US$584) double; HK$4,350-HK$4,650 (US$566-US$604) Regency Club executive floor double; from HK$6,400 (US$831) suite. Children under 12 stay free in parent's room (maximum: 3 persons per room). AE, DC, MC, V. MTR: Wanchai. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; lounge; nightclub; huge outdoor pool (shared w/ adjacent Renaissance Harbour View Hotel and closed in winter); children's splash pool; golf-driving range; 2 outdoor tennis courts; health club; jogging track; concierge; tour desk; limousine service; free shuttle to Central, Causeway Bay, and Admiralty; business center; salon; 24-hr. room service; babysitting, same-day laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV w/keyboard for Internet access and on-demand pay movies, fax, dataport; minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe, bathroom scale, complimentary bottled water.

MODERATE

Best Western Rosedale on the Park ★★ *Finds* This hotel has lots going for it, including complimentary broadband Internet access in each room, cordless phones, fridge (with complimentary soda, beer, and bottled water), and a lounge with computers and free Internet access. There are only 13 rooms on each floor, giving it a boutique-hotel atmosphere. Rooms are small but have everything you need, though note that the least expensive "superior" rooms are on lower floors and face another building.

8 Shelter St., Causeway Bay, Hong Kong. ✆ **800/528-1234** in the U.S. and Canada, or 852/2127 8888. Fax 852/2127 3333. www.rosedale.com.hk. 274 units. HK$1,180-HK$1,280 (US$153-US$166) single; HK$1,280-HK$1,380 (US$166-US$179) double; HK$1,580 (US$205) executive double; from HK$1,980 (US$257) suite. Children under 18 stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. MTR: Causeway Bay. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; lounge; small fitness room; business center; room service (6:30am-midnight); babysitting; same-day laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, cable TV w/pay movies, dataport, fridge, microwave (executive-level rooms) coffeemaker, hair dryer, iron/ironing board, safe.

Harbour View International House *Value* Opened in 1986, this YMCA occupies a prime spot on the Wanchai waterfront, right next to the Hong Kong Arts Centre and not far from the convention center. Rooms, all with twin or double beds, are rather stylish for a YMCA, attracting guests mostly from mainland China and North America. Best of all, more than half the rooms face the harbor with V-shaped windows, making this the cheapest place on Hong Kong Island with great views. Rooms that face inland are even cheaper.

4 Harbour Rd., Wanchai, Hong Kong. ✆ **852/2802 0111.** Fax 852/2802 9063. www.harbour.ymca.org.hk. 320 units. HK$1,200-HK$1,750 (US$156-US$227) single or double. Children under 12 stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. MTR: Wanchai. **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; tour desk; room service (10:30am–10pm); babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, cable TV, minibar.

NEAR THE AIRPORT

MODERATE

Regal Airport Hotel ★ *Kids* Opened in 1998, this is the only hotel at Hong Kong International Airport, a 5-minute walk from the terminal via covered walkway. Standout facilities include a 24-hour cafe and a very good children's recreation room. Guest rooms are large and soundproofed, with modern furniture in eye-popping colors of purple, red, or lime green; all but the cheapest have TVs with keyboards for Internet access and electronic games.

9 Cheong Tat Rd., Chek Lap Kok, Hong Kong. ✆ **800/222-8888** in the U.S. and Canada, or 852/2286 8888. Fax 852/2286 8686. www.regalhotel.com. 1,100 units. HK$1,700–HK$2,400 (US$221–US$312) single; HK$1,850–HK$2,550 (US$240–US$331) double; HK$2,900 (US$377) Regal Class double; HK$3,200 (US$416) Regal Club double; from HK$4,500 (US$584) suite. Children under 12 stay free in parent's room (maximum 2 children per room). AE, DC, MC, V. Airport Express Liner: Hong Kong International Airport. **Amenities:** 5 restaurants; lounge; indoor and outdoor pools; health club and spa; children's recreation room; concierge; limousine service; business center (24 hr.); shopping arcade; salon; 24-hr. room service; babysitting, same-day laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; executive-level rooms; house doctor. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV w/pay movies, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

4 Where to Dine

With more than 10,000 restaurants from which to choose, in a few short days you can take a culinary tour of China, dining on Cantonese, Sìchuān, Shanghainese, Běijīng, Chiu Chow, and other Chinese specialties.

Other national cuisines are also popular, including French, Italian, American, Thai, Indian, and Japanese. A welcome trend has seen talented chefs opening neighborhood establishments in ever greater numbers.

Avoid dining from 1 to 2pm on weekdays, the traditional lunch hour for office workers.

KOWLOON

For Kowloon restaurant locations, see the map on page 537.

EXPENSIVE

Felix ★★★ *Value* PACIFIC RIM FUSION Designer Philippe Starck has made sure that Felix is not your ordinary dining experience, beginning with the elevator's wavy walls and continuing inside the restaurant, where a huge aluminum wall and two glass facades reveal stunning views of Kowloon and Hong Kong Island. The food, featuring Pacific Rim ingredients brought together in East-meets-West combinations, rarely disappoints. You might start with hot California rolls, followed by the Mongolian-style barbecued rack of lamb in a port wine and akala berry reduction served with a feta, cilantro, and mint salad. Bargain hunters can dine early (before 7pm) and opt for a three-course fixed-price dinner for HK$340 (US$44). Or just come by for a drink.

In The Peninsula Hotel, Salisbury Rd., Tsimshatsui. ✆ **852/2920 2888,** ext. 3188. Reservations required. Main courses HK$210–HK$280 (US$27–US$36). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 6pm–2am (last order 10:30pm). MTR: Tsimshatsui.

Fook Lam Moon ★★★ CANTONESE Upon entering this restaurant you immediately feel as if you've stepped back a couple of decades. The decor is outdated, and, unless you're a regular, the waiters are indifferent. Yet this remains *the* place to go for exotic dishes, including shark's fin, bird's nest, and abalone. Shark's fin is the obvious number-one choice, with 19 different renditions listed on the menu. If you feel like splurging, prices for half a bowl of shark's fin with

crabmeat or shredded chicken begin at HK$280 (US$36). If you're not careful, you could end up spending a small fortune (if you go for the exotic dishes, count on at least HK$1,000/US$130 per person). Some Hong Kong old-timers swear this restaurant serves the best Cantonese food in the world.

There's another branch in Wanchai at 35–45 Johnston Rd. (✆ 852/2866 0663; MTR: Wanchai), with the same hours.

53-59 Kimberley Rd., Tsimshatsui. ✆ **852/2366 0286.** www.fooklammoon-grp.com. Main dishes HK$100-HK$190 (US$13-US$24). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11:30am-2:30pm and 6-11:30pm. MTR: Tsimshatsui.

Sabatini ★★ *Finds* ITALIAN The dining hall here is rustic and cozy yet refined. An offshoot of the original restaurant opened by the Sabatini brothers in Rome in 1954, its menu is a faithful replica of the fare served there, with liberal doses of olive oil, garlic, and peppers. Popular dishes include baked walnut-crusted sea bass in zucchini-saffron sauce served with lemon-basil risotto, and veal escalope with Parma ham and sage. The pasta, all handmade, ranges from linguine with lobster and fresh basil to a classic spaghetti with clams. The list of mostly Italian wines is seemingly endless.

In the Royal Garden, 69 Mody Rd., Tsimshatsui East. ✆ **852/2733 2000.** Reservations required. Main courses HK$240-HK$360 (US$31-US$47); fixed-price lunch HK$160-HK$250 (US$21-US$32). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon-2:30pm and 6-11pm. MTR: Tsimshatsui.

Yü ★★★ SEAFOOD Located in the swank Inter-Continental but trendily low-key, Yü keeps all its seafood, including a variety of fish, lobsters, crabs, prawns, abalone, mussels, and oysters, live in tanks until the moment they're ordered; you can have yours prepared any number of Asian and Western ways, including grilled, poached, sautéed, or steamed. Many diners stick to the imported oysters or begin their meals with the signature Seafood Mountain—fresh seafood laid on a mountain of ice, served with six different sauces. Sautéed lobster with black beans and fine noodles is the restaurant's signature dish. Surprisingly, there are also vegetarian choices.

In the Regent Hotel, Salisbury Rd., Tsimshatsui. ✆ **852/2721 1211.** Reservations necessary (request a window seat). Main courses HK$230-HK$330 (US$30-US$43); fixed-price lunch HK$195-HK$250 (US$25-US$32); fixed-price dinner HK$650 (US$84). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon-Sat noon-3pm; daily 6-11pm. MTR: Tsimshatsui.

MODERATE

Gaylord ★ INDIAN This long-established, first-floor restaurant in the heart of Tsimshatsui is popular for its authentic north Indian classics, including tandoori, lamb curry cooked in north Indian spices and herbs, chicken cooked in fiery-hot vindaloo curry, prawns cooked with green pepper and spices, and fish with potatoes and tomatoes. There are also a dozen vegetarian dishes. The lunchtime buffet, served every day except Sunday and public holidays until 2:30pm, is a winner. Fixed-price dinners for two or more persons begin at HK$160 (US$21) per person.

23-25 Ashley Rd., Tsimshatsui. ✆ **852/2376 1001.** Main dishes HK$78-HK$198 (US$10-US$26); lunch buffet HK$95 (US$12). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon-2:30pm and 6-11pm. MTR: Tsimshatsui.

Great Shànghǎi ★ *Finds* SHANGHAINESE Established in 1958, this big old-fashioned dining hall has a gigantic menu of more than 200 items, most priced under HK$140 (US$18) and about as close as you can get to food the way Mom used to cook it in old Shànghǎi. Try the cold chicken in wine sauce, braised shredded eel cooked in an oily garlic sauce, or fried pork dumplings. The house specialty is beggar's chicken for HK$260 (US$34), but it's available only

at night and just a limited number are prepared daily; call in your order by mid-afternoon if you want to be assured of getting a bird.

26 Prat Ave., Tsimshatsui. ✆ **852/2366 8158.** Main dishes HK$75–HK$195 (US$9.75–US$25). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11am–2:30pm and 6:30–11pm. MTR: Tsimshatsui.

Jade Garden Restaurant CANTONESE Jade Garden is popular with Chinese families and is the place to go if you don't know much about Chinese food but want to try it. A plus is the view of the harbor afforded by some of the window-side tables. As in most Cantonese restaurants, lunch is dim sum served from trolleys pushed through the aisles. If you'd rather order from the menu or come for dinner, you might consider drunken shrimp in soup, pan-fried stuffed bean curd, or fried prawns with lemon peel and orange.

In Tsimshatsui, Jade Garden has another branch at 25–31 Carnarvon Rd. (✆ 852/2369 8311), open daily from 7:30am to midnight.

Star House (4th floor), 3 Salisbury Rd., Tsimshatsui. ✆ **852/2730 6888.** Main dishes HK$60–HK$140 (US$7.80–US$18). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 11am–3pm and 5:30–11:30pm; Sun and holidays 10am–11:30pm. MTR: Tsimshatsui.

The Pizzeria ★ *Value* ITALIAN Located on the second floor of the Kowloon Hotel (just behind the Peninsula), this casual and bustling dining hall offers relaxed meals at good prices. Despite its name, the restaurant specializes in pasta, with an a la carte menu that changes often but has included homemade fettuccine with lobster and spinach in tomato cream sauce, and penne pasta with smoked chicken and porcini mushrooms in creamy herb sauce. There are also four different kinds of pizza and such main courses as baked ocean trout with artichoke in filo pastry on green peas and morel sauce. At lunchtime, a visit to the antipasti and salad bar, choice of main dish, and dessert and coffee is cheap.

In the Kowloon Hotel, 19–21 Nathan Rd., Tsimshatsui. ✆ **852/2929 2888,** ext. 3322. Reservations recommended. Pasta and pizza HK$125–HK$150 (US$16–US$19); main courses HK$190–HK$205 (US$25–US$27); lunch buffet HK$180 (US$23) Mon–Fri, HK$200 (US$26) Sat–Sun; fixed-price dinner HK$320–HK$350 (US$42–US$45). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–3pm and 6–11pm. MTR: Tsimshatsui.

Spring Deer Restaurant *Finds* BĚIJĪNG This long-established restaurant offers excellent Běijīng food at reasonable prices. Your tablecloth may have holes in it, but it will be clean—and the place is usually packed. Best on the menu is its specialty—honey-glazed Peking duck, which costs HK$280 (US$36). You'll probably have to wait 40 minutes for the duck if you order it during peak time (7:30–9:30pm). Chicken dishes are also excellent, as are the handmade noodles. Most dishes come in small, medium, and large sizes; the small dishes are suitable for two people.

42 Mody Rd., Tsimshatsui. ✆ **852/2366 4012.** Reservations recommended. Small dishes HK$50–HK$90 (US$6.50–US$12). AE, MC, V. Daily 11:30am–3pm and 6–11pm. MTR: Tsimshatsui.

INEXPENSIVE

Banana Leaf Curry House MALAYSIAN/INDIAN/SINGAPOREAN This fast-growing local chain has more than 100 choices, including chicken, mutton, beef, seafood, and vegetables, cooked in several varieties of curry and presented on banana leaves. The service is brisk and efficient, the prices are reasonable, the tables are crowded, and the atmosphere is that of a school cafeteria. You might want to start with chicken satay and peanut sauce, or samosas with a mint chutney. Main dishes run the gamut from Hǎinán chicken and Malaysian curry crab to vegetarian selections; the dilemma is in making a choice.

Another branch is conveniently located on the 15th floor of Chong Hing Square, 601 Nathan Rd., Mongkok (✆ 852/2332 2525; MTR: Mongkok; open Mon–Fri noon–2:30pm and 6–11:30pm, Sat–Sun noon–11:30pm). There's also a branch at 440 Jaffe Rd., Causeway Bay (✆ 852/2573 8187; MTR: Causeway Bay; open Mon–Fri 11am–3pm and 6–11:30pm Sat–Sun 11am–11:30pm).

Golden Crown Court (3rd floor), 68 Nathan Rd., Tsimshatsui. ✆ **852/2721 4821.** Main dishes HK$62–HK$128 (US$8.05–US$17). AE, V. Daily 11am–3pm and 6–11:30pm. MTR: Tsimshatsui.

CENTRAL

For Central Hong Kong restaurant locations, see the map on p. 541.

EXPENSIVE

M at the Fringe ★★★ *Finds* CONTINENTAL A meal here is a treat in more ways than one—the artsy furnishings are a feast for the eyes, and the food, influenced by cuisines along the Mediterranean, is consistently superb. The handwritten menu changes every 3 months but is always creative and always includes lamb and vegetarian selections. An example of the former is a salt-encased, slowly baked leg of lamb with celery root and potato gratin, French beans, and baby carrots. For dessert, don't pass up the Pavlova.

2 Lower Albert Rd., Central. ✆ **852/2877 4000.** Reservations strongly recommended. Main courses HK$188–HK$212 (US$24–US$28); fixed-price lunch HK$148–HK$168 (US$19–US$22). AE, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–2:30pm; Mon–Sat 7–10:30pm; Sun 7–10pm. MTR: Central.

Petrus ★★★ *Finds* FRENCH Simply put, the views from this 56th-floor restaurant are breathtaking, probably the best of any hotel restaurant on the Hong Kong side. The restaurant is decorated like a French castle, with the obligatory crystal chandeliers, statues, thick draperies, and murals gracing dome-shaped ceilings. The cuisine emphasizes contemporary Mediterranean/French seasonal ingredients, and the menu changes often but has included such intriguing choices as black truffle soup with green asparagus and salsify, and roast Boston lobster served with fennel, morels, and tomato.

In the Island Shangri-La (56th floor), Pacific Place, Supreme Court Rd., Central. ✆ **852/2820 8590.** Reservations recommended. Jacket required. Main courses HK$320–HK$530 (US$42–US$69); fixed-price lunch HK$290–HK$340 (US$38–US$44); fixed-price dinner HK$750–HK$900 (US$97–US$117). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–3pm; daily 6:30–10:30pm. MTR: Admiralty.

Vong ★★★ FRANCO-ASIAN FUSION Chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten set Hong Kong abuzz when he opened on the 25th floor of the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in 1997. Appetizers range from shrimp satay dipped in a fresh oyster sauce to sautéed foie gras with ginger and mango. All main courses are tempting—perhaps you'll choose the spiny lobster with Thai herbs or the chicken marinated in lemon grass with sweet rice steamed in banana leaf. At lunchtime, you can save money by ordering the Black Plate or White Plate menu, which comes with six exquisitely prepared items for HK$218 (US$28).

In the Mandarin Oriental Hotel (25th floor), 5 Connaught Rd., Central. ✆ **852/2825 4028.** Reservations required. Main courses HK$198–HK$338 (US$26–US$44); fixed-price lunch HK$218–HK$258 (US$28–US$34). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–3pm; daily 6pm–midnight. MTR: Central.

MODERATE

Aqua ★★ *Finds* FUSION Aqua sits on a busy corner with a glass facade, but inside it's cool and collected, with an open kitchen set unobtrusively in a corner and low lighting that sets the mood for romantic dining. Australian chef Gregory Bunt creates a constantly changing menu that capitalizes on his years of

working in Asia. For starters, try the tasting platter for two, followed by such entrees as yellowfin tuna grilled with olive crust, basil potatoes, confit tomato, and anchovy sauce; or cumin-crusted lamb loin with smoky aubergine, tomato ginger, and spice jus. Fixed-price lunches are a bargain.

49 Hollywood Rd., Central. ✆ **852/2545 9889.** Reservations recommended. Main courses HK$135–HK$198 (US$18–US$26); fixed-price lunch HK$88–HK$108 (US$11–US$14); fixed-price dinner HK$388 (US$50). AE, MC, V. Mon–Thurs noon–midnight; Fri noon–2am; Sat 10:30am–2am; Sun 10:30am–midnight. MTR: Central.

cafe TOO ★★★ *Finds* INTERNATIONAL The most interesting buffet in Hong Kong, cafe TOO features open kitchens and seven "stations" of food presentations spread throughout the restaurant, thereby giving it a theatrical touch. Browse the appetizer and salad table; a cold seafood counter with sushi, fresh oysters, crab, and other delights; and a Chinese section with dim sum and main courses. Other stations serve Western hot entrees, pastas that are prepared to order (and run the gamut from Chinese to Italian), and Asian dishes from Thai curries to Indian tandoori. The dessert table is the crowning glory.

In the Island Shangri-La Hotel, Pacific Place, Supreme Court Rd., Central. ✆ **852/2820 8571,** ext. 8571. Reservations recommended. Lunch buffet HK$235 (US$31) Mon–Sat, HK$275 (US$36) Sun and holidays; dinner buffet HK$308 (US$40) Sun–Thurs, HK$338 (US$44) Fri–Sat and holidays. AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–2:30pm and 6:30–9:30pm; Sat–Sun noon–3pm and 7–10pm. MTR: Admiralty.

Jimmy's Kitchen ★ CONTINENTAL This restaurant opened in 1928, a replica of a similar, American-owned restaurant in Shànghǎi, and has an atmosphere reminiscent of an American steakhouse, with white tablecloths, dark-wood paneling, and elevator music. The daily specials are written on a blackboard, and an extensive a la carte menu offers salads and soups, steaks, chicken, Indian curries, and a seafood selection that includes sole, scallops, and the local garoupa. It's a good place also for corned beef and cabbage, beef Stroganoff, and hearty German fare.

Another branch at 29 Ashley Rd., Tsimshatsui (✆ 852/2376 0327), is open daily from noon to 11pm.

1 Wyndham St., Central. ✆ **852/2526 5293.** Main courses HK$116–HK$205 (US$15–US$27). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11:30am–3pm and 6–11pm. MTR: Central.

Luk Yu Tea House ★★ CANTONESE Luk Yu, first opened in 1933, is the most famous teahouse remaining in Hong Kong, a wonderful Art Deco–era Cantonese restaurant with ceiling fans, spittoons, individual wooden booths for couples, marble tabletops, and stained-glass windows. It's one of the best places to try Chinese teas like *lung ching* (a green tea) or *sui sin* (narcissus or daffodil), but Luk Yu is most famous for its dim sum, served from 7am to 5:30pm. The problem for foreigners, however, is that the place is always packed with regulars who have their own special places to sit, and the staff is sometimes surly to newcomers. In addition, if you come after 11am, dim sum is no longer served by trolley but from an English menu with pictures but no prices, which could end up being quite expensive unless you ask before ordering. Bring along a Chinese friend, or consider coming for dinner, when it's not nearly so hectic and there's an English menu listing more than 200 items, including all the Cantonese favorites.

24–26 Stanley St., Central. ✆ **852/2523 5464.** Main dishes HK$100–HK$220 (US$13–US$29); dim sum HK$25–HK$55 (US$3.25–US$7.15). MC, V. Daily 7am–10pm. MTR: Central.

Tokio Joe ★ JAPANESE As its quirky name suggests, this hip sushi bar caters to Lan Kwai Fong's youthful nighttime revelers. Dimly lit even for lunch, it

offers sushi and sashimi a la carte, as well as combination platters (sushi combinations run HK$150–HK$360/US$20–US$47). Unique, however, are the California-style roll creations, like the roll with crabmeat, asparagus, sliced fish, mushroom, and egg. Probably the best deal is the set lunch, featuring sashimi, tempura, or a box lunch.

16 Lan Kwai Fong, Central. ✆ **852/2525 1889.** Sushi a la carte HK$40-HK$65 (US$5.20-US$8.45); fixed-price lunch HK$120-HK$190 (US$16-US$25). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon-Sat noon-2:30pm; daily 6:30-11pm. MTR: Central.

Yung Kee ★ CANTONESE Popular for decades, Yung Kee started out in 1942 as a street stall selling roast goose. Its specialty is still roast goose with plum sauce, cooked to perfection with tender meat on the inside and crispy skin on the outside and available only for dinner for HK$380 (US$49). Other specialties include roast suckling pig or duck, cold steamed chicken, barbecued pork, bean curd combined with prawns, sautéed filet of garoupa, and thousand-year-old eggs. Dining is on one of the upper three floors, but if all you want is a bowl of congee or takeaway, join the office workers who pour in for a quick meal on the informal ground floor.

32-40 Wellington St., Central. ✆ **852/2522 1624.** Main dishes HK$68-HK$180 (US$8.85-US$23); dim sum HK$12-HK$24 (US$1.55-US$3.10). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11am-11:30pm. MTR: Central.

CAUSEWAY BAY

EXPENSIVE

TOTT'S Asian Grill & Bar ★★★ INTERNATIONAL/FUSION With its gigantic Chinese paintbrushes at the entrance and a blood-red interior with zebra-striped chairs, this flashy restaurant is highly recommended for its innovative and varied East-meets-West fusion cuisine. Come early for a drink in the restaurant's bar or retire there after dinner for live music and dancing. The menu is diverse in cuisine and price, allowing diners to eat moderately priced dishes like creamy risotto with pearl onions, broad beans, grilled mushrooms, and house-dried tomatoes, or to go all out with tandoori-roasted salmon filet on basil whipped potatoes and crisp vegetable chips.

In the Excelsior Hotel, 281 Gloucester Rd., Causeway Bay. ✆ **852/2837 6786.** Reservations recommended for dinner (request a window seat). Main courses HK$168-HK$328 (US$22-US$43); fixed-price lunch buffet HK$198 (US$26); Sun brunch HK$298 (US$39). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon-Fri noon-3pm; Sun 11:30am-3pm and 6:30-10pm; Mon-Sat 6:30-11pm. MTR: Causeway Bay.

MODERATE

Red Pepper ★ SÌCHUĀN Open since 1970, the Red Pepper has a large following among the city's expatriates. Specialties include fried prawns with chili sauce on a sizzling platter, sour-pepper soup, fried garoupa with sweet-and-sour sauce, smoked duck marinated with oranges, and shredded chicken with hot garlic sauce and dry-fried string beans. Most dishes are available in two sizes, with the small dishes suitable for two people. Lychee tea is a good accompaniment.

7 Lan Fong Rd., Causeway Bay. ✆ **852/2577 3811.** Reservations recommended, especially at dinner. Small dishes HK$85-HK$130 (US$11-US$17). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11:30am-11:15pm (last order). MTR: Causeway Bay.

INEXPENSIVE

Open Kitchen ★ *Finds* INTERNATIONAL This self-serve cafeteria near the convention center is the best place in Wanchai for a quick, inexpensive meal. As its name suggests, chefs working in an open kitchen prepare everything from

lamb chops, grilled steak, and tandoori chicken to grilled Cajun salmon, spring chicken, and pasta. Lighter fare includes a salad bar, soups, sandwiches, sushi, quiche, and desserts. You can also come just for a drink, but the minimum charge per person is HK$20 (US$2.60).

Hong Kong Arts Centre (6th floor), 2 Harbour Rd., Wanchai. ✆ **852/2827 2923.** Main courses HK$70–HK$90 (US$9.10–US$12). AE, MC, V. Sat–Thurs 11am–9:30pm; Fri 11am–11pm. MTR: Wanchai.

AROUND HONG KONG

MODERATE

The Peak Lookout ★★ INTERNATIONAL Although it's on the Peak, across the street from the Peak Tram terminus, there are only limited views of the South China Sea from the Peak Lookout's terrace. A former tram station, it's a delightful place for a meal, with exposed granite walls, a tall timber-trussed ceiling, an open fireplace, wooden floors, and a greenhouselike room that extends into the garden. You can also sit outdoors amid the lush growth where you can actually hear birds singing—one of the best outdoor dining opportunities in Hong Kong on a glorious day. The menu is eclectic, offering soups (from cream of asparagus to the classic Thai seafood soup, *tom yam goong*) and sandwiches. Main dishes—American, Chinese, Indian, and Southeast Asian—include tandoori chicken *tikka,* Thai noodles, penne with prawns, grilled steaks and salmon, and curries like Thai green chicken curry with coconut milk.

121 Peak Rd., Victoria Peak. ✆ **852/2849 1000.** Reservations required for dinner and weekends. Main courses HK$102–HK$238 (US$13–US$31). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 10:30am–11:30pm; Sat–Sun 8:30am–1am. Peak Tram.

INEXPENSIVE

Marché Mövenpick ★ *Kids* INTERNATIONAL Located in the Peak Tower, this Swiss chain restaurant offers sweeping views over Hong Kong. In addition, its food is reasonably priced and varied enough to please even fickle palates and it has a children's corner, with a small slide, toys, and other diversions. Various counters offer salads, pizza, pasta, vegetables, sushi, and Chinese dishes. Entrees range from grilled pork chops and roasted spring chicken to king prawns and sole. Good dining deals are the three-course fixed-price weekday lunches, as well as the dinner buffets.

Peak Tower (levels 6 and 7), 128 Peak Rd., Victoria Peak. ✆ **852/2849 2000.** Main courses HK$65–HK$80 (US$8.45–US$10); fixed-price lunch Mon–Fri HK$78 (US$10); dinner buffet HK$278 (US$36). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11am–11pm. Peak Tram.

STANLEY

INEXPENSIVE

Chilli N Spice ★ *Value* ASIAN Located in the historic Murray House (a massive, colonnaded stone structure built in Central in 1843, dismantled, and rebuilt in Stanley stone by stone), this restaurant boasts views of the sea from its outdoor terrace and serves mostly traditional Thai food, as well as popular Southeast Asian dishes. You might start with minced shrimp, pork, and corn in a pastry shell, or an Indonesian satay. For a main course, you might choose the Singaporean-style fried curry crab; the tiger prawns with lemon grass, dried chili, and garlic; or the Saigon-style fried beef tenderloin.

Shop 101, Murray House, Stanley Plaza, Stanley. ✆ **852/2899 0147.** Main courses HK$50–HK$138 (US$6.50–US$18); fixed-price lunch HK$45–HK$62 (US$5.85–US$8.05). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–11:30pm; Sun 11am–11pm. Bus: no. 6, 6A, 6X, 260, or 973.

ABERDEEN

MODERATE

Jumbo Floating Restaurant *Overrated* CANTONESE There are many other restaurants that are more authentic, are more affordable, and have better food than what you find here—but this floating restaurant has been in operation for almost a quarter of a century and claims to be the largest in the world. Simply take the bus to Aberdeen and then board one of the restaurant's own free shuttle boats, which depart every few minutes. Be sure to stop by the "Seafood Exhibition" on the lower deck, where you'll see tanks of live creatures swimming about. Many diners like to make their seafood selections here. As for the restaurant, it has more reds, golds, and dragon motifs than you've ever seen in one place. Dishes include everything from noodles and rice combinations to fresh lobster, scallops, garoupa balls, and fresh seafood (prawns are a particular favorite). Dim sum is available from an English menu (from trolleys on Sun and holidays) until 4pm.

Aberdeen Harbour, Hong Kong Island. ✆ **852/2553 9111.** Main dishes HK$80–HK$400 (US$10–US$52); dim sum HK$14–HK$28 (US$1.80–US$3.65). Table charge HK$8 (US$1.05) per person. AE, MC, V. Mon–Sat 11am–11pm; Sun 7am–11pm. Bus: no. 7 or 70 from Central to Aberdeen, then the restaurant's private boat.

5 Exploring Hong Kong

Every visitor to Hong Kong should eat dim sum in a typical Cantonese restaurant, ride the Star Ferry across Victoria Harbour and, if the weather is clear, take the Peak Tram for the glorious views from Victoria Peak.

VICTORIA PEAK

At 399 meters (1,308 ft.), Victoria Peak is Hong Kong Island's tallest mountain and offers spectacular views. Since the peak is typically cooler than the sweltering city below, it has always been one of Hong Kong's most exclusive places to live. More than a century ago, the rich reached the peak via a 3-hour trip in sedan chairs, transported to the top by coolies. In 1888 the **Peak Tram** began operating, cutting the journey to a mere 8 minutes.

The easiest way to reach the Peak Tram Station, located in Central on Garden Road, is to take the no. 15C open-top shuttle bus that operates between the tram terminal and the Star Ferry in Central (turn left from the ferry pier). Otherwise, the tram terminal is about a 10-minute walk from the Star Ferry. Trams depart from Peak Tram Station every 10 to 15 minutes between 7am and midnight. Round-trip tickets cost HK$30 (US$3.90) for adults, HK$14 (US$1.80) for senior citizens, and HK$9 (US$1.15) for children.

Upon reaching the Peak, you'll find yourself at the very modern **Peak Tower.** Head straight for the viewing terrace on Level 5, where you have one of the world's most breathtaking views: the skyscrapers of Central, the boats plying Victoria Harbour, Kowloon, and the many hills of the New Territories undulating in the background.

The best thing to do atop Victoria Peak, however, is to take an hour-long **circular hike** on Lugard Road and Harlech Road, located just a stone's throw from the Peak Tower. Mainly a footpath overhung with banyan trees and passing through lush vegetation (with glimpses of secluded mansions), the road snakes along the cliff side, offering views of Central District below, the harbor, Kowloon, and then Aberdeen and the outlying islands on the other side. This is one of the best walks in Hong Kong.

Tips Museum Money Savings

The Museum Pass, available at HKTB for HK$30 (US$3.90), is valid for 1 week and allows entry to the Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong Museum of History, Hong Kong Space Museum, Hong Kong Science Museum, and Hong Kong Heritage Museum. Museum admission is free to all on Wednesday.

MUSEUMS

Municipal museums are closed December 25 and 26, January 1, and the first 3 days of Chinese New Year.

Hong Kong Heritage Museum ★★ *Kids* Presenting both the history and culture of the New Territories, this museum is probably the best reason to take the KCR to Sha Tin in the New Territories. Come here to learn about the customs, religions, and lifestyles of the early fishermen and settlers and how they have changed over the centuries. See a barge loaded for market, an ancestral hall, traditional clothing, models of Sha Tin showing its mind-numbing growth since the 1930s, musical instruments, elaborate costumes used in Chinese opera, porcelains, bronzes, furniture, jade, and other works of Chinese art dating from the Neolithic period to the 20th century. At the Children's Discovery Gallery, youngsters can practice being archaeologists, wear traditional costumes, and learn about marshes. Plan on spending 2 hours here.

1 Man Lam Road, Sha Tin. ✆ **852/2180 8188.** www.heritagemuseum.gov.hk. Admission HK$10 (US$1.30) adults, HK$5 (US65¢) children, students, and seniors. Free admission Wed. Mon, Wed–Sat 10am–6pm; Sun/holidays 10am–7pm. KCR: Tai Wai or Sha Tin, about a 10-min. walk from either.

Hong Kong Museum of Art ★★★ Because of its location on the Tsimshatsui waterfront just a 2-minute walk from the Star Ferry terminus, this museum is the most convenient and worthwhile if your time is limited. Feast your eyes on ceramics, bronzes, jade, cloisonné, lacquerware, bamboo carvings, women's costumes, and textiles, as well as paintings, wall hangings, scrolls, and calligraphy dating from the 16th century to the present. The Historical Pictures Gallery has oils, watercolors, pencil drawings, and prints that provide a visual account of life in Hong Kong, Macau, and Guǎngzhōu in the late 18th and 19th centuries. Another gallery displays contemporary Hong Kong works by local artists. You'll want to spend at least an hour here, though art aficionados can devote more time by renting audio guides for HK$10 (US$1.30).

Hong Kong Cultural Centre Complex, 10 Salisbury Rd., Tsimshatsui. ✆ **852/2721 0116.** www.lcsd.gov.hk/hkma. Admission HK$10 (US$1.30) adults, HK$5 (US65¢) children, students, and seniors. Free admission Wed. Fri–Wed 10am–6pm. MTR: Tsimshatsui.

Hong Kong Museum of History ★★★ If you visit only one museum in Hong Kong, this should be it. Opened in 2001, it's Hong Kong's ambitious attempt to chronicle 6,000 years of history. Through displays that include life-size dioramas, replicas of fishing boats, reconstructed traditional housing, furniture, clothing, and items from daily life, the museum introduces Hong Kong's ethnic groups, traditional means of livelihood, customs, and beliefs. You can peer inside a fishing junk, see what Kowloon Walled City looked like before it became a park, view the backstage of a Chinese opera, read about the arrival of

European traders and the Opium Wars, and study a map showing land reclamation since the 1840s. One of my favorite parts of the museum is a re-created street of old Hong Kong, complete with an original Chinese herbal medicine shop located in Central until 1980 and reconstructed here. There are also 19th- and early-20th-century photographs, poignantly showing how much Hong Kong has changed through the decades. You can easily spend 2 hours here.

100 Chatham Rd. S., Tsimshatsui East. **852/2724 9042.** www.lcsd.gov.hk/hkmh. Admission HK$10 (US$1.30) adults, HK$5 (US65¢) children and seniors. Free admission Wed. Wed–Mon 10am–6pm. MTR: Tsimshatsui (a 20-min. walk from exit B2). Bus: no. 5 from Star Ferry bus terminus.

Sam Tung Uk Museum ★★ Located in the New Territories but easily accessible from either Central or Tsimshatsui in about 25 minutes via MTR, this is actually a restored Hakka walled village, built in the 18th century by members of the farming Chan clan. It consists of tiny lanes lined with tiny tile-roofed homes, four houses that have been restored to their original condition, an ancestral hall, two rows of side houses, an exhibition hall, and an adjacent landscaped garden. The four windowless restored houses are furnished much as they would have been when occupied, with traditional Chinese furniture (including elegant blackwood furniture). Although as many as 300 clan members once lived here, the village was abandoned in 1980. Today the museum is a tiny oasis in the midst of high-rise housing projects.

2 Kwu Uk Lane, Tsuen Wan. ✆ **852/2411 2001.** Free admission. Wed–Mon 9am–5pm. MTR: Tsuen Wan (a few min. walk from exit E).

TEMPLES

Man Mo Temple ★ Hong Kong Island's oldest and most important temple was built in the 1840s and is named after its two principal deities: Man, the god of literature, and Mo, the god of war. Two ornately carved sedan chairs in the temple were once used during festivals to carry the statues of the gods around the neighborhood. But what makes the temple particularly memorable are the giant incense coils hanging from the ceiling, imparting a fragrant, smoky haze—these are purchased by patrons seeking good health or a successful business deal, and may burn as long as 3 weeks.

Hollywood Rd. and Ladder St., Western District. ✆ **852/2803 2916.** Free admission. Daily 8am–6pm. Bus: no. 26 from Des Voeux Rd. Central (in front of the Hongkong Bank headquarters) to the 2nd stop on Hollywood Rd., across from the temple.

Wong Tai Sin ★★ Located six subway stops northeast of Yaumatei in the far north end of Kowloon Peninsula, Wong Tai Sin is Hong Kong's most popular Daoist temple. Although the temple dates only from 1973, it adheres to traditional Chinese architectural principles with its red pillars, two-tiered golden roof, blue friezes, yellow latticework, and multicolored carvings. On the temple grounds are halls dedicated to the Buddhist Goddess of Mercy and to Confucius; the Nine Dragon Garden, a Chinese garden with a pond, a waterfall, and a Nine Dragons mural; the Good Wish Garden, with circular, square, octagonal, and fan-shaped pavilions, ponds, an artificial waterfall, and rocks and concrete fashioned to resemble animals; and a clinic with both Western medical services and traditional Chinese herbal treatments.

Wong Tai Sin Estate. Temple daily 7am–5:30pm; gardens Tues–Sun 9am–4pm. Free admission to temple, though donations of about HK$1 (US15¢) are expected at the temple's entrance and for Nine Dragon Wall Garden; admission to Good Wish Garden HK$2 (US25¢) extra. MTR: Wong Tai Sin (exit B2) and then a 3-min. walk (follow the signs).

ORGANIZED TOURS & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

For information and pamphlets on the following tours, stop by HKTB; most hotels also have tour desks.

CITY TOURS For general sightseeing, the **Gray Line** (✆ **852/2368 7111**) offers a variety of tours to such locations as Man Mo Temple, Victoria Peak, Aberdeen, and Stanley, as well as tours of Po Lin Monastery on Lantau island and the New Territories and sunset cruises. **Splendid Tours & Travel** (✆ **852/2316 2151**) also offers a general city tour, excursions to Lantau and the New Territories, night tours, and cruises.

SPECIAL-INTEREST TOURS The **"Land Between" Tour,** which takes visitors through the vast New Territories with stops at a temple, a traditional rural market, a bird sanctuary, and a fishing village; and the **Heritage Tour,** which covers historic Chinese architecture in the New Territories, including an ornate mansion, an ancestral hall, a walled village, and a temple, can by booked through the HKTB (✆ **852/2368 7112** for both tours).

"MEET THE PEOPLE" Through this unique program of free, 1-hour tours, lectures, and seminars, visitors can meet local specialists and gain in-depth knowledge of Hong Kong's traditions. Programs change, but examples of past offerings have covered Chinese antiques, the language and lore of tea, Hong Kong's contemporary art scene, traditional Chinese medicine, *fung shui* (geomancy), and *tàijíquán* (shadow boxing), with something going on virtually every day of the week. For details on what, when, and where, pick up a "Meet the People" brochure at HKTB.

OUTDOOR PURSUITS

PARKS & GARDENS

Hong Kong Park ★★ *Kids* Opened in 1991, Hong Kong Park, Supreme Court Road and Cotton Tree Drive, Central, features a dancing fountain at its entrance, Southeast Asia's largest greenhouse with more than 2,000 rare plant species, an aviary housing 800 exotic birds in a tropical rainforest setting, various gardens, a children's playground, and a viewing platform reached by climbing 105 stairs. The most famous building on the park grounds is the **Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware** (✆ **852/2869 0690**), the oldest colonial building in Hong Kong. Completed in 1846 in Greek Revival style for the commander of the British forces, it now displays some 500 pieces of tea ware, primarily of Chinese origin and dating from the 7th century to the present day. The park is open daily from 6:30am to 11pm, the greenhouse and aviary are open daily from 9am to 5pm, and the museum of tea ware is open Wednesday through Monday from 10am to 5pm. Admission is free to everything. Take the MTR to Admiralty Station (exit F), then follow the signs through Pacific Place and up the escalators.

Yuen Po Street Bird Garden ★★★ *Kids* Birds are favorite pets in Chinese households; perhaps you've noticed wooden bird cages hanging outside shops or from apartment balconies, or perhaps you've even seen someone taking his bird for an outing in its cage. To see more of these prized songbirds, visit the fascinating Yuen Po Street Bird Garden, Prince Edward Road West, Mongkok, which consists of a series of Chinese-style moon gates and courtyards lined with stalls selling songbirds, beautifully crafted wood and bamboo cages, live crickets and mealy worms, and tiny porcelain food bowls. Young children love it here. Take

the MTR to Prince Edward Road station and walk 10 minutes west on Prince Edward Road West, turning left at the railway overhead onto Yuen Po Street. Admission to the garden is free and it's open daily from 7am to 8pm.

Zoological & Botanical Gardens ★ *Kids* Established in 1864, the Zoological and Botanical Gardens, Upper Albert Road, Central, are spread on the slope of Victoria Peak, making them a popular respite for Hong Kong residents. Arrive early around 7am to see Chinese residents going through the slow motions of *tàijíquán* (shadow boxing; see below). The gardens retain some of their Victorian charm, and of the 1,000 species of plants, something is almost always in bloom, from azaleas in the spring to wisteria and bauhinea in the summer and fall. The small zoo houses 600 birds, 90 mammals, and 20 reptiles from around Asia. There's also a children's playground. Admission is free. The eastern part of the park, containing most of the botanical gardens and the aviaries, is open daily from 6am to 10pm, while the western half, with its reptiles and mammals, is open daily from 6am to 7pm. Take the MTR to Central and then walk 15 minutes up Garden Road to the corner of Upper Albert Road. Or take bus no. 3B or 12 from the Jardine House on Connaught Road Central.

TAI CHI

Tàijíquán (shadow boxing), called "tai chi" in the West, is an ancient Chinese regimen designed to balance body and soul and thereby release energy from within. Visitors can join free, 1-hour **lessons** in English, offered by HKTB's "Meet the People" cultural program, every Tuesday and Wednesday at 8am outside the Hong Kong Cultural Centre on Tsimshatsui near the Star Ferry. For more information, stop by or call HKTB (✆ **852/2508 1234**).

HIKING

With 23 country parks—amounting to more than 40% of Hong Kong's space—there are many trails of varying levels of difficulty throughout Hong Kong, including hiking trails, nature trails, and family trails. Serious hikers may want to consider the famous **MacLehose Trail** in the New Territories, which stretches about 97km (60 miles) through eight country parks, while the **Lantau Trail** is a 69km (43-mile) circular trail on **Lantau island** that begins and ends at Mui Wo (also called Silvermine Bay). Easier to reach is the 50km (31-mile) Hong Kong Trail, which spans Hong Kong Island's five country parks. The Hong Kong Tourist Board has some trail maps, as well as a hiking and wildlife guide book called *Exploring Hong Kong Countryside: A Visitor's Companion.* Or contact the **Country and Marine Parks Authority** at ✆ **852/2150 6666.**

HORSE RACING

If you're here anytime from September to mid-June, join the rest of Hong Kong at the horse races. Introduced by the British more than 150 years ago, horse racing is by far the most popular sporting event in Hong Kong, due to the fact that, aside from the local lottery, racing is the only legal form of gambling in Hong Kong. Winnings are tax-free.

There are two tracks—**Happy Valley** on Hong Kong Island, which you can reach by taking the tram to Happy Valley or the MTR to Causeway Bay; and **Sha Tin** in the New Territories, reached by taking the KCR railway to Racecourse Station. Races are held Wednesday evenings and some Saturday and Sunday afternoons. The lowest admission price is HK$10 (US$1.30), which is for the general public and is standing room only. If you want to watch from the

more exclusive Hong Kong Jockey Club members' enclosure, are at least 18 years old, and are a bona-fide tourist, you can purchase a temporary member's badge for HK$50 (US$6.50). It's available on a first-come, first-served basis by showing your passport at either the Badge Enquiry Office at the main entrance to the members' private enclosure (at either track), or at the off-course betting center near the Star Ferry concourse in Central.

You can also see the races by joining one of two HKTB-sponsored "Come Horse Racing" tours, also limited to individuals at least 18 years old and tourists who have been in Hong Kong fewer than 21 days. For bookings, call the **Come Horse Racing Tour Reservations Hotline** at ✆ **852/2366 3995.**

SWIMMING

There are numerous public swimming pools, including those at **Kowloon Park,** with admission costing around HK$19 (US$2.45) for adults and HK$9 (US$1.15) for children and seniors. About 40 **beaches** are free for public use, most with lifeguards on duty April through October, changing rooms, and snack stands or restaurants. On Hong Kong Island, beaches include Big Wave Bay and Shek O on the east coast, and Stanley, Deep Water Bay, South Beach (popular with the gay crowd), and Repulse Bay on the southern coast. There are prettier beaches on the outlying islands, including Hung Shing Ye and Lo So Shing on Lamma, Tung Wan on Cheung Chau, and Cheung Sha on Lantau.

OUTLYING ISLANDS

An excursion to an outlying island provides not only an opportunity to experience rural Hong Kong but also the chance to view Hong Kong's skyline and harbor by ferry, and very cheaply at that. I recommend either Lantau, famous for its giant outdoor Buddha and monastery serving vegetarian meals, or Cheung Chau, popular with families for its unhurried, small-village atmosphere and beach. Both islands are reached in about an hour via ferries that depart approximately every hour or so from the Central Ferry Pier, located less than a 5-minute walk west of the Star Ferry in Central. (For information on ferry schedules and prices, drop by the HKTB for a free timetable.) Tickets range from HK$10 to HK$31 (US$1.30–US$4), depending on the day (weekdays are cheaper) and class (ordinary and deluxe). Upper-deck deluxe class entitles you to sit on an open deck out back.

In addition to the ferries above, there is also a faster hoverferry service used mostly by commuters, as well as infrequent ferry service from Tsimshatsui's Star Ferry concourse on Saturday afternoon and Sunday. You can also reach Lantau via the Tung Chung MTR Line.

LANTAU

Hong Kong's largest island and twice the size of Hong Kong Island, Lantau has a population of only 45,000 and is home to Hong Kong's international airport. Luckily, more than half of the mountainous and lush island remains preserved in country parks. After taking the ferry from Central to Silvermine Bay (called *Mui Wo* in Cantonese), then bus no. 2 or the MTR to Tung Chung, take bus no. 23 to Lantau's biggest attraction, the **Giant Tian Tan Buddha,** the largest, seated outdoor bronze Buddha in the world. The nearby **Po Lin Monastery** (✆ **852/2985 5248**) is famous for its vegetarian meals. Both are situated on the plateau of Ngong Ping at an elevation of 750m (2,460 ft.). The Giant Buddha is 26.4m (72 ft.) tall and weighs 220 tonnes (243 U.S. tons); it's reached via 268

steps and offers great views of the surrounding countryside. Admission to the viewing platform is free and it's open daily from 10am to 6pm.

Be sure to explore the grounds of the colorful monastery, established near the turn of the century by reclusive Buddhist monks. Because of the ferry and bus rides required to get there and back, you should allow at least 5 hours for a visit to Lantau.

CHEUNG CHAU

If you have only a few hours to spare and don't want to worry about catching buses and finding your way around, Cheung Chau is your best bet. It's a tiny island (only 1 sq. mile), with more than 25,000 people in its thriving fishing village. There are no cars on the island, making it a delightful place for walking around and exploring. The island is especially popular with Chinese families for its rental bicycles and beach, but my favorite thing to do here is to walk the tiny, narrow lanes of Cheung Chau village.

Inhabited for at least 2,500 years by fisherfolk, Cheung Chau still supports a sizable population of fishing families, and fishing remains the island's main industry. Inhabited junks are moored in the harbor, and the waterfront where the ferry lands, known as the **Praya,** buzzes with activity as vendors sell live fish and vegetables. The village is a fascinating warren of narrow alleyways, food stalls, open markets, and shops selling everything from medicinal herbs to toys.

About a 3-minute walk from the ferry pier is **Pak Tai Temple,** near a playground on Pak She Fourth Street. Built in 1783, it's dedicated to the "Supreme Emperor of the Dark Heaven," long worshipped as a Daoist god of the sea. As you roam the village, you'll pass open-fronted shops selling incense, paper funeral objects such as cars (cremated with the deceased to accompany him or her to the next life), medicinal herbs, jade, rattan, vegetables, rice, sun hats, sunglasses, and beach toys. On the other side of the island (directly opposite from the ferry pier and less than a 10-min. walk away) is **Tung Wan Beach.**

6 Shopping

Shopping is one of the main reasons people come to Hong Kong, and at first glance the city does seem to be one huge department store. Good buys include Chinese antiques, clothing, shoes, jewelry, furniture, carpets, leather goods, luggage, handbags, briefcases, Chinese herbs, watches, toys, and eyeglasses. As for electronic goods and cameras, they are not the bargains they once were, though good deals can be found in recently discontinued models, such as last year's Sony Discman. Hong Kong is a duty-free port, so there is no sales tax.

BEST SHOPPING AREAS

Tsimshatsui boasts the greatest concentration of shops in Hong Kong, particularly along Nathan Road, with its many electronics stores (which should be avoided in favor of the reliable chain Fortress). Be sure to explore its side streets for shops specializing in washable silk, casual clothing, and luggage. Harbour City, one of the largest malls in the world, stretches along Canton Road.

For upscale shopping, **Central** is where you'll find international designer labels, in boutiques located in the Landmark and Prince's Building. **Causeway Bay** caters more to the local market, with lower prices, small shops selling everything from shoes and clothing to Chinese herbs, several Japanese department stores, and a large shopping complex called Times Square.

Tips Buyer Beware

Hong Kong is a buyer-beware market. To be on the safe side, try to make your major purchases at HKTB member stores, which display the HKTB logo (a gold circle with black Chinese calligraphy in the middle and the words "Quality Tourism Services"). Member stores are listed in a directory called "A Guide to Quality Merchants," free at HKTB, and at www.qtshk.com. Still, it's always a good idea to obtain a receipt from the shopkeeper with a description of your purchase, including the brand name, model number, serial number, and price for electronic and photographic equipment. For jewelry and gold watches, there should be a description of the precious stones and the metal content. If you're making a purchase using a credit card, ask for the customer's copy of the credit-card slip, and make sure "HK$" appears before the monetary total.

Antiques and curio lovers usually head for **Hollywood Road** and **Cat Street** on Hong Kong Island, where everything from snuff bottles to jade carvings is for sale. Finally, one of my favorite places to shop is **Stanley Market,** on the southern end of Hong Kong Island, where vendors sell business and casual wear, as well as Chinese crafts and products. Another good place to shop for Chinese imports and souvenirs is one of several Chinese **craft emporiums.**

Because shopping is such big business in Hong Kong, most stores are open 7 days a week, closing only for 2 or 3 days during the Chinese New Year. Most stores open at 10am, closing at 7pm in Central, 9 or 10pm in Tsimshatsui, and 9:30pm in Causeway Bay. Street markets are open every day.

SHOPPING A TO Z

ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES

The most famous area for antiques and chinoiserie is around **Hollywood Road** and **Cat Street,** both above the Central District on Hong Kong Island. Hollywood Road twists along for a little more than half a mile, with shops selling original and reproduction Qīng and Míng dynasty Chinese furniture, original prints, scrolls, porcelain, clay figurines, silver, and rosewood and blackwood furniture, as well as fakes and curios. Near the western end is Upper Lascar Row, popularly known as Cat Street, where sidewalk vendors sell snuff bottles and other curios.

Cat Street Galleries Cat Street Galleries, on Cat Street, houses several individually owned booths of arts and crafts and expensive antiques from the various dynasties, making it a good place to begin an antiques shopping odyssey. It's open Monday to Friday from 11am to 6pm and Saturday from 10am to 6pm. 38 Lok Ku Rd., Central. ✆ **852/2543 1609.** MTR: Central. Bus: no. 26 (from Des Voeux Rd. Central in front of the Hongkong Bank) to the 2nd stop on Hollywood Rd., at Man Mo Temple.

Charlotte Horstmann and Gerald Godfrey A favorite of well-to-do antiques collectors for more than 40 years, this small shop, located in Zone C (Ocean Terminal, near the Star Ferry end) of the Harbour City shopping mall on Canton Road, is an emporium of expensive, top-quality Asian antiques, including rosewood furniture, woodcarvings, and bronzes. Since the shop itself serves mainly as an office and reception area, be sure to make an appointment

to see the adjoining 929-sq.-m (10,000-sq.-ft.) warehouse. The shop is open Monday through Saturday from 9:30am to 6pm. Shop 100D, Ocean Terminal, Harbour City, 3 Canton Rd., Tsimshatsui. ✆ **852/2735 7167.** MTR: Tsimshatsui.

China Art The mixed displays of furniture and art give this family-owned shop the elegance of an art gallery. It's one of Hong Kong's best for antique Chinese furniture, including chairs, tables, folding screens, chests, and wardrobes, mostly from the Míng dynasty (1368–1644). Located across from the Central Police Station, it's open Monday through Saturday from 10:30am to 6pm and Sunday from 11am to 6pm. 15 Hollywood Rd., Central. ✆ **852/2542 0982** or 852/2840 0816. MTR: Central. Bus: no. 26 (from Des Voeux Rd. Central in front of the Hongkong Bank) to Hollywood Rd.

Dragon Culture *Finds* All serious fans of Chinese antiques eventually end up here. One of the largest and most knowledgeable purveyors of antiques in Hong Kong, Victor Choi began collecting Chinese antiques in the 1970s, traveling throughout China from province to province and to all the major cities. He shares his expertise in three books and has also given lectures on Chinese antiques for the HKTB's "Meet the People" program. With other galleries nearby at 184 Hollywood Rd. (✆ 852/2815 5227) and 77A Hollywood Rd. (✆ 852/2549 5300), and a gallery in New York, Choi carries Neolithic pottery, three-color glazed pottery horses from the Táng dynasty, Míng porcelains, bronzes, jade, woodcarvings, snuff bottles, calligraphy, paintings, brush pots, stone carvings, and more, and also provides a certificate of authenticity. All Hong Kong shops are open Monday through Saturday from 10am to 6pm. 231 Hollywood Rd., Sheung Wan. ✆ **852/2545 8098.** www.dragonculture.com.hk. MTR: Central. Bus: no. 26 (from Des Voeux Rd. Central in front of the Hongkong Bank) to the 2nd stop on Hollywood Rd., at Man Mo Temple.

True Arts & Curios *Finds* This tiny shop is so packed with antiques and curios that there's barely room for customers. Although everything, from snuff bottles, porcelain, antique silver, earrings, and hairpins, to children's shoes (impractical but darling, with curled toes), is stocked, the true finds here are some 2,000 intricate woodcarvings, pried from the doors and windows of dismantled temples and homes. The shop is open Monday through Saturday from 10:30am to 6:30pm and Sunday from 2:30 to 6:30pm. 89-91 Hollywood Rd., Central. ✆ **852/2559 1485.** MTR: Central.

CHINESE CRAFT EMPORIUMS

In addition to the shops listed here, which specialize in traditional and contemporary arts, crafts, souvenirs, and gift items from China, there are several souvenir shops at Stanley Market, located in Stanley on the southern end of Hong Kong Island, that carry lacquered boxes, china, embroidered tablecloths, figurines, and other mainland imports. All these items will be much cheaper across the border, of course.

Chinese Arts and Crafts Ltd In business for more than 30 years, this is the best upscale chain for Chinese arts and crafts and is one of the safest places to purchase jade. You can also buy silk clothing, arts and crafts, antiques, jewelry, watches, carpets, cloisonné, furs, Chinese herbs and medicine, rosewood furniture, chinaware, Chinese teas, and embroidered tablecloths or pillowcases—in short, virtually all the upmarket items produced by China. It's a great place for gifts in all price ranges. This shop, located in Star House near the Star Ferry at 3 Salisbury Rd., Tsimshatsui (✆ **852/2735 4061;** MTR: Tsimshatsui), is open

from 10am to 9:30pm. Other branches are at Pacific Place, 88 Queensway, Central (✆ 852/2523 3933; MTR: Admiralty); and in the China Resources Building, 26 Harbour Rd., Wanchai (✆ 852/2827 6667; MTR: Wanchai).

Shànghǎi Tang *Finds* Step back into 1930s Shànghǎi at this upscale, two-level store with its gleaming wooden and tiled floors, raised cashier cubicles, and ceiling fans. This is Chinese chic at its best, with neatly stacked rows of updated versions of traditional Chinese clothing ranging from cheongsams and silk pajamas to padded jackets, caps, and shoes—all in bright, contemporary colors and styles. If you're looking for a lime-green or shocking-pink padded jacket, this is the place for you. It's open Monday to Saturday from 10am to 8pm and Sunday from 11am to 7pm. There's a small branch in the Peninsula Hotel, Salisbury Road, Tsimshatsui (✆ 852/2537 2888; MTR: Tsimshatsui). Pedder Building, 12 Pedder St., Central. ✆ **852/2525 7333.** MTR: Central.

FASHION

Hong Kong has been a center for the fashion industry ever since the influx of Shanghainese tailors fleeing the 1949 communist revolution in China. If you're looking for international designer brands and money is no object, the **Landmark,** located on Des Voeux Road Central, Central, is an ultra-chic shopping complex boasting the highest concentration of international brand names in Hong Kong, including Gucci, Tiffany & Co., Polo/Ralph Lauren, Manolo Blahnik, Missoni, Helmut Lang, Sonia Rykiel, A Testoni, Louis Vuitton, Lanvin, Valentino, and Christian Dior. Other shopping arcades with well-known international designer boutiques include the **Prince's Building,** next to the Mandarin Hotel, and the **Peninsula Hotel,** on Salisbury Road in Tsimshatsui.

For trendier designs catering to an upwardly mobile younger crowd, check out the **Joyce Boutique** chain, established in the 1970s by Joyce Ma to satisfy Hong Kong women's cravings for European designs. Today her stores carry clothing by Issey Miyake, John Galliano, Yohji Yamamoto, Rei Kawakubo (Comme des Garçons), and others on the cutting edge of fashion. You'll find Joyce shops at 18 Queen's Rd. Central, Central District (✆ 852/2810 1120; MTR: Central); 334 Pacific Place, 88 Queensway, Central (✆ 852/2523 5944; MTR: Admiralty); and 23 Nathan Rd. in Tsimshatsui (✆ 852/2367 8128; MTR: Tsimshatsui).

FACTORY OUTLETS Hong Kong's factory outlets offer excess stock, overruns, and quality-control rejects. Because these items have been made for the export market, the sizes are Western. Bargains include clothes made of silk, cashmere, cotton, linen, knitwear, and wool. Most outlets are located in **Hung Hom,** clustered in a large group of warehouse buildings called **Kaiser Estates** on Man Yue Street (take bus no. 5C from the Tsimshatsui Star Ferry bus terminal to Ma Tau Wai Road, the 3rd stop after the KCR Kowloon Railway Station). On Hong Kong Island, the best-known building housing factory-outlet showrooms is the **Pedder Building,** 12 Pedder St., Central. For a list of factory outlets, along with their addresses, telephone numbers, and types of clothing, pick up the free pamphlet, "Factory Outlets for Locally Made Fashion and Jewellery," available at HKTB offices. Most outlets are open from 9 or 10am to 6 or 7pm Monday through Friday, with shorter hours on Saturday. Some are open Sunday as well.

MARKETS

Stanley Stanley Market is probably the most popular and best-known market in Hong Kong. Located on the southern coast of Hong Kong Island, it's a great place to buy inexpensive clothing, especially sportswear, cashmere sweaters,

silk blouses and dresses, and women's suits. Men's, women's, and children's clothing are available. The inventory changes continuously—one year it seems everyone is selling washable silk; the next year it's Chinese traditional jackets or Gore-Tex coats. The market also has souvenir shops selling paintings, embroidered linen, beaded purses, handicrafts, and other products from mainland China.

To reach Stanley, take bus no. 6, 6A, 6X, or 260 from Central's Exchange Square bus terminal near the Star Ferry (bus no. 260 also makes stops in front of the Star Ferry terminal and Pacific Place). The bus ride to Stanley takes approximately 30 minutes. From Kowloon, take bus no. 973 from Mody Road in Tsimshatsui East or from Canton Road in Tsimshatsui. Shops are open weekdays from 9:30 or 10am to 6pm (to 7pm Sat and Sun).

Li Yuen Street East & West These two streets are parallel pedestrian lanes in the heart of Central, very narrow and often congested with human traffic. Stalls are packed with handbags, clothes, scarves, sweaters, toys, baby clothes, watches, make-up, umbrellas, needles and thread, knickknacks, and even brassieres. Don't neglect the open-fronted shops behind the stalls. These two streets are located just a couple minutes' walk from the Central MTR station or the Star Ferry, between Des Voeux Road Central and Queen's Road Central. Vendors' hours are from 10am to 6pm, daily.

Jade Market Jade is available in all sizes, colors, and prices at this market at the junction of Kansu Street and Battery Street, in two temporary structures in the Yaumatei District. Unless you really know your jade and pearls, you won't want to make any expensive purchases here. It's open daily from 10am to about 4pm (mornings are best), though some vendors stay until 6pm. The market is located near the Jordan MTR station or less than a 30-minute walk from the Star Ferry.

Ladies' Market Stretching along Tung Choi Street (between Argyle and Dundas sts.) in Mongkok, Kowloon, Ladies' Market specializes in inexpensive women's and children's fashions, shoes, socks, hosiery, jewelry, sunglasses, watches, handbags (including fake designer handbags), and other accessories. Some men's clothing is also sold. Although many of the products are geared more to local tastes and sizes, an increase in tourism has brought more fashionable clothing and T-shirts, and you may find a few bargains. In any case, the atmosphere is fun and festive, especially at night. The nearest MTR station is Mongkok. Vendors' hours are daily from about noon to 10:30pm.

Temple Street Night Market Temple Street in the Yaumatei District of Kowloon is a night market that comes to life when the sun goes down. It offers T-shirts, jeans, menswear, watches, lighters, pens, sunglasses, jewelry, CDs, mobile phones, electronic gadgets, alarm clocks, luggage, and imitation designer watches and handbags. Bargain fiercely, and check the products carefully to make sure they're not faulty or poorly made. The night market is great entertainment, a must during your visit to Hong Kong. North of Temple Street, near Tin Hau Temple, are fortune-tellers and sometimes street performers singing Chinese opera. Although some vendors begin setting up shop at 4pm, the night market is busiest from about 7pm until the 10pm closing; it's located near the Jordan MTR station.

7 Hong Kong After Dark

Hong Kong's nightlife is concentrated in Tsimshatsui, in Central's entertainment areas of Lan Kwai Fong and SoHo, and in Wanchai. If you're watching

your Hong Kong dollars, take advantage of happy hour, when many bars offer two drinks for the price of one or drinks at reduced prices. Furthermore, many pubs, bars, and lounges offer live entertainment, from jazz to Filipino combos, which you can enjoy simply for the price of a beer. Remember, however, that a 10% service charge will be added to your bill.

To obtain tickets for the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, Chinese opera, rock and pop concerts, and other major events, call the **Urban Council Ticketing Office (URBTIX)** at ✆ **852/2734 9009,** or drop by outlets located in City Hall, Low Block, 7 Edinburgh Place in Central, or in the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, 10 Salisbury Rd. in Tsimshatsui. Both are open daily from 10am to 9:30pm.

PERFORMING ARTS

CHINESE OPERA

The most popular regional styles of Chinese opera in Hong Kong are Peking-style opera, with its spectacular costumes, elaborate make-up, and feats of acrobatics and swordsmanship; and the less flamboyant but more readily understood Cantonese-style opera. For visitors, the easiest way to see a Chinese opera is during a festival, such as the Hong Kong Arts Festival, held from about mid-February through early March each year. Otherwise, Cantonese opera is performed fairly regularly at town halls in the New Territories, as well as in City Hall in Central and at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre in Tsimshatsui. Tickets, ranging from HK$100 to HK$300 (US$13–US$39), usually sell out well in advance. Contact HKTB for an updated schedule.

HONG KONG CHINESE ORCHESTRA

Established in 1977, the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra is the world's largest professional Chinese-instrument orchestra, with 80-some musicians performing both new and traditional works using traditional and modern Chinese instruments and combining them with Western and Chinese orchestrations. Performances are held at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, 10 Salisbury Rd., Tsimshatsui (✆ **852/2734 2009**), and at City Hall, Edinburgh Place, Central District (✆ **852/2921 2840**). Tickets range from HK$90 to HK$150 (US$12–US$19).

DANCE CLUBS/DISCOS

C Club With a seductive interior of velvet sofas and a curved bar, all bathed in red lighting, this basement club packs them in with underground house music and techno. If you come on a weekend, be prepared to wait in the queue of beautiful people lined up outside. It's open Monday to Thursday from 6pm to 2am, Friday from 6pm to 5am, and Saturday from 9pm to 5am. California Tower, 30–32 D'Aguilar, Lan Kwai Fong, Central. ✆ **852/2526 1139.** No cover Mon–Thurs; cover HK$100 (US$13) Fri–Sat. MTR: Central.

Propaganda Hong Kong's longest-standing and most popular gay disco, Propaganda moved into upgraded quarters a few years back in the new SoHo nightlife district, with a discreet entrance in a back alley (off Pottinger St.). The crowd is 95% gay, but everyone is welcome. Come late on a weekend if you want to see this alternative hot spot at its most crowded. It's open Tuesday through Thursday from 9pm to 3:30am, Friday and Saturday from 9pm to 5am. 1 Hollywood Rd., Central. ✆ **852/2868 1316.** No cover Tues–Thurs; cover HK$80 (US$10) Fri; HK$80 (US$10) Sat before 10:30pm and after 3am; HK$120 (US$16) Sat 10:30pm–3am. MTR: Central.

THE BAR SCENE

KOWLOON

Chasers One of several bars lining the narrow, alleylike Knutsford Terrace, which parallels Kimberley Road to the north, this is one of the most popular, filled with a mixed clientele that includes both the young and the not-so-young, expat and Chinese. It features a house Filipino band nightly from 10:30pm, playing rock, jazz, rhythm-and-blues, and everything in between, free of charge. Happy hour is from noon to 9pm Sunday and from 5 to 9pm the rest of the week. The bar is open daily from noon to 6am. 2–3 Knutsford Terrace, Tsimshatsui. ✆ **852/2367 9487.** MTR: Tsimshatsui.

Delaney's This upmarket Irish pub with a convivial atmosphere gets an extra boost from a DJ Thursday night and a live Irish band Friday night, both free of charge. An a la carte menu features Irish stew and other national favorites. Happy hour is from 5 to 9pm daily; regular hours are daily from 10:30am to 2:30am. There's another Delaney's in Wanchai at 18 Luard Rd. (✆ 852/2804 2880). 71–77 Peking Rd., Tsimshatsui. ✆ **852/2301 3980.** MTR: Tsimshatsui.

Ned Kelly's Last Stand This lively Aussie saloon attracts a largely middle-aged crowd with free live Dixieland jazz or swing Monday to Saturday from 9:30pm to 1am. It serves Australian chow and pub grub, and is open daily from 11:30am to 2am. Happy hour is from 11:30am to 9pm. 11A Ashley Rd., Tsimshatsui. ✆ **852/2376 0562.** MTR: Tsimshatsui.

Sky Lounge This plush and comfortable lounge on the top floor of the Sheraton affords one of the most romantic views of the harbor and glittering Hong Kong Island. There's soft live music every night except Sunday from 9pm to midnight, with a minimum drink charge of HK$138 (US$18) per person (waived for hotel guests). It's open Sunday to Thursday from 2pm to 1am and Friday and Saturday from 2pm to 2am. In the Sheraton Hotel and Towers, 20 Nathan Rd., Tsimshatsui. ✆ **852/2369 1111.** MTR: Tsimshatsui.

CENTRAL DISTRICT

California This was once *the* place to see and be seen—the haunt of young nouveaux riches in search of definition—and it remains a respected and sophisticated restaurant/bar. Consider starting your night on the town here with dinner and drinks; the restaurant boasts a changing menu from an innovative American chef, though hamburgers (the house specialty) remain hugely popular. Happy hour is from 5 to 9pm. On Friday and Saturday night from 11pm to 4am, the California becomes a happening disco. It's open Monday to Thursday from noon to midnight, Friday and Saturday from noon to 4am, and Sunday from 6pm to midnight. 24–26 Lan Kwai Fong St., Central. ✆ **852/2521 1345.** MTR: Central.

Club 97 Opened almost 20 years ago, this club underwent a recent transformation that changed it from a disco to a sophisticated lounge, a reflection of an aging clientele more prone to drinking and conversation than to dancing. Weekly events to watch for are the Friday gay happy hour, complete with drag shows, and the Sunday reggae night. The club is open Monday to Thursday from 6pm to 4am (happy hour 6–8:30pm), Friday from 6pm to 4am (happy hour 6–10pm), Saturday from 7pm to 4am (happy hour 7–8:30pm), and Sunday from 8pm to 3am (happy hour 8–10pm). 9 Lan Kwai Fong, Central. ✆ **852/2810 9333.** MTR: Central.

Curve This is one of Hong Kong's friendliest and most crowded gay bars, with a long bar upstairs and a mirrored dance floor downstairs. DJs get things

rolling Wednesday through Saturday nights, but equally popular is the tea dance held the third Sunday of every month from 4pm to 2am. (Otherwise, the bar is open daily from 5pm to 4am.) It's located on a hill above Lan Kwai Fong. 2 Arbuthnot Rd., Central. ✆ **852/2523 0998.** No cover Sun–Thurs; cover (including 1 drink) Fri–Sat HK$60 (US$7.80); cover (including 2 drinks) night before a holiday HK$150 (US$19). Central.

Insomnia One of Lan Kwai Fong's most popular bars, this one is aptly named, since live music by a Filipino band doesn't get underway until 10:30pm and it's at its most packed in the wee hours of the morning, when there's no room to spare on the crowded dance floor. Happy hour is from 5 to 9pm. The bar is open daily from 8am to 6am, leaving insomniacs 2 hours with nowhere to go. 38-44 D'Aguilar St., Central. ✆ **852/2525 0957.** MTR: Central.

Mad Dogs Catering to a mellow crowd of professional people in the early evening hours and a wilder bunch at night, this is one of Hong Kong's longer-standing English pubs, with a traditional decor reminiscent of Britain during its imperial heyday. Happy hour is Monday to Saturday from noon to midnight and all day Sunday. There's a DJ every night; ladies get free drinks on Thursday night from 9pm until "late." The pub is open Monday to Thursday from 10am to 2am, Friday and Saturday, from 10am to 3am, and Sunday from 10am to 1am. 1 D'Aguilar St., Central. ✆ **852/2810 1000.** MTR: Central.

CAUSEWAY BAY/WANCHAI

Dusk til Dawn This is one of my top picks for an evening out in Wanchai. Classier than most of its competitors, it attracts a mostly expat and Southeast Asian clientele, who take advantage of its 5-to-10pm daily happy hour, food and snack menu served until 5am, and nightly free live music starting at 10pm, provided by rotating bands that include Filipino musicians and an all-girl band. Open Monday through Saturday from noon to 6am and Sunday from 3pm to 6am. 76-84 Jaffe Rd., Wanchai. ✆ **852/2528 4689.** MTR: Wanchai.

JJ's This upscale, glitzy entertainment complex was the first in Hong Kong to offer several diversions under one roof. It's huge, with a main bar, a pool table, food (pizza, tapas, and snacks served throughout the complex), an upscale music room with live jazz and blues, and a supper club featuring contemporary Latin music, Brazilian flair, and an impressive list of rums. This is the place for those who like to move from one scene to the next, without actually having to go anywhere. Happy hour, including a free snack buffet, is Monday to Friday from 6 to 8:30pm. JJ's is open Monday to Thursday from 6pm to 2am, Friday from 6pm to 3am, and Saturday from 7pm to 4am. In the Grand Hyatt Hotel, 1 Harbour Rd., Wanchai. ✆ **852/2588 1234,** ext. 7323. Cover (including 1 drink) HK$100 (US$13). No cover before 9:30pm. MTR: Wanchai.

8 A Side Trip to Macau

Macau was established as a Portuguese colony in 1557, centuries before the British acquired Hong Kong. Just 65km (40 miles) west of Hong Kong, across the Pearl River Estuary, Macau is a rather small and unpretentious provincial town, only 24.7 sq. km (9½ sq. miles) in area. To old-timers, it's reminiscent of what Hong Kong looked like decades ago.

On December 20, 1999, Portugal's 400 years of rule came to an end when Macau was handed back to China. Like Hong Kong, Macau is a Special Administrative Region of China, permitted its own internal government and economic

system for another 50 years after the Chinese assumed control. As with Hong Kong, no advance visa is required.

Macau has beaches, churches, fortresses, temples, gardens, museums, and fascinating neighborhoods to explore, as well as casinos and restaurants serving wonderful Macanese cuisine. What's more, Macau's prices are cheaper than Hong Kong's, including accommodations and dining.

ARRIVING

BY PLANE **Macau International Airport,** located on Taipa Island and connected to the mainland by bridge, has international connections to Taipei and Seoul. It also has flights with Chinese airlines to Chóngqìng, Fúzhōu, Guìlín, Hángzhōu, Kūnmíng, Sānyà, Shànghǎi, Xiàmén, Xī'ān; and flights with Air Macau to Běijīng, Guìlín, Hǎikǒu, Kūnmíng, Nánjīng, Qīngdǎo, Shànghǎi, and Xiàmén. Several first-class hotels offer complimentary transfers on request. Otherwise, airport bus AP1 travels from the airport to the ferry terminal and Hotel Lisboa; the fare, in Macau *pataca* currency, is MOP$6 (US80¢). A taxi to the Lisboa costs approximately MOP$40 (US$5.20). Airport-departure tax for flights to the mainland is MOP$80 (US$10) adults, MOP$50 (US$6.50) children 2 to 12; for other destinations, the tax is MOP$130 (US$17) adults, MOP$80 (US$10) children. For those flying on to the mainland within 24 hours of arrival in Macau, departure taxes are waived.

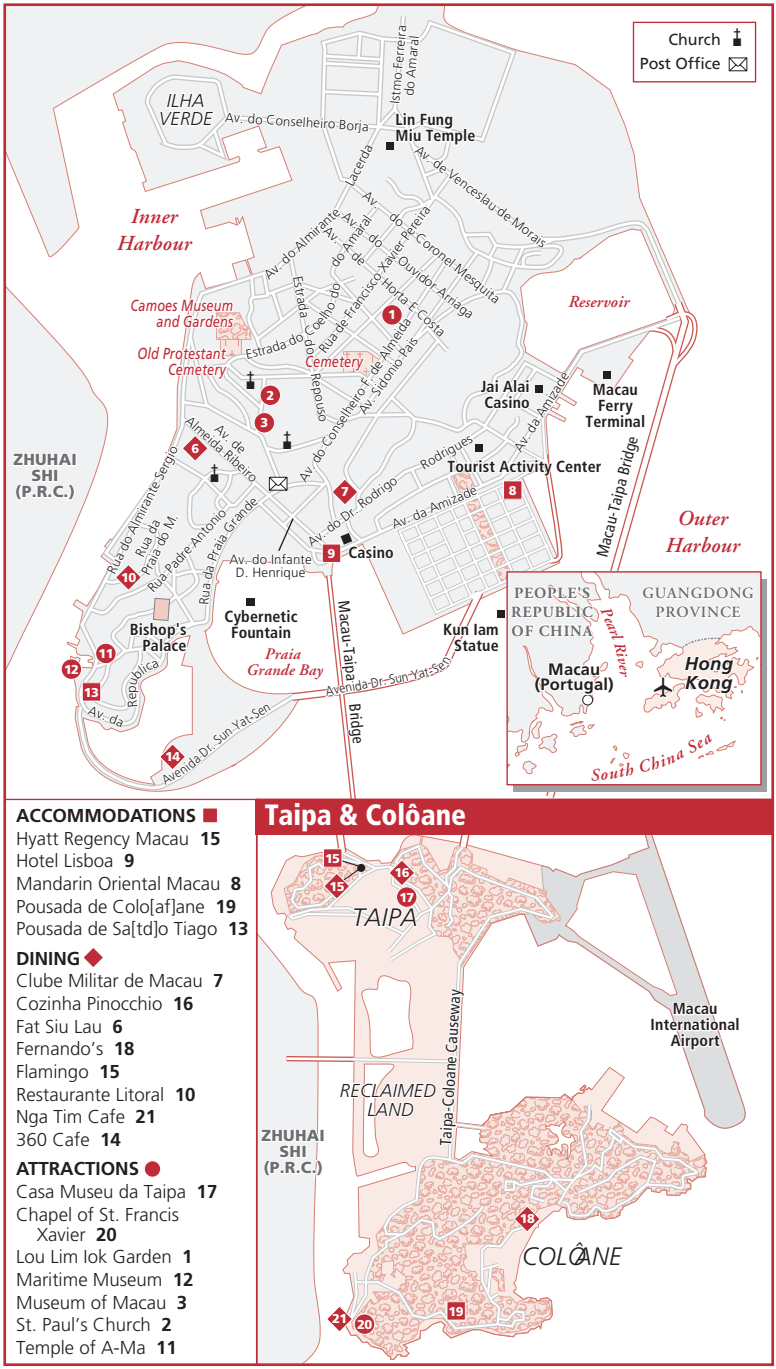
There's also a **helicopter service** from Hong Kong (✆ **853/727288** in Macau; **852/2108 4838** in Hong Kong; www.helihongkong.com).

BY BOAT Macau is easily accessible from Hong Kong by **high-speed jetfoil,** with most departures from the **Macau Ferry Terminal,** located just west of the Central District in the Shun Tak Centre, 200 Connaught Rd., on Hong Kong Island. Situated above Sheung Wan MTR station, the terminal houses jetfoil ticket offices, as well as the Macau Government Tourist Office (room 336, on the same floor as boats departing for Macau). Limited service is also available from Kowloon, from the newer China Hong Kong Terminal on Canton Road, Tsimshatsui.

The fastest, most convenient way to travel to Macau is via a 55-minute ride on a jetfoil operated by **TurboJET** (✆ **852/2859 3333**), with departures from the Macau Ferry Terminal every 15 minutes from 7am to 5:30pm and every 30 to 60 minutes throughout the night. One-way fares Monday through Friday are HK$232 (US$30) for super class and HK$130 (US$17) for economy class; fares on weekends and holidays are HK$247 (US$32) in super class and HK$141 (US$18) in economy. Fares for night service from 5:45pm to 6am are HK$261 (US$34) and HK$162 (US$21) respectively. Seniors older than 60 and children younger than 12 receive a HK$15 (US$1.95) discount.

Tickets can be purchased at the Macau Ferry Terminal on Hong Kong Island, the China Ferry Terminal in Kowloon, and the MTR Travel Service Centre at Hong Kong Station. You can also book by credit card by calling ✆ **852/2921 6688.** Note that passengers are allowed only one hand-carried bag, not to exceed 10 kilograms (22 lb.), with one additional piece checked in 20 minutes prior to departure for a fee ranging from HK$20 to HK$40 (US$2.60–US$5.20), depending on weight.

In Macau, you'll arrive at the **Macau Ferry Terminal,** on the main peninsula. After going through Customs, stop by the Macau Government Tourist Office for a map and brochures. In the arrivals hall is also a counter for free shuttle



Taipa & Colôane

ACCOMMODATIONS ■
Hyatt Regency Macau **15**
Hotel Lisboa **9**
Mandarin Oriental Macau **8**
Pousada de Colo[af]ane **19**
Pousada de Sa[td]o Tiago **13**

DINING ◆
Clube Militar de Macau **7**
Cozinha Pinocchio **16**
Fat Siu Lau **6**
Fernando's **18**
Flamingo **15**
Restaurante Litoral **10**
Nga Tim Cafe **21**
360 Cafe **14**

ATTRACTIONS ●
Casa Museu da Taipa **17**
Chapel of St. Francis Xavier **20**
Lou Lim Iok Garden **1**
Maritime Museum **12**
Museum of Macau **3**
St. Paul's Church **2**
Temple of A-Ma **11**

buses to major hotels. Otherwise, city bus nos. 3, 3A, and 10 travel from the terminal to Avenida Almeida Ribeiro, the main downtown street, for MOP$2.50 (US30¢).

TO THE MAINLAND

Travel to the mainland (on foot across the border to Zhūhǎi, by jetfoil to Shēnzhèn, or by plane) requires a Chinese visa. For all but land crossings, buy visas in Hong Kong (see "Traveling to & from the Mainland" in the Hong Kong section, earlier in this chapter). Citizens of all developed nations may buy 90-day tourist visas for HK$180 (US$23) at the land crossing between Macau and Zhūhǎi. Go to the **China Travel Service** office immediately on your left as you enter the immigration hall on the mainland side, open from 8am to 10pm (✆ **0756/815 6466,** an international call from Hong Kong or Macau). The **border crossing** is open from 7:30am to 11:30pm, but arrive by 11pm.

Flights to other cities in China are almost always much cheaper from Shēnzhèn or Guǎngzhōu. **Shēnzhèn Airport** can be reached directly using TurboCAT (jetfoil/catamaran) services at 11:15am and 3pm (MOP$171–MOP$271/US$22–US$34), with a brief bus transfer from pier to terminal, taking just over 1 hour altogether. For full up-to-date timings and services in each direction, see www.turbocat.com/turbojet_sailing_rev.htm. **Guǎngzhōu** can be reached by bus from Zhūhǎi Gǒngběi bus station, ahead and slightly to the right as you emerge from the Macau/Zhūhǎi border crossing. There are departures every 15 minutes between 6am and 8:30pm to Guǎngzhōu Station, from where there's a choice of taxi, bus, or metro to take you the 8km (5 miles) to the airport. There are also services to **Shēnzhèn** every 15 minutes from 7am to 8:30pm, and eight services to **Kāipíng** between 8:30am and 7:30pm.

VISITOR INFORMATION

There are two **Macau Government Tourist Offices (MGTO)** in Hong Kong—in the arrivals lobby of the International Airport (✆ **852/2769 7970;** www.macautourism.gov.mo), open daily from 9am to 10:30pm (closed for lunch 1–1:30pm and dinner 6–6:30pm); and in room 336 on the third floor of the Macau Ferry Terminal, Shun Tak Centre, in Central (✆ **852/2857 2287**), open from 9am to 5:30pm.

In Macau, you'll find an MGTO at the Macau Ferry Terminal, open daily from 9am to 10pm; there is also an MGTO at Macau International Airport, open for all incoming flights. For complete information, stop by the main Macau Government Tourist Office, Largo do Senado 9 (✆ **853/315566**), located in the center of town on the main plaza just off Avenida Almeida Ribeiro and open daily from 9am to 6pm. Other tourist information offices are located at **St. Paul's Church,** open daily from 9am to 6pm, and at **Guia Fort and Lighthouse,** open daily from 9am to 5:30pm. Be sure to pick up a free city map, brochures on everything from churches to fortresses, and the tourist tabloid *Macau Travel Talk.*

GETTING AROUND

Macau comprises a small peninsula and two small islands—Taipa and Colôane, linked to the mainland by bridges and a causeway. The peninsula—referred to simply as Macau and surrounded by an Inner and an Outer Harbour—is where you'll find the city of Macau, as well as the ferry terminal and most of its hotels, shops, and attractions. Macau's main road is **Avenida Almeida Ribeiro;** about

halfway down its length is the attractive **Largo do Senado (Senate Square),** Macau's main plaza.

Because the peninsula is less than 475km (3 miles) in length and 1.5km (1 mile) at its greatest width, you can walk most everywhere. If you get tired, jump into a metered **taxi,** which charges MOP$10 (US$1.30) at flagfall for the first 1.5km (1 mile), then MOP$1 (US13¢) for each subsequent 250m (825 ft.). **Public buses** run daily from 7am to midnight, with fares costing MOP$2.50 (US30¢) for travel within the Macau Peninsula, MOP$3.30 (US45¢) for travel to Taipa, and MOP$4 to MOP$5 (US60¢–US65¢) to Colôane. Buses heading for Taipa and Colôane make a stop in front of Hotel Lisboa, located on the peninsula near the Macau–Taipa Bridge. MGTO has a free map with bus routes.

WHERE TO STAY

In addition to the rack rates given below (quoted in Hong Kong dollars; be sure to bargain for a better rate, especially in the off season), there's a 10% hotel service charge and a 5% government tax. If you plan on coming during Chinese New Year, Easter, July, August, or late November when the Grand Prix is held, book well in advance.

EXPENSIVE

Mandarin Oriental Macau ★★★ *Kids* This is a companion hotel of the Mandarin Oriental in Hong Kong, but with room rates much lower than you'd pay in Hong Kong. Located about a 7-minute walk from the ferry terminal in the direction of downtown, a huge land-reclamation project has robbed the hotel of much of its view, not to mention peace and quiet. On the plus side, the hotel claimed a small portion of the new land for its state-of-the-art resort facility, which includes an outdoor swimming pool; waterfall; water slide, pool, playground, and children's center; and a gorgeous spa. Although the hotel's exterior is rather nondescript, if not downright ugly, its interior is beautifully designed and elegantly decorated throughout with imports from Portugal.

Avenida da Amizade 956-1110, Macau. ✆ **800/526-6566** in the U.S. and Canada; 853/567888 or 852/2881 1288 for reservations in Hong Kong. Fax 853/594589. www.mandarinoriental.com. 435 units. HK$1,900–HK$2,200 (US$247-US$286) single or double; HK$2,400-HK$2,700 (US$312-US$351) Mandarin floors; from HK$4,600 (US$597) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Free shuttle bus from ferry terminal and airport. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; bar; 24-hr. casino; outdoor heated pool open year-round; kids' pool; 4 outdoor floodlit tennis courts; 2 indoor squash courts; multi-purpose court for volleyball, basketball, and badminton; health club and spa; outdoor Jacuzzi; children's day-care center for ages 3-12; playground; game room; concierge; business center; shopping arcade; salon; 24-hr. room service; massage; babysitting; same-day laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; executive-level rooms; doctor on call. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV w/pay movies, dataport, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

Pousada de São Tiago ★★★ *Finds* Built around the ruins of the Portuguese Fortress da Barra, which dates from 1629, this delightful small inn on the tip of the peninsula is guaranteed to charm even the most jaded of travelers. The entrance is dramatic—a flight of stone stairs leading through a cavelike tunnel that was once part of the fort, with water trickling in small rivulets on one side of the stairs. Once inside, guests are treated to the hospitality of a Portuguese inn, with its ornately carved wooden bedroom furniture imported from Portugal and the use of stone, brick, and Portuguese blue tile throughout. A terrace restaurant is shaded by banyan trees, and most of the rooms, all of which face the sea, have balconies.

Avenida da República, Fortaleza de São Tiago da Barra, Macau. ✆ **853/378111,** or 852/2739 1216 for reservations in Hong Kong. Fax 853/552170. www.saotiago.com.mo. 24 units. HK$1,630-HK$1,960

(US$212-US$254) single or double; from HK$2,300 (US$299) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Free shuttle bus (on request) or bus no. 28B from ferry terminal. **Amenities:** Restaurant, lounge; outdoor pool; room service (7:30am-11:30pm); babysitting; same-day laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, cable TV, dataport, minibar, hair dryer.

MODERATE

Hotel Lisboa *Finds* The Lisboa is in a class by itself. Built in 1969, it's a Chinese version of Las Vegas—huge, flashy, and with a bewildering array of facilities that make it almost a city within a city, and its 24-hour casino is one of the most popular in Macau. It has countless restaurants, shops, and nighttime diversions, including the Crazy Paris Show with a revue of scantily clad European women. The rooms are located in an older wing, a newer wing, and a tower that was completed in 1993. The tower, which added 14 floors, offers the best—and most expensive—harbor views, including rooms with traditional Chinese architecture and furniture. Otherwise, rooms seem rather small and old-fashioned. In short, this is the place to be if you want to be in the thick of it. Buses traveling to the outlying islands and other parts of Macau stop right outside the front door, and downtown Macau is only a 5-minute walk away.

Avenida da Amizade, Macau. ✆ **853/577666,** or 852/2546 6944 for reservations in Hong Kong. Fax 853/567193. www.hotelisboa.com. 927 units. HK$1,350-HK$2,350 (US$175-US$305) single or double; from HK$3,800 (US$494) suite. Children under 13 stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Free shuttle bus; or bus no. 3, 3A, 28A, 28B, or 28C from the ferry terminal. **Amenities:** 18 restaurants (some 24 hr.); 2 bars; lounge, nightclub, 24-hr. casino; outdoor heated pool; health club; games room; shopping arcade; salon; 24-hr. room service; same-day laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV w/pay movies, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Hyatt Regency Macau ★★★ *Value* *Kids* The atmosphere at the Hyatt is both tropical and Mediterranean, and the hotel offers extensive recreational facilities for the entire family, restaurants that are among the best in Macau, and comfortable rooms. Located on Taipa Island with free shuttle service to the mainland (just a 5-min. drive away), the hotel boasts a 1.3-hectare (3-acre) complex set amid lush greenery with an outdoor heated pool open year-round, tennis and squash courts, a fitness center, and more. For families, there's the children's wading pool, playground, game room, a child-care center, and Camp Hyatt (weekends and holidays) for kids ages 5 to 12. If you feel like exploring or dining on local cuisine, the quaint Taipa Village is only a 15-minute walk away.

Estrada Almirante Marquês Esparteiro 2, Taipa Island, Macau. ✆ **888/591-1234** in the U.S., 853/831234, or 852/2956 1234 for reservations in Hong Kong. Fax 853/830195. www.macauhyatt.com. 326 units. HK$750-HK$1,750 (US$97-US$227) single or double; HK$950-HK$1,950 (US$123-US$247) Regency Club; from HK$4,800 (US$623) suite. Children under 12 stay free in parent's room (maximum 3 persons per room). AE, DC, MC, V. Free shuttle bus from ferry terminal and airport, or bus no. 28A from the ferry terminal. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; lounge; 24-hr. casino; outdoor heated pool open year-round; outdoor children's pool; 4 floodlit outdoor tennis courts; 2 indoor squash courts; multi-purpose court for volleyball, basketball, and badminton; playground; rental bicycles; health club and spa; wonderful child-care center for children 2-8; Camp Hyatt for children 5-12; games room with video games, table tennis and pool tables; concierge; free shuttle to ferry, airport, and Hotel Lisboa; business center; 24-hr. room service; massage; babysitting; same-day laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; executive-level rooms; in-house nurse and doctor. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV w/pay movies, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

INEXPENSIVE

Pousada de Colôane ★ *Finds* This small, family-owned property, perched on a hill above Cheoc Van Beach with views of the sea, is ideal for couples and families in search of a reasonably priced isolated retreat. More than 30 years old but recently renovated (mold, however, seems to be a recurring problem), it's a relaxing, rather rustic place, with modestly furnished rooms, all of which have

balconies facing the sea and a popular public beach. There's an outdoor terrace where you can relax over drinks, and the inn's Portuguese restaurant is especially popular for the Sunday lunch buffet offered during peak season. The main drawback is one of access, but buses to Macau pass by frequently; when you arrive at the Macau ferry terminal, you're best off traveling to the hotel by taxi.

Praia de Cheoc Van, Coloane Island, Macau. ✆ **853/882144.** Fax 853/882251. pcoloane@macau.ctm.net. 22 units. HK$680–HK$750 (US$88–US$98) single or double. Weekday discounts available. AE, MC, V. Bus: no. 21A, 25, or 26A from Lisboa Hotel (tell the bus driver you want to get off at the hotel). **Amenities:** Restaurant, bar; outdoor pool; children's pool; playground. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar.

WHERE TO DINE

EXPENSIVE

Clube Militar de Macau ★★ *Finds* MACANESE/PORTUGUESE With its tall ceilings, whirring ceiling fans, arched windows, wooden floor, and displays of antique Chinese dishware, this is one of Macau's most atmospheric dining halls. It's located in a striking pink colonial building, built in 1870 for military officers and opened to the public in 1995. If you order from the menu, it's best to stick to the classics, such as Portuguese green vegetable soup, roasted codfish with hot olive oil and garlic, seafood stew in a white wine sauce, sirloin steak Portuguese style, or African chicken. The lunch buffet is a downtown favorite, and the list of Portuguese wines is among the best in town.

Avenida da Praia Grande 795. ✆ **853/714009.** Reservations recommended for lunch. Main courses HK$90–HK$120 (US$12–US$16); fixed-price lunch or dinner HK$90 (US$12); lunch buffet HK$130 (US$17). AE, MC, V. daily noon–3pm and 7–11pm. Bus: no. 3, 3A, 10, 10A, or 10.

Flamingo ★★★ *Value* MACANESE Decorated in hot pink, the Flamingo has a great Mediterranean ambience, with ceiling fans, swaying palms, and a terrace overlooking lush landscaping and a duck pond. An air-conditioned enclosure was recently added for those unaccustomed to alfresco dining, but the real pleasure of dining here is the terrace. The bread is homemade, and the specialties are a unique blend of Portuguese, Chinese, African, Indian, and Malay spices, resulting in delicious, authentic Macanese fare. Try the beef croquettes with marinated black olives; spicy king prawns with chili sauce; curried crab; African chicken with chili-coconut sauce; grilled sardines; or Macanese fried rice with chorizo, shrimp, chicken, and vegetables.

In the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Taipa Island. ✆ **853/831234.** Reservations recommended Sat–Sun. Main courses HK$70–HK$120 (US$8.85–US$16); fixed-price lunch HK$88 (US$11). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–3pm and 7–11pm. Bus: no. 11, 21, 21A, 26, 26A, 28A, 33, 35, or AP1.

360 Cafe ★ INTERNATIONAL This is Macau's most conspicuous restaurant, more than 220m (730 ft.) above reclaimed ground in the soaring Macau Tower. Opened in 2001, the tower contains an observation deck and lounge; admission to both is HK$70 (US$9.10). Head instead to the tower's revolving restaurant, where for the price of a buffet you have an equally good view. It takes 1½ hours for a complete spin, giving you ample time to sample the various Southeast Asian, Chinese, Macanese, and Continental dishes available as you soak in the view.

In the Macau Tower, Lago Sai Van. ✆ **853/9888660.** Reservations recommended weekends. Buffet lunch HK$100 (US$13); buffet dinner HK$188 (US$24). Daily noon–3pm and 6:30–11pm. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 23 or 32.

MODERATE

Cozinha Pinocchio PORTUGUESE/MACANESE Opened in 1977, Taipa Island's first Portuguese restaurant is still going strong, though some who have

known it since its early days claim that the atmosphere became more staid when a roof was added to the original roofless two-story brick warehouse. Nevertheless, things are still hopping—people crowd its doors for specialties like curried crab, king prawns, charcoal-grilled sardines, fried codfish cakes, grilled spareribs, roast veal, roast quail, and Portuguese-style cooked fish.

Rua do Sol, Taipa Village, Taipa Island. ✆ **853/827128.** Main courses HK$48–HK$118 (US$6.25–US$15). MC, V. Daily 11:45am–11:45pm. Bus: no. 11, 22, 28A, 33, or 34.

Fat Siu Lau MACANESE This is Macau's oldest restaurant (dating from 1903). Its three floors of dining have been updated, but its exterior matches all the other storefronts on this revamped street—whitewashed walls and red shutters and doors. Dishes include roast pigeon marinated according to a 90-year-old secret recipe; spicy African chicken; curried crab; garoupa stewed with tomatoes, bell pepper, onion, and potatoes; and grilled king prawns.

Rua da Felicidade, 64. ✆ **853/573580.** Main courses HK$45–HK$135 (US$5.85–US$18). No credit cards. Daily 11:30am–11:30pm. Bus: no. 3, 3A, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 18, 19, 21, or 21A.

Fernando's ★ *Finds* PORTUGUESE For years Fernando's was just another shack on Hac Sa Beach, hardly distinguishable from the others (it's the one closest to the beach, below the vines). But then a brick pavilion was added out back, complete with ceiling fans and an adjacent open-air bar with outdoor seating (a good place to wait for a table; reservations are not accepted), and now everyone knows the place. The strictly Portuguese menu includes prawns, crabs, mussels, codfish, *feijoada* (a Brazilian stew), veal, chicken, pork ribs, suckling pig, beef, and salads. Only Portuguese wine is served, stocked on a shelf for customer perusal (there is no wine list). The place is very informal and not for those who demand pristine conditions—there is no air-conditioning, not even in the kitchen.

Praia de Hac Sa, 9, Colôane. ✆ **853/882264** or 853/882531. Reservations not accepted. Main courses HK$60–HK$148 (US$7.80–US$19). No credit cards. Daily noon–9:30pm. Bus: no. 15, 21A, 25, or 26A.

Restaurante Litoral ★★ MACANESE Exactly which restaurant serves the most "authentic" Macanese food in town is a hotly contested subject, but this attractive restaurant, with its dark-gleaming woods, whitewashed walls, and stone floor, can certainly lay claim to the title. All the traditional favorites are here, including curry crab, curry prawns, African chicken, *feijoada* (stew), and *minchi,* a Macanese dish prepared with pork cubes, potatoes, onion, and garlic—but Portuguese specialties like codfish baked with potato and garlic, roast Portuguese sausage, and Portuguese green soup are not to be overlooked. Wash it all down with Portuguese wine or beer. The restaurant is located along the covered sidewalk not far from the Maritime Museum and A-Ma Temple.

Rua do Almirante Sergio, 261A. ✆ **853/967878.** Main courses HK$60–HK$120 (US$7.80–US$16). AE, MC, V. Daily noon–3 and 6–11pm. Bus no. 1, 1A, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 10A, 11, 18, 21, 21A, or 28B.

INEXPENSIVE

Nga Tim Cafe *Finds* CHINESE/MACANESE This lively, open-air pavilion restaurant is a good place to rub elbows with the natives. It's situated on the tiny main square of Colôane Village, dominated by the charming Chapel of St. Francis Xavier. Its popularity with the locals lends it a festive atmosphere. The food, which combines Chinese and Macanese styles of cooking and ingredients, is in a category all its own, with many dishes not available elsewhere. Try the salt-and-pepper shrimp, chicken in an earthen pot, grilled duck with lemon sauce, steamed chicken with garlic, scallops with broccoli, or crab curry.

Rua Caetano, No. 8, Coloane Village, Coloane Island. ✆ **853/882086.** Main courses HK$32–HK$65 (US$4.15–US$8.45). MC, V. Daily 11:30am–1am. Bus: no. 21, 21A, 25, 26, or 26A. Closed 1st Tues of the month.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

St. Paul's Church ★★ The church crowns a hill in the center of the city and is approached by a grand sweep of stairs. However, only its ornate facade and some excavated sites remain. Designed by an Italian Jesuit, it was built in 1602 with the help of Japanese Christians who had fled persecution in Nagasaki. In 1835, the church caught fire during a typhoon and burned to the ground, leaving its now-famous facade, adorned with carvings and statues depicting Christianity in Asia—a rather intriguing mix of images that includes a Virgin Mary flanked by a peony (representing China) and a chrysanthemum (representing Japan). Beyond the facade is the excavated crypt, where glass-fronted cases hold the bones of 17th-century Christian martyrs from Japan and Vietnam. Here, too, is the tomb of Father Allesandro Valignano, founder of the Church of St. Paul and instrumental in establishing Christianity in Japan. Next to the crypt is the underground Museum of Sacred Art, with religious works of art produced in Macau from the 17th to 20th centuries, including 17th-century oil paintings by exiled Japanese Christian artists, crucifixes of filigree silver, and wooden saints.

Rua de São Paulo. ✆ **853/358444.** Free admission. Grounds open daily 24 hr.; museum Wed–Mon 9am–6pm. Bus: no. 3, 3A, or 10 to Largo do Senado Sq. (off Avenida Almeida Ribeiro); then follow the wavy, tiled sidewalk leading uphill to the northeast about 10 min.

Museum of Macau ★★★ A must-see, this very ambitious project beside St. Paul's Church in the bowels of ancient Monte Fortress provides an excellent overview of Macau's history, local traditions, and arts and crafts. Displays, arranged chronologically, start with the beginnings of Macau and the arrival of Portuguese traders and Jesuit missionaries. Particularly interesting is the room comparing Chinese and European civilizations at the time of their encounter in the 16th century, including descriptions of their different writing systems, philosophies, and religions. Other displays deal with the daily life and traditions of old Macau, such as festivals, wedding ceremonies, and industries ranging from fishing to fireworks factories. Displays include paintings and photographs of Macau through the centuries, traditional games and toys, an explanation of Macanese cuisine and architecture, and a re-created Macau street.

Citadel of São Paulo do Monte (St. Paul Monte Fortress). ✆ **853/357911.** Admission MOP$15 (US$1.95) adults, MOP$8 (US$1.05) seniors and children. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. Located next to St. Paul's Church.

Maritime Museum ★ *Kids* Macau's oldest museum, ideally situated on the waterfront of the Inner Harbour where visitors can observe barges and other boats passing by, traces the history of Macau's lifelong relationship with the sea. It's located at the tip of the peninsula, across from the Temple of A-Ma, in approximately the same spot where the Portuguese first landed. The museum begins with dioramas depicting the legend of A-Ma, protectress of seafarers and Macau's namesake, and continues with models of various boats, including trawlers, Chinese junks, Portuguese sailing boats, and even modern jetfoils. There are also life-size original boats on display, ranging from the sampan to an ornate festival boat. There's a small aquarium as well, but best of all are the museum's 30-minute boat tours aboard a restored fishing junk, with sailings at 10:30am, 11:30am, 3:30pm, and 4pm Wednesday through Monday except the first Sunday of the month. Cost of the boat trip is MOP$10 ($1.30) for adults and MOP$5 (US65¢) for children. Seniors and children younger than 10 sail free.

Largo do Pagode da Barra, 1. ✆ **853/595481.** Admission MOP$10 (US$1.30) adults, MOP$5 (US65¢) children, free for seniors and children under 10. Sun and holidays, half price. Wed–Mon 10am–5:30pm. Bus: no. 1, 1A, 2, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 10A, 11, 18, 21, 21A, 28B, or 34.

Temple of A-Ma ★★ Macau's oldest temple is situated at the bottom of Barra Hill at the entrance to the Inner Harbour, across from the Maritime Museum. With parts of it dating back more than 600 years, it's dedicated to A-Ma, goddess of seafarers. The temple was already here when the Portuguese arrived, and they named their city A-Ma-Gao (Bay of A-Ma) after it. The temple contains images of A-Ma and stone carvings of the boat that carried her to Macau.

Rua de S. Tiago da Barra. Free admission. Daily 8am–5pm. Bus: no. 1, 1A, 2, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 10A, 11, 18, 21, 21A, 28B, or 34.

MACAU AFTER DARK

The most sophisticated of Macau's casinos are located in hotels—the **Mandarin Oriental, Hyatt Regency, Holiday Inn,** and **Hotel Lisboa,** all open 24 hours. Among those catering primarily to Chinese, none is more interesting than the ornately decorated **Floating Macau Palace Casino,** moored in the Outer Harbour not far from the Mandarin Oriental Hotel and worth strolling through for a look at Chinese gambling.

One of the few benefits to have arisen from reclaimed-land development on the Outer Harbour is the Docks, a string of sidewalk cafes and bars lining Avenida Dr. Sun Yat-Sen near the Kun Iam Statue; they are busiest from 10pm to 1am.

TAIPA & COLÔANE ISLANDS

Closest to the mainland, **Taipa** has exploded with new construction in recent years, but it's still worth coming to for **Taipa Village,** a small, traditional community with narrow lanes; two-story colonial buildings painted in yellows, blues, and greens; and hanging baskets of flowers. There are a number of fine, inexpensive restaurants here, making dining reason enough to come. For sightseeing, don't miss the **Casa Museu da Taipa (Taipa House Museum),** on Avenida da Praia (✆ **853/827088**). It's one of five colonial-style homes lining the banyan-shaded street that once belonged to Macanese families in the early 1900s. Combining both European and Chinese designs and furnishings as a reflection of the families' Eurasian heritage, the Casa Museu displays a dining and living room, kitchen, and upstairs bedrooms filled with period furniture. A couple of the other former homes contain displays relating to the history of Taipa and traditional regional costumes of Portugal. Hours are Tuesday through Sunday from 10am to 6pm, and admission is MOP$5 (US65¢). Bus nos. 11, 15, 22, 28A, 30, 33, 34 and 35 all go to Taipa Village.

Farther away and connected to Taipa via causeway and a huge strip of reclaimed land, **Colôane** is less developed than Taipa and is known for its **beaches,** particularly Cheoc Van and Hac Sa, both with lifeguards. To reach them, take bus nos. 21A, 25 or 26A. Farther along the coast is the quaint, laid-back community of **Colôane Village,** with its sweet **Chapel of St. Francis Xavier,** built in 1928 and dedicated to the Catholic missionary.

For more information on Taipa and Colôane, pick up a free pamphlet from the Macau tourist office called *Macau, Outlying Islands.*

11

The Southwest: Mountains & Minorities

by Sharon Owyang

"The most interesting part of China, from a geographical and ethnological point of view, is the West—geographically, because its recesses have not yet been thoroughly explored, and ethnologically, because a great part of it is peopled by races which are non-Chinese." In describing the attraction of southwest China for a few iconoclastic foreigners in 1889, British consul Alexander Hosie may as well be describing the region's appeal today for hundreds of thousands of travelers, both foreign and Chinese. Considerably more explored than in Hosie's day but still retaining large swaths of undiscovered territory, today's splendid southwest is beginning to attract its deserved share of attention, and will be in the years to come one of China's major tourist destinations.

For starters, this region, encompassing the provinces of **Yúnnán, Guìzhōu Guǎngxī,** and **Hǎinán Island,** is home to some of China's most spectacular mountain scenery. As the Himalayan mountain range in northwest Yúnnán gives way to the Yúnnán–Guìzhōu plateau to the southeast, the scenery changes from the awesome 5,000m (16,400-ft.) high glacier peaks of the **Jade Dragon Snow Mountain range** to the lower but no less beautiful famous limestone hills of eastern Guǎngxī. Three of Asia's mighty rivers—the Salween, the Mekong, and the Yángzǐ—cut parallel paths all within 150km (90 miles) of each other in the northwest mountains before they flow their separate ways, creating in their passage some of the most breathtaking gorges and lush river valleys in the country.

Even more appealing is the fact that this region is easily the most ethnically diverse in China. Twenty-six of China's 56 ethnic groups can be found in the southwest, which claims about 45 million of China's 100 million-strong minority population. If geography is destiny, then this inhospitable mountainous terrain, to which many ethnic minorities were historically displaced by earlier expanding Chinese empires, has not only helped create a vibrant kaleidoscope of peoples, languages, and cultures, but it has helped some of these cultures maintain their unique traditional ways in the face of encroaching modernization. At the same time, shared borders with Sìchuān, Tibet, Myanmar (Burma), Laos, and Vietnam have allowed the region to absorb and integrate the colorful and diverse influences of its neighbors. From the Mosu at **Lúgū Lake** to the Dǎi in **Xīshuāngbǎnnà,** from the Miáo around **Kǎilǐ** to the Dòng in **Sānjiāng,** you will have multiple opportunities to encounter different minorities.

The Chinese saying, "The mountains are high and the emperor is far away" *(shān gāo huángdì yuǎn)* describes perfectly this region which has historically marched to the beat of its own local kings and warlords.

Coming fully into China's fold only after 1949, today's southwest, still separated from the main corridors of power by vast distances, enjoys a slower, more relaxed pace of life. The largely temperate-to-subtropical climate of this region makes visiting at any time of year possible.

A traveler can easily spend years in this region and not exhaust its offerings. Between the obvious draws of **Guìlín,** which ranks as one of China's top five destinations, the backpacker mecca of **Yángshuò,** and the increasingly popular trifecta of **Kūnmíng, Dàlǐ,** and **Lìjiāng,** is a legion of other delights awaiting discovery. To be sure, travel outside the major tourist destinations and provincial capitals can be arduous and distinctly lacking in luxury, but for those willing to forego a few creature comforts for heaps of discovery, Guìzhōu Province, one of China's best-kept secrets, contains not only spectacular natural scenery in the form of karst mountains and waterfalls, but some of the most dynamic and colorful minority life in China. In addition, the still-quaint towns of **Téngchōng** and **Jiànshuǐ,** and the sublime terrace fields of **Lóngshèng** and **Yuányáng,** promise new delights even for the seasoned southwest traveler. In the north, the road to Tibet, which remains one of the most spectacular and difficult journeys, passes through the newly crowned **Shangri-La.** And if, at the end of it all, you need an antidote to the mountains and the dizzying colors of ethnic diversity, the pristine, white-sand beaches of Hǎinán Island, as uncharacteristic a scene as any you'll find in China, await the weary traveler. *Note:* Unless otherwise noted, hours listed for attractions and restaurants are daily.

SOME FESTIVALS IN THE SOUTHWEST

Festival	Location	Lunar Calendar	2004	2005
Tàiguǎnrén (Dòng)	Dòng areas	3rd–4th of 1st	late Jan	late Feb
Dragon Lantern (Miáo)	Táijiāng	15th of 1st	Feb 5	Feb 23
Huāpào (Dòng)	Cóngjiāng	28th of 1st	Feb 18	Mar 8
Sānduō (Nàxī)	Lìjiāng	8th of 2nd	Feb 27	Mar 17
Water Splashing Festival (Dǎi)	Jǐnghóng Xīshuāngbǎnnà	(Apr 13–15 fixed in Western calendar)		
Sānyuèsān	Dòng areas	3rd of 3rd	Apr 21	Apr 11
Sānyuè Jié (Bái)	Dàlǐ	15th of 3rd	May 3	Apr 23
Sisters' Meal Festival (Miáo)	Táijiāng/Shìdòng	15th–17th of 3rd	May 3–5	Apr 23-25
Sìyuèbā (Miáo)	Huángpíng	8th of 4th	May 26	May 15
Ràosānlíng (Bái)	Dàlǐ	23rd–25th of 4th	Jun 10–12	May 30–Jun 1
Dragon Boat (Miáo)	Shīdòng	25th of 5th	July 12	July 1
Chábái Singing (Bùyī)	Xīngyì	21st of 6th	Aug 6	July 26
Huǒbǎ Jié (Bái)	Dàlǐ	24th of 6th	Aug 9	July 29
Zhuàn Shān Jié	Lúgū Hú	25th of 7th	Sept 9	Aug 29
Miáo New Year	Léishān	last 10 days of 10th	1st week 2004	Dec 4th week Nov 2005

**Dates are based on information provided by local tourism sources. However, there are many date fluctuations, especially with festivals like the Miáo New Year. Check with the local CITS or other local sources before setting off.

ZHEJIANG
FUJIAN
JIANGXI
HUBEI
HUNAN
GUIZHOU
GUANGDONG
GUANGXI
SICHUAN
YUNNAN
XISHUANGBANNA
TIBET
INDIA
MYANMAR
LAOS
VIETNAM
THAILAND
South China Sea
Nanchang
Changsha
Xiamen
Shantou
Hong Kong
Hong Kong
Guangzhou
Haikou
Hainan Island
Sanya
Beihai
Pingxiang
Nanning
Hanoi
Chongqing
Zigong
Guiyang
Kaili
Rongjiang
Longsheng
Guilin
Sanjiang
Yangshuo
Lanzhou
Li Jiang (Li River)
Yangtze River
Huangguoshu Waterfall
Shilin (Stone Forest)
Jianshui
Yuanyang
Hekou
Jinghong
Dukou
Kunming
Yangzi River (Winsha Jiang)
Xianggelila
Lijiang
Dali
Baoshan
Mangshi
Ruili
Tengchong
Mekong River (lancang Jiang)
Salween River (Nu Jiang)
Mandalay
Beijing
China
area of detail
0
200 mi
0
200 km

1 Nánníng

Guǎngxī Province, 350km (217 miles) SW of Guìlín, 440km (273 miles) SE of Guìyáng

Since 1958, Nánníng has been the provincial capital of the Guǎngxī Zhuàng Autonomous Region, itself home to more than 15 million Zhuàng people, China's largest minority group. Although over 60% of Nánníng's 1.4 million people are Zhuàng, you won't encounter too many "costumed" minorities here. The aboriginal Zhuàng, having long since assimilated the bulk of Chinese ways, except in their language, which bears a closer resemblance to Thai, are practically indistinguishable from the Hàn. An exception occurs during the annual **International Festival of Folk Songs and Folk Arts** held in the first half of November when many of Guǎngxī's minorities, including the Zhuàng, the Miáo, the Dòng, and the Yáo, gather for a colorful week of ethnic song and dance performances that have been criticized by some as being mere "urban reenactments." During other times, Nánníng—which stands as an example of China's recent attempt to develop the west with its upmarket hotels, spanking-new department stores, and newly landscaped parks—has few attractions to keep visitors *in* town, but makes a convenient base for exploring the surrounding countryside dotted with limestone peaks and quaint traditional towns. Nánníng's location in the center south of the province and its proximity to the Vietnamese border (200km/120 miles to the south) makes it an ideal transit point for travelers, whether you're moving on to minority regions in the northeast, the coastal town of Běihǎi in the southeast, or Vietnam via the town of Píngxiáng. Vietnamese visas can be arranged here.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Nánníng is well connected by daily **flights** to many major Chinese destinations, including Běijīng (2 hr., 15 min.), Chéngdū (1½ hr.), Guǎngzhōu (1 hr.), Guìlín (45 min.), Hǎikǒu (50 min.), Kūnmíng (1 hr.), and Shànghǎi (2 hr.). There are also international flights to Bangkok (Thurs), Hong Kong (Tues, Fri, Sun) and to Hanoi (Mon and Thurs). Purchase tickets at the **CAAC** office at Cháoyáng Lù 82 (✆ **0771/243-1459**). Airport buses (¥15/$2) depart every hour from the CAAC office (open 5:30–7:30am and 8am–7pm).

From Nánníng's **railway station,** the T6 for Běijīng (30 hr.) departs at 11am and stops at Guìlín, while the Chéngdū-bound train K142 (38 hr.) departs at 6:46pm and stops at Guìyáng and Chóngqìng. The 2005 leaves for Kūnmíng (15 hr.) at 3:43pm. A convenient express train, the T902, leaves for Guìlín at 8:30am and arrives at 2:44pm. The T5 from Běijīng to Hanoi stops at Nánníng, where it becomes the T905, which departs Nánníng every Tuesday and Saturday at 7:20pm and arrives in Hanoi at 6:50am after Customs and a change of trains at Tóngdēng. There are only 12 soft-sleeper berths available on the T905 from Nánníng, and they are often hard to come by. It's best to have a travel agency such as **CITS** at Xīnmín Lù 40 (✆ **0771/285-3764**) purchase your ticket. CITS can also arrange 1-month **Vietnamese visas** for ¥550 ($69). Allow 10 working days.

Nánníng has four bus stations, but the **Main Bus Station (Qìchē Zǒng Zhàn)** at Huádōng Lù 65 (✆ **0771/242-4529**) has the most convenient buses to Guìlín (5 hr.; ¥80/$10) every half hour from 7am to 10:30pm; to Běihǎi (3 hr.; ¥50/$6.25) every half hour from 7:30am to 8:30pm; to Píngxiáng (¥50/$6.25) every 90 minutes from 8:30am to 5pm; and to Guǎngzhōu (10 hr.; ¥180/$22).

ACCOMMODATIONS ■
Míngyuán Xīndū Jiǔdiàn **4**
明园新都酒店

Xiángyún Dàjiǔdiàn **5**
翔云大酒店

Yōngjiāng Bīnguǎn **7**
邕江宾馆

DINING ◆
Dàtōng Měishí **8**
大通美食

Měilì Huàbīng Chéng **1**
美丽化冰城

Tàiguó Cāntīng **6**
泰国餐厅

Zǐyún Xuān **4**
紫云轩

ATTRACTIONS ●
Báilóng Gōngyuán **2**
白龙公园

Guǎngxī Shěng Bówùguǎn **9**
(Guǎngxī Provincial Museum)
广西省博物馆

Guǎngxī Yàoyòng Zhíwùyuán **3**
(Medicinal Herb Botanical Garden)
广西药用植物园

Qīngxiù Shān Fēngjǐngqū **10**
青秀山风景区

To Anji Bus Station and Yiling Yan
To Yangmei, Deitan Waterfall and PSB
Daxue Lu
North Bus Station (Beida Keyunzhan) (buses to Detian Waterfall)
Beida Lu
You'ai Lu
Buses to Yangmei
Zhonghua Lu
Huadong
Suzhou Lu
Chaoyang Lu
Main Bus Station
Renmin Dong Lu
BAILONG GONGYUAN
Minzhu Lu
Gucheng Lu
Ximin Lu
CHAOYANG HUAYUAN
Chaoyang Stream
Dongge Lu
Renmin Xi Lu
Jiangbin Lu
Minzu Dadao
Yong Jiang
Linjiang Lu
Qixing Lu
Taoyuan Lu
Bus Station
Bank
Post Office
Rail Station
Travel Agent
0 1/2 mi
0 0.5 km
N

Nánníng

The **North Bus Station (Běidà Kèyùn Zhōngxīn)** on Běidà Lù (✆ **0771/385-6728**) is the place to catch buses to Dàxīn for the Détiān Waterfall. Eleven express buses make the 2-hour trip to Dàxīn between 6:40am and 8:40pm for ¥30 ($3.75). An 8:50am bus goes directly to Détiān Waterfall during the summer tourist season. Note that there are plans to move all the bus stations from their current in-town locations to as-yet unconfirmed new sites on the outskirts, and plans as well to consolidate existing routes, so check with your hotel before you set out.

GETTING AROUND **Taxis** cost ¥7 (90¢) for 2km (1¼ miles), then ¥1.60 (20¢) per kilometer, and ¥2.40 (30¢) per kilometer after 5km (3 miles). **Bus** no. 10 (¥1/15¢) runs from the railway station to the North Bus Station.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China** (open Mon–Fri 8am–6pm) is at Gǔchéng Lù 15.

Internet Access An **Internet cafe** on the fifth floor of the Nánníng Bǎihuò Dàlóu at Cháoyáng Lù 39 charges ¥3 (40¢) per hour. A passport and ¥10 ($1.25) deposit are required. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office There is a 24-hour post office on Sūzhōu Lù.

Visa Extension The Foreign Affairs Office of the **PSB** (open Mon–Fri 9am–4:30pm) is at Kēyuán Dàdào, Dōngwǔlǐ (✆ **0771/289-1260**).

EXPLORING THE TOWN

PARKS & GARDENS

East of the railway station, **Báilóng Gōngyuán** (¥2/25¢; 6am–12am) is good for a quick stroll; it contains the remains of an early 20th-century fort with a German cannon (in case of a French invasion from Vietnam). A botanical garden houses rare plants and herbs. About 10km (6 miles) southeast of town, the sprawling **Qīngxiù Shān Fēngjǐngqū** (¥8/$1, 24 hr.) has several scenic mountains and springs as well as a Daoist temple. Taxi is the most convenient way to get there; or take bus no. 10 for ¥2 (25¢) to its terminus and then walk to the main entrance. Popular with foreign tour groups is the **Guǎngxī Yàoyòng Zhíwùyuán (Medicinal Herb Botanical Garden;** ¥5/65¢) located about 15km (10 miles) northeast of town. With over 2,400 species of medicinal plants and Chinese captions, it can be a little overwhelming unless you manage to get the rare English-speaking tour guide.

Guǎngxī Shěng Bówùguǎn (Guǎngxī Provincial Museum) ★ Worth a visit if you're heading to minority regions like Lóngshèng and Sānjiāng, this museum features the clothing, artifacts, tools, and musical instruments of Guǎngxī's various minority groups, plus an impressive collection of sacred bronze drums. Captions are in Chinese, though occasionally there is an English preface.

Mínzú Dàdào 34. Admission ¥8 ($1). 9–11am and 2:30–4pm.

WHERE TO STAY

Míngyuán Xīndū Jiǔdiàn ★★ The top place to stay in town, this hotel has spacious, comfortable rooms with firm beds (but ugly green leather headboards), classical European furniture, and all the usual five-star trappings. Bathrooms are bright but show signs of wear. With tour groups traipsing in and out of the hotel, there's not much personal attention, but the staff is efficient.

Xīnmín Lù 38. ✆ **0771/283-0808.** Fax 0771/283-0811. 298 units. ¥858 ($107) standard room; from ¥1,858 ($232) suite. 10% discounts; 10% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; lounge; outdoor pool; outdoor tennis court; health club; sauna; concierge; airport shuttle; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; room service; laundry/dry cleaning; babysitting; nonsmoking floor; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Xiángyún Dàjiǔdiàn Ignore the ugly, white-tiled, blue-glass exterior of this sprawling three-star hotel just west of the Míngyuán hotel. Guest rooms, at least those renovated in 2002, are considerably homier with new carpets, new furniture, fresh white wallpaper, and firm comfortable beds. Bathrooms are clean, but the bath mats could use changing altogether. Service is adequate.

Xīnmín Lù 59. ✆ **0771/210-1999.** Fax 0771/283-3106. 208 units. ¥380–¥430 ($47–$53) standard room; ¥800 ($100) suite. 30% discounts. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; health club; concierge; free airport shuttle; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; room service; laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar.

Yōngjiāng Bīnguǎn ★ *Value* On the banks of the Yōng, this four-star hotel done in a neoclassical style has very large rooms that seem to dwarf the generic brown furniture in it, but are otherwise well fitted with comfortable beds and the usual amenities. Request a river-view room. Bathrooms are a little worn but acceptably clean. Big discounts make it a good value.

Jiāngdōng Lù 41. ✆ **0771/280-0888.** Fax 0771/280-0535. 338 units. ¥380–¥680 ($47–$85) standard room; from ¥1,080 ($135) suite. Discounts up to 60%. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar, lounge; health club; sauna; concierge; business center; shopping arcade; salon; room service; laundry/dry cleaning; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe (deluxe standards only).

WHERE TO DINE

Dàtōng Měishí ★ GUǍNGXĪ Located along restaurant row Zhōngshān Lù, this informal but incredibly popular restaurant dishes up favorites like *jiǔcài héxiā* (river shrimp with chives), *fēngwèi niúzá* (seasonsed tripe), and *jiāoyán yāxiàba* (spicy duck's tongue). Too exotic? Choose from the vegetables, meats, and tanks of live seafood on display.

Zhōngshān Lù 209–225. ✆ **0771/281-0188.** ¥50–¥80 ($6.25–$10). No credit cards. 5pm–3am.

Měilì Huàbīng Chéng INTERNATIONAL This clean, Western-style diner near the railway station offers a credible approximation of American comfort foods (steak, burgers, and so on) as well as Asian staples like fried rice and curry beef rice. Come in the middle of the night and you'll likely find a fellow night-owl traveler nursing his beer and flirting hopelessly with the waitress.

Cháoyáng Lù 71–5. ✆ **0771/243-3620.** Main courses ¥6–¥20 (75¢–$2.50). No credit cards. 24 hr.

Tàiguó Cāntīng ★ THAI Yes, there's an authentic Thai restaurant in Nánníng, and the food's great, though the restaurant's location in a cavernous banquet room on the fourth floor of an office building is puzzling. The Thai chef works magic with the *poo ob woonsen* (crab with vermicelli), *keang pakai* (green curry chicken casserole), and *som tam* (papaya salad). The waitstaff is so friendly and gracious that you'd be forgiven for thinking they were Thai.

Cháoyáng Lù 66, 4th floor. ✆ **0771/261-0494.** Photo menu. ¥80–¥150 ($10–$19). No credit cards. 10am–11pm.

Zǐyún Xuān ★ INTERNATIONAL This informal, inexpensive restaurant, part of the Míngyuán Hotel, offers a smorgasbord of delights, from Indian fruit pancakes to Hong Kong–style dim sum, from local quail soup with gingko to sushi and pizza. Some of it can be greasy.

Míngyuán Fàndiàn, Xīnmín Lù 38. ✆ **0771/211-8290.** Main courses ¥10–¥20 ($1.25–$2.50). No credit cards. Mon–Fri 11am–2:30pm and 5pm–midnight; Sat–Sun 7am–10am, 11am–2:30pm, and 5pm–midnight.

AROUND NÁNNÍNG

Yángměi Originally built by troop garrisons from Shāndōng Province during the Sòng dynasty, this quaint village 38km (23 miles) west of Nánníng on the Yōng River flourished during the late Míng and early Qīng dynasties and today is the best preserved of its kind in Guǎngxī (¥5/65¢). Highlights include **Qīngdài Yìtiáo Jiē,** a Qīng street paved with irregularly shaped green shales and flanked by rows of traditional stone and brick buildings; and the 1736 **Kuíxīng Lóu** once used for important town meetings and as a place of worship. A large and lively **market** is held in town every 3 days.

Yángměi buses depart hourly from 9am to 2pm (1½ hr.; ¥4/50¢) from the street immediately east of the Number Two City Bus Station (Shì Dìèr Gōnglù Kèyùn Zhàn). The last bus back to Nánníng departs Yángměi at around 4pm. It's also possible to take a boat, the *Xīngdǎo Hào* (3 hr.; ¥60/$7.50) from Nánníng to Yángměi on the Yōng River, but only when there are at least 30 people. The boat departs from the pier at Nánhuán Lù and Língjiāng Lù at 8:30am and returns at 6:30pm. Call ✆ **0771/283-1320** for more information.

Yílíng Yán This 1,100m (3,608-ft.) long limestone cave located 21km (13 miles) north of Nánníng is the only karst cave open to the public in southern Guǎngxī. Its eight caverns full of oddly shaped limestone rocks are all illuminated with the usual gaudy colored lights. Before entering the cave, visitors walk through the **Zhuàng Minority Culture Park,** which gives an introduction to the food, customs, and dances of the Zhuàng. You'll probably be stuck with a Chinese-speaking tour guide taking groups through both the park and the cave, because an English-speaking guide comes at the unbelievably mercenary price of ¥500 ($62)! To get to the park, take one of the express Wúmíng-bound buses (45 min.; ¥6/75¢) that run every 20 minutes from 7am to 8:10pm from the Ānjí Bus Station (Ānjí Chēzhàn) 7km (4⅓ miles) north of the railway station. Admission to the park, open from 8am to 5pm, is ¥15 ($2); admission to the cave is ¥25 ($3).

SIDE TRIP TO A WATERFALL: DÉTIĀN PÙBÙ

The world's second largest transnational waterfall (next to Niagara Falls) is 200km (124 miles) west of Nánníng on the Sino–Vietnamese border. The rainy season is from mid-June to early August, but any visit from May to early October will show you the pretty falls in their full glory.

With a total drop of 60m (197 ft.), the waterfall actually comprises several layers of falls with the majority of its 200m (656-ft.) span comfortably ensconced on the Chinese side. You can view them from 7am to 7pm for ¥30 ($3.75). Inside, steps lead down to a walkway which meanders along a stretch of the falls. Expect a gauntlet of vendors. The path eventually detours off to the 53rd boundary marker between the countries, an obligatory photo op for most Chinese tourists. A large dent in the left side of the tablet is said to have been the result of gunfire exchange in 1978, before war officially broke out between the two countries in 1979. Technically, any territory in front of the marker is Vietnam, but as long as you don't wander too far beyond the marker, you can probably spare yourself any encounters with officious border guards and still say you set foot in Vietnam.

Most tourists visit on a 2-day trip, but if you're pressed for time, it's possible to see the falls in a long day with private taxi hire for around ¥600 ($75). To

reach the falls by bus, take one of the 11 Dáxīn-bound buses between 6:40am and 8:40pm (2 hr.; ¥30/$3.75) from Nánníng's **North Bus Station (Běidà Kèyùn Zhōngxīn)** on Běidà Lù (✆ **0771/385-6728**). The 8:50am bus goes directly to Détiān Waterfall and returns at 3pm but appears to run regularly only during the summer tourist season. In Dáxīn, infrequent minivan taxis can take you to Détiān for around ¥10 ($1.25) per person. Or take a minivan taxi to Shuōlóng for ¥6 (75¢), and transfer to another minivan taxi or motorcycle to the falls for ¥6 to ¥12 (75¢–$1.25). From Dáxīn, buses return to Nánníng from 7:20am to 7pm.

At the falls, you can stay at the **Détiān Shānzhuāng** (✆ **0771/377-3570**), a basic but clean hotel with standard rooms for ¥400 ($50) and deluxe rooms for ¥480 ($60). Opt for the latter, as these are larger and come with a fridge and views of the falls. Bathrooms have showers only.

2 Guìlín ★

Guǎngxī Province, 500km (310 miles) NW of Hong Kong, 1,675km (1,039 miles) SW of Běijīng

One of the most-visited Chinese cities, Guìlín (pop. 630,000), located in the northeastern part of the Guǎngxī Zhuàng Autonomous Region, has long been famous for its limestone karst hills. Formed more than 200 million years ago when the oceans receded from this area, the hills sprout from a patchwork of paddy fields and flowing streams, creating a dreamy, seductive landscape that leaves few souls unstirred. Though there are a few hills in the city that can be explored, the Lí River cruise from Guìlín to Yángshuò is the top attraction in town. Increasingly, Guìlín is also being used as a base to visit the Yáo, Miáo, and Dòng minority villages to the northwest. Unfortunately, the cost of Guìlín's overwhelming popularity is a degree of unrelenting exploitation and extortion audacious even by Chinese standards; foreigners are overcharged for everything.

With summer's heat and humidity and winter's low rainfall affecting water levels in the Lí River, April, May, September, and October are the best months for cruising. April to August also marks the rainy season, however, so be prepared with rain gear. Avoid the first weeks of May and October, when China celebrates national holidays, the Lí River becomes even more congested with tourist boats than usual, and the price of everything doubles at the very least.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE From Guìlín's airport 30km (19 miles) west of town, **flights** connect to Guǎngzhōu (1 hr.), Běijīng (2½ hr.), Shànghǎi (2 hr.), Kūnmíng (1½ hr.), and Chéngdū (70 min.). There are also international flights to Seoul (4 hr.) and Hong Kong (1½ hr.). Tickets can be purchased at the **Míngháng Dàshà** on Shànghǎi Lù (✆ **0773/384-3922**), and also at travel agencies or hotel tour desks. **Dragonair** has an office at the Guìlín Bravo Hotel, Rónghú Nán Lù 15 (✆ **0773/ 282-3950,** ext. 1150). Airport shuttles depart from the CAAC office every half hour from 6:30am to 8pm for ¥20 ($2.50); they also meet incoming flights. Taxis to the airport cost around ¥100 ($13).

Train travel to and from Guìlín is not very convenient, as the surrounding mountainous topography means that destinations further afield often require several days' travel; also, sleeper tickets for those destinations are often difficult to come by. The city has two railway stations, though the main one used by most travelers is the **Guìlín Huǒchē Zhàn** (✆ **0773/383-3124**) in the southern part of town. The T6 to Běijīng (24 hr.) departs at 5:23pm, the K38/35 to Guǎngzhōu

(13 hr.) at 6:15pm, the K150 to Shànghǎi (26 hr.) at 4:28pm, and the K155 to Kūnmíng (via Guìyáng, 30 hr.) at 2:08pm. For Chéngdū and Chóngqìng, change trains at Guìyáng (18 hr.). There are trains throughout the day to Nánníng (7–8 hr.). The T5/905 from Běijīng to **Hanoi** stops in Guílín (only four sleeper berths are available from Guìlín). It's best to have a travel agent or your hotel tour desk arrange tickets because they are extremely difficult to come by.

From the **Guìlín Bus Station** (**Guìlín Qìchē Zhàn; ✆ 0773/382-2153**) just north of the railway station, large, air-conditioned direct *(zhídá)* **buses** go to Běihǎi (7 hr.; ¥150/$19) at 8:30am, 9:20am, and 10:20am; to Lóngshèng (3 hr.; ¥15/$1.90) every 40 minutes from 7am to 7pm; to Nánníng (5 hr.; ¥80/$10) every half hour from 7am to 7pm; and to Guǎngzhōu (9 hr.; ¥150/$19) at 9am, 11am, 9pm, 10pm, and 11pm. Regular minibuses run to Yángshuò (1 hr.; ¥7.50/95¢) from the bus station and outside the railway station. A new private luxury air-conditioned bus to Hong Kong (**✆ 0773/585-7088**) now runs every Friday evening, charging ¥350 ($44) one-way, ¥600 ($75) round-trip. It departs from the Guìlín Guìshān Hotel on Chuānshān Lù at 7pm, stops at the Yángshuò Paradise Hotel at 8pm, and arrives at Huánggǎng in Shēnzhèn at 7am. After passengers go through Customs and Immigration, the bus continues onto Shatin, Kowloon Tong, and Tsimshatsui in Hong Kong. For the return, the bus simply retraces the route, departing from Hong Kong's Tsimshatsui at 4pm and arriving in Guìlín the next morning around 7am. There are plans to increase the frequency of this service.

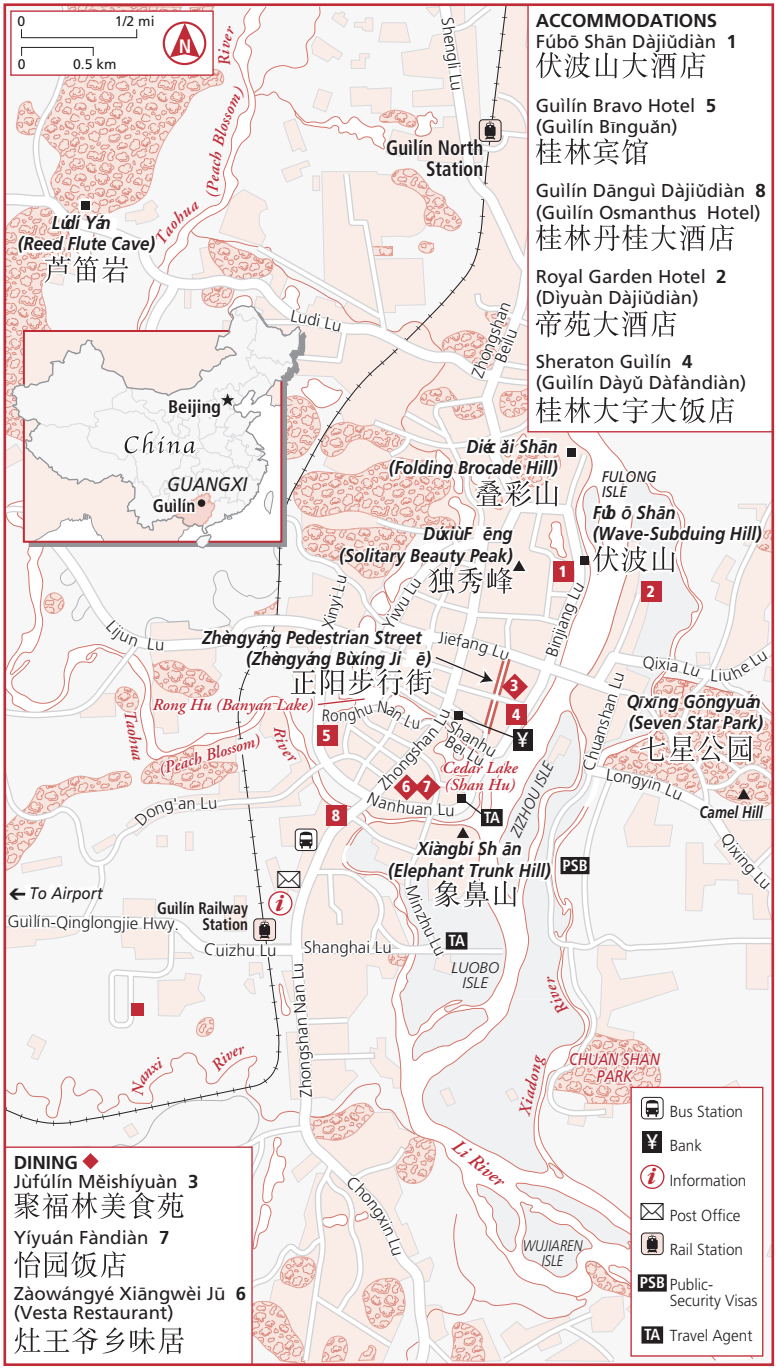
GETTING AROUND Guìlín is a compact area and is easy to get around by foot or bicycle. **Bikes** can be rented at most hotels, including the Bravo Hotel and the Sheraton, at rates of ¥25 to ¥50 ($3–$6) per day plus a deposit of ¥300 to ¥400 ($38–$50).

Taxis cost ¥7 (90¢) for 2km (1¼ miles), then ¥1.60 (20¢) per kilometer. After 4km (2½ miles), the price jumps to ¥2 (25¢) per kilometer. From 11pm to 7am, the fare is ¥7.80 (95¢) for 2km (1¼ miles), then ¥2.40 (30¢) per kilometer until 4km (2½ miles), and ¥3 (40¢) per kilometer after that.

There are also several **buses** geared towards tourists: The free bus no. 58 from 8:30am to 4:30pm runs from Nánxī Park in the south to Reed Flute Cave, stopping along the way at Elephant Hill, Seven Star Park, Fúbō Hill, and Diécǎi Hill. Another free sightseeing minibus travels a similar loop from Seven Star Park to Reed Flute Cave between 8:40am and 4pm, but passengers are required to show their entrance tickets to at least one of the sights.

TOURS **CITS** at Bīnjiāng Lù 41 (**✆ 0773/286-1623;** fax 0773/282-7424) has full-day city tours with English-speaking guides for ¥200 ($25) per person. The CITS Panda Bus picks up daily from the Fǔbó, Sheraton, Bravo, and Royal Garden hotels. CITS can also organize Lí River cruises for ¥460 ($57), day trips to Yángshuò by bus for ¥193 ($24) per person, and overnight trips to Lóngshèng Minority Village and Terrace Fields for ¥450 to ¥550 ($56–$68) per person. The concierge at the Sheraton Hotel, Bīn Jiāng Nán Lù (**✆ 0773/282-5588**), can arrange all of the above, as well as nighttime cormorant fishing trips for ¥65 ($8) and evening cultural performances for around ¥100 ($13).

VISITOR INFORMATION For information on hotels and sights, there are **Guìlín Tourism Information Service** centers around town, most noticeably outside the railway station (**✆ 0773/382-7391**) and in the **Central Square** (**Zhōngxīn Guǎngcǎng**; **✆ 0773/285-4318**).



ACCOMMODATIONS

Fúbō Shān Dàjiǔdiàn **1**
伏波山大酒店

Guìlín Bravo Hotel **5**
(Guìlín Bīnguǎn)
桂林宾馆

Guìlín Dānguì Dàjiǔdiàn **8**
(Guìlín Osmanthus Hotel)
桂林丹桂大酒店

Royal Garden Hotel **2**
(Diyuàn Dàjiǔdiàn)
帝苑大酒店

Sheraton Guìlín **4**
(Guìlín Dàyǔ Dàfàndiàn)
桂林大宇大饭店

DINING

Jùfúlín Měishíyuàn **3**
聚福林美食苑

Yíyuán Fàndiàn **7**
怡园饭店

Zàowángyé Xiāngwèi Jū **6**
(Vesta Restaurant)
灶王爷乡味居

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs **Bank of China** (open Mon–Fri, 8am–noon, 3–6pm) is at Shànhú Běi Lù 5. It offers forex and an ATM.

Internet Access Visit the third floor of **Lèqún Shǒujīchéng** at Zhōngshān Zhōng Lù 49, corner of of Lèqún Lù. Internet access is 24 hours, at ¥2 (25¢) per hour. Dial-up is **96163.**

Post Office The main post office (open 8am–8pm) is at Zhōngshān Zhōng Lù 249.

Visa Extensions The **Gōngānjú** (**PSB; ✆ 0773/582-9930;** open Mon–Fri 8:30am–noon and 3–6pm) is on the east side of the Lí River south off Lóngyīn Lù.

EXPLORING GUÌLÍN

In the center of town are two of Guìlín's main lakes left over from the moat that ringed the city in the Táng dynasty. To the western side of Zhōngshān Lù is **Róng Hú (Banyan Lake),** named after an 800-year-old banyan tree on its shore. On the eastern side is **Shàn Hú (Cedar Lake),** with its newly erected twin pagodas. A **Liǎngjiāng Sìhú (Two Rivers and Four Lakes) boat tour** offers visitors a chance to tour these lakes together with Guì Hú (Osmanthus Lake), Mùlóng Hú (Wooden Dragon Lake), and parts of the Lí Jiāng and Táohuā Jiāng (Peach Blossom) rivers, all of which are now connected by newly dredged waterways. Day sailings for ¥90 ($11) from 9:30am to 4pm, and evening sailings for ¥120 ($15) from 7:30 to 9:30pm, depart from the Jiěfàng Qiáo Mǎtóu (pier) on Bīnjiāng Lù near Jiěfàng Qiáo, and from the Zhīyīn Tái Mǎtóu on the eastern side of Cedar Lake. Buy tickets at hotel tour desks and at Shízì Jiē next to the Dàshìjiè Bridge (✆ **0773/282-2666**).

MOUNTAINS & CAVES

Diécǎi Shān (Folding Brocade Hill) Named for its striated layers of rock that resemble folded brocade, this hill was most popular with poets and painters in the Míng and Qīng dynasties, whose visits were commemorated by scores of inscriptions carved in the rock face. Halfway up the hill is the Wind Cave, a tunnel of cool breezes that extends right through the mountain. The city's highest peak (elev. 223m/731 ft.) has some unobstructed views of the Lí River.

Diécǎi Lù. Admission ¥13 ($1.50). 6:30am–6:30pm (cave, 7am–4pm). Bus: no. 2, 58.

Dúxiù Fēng (Solitary Beauty Peak) Tapering to a pavilion-capped peak, this 152m (498-ft.) high limestone beauty in the middle of town is the most dramatic of Guìlín's hills. A set of steep stairs winds to the top, where awaiting you is a spectacular panorama of Folding Brocade Hill to the north, Wave Subduing Hill to the east, and Seven Star Crag to the southeast. The hill is actually located on the grounds of the former palace (*wángchéng*) of a Míng dynasty prince, occupied today by the Guǎngxī Normal University. A gallery sells works by local artists at exorbitant prices.

Wángchéng 1. Admission ¥15 ($2). Apr–Oct 7am–7pm; Nov–Mar 7:30am–6:30pm. Bus: no. 1 (Lèqún Lù stop); from Zhōngshān Lù, take a right onto Xīhuá Lù for about 150m (490 ft.). The park entrance is on your left.

Fúbō Shān (Wave-Subduing Hill) This 213m (698-ft.) high hill offers some grand views from the peak and plenty of kitschy lore, including the **Sword Testing Stone,** a bizarre stalactite descending to within an inch of the ground. Legend has it that a Táng dynasty general, Fúbō, for whom the hill was allegedly named, took his mighty sword to the stone here. Also here is the **Thousand**

Buddha Cave, which contains about 200 Buddhist sculptures mostly from the Táng and the Sòng dynasties, many of whose heads were lopped off during the Cultural Revolution.

Bīnjiāng Lù. Admission ¥10 ($1.25). 6am–10:30pm. Bus: no. 2 or 58.

Lúdí Yán (Reed Flute Cave) ★★ Located a pleasant 45-minute bike ride northwest of town, Reed Flute Cave, whose name derives from the reeds that used to cover the entrance and were used to make flutes, is the most impressive and most popular of Guìlín's caves. Going first thing in the morning or late in the afternoon helps you avoid the overwhelming crowds. At any time, however, individual visitors may have to wait for a group of 20 or more tourists to amass before you can take the 40-minute tour of the cave—and only then with a Chinese-speaking guide. The highlight is the cavernous Crystal Palace of the Dragon King (Shuǐjīng Gōng) with a dense collection of limestone mounds reflected in pools of water, all lit by hundreds of colored lights. Despite the blatantly tacky artifice of it all, most visitors can't help but gasp at the scene before them. This grotto is said to have been an air-raid shelter during World War II.

Lúdí Lù. (If you're biking from the Guìlín Bravo Hotel, go north on Xīnyì Lù, take a left on Lìjūn Lù, and continue as it becomes Xīshān Lù; bear right as the road changes to Táohuā Jiāng Lù, and continue all the way to Lúdí Lù; take a right onto the bridge crossing the Peach Blossom River (Táohuā Jiāng) until you reach the park entrance.) Admission ¥45 ($5.50); in the slow season, ¥40 ($5). Apr–Nov 7:30am–5:20pm; Dec–Mar 8am–4:50pm. Bus: no. 3.

Qīxīng Gōngyuán (Seven Star Park) ★ Named for its seven hills whose configuration is said to resemble the Big Dipper, this extremely popular park's most famous attraction is the gargantuan **Qīxīng Yán (Seven Star Cave),** which requires about 40 minutes to tour and is full of brightly lit, bizarrely shaped rock outcroppings. Exiting the cave puts you in the vicinity of the aptly named **Luòtuo Shān (Camel Hill).** In the south of the park is the Cresent Moon Peak with its **Lóngyīn Dòng (Dragon Darkness Cave)** and **Guìhǎi Bēilín (Forest of Stelae),** which has thousands of stone tablet inscriptions from the last 1,600 years. There's plenty of room for some pleasant strolls away from the crowds.

Ziyóu Lù. Admission: ¥20 ($2.50) park; ¥30 ($2.75) cave, ¥25/$3.15; Dec–Mar. Park 6am–10pm; cave 8am–5:30pm. Bus: no. 10, 11, 14, 28, 52, or 58.

Xiàngbí Shān (Elephant Trunk Hill) Guìlín's most recognizable but least interesting hill got its name because part of it looks like an elephant's trunk dipping into the river. It's a short but steep climb to the top, where you can see the Lí River snaking through town. Halfway up the hill is a three-story Míng dynasty pagoda dedicated to Pǔxián, a servant of Buddha. At night, the park is aglow with multicolored lights.

Xiàngbí Lù. Admission ¥15 ($2). 6:30am–10:30pm. Bus: no. 2, 57, 58.

WHERE TO STAY

Hotels are often heavily booked in May, June, September, and October, so plan ahead if want to visit then. Many Guìlín hotels tack on a 15% service charge and a ¥8 ($1) per-person, per-night government tax, which rises to ¥25 ($3.10) during the second to sixth days of the Lunar New Year and also during the May and October national holidays.

EXPENSIVE

Guilín Bravo Hotel (Guìlín Bīnguǎn) ★★ Catering to foreigners since 1988, this former Holiday Inn, located on the northwestern bank of Banyan

Lake, is still the best four-star hotel in town. Rooms are comfortably furnished with large twin beds and soft chairs. Ninth-floor rooms have high ceilings and marvelous views of the lake. Bathrooms are bright and clean.

Róng Hú Nán Lù 14. ✆ **0773/282-3950.** Fax 0773/282-2101. www.glbravohtl.com. 274 units. ¥960 ($120) standard room; from ¥1,360 ($170) suite. 20%–30% discounts. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; lounge; outdoor swimming pool; rooftop tennis courts; health club; Jacuzzi; sauna; bike rental; concierge; tour desk; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; room service; dry cleaning/laundry; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Royal Garden Hotel (Dìyuàn Dàjiǔdiàn) ★★ Catering mostly to Japanese and lately also to American tour groups, this five-star hotel on the east bank of the Lí River offers first-rate facilities and all the standard luxuries. However, it's a little too inconvenient for the independent traveler. Spacious guest rooms are fitted with large twin beds and dark wood furniture, and bathrooms are clean.

Yánjiāng Lù. ✆ **0773/581-2411.** Fax 0773/581-5051. 335 units. ¥880–¥960 ($110–$120) standard room; from ¥1,840 ($230) suite. 10%–20% discounts. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; bar; lounge; nightly minority cultural show; outdoor swimming pool; outdoor tennis courts; health club; sauna; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; room service; dry cleaning/laundry; 24-hr. medical clinic. *In room:* A/C, TV, broadband (6th and 7th floors on request), minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Sheraton Guìlín (Guìlín Dàyǔ Dàfàndiàn) ★★★ Though showing signs of age, the Sheraton still offers the best and most efficient service in town. The hotel has an unparalleled location, flanked by the Lí River on one side and the new Zhèngyáng Pedestrian Street with its myriad shops and restaurants on the other. Guest rooms, arrayed around the modern if somewhat dark atrium lobby, are well appointed, with comfortable beds and clean marble bathrooms. The hotel offers very reliable Western dining, and also boasts a 20m (65-ft.) long swimming pool. Staff is professional, friendly, and very helpful.

Bīnjiāng Nánlù (west bank of Lí River). ✆ **0773/282-5588.** Fax 0773/282-5598. www.sheraton.com/guilin. 430 units. ¥1,245 ($150) double. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; lounge; indoor swimming pool; health club; sauna; bike rental; concierge; tour desk; airline-ticketing service; airport shuttle; 24-hr. business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; 24-hr. room service; babysitting; same-day dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, safe, hair dryer.

MODERATE

Fúbō Shān Dàjiǔdiàn ★ Located on the western banks of the Lí River, this is the best of the three-star locally managed hotels. Rooms are plain but perfectly comfortable and clean. River-view rooms are quite large, and fourth-floor rooms have been recently renovated.

Bīnjiāng Lù 121. ✆ **0773/ 282-9988.** Fax 0773/282-2328. 151 units. ¥640 ($80) standard room; ¥960 ($120) suite. 30% discounts. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; health club; sauna; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; room service; laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer (select rooms).

Guìlín Dānguì Dàjiǔdiàn (Guilín Osmanthus Hotel) This mid-range three-star hotel centrally located just north of the railway station is aiming for four stars with its recently renovated west wing, but falling short with new rooms that are still fairly basic and even a little dark. All the standard amenities are here, though, and beds are comfortable and bathrooms large.

Zhōngshān Nán Lù 451. ✆ **0773/383-4300.** Fax 0773/383-5316. 362 units. ¥320–¥560 ($40–$70) standard room; ¥1,300 ($162) suite. Up to 40% discounts. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; outdoor pool; health club; sauna; concierge; tour desk; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; room service; dry-cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge.

WHERE TO DINE

Guìlín's most famous local dish is *Guìlín mǐfěn* (Guìlín rice noodles), served at practically every street-corner eatery. Order it dry or in broth, with chicken, beef, even horse meat *(mǎròu),* or plain, then add chives, chili, and pickled sour green beans. Other local favorites, including snake, dog, seafood, and a variety of wild animals sometimes too exotic for foreign tastes, are available in many local restaurants, which usually don't have English menus. For Western food, stick to the international hotel restaurants such as the Sheraton's **Studio Café** and the Guìlín Bravo's **Patio Café. McDonald's** and **KFC** are both on Yīrén Lù off the Zhèngyáng pedestrian street.

MODERATE

Jùfúlín Měishíyuàn ★ GUÌLÍN/CANTONESE One of the more popular restaurants on the new Zhèngyáng Bùxíngjiē (Pedestrian St.), this well-lit and clean restaurant offers local food, stir-fries, and dim sum on the first floor and outdoors, and Cantonese cuisine on the second floor. Local favorites include sautéed snails, Lí River shrimp, steamed Lí River fish, and stewed turtle. Or order from the food on display outside the restaurant—spicy crayfish, skewered meats, tofu, and assorted vegetables—all of which can be grilled on the spot over an open fire.

Zhèngyáng Lù 10. ✆ **0773/280-8748.** Meal for 2 ¥80–¥120 ($10–$13). No credit cards. 11am–1:30am; dim sum not served 2:30–5:30pm.

Yíyuán Fàndiàn ★★ SÌCHUĀN Garnering consistently high marks from travelers, this restaurant serves some excellent spicy dishes, including the tears-inducing diced chicken stir-fried with bushels of chilies and garlic; and the *shuǐzhǔ niúròu* (tender beef slices and vegetables in a chili sauce). Calm the palette with *tángcù cuìpíyú* (crispy sweet-and-sour fish), then rev back up to a spicy finish with the *dāndān miàn* (noodles in spicy peanut sauce). The decor is pleasant, and the service is friendly and efficient.

Nánhuán Lù 106. ✆ **0773/282-0470.** English menu. Meal for 2 ¥80–¥100 ($10–$13). No credit cards. 11:20am–2pm and 5:20–9pm.

Zàowángyé Xiāngwèi Jū (Vesta Restaurant) ★ YÁO/ZHUÀNG The emphasis at this pleasant restaurant serving authentic Yáo and Zhuàng minority cuisines is on spices and fresh ingredients gathered from the countryside. Specialties include *shāncūn tǔjī* (free-range chicken soup), *záliáng zhútǒng fàn* (bamboo cooked rice), and *shāncūn làròu zhēng yúpiàn* (steamed taro with smoked meat).

Nánhuán Lù 96. ✆ **0773/282-7769.** Meal for 2 ¥80 ($10). No credit cards. 11am–2:30pm and 4:30–9:30pm.

SHOPPING

With generally over-inflated prices, Guìlín is no place for bargains. Snacks and candies that make nice gifts include *guìhuā sū* (a crisp, sweet osmanthus cracker) and *guìhuā wángchá* (osmanthus flower tea). The newest attraction, the **Zhèngyáng Pedestrian Street,** has a plethora of shops and stalls selling everything from teapots and jade to clothing and overpriced minority handicrafts and embroidery. The **Guìlín Wēixiào Táng Shāngshà (Guìlín Niko Niko Do Co, Ltd.)** at Zhōngshān Zhōng Lù 187, open from 9am to 10:30pm, is the largest **department store** in town.

LÍ JIĀNG AFTER DARK

Minority song and dance performances are held nightly at the **Lí Jiāng Theatre** (**Lí Jiāng Jùyuàn),** Bīnjiāng Lù (✆ **0773/286-0288**). Performances cost ¥60 to ¥100 ($7.50–$13) and run from 8 to 9:15pm. The **Guìlín Folk Customs Centre (Guìlín Mínsú Fēngqíng Yuán)** at Línjiāng Lù (✆ **0773/581-5678**) charges ¥60 ($7.50) for shows from 7 to 9:30pm. **The Guìlín Spring Theatre (Chūntiān Jùchǎng)** at Xìngyì Lù 31 (✆ **0773/285-6290**) offers 7:30pm performances for ¥80 ($10) that are only fractionally better than the other two. Nighttime cruises around Guìlín's lakes (see above) are also popular.

A POPULAR BOAT TRIP: LÍ JIĀNG (LÍ RIVER)

A boat cruise from Guìlín to Yángshuò along the 432km (270-mile) Lí River is usually sold as the highlight of a Guìlín visit, and indeed, the 83km (52-mile) stretch between the two towns affords some of the country's most breathtaking scenery as the river snakes gracefully through tall karst mountains, gigantic bamboo sprays, and picturesque villages—sights that have inspired countless poets and painters for generations. Unfortunately, such inspiration these days costs a lot more than it used to and, inevitably, monopoly and price-gouging have become the trademarks of this cruise. Foreigners, segregated onto "foreigner boats," pay ¥460 to ¥480 ($57–$60), which is especially egregious considering that Chinese tourists pay less than half that amount. Unfortunately, there is no other way to travel this stretch of the Lí River except on these official tourist authority–sanctioned boats. If time and convenience are your priorities, then take the cruise by all means. Otherwise, if you plan to spend some time in Yángshuò, consider bypassing the cruise; more beautiful karst scenery can be better toured on foot, by bike, or by boat from Yángshuò.

Currently, river trips for foreigners depart from Zhú Jiāng Mǎtóu (Zhú Jiāng Pier) 24km (15 miles) and a half-hour bus ride south of Guìlín at around 8:30am. The first 1½ hours of the cruise to the town of Yángdī is serene and comparatively unexciting but for names of hills along the way, such as a woman yearning for her husband's return, the Eight Immortals, even a calligraphy brush. Visual highlights are clustered between **Yángdī** and the picturesque town of **Xīngpíng. Jiǔmǎ Huà Shān (Nine Horses Fresco Hill)** is a steep cliff face with shadings and markings said to resemble a fresco of nine horses. A little further on, **Huángbù Dàoyǐng,** a series of karst peaks and their reflections, is the tableau burnished on the back of a Chinese ¥20 note.

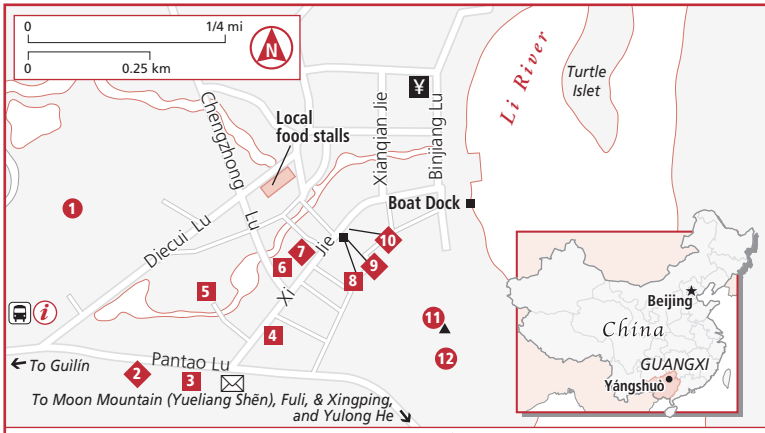
Boats arrive in Yángshuò in the early afternoon after 4 or 5 hours of sailing. There's a stop for shopping, after which tour buses transport passengers back to Guìlín (1 hr.). Tickets for the cruise can be bought at hotel tour desks or at CITS, and include round-trip transportation to Zhú Jiāng Pier, an English-speaking guide, and a Chinese lunch.

Note: See Appendix A for Chinese translations of key locations listed above.

3 Yángshuò ★★★

Guǎngxī Province, 65km (50 miles) S of Guìlín

Located at the terminus of the Lí River cruise from Guìlín, the small town of Yángshuò has long been a backpackers' mecca. Set admid an awesome cluster of limestone pinnacles, Yángshuò is more beautiful, less expensive, and significantly less crowded than Guìlín. In fact, some of the most impressive karst scenery in Guǎngxī can be found just a short bike ride outside town. With its



ACCOMMODATIONS
Àiyuán Bīnguǎn **4**
瑷源宾馆

Hóngfú Fàndiàn **8**
(Hóngfú Palace Hotel)
鸿福饭店

New West Street Hotel **3**
(Xīn Xījiē Dàjiǔdiàn)
新西街大酒店

Paradise Yángshuò Resort **5**
(Yángshuò Bǎilèlái Dùjià Fàndiàn)
阳朔百东来度假饭店

Xī Jiē Jiǔdiàn **6**
(West Street Hotel)
西街酒店

DINING
Le Vôtre **9**
东得法式餐厅

Lisa's **10**

Méiyǒu Café **7**
没有饭店

Planet Yángshuò **2**
(Yínzuò Xīcāntīng)
银座西餐厅

ATTRACTIONS
Bìlián Fēng (Green Lotus Peak) **11**
碧莲峰

Shānshuǐ Yuán **12**
山水园

Yángshuò Gōngyuán (Yángshuò Park) **1**
阳朔公园

Bank
Bus Station
Information
Post Office

inexpensive hostels and Western-style cafes, some foreigners have been known to stay for months, sometimes even years. Although today's Yángshuò, overtaken by upscale hotels, new shops and bazaars, and hordes of eager tourists, is no longer the unknown, quiet idyll of years past, it remains a lovely and relaxing place to break a journey and to soak up some of China's most beautiful scenery.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The nearest rail and air connections are in Guìlín, but tickets can be purchased here from CITS. From the bus station on Pāntáo Lù, **buses** depart for Guìlín (70 min.; ¥7.50/95¢) every 10 to 15 minutes from 7:30am to 8pm; for Xīngpíng (1 hr.; ¥3.50/45¢) every 15 minutes from 6am to 7:30pm; for Fúlì (20 min.; ¥5/60¢) every 15 minutes from 6am to 7:30pm; and for Gāotián (½ hr.; ¥2/25¢) every 15 minutes from 6:30am to 7pm. Direct buses also run to Guǎngzhōu (8 hr.; ¥150/$19) at 10am, noon, 4pm, and 10pm; and to Shēnzhèn (10 hr.; ¥180/$22) at 5:30pm and 9pm. The **Guìlín–Hong**

Kong Express Bus (✆ **0773/585-7088**) runs a luxury air-conditioned bus (¥350/$44 one-way; ¥600/$75 round-trip) between Guìlín and Hong Kong every Friday evening. It stops in Yángshuò at the Paradise Hotel at 8pm to pick up passengers, but you have to call and book a ticket ahead of time. The bus arrives at Huánggǎng in Shēnzhèn at 7am.

Taxis from Guìlín (your hotel in Guìlín can arrange this) will make the trip in an hour at a cost of around ¥250 to ¥300 ($31–$38).

GETTING AROUND Yángshuò's main thoroughfare is the cobblestone pedestrian street **Xī Jiē (West St.),** also known as Yángrén Jiē (Foreigner's Street). It runs from Pāntáo Lù to the Lí River boat docks and is where the bulk of travelers' cafes, shops, and basic guesthouses are clustered. The town itself is small enough to be traversed by foot in less than an hour. **Bikes** are the best means of getting to outlying sights, and are available for rent for ¥10 ($1.25) at many Xī Jiē cafes and hotels, as well as at the southern end of Xī Jiē towards Pāntáo Lù. **Motorcycle taxis,** normally ¥3 (40¢) for 3km (2 miles), will offer to take tourists out to Moon Mountain and nearby caves for ¥30 ($3.75), but be sure to agree on all the desired destinations and cost beforehand.

TOURS & GUIDES **CITS** at Xī Jiē 110 (✆ **0773/882-7102;** fax 0773/882-7102; citsys@sina.com.cn) has three outlets on Xī Jiē and offers many local tours. A 1- or 2-day Lóngshèng Minority Village tour costs ¥150 ($19); the bus leaves Yángshuò at 7:30am and returns at 7pm. There are also Lí River cruises between Yángshuò and Xīngpíng and between Xīngpíng and Yángdī. Day tours can be booked at several travelers' cafes, including **Planet Yángshuò** at Pāntáo Lù 47 (✆ **13507839231**).

VISITOR INFORMATION The friendly **Yángshuò Lǚyóu Iīxún Fúwù Zhōngxīn (Yángshuò Tourism Information Service Center)** just south of the bus station on Pāntáo Lù (✆ **0773/882-7922**) can answer basic questions on accommodations, local sights, and tours.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China** is located at Bīnjiāng Lù 11. Forex hours are Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm.

Internet Access Internet access is available at a number of cafes and also at **CITS** (Xī Jiē 110) for ¥6 to ¥10 (75¢–$1.25) per hour. Dial-up is **96163.**

Post Office The post office (open 9am–9:30pm) is at Pāntáo Lù 28..

Visa Extensions The Yángshuò **PSB** office at Chéngběi Lù 39 now tells foreigners that they have to go to Guìlín to renew their visas.

EXPLORING YÁNGSHUÒ

The majority of Yángshuò's treasures are located a bike ride out of town. **Xī Jiē (West St.),** with its souvenir shops and travelers' cafes, has become a bona-fide tourist attraction for Chinese visitors, who completely take over the street starting in the early afternoon when boats from Guìlín pull in. The former Míng dynasty **Jiāngxī Huìguǎn,** once the guild hall for merchants from Jiāngxī Province, has now become part of the Hóngfú Hotel on Xī Jiē, but it's worth a quick pop-in for its finely carved lattice doors and windows.

In the southeastern part of town along the western banks of the Lí River, the **Shānshuǐ Yuán** park (¥21/$3; open 8:30am–6pm) is home to the impressive karst mountain **Bìlián Fēng (Green Lotus Peak),** which towers over the town and the harbor. In the western part of town next to the bus station, **Yángshuò**

Gōngyuán (Yángshuò Park) (Diécuì Lù 22; ¥9/$1.10; open 6:30am–7pm) sees few foreign visitors. You can hike to the top of Xīláng Shān for some arresting views of the countryside.

In the evenings around 7pm or 7:30pm, that quaint, anachronistic activity of **cormorant fishing** (45 min.–1 hr.) is trotted out for tourists. The cormorant, fitted with a fairly tight noose around its neck to prevent it from swallowing its catch, typically dives in harness for fish, which it captures in its beak and returns to its master on his flat bamboo raft. A good cormorant is said to be able to feed an entire family. You can purchase tickets for ¥30 to ¥40 ($3.75–$5) from CITS or any of the backpackers' cafes.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

With so many karst hills and caves around the area, Yángshuò has become a little mecca for **rock climbing,** boasting some 70 climbing circuits. English-speaking Echo at the **Karst Café,** Xiànqián Jiē 42 (✆ **0773/882-8482**), helps organize and lead both half-day trips for ¥150 ($20) and 1- to 3-day trips for ¥300 ($38) per person per day. During the summer months, some cafes on Xī Jiē will organize **rafting** or **kayaking** trips on the Lí River and on smaller rivers like the Yùlóng Hé (Jade Dragon River). Those preferring something more sedate can take courses on tai chi, Chinese cooking, Chinese calligraphy, Chinese medicine, or Mandarin at various outfits in town, including the **Chinese Culture and Art Promotion Workshop,** Diécuì Jiē 2 (✆ **0773/881-1121**).

WHERE TO STAY

Xī Jiē, once a backpacker's dream with its cheap hostels and guesthouses, has of late been playing host to some newer, smaller hotels that provide perfectly comfortable and unpretentious accommodations. Larger, better-appointed hotels are along Pāntáo Lù, but these lack the charm and personal touches of the guesthouses. Some seriously offensive price gouging occurs during holidays (1st weeks in May and Oct) and peak periods (summer), when rooms can cost up to four times the usual price.

EXPENSIVE

New West Street Hotel (Xīn Xī Jiē Dàjiǔdiàn) ★ The jury is still out on this large, seven-story Chinese-style hotel—so new at press time you could smell the paint—but the hotel clearly aims to lure away a chunk of the Paradise Resort's foreign clientele. For now, rooms have the benefit of being the newest in town, outfitted with firm beds, sparkling white linens, and chunky Chinese furniture. Bathrooms are large, airy, and clean.

Pāntáo Lù. ✆ **0773/881-8888.** Fax 0773/881-8898. www.nwshotel.com. 160 units. ¥800 ($98) standard room; from ¥1,060 ($128) suite. 20% discounts. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; sauna, concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; room service; laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar.

Paradise Yángshuò Resort (Yángshuò Bǎilèlái Dùjià Fàndiàn) ★ Located in its own compound at the western end of Xī Jiē, this three-star Chinese courtyard–style resort dating to the 1950s once prided itself on offering the only classy accommodations in town for foreign tour groups. Guest rooms are furnished with comfortable beds, and bathrooms are duly clean. Service is efficient, if not exactly warm.

Xī Jiē 116. ✆ **0773/882-2109.** Fax 0773/882-2106. www.paradiseyangshuo.com. 145 units. ¥664 ($80) standard room; from ¥996 ($120) suite. 20% discounts. 18% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; outdoor swimming pool; health club; bowling alley; sauna; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; room service; next-day dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar.

MODERATE

Àiyuán Bīnguǎn *Value* This pleasant new (Feb 2002) Chinese-style hotel has simply but tastefully decorated rooms with wooden floors, Chinese-style furniture, comfortable beds, and clean bathrooms. Deluxe rooms come with balconies. An enclosed courtyard full of bamboo furnishings adds to the charm of this tightly run operation.

Xī Jiē 115. ✆ **0773/881-1868.** Fax 0773/881-1916. 63 units. ¥360–¥480 ($45–$60) standard room. 20%–30% discounts. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; concierge; tour desk; business center; shopping arcade; salon; room service; next-day laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer.

West Street Hotel (Xī Jiē Jiǔdiàn) *Finds* This hotel at the western end of Xī Jiē doesn't look like much from the outside, but it's a lovely, friendly, well-run place that makes you feel like you're in a friend's home. Guest rooms have wooden floors, comfortable beds, and rattan furniture, and each is decorated with inspired individual flourishes. Bathrooms are clean and well maintained. The hotel has a kitchen that serves a Western buffet breakfast and Chinese lunch and dinner. The staff is friendly and speaks some English.

Xī Jiē 108. ✆ **0773/882-8659.** Fax 0773/882-8658. WSHotel@yeah.net. 41 units. ¥400 ($50) standard room; ¥600 ($75) suite. 20%–50% discounts. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bike rental; room service; next-day laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

INEXPENSIVE

Hóngfù Fàndiàn (Hóngfù Palace Hotel) Housed in the former Jiāngxī Guild Hall (300 yr. old), this new treat of a hotel is the brainchild of two French brothers who also run the French restaurant, Le Vôtre, next door. The spacious guest rooms, though a little dark, are simply decorated with traditional Chinese furniture and comfortable beds. Bathrooms are large and clean.

Xī Jiē 79. ✆ **0773/882-9489.** Fax 0773/882-9499. hongfuhotelyangshuo@yahoo.fr. 28 units (shower only). ¥200 ($25) (¥600/$75 in high season) standard room; ¥500 ($62) suite. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; concierge; room service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, no phone.

WHERE TO DINE

There are plenty of cafes on Xī Jiē offering Western, Chinese, and local dishes at very reasonable prices. Although such alfresco dining is extremely pleasant and allows for good people-watching, some tourists have recently complained about being harassed mid-bite by overeager vendors or would-be English practitioners offering their services as tour guides.

The first cafe to serve banana pancakes in Yángshuò, **Lisa's**, at Xī Jiē 71 (✆ **0773/882-0217**), is one of the oldest and most venerable institutions around the cafe scene. Lisa also turns out some of the town's best pizzas as well as all the usual Western and Chinese staples at ¥10 to ¥25 ($1.25–$3.10) per dish. The **Méiyǒu Café** at Xī Jiē 86 (✆ **0773/882-9406**) successfully lives up to its mantra, "*méiyǒu* warm beer, *méiyǒu* lousy food, *méiyǒu* rip-offs" (*méiyǒu* means "don't have"). **Minnie Mao's,** at Xī Jiē 83 (✆ **0773/882-6484**), provides tourist information along with its popular pizzas. **Planet Yángshuò,** at Pāntáo Lù 47 (✆ **013507839231**), serves even cheaper pancakes than the Xī Jiē establishments, a decent Greek souvlaki pita, and some credible burritos. For the more adventurous, snake, dog, and rat are served here too.

For more elegant dining, charming **Le Vôtre** at Xī Jiē 79 (✆ **0773/882-8040**), occupying half of the former Míng dynasty Jiāngxī Guild Hall, offers everything from T-bone steaks to Chinese dishes, but signature specialties include escargots, *moules chaude* (steamed mussels), and *filet du canard grillé* (grilled duck filet). Finish off with a crème brûlée or the crêpes Suzettes. A full

bevy of Italian and French wines is available. Main courses range from ¥30 to ¥80 ($3.75–$10).

To eat where the locals eat, head a block north of Xī Jiē to **Diécuì Lù,** where informal food stalls serve specialties such as delicious *píjiǔ yú* (fish cooked in beer and spices) and *bàochǎo tiánluó* (Lí River snails stuffed with pork). However, be advised that some visitors have found the sanitary standards here to be questionable. There are no menus in English, so you may have to point at what other people are eating. A meal for two costs ¥20 to ¥50 ($2.50–$6.25).

SHOPPING

The shops along Xī Jiē deliver all the usual suspects—Máo buttons, batik clothing and tablecloths, North Face jackets and parkas, minority embroidery, jewelry, cloisonné, postcards—but hard bargaining is a must. **Summit Climbing** at Xī Jiē 88, open 9am to midnight, sells outdoor gear.

AROUND YÁNGSHUÒ

See appendix A for Chinese translations of key locations.

RIVER TRIPS

There are plenty of opportunities to take shorter and significantly less expensive river trips from the Yángshuò area—check with the travel agencies and backpackers' cafes on Xī Jiē for your options. The fascist Lí River patrol authorities have a stranglehold on all river traffic and there are strict laws about the kinds of boats foreigners can ride on, so stick with the legitimate outfits rather than with the random touts who approach you, no matter how friendly they are.

One of the more popular trips is downriver to the town of **Fúlì** (see below), but boats only ply this route during the summer and early fall. Another trip is to the town of **Xīngpíng,** about 3 hours upstream from Yángshuò. Official boats make the run in summer for about ¥60 to ¥80 ($7.50–$10) per person. Rather than sail upstream, some tourists prefer to cycle or take a bus to Xīngpíng and catch a boat downstream back to Yángshuò. Some tour operators come up with creative combinations of hiking/river-trip tours, which involve traveling to Xīngpíng by bus or bike, then hiking along the river for part of the way before hopping onto a boat for the rest of the journey.

MOON MOUNTAIN (YUÈLIÀNG SHĀN) AREA

A pleasant bike trip involves riding 8km (5 miles) out to **Moon Hill (Yuèliàng Shān)** in the direction of Gāotián. Follow Pāntáo Lù in the opposite direction from Guìlín until the traffic circle, and bear right onto Kàngzhàn Lù. Once you leave town, you'll be greeted around each bend with unbelievably scenic vistas of karst pinnacles stretching as far as your eyes can see.

Along the road to Moon Mountain are several recently built attractions geared strictly towards Chinese tour groups that can be safely missed. About 6km (4 miles) from Yángshuò, the **Gǔróng Gōngyuán** (¥18/$2.25; open 6am–sunset) has an intriguing 17m (56-ft.) tall, over 1,500-year-old banyan tree that looks like a collection of entwined snakes up close and like a giant umbrella from afar. Visit if you have time, but you can see the tree just as easily from atop **Moon Mountain,** 1km (½ mile) away, (¥8/$1; open 7am–6pm), so named because of the large moon-shaped arch under its peak. A series of steep steps winds through thick bamboo brush all the way to the top, where there are some marvelous views.

If there's an adventurous spelunker in you waiting to break free, there are several more interesting, undeveloped caves around here worth exploring. However,

these are suitable only for the fit, as none have paved paths and all will require you to get down and dirty by crawling through holes and climbing rickety ladders. **Buddha Cave** (¥60/$7.50; open 8am–6pm summer, 9am–5pm winter), along with **Water Cave (Shuǐyán),** have underground pools and rivers on which you can paddle and get that mud bath you've always wanted.

FÚLÌ

Located along the Lí River downstream from Yángshuò, the village of Fúlì, first established over 1,300 years ago during the Táng dynasty, is a popular excursion either by boat or bike. Most travelers seem to prefer the latter for the gorgeous scenery along the 6km (4-mile) ride. Fúlì holds a **market** every 3 days and while there's not much to buy for tourists (but potentially a lot to lose to pickpockets—be careful!), there's enough local color here to take an hour or so of your time. Just before the market is a lane that winds past traditional stone houses down to the river. To cycle to Fúlì, head east on Pāntáo Lù past the traffic circle and follow the road across the bridge. You can also take a bus from the station on Pāntáo Lù.

XĪNGPÍNG ★★

Surrounded by a jungle of karst pinnacles, the charming, as yet unspoiled village of Xīngpíng about 25km (15 miles) upstream of Yángshuò is being touted by some as the next Yángshuò, meaning the next backpackers' haven, now that Yángshuò has become more of a commercialized circus. Cobblestone streets wend their ways through this quaint village of stone houses that's refreshingly free of souvenir stores, and residents go about their daily business with nary a glance spared for the visitor. The most scenic area is the riverfront; on market days you'll see villagers from the surrounding areas boarding boats laden with everything from live chickens to new aluminum woks. A few cafes and backpackers' hostels have sprung up here, but accommodations and dining are still fairly basic. There are regular buses to Xīngpíng from the Yángshuò bus station, or you can ride your bike here in 3 to 4 hours.

An interesting side trip from Xīngpíng is to **Yúcūn** (literally "Fishing Village"), a tiny, picturesque Míng dynasty village (1506–1521) 20 minutes downstream along the Lí River, whose more famous visitors have included Sun Yat-sen in 1921 and Bill Clinton in 1998. Full of traditional Míng and Qīng dynasty houses with white walls and gray tiled roofs with upturned eaves, as well as the occasional ancestral hall, the village requires a ¥5 (60¢) entrance fee which includes a tour by a Chinese-speaking local. Daily boats make the 20-minute trip to Yúcūn for ¥25 ($3) round-trip. They depart Xīngpíng's waterfront between 8am and 5:30pm (the ticket booth is to the right at the end of the main street), but boats only depart with a quorum of 10, which sometimes can mean a wait of hours in low season. The gorgeous boat ride between Xīngpíng and Yúcūn, however, is generally worth the bit of hassle in getting there.

YÙLÓNG HÉ (JADE DRAGON RIVER) ★★★

One of the loveliest trips outside Yángshuò, this river, sometimes dubbed **Xiǎo Lí Jiāng (Lesser Lí River),** is, if anything, even more beautiful and certainly quieter than the Lí. The river's more famous landmarks may be its bridges, in particular the 59m (194-ft.) long Míng dynasty **Yùlóng Qiáo (Jade Dragon Bridge)** found in the town of **Báishā,** but it's the scenery of small villages nestled at the foot of karst hills surrounded by rice paddies and a lazy winding river that most visitors remember long after they've left. Many of the travelers' cafes offer full-day tours of the river and surrounding sights, but it's entirely possible

to visit on your own. Just pack a picnic, plenty of film, and rain gear, check your bike's tire pressure, and you're off.

There are several routes by which to explore the river. From Yángshuò, head out towards Moon Hill. Before the bridge crossing the Yùlóng Hé, head right on the dirt trail which can, with several deviations, take you all the way up to Báishā and the Jade Dragon Bridge. You can return along these back paths, or head back from Báishā on the main Guìlín–Yángshuò highway. Or reverse the order and take the highway to Báishā (9km/6 miles from Yángshuò), then cycle back down through the villages. Chances are you'll get lost on some of these paths, that can narrow to the width of your bicycle (so get off and walk carefully or you may end up in the mud!), but that's half the fun. Not to worry, the villagers around here are more than happy to set you right, and there are enough paths between the river and the highway that you won't be lost for long.

Alternatively, some travelers have sailed back down the Yùlóng Hé on narrow bamboo rafts for ¥100 to ¥200 ($12–$25), though I don't advise it. Several years ago, there was a boating fatality involving a foreigner in the lower reaches of the river. Because new rules requiring passengers to wear safety jackets seem to be honored more in the breach, this is a risky undertaking at best. Some travelers have settled for sailing down a very short, relatively smooth stretch of the river from Báishā, but even this involves having to get off the raft occasionally so it can be poled down the bigger bumps.

4 Lóngshèng

Guǎngxī Province, 90km (55 miles) NW of Guìlín, 60km (36 miles) E of Sānjiāng

A 3-hour bus ride northwest of Guìlín, Lóngshèng is located on the northern mountainous border between the Guǎngxī Zhuàng Autonomous Region and Guìzhōu. This remote hilly area is dominated by minority groups, chiefly the Dòng, Miáo, and Yáo, who pursue terrace farming, hunting, and logging. The highlight here is **Lóngjǐ Tītián (Dragon's Backbone Rice Terraces),** a beautifully sculpted landscape of terraced rice fields 40 minutes southeast of town.

The months of May and August through October are the best times to visit. Though the rainy season typically lasts from February to May, May is planting season and offers some of the most spectacular vistas when the rice fields are submerged in water. In September and October, just before the fall harvest, the fields are covered in waves of golden yellow. *Note:* Please turn to Appendix A for Chinese translations of key locations.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE From the **Lóngshèng Bus Station** (✆ **0773/751-6097**) at the intersection of Guìlóng Lù and Xīnlóng Xī Lù, there are buses to Guìlín (3 hr.; ¥15/$1.90) every 40 minutes from 6:50am to 6:40pm; to Sānjiāng (2 hr.; ¥8/$1) every half hour from 6am to 5:50pm; and to Lóngjǐ Tītián/Lóngjǐ Terrace Fields (45 min.; ¥6.50/80¢) at 7:30am and every 2 hours from 9am to 5pm. Return buses depart Lóngjǐ Tītián for Lóngshèng at 7:20am, 8:50am, 11am, 1pm, 3pm, and 4:30pm.

VISITOR INFORMATION You can pick up informational brochures (some in English and with maps) on local sights and accommodations at the **Lóngshèng Lǚyóu Zǒng Gōngsī (Lóngshèng Tourism Company),** located left of the waiting room at the bus station (✆ **0773/751-7566**). The local English teacher who runs the **Lóngjǐ Dùjià Shānzhuāng (Riverside Hotel)** at Guìlóng Lù 5 (✆ **0773/751-1335**) can also provide information on local sights.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs None available.

Internet Access The Internet cafe above the **Xīnhuá Bookstore** (open 9am–midnight) at Gǔlóng Jiē 18 charges ¥2 (25¢) per hour. Dial-up is **96163.**

Post Office The post office (open 8am–5:30pm) is south of the Xīnhuá Bookstore on Gǔlóng Lù.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE

The best place to stay is not Lóngshèng itself but the village of Píng'ān up in Lóngjǐ Tītián (see below). If you end up having to stay in the town, however, the most modern place is the new two-star **Lóngshèng Dàjiǔdiàn,** located at the center of town on Zhōngxīn Jiē (✆ **0773/751-7718**). Standard rooms with private bathroom for ¥160 to ¥200 ($20–$25) are unremarkably decorated but are spacious and comfortable. Bathrooms are a little dark but adequately clean. The hotel has a Chinese restaurant on the third floor, which can sometimes be noisy for guests on the fourth floor. The **Riverside Hotel (Kǎikǎi Lǚshè)** at Guìlóng Lù 5 (✆ **0773/751-1335**) has dorm beds for ¥20 to ¥40 ($2.50–$5) and serves palatable, inexpensive food with an English menu.

The **Lǜsè Càiguǎn** (✆ **0773/751-2473**), at the corner of Xīnglóng Běi Lù and Shèngyuán Lù, has an English menu and serves inexpensive tasty fare such as sautéed chicken with bamboo shoots, beef with green pepper, and home-style bean curd.

AROUND LÓNGSHÈNG

Located 28km (17 miles) southeast of Lóngshèng, the spectacular **Lóngjǐ Tītián (Dragon's Backbone Terrace Fields)** ★★★ were first farmed in the Yuán dynasty and completed in the Míng. These remarkable feats of engineering resemble ribbons gracefully undulating up the mountains to peaks as high as 880m (2,886 ft.). The best base from which to explore the terraces is the Zhuàng village of **Píng'ān** right atop the dragon's backbone. Buses from Lóngshèng to Píng'ān stop along the way at the Zhuàng village of **Jīnzhú Zhài** and the Yáo village of **Huāngluó Zhài,** the latter famous for the impossibly long hair of its women villagers. It's possible to hike up through some gorgeous fields to Píng'ān from either village (45 min.–1½ hr.), but the route from Jīnzhū Zhài (not clearly marked so you can get lost, but most villagers can point you in the right direction) bypasses Píng'ān's entrance, which means you won't have to pay the entrance fee of ¥30 ($3.75).

Píng'ān is an over-600-year-old Zhuàng village with about 150 households, many with the family name of Liáo. The most popular walking circuit for those short on time is a 90-minute loop that takes in Viewpoint 1 and Viewpoint 2, the latter located atop one of the highest ridges. It's also possible and pleasant to hike to **Lóngjǐ Gǔ Zhài** village (1 hr. one-way) to the west and to the Yáo village of **Dà Zhài** (3 hr. one-way) to the east, although the second will require a full day and the services of a guide (usually someone from the guesthouse where

Women Behaving Badly

Some visitors complain about being harassed by Yáo women who pester them to buy silver jewelry or to watch them perform their hair-combing ritual, after which they demand large sums. They also attempt to charge for photography, so keep the lens cap on.

you're staying). The **views** ★★★ from Dà Zhài, however, are even more spectacular than from Píng'ān and are worth the trip if you have the time.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE

Accommodations in Píng'ān are in basic traditional wooden homes with little to none of the amenities of a regular hotel. Most of the hostels provide 24-hour hot water, but showers and toilets are typically communal. The hostels also offer decent Western, Chinese, Zhuàng, and Yáo specialties such as *zhútǒng fàn* (fragrant rice cooked in bamboo) and *làròu* (smoked pork).

The **Lóngjǐ Dùjià Shānzhuāng (Lóngjǐ Riverside Hotel; ✆ 0773/758-3047**), close to the Viewpoint One, is the best outfitted of the hostels with 16 standard rooms for ¥70 ($9) with private bathroom. Rooms are clean and comfortable, and there is a nice patio where guests can unwind with cool beers after a hard day of trekking. The staff is friendly and speaks some English. Plans are underway to provide Internet service. The **Lìqíng Lǚshè (Lìqíng Guesthouse; ✆ 0773/758-3048**) has two buildings in different locations; a bed costs ¥20 ($2.50). The second building higher up the mountain offers some stunning morning vistas. Service is friendly and the hostel serves a robust Western breakfast. For unparalleled unobstructed views, **Lǎnyuè Gé (View Place Inn; ✆ 0773/758-3005**), just below the Viewpoint Two, is one of the highest-situated buildings and is especially popular with French travelers. Rooms are basic but clean, there is 24-hour hot water, and laundry service is available.

5 Sānjiāng

Guǎngxī Province, 60km (36 miles) W of Lóngshèng, 110km (66 miles) SW of Zhàoxìng

The Sānjiāng Dòng Minority Autonomous County is 7 hours northwest of Guìlín, just south of the border with Guìzhōu Province. The Dòng comprise over 50% of the county's 300,000 inhabitants. Many visitors head immediately for the lovely Chéngyáng Wind and Rain Bridge about 20km (12 miles) northeast of town, but also attractive and worth exploring are the many Dòng villages around Sānjiāng. The Dòng are known for their spectacular festivals (p. 612). *Note:* Please turn to Appendix A for Chinese translations of key locations.

AROUND SĀNJIĀNG

The magnificently crafted covered **Chéngyáng Wind and Rain Bridge (Chéngyáng Fēngyǔ Qiáo)** ★★★, Sānjiāng's most famous attraction, is located in Chéngyáng District about 20km (12 miles) northeast of town. Built of wood without a single nail, this 64m (210-ft.) long bridge spanning the Línxī River has five white-edged, triple-eaved pavilions built on stone piers, three in the riverbed. The bridge marks the entrance (¥10/$1.25) to the eight Dòng villages of Chéngyáng District, all well worth exploring. The village of **Mǎ'ān** has a seven-tiered drum tower, while **Píng Zhài** has a smaller three-pavilion bridge which is unfortunately in need of repair. The largest village, **Dà Zhài,** hosts a large **market** every 5 days (on the 6th, 11th, 16th, and so on of the month).

The **Chéngyáng Qiáo Zhāodàisuǒ** (**Chéngyáng Bridge National Hostel; ✆ 0772/858-2468;** tim_hostel@hotmail.com), a well-run hostel located on the other side of the Chéngyáng Wind and Rain Bridge and favored by foreign travelers, is the best place to stay in Sānjiāng. This traditional wooden Dòng-style hotel has rooms for ¥20 ($2.50) per bed or ¥40 ($5) standard, fitted with beds and mosquito nets, clean communal showers and toilets, and an upstairs porch that offers some of the best views of the Wind and Rain Bridge. The friendly

owners speak some English and can organize tours of the surrounding Dòng and Miáo villages. Plus they cook up excellent traditional Dòng, Chinese, and Western food; a meal for two costs ¥30 to ¥60 ($4–$7.50). Internet service is available.

OTHER MINORITY VILLAGES

For a unique day trip out of Sānjiāng, visit some of the interesting Dòng villages on the way to Dúdòng (48km/29 miles northwest of Sānjiāng) that have not been sanitized for tourists. Take the bus to Dúdòng and hop off along the way at any village that interests you; or arrange a day tour with the **Chéngyáng Bridge Travel Service** at Jiāngfēng Jiē 14 (✆ **0772/861-6820**) or at the Chéngyáng Bridge National Hostel if you're staying there. About 30km (20 miles) from Sānjiāng, **Bāxié Zhài** ★★ has the oldest standing village entrance in Sānjiāng, complete with faded paintings of dragons and phoenixes, a seven-tiered drum tower, and an impressive four-pavilion wind and rain bridge. **Píngliú Zhài** is famous for its bull fighting during the Dòng Bull Fighting Festival. A little further on, lovely **Bātuán Zhài** is unique for having a double-passageway wind and rain bridge *(rénchù fēndào qiáo)* ★★, with an upper level for humans and a lower level for animals.

Off the Dúdòng circuit but about 48km (29 miles) directly north of Sānjiāng is the village of **Mǎpàng,** famous for its superb tapering nine-tiered wooden drum tower, which was built without any nails.

6 Běihǎi

Guǎngxī Province, 580km (360 miles) W of Hong Kong, 229km (142 miles) S of Nánníng

Located at the southeastern tip of Guǎngxī, Běihǎi is a sleepy coastal town famous for its beaches and pearls. First settled over 2,000 years ago, this fishing community was opened up to Western powers after the Yāntái Agreement of 1876; Westerners moved in and established consulates and businesses here. With a subtropical climate offering plenty of sunshine, and a relaxed pace of life, Běihǎi makes for a pleasant escape from the nonstop frenzy of many Chinese cities. *Note:* Please turn to Appendix A for Chinese translations of key locations.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Běihǎi is connected by **flights** to Běijīng (3 hr.), Guǎngzhōu (50 min.), Guìlín (45 min.), Shēnzhèn (1 hr.), Shànghǎi (2 hr.), Hong Kong (1 hr., 20 min.), Guìyáng (1 hr.), and Kūnmíng (1½ hr.). Tickets can be purchased at the **CAAC** office at Běibùwān Xī Lù, 2nd floor of Mínháng Dàshà (✆ **0779/303-3757**) from 8:30am to 8:30pm. Buses depart from here for the airport (30 min.; ¥10/$1.25) 24km (9 miles) east of town 2 hours before scheduled departures and also meet incoming flights. Taxis to the airport should run ¥50 ($6.25).

From the **railway station** (✆ **0779/320-9898**) located between downtown and Silver Beach, twice-daily trains run to Nánníng (3 hr.), where there are more extensive connections to the rest of China's rail network.

From the **long-distance bus station** (✆ **0779/202-2094**) on Běibùwān Lù, air-conditioned luxury buses run to Nánníng (2½-3 hr.; ¥50/$6.25) every half hour from 6:50am to 9pm. Express buses also run to Shēnzhèn (11 hr.; ¥230/$29) at 8:20pm; to Guǎngzhōu (10 hr.; ¥180/$23) at 8:45am and 8:55pm; and to Guìlín (7 hr.; ¥150/$19) at 8:40am and 9:10pm.

A daily 10-hour **ferry** to Hǎikǒu on Hǎinán Island departs at 6pm from the Běihǎi Guójì Kèyùn Gǎng (International Ferry Terminal; ✆ **0779/388-0711**).

A standard room with shared bathroom costs ¥211 ($26). A daily boat also runs to Wéizhōu Dǎo (2½ hr.) at 8:30am and returns at 3pm. A sleeper berth costs ¥45 ($5.65), while seats in second and third class cost ¥40 ($5) and ¥35 ($4.40) respectively. During high season, a fast boat, the *Jīnghǎi Hào,* leaves at 8:30am. The fare is ¥52 ($6.50).

GETTING AROUND Santana **taxis** cost ¥7 (85¢) for 3km (2 miles), then ¥1.60 (20¢) per kilometer. Motorcycle taxis charge ¥3 (35¢) around town and ¥6 to ¥8 (75¢–$1) to Silver Beach.

Bus no. 3 (¥2/25¢) runs from downtown to Yín Tān (Silver Beach), while bus no. 2 runs from the railway station north past Wàishā to the ferry docks in the western part of town.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China** (open Mon–Fri 8am–noon and 2:30–5:30pm) is located on Běihǎi Dàdào between Guìzhōu Lù and Sìchuān Lù. An ATM is available.

Internet Access The 24-hour Internet cafe **Guótōng Wǎngbā,** charging ¥2 (25¢) per hour, is at Běibùwān Xī Lù 19, just west of the Guótōng Gòuwù Zhōngxīn (Guótōng Shopping Center). Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The main post office (open 8am–8pm) is at the southwestern corner of Jiěfàng Lù and Wōpíng Lù..

Visa Extension The **Shì Gōngānjú (PSB)** is located at Zhōngshān Lù 213 (✆ **0779/209-1811;** Mon and Fri 2:30–5:30pm, Tue–Thur 8am–noon and 2:30–5:30pm/3–6pm from June–Sept).

EXPLORING THE TOWN

The consulates, trading firms, and homes built by foreign powers after the Yāntái Agreement of 1876 can still be seen in Běihǎi's **old town** around Zhúhǎi Lù and Zhōngshān Lù. Three long blocks south of Zhōngshān Lù on Jiěfàng Lù is the former German Consulate, a two-story yellow structure with graceful arches, now on the grounds of the Nánzhú Bīnguǎn. Across the road is the old British Consulate, which has fallen into a state of disrepair and is now part of a local school.

Yín Tān (Silver Beach) ★★ Běihǎi's premier attraction, located 10km (6 miles) south of downtown, may not quite live up to its local moniker of "first beach of the world," but it does offer a gorgeous 24km (16-mile) stretch of fine white sand and clear, warm water not commonly found in or associated with China. During the peak months of July and August, Chinese tourists throng here for volleyball, sunbathing, and sandcastle building. You can also rent motorized skiffs, speedboats, horses, and even the obligatory camel.

Yín Tān. Admission ¥25 ($3.20). 6am–9pm. Bus: no. 3.

WHERE TO STAY

Hǎitān Dàjiǔdiàn ★ In the Silver Beach area, this four-star outfit is the best place to stay. Many rooms offer stunning sea vistas, especially rooms on the fourth, fifth, and sixth floors. Rooms are large, with firm beds and tasteful furnishings, and the bathrooms are clean.

Yín Tān Dàdào. ✆ **0779/388-8888.** Fax 0779/389-8168. 151 units. ¥580–¥680 ($73–$85) standard room; from ¥1,280 ($160) suite. 10% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; nightclub; outdoor pool; health club; sauna; bowling center; concierge; airport shuttle service; business center; shopping arcade; salon; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Shangri-La Hotel (Xiānggélǐlā Fàndiàn) ★★★ *Kids* This luxurious five-star 17-story hotel is the best place to stay in town, even though its location in the northeastern section is less than ideal. Guest rooms are spacious, comfortable, and pleasantly furnished with large double beds, rattan furniture, and large writing desks. Bathrooms are immaculate. Facilities are first-rate, and highlights are a large sculptured swimming pool with a children-friendly special pool and water slide. The staff is friendly and the service highly efficient.

Chátíng Lù 33. ✆ **0779/206-2288,** 0779/205-0070. Fax 0779/205-0085. www.shangri-la.com. 364 units. ¥840–¥1,050 ($105–$131) standard room; from ¥4,000 ($500) suite. 15% service charge; 30% discounts. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; nightclub; outdoor pool; outdoor tennis courts; health club; Jacuzzi; sauna; concierge; airport shuttle service; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; room service; massage; laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

For the best seafood, head out to **Wàishā,** a thin strip of land connected by a bridge to the northwest part of town where new restaurants have replaced the 72 informal "no-name" food stalls that used to be here. Local specialties worth trying include sandworms (found only in Běihǎi due to the general lack of water pollution), abalone, snails, crayfish, and sea cucumber.

Rìrìxiān Hǎixiān Lóu ★ CANTONESE/SEAFOOD Located at the western end of Wàishā, this former "no-name" food stall has moved into a brand new Thai-style building with whitewashed walls and beachfront thatched-roof huts. Favorites include *jīnshā yóuyú* (spicy cuttlefish) and *jiǔhuáng chǎo shāchóng* (sandworms stir-fried with leeks), though sometimes the simple standbys are the best: *báizhuó xiā* (blanched fresh prawns) and *qīngzhēng shíbān* (steamed garoupa).

Wàishā Dǎu, Yìnní Cān Yǐng Qū. ✆ **0779/203-9818.** Reservations recommended. Meal for 2 ¥120–¥180 ($18–$22). No credit cards. 11:30am–1am.

Shāng Palace ★★ CANTONESE Fresh seafood is served in this clean, elegant setting complemented by magnificent sea views. House specialties include deep-fried stuffed prawn meatballs, stir-fried shrimps with Lóngjǐng tea leaves, and braised sea cucumber with abalone sauce. Dim sum is served from 7 to 11am and 9pm to 1am.

Shangri-La Hotel, 2nd floor, Chátíng Lù 33. ✆ **0779/206-2888.** Dinner reservations recommended. Meal for 2 ¥ 140 ($18) and up. AE, DC, MC, V. 7am–1am.

SHOPPING

The **Běihǎi Shì Wénbāng Zhēnzhū Yǒuxiàn Gōngsī (Běihǎi Wenpoin Pearls Company)** at Sìchuān Nán Lù (open 8am–9pm) caters mostly to large tour groups, but individuals can easily purchase both saltwater and freshwater pearls here, as well as pearl eyedrops, facial masks, and powders. Prices are quite reasonable. You can select your own pearls and have a necklace strung together in just a few minutes.

AROUND BĚIHǍI

The highlight of **Wěizhōu Dǎo** ★, a charming volcanic island 36 nautical miles (55.6km/34½ miles) from Běihǎi, is an unusual 21m (69-ft.) high **French Cathedral** built here shortly after the 1876 Yāntái Agreement. Constructed entirely of local materials (rocks, coral, sand, limestone, and bamboo), the faded but still impressive three-story Gothic structure has a bell tower, spires, and high arched ceilings in the nave. It is said that hundreds of Christian converts fled here during times of persecution, but today, there are services only on special

occasions. This volcanic island also has striated coral formations, sea caves, and blowholes worth visiting. A daily boat leaves Běihǎi at 8:30am (See "Getting There," above) and returns from Wēizhōu at 3pm. Check with your hotel tour desk about 1-day tours of the island.

7 Guìyáng

Guìzhōu Province, 450km (270 miles) NE of Kūnmíng, 440km (264 miles) NW of Nánníng

Guìyáng is the capital of Guìzhōu Province, one of China's economically poorest provinces. Guìzhōu was initially settled by non-Chinese tribes such as the Dòng, the Bouyi (Bùyī) and the Miáo. It didn't become an official province of China until the Míng dynasty (1368–1644), when it was used as a staging post for Chinese troops fighting rebellions in Yúnnán. There were many rebellions for independence and autonomy against the ruling Hàn empire within Guìzhōu itself, many of them led by the Miáo. The Japanese invasion of China in the early 1930s forced the retreating Nationalist government to begin opening up Guìzhōu with the building of roads, railways, and some light industries.

Despite some development, however, Guìzhōu has remained an impoverished backwater compared to its neighbors. Incomes and literacy rates are well below the national averages, and many villages still lack basic infrastructure such as roads and electricity. Many of those who suffer the consequences of this poverty are Guìzhōu's 17 minority groups, which make up 37% of the province's population. Some of the blame has been laid at the feet of these minorities, who are perceived as being resistant to assimilation and development. The attitude towards minorities, however, has shifted in recent years as the government, recognizing that the traditional cultures and lifestyles of these "intransigent" groups are precisely the attraction for tourists, is now belatedly improving the province's infrastructure to facilitate tourism.

Guìyáng itself, whose name is often derisively interpreted as "precious sun" because of its infrequent appearance over this gray and gloomy city, used to be a place travelers couldn't wait to get out of, if they made it here at all. Today, gray, dreary buildings still dominate this rapidly developing city of a million people, but happily for visitors interested in exploring Guìzhōu's ethnic minority cultures, having to stay over is not as dreaded as it once was. The city now has international standard hotels, fine dining, decent shopping, and a few pleasant parks and sights. With the building of new highways, this transportation hub is an ideal base from which to visit surrounding attractions like the Huángguǒshù Falls and Bouyi minority villages.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Daily **flights** connect Guìyáng to Běijīng, Shànghǎi, Guǎngzhōu, Chéngdū, Xī'ān, Kūnmíng, Gùlín, Nánníng, Chóngqìng, and Hong Kong. Tickets can be purchased at the **CAAC** office at Zūnyì Lù 264 (✆ **0855/597-7777**) from 8:30am to 8pm. A **China Southwest Airlines** office, located in the Táiwān Dàshà at Zhōnghuá Nán Lù (✆ **0851/581-1222**), is open from 8am to 10pm. The 12km (8-mile) **taxi** ride to the airport should cost ¥50 ($6.25). **Airport buses** depart from the CAAC office every half hour for a fare of ¥10 ($1.25); the CAAC office is open from 8:30am to 6:30pm.

Guìyáng's **railway station** (✆ **0851/818-1222**) in the southern part of town is a modern building with computerized ticketing and all your usual touts. From here, several **trains** a day run to Kǎilǐ (3–4 hr.; ¥25/$3), though it's much faster now to take the 2-hour bus. The K946 train originates in Guìyáng at 7:40am,

so it's easier to get an assigned seat on it. The 2079 departs for Kūnmíng (12½ hr.; ¥234/$29 soft sleeper) at 6:50pm; the K922 leaves for Chéngdū (17 hr.; ¥226/$28 soft sleeper) at 4pm; and the 5608 departs for Chóngqìng (10 hr.; ¥150/$19 soft sleeper) at 7:40pm. The T88 departing at 10:36pm is the quickest option for getting to Běijīng (32 hr.; ¥754/$94 soft sleeper). The K112 runs to Shànghǎi (33 hr.; ¥556/$69) at 9:30pm; and the 1688 heads for Guǎngzhōu (33 hr.; ¥337/$42) at 9am, stopping at Guìlín (17 hr.) along the way.

Guìyáng has several bus stations, but the main one that should serve most travelers' needs is the **Sports Stadium Bus Station (Tǐyùguǎn Kèyùn Zhàn)** near the railway station at Zūnyì Lù and Jiěfàng Lù (✆ **0851/579-3381**). **Buses** run to Kǎilǐ (2 hr.; ¥30–¥35/$3.75–$4.25) every half hour from 7:30am to 7:30pm; to Ānshùn (1½ hr.; ¥15/$2) every 20 minutes from 7:05am to 7:30pm; and to Róngjiāng (7 hr.; ¥70/$9) at 1:50pm. Tour buses to Huángguǒshù Falls and Dragon Palace Cave depart from the bus stand just outside the railway station (see "Tours & Guides," below).

GETTING AROUND **Taxis** cost ¥10 ($1.25) for 3km (2 miles), then ¥1.60 (20¢) per kilometer, and ¥1.90 (25¢) per kilometer after 10km (6 miles). From 10pm to 7am, prices rise to ¥12 ($1.50) for 3km (2 miles) , then ¥1.90 (25¢) per kilometer, and then ¥2.40 (30¢) per kilometer after 10km (6 miles).

TOURS & GUIDES Companies outside the Tōngdá Fàndiàn near the railway station offer various tours of the Huángguǒshù Falls. For about ¥200 ($25), you get transportation, meals, and a guided tour (in Chinese) of the falls, as well as a Miáo village. You also get either **Tiānxīng Qiáo (Heavenly Star Bridge)** or **Lónggōng Dòng (Dragon Palace Caves).** Another option is a round-trip bus ride to the falls for ¥60 ($7.50). **CITS,** at Héqún Lù 1, Lóngquán Dàshà, 7th floor (✆ **0851/690-1660**), can arrange private tours of the same with English-speaking guides, but rates are much higher (starting at around ¥800/$100 a day for car and guide).

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The main branch of the **Bank of China** (✆ **0851/586-9790;** open Mon–Fri 8:30–11:30am, 2:30–6pm/2–5:30pm in winter) is located at Dūsī Lù 30. The branch has an ATM.

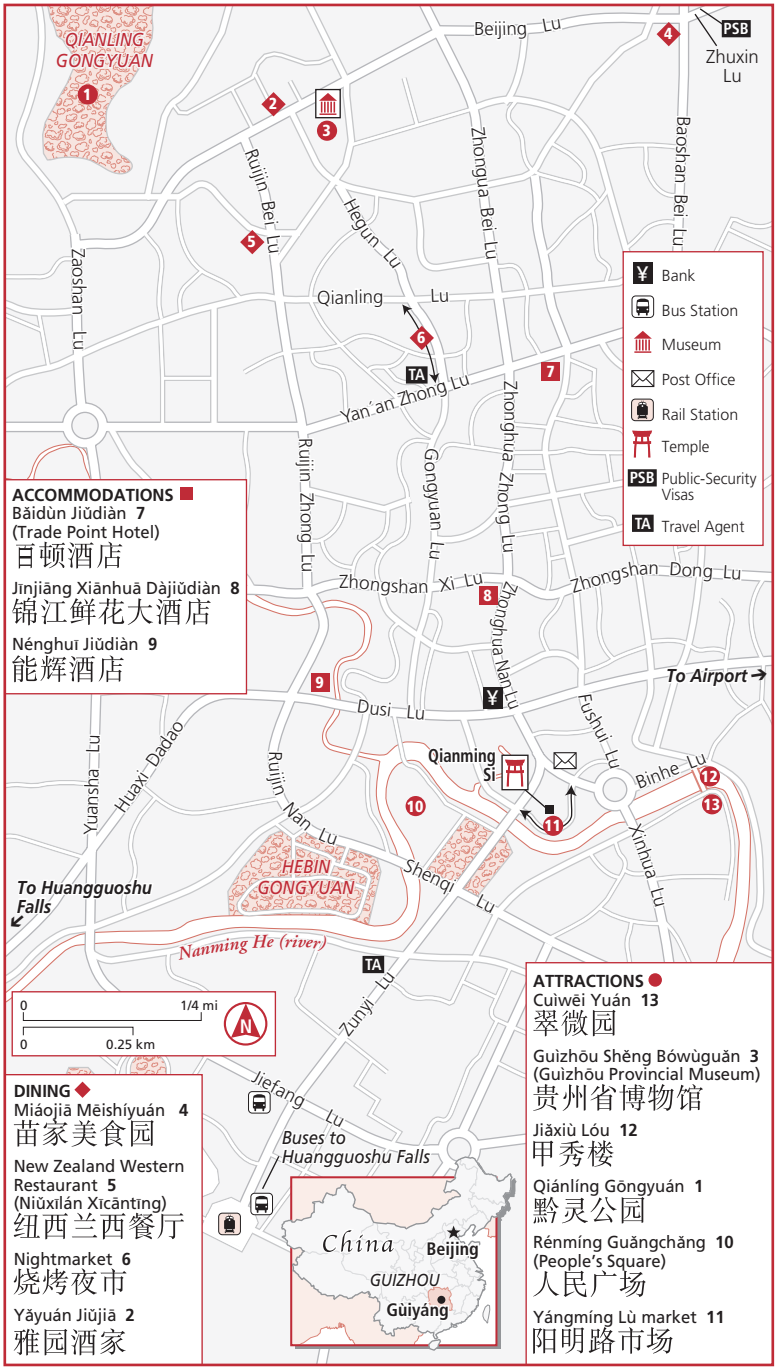
Internet Access A 24-hour Internet cafe at Yán'ān Dōng Lù 20 just east of the Trade Point Hotel charges ¥2 (25¢) an hour.

Post Office The main post office (open 8:30am–7pm) is at Zhōnghuá Nán Lù 68.

Visa Extensions The **PSB** is at Zhúxīn Lù 5 (✆ **0851/676-5230;** open Mon–Fri 8:30am–noon, 2–5pm). Allow 5 business days for a month-long extension.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

The stretch of the Nánmíng River southeast of the city center is worth a couple hours' stroll. From **Rénmín Guǎngchǎng (People's Square)** on Zūnyì Lù, where a giant gleaming white statue of Máo Zédōng presides over tai-chi practitioners, kite flyers, and young lovers, head north to Yángmíng Lù, where there's a colorful outdoor **market.** Watch for the Buddhist temple Qiánmíng Sì off a side street and also for the Chinese-medicine doctors practicing moxibustion and cupping healing techniques. At the end of the market, cross the traffic circle, head down the street, and walk along the river to the Fúyù Bridge on



ACCOMMODATIONS
Bǎidùn Jiǔdiàn **7**
(Trade Point Hotel)
百顿酒店
Jǐnjiāng Xiānhuā Dàjiǔdiàn **8**
锦江鲜花大酒店
Nénghuī Jiǔdiàn **9**
能辉酒店

DINING
Miáojiā Měishíyuán **4**
苗家美食园
New Zealand Western Restaurant **5**
(Niǔxīlán Xīcāntīng)
纽西兰西餐厅
Nightmarket **6**
烧烤夜市
Yǎyuán Jiǔjiā **2**
雅园酒家

ATTRACTIONS
Cuìwēi Yuán **13**
翠微园
Guìzhōu Shěng Bówùguǎn **3**
(Guìzhōu Provincial Museum)
贵州省博物馆
Jiǎxiù Lóu **12**
甲秀楼
Qiánlíng Gōngyuán **1**
黔灵公园
Rénmíng Guǎngchǎng **10**
(People's Square)
人民广场
Yángmíng Lù market **11**
阳明路市场

which sits **Jiǎxiù Lóu** (¥2/25¢; open 8:30am–5:30pm). Built in 1598 as a meeting place for scholars attending the provincial Confucian examinations, this three-story pavilion has three tiers of soaring eaves supported by 12 stone pillars. The pavilion currently houses a teahouse and a small exhibit of the building's history. At the other end of the bridge is **Cuìwēi Yuán,** (¥3/40¢; open 8:30am–midnight), a series of traditional buildings once part of a Míng dynasty Buddhist temple. Today, it's home to a teahouse favored by mahjong players; pricey shops sell minority goods.

Guìzhōu Shěng Bówùguǎn (Guìzhōu Provincial Museum) The second-floor display on the embroidery, clothing, and artifacts of Guìzhōu's minorities is the museum's most interesting. Local archaeological finds and the requisite provincial dinosaur skeleton round out the collection.

Běijīng Lù 168. Admission ¥10 ($1.25). Tues–Sun 9am–5pm.

Qiánlíng Gōngyuán Located on the slopes of 1,395m (4,576-ft.) high Qiánlíng Shān in the northwest part of town, this lushly forested park offers a pleasant reprieve from the urban jungle. A hike up the steep winding path to the 17th-century temple **Hóngfǔ Sì** (¥1/15¢; open 8am–6pm) will give you a good workout and a bird's-eye view of the city. A cable car (¥12/$1.50 up; ¥8/$1 down) also makes the trip. Avoid the zoo at all costs.

Zǎo Shān Lù. Admission ¥5 (65¢). 6:30am–10pm

WHERE TO STAY

Bǎidùn Jiǔdiàn (Trade Point Hotel) ★★ This elegant, centrally located four-star hotel is the top choice in town. Guest rooms are a bit small but are well appointed with large beds, soft linens, and comfortable chairs. Bathrooms are clean and well stocked. The hotel provides all you need for a restful night save for the jarring karaoke rooms on the fourth floor.

Yán'ān Dōng Lù 18. ✆ **0851/582-7888.** Fax 0851/582-3118. www.trade-pointhotel.com. 254 units. ¥800–¥900 ($100–$112) standard room; ¥1,360 ($170) suite. Discounts up to 50%. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; health club; sauna; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; room service; laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking floor; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Jīnjiāng Xiānhuā Dàjiǔdiàn Newer and nicer than the Park Hotel, this four-star hotel managed by the Shànghǎi Jǐnjiāng Group is ideally located next to the central traffic circle, and offers a decent if not particularly memorable stay. The hotel (floors 12–28) shares a building with offices and shops. Standard rooms are a good size and bright, though the carpets are old and stained. Bathrooms are small but clean. Rooms above the 22nd floor are in better shape.

Zhōnghuá Nán Lù 1. ✆ **0851/586-7888.** Fax 0851/581-3004. 248 units. ¥468 ($58) standard room; ¥568 ($71) deluxe room; ¥698–¥2,680 ($87–$335) suite. 30% discounts. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; concierge; business center; forex; gift shop; salon; room service; laundry/dry cleaning; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe (select rooms).

Nénghuī Jiǔdiàn ★ *Value* Newly opened in September 2002, this handsome and modern hotel delivers accommodations and facilities well beyond what its three-star status might suggest. Guest rooms are large and bright with high ceilings, big firm beds, modern furniture, and sparkling bathrooms. How well the hotel will be maintained remains to be seen.

Ruìjīn Nán Lù 38. ✆ **0851/589-8888.** Fax 0851/589-8622. 125 units. ¥520 ($65) standard room; ¥1,080 ($135) suite. 40% discounts. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; lounge; health club; sauna; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; room service; laundry/dry cleaning; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

The best Western dining is offered in high-end hotels like the **Trade Point Hotel,** which has a Western buffet. Less exalted fare like **KFC** (open 9am–11pm) is available at Zhōnghuá Nán Lù 246. For local dining, an extremely lively **night market** ★ on Héqún Lù just north of Yán'ān Zhōng Lù proffers kabobs, grilled meats and vegetables, noodles, dumplings, stir-fries, and hot pot and is, for adventurous patrons, one of the more interesting dining experiences in town. Dog meat is very popular here.

Miáojiā Měishíyuán ★ MIÁO Located down a set of dark steps in a traditional courtyard setting, this casual Miáo restaurant serves some incredibly spicy food. Try, if you dare, the fiery *yáng làjiāo* (hot peppers and chilies that have been blanched, sun-dried and fried), *Miáojiā ānyú* (Miáo sour fish), or the delicious *Miáowèi páigǔ* (spicy Miáo spareribs). For something more benign, the *Miáojiā tǔdòu piàn* (deep-fried potato coins) and *ròusī chǎomiàn* (stir-fry noodles with pork) should be comfortingly familiar.

Bǎoshān Běi Lù 433 (opposite Holiday Inn). ✆ **0855/675-1451.** ¥25–¥70 ($3–$9). No credit cards. 11am–2:30pm and 5–9:30pm.

New Zealand Western Restaurant (Niǔxīlán Xīcāntīng) WESTERN/ASIAN If you don't want to pay hotel prices for your Western food, this pleasant restaurant delivers the goods at reasonable prices.

Ruìjīn Běi Lù (opposite Guìyáng Dàshà). ✆ **0851/651-2086.** Main courses ¥20–¥45 ($2.50–$5.60). No credit cards. 10:30am–midnight.

Yǎyuán Jiǔjiā ★★ CANTONESE/SEAFOOD This elegant upmarket branch of a popular local restaurant chain is handsomely designed with stone pillars and red and black wall panels in an enclosed atrium. House specialties include *xiándànhuáng jìn qīngguā* (salted eggs on a bed of cucumber) and *xiānhuáishān kòulǔròu* (braised pork and veggies). Simple seafood dishes like *qīngzhēng yú* (steamed fish) and *báizhuó xiā* (blanched prawns) are also available. There are no English menus, but the usually harried staff tries to be helpful when you can get their attention.

Běijīng Lù 227. ✆ **0851/681-1988.** Reservations recommended. ¥80–¥120 ($10–$12). No credit cards. 10am–9pm.

SHOPPING

You're better off buying minority handicrafts in the outlying villages, but in a pinch, **Cuìwēi Yuán** on the south side of the Nánmíng River has shops selling beautiful but pricey batiks and Miáo and Dòng embroidery. The outdoor **market** at Yángmíng Lù offers everything from bonsai plants and saucy parrots to Chinese medicines and antiques.

NIGHTLIFE

Offering a wide and inexpensive beer selection, the laid-back cafe/bar **Mèngwēi Sēnlín (Norway Forest)** on Xī Hú Lù near Jiǎxiù Lóu stays open till the wee hours. **Xiǎoxiǎo Píjiǔwū (Little Beer House)** at Běijīng Lù 64 ✆ **0851/683-6301;** open noon–2am) serves local and Carlsberg beer (stick to the latter) and medicinal snake wines, as well as noodles, snacks, and dumplings. Outdoor "rooftop" dining is available in the summer.

SIDE TRIPS FROM GUÌYÁNG

A new highway between Guìyáng and the Huángguǒshù Falls enables visitors to make the trip in a day. Those short on time would do well to hire a private car,

which your hotel or, in a pinch, CITS, can help arrange. *Note:* Please turn to Appendix A for Chinese translations of key locations below.

HUÁNGGUǑSHÙ PÙBÙ (HUÁNGGUǑSHÙ FALLS)

Guìzhōu's premier attraction, and China's largest waterfall, is located 150km (90 miles) and just over 2 hours on the highway southwest of Guìyáng. Many foreigners have reported being underwhelmed by the falls (named for the indigenous *huángguǒshù* or yellow fruit tree), possibly because they visited during the dry season (Nov–Apr), when the usual torrents are reduced to a mere trickle. Current rumors suggest that authorities plan to recycle the water in order to make this a year-round attraction. From May to October, the thundering falls can be heard for miles.

Fed by the Báishuǐ River (Báishuǐ Hé), the main waterfall spans 81m (266 ft.) and plunges down a precipitous 74m (243 ft.) into **Rhinoceros Pool.** The **Water Curtain Cave,** with a separate admission fee of ¥10 ($1.25), is a 100m (328-ft.) long walkway behind the falls. It promises a wet backstage view of the cascades, especially in the rainy season. There are three entrances to the falls: just south of Huángguǒshù town, next to the Huángguǒshù Bīnguǎn, and next to the cable car. Admission to the falls is ¥40 ($5) February to October and ¥35 ($4.30) at other times.

During the rainy season, other falls to visit include **Dǒubōtáng Pùbù** (about 1km/⅔ mile upstream from the main falls) and **Luósītān Pùbù** (about 1km/⅔ mile downstream). The latest attraction for Chinese tourists is **Tiānxīng Qiáo Jǐngqū (Heavenly Star Bridge Scenic Area;** ¥30/$3.75; ¥25/$3 Nov–Jan) about 8km (5 miles) below the main falls. Highlights include a large cave full of the usual karst formations, a tableau of stones rising from the water, and a waterfall. It's nice, if you can explore away from the crowds.

If you want to overnight at the falls, the three-star **Xīn Huángguǒshù Bīnguǎn** (✆ **0853/359-2110**) offers the nicest accommodations and a Chinese restaurant. Up a driveway off the main road south of the village, the hotel has large, bright, and comfortable standard rooms with sparkling new bathrooms (shower only) for ¥480 ($60).

LÓNGGŌNG DÒNG (DRAGON PALACE CAVES)

About 132km (79 miles) west of Guìyáng is a string of underground karst caves that stretch for over 15km (9 miles) through some 20 hills. At present, only 840m (2,755 ft.) of the main **Dragon Palace Cave** (¥50/$6.25; open 8am–6:30pm/5:30pm in winter) is open to the public. Rowboats take visitors through five chambers of colorfully lit, wonderfully weird karst formations, as tacky muzak plays in the background. When the water levels are low, you'll have to return by boat, but during the rainy season, visitors can climb stone ladders in the last chamber to Tiger's Den, then slowly meander back to the entrance through a stone forest park. Those not partial to caves should give this whole place a miss and focus instead on the surrounding minority villages. Private car hire or an organized tour from Guìyáng are the most convenient ways to visit.

MINORITY VILLAGES

The area southwest of Guìyáng around Ānshùn is home to the **Bouyi,** one of the original peoples of southwest China, who number around 2.5 million today. Related to the Zhuàng, the poorer Bouyi are skilled stonemasons, forced by the rocky karst terrain to build entire hillside villages out of stone. One such village worth visiting is **Shítou Zhài (Stone Village)** ★ where, not surprisingly, all the

walls, bridges, roads, and houses are made of stone. Home to about 200 households, the village sits along the river Báishuǐ Hé and is surrounded by pretty green paddies. You can pick up some of the Bouyi's famous batik here, since everyone seems to have a batik workshop in their house. Shítou Zhài is off the main highway about 15km (9 miles) beyond the Lónggōng turnoff and 5km (3 miles) before Huángguǒshù. Watch for the turnoff and travel another kilometer or so along the dirt road to the village.

About 60km (40 miles) west of Guìyáng, off the main highway between Guìyáng and Ānshùn, the intriguing Míng dynasty village of **Tiānlóng Túnbǎo** ★★ (¥20/$2.50; open 8:30am–7pm) makes for an interesting visit despite it being a tour-group magnet. Tiānlóng Túnbǎo's almost 6,500 inhabitants are descendants of the Hàn Chinese soldiers who were sent to the southwest in 1381 by the first Míng Hóngwǔ emperor. Calling themselves *Lǎo Hàn* (Old Hàn), the villagers regard themselves as a quasi-minority for having retained many of the Míng dynasty Hàn Chinese ways for the last 6 centuries, in particular the women's dress and hairstyles and the dialect they speak. Villagers also perform their own unique brand of opera known as *dì xì* (ground or open-air opera), so named because it's performed not on a stage but on the ground, with the audience standing on surrounding elevated spots to get better views. As with most buildings in the area, the houses in Tiānlóng are also made of stone and have low entrances. The village entrance fee includes a Chinese-language tour of the various ancestral halls and residences in this labyrinthine village.

8 Kăilĭ & the Miáo & Dòng Autonomous Prefecture

Guìzhōu Province, 184km (110 miles) E of Guìyáng

As the capital of the Qián Dōngnán Autonomous Prefecture of the Miáo and Dòng nationalities in eastern Guìzhōu, Kăilĭ is the gateway to some of the most fascinating minority villages you're likely to encounter in China. About 65% of the prefecture's population is Miáo, clustered to the east and northeast of Kăilĭ. The Dòng are to the southeast. This entire region hosts more than 100 festivals (see chart on p. 574) each year, with the greatest concentration around February/March and October/November, making these excellent months to visit. Be warned that travel around the Miáo areas can be difficult due to its narrow, winding roads, but this is often light years ahead of traveling through some of the Dòng region's backwaters, where a farmer's truck or your own feet might be the only means of navigating pothole-ridden mud paths. In truth, half the fun of traveling in this part of the country is getting there in the first place, so bring your sense of adventure and don't forget the seat cushion. *Note:* Please turn to Appendix A for Chinese translations of key locations in this section.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Traveling by **train** to Guìyáng (3½ hr.) has become less popular now that buses can whisk travelers there in 2 hours. The faster trains leave Kăilĭ in the middle of the night, though there's a 10am train (K192) that gets in at 1:51pm and a 4:10pm train (K79) that gets in at 7:47pm. Tickets (hard seats only) can be bought at a counter inside the **Bank of China** at Běijīng Dōng Lù 9–11 (✆ **0855/822-1065;** open 8:30am–noon and 2–5:30pm). A taxi ride to town from the **railway station** (✆ **0855/381-2222**) costs ¥10 ($1.25). For destinations further afield like Kūnmíng (the T61 train departs at 11:59pm and arrives in Kūnmíng at 3:17pm), purchase your tickets in Guìyáng if you want anything more than a hard seat.

The Miáo

The Miáo, also called Hmong, trace their history back 4,000 years to what is now the Yellow River area in central China. As the first Chinese dynasty (221–207 B.C.) came into being and the Chinese empire expanded, the Miáo were driven into the outlying mountain regions. The subsequent southwesterly migration splintered the Miáo into different subgroups with their own dialects, dress, and customs, making them one of the most diversified ethnic groups in China. Black, Red, White, Long-Horned, Flowery, Mountain, and Long-Skirt Miáo are just some names that the Hàn Chinese gave to the Miáo, based on their appearance or locale. Those who continued their southerly migration into Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam are generally known as Hmong. Today there are about eight million Hmong worldwide.

Miáo festivals such as the Miáo New Year, the Sisters' Meal Festival (Zǐmèifàn Jié), and the Lúshēng Festival (dates vary by village) are occasions for young men and women to socialize and find marriage partners. The events are marked by dancing, the playing of *lúshēng* (a musical instrument made of pipes), buffalo fighting, cockfighting, and horse racing. If at all possible, time your visit during one of these occasions. The Miáo are generally very hospitable and will greet visitors with cups of locally brewed rice wine, the ultimate sign of respect from some of the hardiest drinkers around.

From the **bus station** at Wénhuá Běi Lù (✆ **0855/823-8035**), **buses** run to Guìyáng (2 hr.; ¥30–¥35/$3.75–$4.50) every half hour from 6am to 7:15pm; to Róngjiāng (6 hr.; ¥28–¥35/$3.50–$4.50) from 6:40am to 3pm; to Cóngjiāng (9 hr.; ¥45–¥55/$5.50–$6.80) at 6:50am, 8am, and 9am; to Léishān (1 hr.; ¥8/$1) every half hour from 7am to 5:30pm; to Táijiāng (1 hr.; ¥8/$1) every 40 minutes from 8:30am to 6pm; and to Shīdòng (2½ hr.; ¥15/$2) from 8am to 2:50pm.

GETTING AROUND **Taxis** charge ¥4 (50¢) for in-town destinations, but ¥5 (65¢) if you catch one inside the bus station. Add an additional ¥1 (15¢) to all fares from midnight to 7am. **Bus** no. 2 makes a loop from the railway station in the north down past the long-distance bus station on Wénhuà Běi Lù to the main traffic circle on Běijīng Lù and then down Zhāoshān Nán Lù to the museum, before it returns to the railway station. The bus fare is ¥0.50 (5¢).

TOURS & GUIDES **CITS,** at Yíngpán Dōng Lù 53 (✆ **0855/822-2506;** www.qdncits.com; open Mon–Fri 9am–6pm) can customize private trips to the Miáo and Dòng regions, especially if you're looking to explore remote villages, but none of it comes cheap. Rates start at around ¥800 ($100) a day for a guide and driver. Bargain hard. The office's top English-speaking guide, the friendly Mr. Lǐ Màoqīng, can answer questions regarding nearby sights.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The main branch of the **Bank of China** is at Zhāoshān Nán Lù 6 (open Mon–Fri, 8am–noon and 2:30–6:30pm/2–6pm in winter).

Internet Access The **Téngxùn Wǎngbā** at the intersection of Běijīng Dōng Lù and Wénhuà Lù (look for the green sign) charges ¥2 (25¢) an hour. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The post office (open 8am–6:30pm/6pm Oct–Apr) is at Běijīng Dōng Lù 1.

Visa Extension The **PSB** is at Yǒnghuá Lù (✆ **0855/855-5201;** open Mon–Fri, 8–11:30am and 2–5:30pm). Allow 5 working days.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

Kăilĭ's highlights are undoubtedly in the villages outside of town. One exception is its **Sunday Market,** where minorities from nearby villages sell all manner of goods around Xīmén Jiē and surrounding side streets. The **Minorities Museum** (Zhōu Mínzú Bówùguǎn), at Guǎngchǎng Lù 5; ¥10/$1.25; open 9am–5pm) in the southern part of town, is mildly interesting, with fairly comprehensive if musty displays on the costumes, artifacts, musical instruments, and traditional houses of the Miáo and the Dòng. More curious is the fact that the museum is on the third floor of a forlorn furniture store.

WHERE TO STAY

Guótài Dàjiǔdiàn This three-star hotel right in the center of town is the nicest place to stay in Kăilĭ and currently gets all the foreign tour groups. Guest rooms are nothing special but are spacious and clean and come with large, comfortable beds and reasonably well-kept furniture. Bathrooms are clean. The staff is efficient and even smiles occasionally.

Běijīng Dōng Lù 6. ✆ **0855/826-9888.** Fax 0855/826-9818. 73 units. ¥258–¥288 ($32–$36) standard room; ¥380–¥880 ($47–$110) suite. 20% discounts. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; concierge; shopping arcade; salon; room service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Kăilĭ Lántiān Dàjiǔdiàn Depressingly old and decrepit on the outside, this hotel in the center of town has surprisingly spacious and comfortable rooms. The ¥218 ($27) rooms are so large they come with a whole living-room set. Beds are a little small but firm. Some of the bathrooms could use a new grout job but are otherwise acceptably clean. Get a room as far away from the sleazy nightclub on the fourth floor as possible.

Běijīng Xī Lù 1. ✆ **0855/827-5980.** Fax 0855/823-4699. 56 units. ¥168–¥218 ($21–$27) standard room; ¥380 ($47) suite. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; concierge; room service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

WHERE TO DINE

Hotels still offer the best dining options. At press time, restaurants serving a variety of Chinese cuisine were starting to pop up along **Shāngmào Jiē** in the newly developing southern part of town. These spots are geared toward locals, so don't expect English menus. Do venture here if you're tired of hotel food . . . but make sure you recognize the characters for dog meat *(gǒuròu)* if that's not something you're game for.

A lively **night market** in the alley right next to the Guótài Hotel offers barbecue, noodles, dumplings *(jiǎozi),* meat buns *(bāozi),* and fresh fruit. One of the best **bakeries** in town is a 5-minute walk south of the bus station on Wénhuà Běi Lù. It sells pastries, cakes, hot coffee (albeit of the instant variety), teas, juices, and also dumplings *(shuǐjiǎo).*

The closest approximation to Western food can be found at **Màidéshì,** located at Zhāoshān Běi Lù 2, second floor, just north of the post office. It serves fried chicken, chicken burgers, and french fries.

AROUND KǍILǏ

If you're short on time, several Miáo villages around Kǎilǐ can comfortably be visited, alone or in combination, as day trips. One of the most popular is **Lángdé** ★, a lovely traditional Miáo village of about 600 people (all surnamed Chén), located 31km (19 miles) and a 45-minute ride south of Kǎilǐ. Dating to the late Yuán/early Míng dynasty, the village is divided into two sections. If your visit coincides with a tour group's, you may be greeted with songs and rice wine and treated to a bronze-drum dance performance in the upper village square. With its water wheels and wooden stilt houses, the village is a lovely stroll, and the women vendors at the village entrance actually carry some beautiful embroidery amid the rest of their junk. To get there, take the Léishān-bound bus for ¥6 (75¢) and ask to be let off at Lángdé. From the main road, it's still over a kilometer's walk into the upper village.

Fifteen kilometers (9 miles) southwest of Kǎilǐ, the small village of **Zhōuxī** is host to a grand *lúshēng* festival every year around the 20th day of the first lunar month, when melodious pipes resound through a sea of silver headdresses. To reach Zhōuxī, take a minivan taxi for ¥3 to ¥4 (40¢–50¢) from the corner of Huánchéng Xī Lù and Běijīng Xī Lù.

About 19km (11 miles) northwest of Kǎilǐ and surrounded by tree-covered hills, the village of **Mátáng** ★★ is home to about 400 members of the **Géjiā** people (the other Géjiā stronghold is in **Huángpíng** Village). Once lumped in with the Miáo, the Géjiā were formally recognized only in 1993. Unlike the Miáo, who are known to have strong constitutions, the Géjiā toast with rice, not wine. Another distinguishing custom is the Cáiqíng dance (Cáiqíng Wǔ), with its characteristic stomping. The harder the stomp, the deeper the love between the man and the woman. Known for their batik and embroidery, the Mátáng Géjiā are friendly and hospitable. To get here, take a minivan taxi for ¥3 (40¢) or a Yúdòng-bound minibus for ¥2 (25¢) from the corner of Huánchéng Xī Lù and Běijīng Xī Lù. Ask to be dropped off at Mátáng; it's a 15-minute walk to the village. An excellent day trip would take in Lángdé in the morning, and Mátáng in the afternoon.

XǏJIĀNG ★★

Located about 75km (45 miles) southeast of Kǎilǐ in Léishān County, Xǐjiāng is the largest Miáo village in China, with about 1,000 households. Nestled in a valley surrounded by lush bamboo forests, the village has hundreds of dark brown wooden stilt houses built into the side of a hill and, unfortunately for purists, a white concrete building (Xǐjiāng's new school) smack in the middle of it all. Xǐjiāng hosts a massive celebration during the **Miáo New Year Festival** in the 10th lunar month with dances, bullfights, *lúshēng* competitions, and other festivities, most clustered around the basketball court. On the sixth day of the sixth lunar month (usually July or Aug), the **New Rice Tasting Festival** is another raucous celebration. **Market** days in Xǐjiāng (every 7 days for the large market, every 5 days for a smaller market) are also very colorful, as villagers hawk everything from fish to fake hair.

Xǐjiāng can be visited as a day trip with private car hire or overnight if you travel by bus. From Kǎilǐ, there are very infrequent direct buses. More reliable is the bus to Léishān (1 hr.; ¥8/$1); from there, transfer to a bus for Xǐjiāng (1 hr.; ¥7/90¢).

The best option among the town's very basic accommodations is the relatively new, relatively clean **Chángzhēn Lóu** (✆ **0855/334-8068**), located down the main street from the old and decrepit Zhèngfǔ Zhāodàisuǒ (Government

Guesthouse). It has 30 new beds at ¥10 ($1.25) each, in different room combinations with bare concrete floors and communal showers and toilets.

TÁIJIĀNG & FĂNPÁI

This ordinarily uninspiring town of Táijiāng, dotted with more nondescript white-tiled buildings than with the traditional black and brown Miáo houses, comes alive during two big Miáo festivals: the Dragon Lantern Festival halfway through the first lunar month, and the Sisters' Meal Festival in the middle of the third lunar month. The town also has a **Wénchāng Gōng,** (¥10/$1.25), a former school and Confucian hall was built by the most famous Miáo resistance leader, Zhāng Xiùméi, who fought Qīng dynasty troops for 18 years in the mid-19th century. Today, there's a Miáo **embroidery museum** on the premises, which is usually closed unless a visitor shows up and pounds on the door. The town hosts a large and fairly interesting **market** every 6 days.

Táijiāng can also be used as a gateway to **Fănpái,** a traditional Miáo village hidden high in the hills above Táijiāng, seemingly forgotten by time. The ride to Fănpái can be wonderfully atmospheric, especially on any of Guìzhōu's misty, moody days. In the village, wander around the traditional wooden dwellings or go for a hike in the surrounding hills and watch the villagers work their terrace fields. Minibuses leave every hour for Fănpái (1 hr.; ¥4/50¢) from the main street just before the T-junction.

The best place to stay in Táijiāng is **Miáojiāng Bīnguǎn** (✆ **0855/532-6028**) on the road into town. Rooms for ¥70 ($8.75) are basic but clean and have air-conditioning, TV, and 24-hour hot water, but no phone.

The ride from Táijiāng to Shìdòng (below) takes in some beautiful mountain scenery. Notoriously unreliable buses for Shìdòng (2–2½ hr.; ¥7/90¢) depart from the street left of the T-junction hourly from 6 to 11am.

SHÌDÒNG

About 94km (56 miles) northeast of Kăilĭ, this little Miáo village along the banks of the Qīngshuĭ River hosts two big festivals. The 3-day **Lóngzhōu Jié (Dragon Boat Festival),** in the middle of the fifth lunar month, features dragon boats made from hollowed-out tree trunks that are decorated with a dragon's head and hold up to 30 rowers. Each of the nearby villages enters a boat in the race. **Zĭmèifàn Jié (Sisters' Meal Festival),** during the fourth lunar month, is often celebrated with *lúshēng* dances, antiphonal singing, and plenty of opportunities for young Miáo women, gorgeously bedecked with elaborate silver headdresses, to socialize with erstwhile suitors. Several months before the festival, many Shìdòng households will be engaged in making silver ornaments for the festival. Silver aficionados may wish to visit here at any time, as Shìdòng (in particular the neighboring hamlet of Tánglóng) is renowned for excellent-quality silver. While these ornaments are mostly for private use, it's possible to purchase pieces from enterprising villagers. Ask around. For now, visit Shìdòng as a day trip from Kăilĭ; local accommodations would make sleeping in one of those dragon boats seem like a night at the Ritz. Return buses to Kăilĭ stop running around 2pm.

DÒNG REGION

The southeastern part of Guìzhōu is squarely Dòng territory, with over 400 Dòng roofed bridges in Lípíng, Róngjiāng, and Cóngjiāng counties. On the southeastern border across from Guăngxī Province, Zhàoxìng is the largest Dòng village, while the area around Róngjiāng and Cóngjiāng is dotted with smaller villages awaiting discovery.

RÓNGJIĀNG & CÓNGJIĀNG

The only reason to stay in Róngjiāng, 173km (104 miles) southeast of Kǎilǐ, is its famous and incredibly colorful **Sunday Market,** which spills onto several streets east of the main road. Unless you want to explore the Dòng villages around here, many travelers heading south from Kǎilǐ end up overnighting or changing buses in Cóngjiāng, which serves as more of a gateway to both Zhàoxìng in the east and Guǎngxī Province in the south.

RÓNGJIĀNG

GETTING THERE From the **Main Bus Station (Qìchē Zhàn)** in the north of town, **buses,** including minibuses, large air-conditioned buses, and sleepers, run to Kǎilǐ (6–7 hr.; ¥28–¥35/$3.50–$4.50) from 6:30am to 4pm; and to Cóngjiāng (3 hr.; ¥15/$1.90) from 6:40am to 4:30pm.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE The best place to stay is the **Róngjiāng Bīnguǎn** at Gǔzhōu Zhōng Lù 47 (✆ **0855/662-4188;** fax 0855/662-4223), which has basic but comfortable enough standard rooms for ¥160 ($20) with private bathrooms,. There's also a restaurant.

CÓNGJIĀNG

79km (47 miles) SE of Róngjiāng, 252km (151 miles) SE of Kǎilǐ

Like Róngjiāng, there's little to recommend Cóngjiāng itself, but about 7km (4 miles) before the town, on the road from Róngjiāng, the unusual village of **Bāshā** ★★ (pronounced Bāshā) makes for a fascinating visit. Although recognized as members of the Miáo, the Bāshā Miáo are practically a tribe unto

The Dòng

Accounts differ as to the origins of the Dòng people—some say they came from the Yángzǐ River (Cháng Jiāng) region, and others argue that they migrated north from Thailand—but now they are firmly planted in southeast Guìzhōu (2.5 million Dòng residents) and in northeast Guǎngxī Province, where they gravitate toward lush river valleys.

Famed for their (fir) wooden architecture, Dòng villages typically have a Wind and Rain Bridge *(fēngyǔ qiáo),* which serves not only as a meeting place for villagers but to ward off inauspicious energies from the village. Each village also has one or several drum towers *(gǔlóu),* each built for a clan with the same surname.

In addition to the many Hàn festivals such as Spring Festival and Festival of the Ghosts, the primarily animist Dòng celebrate many of their own, including one of the biggest, Sānyuèsān, held on the third day of the third lunar month and celebrated with fireworks, dances, sporting competitions, bullfights, and abundant feasting. The Tàiguānrén Festival, which coincides with the Hàn Spring Festival, has visitors from neighboring villages dressed up as bandits, goblins, and strange animals, while a man dressed as a government official *(guānrén)* parades through town dispensing money as a gift to the village. The Firecracker Festival (Huāpào), celebrated in Guǎngxī's Sānjiāng on the third day of the second month, has participants competing to catch an iron ring that's been blasted out of a small cannon.

themselves. They cling to unique traditions such as the men's *hugun* hairstyle, which is created by shaving off all the hair except for what grows on the crown, and coiling what's left into a topknot never to be cut, as hair is considered the lifeline given by ancestors. Wandering through the village, you can hear the pounding of indigo grass and dyed cloth and see swags of glutinous rice hanging on giant racks to dry. Barefoot boys play hide-and-seek, and dogs bark at approaching visitors while pigs snort and wallow deeper in the mud. Living a simple and extremely poor existence, the Bāshā are understandably wary of cadres of tourists tramping through their village. You can only hope that the entrance fees of ¥10 ($1.25) for foreigners and ¥6 (75¢) for Chinese are actually going to the village and not padding some tourist official's pockets. If you're visiting on your own, tread softly and sensitively.

As you leave Cóngjiāng in the direction of Zhàoxìng, cutting a dashing sight on the left are the three drum towers of **Gāozēng** village. Two of the drum towers are the tallest in the region, at 17 stories and almost 30m (98 ft.) high. The road between Cóngjiāng and Zhàoxìng offers some of the most picturesque pastoral scenes of terrace fields cut into gently rolling hills.

GETTING THERE From the **Cóngjiāng Bus Station** (**Qìchē Zhàn; ✆ 0855/641-3957**) on the eastern side of the river, **buses** run to Róngjiāng (3 hr.; ¥15/$2) every hour from 7am to 5:20pm; to Kăilĭ (10 hr.; ¥53/$6.60) at 6am, 8am, and 9:20am; and to Sānjiāng in Guăngxī Province (3½–4 hr.; ¥15/$2), with nine departures from 6:30am to 3:30pm via Bāluó and Fùlù. To get to Zhàoxìng, take a Lípíng-bound bus for ¥20 ($2.50) from 6:30am to 1:40pm and change at Pílín. You can also change at Luóxiáng, but connecting buses are infrequent; at press time, the dirt road (if it can be called that) between Luóxiáng and Zhàoxìng consisted a series of never-ending potholes.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE The newest place to stay is the **Yuèliang Shān Bīnguăn** on Jiāng Dōngnán Lù (**✆ 0855/641-4888**), on the eastern side of the river just next to the bus station. Standard rooms with air-conditioning, TV, phone, and 24-hour hot water cost ¥120 ($15). The hotel also has a Chinese restaurant. No English is spoken. Across from the bus station are food stalls that serve basic stir-fries (point to the vegetables you want and say *"chăo ròu"* if you want them with pork) and noodles to get you through the night. Off the main street west of the river is a small **night market** of barbecue stalls, north of the post office.

ZHÀOXÌNG ★★★

Zhàoxìng, the biggest Dòng village in China with a population of 3,500 people (all surnamed Lù!), is one of those places where the rewards that await you are in direct proportion to the difficulty in getting there. And it is very difficult to get to Zhàoxìng. With a history of over 700 years, this picturesque village of fishponds and rice paddies is extremely welcoming (but largely free of tourists) and boasts the single greatest collection of drum towers (five) in China. With many settlements around the area ripe for exploration, there's enough to occupy you for at least a couple of days; allow an equal amount of time to get here and away. Though Zhàoxìng can be approached from both Kăilĭ and Sānjiāng in Guăngxī Province, the latter has more direct buses.

GETTING THERE The most hassle-free way to get to Zhàoxìng is by private car/taxi hire. From Sānjiāng in Guăngxī Province, the 3-hour-plus ride will run between ¥200 and ¥300 ($25–$38) depending on your bargaining powers. For bus times, see "Getting There" in the Sānjiāng section. From Zhàoxìng to

Sānjiāng by bus (4–4½ hr.), an early-morning bus departs at 7:30am and another less reliable bus around 9:30am. The quickest way to Kǎilǐ (10 hr.) is to take the 7am bus to Lìpíng and transfer to the 11:40am bus to Kǎilǐ. At press time, there were no direct buses to Cóngjiāng. The best option is to take a bus to Pílín, then transfer to a Cóngjiāng bus that's coming from Lìpíng. Alternatively, some folks have hiked an hour to Luóxiáng; or they have taken a local farmer's truck for ¥30 ($3.75) along a wretched pothole-riddled dirt road and transferred to a Cóngjiāng-bound (¥11/$1.40) bus, which runs every half hour to hour from 7:30am to around 4pm.

EXPLORING THE VILLAGE & BEYOND

The main attraction is the village itself, which is divided into five sections organized by clan, each with its own all-wooden **drum tower, wind and rain bridge,** and **theater stage.** Ranging from 7 to 13 stories (the tallest is 25m/ 82 ft. high), the drum towers have all been rebuilt since they were destroyed by Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). Desperately in need of a fresh coat of paint, the structures are still impressive and continue to play host to large events like weddings, festivals, and funerals, and to less momentous occasions like a villager's afternoon nap. The rest of the place is filled with photo ops of villagers dyeing cloth, sifting rice, weaving baskets, and building houses.

There are also several villages around Zhàoxìng worth visiting. Three kilometers (2 miles) or an hour's invigorating climb to the south, the village of **Jìtáng** ★ has three well-preserved original drum towers that escaped destruction during the Cultural Revolution. The largest, in the middle of the village square, has 11 tiers of eaves and is held up by 16 original stone pedestals. Wander this lovely village, where bales of indigo cloth hang from beautiful traditional wooden houses and friendly children try their Chinese (usually limited to *"níhǎo"* meaning "hello") on you. To get there, follow the main street in the direction of Luóxiáng and bear left as the road winds uphill. The village of **Tángān** about 4km (2½ miles) to the southeast has some stone terraces worth hiking out to see if you have time.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE

The nicest and most popular place to stay is the all-wooden **Wénhuàzhàn Zhāodàisuǒ** right in the center of town off the main road, just under 50m (164 ft.) from the informal bus stop. The spartan rooms come with nothing more than beds and fans but are otherwise clean, as are the communal showers and toilets. A bed costs ¥20 ($2.50) and a standard room ¥50 ($6.25). The owners don't speak much English but are very friendly and can cook Chinese and Dòng meals as well as pancakes for breakfast. Deeper inside the village, **Lulu's Homestay** (**Fēngqíng Lǚyóu Shèwài Mínjū Lǚguǎn; ✆ 0855/613-0112**) offers six rooms on the second level of the owner's (Lù Xīnfēng) house, but a brand-new wooden guesthouse was being constructed next door at press time. The new rooms should be basic but clean, with beds averaging ¥20 to ¥25 ($2.50–$3) each. Mr. Lù's wife cooks delicious Dòng meals for ¥10 to ¥20 ($1.25–$2.50) per person, and instant coffee is available. Mr. Lù, with his smattering of English, often leads hikes in the surrounding hills. Currently, Mr. Lù has the only Internet service (¥10/$1.25 per hour) in town.

AROUND ZHÀOXÌNG

If you're traveling the road between Zhàoxìng and Sānjiāng in Guǎngxī Province, you'll notice about 1½ hours south of Zhàoxìng at the hamlet of **Dìpíng** a three-tower **wind and rain bridge** stretching across the river. Guìzhōu's most impressive bridge of its kind, the structure was built as early as 1883.

9 Kūnmíng

Yúnnán Province, 1,200km (744 miles) NW of Hong Kong, 450km (270 miles) SW of Guìyáng

As the capital of Yúnnán Province, Kūnmíng, also known as the "city of eternal spring," is one of the most pleasant and relaxed cities in China. Though it was founded over 2,000 years ago, the city did not gain prominence until it became the eastern capital of the Nánzhào Kingdom in the 8th century. By the time the Mongols swept through in 1274, Kūnmíng, or Yachi as it was then known, was enough of a flourishing town to have attracted the attention of Marco Polo, who described it as a "very great and noble" capital city. The city's bloodiest period occurred during the Qīng dynasty, with a series of Muslim rebellions. In the late 19th century, foreign influence appeared in the form of the French, who built a narrow-gauge rail line to Vietnam still in use today. During World War II, Kūnmíng played an important role as the terminus of a major supply line (the famous Burma Road) in the Allies' Asian theater of operations.

Today, Kūnmíng's wide streets, towering office blocks, and giant shopping centers all convey the impression of a modern, 21st-century city. Sadly, much of the development of recent years, most of it on account of the 1999 International Horticultural Exhibition, has come at the expense of traditional wooden dwellings and artisan workshops, which have all been razed in the process, taking much of the city's original charm with them. Still, Kūnmíng remains a highly enjoyable and relaxing place to spend a few days even if its offerings do not match some of Yúnnán's other treasures. A subtropical location and high elevation (1,864m/6,213 ft.) give Kūnmíng a temperate climate year-round. Its days are filled with sunshine, making almost any time good for a visit, though the balmy months of September and October are especially fine.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Plane** Kūnmíng is connected by daily flights to Běijīng (2½ hr.), Chéngdū (1 hr.), Guìlín (1½ hr.), Shànghǎi (2½ hr.), Dàlǐ (½ hr.), Lìjiāng (40 min.), Xiānggélǐlà (1 hr.), Bǎoshān (40 min.), Mángshì (40 min.), and Xīshuāngbǎnnà (40 min.). There are twice-weekly flights to Lhasa via Xiānggélǐlā. Tickets can be purchased at the **CAAC/Yúnnán Airlines** office at Tuòdōng Lù 28 (✆ **0871/316-4270** domestic; 0871/312-1220 international). Tickets can also be purchased at the airport, at CITS and other travel agencies, and at hotel tour desks. On the international front, Yúnnán Airlines and several international carriers serve Hong Kong, Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Yangon, Mandalay, Vientiane, Osaka, Singapore, and Hanoi. Foreign airline offices include: Dragonair (Běijīng Lù 157; ✆ 0871/356-2828); Lao Aviation (Camellia Hotel, Dōngfēng Dōng Lù 96; ✆ 0871/316-3000, ext. 5166); Thai Airways (Běijīng Lù 98, 2nd floor, King World Hotel annex; ✆ 0871/351-2269); Silk Air/Singapore Airlines (Dōngfēng Dōng Lù 25; ✆ 0871/315-7125), Japan Airlines (Bank Hotel, Qīngnián Lù 399; 3rd floor ✆ 0871/315-8111); and Vietnam Airlines (Tuòdōng Lù 80; ✆ 0871/315-7175). The airport is 5 km (3 miles) south of city center, a quick ¥15 to ¥30 ($2–$4) taxi ride depending on your destination in town. There are no CAAC airport buses, but public bus nos. 67 and 52 also serve the airport at ¥1 (15¢).

By Train Kūnmíng is well connected by rail to many major Chinese cities, but these trips can require several days and nights. Consider flying for longer distances. Trains run to Běijīng (T62, 42 hr.), Shànghǎi (K80, 46 hr.), Guǎngzhōu (1166, 31 hr.), Guìlín (K182, 17½ hr.), Nánníng (2006, 14½ hr.), Guìyáng

Kūnmíng

ACCOMMODATIONS ■

Bank Hotel **17**
(Bāngkè Fàndiàn)
邦克饭店

Camellia Hotel **22**
(Cháhuā Bīnguǎn)
茶花宾馆

Courtyard by Marriott **7**
(Wànyí Jiǔdiàn)
万怡酒店

Harbour Plaza Kūnmíng **2**
(Kūnmíng Hǎi Yì Jiǔdiàn)

Kai Wah Plaza Hotel **16**
(Jià Huá Guǎngchǎng Jiǔdiàn)
佳华广场酒店

DINING ◆

Báitǎ Dǎiwèi Tīng **18**
(Báitǎ Dǎi Flavor Restaurant)
白塔傣味厅

Jīnbì Chūn **14**
金碧春

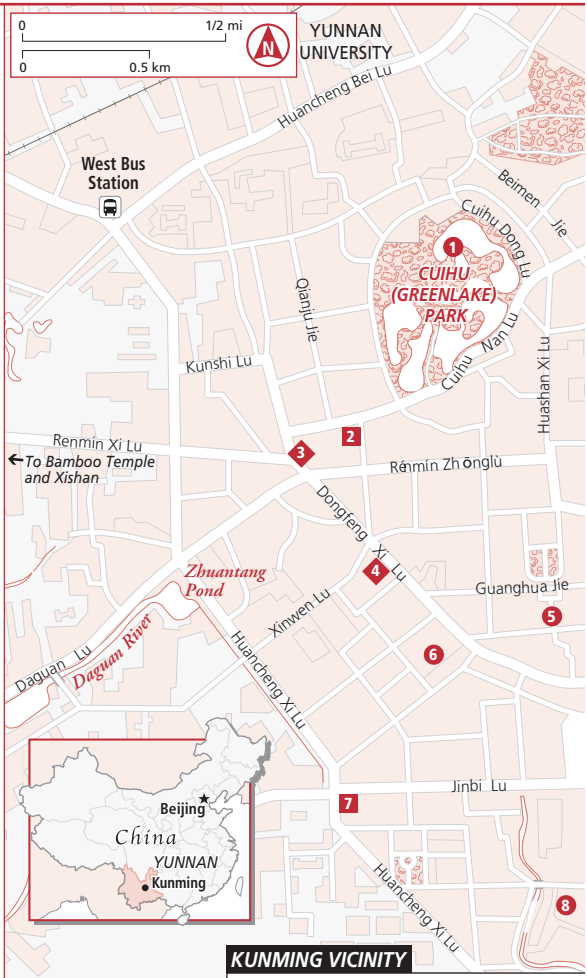
Jiāngshì Xiōngdì Qiáoxiāng Yuán **13**
江氏兄弟桥香园

Māmā Fù's Restaurant **21**
(Māmā Fù Cāntīng)
妈妈付餐厅

Qīngniǎo (Blue Bird Café) **3, 4**
青鸟

Wei's Pizzeria **19**
(Hāhā Xiǎoguǎngchǎng Bīsà Cāntīng)
哈哈小广场比萨餐厅

Yùquán Zhāisù Shí **10**
玉泉斋素食



KUNMING VICINITY

Dàguān Yuán **B**
大观园

Jīn Diàn (Golden Temple) **C**
金殿

Lake Diān (Diān Chí) **H**
滇池

Qióngzhú Sī (Bamboo Temple) **A**
筇竹寺

Shìjiè Yuányì Bólǎnyuán **D**
(International Horticultural Exposition Park)
世界园艺博览园

ATTRACTIONS
Cuìhú Gōngyuán 1
(Green Lake Park)
翠湖公园
Dōng Sītǎ 15
(East Pagoda)
东寺塔
Huāniǎo Shìchǎng 5
(Flower and Bird Market)
花鸟市场
Jīnbì Guǎngchǎng 12
(Jīnbì Square)
金碧广场
Kūnmíng Shì Bówùguǎn 20
(Kūnmíng City Museum)
昆明市博物馆
Nánchéng Ancient Mosque 11
南城清真古寺
Xī Sītǎ 8
(West Pagoda)
西寺塔
Yuántōng Sī 9
圆通寺
Yúnnán Shěng Bówùguǎn 6
(Yúnnán Provincial Museum)
云南省博物馆
Stone Forest (Shílín) J
石林
Xī Shān (Western Hills) G
西山
Yúnnán Mínzú Bówùguǎn F
(Yúnnán Museum of Minority Nationalities)
云南民族博物馆
Yúnnán Mínzú Cūn E
(Yúnnán Nationalities Village)
云南民族村
Zhèng Hé Gōngyuán I
郑和公园
Kunming North Station
KUNMING ZOO
To Golden Temple & International Horticultural Exposition Park
Panlong River
Huancheng Bei Lu
Yuantong Jie
Huashan Nan Lu
Xinghua Jie
Qingnian Lu
Taoyuan Jie
Beijing Lu
Bank of China
PSB
Renmin Zhonglu
Huancheng
Kunming Theatre
Zhengyi Lu
Weiyuan Jie
Huguo Lu
Nanping Lu
Baita Lu
Dongfeng Dong Lu
Workers' Cultural Hall
Kunming Stadium (Tiyuguan)
Dong Lu
Jinbi Lu
Tuodong Lu
Houxin Jie
Dongsi Jie
Shulin Jie
Qingnian Lu
Panlong River
Tangshuang Lu
Wujing Lu
Jinzhi River
East Bus Station
To the Stone Forest
Huancheng Nan Lu
Chuncheng Lu
CITS
Yongping Lu
Nanyao Qiche Keyun Zhan Bus Station
Kunming Railway Station
To Airport
Bus Station
Bank
Mosque
Post Office
Rail Station
PSB Public-Security Visas

(K156, 12 hr.), Chéngdū (K114, 18 hr.), Dàlǐ (K446 or K732, 8 hr.), and Shílín/Stone Forest (K440, 90 min.). Tickets can be purchased at the **railway station** (✆ **0871/612-2492**) south of town from 6:30am to 11:30pm. The 5933 train departs from Kūnmíng's North Railway Station (Běi Huǒchē Zhàn) on Friday and Sunday at 4pm for Hékǒu (17 hr.), after which it continues on to Hanoi, arriving there at 8:10pm local time.

By Bus Kūnmíng has a number of long-distance bus stations, all within 5 minutes of each other and the railway station, but the main one that should serve most travelers' needs is the **Nányáo Qìchē Kèyùn Zhàn** at Běijīng Lù 60 (✆ **0871/351-0617**), at the northwest corner of Běijīng Lù and Yǒngpíng Lù. From here, buses go to Xiàguān (17 buses; 5 hr.; ¥104/$13) from 7:30am to 7:30pm; to Lìjiāng (9 hr.; ¥152/$19) at 7:30am, 9:30am, 11:30am, and 2pm); to Xiānggélǐlā/Zhōngdiàn (12 hr.; ¥162/$20) at 8:20am; to Ruìlì (16 hr.; ¥191/$24) at 3:30pm; to Jǐnghóng (16 hr.; ¥150/$19) at 2pm, 4pm, 6pm, 7pm, and 8pm; to Bǎoshān (7½–8 hr.; ¥116–150/$15–$19) at 7:30am, 10:30am, noon, and 6pm; to Hékǒu (11 hr.; ¥112/$14) at 9:45am; and to Jiànshuǐ (4½ hr.; ¥30–¥35/$3.75–$4.35) every half hour from 7:20am to 9pm. A private bus company, **YNTAC** (✆ **0871/718-7225**), also operates luxury, air-conditioned, nonsmoking buses from Kūnmíng to Xiàguān (5 hr.; ¥103/$13) at 8:30am, 9:30am, 10:30am, 1pm, 2:30pm, and 7pm; and to Lìjiāng (8 hr.; ¥151/$19) at 8:30am, 9:30am, and 1pm. Buses leave from the Kūnmíng Tǐyùguǎn at Dōngfēng Dōng Lù 99. The **West Bus Station (Xiǎo Xī Zhàn)** at Rénmín Zhōng Lù just west of Dōngfēng Xī Lù, has buses that go to Kūnshān (1 hr.; ¥10/$1.25) every half hour to hour from 7:30am to 6pm.

GETTING AROUND Downtown sights can be toured on foot or by bike. If your hotel does not offer bike rental, the Camellia Hotel (see "Where to Stay," below) rents them for ¥2 (25¢) an hour or ¥15 ($1.90) for the day.

Flagfall for Xiàlì and smaller **taxis** is ¥7 (85¢) for 3km (2 miles), then ¥1.60 (20¢) per kilometer until 10km (6 miles), when it goes up to ¥2.40 (30¢) per kilometer. From 10pm to 6am, the cost is ¥8.40 ($1.05) for 3km (2 miles), then ¥1.90 (25¢) per kilometer until 10km (6 miles), then ¥2.70 (35¢) per kilometer. Santana taxis cost ¥8 ($1) for 3km (2 miles) and ¥1.80 (25¢) per kilometer after that; from 10pm to 6am, flagfall is ¥9.60 ($1.20) for 3km (2 miles).

While many of the outlying sights such as the Bamboo Temple and Dragon's Gate can be reached most conveniently by taxi, public **buses** also travel most of these routes. Bus no. 52 runs from the airport to Dàguān Yuán via the railway station. Bus no. 47 runs from the railway station to the International Horticultural Exposition Park, from where you can either take the cable car or bus no. 10 to the Golden Temple. Bus no. 44 goes from a block north of the railway station to the Yúnnán Nationalities Village. The fare for each bus is ¥1 (15¢).

CONSULATES **Laos** The **Laos Consulate** (✆ **0871/317-6624**) is in room 120 of the Camellia Hotel at Dōngfēng Dōng Lù 96 (open Mon–Fri 8:30am–11:30am and 1:30–4:30pm). Transit visas (5–7 days) and standard 15-day tourist visas (valid within 2 months of issue) can be issued in 3 working days (ordinary service) or by the next working day (express service). Fees vary from ¥270 to ¥378 ($33–$47) for ordinary service and from ¥400 to ¥505 ($50–$63) for express service. You cannot currently get a Laos visa at the border. Bring two photos and complete two application forms.

Myanmar The **Myanmar Consulate** (✆ **0871/316-3000,** ext. 6225; fax 0871/317-6309) is located in room 225 of the Camellia Hotel (open Mon–Fri,

8:30am–noon and 1–4:30pm). Standard 28-day travel visas costing ¥185 ($23) and valid within 3 months of issue can be issued in 3 working days; for same-day service, expect to pay an extra ¥150 ($19). This visa is only good for flying into Yangon or Mandalay. For overland crossing at the Ruìlì border, see "Tours," above.

Thailand The **Thai Consulate** (✆ **0871/316-2033,** ext. 62105; fax 0871/316-6891) is located on the grounds of the Kūnmíng Hotel at Dōngfēng Dōng Lù 50–52 (open Mon–Fri 9am–1:30pm). Note that travelers from most countries shouldn't need Thai visas.

Vietnam There is no Vietnamese consulate here, but you can apply for 30-day Vietnamese visas for ¥400 ($50) at the **Vietnam Airlines** office, Tuōdōng Lù 80 (✆ **0871/315-7175**). Bring your passport and photo.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES The **Kūnmíng Sports Stadium (Kūnmíng Tǐyù Guǎn)** has a swimming pool open to the public from 6:30am–10pm; ¥10 ($1.25). Golfers can head to the **Spring City Golf and Lake Resort** located 48km (29 miles) southeast of Kūnmíng; it has a championship 18-hole golf course designed by Jack Nicklaus and another by Robert Trent Jones, Jr. Standard rooms at the five-star resort (✆ **0871/767-1188;** www.springcitygolf.com) cost ¥1,328 to ¥1,504 ($166–$188), while a round of golf will set you back ¥1,410 to ¥1,760 ($176–$220).

TOURS CITS at Huánchéng Nán Lù 285 (✆ **0871/353-5448;** fax 0871/316-9240; www.kmcits.com.cn; open Mon–Fri 8:30am–noon and 2–6pm) is often busy juggling international tour groups but can be very helpful with arranging accommodations, ongoing transportation, or customized tours throughout Yúnnán for individual travelers. The **Camellia Travel Service** on the ground floor of the Camellia Hotel at Dōngfēng Dōng Lù 96 (✆ **0871/316-6388;** fax 0871/318-8949, Camellia@ynmail.com; open 8am–10pm). They can arrange travel to **Tibet** by plane (price per person inclusive of one-way plane ticket, Tibet Travel Permit, an English-speaking guide, insurance, and accommodations in Tibet for 3 days) or overland by Landcruiser from Zhōngdiàn (¥5,000/$625 per person inclusive of transportation, travel permit, and guide, subject to a minimum of four people). Note that travelers to Tibet are still required to join an "organized tour," but the group can consist of just one person (see p. 755 for more details).

For overland travel to **Myanmar** at the Ruìlì border, you will have to be accompanied all the way to Mandalay by an official travel agency–sponsored guide. A travel agency (✆ **0871/316-0003**) in room 208 of the Camellia Hotel just before the Myanmar consulate can handle all the arrangements for you, including the visa. Expect to pay about ¥1,500 ($187) per person for all arrangements.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The main branch of the **Bank of China** (open Mon–Fri, 8:30am–noon, 2–5pm) is at Rénmín Dōng Lù 448. ATMs here accept international cards.

Internet Access Internet access is available at **China Telecom,** Dōngfēng Dōng Lù 12; open Mon–Fri 8:30am–5:30pm, Sat–Sun 9am–5:30pm; ¥5/60¢/hr. before 10am, ¥6/75¢/hr. otherwise). A ¥20 ($2.50) deposit is required. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The main post office is (open 8am–8pm) at Dōngfēng Dōng Lù 14, and another (open 9am–8pm) is west of the railway station.

Visa Extensions The visa office is located at counter 57 of the **People's Service Center** of Kūnmíng Municipality (Kūnmíng Shìzhèngfǔ Biànmín Zhōngxīn), Rénmín Dōng Lù 196 (✆ **0871/319-6540;** open Mon–Fri 8:30–11:30am and 1–5:30pm).

EXPLORING KŪNMÍNG

A WALK THROUGH OLD KŪNMÍNG

Start just south of Jīnbì Square at Dōngsì Jiē 61, at the Táng dynasty **Xīsì Tǎ (West Pagoda)** and **Dōngsì Tǎ (East Pagoda),** both built around 849 but renovated several times since. The four-sided, 13-story pagodas with Buddhist statues in each story's niches cannot be entered and are connected by a pedestrian walkway. From here, head north to the **Jīnbì Guǎngchǎng (square)** where the **Jīnmǎ Bìjī Fáng,** a series of newly constructed traditional buildings, now house some of Kūnmíng's hottest bars, teahouses, and restaurants. Continuing north, you'll soon reach a traffic circle (Jìngrè Park) which used to mark one of Kūnmíng's old city gates. Heading north on the Chinese-lantern-lined Zhèngyì Lù, you'll soon see on your left the former **Nánchéng Ancient Mosque,** which has had its 400 years of history obliterated in its present 1997 white-tiled, smoked-glass incarnation.

Turning left at Jǐngxīng Jiē brings you to Kūnmíng's delightful **Huāniǎo Shìchǎng (Flower and Bird Market)** ★, the heart of Kūnmíng's old city. About 30m (100 ft.) in, turn right into a traditional alleyway marked by eight lanterns, where you'll find **Mǎ Fǔ,** a series of traditional buildings now housing a restaurant and a calligraphy association where you can be painted with an ethnic Yúnnán tattoo. Or simply dawdle your time away at the market, where you can purchase everything from pet turtles and bonsai plants to old coins and tacky souvenirs.

Heading northeast once you exit the market, you'll soon see Yúnnán's oldest herbal pharmacy, **Fù Lín Táng,** established in 1857. You can watch the prescriptions being filled in the back. From Fù Lín Táng, head north to Rénmín Lù, where you can catch a taxi back to your hotel or take bus no. 69 to nearby **Cuìhú Gōngyuán (Green Lake Park),** one bus stop away.

Cuì Hú (Green Lake) ★ Kūnmíng's nicest park is a pleasant retreat from the bustling city even though it can get quite crowded on weekends. Bridges and pavilions connect the various islands on the lake, and sipping tea at a lakeside teahouse is one of the more pleasant activities here. The park is home to the Siberian black-headed gulls, which migrate here during the winter.

Cuìhú Nán Lù 67. Free admission. 6am–midnight. Bus: no. 4, 59, 22, 74, 78, 85, 101.

Kūnmíng Shì Bówùguǎn (Kūnmíng City Museum) Only worth a visit if you've exhausted the city's other offerings, this museum focuses on the bronzes, drums, jewelry, swords, and other artifacts of the Diān nation unearthed around the Lake Diān area, including a seven-story octagonal Sutra Stone Pillar built during the Dàlǐ Kingdom (938–1254) to release the soul from suffering.

Tuòdōng Lù 120. Admission ¥5 (60¢). Tues–Sun 10am–4:30pm.

Yuántōng Sì This unusual temple, the largest Buddhist shrine in Kūnmíng, combines elements from Mahayana, Hinayana (or Theravada), and Tibetan Buddhism (Lamaism). Originally built between 780 and 807, and rebuilt during the Qīng dynasty, the temple is dedicated to the worship of Avalokitesvara (the original male Buddha who was later transfigured into the female Guānyīn in Chinese Mahayana Buddhism. In the back of the complex is a

Hinayana-style hall with a bronze statue of Sakyamuni donated by the Buddhist Association of Thailand. To the east is an altar hall of the Lama sect.

Yuántōng Jiē. Admission ¥4 (50¢). 8am–5pm.

Yúnnán Shěng Bówùguǎn (Yúnnán Provincial Museum) This museum covers Yúnnán's ethnic minorities, the history of the province's bronze drum culture, and the development of Yúnnán Buddhist art, incorporating elements of Lamaism, Mahayana, and Hinayana Buddhism. Exhibits which have basic English captions are not as impressive as you might expect, but are interesting enough for an hour of your time.

Wǔyī Lù 118. Admission ¥5 (60¢). 9am–5pm.

WHERE TO STAY

Less conveniently located for the independent traveler in the southwestern part of town is the four-star **Courtyard by Marriott (Wànyí Jiǔdiàn)** ★★, Huánchéng Xī Lù 300 (✆ **0871/415-8888;** fax 0871/415-3282; cyhotel@public.km.yn.cn). While not as luxurious as some five-star hotels, it still delivers first-rate facilities and quality service.

Bank Hotel (Bāngkè Fàndiàn) ★★★ Located in the heart of town on the banks of the Pànglóng River, this luxurious five-star hotel boasts the largest standard rooms in Kūnmíng. Each is plushly decorated with classical redwood furniture and a large comfortable bed. The spacious bathrooms are clean and come with separate tub/shower. Facilities are first-rate and the staff is efficient.

Qīngnián Lù 399. ✆ **0871/315-8888.** Fax 0871/315-8999. www.bankhotel.com. 285 units. ¥1,146 ($138) standard room; from ¥2,158 ($260) suite. 20%–30% discounts. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; lounge; indoor pool; tennis court; health club; sauna; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; room service; dry cleaning/laundry; nonsmoking rooms; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Camellia Hotel (Cháhuā Bīnguǎn) ★ Still the favorite of independent budget travelers, this two-star hotel has recently renovated standard rooms that are large, comfortable, and comparable to those of many three-star hotel rooms. There are also older budget standard rooms that are smaller and more run down, and basic dorms with shared showers that are in high demand. The hotel offers an excellent ¥10 ($1.25) Western buffet breakfast. The staff speaks some English and can be helpful when pressed.

Dōngfēng Dōng Lù 96. ✆ **0871/316-3000.** Fax 0871/314-7033. 180 units. ¥200–¥220 ($25–$28) standard room; ¥30 ($3.75) dorm bed. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; bike rental; concierge; tour desk; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; room service; laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Harbour Plaza Kūnmíng (Hǎiyì Jiǔdiàn) ★★★ This luxurious five-star Hong Kong–managed hotel is minutes from Green Lake Park and currently *the* place to stay for high-end tour groups from Europe and America. Guest rooms are simply but tastefully decorated and have comfortable beds. Bathrooms run small but are clean and bright. Staff is poised and efficient.

Hóng Huá Qiáo 20. ✆ **0871/538-6688.** Fax 0871/538-1189. www.harbour-plaza.com. 300 units. ¥1,038 ($139) standard room. Discounts up to 40%. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; lounge; outdoor pool; health club; sauna; children's playroom; concierge; tour desk; free airport shuttle; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning and laundry; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Kai Wah Plaza Hotel (Jià Huá Guǎngchǎng Jiǔdiàn) ★★★ Formerly managed by Westin Hotels, this 37-story modern glass hotel is so large you

sometimes feel like you're staying at a convention center. (The hotel shares the atrium with an office complex.) For the hotel's size, rooms here are comparatively small but are well appointed with modern furniture and plush beds. Bathrooms come with separate tub and shower. Service is adequate.

Běijīng Lù 157. ✆ **0871/356-2828.** Fax 0871/356-1818. 555 units. ¥1,120 ($140) standard room; from ¥1,600 ($200) suite. 35% discounts. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bakery; bar; lounge; cigar bar; indoor pool; health club and spa; Jacuzzi; sauna; squash court; concierge; tour desk; free airport shuttle; 24-hr. business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry; medical clinic. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, broadband Internet access, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

The most famous Yúnnán dish is **"crossing the bridge noodles"** *(guòqiáo mǐxiàn),* a hot pot consisting of steaming chicken broth to which you add thinly sliced chicken, pork, fish, other meats, vegetables, mushrooms, and rice noodles, all seasoned with peppers and chilies to taste. The oil on top keeps the simmering food hot enough to scald tongues, so be careful with your first bites! According to legend, the dish was invented over a century ago by the wife of a scholar who discovered that a layer of oil on top of her husband's food could keep it warm all the way from her kitchen across the bridge to a pavilion where he was studying for his imperial examinations, hence the dish's name. Another popular local dish is *qìguō jī* (chicken stewed with medicinal herbs). Along with a pharmacopeia of allegedly healthful herbs and spices that are often used in many local dishes, Yúnnán mushrooms are also valued for their medicinal qualities. Fried goat cheese, Yúnnán sweet ham, and Yúnnán coffee are some other local favorites.

MODERATE

Jīnbì Chūn ★★ DIĀN CUISINE/SÌCHUĀN One of the best dining experiences in town, this restaurant combines the wonderful ambience of a 130-year-old Chinese mansion with delectable local Diān cuisine. This two-story gray-brick building just south of Jīnbì Square has private dining rooms arrayed around a once open courtyard. Red Chinese lanterns and beautifully carved wooden doors and lattice windows set the right mood. Specialties include *zhēng lǎo nánguā* (steamed pumpkin), *jīnbì yān huóxiā* (spicy prawn sashimi), and *sūpí guànguàn jī* (chicken soup with puff pastry). The restaurant should have an English menu by the time you read this.

Dōngsì Jiē, Dà Huājiāo Xiāng 5. ✆ **0871/364-1663.** Reservations recommended. Main courses ¥80–¥100 ($10–$12). No credit cards. 11am–10pm.

Yùquán Zhāi Sùshí ★ VEGETARIAN The largest vegetarian restaurant in town, located diagonally across from the Yuántōng Sì, is a clean, low-key, and foreigner-friendly place where Buddhist chants play softly in the background. All the dishes here are made from vegetables, tofu, or soy products but have been known to fool even the most discerning of meat eaters. Try *hóngshāo shīziqiú* (a mushroom ball in soya sauce), *cuìpí yā* (crispy fried mock duck), and *cuìpí rúyì yú* (crispy mock fish in sweet-and-sour sauce). The staff is attentive and helpful.

Píngzhèng Jiē 88, 2nd floor. ✆ **0871/511-16572.** English menu. Main courses ¥80–¥120 ($10–$15). No credit cards. 9am–9pm.

INEXPENSIVE

Báitǎ Dǎiwèi Tīng (Báitǎ Dǎi Flavor Restaurant) ★ DǍI For a refreshing change of palate, this ethnic Dǎi restaurant, decorated comfortably with rattan furniture and batik prints, serves delicious favorites that include *yēzi qìguō jī* (coconut chicken), *huǒshāo gānbā* (barbecue dried beef), *zhútǒng ròu* (pork

cooked in bamboo), and *hùnhé chǎo* (fried mixed vegetables). A variety of local beers and wines are available to complement your meal.

Shāngyì Jiē 143. ✆ **0871/317-2932.** Main courses ¥50–¥70 ($6.25–$8.75). No credit cards. 11:30am–2:30pm and 5:30–9:30pm.

Jiāngshì Xiōngdì Qiáoxiāng Yuán ★ YÚNNÁN This string of franchise restaurants by the Brothers Jiāng serves some of the most consistently reliable *guòqiáo mǐxiàn* (crossing-the-bridge noodles) in town. The outlet located at Jīnbì Square is housed in a traditional Chinese building with wooden doors and lattice windows. The most basic version of the noodles features soup, pork, ham, cuttlefish, and chicken, while the most expensive comes with *qìguō jī* (steamed chicken), beef liver, duck gizzards and an assortment of local wild vegetables. There is also a meatless version for ¥10 ($1.25).

Shūlín Jiē 2. ✆ **0871/364-5275.** Main courses ¥10–¥60 ($1.25–$7.50). No credit cards. 6:30am–9pm.

Māma Fù's Restaurant (Māma Fù Cāntīng) ★ WESTERN/CHINESE All the Chinese and Western staples are here: fried noodles, fried rice, pancakes, apple pie, sandwiches, pizzas, and spaghetti. The restaurant bakes its own breads. Several doors down, the **Fù Māma Miànguǎn** offers a wide variety of noodle dishes, including *hóngshāo niúròu miàn* (beef noodles), *shànyú miàn* (noodles with eel), and *yìndù gālí jī miàn* (curry chicken noodles).

Báitǎ Lù 219 (across from the Kūnmíng Hotel). ✆ **0871/311-1015.** Main courses ¥15–¥40 ($2–$5). No credit cards. 8:30am–11pm. Māma Fù Miànguǎn, Dōngfēng Dōng Lù 58. ✆ **0871/316-7340.** Main courses ¥8–¥20 ($1–$2.50). No credit cards. 8:30am–midnight.

Qīngniǎo (Blue Bird Café) WESTERN/CHINESE This popular restaurant has two outlets. The one at Dōngfēng Xī Lù is squirreled away in its own alley with alfresco dining on the lovely patio. Unfortunately, it suffers from usually over-enthusiastic, not always melodious karaoke aficionados, who can put a damper on a quiet candlelight dinner. The cafe, Xiǎo Xīmén Qīngniǎo on Cuìhú Nán Lù, is quieter and cozier. Food at both is consistently decent. The menus offer pizza, steaks, and basic Chinese fare familiar to foreigners (kung pao chicken, garlic eggplant).

Qīngniǎo Lǎowū, Dōngfēng Xī Lù 127, buildings 1 and 2. ✆ **0871/361-0478.** Xiǎo Xīmén Qīngniǎo, Cuìhú Nán Lù 150. ✆ 0871/ 531-4071. Main courses ¥18–¥30 ($2.25–$3.75). No credit cards. 9am–2am.

Wei's Pizzeria (Hāhā Xiǎoguǎngchǎng Bǐsà Cāntīng) ★ *Kids* WESTERN/CHINESE Located in a small alley off Tuòdōng Lù, this family-friendly restaurant offers Internet and book-exchange services, bikes for rent, a full bar, and a children's playpen in addition to excellent home cooking from all over the map. Favorites include the Four Seasons pizza, veggie lasagna, enchiladas, and the cheesesteak sandwich, plus basic Chinese dishes such as *yúxiāng qiézi* (eggplant with garlic sauce) and *qìguō jī* (steamed chicken).

Tuòdōng Lù 78. ✆ **0871/316-6189.** Main courses ¥18–¥30 ($2.25–$3.75). No credit cards. 8am–midnight.

SHOPPING

The area around Zhèngyì Lù and Nánpíng Lù has turned into Kūnmíng's main shopping district. The huge **department store** Kūnmíng Bǎihuò Dàlóu at Dōnfēng Dōng Lù 99; open 9:10am–10pm) has a supermarket in the basement. The Gǔwán Chéng (open 8:30am–7:30pm) at the southwest corner of Hùguó Lù and Nánpíng Lù has a collection of stores selling **antiques,** curios, and ceramics. Yúnnán's famous **Pǔ'ěr tea** can be purchased at Ten Fu's Tea (Tiān Fú Míngchá), Shāngyì Jiē 41, next to the PSB. The Flower and Bird Market in

Jīngxīng Jiē is worth a browse for **souvenirs** and minor, mostly fake, antiques. Minority women will sometimes gather outside the Camellia Hotel with their **handicrafts** and **batiks.**

KŪNMÍNG AFTER DARK

The 24-hour **Àomā Měilì Restaurant** at Dōngfēng Lù 60 (✆ **0871/312-6036**) is a laid-back bar with a good selection of liqueurs, beers, wines, sake, and the usual coffees and teas. The popular **Camel Bar (Luòtuo Jiǔbā)** at Báitǎ Lù 274 (✆ **0871/337-6255**) serves inexpensive beer and has live music on weekends. The local bar scene thrives at dark but trendy **The Hump** (✆ **0871/364-4197;** open noon–2am or last customer) has a full bar and posters of American pop and movie stars.

AROUND KŪNMÍNG

Jīn Diàn (Golden Temple) ★★ The centerpiece of this gorgeous Daoist temple complex, located 10km (6 miles) northeast of town, is the small but exquisite Golden Temple, built in 1671 on a two-tiered marble platform ringed by beautifully carved balustrades. The weathered 6.7m (22-ft.) high, 7.8m (25-ft.) wide, 250-ton hall has a double-eaved roof with gables, beams, columns, lattice doors, and lattice windows, all cast in bronze. Inside is a 1.5m (5-ft.) tall bronze statue of Zhèn Wǔ, the legendary God of the North, flanked by a girl and a boy servant. Beyond the Golden Temple at the summit of the hill is the **Bell Tower (Zhōng Lóu),** a 36m (118-ft.) high, three-story square structure with a total of 36 flying eaves evoking flying phoenixes that was built only in 1983. Inside hangs a 14-ton bronze bell, used to signal time as well as to sound the alarm at the city's southern gate.

Jīn Diàn Gōngyuán. Admission ¥15 ($1.90). 7am–8pm. Bus: no. 10, 71 (from Jìnrì Gōngyuán).

Qióngzhú Sì (Bamboo Temple) ★★ Built in 639 and rebuilt in 1422 to 1428, this temple houses an incredibly vivid tableau of 500 arhats carved between 1883 and 1890 by Sichuanese sculptor Lǐ Guǎngxiū and his six apprentices, who gave to each arhat a different and incredibly naturalistic facial expression and pose. It is thought that some of these arhats, who range from the emaciated to the pot-bellied, the angry to the contemplative, were carved in the images of the sculptor's contemporaries, friends, and foes. A wildly fantastical element dominates the main hall, where an arhat surfs a wave on the back of a unicorn, while another stretches a 3m (10-ft.) arm upwards to pierce the ceiling.

12km (7 miles) northwest of town. Admission ¥4 (50¢). 7:30am–5pm. Bus: no. 1 from Nánpíng Jiē and Zhèngyì Lù to Huángtǔ Pō; transfer to *miàndī* (van) taxis (¥3/35¢) for Qióngzhú Sì.

LAKE DIĀN (DIĀN CHÍ)

China's sixth largest freshwater lake, located southwest of Kūnmíng, is 40km (25 miles) from north to south and covers an area of 300 sq. km (186 sq. miles). Fishing boats still trawl the lake, but serious pollution has made it difficult for many families to continue to make their living this way. Bordered by hills to the west and industrial settlements to the south and east, the lake has a number of attractions.

Dàguān Yuán This pleasant park on the northern shore of Lake Diān boasts nurseries, gardens, and walkways, but it is most famous for its triple-eaved **Grand View Tower (Dàguān Lóu),** first built in 1682 and rebuilt in 1883. The tower offers unobstructed views of the lake.

Dàguān Lù (3km/2 miles south of Kūnmíng). Admission ¥5 (60¢), dawn to dusk. Bus: no. 4, 52 (from airport).

Xī Shān (Western Hills) Sometimes called the Sleeping Beauty Hills—their contours are said to resemble the outline of a sleeping maiden when viewed from afar—this densely forested range of hills on the western banks of Lake Diān is home to a number of Buddhist and Daoist temples and pavilions carved into the sheer rock face.

From the park's entrance, it's a 5km (3-mile) hike uphill to the parking lot and cable-car station, though most visitors prefer to take the bus from Gāoyáo directly to the parking lot. Along the way, the first major temple is the large and impressive Míng dynasty **Huátíng Sì** (¥4/50¢; open 7:20am–6:30pm) which has statues of 500 arhats. About 2km (1¼ miles) later is another Míng temple, **Tàihuá Sì** (¥3/40¢; open 8am–6pm), which was built in 1306 and boasts large gardens that contain camellia, plum, and osmanthus trees.

At the minibus and cable-car terminus is **Niè Ěr Zhī Mù,** (¥1/15¢; open 8am–6:30pm), the tomb of the famous Yúnnán musician Niè Ěr, who composed China's national anthem before he drowned prematurely at sea in Japan in 1935. From here, you can take a chairlift for ¥15 ($1.90) to the summit at Dragon Gate (Lóngmén), or you can take a tram for ¥3 (40¢) to **Sānqīng Gé,** a Daoist temple dedicated to the three main Daoist Gods which marks the beginning of the climb to the Dragon Gate Grottoes (¥20/$2.50). This series of grottoes containing various deities was carved by a local Daoist monk, Wú Láiqīng, and his band of monks between 1781 and 1795, all of whom must have been hanging by their fingertips as they painstakingly hacked away at the sheer rock face. The path on the cliff edge leading to **Dragon Gate** is so narrow that only one person can pass at a time. Below is a precipitous drop of about 600m (2,000 ft.) to the shores of Lake Diān. Those with vertigo should avoid this path. But the views from here of the lake and Kūnmíng in the distance are quite stunning and worth the trip.

To get to Xī Shān, take a taxi for ¥80 to ¥100 ($10–$12), or take local bus no. 5 from the Kūnmíng Hotel to its terminus at the Liù Lù Chēchǎng. Change to bus no. 6, which will take you to the village of Gāoyáo, where minibuses and van taxis will run you up to the tomb of Niè Ěr for ¥5 to ¥15 (60¢–$2). Minibuses also make the run to the tomb from the Liù Lù Chēchǎng, but these are unreliable. You can also leave Dragon Gate by cable car for ¥30 ($3.75) one-way, ¥50 ($6.25) round-trip. It crosses Lake Diān down to Hǎigēng Park and the Yúnnán Nationalities Village. The cable-car terminus is at the tomb of Niè Ěr.

15km (9 miles) west of Kūnmíng.

Yúnnán Mínzú Bówùguǎn (Yúnnán Museum of Minority Nationalities) ★ Worth a visit if you're heading into the minority regions of Yúnnán, this museum offers a systematic and comprehensive overview of the folk arts, clothing, musical instruments, textiles, jewelry, handicrafts, and social structure of Yúnnán's 25 minority groups. Captions are bilingual. There are also a teahouse and a museum store.

Diān Chí Lù. Admission ¥10 ($1.25). Tues–Sun 9am–4:30pm. Bus: no. 44.

Yúnnán Mínzú Cūn (Yúnnán Nationalities Village) Twelve of Yúnnán's 25 minorities currently have their own model villages at this open-air museum. This "minorities-are-happy-they-sing-and-dance" routine should be treated with a healthy skepticism, or better yet, be put to the test by actually visiting some real minority villages.

8km (4¾ miles) south of Kūnmíng. Admission ¥70 ($8.75); 6–10pm ¥50 ($6.25). 8am–10pm (to 6pm in winter). Bus: no. 44.

Zhèng Hé Gōngyuán Sadly, there's not much to see at this park honoring the Míng dynasty admiral Zhèng Hé, whose amazing explorations in his day have largely been forgotten. Other than the *de rigueur* statue of the admiral and Zhèng Hé's father's tomb, a museum display in his old residence chronicles his seven sea voyages.

60km (40 miles) southwest of Kūnmíng in Kūnyáng. Admission ¥2.50 (30¢). 8am–5pm. Bus: no. 14 from Xiǎo Xīmén Bus Station to Kūnyáng Bus Station. Exit the station and turn right onto Zhèng Hè Lù for 300m (980 ft.) until the second intersection. The park is to the left.

STONE FOREST (SHÍ LÍN) ★★

Located 90km (55 miles) southeast of Kūnmíng in the Lǔnán Yí Autonomous County, Shí Lín is Kūnmíng's most famous attraction—a giant forest of limestone rocks formed 270 million years ago when the ocean receded from this area. Millions of years of tectonic shifts and erosion from wind and rain have resulted in today's maze of sharp-edged fissures and sky-piercing pinnacles, which are punctuated by walkways, ponds, and pavilion lookouts. Fed by subterranean rivers, **Jiànfēng Chí** is the only natural body of water in the forest. The reflection of the blue sky, white clouds, and sword-like stone peaks in the pond makes

China's Columbus

China's most famous sailor, Zhèng Hé, was born in 1371 in the town of Kūnyáng. Originally a Huí Muslim named Mǎ Hé, he was captured by the conquering Míng army at age 10, castrated, and forced into service. Rising through the military ranks, he was eventually promoted to serve as a eunuch in the inner court of the Forbidden City, where it is said the emperor gave him the name Zhèng Hé because Mǎ means "horse" in Chinese and horses could not enter the inner court. In 1405, he was appointed admiral of a naval expedition to explore new trade routes and to collect tribute for the Chinese emperor.

Zhèng Hé made seven voyages between 1492 and 1504 compared to Christopher Columbus's four and Vasco da Gama's single sailing in 1497 to 1499. With an armada of 62 ships and a crew of 27,800 men—compared to Columbus's three ships and 87 crew members, and da Gama's four ships and 160 men—the admiral explored territory from Java to the mouth of the Persian Gulf and even down the coast of Africa, sailing to a total of 39 countries, including modern-day Vietnam, Thailand, Yemen, Iran, and Somalia. That Zhèng Hé's feats have remained largely forgotten may have something to do with the fact that his expeditions were less about conquering new lands or disseminating religion than about proclaiming the glory of the Chinese empire to foreigners, who would, the Chinese assumed, recognize China as the Middle Kingdom and render tribute accordingly. It has become an interesting exercise for historians to speculate on what might have happened had the Chinese acted on these explorations of "barbarian" lands. Perhaps we would all be speaking Chinese right now.

this one of the most photographed locales in the forest. **Shīzi Tíng (Lion Pavilion),** the highest point in the Stone Forest, and **Wàngfēng Tíng (Peak Viewing Pavilion)** offer the best panoramas.

This geological wonder is quite a sight if you've never before seen a petrified forest, but some visitors are underwhelmed, as the forest never quite lives up to its hype. It could be the hordes of tourists that tramp through here during the day, for the forest takes on a much more ethereal and mysterious quality only in the evening after the tour groups have left. The Stone Forest can be comfortably navigated in a 2½- to 3-hour loop with plenty of opportunities to get off the trodden path. An English-speaking tour guide can be hired for ¥80 ($10) but is not really necessary.

This area is also home to the Sāní branch of the Yí minority group. Young Sāní men and women in colorful costumes greet all arriving visitors and act as tour guides through the forest, while Sāní vendors sell a variety of handicrafts and some very nice batiks. There are also Sāní song and dance performances during the day and on most nights at the Minor Stone Forest (Xiǎo Shí Lín) right next to the Stone Forest.

About 8km (5 miles) northeast of the Stone Forest is the 300-hectare (741-acre) **Nǎigǔ Shílín** (¥25/$3) which predates the Stone Forest by about two million years. If you like caves, the impressive black volcanic rock formations and underground karst caves here are worth visiting as a complement to the Stone Forest (see "Getting There" for details). On your own, catch a minibus for ¥15 ($1.90) from the main road outside the Stone Forest.

Another side trip worth considering is the 96m (315-ft.) high, 54m (177-ft.) wide **Dàdiéshuǐ Fēilóng Bù** (¥18/$2.25), Yúnnán's largest waterfall. Hiring a taxi for ¥50 to ¥70 ($6–$8.50) directly from the Stone Forest is the most convenient way to get here.

GETTING THERE The best way of reaching the Stone Forest is via the direct K440 train (90 min.; ¥20/$2.50 one-way, ¥30/$3.75 round-trip), which departs Kūnmíng at 8:10am and returns from the Stone Forest at 4:30pm. Train tickets for the forest are sold from 7:30am to 8:10am at a special booth at the southeast corner of the railway station next to the gate for the Stone Forest train. During other times, purchase Stone Forest train tickets at counter 3 in the main station or from travel agencies or hotel desks. Entrance tickets for the Stone Forest can be purchased for ¥80 ($10) on the train, where attendants may also try to sell you organized tours taking in nearby sights. Nǎigǔ Stone Forest costs an additional ¥40 ($5) including lunch, and the Dàdiéshuǐ Waterfall costs an additional ¥50 ($6.25) including lunch. If you decide to join one of these tours, usually conducted only in Chinese, they will send you to the railway station in time for the return train to Kūnmíng at 4:30pm. If you do not wish to wait for the 4:30pm return train, you can catch other, earlier Kūnmíng-bound trains for ¥17 ($2.10) that stop at the Stone Forest on the way (the 1165 leaves Shílín at 1:47pm and arrives in Kūnmíng at 3:30pm), although there are no reserved seats. Avoid anyone who tries to sell you bus rides for ¥30 ($3.75) round-trip, unless you want to spend all your time shopping along the way and only reach the forest in the afternoon.

WHERE TO STAY The sprawling two-star **Shí Lín Bīnguǎn** (✆ **0871/771-1405;** fax 0871/771-1414) inside the main gate to the Stone Forest Park entrance is the best place to stay in the park. Building 4 has the nicest rooms, at

¥300 ($38). The rooms are spacious and comfortable, if a little worn. There are two Chinese restaurants here. The hotel does not accept credit cards.

10 Dàlǐ

Yúnnán Province, 392km (243 miles) NW of Kūnmíng, 15km (9 miles) N of Xiàguān, 150km (90 miles) S of Lìjiāng

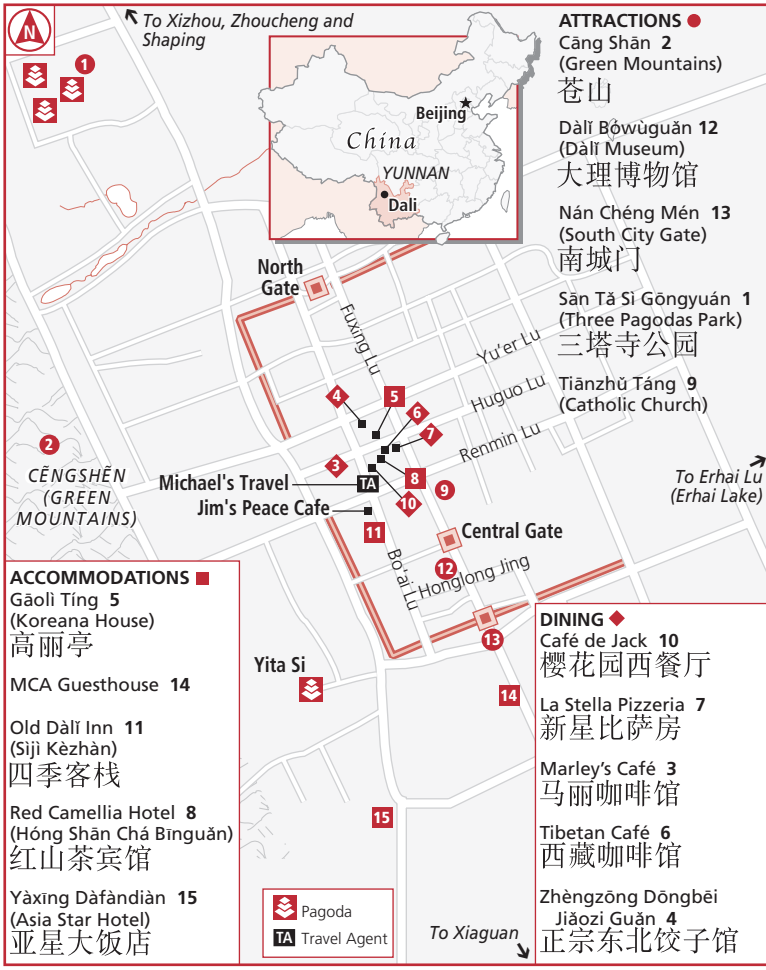
The charming town of Dàlǐ, traditionally one of the best places in China to tune in, turn on, and drop out for a while, remains a wonderful place to visit despite the increasing commercialization brought by tour groups. Its small size belies its important place in Yúnnán's history: During the Táng dynasty (609–960), Dàlǐ was the capital of the Nánzhào Kingdom, and during the Sòng dynasty (960–1079), it was the capital of the Dàlǐ Kingdom. Deserted after Kublai Khan overran Dàlǐ in 1252, it was reconstructed during the Míng dynasty (1382). Today's Dàlǐ is the capital of the Bái Autonomous Prefecture (although it's run from Xiàguān). Located in a mountain valley at an elevation of 1,948m (6,496 ft.), Dàlǐ is sunny year-round, though winter nights can be chilly. The best times to visit are between February and October, when the majority of festivals take place.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Dàlǐ's transportation hub is **Xiàguān,** 15km (9 miles) to the south. From the Dàlǐ Airport another 15km (9 miles) northeast of Xiàguān, there are daily **flights** to Kūnmíng (40 min.) and Xīshuāngbǎnnà (50 min.). From the airport to Dàlǐ is about a 1-hour taxi ride, which will cost up to ¥100 ($12). If you need to purchase additional plane tickets, take a taxi into Xiàguān for about ¥40 to ¥50 ($5–$6) and go to the **Yúnnán Airlines** ticket office (✆ **0872/231-5339**), located next to the railway station across from the China Telecom building. There is another outlet in the Cāng Shān Fàndiàn at Cāng Shān Lù 118. Travel agencies or your hotel concierge in Dàlǐ may be able to help you purchase airline tickets, but give them as much advance notice as possible and expect to pay a fee for the service.

A popular **train** route is the overnight sleeper from Kūnmíng (8 hr.; ¥161/$20 soft sleeper), which leaves Kūnmíng at 10:34pm and arrives in Xiàguān at 6:22am. A later train departs at 11:16pm and arrives at 7:30am. From the railway station, bus no. 8 (45 min.; ¥3/40¢) runs to the west gate of the old city in Dàlǐ, while bus no. 10 runs into Xiàguān. Returning to Kūnmíng, trains depart Xiàguān at 9pm and 10:02pm. You can now buy tickets for trains departing from Kūnmíng in the lobby of the Jiāotōng Fàndiàn at Jiànshè Lù 2 (✆ **0872/212-6588;** open 8–11:30am and 2–5:30pm) in Xiàguān. There is a ¥10 ($1.25) service fee for Dàlǐ–Kūnmíng tickets and a ¥20 ($2.50) fee for all other destinations.

Travelers can still take the 9-hour bus trip on the old Burma Road (see box, below) between Kūnmíng and Xiàguān, but most folks these days prefer the far quicker (4–5 hr.) and more comfortable **buses** that travel the new expressway. Most Dàlǐ-bound buses actually stop in Xiàguān, which has several bus stations, but the main one that travelers will likely use the most is the confusingly named **Dàlǐ Qìchē Kèyùn Zhàn** (✆ **0872/218-9330**) on Jiànshè Lù east of Rénmín Lù. From here, luxury air-conditioned buses depart for Kūnmíng (5 hr.; ¥104/$13) every half hour from 7:30am to 8:30pm; for Lìjiāng (3 hr.; ¥51/$6.30) at 8:30am, 2pm, 7pm, and 7:30pm; and for Xiānggélǐlā/Zhōngdiàn (6 hr.; ¥86/$11) at 9am and 3pm. There are also regular buses to Lìjiāng (3 hr.; ¥35–¥50/$4.40–$6.30) every half hour from 7:20am to 7:30pm; to Téngchōng



(5–6 hr.; ¥71–¥81/$8.80–$10) at 10am and 7:30pm; to Bǎoshān (2–6 hr.) hourly from 8:30am to 3:30pm; to Ruìlì (10 hr.; ¥91/$11) at 8:30am and 8pm; and to Jǐnghóng (22 hr.; ¥141/$18) at 7:30pm. A private bus company, **YNTAC** (✆ **0872/212-5221**), operates luxury, air-conditioned, nonsmoking buses from Xiàguān's Cāng Shān Fàndiàn (Cāng Shān Lù 118). The buses go to Kūnmíng (5 hr.; ¥103/$13) at 8:30am, 10:30am, 12:30pm, 1pm, 2:30pm, and 7:30pm; and to Lìjiāng (3 hr.; ¥55/$6.90) at 8:20am, 1:40pm, 2:40pm, and 7pm. From the center of Xiàguān to Dàlǐ, take bus no. 4 for ¥2 (25¢) from the corner of Jiànshè Lù and Rénmín Lù.

In Dàlǐ, it's best to have a tourist cafe arrange your Dàlǐ–Kūnmíng bus for ¥105 to ¥110 ($13–$14), as they will take care of sending you to Xiàguān for the transfer. There is usually a ¥5 (60¢) fee for this service. Buses to Lìjiāng also mostly originate out of Xiàguān. Again, the most hassle-free option is to have a travel agency or cafe book your ticket.

Note: If you get stuck in Xiàguān en route to Dàlǐ, the modern four-star **Mànwàn Dàjiǔdiàn** ★ at Cānglàng Lù (✆ **0872/218-8188;** fax 0872/218-1742) is the nicest place to stay in town, with large comfortable rooms and bright, clean bathrooms. Standard rooms cost ¥500 ($62); suites are ¥780 to ¥988 ($97–$123).

GETTING AROUND **Old town Dàlǐ** is so small that it's possible to walk from the North Gate (Běi Mén) to the South Gate (Nán Mén) in half an hour or less if you don't stop at the many shops along the main thoroughfare, Fùxīng Lù. The other two main streets are Bó'ài Lù and the pedestrian-only Hùguó Lù, also known as Foreigner's Street (Yángrén Jiē) because of the many cafes and backpackers' guesthouses there. To explore further afield, **bikes** are the best way to get around and can be rented at the MCA Guesthouse and at Michael Yáng's Travel Booking office for around ¥10 ($1.25) a day. A **taxi** to nearby sights such as the Three Pagoda Park or the Cāng Shān chairlift will run between ¥5 and

The Burma Road

As the Japanese took control of northern and coastal China in 1937, the Kuomintang government, forced to flee to Chóngqìng, decided that a "back door" supply line was needed into the country. They turned to the ancient overland trade routes with India and Burma, also known as the southern Silk Route, which over 2,000 years ago had connected the markets of the Hàn empire with the bazaars of Rome. Between 1937 and 1939, about 200,000 Chinese and Burmese laborers were drafted to build a road from Xiàguān (the stretch from Kūnmíng to Xiàguān had been built in 1935) across the Mekong and Salween rivers to Bǎoshān, to Wǎndīng, and on to Lashio in Burma, where rail lines connected it to Mandalay. Armed with only the most primitive of tools, laborers wrestled large boulders, crushed stone, and moved tons of mud into a 1,100km (700-mile) long road that wound through thick mountains and dense jungles. The road turned out to be a strategic lifeline for the Chinese. From 1940, up to 18,000 tons of supplies were carried into China each month. When the Japanese captured Burma in 1942 and cut off the Burmese side of the route, another road was built from Ledo in northeast India to meet up with the Burma Road at Bhamo and Muse. This 1,736km (1,079-mile) long Ledo supply route came to be known as the Stilwell Road after Gen. Joseph B. Stilwell, who ran the Allied operation in the China-Burma-India theater from his base in Kūnmíng. At the same time, a temporary air supply line came over the Himalayan Hump from India, but the treacherous terrain took the lives of over 1,000 airmen, some of whose bodies have never been recovered. Finished in 1944, the Stilwell road was abandoned the following year with the end of the war.

Today, this 940km (564-mile) stretch between Kūnmíng and the border crossing at Wǎndīng (though not currently open for tourist crossings) has once again become the darling of Chinese entrepreneurs eager for Burmese business, with traded items ranging from jade and rubies to heroin and anti-aircraft artillery.

¥10 (60¢–$1.25). Bus no. 2 runs from the Yàxīng (Asia Star) Hotel to the dock at Cǎicūn.

TOURS & GUIDES Many of the Dàlǐ cafes provide a variety of tours, including a **boat trip** on Ěr Hǎi Lake which costs ¥20 to ¥40 ($2.50–$5) per person, depending on group size; or **horseback riding** to a mountain monastery or local Bái village for about ¥40 to ¥60 ($5–$7.50) per person. Local English-speaking guides can be hired through cafes for about ¥30 to ¥50 ($3.75–$6) per hour, or around ¥200 ($25) per day. Michael Yáng of **Dàlǐ Michael Travel Information Consultation** at Bó'ài Lù 68 (✆ **0872/267-8189**) offers all of the above services, will work within your budget, and won't hesitate to give you the latest unvarnished lowdown on nearby sights. In addition, he can arrange tai chi, calligraphy, and Chinese cooking classes. Marley, of **Marley's Café** at Bó'ài Lù 105 (✆ **0872/267-6651**), can arrange visits to Yí, Bái, and Huí markets. Jim (Jīn Cè) at **Jim's Peace Café,** Bó'ài Lù 63 (✆ **0872/267-1822**), can arrange motorcycle trips around Ěr Hǎi Lake.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China** (open Mon–Fri, 8am–6pm) is at Fùxīng Lù 333. It has an outside ATM.

Internet Access Many cafes offer Internet access, but the best deal is at **China Telecom** (¥2/25¢ per hour; open 9am–midnight). It's located at the intersection of Fùxīng Lù and Hùguó Lù. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The post office (open 8am–6pm) is at the corner of Fùxīng Lù and Hùguó Lù.

Visa Extension These are available in Xiàguān at the **Gōngānjú (PSB),** located at Tiānbǎo Jiē 21 (✆ **0872/216-6090;** open Mon–Fri 8:30 –11am and 2:30–5pm).

EXPLORING DÀLǏ

Old town Dàlǐ, with its 9m (30-ft.) high battlements, dates to the Míng dynasty (1368–1644), but the current wall was restored and extended only in 1998 as part of a project to gentrify Dàlǐ and attract tourists. From the top of the freshly painted Nánchéng Mén (South City Gate; ¥2/25¢; open 8am–9pm), there are some lovely views of the town and the Cāng Shān Mountains to the west. You can also walk along the restored city wall to Xī Mén (Western Gate).

Dàlǐ Bówùguǎn (Dàlǐ Museum) This small museum is located on the site of the former palace of Dù Wénxiù (1823–1872), a Huí Muslim who, following the Tàipíng Rebellion, led local villagers in a 16-month uprising against the Qīng army. The museum offers a collection of bronzes, pottery, and Bái artifacts excavated from the surrounding areas.

Fùxīng Lù 111. Admission ¥5 (60¢). 8:30am–6pm.

Sān Tǎ Sì Gōngyuán (Three Pagodas Park) ★ About 2km (1¼ miles) northwest of town at the foot of the Cāngshān Mountains, Dàlǐ's most famous landmark has unfortunately become a massive tourist trap. Blatant price-gouging (in 2 years, ticket prices have increased five times from ¥10/$1.25 to ¥52/$6.50) has tainted this once open and informal garden that is now sequestered behind thick red walls. The three pagodas were originally part of Chóngwén Sì monastery and have withstood several earthquakes through the years. The monastery itself was destroyed in the Qīng dynasty, and what you see today dates only to 1999.

The Bái

With a history dating back some three to four thousand years around the Ěr Hăi Lake region, the Bái nationality is one of the oldest and the second largest minority groups in Yúnnán. Over 80% of the Bái, now numbering close to 1.4 million, live in Dàlĭ and the surrounding villages and countryside in what is known as the Bái Autonomous Prefecture. More than most minority groups, the Bái, who've had a long illustrious history throughout the Nánzhào and Dàlĭ kingdoms, are one of the best adapted to the Hàn majority. The Bái—the "white"—revere the color, which is regarded as noble and is the main color of their traditional dress.

The Bái celebrate many festivals, the largest of which is Sānyuè Jié (Third Month Festival), which had its origins over a thousand years ago when Buddhist monks and adherents gathered to celebrate Guānyīn's (the Goddess of Mercy) appearance to the Bái. Today's festival, which starts on the 15th day of the third lunar month (usually Apr or early May), has become more secular as the Bái and other minorities from around the area gather in the foothills of Cāng Shān (Green Mountains) for 5 days and nights of singing, dancing, wrestling, horse racing, and large-scale trading of everything from Tibetan-made felt hats and silk floss to horses and medicinal herbs. Ràosānlíng, which involves a procession to three nearby temples, is held between the 23rd and the 25th days of the fourth lunar month (usually May). Huŏbă Jié (the Torch Festival) is held on the 24th day of the sixth lunar month (usually July) and involves the parading of flaming torches through homes and fields. There are also fireworks and dragon boat races.

The central pagoda, the statuesque 16-story, 69m (226-ft.) high **Qiānxún Tă,** resembling Xī'ān's Small Goose Pagoda, was built first between 824 and 859 and is a hollow square brick structure with graceful eaves. Each floor has windows and niches containing Buddhist statues, many of them now defaced if not completely destroyed. The two smaller flanking octagonal pagodas were built later during the 12th century, and have 10 tiers each for a total height of 42m (138 ft.). A popular photo op is from a small lake in the northeast corner of the park that captures the reflections of all three pagodas in a stunning tableau.

Sān Tă Gōngyuán. Admission ¥52 ($6.50). 8am–7pm.

Tiānzhŭ Táng (Catholic Church) Built by the French in 1938 and completely renovated in 1984 after severe destruction during the Cultural Revolution, Dàlĭ's Catholic Church comes in the unusual form of a Chinese-style building with three sections of double-tiered eaves. An initial gate leads to a second gate, which is actually the facade of the church. The eclecticism continues inside with red pillars, a blue ceiling painted with stars, Chinese-style chairs, and a simple altar with a picture of Christ. Mass is held every morning at 9am. If the church is closed when you visit, the caretaker will be happy to open it for you.

Xīnmín Lù 6 (200m/656 ft. down Rénmín Lù east of Fùxīng Lù, take a right onto Xīnmín Lù). Free admission.

MARKETS

A market visit is highly recommended for a sense of local color. Many of the markets around Dàlǐ are scheduled according to the lunar calendar, so check with the local cafes before you set out. Dàlǐ itself has a market every 7 days (usually on the 2nd, 9th, 16th, and 23rd days of the lunar month). Once the most popular, the Shāpíng market, held every Monday, has become a bit of a commercialized circus (see below). The town of Wāsè on the eastern shores of Ěr Hǎi Lake also has a popular market held every 5 days from 9:30am to 4pm. Foodstuffs and agricultural produce are the main goods here, as the market still caters to locals instead of tourists. The easiest way to visit is to sign up with a local cafe that will arrange round-trip transportation for around ¥28 ($3.50) per person. Also check with Marley's Café or Michael Yáng (see above) about visiting Yí markets in the south around Wēi Shān.

WHERE TO STAY

Accommodations can be scarce during festivals and also in June and July, so be sure to book your hotel ahead of time if you're going to be here then.

Old town has several guesthouses favored by backpackers that offer dormitory-style beds and shared bathrooms and showers for around ¥20 ($2.50) per night, with some doubles as well. The **Old Dàlǐ Inn (Sìjì Kèzhàn)** at Bó'ài Lù 51 (✆ **0872/267-0382;** fax 0872/267-5360), also known as the No. 5 Guesthouse, has two wings of two-story wooden Bái buildings, a courtyard, and a cafe, and offers dorm rooms, rooms with shared bathrooms, and a few standard rooms with private bathrooms (¥140/$17). Well south of town, the **MCA Guesthouse** ★ at Wénxiāng Lù 7000 (✆ **0872/267-3666;** fax 0872/267-1999) is the pick of the hostels, with beautiful grounds, dorms, rooms with shared bathrooms, a few standard rooms with private bathrooms (¥120/$15), a cafe, an outdoor swimming pool, and other amenities. A new hostel, **Gāolì Tíng (Koreana House)** ★ at Hùguó Lù 115 (✆ **0872/266-5083**), offers standard rooms with private bathroom for ¥200 ($25); they can often be discounted up to 50% in the low season. Rooms are extremely clean and come with portable heaters and heating pads for the winter months. Bathrooms are clean with plenty of hot water. An excellent Korean restaurant also serves Western food.

Red Camellia Hotel (Hóng Shānchá Bīnguǎn) Also known as the Number Two Guesthouse, this two-star standby was the first guesthouse to open to foreigners in Dàlǐ in 1984 and is definitely showing its age. The somewhat dark rooms have thick curtains and small twin beds that are a tad soft. Bathtubs are worn but clean enough. The hotel has few amenities but is still popular for its modest prices and convenient location.

Hùguó Lù 32. ✆ **0872/267-00406.** Fax 0872/267-0309. 150 units. ¥220–¥260 ($28–$33) standard room. Up to 50% discounts in low season. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Ticket service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Yàxīng Dàfàndiàn (Asia Star Hotel) ★ For those who want to stay close to old town but need their luxuries, this four-star China–Táiwān joint venture located 1.5km (1 mile) south of Dàlǐ on the old main highway—not an easy walk from town—is the best option around. Guest rooms are comfortable enough despite the rather ugly ornate furniture and the somewhat worn carpets. Bathrooms are large and have full amenities.

Lǚyóu Dùjià Qū, Dàlǐ Gǔchéng. ✆ **0872/267-9999.** Fax 0872/267-1699. 310 units. ¥900 ($108) double; ¥1,580–¥2,988 ($188–$360) suite. Up to 45% discount in low season. All rates subject to 15% service

charge. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge, gym; croquet; bike rental; concierge; shuttle service to old town Dàli[av; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; 24-hr. room service; massage; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning; 24-hr. clinic. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar (select rooms), hair dryer.

WHERE TO DINE

Ěr kuài is sold all around northwest Yúnnán, where it mostly consists of a piece of flat rice dough that's grilled or fried and flavored with salty and spicy seasonings. In Dàlǐ, the dough is stuffed with salted vegetables, sweet sauce, chili sauce, crushed peanuts and *yóutiáo* (fried, salty doughnut) and grilled to tender perfection. This "Dàlǐ calzone" is one of the most popular breakfast items, often sold on street corners like Hùguó Lù and Fùxīng Lù. Other typical local dishes include *shāguō yú* (stewed fish casserole) and the Bái specialty, *rǔshàn* (milk fan), a local cheese sliced in thin layers.

The foreigners' cafes clustered along Hùguó Lù and Bó'ài Lù serve inexpensive and generally tasty Western, Chinese, Bái, and Tibetan meals. **Café de Jack** at Bó'ài Lù 82 (✆ **0872/267-1572**) is a popular hangout known for its pizzas and its chocolate cake. Jack is also the owner of **La Stella Pizzeria** at Hùguó Lù 58 (✆ **0872/266-2881**), which serves an excellent pizza Margherita and a spicy beef pizza very popular with Chinese diners. Also popular is the cozy **Tibetan Café** at Hùguó Lù 42 (✆ **0872/266-2391**). It specializes in Tibetan specialties that include stewed lamb, omelets, pancakes, and butter tea, in addition to the usual Western and Chinese fare. The cafe can also organize Tibetan group meals upon request. There's a wonderfully relaxed yet upscale feel to the trusty standby, **Marley's Café,** at Bó'ài Lù 105 (✆ **0872/267-6651**), which serves Bái food such as *mùguā jī* (fried chicken Bái style) and *shāguō yú* (fish casserole). Make a reservation for Marley's Sunday-evening "Bái Style" banquet. **Gāolì Tíng (Koreana House)** at Hùguó Lù 115 (✆ **0872/266-5083**) serves excellent and authentic Korean food, including *bulgogi* (grilled marinated beef) and a variety of barbecue dishes, noodles, and soups.

Walking a block north to **Yù'ér Lù** will bring you to a number of traveler-free local restaurants. The tiny **Zhèngzōng Dōngběi Jiǎozi Guǎn** at Yù'ér Lù 6 (✆ **013988538030**) serves some of the best northern cuisine this side of the Yángzǐ. The fare here is consistently hearty, from the fiery *shuǐzhǔ ròupiàn* (pork cooked in a spicy broth with vegetables) and kung pao chicken to staples like dumplings and wontons. An English menu is available.

SHOPPING

As always, comparison-shop before you commit to anything: A piece of batik on Hùguó Lù can sometimes cost 10% to 20% more than another along Fùxīng Lù (or vice-versa). For **batiks,** you can usually get better prices in the wholesale factories and workshops in Zhōuchéng (see below). In stores, it's not uncommon to bargain to half or two-thirds of the asking price. Another popular souvenir, Dàlǐ **marble,** famous for its beautiful cloud-like patterns and anti-corrosive nature, is now even more in demand because the practice of quarrying from the Cāng Shān mountains has been officially prohibited. You can pick up marble ashtrays or small carvings around town.

AROUND DÀLǏ

Please turn to Appendix A for Chinese translations of key locations.

CĀNG SHĀN (GREEN MOUNTAINS)

Running down the west side of Dàlǐ, the 42km (25-mile) long Cāng Shān mountain range with its 19 peaks (a number of them permanently snow-covered),

18 streams, and acres of verdant forests, is well worth exploring. The easiest way to ascend the mountain is by chairlift, a lovely ride ¥28 ($3.50) up, ¥20 ($2.50) down, that offers some of the loveliest vistas of the old town and the shimmering blue Ěr Hăi Lake in the distance. (From the western gate of the old town, head north until you see the sign for the chairlift; or take a taxi for ¥5 to ¥8 (60¢–$1). At the chairlift's upper terminus is **Zhōnghé Sì,** a not particularly memorable temple. Several trails branch out from here. One option if you don't have time to make a day of it is the trek through pretty terrain to **Fèngyǎn Dòng (Phoenix Cave),** which takes you through the back of Lóngquán Mountain (about an hour each way). There's also a vigorous 11km (7-mile), 4½- to 5-hour hike to **Gǎntōng Sì,** a temple first built in 900 on the southern slope of Yīngshèng Peak. The road down the mountain from Gǎntōng Temple will take you back to the main road, from where you can take a taxi or bus no. 4 back to Dàlǐ. Another trail leads to the lovely **Qīngbì Xī** in the valley between Mălóng and Shèngyīng peaks. Flowing through three large ponds, this stream eventually empties into Ěr Hăi.

ĚR HĂI HÚ (ĚR HĂI LAKE)

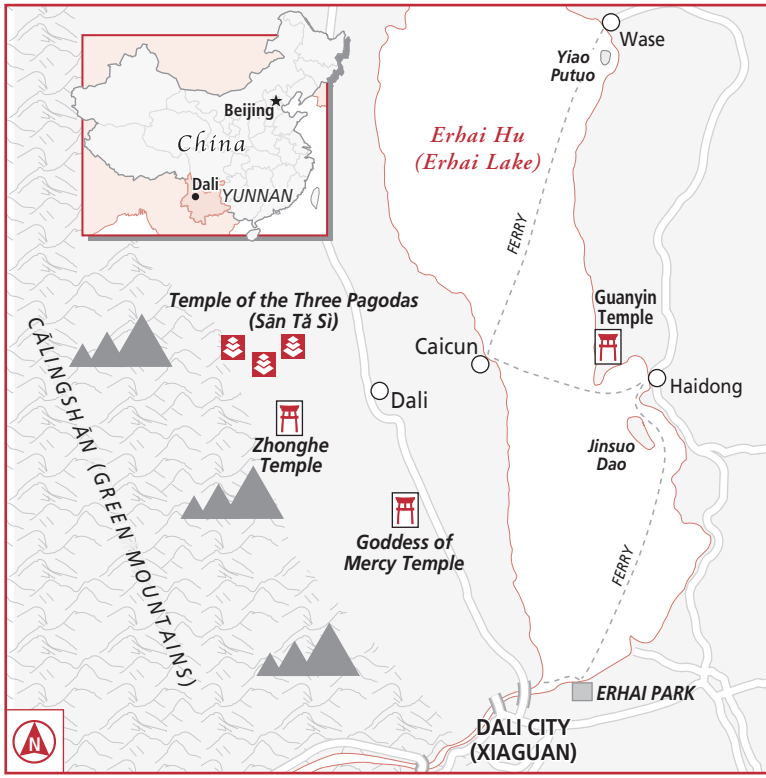
East of Dàlǐ and north of Xiàguān, Ěr Hăi Hú, literally named after its resemblance to a human ear *(ěr),* is one of the seven largest freshwater lakes in China and the second largest in Yúnnán after Diān Chí in Kūnmíng. Originating in the Hēigǔ Shān mountains to the northwest and fed partially by the 18 streams of Cāng Shān, the lake spans 42km (25 miles) from north to south, and 7km (4 miles) from east to west, and has an average depth of 10m (33 ft.). There are many settlements and towns scattered around the lake, along with some tourist traps on the eastern side.

A **boat ride** ★ on the beautiful lake is one of the highlights of a visit to Dàlǐ. Several ferries cross the lake, from Lóngkān to Hăidōng, Cáicūn to Wāsè, and Xiàguān to Jīnsuō Dǎo. Giant tourist boats charge ¥90 ($11) to make a 3½- to 4-hour run of the lake from the Táoyuán Mătóu (dock) in Zhōuchéng to Xiàguān, stopping along the way at **Pǔtuó Dǎo, Guānyīn Gé (Guānyīn Pavilion),** and **Jīnsuō Dǎo,** an island full of caves and caverns and inhabited by Bái fishermen. You can also negotiate with smaller private boats, which charge an average of ¥100 to ¥200 ($13–$25) for the round-trip; or get a travelers' cafe in town to help you with any special arrangements.

Located about 33km (20 miles) north of Dàlǐ on the shores of Ěr Hăi Lake, the town of **Xīzhōu** has some of the most concentrated and best-preserved Bái architecture around. A thriving commercial center before 1949 with many large residences built by rich merchants, Xīzhōu today still has around 88 of these typical Bái houses, but the best preserved is the seven-courtyard **Yán Jiā Dàyuàn (Yán Family Compound;** ¥10/$1.25; open 8am–6pm), first built in 1899 and added to in the subsequent 40 years. All the Bái architectural motifs are here, including *zǒumă zhuàn gélóu* (literally "running horses turning a corner")—a balcony that connects all the rooms on the second floor. A wander around the village gives visitors an unvarnished glimpse of the daily lives of Bái people. To get there, take an Ěryuán-bound bus for ¥4 (50¢) from outside the old town's west gate. From where the bus drops you off in Xīzhōu, a motorcycle taxi will take you to the center of town for about ¥2 (25¢).

About 7km (4 miles) north of Xīzhōu, the village of **Zhōuchéng** is famous for its **tie-dyed batiks** ★. The minute you step off the bus, you'll be approached by Bái women who will invite you to visit their batik workshops. This is worth considering, as you can often pick up batik tablecloths or shirts for considerably

Ěr Hāi Hú



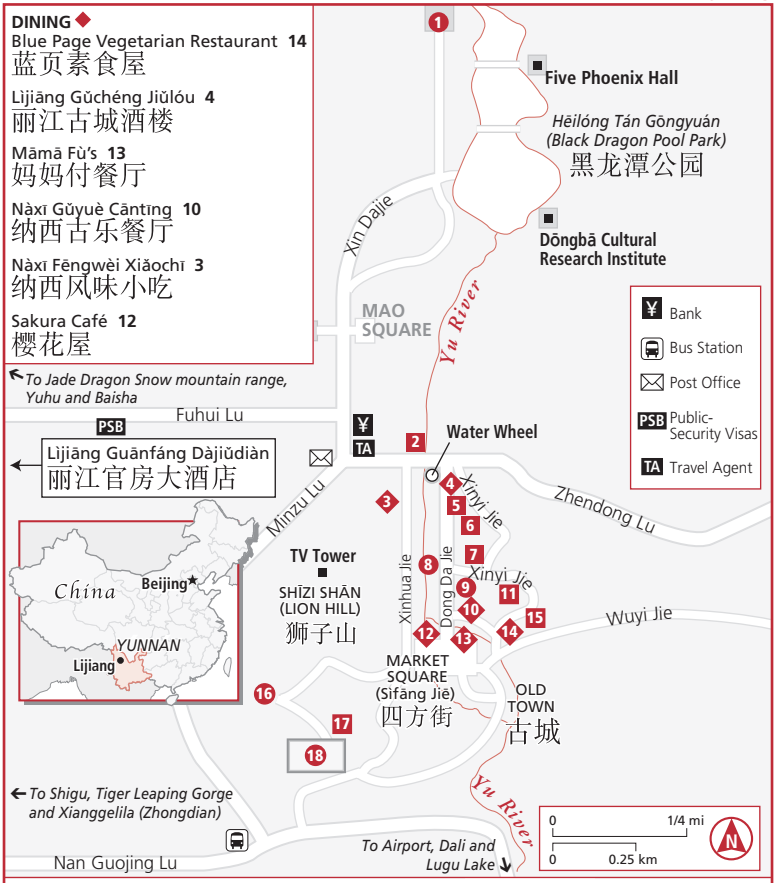
less than you would pay in the shops in Dàlǐ—subject to bargaining, of course. There is also a local **market** in the center of town; uphill from there, part of the old town is worth exploring. Catch an Ěryuán-bound bus from either Dàlǐ or Xīzhōu.

About 30km (20 miles) north of Dàlǐ, the town of **Shāpíng** traditionally hosts a lively Bái market every Monday from 10am to 4pm. Shāpíng used to be the darling of ethnic markets with foreign travelers, since you could see everything from farmers chasing runaway pigs to village dentists pulling teeth. Some of that still goes on today, but savvy capitalists have now set up whole sections aimed squarely at the tourist trade with ridiculously marked-up souvenirs, batiks, and crafts. Beware of the "silver," which is nothing more than a cheap tin alloy. Many of the travelers' cafes can organize transportation to the market for ¥15 ($1.90) round-trip (departure around 9:30am, return by 4pm). Alternatively, catch an Ěryuán-bound bus from the main road for ¥6 (75¢).

11 Lìjiāng ★★★

Yúnnán Province, 527km (316 miles) NW of Kūnmíng, 150km (90 miles) NW of Dàlǐ

Lìjiāng is as lovely as it gets in China. Located in the northwest part of Yúnnán Province, this capital of the Lìjiāng Nàxī Autonomous County (pop. 302,000) is home to the Nàxī people (who constitute almost 60% of its population) and to a smaller number of Bái, Tibetan, Yí, Mosu, and Hàn peoples. Though its



DINING
Blue Page Vegetarian Restaurant **14**
蓝页素食屋
Lìjiāng Gǔchéng Jiǔlóu **4**
丽江古城酒楼
Māmā Fù's **13**
妈妈付餐厅
Nàxī Gǔyuè Cāntīng **10**
纳西古乐餐厅
Nàxī Fēngwèi Xiǎochī **3**
纳西风味小吃
Sakura Café **12**
樱花屋

ACCOMMODATIONS
Dōngbā House **11**
东巴豪斯客栈
First Bend Inn **15**
第一湾酒店
Gélán Dà Jiǔdiàn
(Grand Lijiāng Hotel) **2**
格兰大酒店
Gǔchéng Kèzhàn
(Ancient Town Inn) **5**
古城客栈
Mù Wáng Fǔ Yìzhàn
(Mu's Mansion Hotel) **17**
木王府驿栈
Sānhé Jiǔdiàn **6**
三合酒店
Tea Horse Family Guest House
(Chámǎ Kèzhàn) **7**
茶马客栈

ATTRACTIONS
Dōngbā Gōng
(Dōngbā Palace) **8**
东巴宫
Dōngbā Wénhuà Bówùguǎn **1**
(Museum of Nàxī Dōngbā Culture)
东巴文化博物馆
Mù Fǔ (Mù's Residence) **18**
木府
Nàxī Gǔyuè Huì
(Nàxī Music Academy) **9**
纳西古乐会
Wàngǔ Lóu **16**
万古楼

history dates to the Warring States (475–221 B.C.), its most influential period was when it was governed by Nàxī chieftains during the Míng dynasty (1368–1644).

In February 1996, an earthquake hit Lìjiāng, killing over 300 people and destroying much of the city. Amazingly, many of the traditional Nàxī houses held up quite well, leading the government in its reconstruction process to pour millions of *yuán* into replacing concrete buildings with traditional wooden Nàxī architecture. The World Bank came up with rebuilding funds, and Lìjiāng was conferred with the ultimate imprimatur (some would say the kiss of death) as a UNESCO World Heritage town in 1999. All this attention plus the construction of a new airport and hotels has turned it into a major tourist destination. Lìjiāng's old town, with its cobblestone streets, gurgling streams, and Nàxī architecture, thankfully preserves a modicum of traditional ways, but as Hàn merchants move in to cater to hordes of stampeding tourists, many of the Nàxī who still live there (about 6,000 households) are finding their old way of life being challenged.

Located on the road to Tibet in a region widely regarded as being one of the most beautiful in the world, Lìjiāng also offers a plethora of fascinating side trips that can easily take up to a week or more of your time. Lìjiāng (elev. 2,340m/7,800 ft.) has a pleasant climate year-round with average temperatures in the spring, summer, and fall ranging between 60°F and 80°F (16°C and 27°C). Spring and summer are the best times to visit, as the summer months are often crowded with Chinese tourists.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE From Lìjiāng's airport, 24km (15 miles) and a 30-minute taxi ride (around ¥80/$10) southwest of town, there are daily **flights** to Kūnmíng (50 min.) as well as weekly flights to Guǎngzhōu (3 hr.), Shànghǎi (4½ hr.), and Xīshuāngbǎnnà (30 min.). Tickets can be bought at the **CAAC/Yúnnán Airlines** ticket office at Fúhuì Lù, Mínháng Zhàn (✆ **0888/516-1289**). CAAC airport buses for ¥10 ($1.25) depart from the office 90 minutes before scheduled departures. There is another CAAC office on the first floor of the Lìjiāng Dàjiǔdiàn at Xīn Dà Jiē (✆ **0888/518-0280;** open 8:30am–6:30pm).

From the main **long-distance bus station** at the southern end of Mínzú Lù (✆ **0888/512-1106**), **buses** run to Xiàguān (3 hr.; ¥32–¥51/$4–$6.30) every half hour from 7:10am to 6:30pm; express buses to Xiàguān depart at 8:20am, 11:30am, and 2:30pm. Express buses run to Kūnmíng (8 hr.; ¥152/$19) at 8:20am, 9:20am, 11:20am, and 3:20pm; a sleeper bus to Kūnmíng (9 hr.; ¥105–¥115/$13–$14) runs every half hour from 5:30 to 8:30pm. Buses also run to Zhōngdiàn/Xiānggélǐlā, passing Qiáotóu (5 hr.; ¥27/$3.40) every hour from 7:30am to 4pm; to Jīnjiāng/Sìchuān (9 hr.; ¥52–¥66/$6.40–$8) at 7:10am, 8:30am, 12:30pm, 2pm, and 6pm; and to Nínglàng (4 hr.; ¥23/$3) every hour from 7:50am to 3:30pm. A private bus company, **YNTAC** (✆ **0888/512-5492**), operates luxury air-conditioned buses to Xiàguān (3 hr.; ¥50/$6.25) at 8:30am, 9am, 10:30am, and 5pm; and to Kūnmíng (8 hr.; ¥151/$19) at 8:30am, 9am, and 10:30am. YNTAC buses depart from the Nàxī Dàjiǔdiàn, at Nán Guòjìng Lù about 1km (⅔ mile) west of the bus station.

GETTING AROUND The old town, off limits to motor traffic, can be comfortably toured on foot. **Taxis** cost ¥6 (75¢) for 3km (2 miles), then ¥1.60 (20¢) per kilometer. From midnight to 7am, in-town taxis charge ¥10 ($1.25) per trip. **Bikes** can be rented from several cafes in the old town and also in Máo Square at Ali Baba (✆ **013987047896**) for around ¥15 ($2) a day.

TOURS & GUIDES Many of the cafes and hostels in old Lìjiāng have travel agencies that provide day tours and air and bus tickets. The **Dōngbā House,** Xīnyì Jiē, Jíshàn Xiāng 16 (✆ **0888/517-5431**), can help with backpackers' routes. **Gallery Travel,** diagonally across the way at Jíshàn Xiāng 39 (✆ **0888/666-0994**), frequently organizes hikes to Tiger Leaping Gorge, skiing trips to nearby Hābā Mountain and Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, and overland trips by Landcruiser into Tibet (approximately ¥4,500/$562 per person for transportation and Tibet permit, based on 4-person minimum). For the less adventurous, Old Lìjiāng has a **Tourist Consultation Service** just inside the northern entrance on Xīnyì Jiē (✆ **0888/511-6666**) which offers more sedate day tours of the surrounding areas (in Chinese only).

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The main branch of the **Bank of China** (open Mon–Fri, 8:30am–5:30pm) is on Xīn Dà Jē south of Fúhuì Lù and has an ATM. In the old town, the **Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC)** across from the post office (open Mon–Fri, 8:30am–5pm) can exchange cash and travelers' checks.

Internet Access A number of cafes in the old town offer Internet service for around ¥5 to ¥10 (65¢–$1.25) an hour. One of the most reliable is the **Dōngbā House Inn,** Xīnyì Jiē Jíshàn Xiāng 16. Dial-up is **163**.

Post Office The main post office in new Lìjiāng (open 8am–8pm) is on Xīn Dàjiē. A smaller post office (open 8am–8pm) is in the old town at Sìfāng Jiē just south of the Xīnhuá Bookstore.

Visa Extensions The **Gōngānjú (PSB)** is located at Fúhuì Lù (✆ **0888/518-8437;** open Mon–Fri, 8am–noon, 2:30–5:30pm in summer; 8:30am–noon, 2–5:30pm otherwise).

EXPLORING LÌJIĀNG

OLD TOWN ★★★

When visitors and travel guide writers gush about Lìjiāng, they're really referring to its *raison d'être,* the **old town** *(gǔchéng),* built over 800 years ago during the Southern Sòng dynasty. A delightful maze of twisting cobblestone streets and Nàxī-style homes and shops, increasingly of the souvenir variety, the old town still affords glimpses of traditional Nàxī life as residents go about their daily lives despite the staggering crowds and the increasingly commercial tenor of the whole place.

Unlike many ancient towns in China, Lìjiāng does not have a city wall. It is said that the first ruling family of Lìjiāng, surnamed Mù, prohibited the building of a wall around the old town because drawing a box around the character of *mù* turned it into the character *kùn,* meaning "difficulty," and was therefore not auspicious. What the old town does have, however, is a web of flowing canals fed by the Yùquán springs in today's Black Dragon Pool to the north. These streams often flow into several three-pit **wells** scattered around the old town with designated pits for drinking, washing vegetables, and washing clothes. You can see such a well at the **Báimǎlóng Tán** in the south of town. The **Yìcàn Quán,** for drinking water only, can be found on Mìshì Xiāng next to the Blue Page Vegetarian Restaurant. The old town used to have several water mills as well, but the only one standing today is a reconstructed **water wheel** at the old town entrance. In the center of town is **Market Square (Sìfāng Jiē),** ringed with shops and

The Nàxī

The majority of China's Nàxī population, numbering just under 290,000, lives in Yúnnán, and of this group, more than half reside in the Lìjiāng Nàxī Autonomous County; the rest reside in Zhōngdiàn, Nínglàng, Yǒngshèng, and Déqìn counties to the northwest. Though the Nàxī's exact origins are not known, they are thought to be descendants of the ancient nomadic Tibetan Qiāng tribes of Qīnghǎi. Driven south by northern invaders, the Nàxī have been resident in the Lìjiāng area for around 1,400 years.

The Nàxī believe in a polytheistic religion called *dōngbā* (meaning "wise man" or "scripture reader"), which is a blend of Tibetan lamaism, Daoism, and shamanistic beliefs in various gods and spirits in nature. *Dōngbā* are also Nàxī shamans, the most revered figures because they not only act as mediators between the present and the spirit world but are the only ones who can read, write, and interpret the approximately 1,400 pictographic characters that comprise the Nàxī script created over a thousand years ago.

The importance of the shaman notwithstanding, women play a dominant role in Nàxī society, which is matrilineal in nature. Inheritance passes from the mother through the youngest daughter, and women control the purse strings, work the fields, and trade at markets. It is the men who traditionally function as child-raisers, gardeners, and musicians. The revival in recent years of traditional Nàxī music has helped keep alive an ancient art form that the Nàxī have been practicing since before the days of Kublai Khan's invasion of Lìjiāng in the 13th century. Many of the songs, rarely heard anywhere else and some dating as far back as the Sòng and Táng dynasties, are played on rare and unusual musical instruments several hundred years old. Dōngbā music and dance performances are held every evening in the old town, and feature prominently as well in Nàxī festivals, including the traditional Sānduō Festival held on the eighth day of the second lunar month to honor the god Sānduō, believed to be the great protector of the Nàxī against a whole horde of pestilence and disasters.

restaurants. During the day, Nàxī women come here to trade, and on certain evenings, residents will gather here and break into spontaneous circle dances.

From Market Square, a cobblestone path leads uphill along the eastern flanks of **Shīzi Shān (Lion Hill),** which separates the old town from the new. This area, known as Huáng Shān, is one of the region's oldest neighborhoods and is a lovely place to wander, as it's a relatively tourist-free zone. At the top of the hill is the 33m (108-ft.) tall **Wàngǔ Lóu;** admission is ¥15 ($1.90) and it's open from dawn to dusk. Each meter represents 1,000 of Lìjiāng's 330,000 people; it is said to be the tallest wooden pagoda in China. Supported by 16 massive 22m (72-ft.) high pillars made from old local wood, the square pagoda has 13 soaring eaves (representing the 13 peaks of the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain range) and over 2,300 Dōngbā designs carved into the structure. There are some stunning views ★★ of the old town, new town, and majestic Jade Dragon Snow Mountain range from the top.

Anchoring the southern part of the old town is **Mù Fǔ (Mù's Residence;** ¥35/$4.30; open 9am–6pm) The former home of the Nàxī ruling family, which ruled Lìjiāng for 22 generations until 1723, the residence was actually completely destroyed in the Qīng dynasty (1644–1911) and, until the earthquake of 1996, the houses of ordinary Nàxī stood in the palace's stead. Post-earthquake authorities apparently determined that World Bank rebuilding funds would be better justified by an imperial residence that could attract legions of tourists rather than by banal domestic housing; the result is the sprawling residence you see today. Stepped into the side of Lion Hill are six main halls separated by courtyards said to resemble those of the Forbidden City, including a meeting hall where the clan chiefs met and a library of Dōngbā writings. From the back of the residence, steps lead up the hill to Wàngǔ Lóu.

> **Tips Lost in Lìjiāng**
>
> If you ever get lost in the old town, just find a stream and walk against the current, as it will invariably lead you back to an entrance of the town.

Dōngbā Wénhuà Bówùguǎn (Museum of Nàxī Dōngbā Culture) ★ This museum features exhibits of Nàxī clothing and jewelry, Dōngbā pictographic script, unearthed artifacts from old Lìjiāng, and a display claiming the region is the real Shangri-La. Explanations are in English. At the museum shop you can have a piece of Dōngbā calligraphy drawn for you by an 85-year-old Dōngbā shaman for about ¥100 ($13).

Hēilóng Tán. Admission ¥5 (60¢). 8:30am–6pm.

Hēilóng Tán Gōngyuán (Black Dragon Pool Park) ★ About 1.5km (1 mile) north of the old town, this park, which contains the source of much of the old town's water, also offers Lìjiāng's most famous photo op: the distant snow-capped Jade Dragon Snow Mountain fronted by the park's Déyuè Lóu (Moon Embracing Pavilion), and Wǔkǒng Qiáo (Five Arch Bridge). In the eastern section is the three-story Míng dynasty Wǔfèng Lóu (Five Phoenix Hall), with soaring eaves meant to resemble flying phoenixes. Also here is the Dōngbā Cultural Research Institute (Dōngbā Wénhuà Yánjiūsuǒ), where you can see experts translating Dōngbā pictographs.

Xīn Dàjē. Admission ¥20 ($2.50). 6:30am–8:30pm.

WHERE TO STAY

While new Lìjiāng has more upscale hotels with modern facilities, none of them can match the charming ambience and coziness of the old town's traditional Nàxī guesthouses and hotels. Of the inns offering basic dormitory-style and standard-room accommodations (some with private bathroom) that are favored by independent travelers and backpackers, the **Dōngbā House** (formerly called the MCA Guesthouse) at Jíshàn Xiāng 16, Xīnyì Jiē (✆ **0888/517-5431;** fax 0888/517-5431), ranks high. The guesthouse has small but perfectly adequate Nàxī courtyard rooms for ¥20 to ¥50 ($2.50–$6), a decent restaurant, a travel desk, Internet access, and bike rental. The clean and popular **First Bend Inn** at Xīnyì Jiē, Mìshì Xiāng 43 (✆ **0888/518-1688**) offers standard rooms around a Nàxī courtyard for ¥80 ($10). All bathrooms are shared. A newcomer on the scene, the **Tea Horse Family Guest House (Chámǎ Kèzhàn),** at Xīnyì Jiē, Jíshàn Xiāng 9 (✆ **0888/512-0351**), has six clean standard rooms with private bathrooms for ¥200 to ¥300 ($25–$37) during high season; 60% discounts are offered during low season. It also has eight standard rooms without bathroom

for ¥20 ($2.50). The guest rooms are clean and the bathrooms have 24-hour hot water. The guesthouse business center can help you book tickets.

A notch above these guesthouses are several hotels also housed in traditional Nàxī buildings. The **Sānhé Jiǔdiàn** at Jíshàn Xiāng 4, Xīnyì Jiē (✆ **0888/512-0891;** fax 0888/512-0892) has comfortable, pleasant standard rooms with air-conditioning (central heating during the winter) and private bathrooms for ¥280 ($35). Next door, the **Gǔchéng Kèzhàn (Ancient Town Inn)** at Jíshàn Xiāng, Xīnyì Jiē (✆ **0888/ 515-9000;** fax 0888/515-9018), offers a variety of rooms arranged around lovely courtyards. Standard rooms with private bathrooms are ¥300 ($38), though some of these rooms are quite small and dark. During the colder winter months, there is central heating from 7 to 10pm. South of Sìfāng Jiē right next to Mù Fǔ is **Mù Wáng Fǔ Yìzhàn (Mu's Mansion Hotel)** at Guāngyì Jiē (✆ **0888/510-2810**), built on the original site where the Mù family used to entertain friends and relatives. There's a lovely courtyard here with rattan rocking chairs and paper lanterns. Rooms retain their original wooden floors and lattice windows, and are comfortable and clean. Standard rooms with private bathrooms cost ¥180 to ¥580 ($23–$73), and suites cost ¥680 ($85). The hotel has a restaurant and Internet service.

Gélán Dàjiǔdiàn (Grand Lijiāng Hotel) ★★ *Value* In terms of comfort, location, and value for money, this Thai-managed hotel is the best choice of all the hotels outside the old town. For a three-star establishment, the large rooms are remarkably well outfitted with a range of amenities, including in-house American movies. The marble bathrooms are spacious and clean. Rooms on the north side have magnificent views of the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain range, while the old town is just outside the front door.

Xīnyì Jiē (on Yù River, north entrance of old town Lìjiāng). ✆ **0888/512-8888.** Fax 0888/512-7878. 123 units. ¥480 ($60) standard room; ¥640 ($80) deluxe room; from ¥960 ($120) suite. 20%–30% discounts. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; 24-hr. room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Lìjiāng Guānfáng Dàjiǔdiàn The only five-star hotel in town, this modern glass building with the revolving restaurant towers above all others as the symbol of new Lìjiāng. Distinctly lacking in personal charm, the hotel attracts mostly domestic tour groups. Rooms are not as luxurious as you would expect: The carpets are a little worn, and the upholstery clashes with the decor, but the units are otherwise spacious and come with the full amenities. Bathrooms are done in a rather garish tile but are clean.

Xiānggélǐlā Dàdào. ✆ **0888/518-8888.** Fax 0888/518-1999. www.gfhotel-lijiang.com. 289 units. ¥960–¥1,120 ($120–$140) standard room; ¥2,000 ($250) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; lounge; indoor swimming pool; health club and spa; bowling alley; concierge; tour desk; air ticket counter; free airport shuttle; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

Old town Lìjiāng offers plenty of friendly cafes and family-operated restaurants catering to foreign travelers with Western, Chinese, and Nàxī food at very reasonable prices (¥10–¥20/$1.25–$2.50 a dish). The classic **Māma Fū** (✆ **0888/512-2285**), located on Xīnyì Jiē just north of the Market Square, serves some of the best pizzas around and is also famous for its homemade breads and apple pie. Sit outside by the running stream and watch old Lìjiāng go by. The **Blue Page Vegetarian Restaurant** at Xīnyì Jiē, Mìshì Xiāng 69 (✆ **0888/518-5206**), is a quiet, cozy place with fresh flowers that serves excellent vegetarian fare such as a mushroom and vegetable pie, vegetarian burgers, and apple crumble. The

Dōngbā House at Xīnyì Jiē, Jíshàn Xiāng 16 (✆ **0888/517-5431**), offers Tibetan cuisine along with Nàxī, Chinese, and Western food, and some of the best people-watching in the old town. On the west side of the old town, the always-crowded **Sakura Café** at Xīnhuá Jiē, Cuìwén Duàn 123 (✆ **0888/518-7619**), has everything from delicious Korean *bibimbap* (rice with vegetables and meat) to an Israeli chicken-cutlet dinner.

Lìjiāng Gǔchéng Jiǔlóu YÚNNÁN/NÀXĪ This pleasant, upscale restaurant with alfresco streamside dining specializes in the *Nàxī sāndiéshuǐ,* a 36-course meal divided into cold, steamed, and sweet dishes. Although this banquet, at ¥488 ($61), is designed for six to eight people, smaller groups can order the half portion for about ¥300 ($38). The restaurant also has a more traditional Chinese menu, and serves hot pot and grilled kabobs as well.

Dōng Dà Jiē (entrance to the old town). ✆ **0888/518-1818.** Meal for 2 ¥80–¥150 ($10–$19). No credit cards. 9am–midnight.

Nàxī Fēngwèi Xiǎochī NÀXĪ This no-frills restaurant serves some of the best local fare in all of Lìjiāng; witness the crowds that throng here every night. You can dine outdoors by a running stream or on the second floor. Nàxī favorites include *jīdòu chǎo mǐfàn* (fried rice with soya bean), *Lìjiāng bābā* (a local baked pastry which can be ordered sweet or salty), and *zhá rǔ bǐng* (fried goat cheese). If you're with a group of five or more, ask for the *fēngwèi cān,* which consists of 10 to 16 special Nàxī dishes. Service is brusque during peak meal times from 6 to 8pm. The restaurant has a second outlet two doors down.

Xīnhuá Jiē, Shuāng Shí Duàn 22. ✆ **0888/518-9591.** Meal for 2 ¥20–¥40 ($2.50–$5). No credit cards. 7:30am–11pm.

Nàxī Gǔyuè Cāntīng YÚNNÁN/NÀXĪ This modest restaurant located down an alley has little atmosphere but serves hearty *guòqiáo mǐxiàn* (crossing-the-bridge noodles) and *qìguō jī* (stewed chicken), as well as Nàxī specialties like *kǎoyú* (barbecued fish) and *Lìjiāng dàguōcài* (vegetables in broth). There are no menus in English, but the staff tries to be helpful.

Dōng Dà Jiē (south of Nàxī Gǔyuè Huì/Nàxī Music Academy). ✆ **0888/666-7577.** Meal for 2 ¥20–¥60 ($2.50–$7.50). No credit cards. 7:30am–11:30pm.

LÌJIĀNG AFTER DARK

Attending a Nàxī concert is one of the more popular evening activities in Lìjiāng. The original Nàxī Orchestra at the **Nàxī Gǔyuè Huì (Nàxī Music Academy)** is led by esteemed Nàxī ethnomusicologist Xuán Kè, who delivers introductions and explanations to the music and instruments in both English and Chinese. Nightly performances are held at the Nàxī Concert Hall (Dōng Dà Jiē) from 8 to 9:30pm. Purchase tickets for ¥30 to ¥50 ($3.75–$6.25) ahead of time; performances are frequently sold out. Directly across the street, the **Dōngbā Gōng** offers a second option for Nàxī song and dance performances at 8pm. Tickets are ¥35 ($4.50) or ¥50 ($6.25).

AROUND LÌJIĀNG

Please turn to Appendix A for Chinese translations of key locations.

YÙFĒNG SÌ

Located about 13km (8 miles) northwest of Lìjiāng at the foot of Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, this small lamasery belonging to the Scarlet Sect of Tibetan Buddhism was first built in 1660. Today it is best known for its *wànduǒ shānchá* (10,000-flower camellia tree). Formed from the merger of two trees planted by

monks between 1465 and 1487, the camellia tree is said to bloom 20 times between March and June, bearing a total of 20,000 blossoms! If you're cycling here (2 hr.), follow Xiānggélǐlā Dàdào out of town. About 5km (3 miles) past the town of Báishā, take a left at **Yùshuǐ Zhài (Jade Water Village),** go past the **Dōngbā Village,** and continue on to Yùfēng Temple.

YÙ HÚ (NGULUKO)

Just before the Dōngbā Village is the turnoff for the lovely, quiet, tour group–free village that was Josepfh Rock's home in the 1920s and 1930s. The Austrian-born botanist and anthropologist, whose *Ancient Nakhi Kingdom of Southwest China* is the definitive account of Nàxī culture and language, is a local legend who lived in Lìjiāng for 27 years. Following the turnoff—which you can't miss, as large letters proclaim FOLLOW ROCKER'S TRAIL TO SHANGRI-LA (the misspelled name turns out to be an English transliteration of the literal Chinese pronunciation of "Rock," or "Luòkè")—take a right at the first fork for about 3km (2 miles), then follow signs directing you to the village where all the houses are built entirely from large stones and rocks. **Joseph Rock's former residence (Luòkè Gùjū Chénlièguǎn;** ¥10/$1.25; open 8am–6pm) is a two-story wooden house where Rock lived with his Nàxī assistant Lǐ Sīyù. Rock's quarters on the second floor contain his original twin bed, his suitcase, a folding table, two chairs, and kerosene lamps. A newly built exhibition hall next to the residence has displays of Rock's gun, clothing, pictographic cards used to help Rock learn the Dōngbā language, and Rock's own photographs of Nàxī funeral ceremonies and festivals.

BÁISHĀ

10km (6 miles) northwest of Lìjiāng, 1km (½ mile) off the main road to Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, this dusty historic town is most famous these days for its Míng- and Qīng-dynasty **temple frescoes** which were painted by Nàxī, Tibetan, Bái, and Hàn artists and hence incorporate elements of Buddhism, Lamaism, and Daoism. The largest fresco, found on the front wall of the **Dàbǎojiù Palace** (¥8/$1; open 7:30am–6pm), is a gorgeous Míng dynasty mural of Buddha preaching to his disciples.

In the street behind the Dàbǎojì Palace, visitors can also find Báishā's most famous personality, Dr. Ho (Hé), at his Chinese herbal clinic. Immortalized by travel writer Bruce Chatwin as the "Taoist physician in the Jade-Dragon Mountains of Lìjiāng," and visited by countless journalists and curious travelers ever since, Dr. Ho can dispense herbs for any ailment and will happily sell you some of his special tea made from home-grown herbs, which has many fans if you believe all the scrapbooks of letters from grateful patients.

YÙLÓNG XUĚSHĀN (JADE DRAGON SNOW MOUNTAIN)

This magnificent 35km (21-mile) long mountain range framing Lìjiāng is a must-visit. The tallest of the mountain's 13 peaks is the daunting **Shànzifēng** (**Fan Peak;** elev. 5,596m/18,355 ft.), perennially snowcapped and climbed for the first time only in 1963 by a research team from Běijīng. Today's visitors have a number of options for exploring the mountain. All require you to pay a ¥60 ($7.50) entrance fee to the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain Scenic Area, about 30km (20 miles) north of town. Many tourists visit as part of an organized tour. To get out here on your own, it's best to hire a private car or taxi for ¥100 to ¥150 ($13–$19), or take a bus for Bǎoshān or Dàjù.

The most popular visit is a round-trip cable-car ride for ¥180 ($22) from the village just inside the main gate to **Bīngchuān Gōngyuán (Glacier Park).** If possible, purchase your ticket in town the day before at the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain ticket office at Xiānggélǐlā Dàdào and Xiàngshān Dōng Lù, as ornery ticket attendants at the reception center will sometimes insist you cannot purchase a ticket on the spot. Buses for ¥10 ($1.25) round-trip will transport you the 4km (2½ miles) from the reception center to the cable car terminus. From here it's a two-section ride on a chairlift to the foot of Fan Peak. You can climb a wooden walkway all the way up to 4,480m (14,700 ft.), where visitors are greeted with a stunning view of glaciers and with ice caverns. If you feel any altitude sickness, Chinese vendors will happily sell you an oxygen bag for around ¥30 ($3.75).

About 20 minutes north of the reception center past the Báishuǐ Hé River, a 10-minute ride on a chairlift for ¥40 ($5 round-trip) and a 30-minute ramble through groves of spruce and pine trees leads you to **Yúnshān Píng** (**Spruce Meadow,** elev. 3,206m/10,515 ft.). During the annual Torch Festival, young Nàxī men and women come here to pray for eternal love.

The third cable car, which costs ¥60 ($7.50) round-trip and takes you another 20km (12 miles) north, arrives at **Máoniú Píng** (**Yak Meadow,** elev. 3,500m/11,480 ft.), the least-visited of the three spots. The meadow has grazing yaks, blooming flowers (in spring and summer), and a number of hiking possibilities. One of the more popular routes leads to Xuěhuā Hú (Snow Flake Lake), which brilliantly captures the crystalline reflection of the surrounding mountains.

CHÁNG JIĀNG DÌYĪ WĀN (SHÍGǓ & THE FIRST BEND OF THE YÁNGZǏ)

Located about 45km (27 miles) west of Lìjiāng, the town of Shígǔ (Stone Drum) sits on the first bend of the mighty Yángzǐ River (known in Yúnnán as the Jīnshā Jiāng or Golden Sand River). Originating from the Qīnghǎi–Tibet Plateau and flowing south through the Héngduàn Mountain range, the river abruptly turns north at Shígǔ, making this the most important bend in the river, as it keeps the Yángzǐ waters from flowing out of China. This strategic spot is also an important military site; Zhūgě Liàng, a famous Three Kingdoms Period (220–280) strategist is said to have crossed here during one of his campaigns, as did Kublai Khan in the 13th century using air-filled sheepskin bags. In 1936, 18,000 Red Army soldiers crossed here during their Long March north. Many visitors on their way to Tiger Leaping Gorge or Shangri-La stop along the road before the turnoff to Shígǔ to snap a quick photograph of the bend, and that is usually sufficient as the town itself is a rather sleepy, unexciting place.

TIGER LEAPING GORGE (HǓTIÀO XIÁ)

Often billed as one of the most spectacular sights in Lìjiāng and a must-hike for trekkers, the 30km (18-mile) long Tiger Leaping Gorge, which sits between the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain of Lìjiāng and the Hābā Snow Mountain of Zhōngdiàn to the north, is a tad overrated. To be sure, this canyon, reaching a depth of over 3,000m (9,842 ft.), is pretty enough, and occasionally breathtaking; as treks go, it is a moderately interesting, occasionally strenuous, and infrequently dangerous trek taking 2 to 3 days, but by no stretch of the imagination is it the ultimate of sights, as its renown may have led some to expect.

The gorge is divided into upper *(shàng hǔtiào),* middle *(zhōng hǔtiào),* and lower *(xià hǔtiào)* sections, with two main entrances, one at the town of Qiáotóu

at the upper gorge and the other at the town of Dàjù at the end of the lower gorge (¥30/$3.75; open 8am–7pm). Most hikers now start from Qiáotóu, as all foreigners traveling on buses from Lìjiāng to Dàjù are required to pay the ¥48 ($6) entrance fee to the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain Scenic Area between Lìjiāng and Dàjù. For most visitors short on time, the gorge can be visited as a day trip from Lìjiāng or on the way to Shangri-La. Recently, instead of going all the way to Qiáotóu, many private-hire taxis and tour buses like to drop off visitors at a newly constructed parking lot on the south side of the gorge across from the town of Qiáotóu. After paying the entrance fee, it's a 2.6km (1½-mile) walk along a wide paved path to the gorge's most famous sight, the **Tiger Leaping Stone (Hǔtiào Shí),** a large rock in the middle of the raging river which gave the gorge its name. The legend goes that a tiger being chased by a hunter escaped capture by leaping over the river with the help of this rock.

On the north side of the gorge, a new road for buses and cars has been built all the way from Qiáotóu to Tiger Leaping Stone, allowing for even more busloads of tourists to disembark on the northern side of the stone; by the time you read this, the road from Tiger Leaping Stone to Walnut Grove which marks the end of the middle section of the gorge should be paved, which means more exhaust-spewing cars reaching ever deeper into the gorge.

For trekkers approaching from Qiáotóu, there are two paths: the lower path used by buses and cars as described above, which is a relatively easy and flat, if exhaust-filled, hike; and the higher path, which is longer, more strenuous, and more dangerous because of falling rocks and narrower paths. Check with the travelers' cafes in Lìjiāng beforehand for the latest hiking conditions. It is possible but not advisable to do the hike in a day. Basic but charming guesthouses along the way, all with hot water and restaurants, make overnighting at the gorge a relatively painless affair. In general, hikers on the high path can overnight at **Nuòyǔ** village, 6.3km (4 miles) and 2 hours from Qiáotóu, where the Nàxī Family Guesthouse charges ¥10 ($1.25) per bed. Or you can stay at **Běndìwān** village, 17km (10 miles) and 4 to 8 hours from Qiáotóu, which has several guesthouses; the Halfway Guesthouse (Zhōngtú Kèzhàn) has beds for ¥10 to ¥15 ($1.25–$2), and some of the best views. Some hikers even manage to get to **Walnut Grove (Hétao Yuán),** 23km (14 miles) from Qiáotóu and 2 to 4 hours from Běndìwān, in one day. However, the middle rapids between Tina's Guesthouse on the lower path and Walnut Grove is one of the prettiest sections of the gorge, so you may want to take your time through there. Guesthouses at Walnut Grove include the very social Sean's Spring Guesthouse (Shānquán Kèzhàn) with beds for ¥15 to ¥20 ($2–$2.50); and the quieter Château Woody (Shānbáiniǎn Lǚguǎn), with beds for ¥10 to ¥15 ($1.25–$2), clean toilets, and great views. From Walnut Grove, you can either hike back to Qiáotóu via the 4- to 5-hour lower path, or you can take a taxi back to Qiáotóu for ¥10 to ¥15 ($1.25–$2). Another option is to continue on to Dàjù, a section considerably less scenic which requires crossing the river; the old ferry costs ¥10 ($1.25), the new ferry ¥12 ($1.50).

To get to Qiáotóu from Lìjiāng, take a Zhōngdiàn-bound bus (2½ hr.; ¥14/$1.60) every half hour to hour from 7:30am to 3pm, and ask to be let off at Qiáotóu. From Qiáotóu, the last bus to Lìjiāng passes at around 6:30pm, while the last bus to Zhōngdiàn passes at around 5pm. The last bus (3 hr.; ¥24 ($3) from Dàjù to Lìjiāng leaves at 1:30pm. Frequent minibuses until 5pm take 2½ hours and cost ¥15 ($2) to get from Dàjù to Zhōngdiàn.

A FASCINATING SIDE TRIP
LÚGŪ HÚ (LÚGŪ LAKE)★★

Located about 210km (126 miles) northeast of Lìjiāng in the Níngláng Autonomous County (Níngláng Xiàn) at the juncture of Yúnnán and Sìchuān provinces, the pristine and breathtaking **Lúgū Hu (Lúgū Lake)** is the home of the Mosu ("Mósuō" in Mandarin)—the only practicing matriarchal society in the world, with a population of 36,000—and a smaller number of Tibetans and Yí. The relatively remote lake is at least a 5-hour trip by car (up to 8 hr. by minibus with a change in Níngláng) from Lìjiāng, and it used to be that only anthropologists and a handful of curious travelers would make the trip. However, as word got out about the unusual Mosu, new roads were built and Chinese visitors have been arriving by the busloads, usually as part of a 2-day tour from Lìjiāng. It's an interesting world, where women do *all* of the work, from child raising to cooking, from planting to governing, and the men are defined by their roles not as fathers but as uncles to the children in their mother's household. On the 25th day of the seventh lunar month (Aug or Sept), the Mosu celebrate their biggest festival, Zhuàn Shān Jié (Mountain-Circling Festival) at the Gémǔ Nǚshén Shān (Goddess Gémǔ Mountain) on the shores of Lúgū Lake.

Despite the increasingly crass commercialization and crowds, Lúgū Lake is still worth visiting, though an overnight stay is required. Most of the Chinese tour groups arrive in the afternoon and depart after breakfast the next morning, leaving you a good part of the day to explore, take a boat ride on the lake, or engage a Mosu in conversation, all in relative peace before the next batch of tourists arrives in the afternoon.

The 70-sq.-km (27-sq.-mile) freshwater lake (admission ¥35/$4.40) is dotted with many Mosu log cabins, though these have been replaced by three- and four-story hotels in the main village of **Luòshuǐ Cūn** on the western shore. The lake is surrounded by mountains, with the **Gémǔ Nǚshén Shān** in the north and the hills of Sìchuān's Yányuán County across the lake in the east. Colorfully clothed Mosu women can row visitors in "pig-trough" *(zhūcáo)* boats, for approximately ¥35 ($4.25) per person, out to the two major islands in the lake: **Lǐwùbǐ Dǎo** and **Hēiwǎé Dǎo.** A small **museum** next to the bus station on the main strip has displays (in Chinese only) of Mosu artifacts and hosts evening Mosu song and dance performances. The owners of the **Húsī Teahouse,** transplants from Chóngqìng themselves, are a great source of information on local activities and often lead hikes around the lake. Further on, **Yóǒgníng** is home to several more Mosu villages worth exploring.

GETTING THERE Short of joining an organized tour (which travel agencies in Lìjiāng can arrange), the easiest way to get out to the lake on your own is by private car or taxi hire (5½ hr.; ¥500–¥600/$62–$75 round-trip); you'll have to pay for the driver's food and accommodation separately. Otherwise, take a Níngláng-bound bus from Lìjiāng's main bus station, then transfer to a Luòshǔi-bound minibus (2–2½ hr.; ¥20/$2.50). Leaving Luòshuǐ, a Lìjiāng-bound bus (¥43/$5) leaves the bus station (*kèyùn zhàn*) along the lakeshore at 7:30am. Alternatively, take a minivan taxi to Níngláng for ¥20 ($2.50), and then catch a connecting bus back to Lìjiāng (every hour 7am–3pm).

WHERE TO STAY & DINE A decent option close to the lake is the relatively new **Āxiá Nóngjiā Yuán (Āxiá Farmer's House, ✆ 0888/588-6066**), located behind the museum between the lake and the main road. It has 12 clean doubles with attached bathrooms for ¥200 ($25), with a 50% discount in low

season. Staying along the waterfront is the most pleasant option, but the log cabin guesthouses for ¥10 to ¥15 ($1.25–$2) per bed are very basic, with communal showers and toilets. The **Mósuō Yuàn** (✆ **0888/588-1188**) along the lakeshore is one of the larger guesthouses and is relatively clean. Guesthouse owners can cook you dinner for about ¥10 to ¥20 ($1.25–$2.50). In the evenings, barbecue stalls set up along the waterfront, where you can get any variety of grilled meats and vegetables. The **Húsī Teahouse** along the waterfront offers coffees, teas, juices, and basic but tasty Chinese fare.

12 Xiānggélǐlā (Zhōngdiàn)

Yúnnán Province, 651km (390 miles) NW of Kūnmíng, 198km (119 miles) NW of Lìjiāng

To its majority Tibetan residents, the capital of the Díqìng Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, a small town on the road between Lìjiāng and Tibet, is known as Gyalthang. To the town's smaller Hàn population, it's still called Zhōngdiàn. To tourist authorities, hotel owners, and tour operators around the country, the town is now the earthly paradise of Xiānggélǐlā (that's Shangri-La to you). A rose never had it so difficult, and we'll continue to refer to the destination as "Zhōngdiàn" in practical information. Though Zhōngdiàn was officially renamed Xiānggélǐlā in May 2002 (see sidebar), you'll be sorely disappointed if you arrive here expecting paradise. Tourist authorities are working hard to build new hotels and roads, but for now this is still a small, dusty town (elev. 3,380m/11,092 ft.) to be visited mostly for its Tibetan monastery if you aren't going to make it to Tibet. The surrounding area, however, does offer some spectacular scenery. *Note:* Please turn to Appendix A for Chinese translations of key locations.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Zhōngdiàn is connected by **flights** to Kūnmíng (50 min.; daily), Chéngdū (1 hr., 10 min.; 3–4 flights a week), and Lhasa (1 hr., 45 min.; one or two flights a week depending on season). To fly to Lhasa, you must have your Tibet travel permit in order. Tickets can be purchased at the **Yúnnán Airlines/CAAC** office at Wénmíng Jiē next to the Guànguāng Hotel (✆ **0887/822-9901**); it's open from 8:30am to noon and 3 to 8pm (2 to 5:30pm in winter). Taxi fare to the airport about 6km (4 miles) south of town will cost ¥15 to ¥20 ($1.90–$2.50).

From the **Bus Station (Kèyùn Zhàn)** on Chángzhèng Lù (✆ **0887/822-2972**), **buses** run to Kūnmíng (9–10 hr.; ¥142–¥175/$17–$21) at 9am, and then hourly from 11am to 8pm; to Xiàguān (8 hr.; ¥42–¥65/$5–$8) every hour from 7am to 8pm; to Lìjiāng (3½-5 hr.; ¥27/$3.25) every half hour to hour from 7:10am to 5pm; to Déqīn (7 hr.; ¥30/$3.75) at 7:20am, 8:20am, and 9:20am; to Xiāngchéng (9 hr.) at 7:30am; to Jīnjiāng (10 hr.) at 3:30pm and 5pm; and to Sānbā (5–6 hr; ¥20/$2.50) at 8:30am. The 3:30pm bus to Jīnjiāng will get you there in time to connect with the train to Chéngdū. There has been talk of moving the bus station to the northern part of town along Zhōngxiāng Lù, so check beforehand.

It's possible to hire a **taxi** to take you to Lìjiāng by way of Báishuǐ Tái and Tiger Leaping Gorge for around ¥600 ($75) a day.

To Tibet You can only travel overland to Tibet by Landcruiser as part of an official travel agency group with all the requisite Tibet travel permits. If you haven't made prior reservations by the time you arrive in Zhōngdiàn, check first

The Search for Shangri-La?

In 1933, the word "Shangri-La" was introduced into the world's lexicon by novelist James Hilton, who wrote in *Lost Horizon* of four Westerners stranded by a plane crash in an idyllic mountain paradise in the Himalayas called Shangri-La. In this earthly Eden, peace and harmony prevailed. Hilton, who never set foot in China, later hinted that the inspiration for his mythical paradise may well have derived from Joseph Rock's many *National Geographic* articles about northwest China in the 1920s and 1930s. By then, this "magical place" with the lush valley, a monastery, a village, and Mount Karakal, "an almost perfect cone of snow," had stirred the soul of many an explorer, Chinese and Western alike, and the search for the "real" Shangri-La was on.

For the last 70 years, countries like Nepal and Bhutan have laid claim to the title. Within China, some have posited that Lìjiāng, after all Rock's hometown for 27 years, was the real Shangri-La, while Sìchuān Province claimed that its Yādǐng Nature Reserve in the Konkaling Mountains was the true site. Then, in 1997, the Yúnnán government declared that they had, with "certainty," found Shangri-La—the Díqìng Plateau, 100km (60 miles) north of Lìjiāng. Citing many similarities to Hilton's description, Zhōngdiàn County, the capital of the Díqìng Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, officially changed it name to Xiānggélǐlā (Shangri-La) in 2002. Was paradise found after all? Zhōngdiàn may have the official imprimatur, but several rebel experts believe that the real inspiration for Shangri-La can actually be found some 320km (200 miles) to the southeast in the ancient kingdom of Mùlǐ, an area the size of Wales between Dàochéng, Zhōngdiàn, and Jiǔlóng.

at the travelers' cafes. During the summer, there may be enough interest to pull together a group, but it'll likely cost around ¥5,000 ($625) per person just for transportation and the permit. From Zhōngdiàn, the overland route passes through Déqīn, the last border town in Yúnnán, another 6 to 8 hours away by car. Any questions about Tibet travel permits can be referred to Mr. Lin at the Tibet Tourism Office (see below).

To Sìchuān The back roads into Sìchuān from Zhōngdiàn are no less scenic or any more comfortable than the road to Tibet, but at least you won't have to worry about permits. Busing it to Chéngdū will take at least 6 to 7 days over some very high altitudes (above 4000m/13,120 ft.) and incredibly gorgeous terrain. Hiring a private car will cost around ¥800 to ¥1,200 ($100–$150). From Zhōngdiàn, a 7:30am bus departs every 2 to 3 days for Xiāngchéng in Sìchuān; the trip takes 10 hours. From Xiāngchéng, the route continues to Dàochéng or Lǐtáng, depending on weather and road conditions, then to Kāndìng (11 hr. from Lǐtǎng), and finally to Chéngdū (a further 8 hr.).

GETTING AROUND Around town, **taxis** (unmetered) cost ¥5 (60¢) per trip. Bus no. 3 (¥1)/15¢) runs from the Tibet Hotel up the main thoroughfare, Chéngzhèng Lù, all the way to Sōngzànlín Sì.

TOURS **CITS** at Chángzhèng Lù (✆ **0887/823-0152**) just north of the bus station offers day tours (in Chinese only) to the surrounding areas. A group package to Sōngzànlín Sì, Bìtǎ Hǎi, and Nàpà Hǎi will run ¥110 to ¥150 ($14–$19). Information on local sights and travel to Tibet and Sìchuān can be picked up at the **Tibet Café** at Chángzhèng Lù (✆ **0887/823-0282**) and at the **Shangri-La Traveller Club** at Hépíng Lù 98 (✆ **0887/822-8671**). In the summer, there may be folks at either place organizing groups to Tibet and Sìchuān. Mr. Lin at the **Tibet Tourism Office** (✆ **0887/688-3996;** mobile 0139887/17676688) in the Xiāngbālā Hotel can arrange Tibet travel permits.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **People's Bank of China (Zhōu Rénmín Yínháng;** open Mon–Tues, Thurs–Fri, 8:30am–noon and 2:30–5:30pm) is on Chángzhèng Lù. It offers forex, but it won't give cash advances on credit cards.

Internet Access **China Telecom** on Chángzhèng Lù 9 has Internet service from 9am to 9pm, at ¥3 (40¢) per hour, as does the **Tibet Hotel.** Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The post office (open 8:30am–8:30pm/9am to 8pm in the winter) is at the corner of Chéngzhèng Lù and Xiàngyáng Lù.

Visa Extensions The visa section of the **Gōngānjú (PSB;** Mon–Fri, 8:30–11:30am, 2:30–6pm summer; 9am–noon. 2–5:30pm in the winter.) is located at Chángzhèng Lù 72 just south of the Díqìng Bīnguǎn.

EXPLORING THE TOWN

The largest Tibetan Buddhist temple in southwest China, **Ganden Sumtseling Gompa (Sōngzànlín Sì)** ★★★ (¥10/$1.25; open 7:30am–6:30pm), located 3km (2 miles) north of town. The Gelukpa (Yellow Hat) monastery was built in 1679 by the fifth Dalai Lama. Modeled on the Potala Palace in Lhasa, the temple was shelled by the Chinese army in 1959 and officially reopened in 1981. About 700 monks currently reside here. The main temple at the top of the hill, a four-story structure with a gold-plated roof reached by climbing a series of steps (or you can have your taxi drive you up to the north entrance *[běimén]*), has a solemn main hall with 108 red pillars and scores of colorful *thangka* hanging from the ceiling. Ascend to the roof, where a simply glorious panorama of Zhōngdiàn awaits you. You may even be able to find a monk who can point out the nearby mountain to the south used for Tibetan sky burials.

Returning to town on Chángzhèng Lù, you'll see a large white **chörten** (Tibetan stupa) on a hill to the west. There is typically a stupa at the entrance to every Tibetan town which, as a symbol of protection, is usually decorated with prayer flags and jewels, and ringed with stones laid by pilgrims as expressions of particular wishes or prayers. Pilgrims entering town are required to circumambulate the stupa three times.

To the south, Zhōngdiàn's **old town** is worth a ramble. From the Tibet Hotel, head east on Tuánjié Lù until it curves south onto Cāngfáng Jiē. You'll soon come to the **Old Town Scripture Chamber (Gǔchéng Zàngjīng Táng)**. Admission is ¥5 (60¢) and hours are from 7am to 8pm. The 300-year-old temple housed part of the Red Army on their Long March in 1936. The triple-eaved main hall contains a statue of an all-seeing and omnipotent Buddha with a thousand heads and hands *(qiānshǒu qiānyǎn).*

WHERE TO STAY

Díqìng Bīnguǎn Popular with American and European tour groups, this Tibetan-style three-star hotel used to be the official government hotel for the prefecture and has comfortable and clean but otherwise unexciting rooms. There are cheaper, unheated standard rooms in an annex out back (electric blankets provided), and crude dorm beds in a third building. Service is adequate.

Chángzhèng Lù 11. ✆ **0887/822-9666.** Fax 0887/822-2703. 157 units. ¥300–¥480 ($38–$60) standard room; ¥1,280 ($160) suite. 20%–30% discounts. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; lounge; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; room service; laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Lóngfèng Xiáng Dàjiǔdiàn (Holy Palace Hotel) ★ This imposing Tibetan-style four-star hotel is the newest (2001) and most modern of the in-town hotels and is popular with upmarket American and European tour groups. Guest rooms are large and fitted with comfortable firm beds and classical European furniture. Bathrooms are clean but somewhat dark.

Hépíng Lù. ✆ **0887/822-9788.** 220 units. ¥ 528 ($66) standard room; ¥1,680–¥1,880 ($210–$235) suite. 20% discount. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; lounge; concierge; travel agency; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; room service; laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer.

WHERE TO DINE

For decent and inexpensive local and Western fare, head to the travelers' cafes in the southern part of town. The most popular of the lot is the cozy **Tibet Café** ★ at Chángzhèng Lù near the Martyr's Cemetery (✆ **0887/823-0282**). It serves Western staples like pancakes, pasta, and pizza, along with Nàxī and Tibetan specialties (try the yak steak or the hearty fried bread stuffed with yak meat). Main courses cost ¥10 to ¥20 ($1.25–$2.50). The **Shangri-La Traveller Club** at Hépíng Lù 98 (✆ **0887/822-8671**) also has a restaurant that serves decent, cheap Chinese dishes (fried rice, noodles, eggs with tomato). The bar's special concoction, *qīngkē wǔwèizǐ jiǔ,* a very potent 50-proof combination of Tibetan vodka and Chinese medicines, is only for the truly intrepid. The new (2002) **Yak Bar** at Tuánjié Jiē (✆ **0887/828-8665**), has affordable Western favorites like pizzas and burgers, but it specializes in Japanese and Korean food such as *bulgolgi* (grilled marinated beef) and tempura. Around Hépíng Lù and Jiàntáng Lù are a number of food stalls and small restaurants that serve Huí Muslim, Sìchuān, and home-style *(jiācháng cài)* Chinese food; none, however, have English menus.

AROUND XIĀNGGÉLĪLĀ

The most popular day trip is to **Báishuǐ Tái (White Water Terraces)** ★, (¥30/$3.75; open 8am–6pm), a limestone-deposit plateau at the town of Sānbā about 108km (67 miles) southeast of Xiānggélǐlā. These seemingly sculpted terraces, actually formed from calcium carbonate deposits over hundreds of years, are quite beautiful. It has become *de rigueur* for visitors to walk barefoot on the terraces, which appear slippery but are actually not. Nearby is the village of Báidì, the cradle of Nàxī Dōngbā culture. To get there, it's best to hire a private car for ¥350 to ¥600 ($45–$75); or join a day tour organized by the travelers' cafes or your hotel concierge desk.

Many tourists combine their Báishuǐ Tái visit with a stop at **Bìtǎ Hǎi (Bìtǎ Lake;** ¥30/$3.75; open 8am–5pm/6pm summer) a nature reserve some 25km (15 miles) east of town whose centerpiece freshwater lake is awash in azalea blooms in June and a riot of autumn colors in September. There are two entrances to the lake: one in the west which is still several kilometers (½ hr. by

pony) from the lake; and another in the south, on the road to Báishuǐ Tái. From the southern entrance, it's a 2km (1¼-mile) walk down a log-lined path or a 20-minute pony ride for ¥20 ($2.50) to the lake. Many visitors tend to walk down and ride up, because the walk uphill at this altitude can be quite taxing. The main paths are full of tourists but there are plenty of opportunities to get away for more private hikes.

13 Bǎoshān & Téngchōng

The Bǎoshān region located to the west of Dàlǐ has a history that dates to the 4th and 5th centuries B.C., when trade routes extending from Sìchuān to India via Yúnnán and Burma passed right through the towns of Bǎoshān and Téngchōng. The area came under Chinese control during the Hàn dynasty, and cities along this route flourished well into the Táng dynasty. Overlooked by most travelers today, the region, which is home to several minorities, including the Hàn, Yí, Bái, Dǎi, and Huí, boasts the delightful town of Téngchōng, which has enough volcanoes, hot springs, and traditional Chinese villages nearby to warrant a detour of a few days. Bǎoshān is Téngchōng's air link to the outside world, but there's not a lot to see here.

BǍOSHĀN

Yúnnán Province, 592km (355 miles) W of Kūnmíng, 168km (101 miles) E of Téngchōng

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Daily **flights** connect to Kūnmíng (40 min.) from Bǎoshān's airport 10km (6 miles) south of town. The **Yúnnán Airlines** office (✆ **0875/216-1747**) is located at the corner of Mínháng Lù and Lóngquán Lù. A taxi from the airport costs about ¥20 ($2.50).

From the **Bǎoshān Bus Station** (**Qìchē Zhàn;** ✆ **0875/212-2311**), **buses** run to Kūnmíng (7½–8 hr.; ¥116–¥150/$15–$19) from 8 to 10am, at 1 and 3:30pm, and from 5:20 to 8:20pm. Buses also run to Xiàguān (3 hr.; ¥31–¥41/$4–$5) every 40 minutes from 7am to 4:20pm; to Téngchōng (3½–4½ hr.; ¥27–¥36/$3.50–$4.50) every half hour to hour from 6:40am to 5:30pm; to Ruìlì (5 hr.; ¥43/$5.25) every half hour from 6:30am to 2:35pm; and to Jǐnghóng (20 hr.; ¥158/$19) at 6pm.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China** (open Mon–Fri, 8–11:30am, 2:30–6pm) is at Bǎoxiù Dōng Lù and Zhèngyáng Běi Lù. There is an ATM inside the bank.

Post Office There is a post office (open 8am–8pm) at Xiàgǎng Jiē and Jiǔlóng Lù.

WHERE TO STAY

Lándū Hotel (Lándū Fàndiàn) This three-star hotel located 5 long blocks west of the bus station is the nicest place to stay in town. Rooms are large and, unlike the hotel's unrepentantly ugly white-tile, smoked-glass exterior, are decorated in a surprisingly understated and tasteful manner. Beds are firm and comfortable; bathrooms are clean and bright.

Bǎoxiù Xī Lù Zhōngduàn. ✆ **0875/212-1888.** Fax 0875/212-1990. 150 units. ¥400 ($50) standard room; ¥800 ($100) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar, lounge; indoor pool, exercise room; bowling alley, concierge; business center; shopping arcade; salon; room service; laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar.

TÉNGCHŌNG

Yúnnán Province, 750km (450 miles) W of Kūnmíng, 168km (101 miles) W of Bǎoshān

Téngchōng, a predominantly Hàn town which shares a 148km (89-mile) border with Myanmar (Burma) to the northwest, flourished as an ancient southwestern Silk Route town. However, from the Míng dynasty on, large numbers of its natives went abroad to Burma and Southeast Asia to trade and seek a livelihood, thus creating for Téngchōng a reputation as the "homeplace of the overseas Chinese." The money sent home by the émigrés helped build schools, residences, and memorial halls, and today you can see some charming, well-preserved traditional villages in the area. Téngchōng also sits on the southwestern end of the Héngduàn (transversely faulted) Mountains, in a region where volcanoes abound and earthquakes are frequent. Bubbling over with geothermal energy, the county has over 80 hot springs and fountains.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The closest airport is at Bǎoshān. From the **Téngchōng Bus Station** (**Kèyùn Zhàn; ✆ 0875/518-1450**) and the **long-distance bus station (Chángtú Qìchē Zhàn),** both on Huánchéng Dōng Lù directly opposite each other, **buses** run to Kūnmíng (15 hr.; ¥156/$19) from 1:30 to 7:50pm; to Xiàguān (10 hr.; ¥80/$10) at 8:30am and 7pm; to Bǎoshān (4 hr.; ¥26–¥32/$3.25–$4) every half hour from 7am to 4:30pm; to Ruìlì (7 hr.; ¥36/$4.40) at 6:20am, 7am, 8:30am, and 11:20am; and to Mángshì (4 hr.; ¥20/$2.50) every half hour to hour from 7:30am to 3pm.

GETTING AROUND Téngchōng is small enough to explore on foot. **Bikes** are useful to get to nearby sights such as Běihǎi, Héshùn, and even Rèhǎi. They can be rented at Guānghuá Lù 79, open from 8am to 10:30pm, for ¥1.50 (20¢) per hour, ¥15 ($1.90) per day if over 10 hours, and ¥10/$1.25 per day for 2 to 3 days' rental. **Taxi** fare costs ¥5 (65¢) for in-town destinations. The rest is subject to negotiation.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Traveler Community Centre (TCC) Café** (**Téngchōng Mínzú Biǎoyǎn Zhōngxīn; ✆ 0875/513-1061;** tcc_cafe@hotmail.com) at the western edge of town caters primarily to backpackers but can be a helpful source of information on nearby sights.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China** (open Mon–Fri; 8–11:30am, 2:30–6pm) is at Yíngjiāng Dōng Lù 161. There is an ATM outside the bank.

Internet Access **China Telecom** (open 8am–midnight) on Láifēng Dàdào has Internet service for ¥2 (25¢) an hour.

Post Office The post office (open 8am–5:30pm) is at the corner of Fēngshān Nán Lù and Yíngjiāng Dōng Lù.

Visa Extensions The visa section of the **Gōngānjú (PSB)** is located at Xià Xī Jiē 20, room 107 (**✆ 0875/513-1046;** open Mon–Fri, 8–11:30am, 2:30–5:30pm).

EXPLORING TÉNGCHŌNG

The old part of Téngchōng, with its somewhat dilapidated but still charming two-story wooden houses, can best be seen in the side streets off Yíngjiāng Lù and Fēngshān Lù. On Shàng Xī Jiē north of Guānghuá Xī Lù is a large **produce**

market. West of the market on Lǎo Huánchéng Xī Lù is the **former British Consulate,** a handsome gray granite building with thick pillars and gray tiled roof, now part of the County Grain Department.

In the southern part of town, the **Láifēng Shān Guójiā Sēnlín Gōngyuán (Láifēng Shān National Forest Park;** open 24 hours; ¥10/$1.25 admission charged 8am–6pm) is a large and quiet pine forest that offers vigorous hikes, especially up to the summit, where a pagoda offers spectacular views of the area. **Láifēng Sì,** an active temple first built during the Táng dynasty and rebuilt in the Míng and Qīng, is also located here.

In the western part of town, the **Diéshuǐ Hé Pùbù** (¥10/$1.25; open 8am–8pm) is a small but pretty waterfall good for a quick ramble or a long picnic. Before you reach the falls, a new **Nationalities Cultural Performance Center** hosts the usual minority performances in summer.

WHERE TO STAY

Téngchōng currently lacks international-standard accommodations. At press time, there were plans to build several four-star hotels, but it's anyone's guess when those will be ready.

Jīnjià Jiǔdiàn Located in the southwest part of town on the road to Héshùn, this relatively new (2001) hotel is planning a four-star annex. For now, however, guests have to make do with a somewhat charmless no-frills hotel that at least has decent, clean rooms fitted with firm beds. Bathrooms are basic but clean. Speaking English to the staff flusters them.

Fēicuì Xī Lù Xiǎotuán Bō 66. ✆ **0875/513-3186.** Fax 0875/513-1528. 24 units. ¥180 ($23) standard room; ¥318–¥488 ($39–$61) suite. 20%–30% discounts. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; business center; room service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer.

Téngchōng Bīnguǎn Showing signs of age, this old standby conveniently located at the southern end of Téngchōng's main street is still the top choice for many foreign tour groups. Guest rooms are spacious, and bathrooms are clean if a little musty.

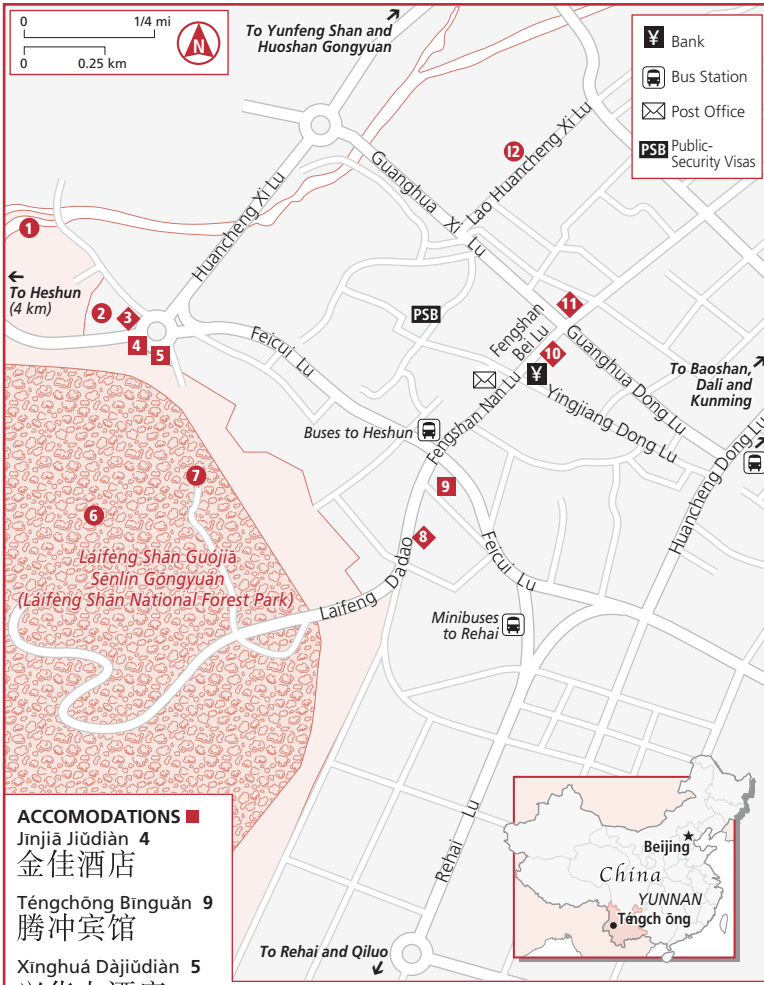
Guānliù Jiē, Guāntīng Xiāng 12. ✆ **0875/518-1044.** Fax 0875/518-3566. 90 units. ¥266 ($33) standard room; ¥488 ($61) suite. 20%–30% discounts. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; concierge; store; room service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Xīnghuá Dàjiǔdiàn This new (2002) six-story, two-star hotel next to the Jīnjià offers basic but clean accommodations at very reasonable prices. Don't be put off by the ugly lobby; the rooms are comfortable and the furniture is still relatively new. Bathrooms are large, well lit, and clean. Avoid rooms on the third floor; the karaoke singing down the hall will keep you up all night.

Fēicuì Xī Lù Xiǎotuán Bō 56. ✆ **0875/513-3688.** Fax 0875/513-2688. 35 units. ¥200 ($25) standard room; ¥680 ($85) suite. Up to 50% discounts. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; business center; store; room service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer.

WHERE TO DINE

There is a lively **night food market** ***(shāokǎo yèshì)*** ★ off Fēngshān Lù just north of the Bǎidà Chāoshì where you can sample a delicious array of barbecue skewers, local casseroles, and stir-fries. Another open-air **food market,** the ***Téngyuè Sshífǔ,*** behind the Téngchōng Bīnguǎn stays open until the wee hours. The **Traveler Community Centre (TCC) Café** (Téngchōng Mínzú Biǎoyǎn Zhōngxīn; ✆ **0875/513-1061**) serves inexpensive Western food, breakfast, coffee, and juices.



ACCOMODATIONS ■

Jīnjiā Jiǔdiàn **4**
金佳酒店

Téngchōng Bīnguǎn **9**
腾冲宾馆

Xīnghuá Dàjiǔdiàn **5**
兴华大酒店

DINING ◆

Fèngyuán Cāntīng **8**
凤园餐厅

Jiǔjiǔ Zhuāng **10**
九酒庄

Night food market **11**
(shāokǎo yèshi)
烧烤夜市

Traveler Community Centre (TCC) Café **3**
旅行者根据地咖啡馆

ATTRACTIONS ●

Diéshuǐ Hé Pùbù **1**
叠水河瀑布

Former British Consulate **12**
英国领事馆旧址

Láifèng Shān Guójiā Sēnlín Gōngyuán **6**
(Láifèng Shān National Forest Park)
来凤山国家森林公园

Láifèng Sì **7**
来凤寺

Nationalities Cultural Performance Center **2**
民族文化表演中心

Fèngyuán Cāntīng HOME-STYLE/TÉNGCHŌNG Extremely popular with locals, this restaurant serves creative cuisine in a traditional two-story Chinese courtyard–style building complete with lattice windows and upturned eaves. Menu items include the delicious *fèngyuán dòufu* (tofu deep-fried in a batter of milk, eggs, and coconut), *dàjiùjià* (a rice-flour pastry stir-fried with ham, mushrooms, and vegetables), and *gōngbào tiánjī* (kung pao frogs' legs). There are no menus in English, but the staff tries to be helpful.

Láifēng Dàdào. ✆ **0875/518-9898.** Meal for 2 ¥30–¥80 ($3.50–$10). No credit cards. 11am–1pm and 4–9pm.

Jiǔjiǔ Zhuāng HOME-STYLE/TÉNGCHŌNG This small, clean restaurant on the main street offers tasty food and reasonable prices. Local specialties include *shāguō mángmènjī* (braised chicken casserole), *Téngchōng suānsǔn yú* (Téngchōng sour fish with bamboo), and *guòqiáo mǐxiàn* (crossing-the-bridge noodles). More familiar fare like *yúxiāng qiézi* (eggplant with garlic sauce) and *sānsè yángyúsī* (potato with red and green peppers) is also available. There's no English menu but service is attentive. Beer and local wine are served.

Fēngshān Běi Lù 24. ✆ **0875/513-1904.** Meal for 2 ¥20–¥40 ($2.50–$5). No credit cards. 11am–2pm and 5–9:30pm.

AROUND TÉNGCHŌNG

Sights around Téngchōng can easily take up to a few days depending on your interests. Ornithologists may be interested in visiting the **Běihǎi National Marshland (Běihǎi Shīdì;** ¥20/$2.50) 12km (7 miles) northeast of town, a lake where it's possible to tread on large beds of floating grass. The marshland is an hour away by bike; or take a minibus for ¥5 (60¢) from the traffic circle at the intersection of Huǒshān Lù and Huánchéng Xī Lù.

Traditional Villages

Héshùn Qiáoxiāng ★★ Located 4km (2½ miles) southwest of Téngchōng, this charming, well-preserved ancient town (¥20/$2.50 8am–6pm, free otherwise) whose name means "peace and harmony" is a must-visit. First established when the militia sent by the Míng dynasty Hóngwǔ emperor to Yúnnán in the early 1400s decided to stay on, Héshùn today has over 1,300 households and over 6,000 people, with another 12,000 former residents living abroad (70% of whom are in neighboring Burma, while others are in Japan, Thailand, India, Canada, and the United States). One of Héshùn's highlights is its **library** ★, which boasts a collection of 70,000 books. Built in 1928, this quaint building, complete with creaky wooden floorboards and glass windows, is fronted by a Chinese-style double-eave gate with an inner stone gate with Western-style arches and columns. Next door is the former **Confucian Temple (Wén Miào),** which is now part of the library. Many of Héshùn's pathways are studded with volcanic cobblestones, with a smoother paved stone path down the center for the convenience of elderly and female villagers. The village's many traditional courtyard-style residences are also well maintained. Architectural highlights include the **Liú Family Memorial Hall (Liúshì Zōngcí)** and the **former residence of Āi Sīqí (Āi Sīqí Gùjū;** admission ¥10/$1.25), a Marxist philosopher whose writings are said to have influenced Máo Zédōng.

Visitors wandering around may notice that each section *(xiàng)* of the village, once home to residents with the same last name, has a curved terrace in front of its gate. This "moon terrace" *(yuètái),* which forces the river surrounding Héshùn to curve around it, is meant to prevent wealth from flowing out of the

village. In the past, each section used to have a main gate *(lǐ mén)* as well, the keys to which were kept by the eldest resident in that section. The idea was to prevent theft, but it also served to keep young married women at home when their husbands went abroad for business.

To get there, take bus no. 3 for ¥1.50 (20¢) from the corner of Fěicuì Lù and Fēngshān Lù or from the traffic circle in front of the TCC Café.

Qíluó Qiáoxiāng This traditional village 2km (1¼ miles) south of town boasts the largest and best-preserved Confucian Palace in Téngchōng, the **Wéncāng Gōng.** Qíluó's **library,** smaller and less impressive than Héshùn's, is nevertheless worth a visit, as is the Daoist temple **Shuǐyǎng Sì,** located deep inside the village. At press time, there was no village entrance fee. To get here, it's easiest to take a taxi or ride your bike down Rèhǎi Lù. The turnoff for Qíluó will be on your left, although you may have to ask for directions because no signs are posted.

Volcanoes

The Téngchōng area has 97 volcanoes, all dormant since 1609 when the largest, Dàyīng Shān, just 10km (6 miles) outside the county line, last erupted. About 25km (15 miles) north of town, **Huǒshān Gōngyuán (Volcano Park)** ★, (¥20/$2.50; open 8am–7pm), is the most accessible cluster. It includes **Dàkōng Shān (Big Empty Hill),** the largest volcano here, with a height of 150m (492 ft.). You can climb to the top, where there are some commanding views of the surrounding mountains, but the big empty crater now covered with grass is underwhelming. More interesting is the bed of black Vesuvianite columns, **Zhúzhuàng Jiélǐ** ★, formed from the erosion of lava-encrusted rocks, about 12km (7 miles) northeast of the volcano clusters.

To get to the Volcano Park, take a bus to Mǎzhàn for ¥5 (60¢) from the West Bus Station (Xī Zhàn), then walk to the entrance of the park; or hire a taxi for ¥40 ($5) round-trip to take you to the volcanic columns, whose entrance fee is included in park admission. Hiring a private taxi from Téngchōng will run around ¥100 to ¥150 ($13–$19).

Yúnfēng Shān

Located 55km (34 miles) northwest of Téngchōng, this Daoist mountain (¥10/$1.25; open 8am–7pm) with its cluster of monasteries perched atop its peak offers some challenging hikes. However, most visitors prefer the 20-minute cable-car ride to the top for ¥30 ($3.75) one-way, ¥50 ($6.25) round-trip. From the cable car terminus, it's still a steep and lung-straining 20-minute climb to the main temple, **Dàxióng Bǎodiàn,** first built in the Míng dynasty but seriously damaged during the Cultural Revolution and most recently rebuilt in 1987. On a clear day, the **views** ★ from the top are spectacular: To the east is the Gāolǐgōng Shān mountain range, while just over the hills to the northwest lies Myanmar. Take a Gǔdōng minibus for ¥9 ($1.10) from Téngchōng's west station, and transfer in Gǔdōng to Yúnfēng Shān–bound minivans charging ¥5 (60¢) per person for three or more.

Sea of Heat (Rè Hǎi)

Dotted throughout this cluster of 19 geysers located 11km (6 miles) south of town are a variety of springs, pools, medicinal baths, streams, and mini-waterfalls. Original water temperatures range upwards of 194°F (90°C), with the largest and hottest spring, Dàgǔnguō, constantly spewing hot vapors. The entrance fee of ¥30 ($3.75) allows you a general visit, while a ¥100 ($13) ticket includes a soak in all the baths.

Crossing into Myanmar

In years past, the town of Ruìlì (827km/496 miles west of Kūnmíng), which currently has China's only overland crossing into Myanmar (Burma), used to have a famous reputation as a Wild West frontier town, but the edginess resulting from being so close to the drug trade along the two countries' border has now been reduced, at least on the surface, to a few shifty-looking characters and heavily made-up women loitering around the main traffic circle. Drug and prostitution-related homicides in the last few years have closed the local casinos and driven tourists away. Not that there is much to see in Ruìlì other than a handful of temples, and unless you simply have to cross into Myanmar via this overland route at the Jiégāo border checkpoint, your time is much better spent elsewhere in Yúnnán. If you cross, you must be accompanied directly to Mandalay by an official travel-agency-sponsored guide (see "Organized Tours" in the "Kūnmíng" section). No day crossings are allowed for foreigners, and all the proper transportation and visa arrangements can take at least 2 weeks.

To get to Ruìlì, the closest airport is at Mángshì, 115km (69 miles) east of Ruìlì, where there are twice-daily **flights** to Kūnmíng (40 min.). Minibuses meet incoming flights and head directly to Ruìlì (2 hr.). In Ruìlì, you can buy plane tickets at the **Yúnnán Airlines** office (✆ **0692/414-8275**) next to the Yǒngchāng Hotel. There is also a daily morning bus that leaves from here directly for the Mángshì airport 3 hours before the first flight. From Ruìlì's **long-distance bus station** (✆ **0692/414-1423**), **buses** run to Kūnmíng (12–15 hr.; ¥179/$22) every 1 to 2 hours from 7am to 7:30pm; to Téngchōng (6 hr.; ¥35/$4.40) from 5:50 to 11:10am; to Jīnghóng (36 hr., ¥243/$30) at 8:30am; and to Xiàguān (10 hr.; ¥98/$12) every hour from 4 to 8pm.

In Ruìlì, the nicest and most modern hotel, the four-star **Jīnchéng Dǎi ǔdiàn** at Máohǎn Lù Zhōngduàn (✆ **0692/415-9999;** fax 0692/415-9888) lacks personal charm, but it offers comfortable and clean rooms for ¥418 ($52) with up to 50% discounts. The restaurant has a full range of facilities and two restaurants serving Chinese and Dǎi food.

The best hotel in the area is the **Rèhǎi Dàjiǔdiàn** (✆ **0875/515-0366;** fax 0875/514-9688). The hotel has buildings both inside and outside the Rè Hǎi scenic area (you have to pay the ¥30/$3.75 entrance fee to get inside the scenic area). Rooms inside are nicer than those outside and have firm beds, the standard amenities, and clean enough bathrooms (¥260–¥280/($30–$36). Hotel guests are allowed free entry to the springs. To get there, catch a minibus for ¥5 (60¢) from the traffic circle at Fěicuì Lù and Rèhǎi Lù. Taxi fare costs ¥30 to ¥40 ($3.80–$5) round-trip.

14 Jīnghóng & Xīshuāngbǎnnà

Yúnnán Province, 730km SW of Kūnmíng

The Xīshuāngbǎnnà Dǎi Autonomous Prefecture is situated at the subtropical southwestern tip of Yúnnán and shares a border with Burma and Laos. About a

third of its 800,000-strong population is Dǎi, another third is Hàn, and the rest comprises minorities such as the Hāní, Lāhù, Bùlǎng, Jīnuò, Yáo, and Yí. With its tropical forests, perennial sunshine, and laid-back lifestyle, the place has always felt more like Southeast Asia than China. Today, with domestic tourists able to travel more easily to the real Thailand and Burma, Xīshuāngbǎnnà, a Chinese approximation of the original Thai *Sip Sawng Panna* ("Twelve Rice-Growing Districts"), is no longer the much-ballyhooed destination it once was, and much of the main town of Jǐnghóng has fallen into a kind of romantic decay. Still, for plant lovers and those with an interest in minority cultures, especially Dǎi culture, Xīshuāngbǎnnà is worth visiting for a refreshing change of pace. The wildly popular Dǎi Water Splashing Festival (Apr 13–15) can be an interesting time to visit, but book well in advance, as flights and accommodations are notoriously scarce at this time. Otherwise, the most pleasant times to visit are between October and February. *Note:* Please turn to Appendix A for Chinese translations of key locations in this section.

The Dǎi

Historically, the Dǎi (also known as the "Tai") are said to have appeared in the Yángzǐ River valley around the 1st century A.D. but were driven south by the expansion of the Chinese empire. The majority of the Dǎi moved into the northern parts of Southeast Asia and are found today in Thailand, Laos, northeast Myanmar (Burma), and northern Vietnam. The majority of China's Dǎi population of over 1,025,000 live in the Xīshuāngbǎnnà region and in Déhóng Prefecture. "Dǎi" means "peace and freedom loving," and it is no coincidence that the Dǎi/Thai are often regarded as being some of the most gracious people in the world.

The Dǎi mostly inhabit the plains areas around rivers and lakes. To keep away from the damp earth, they live in bamboo stilt houses, with the second floor given over to the living quarters and the first floor reserved for livestock.

The Dǎi practice Theravada Buddhism, and there are Buddhist temples and pagodas in every village, though individual villages are not beyond their own animistic beliefs and spirit worship. The Water Splashing Festival (Pōshuǐ Jié), a huge tourist attraction, also marks the Dǎi New Year. According to legend, the Dǎi were once terrorized by a sadistic demon who took for himself seven consorts. In an *in vino veritas* moment, the youngest of the consorts, who was plying the demon with strong libations, discovered that he would die if hung by his own hair. As soon as the demon fell into a drunken stupor, she grabbed a strand of his hair and strangled him. The demon's head fell off but burst into unquenchable flames as it rolled through the land wreaking havoc. The seven consorts took turns dousing the ball of fire with water. To this day, water is splashed on everyone in gratitude for deliverance from the demon, and to wash away your own sins as well as any disasters or diseases. The wetter you are, the more luck you're likely to receive in the coming year. The lively festival is also marked by dragon boat races, group dances, temple visits, and rocket launching.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Jǐnghóng is connected by **flights** to Kūnmíng (40 min.), Dàlǐ (45 min.), Lìjiāng (50 min.), and Bangkok (30 min.). Tickets can be purchased at the **Yúnnán Airlines/CAAC** office located at Jǐngdé Xī Lù 8 (✆ **0691/212-7040**). Minibuses charge ¥2 (25¢), or ¥3 (40¢) after 10pm; they make runs to the airport every 10 minutes from 7am to 11:30pm. The airport is located about 5km (3 miles) southwest of town, and the minibuses depart from the corner of Jǐngdé Xī Lù and Mínzú Nán Lù. A taxi ride between the airport and town will cost around ¥20 ($2.50).

For destinations such as Kūnmíng or Dàlǐ, it's much more convenient to take the plane, as bus trips are interminably long and smoke-filled, and you may find yourself caught in floods, mudslides, or bus breakdowns. Still, for the intrepid (or the foolish), there's the **bus station (QìchēKkèyùn Zhàn)** on Mínzú Běi Lù (✆ **0691/212-3570**). Express buses run to Kūnmíng (15 hr.; ¥157/$19) at 10:30am, 2pm, 4pm, 6pm, and 7:30pm; ordinary sleeper buses also make the run (19 hr.; ¥146–¥170/$18–$21) every 40 minutes from 8:20am to 7pm. In addition, buses run to Xiàguān (28–33 hr.; ¥150/$19). Buses also leave for Xiàguān from the new and somewhat forlorn **South Bus Station** (**Nán Zhàn;** ✆ **0691/212-3586**) on Nónglín Lù. Additional buses leave from the **City Bus Station** (**Shì Kèyùn Zhàn;** ✆ **0691/212-8741**) for Hékǒu (¥148/$19) at 7:30am; for Gǎnlǎnbà (½ hr.; ¥6.50/80¢) every 20 minutes from 6:30am to 7pm; for Měnglún (2 hr.) every 20 minutes from 6:30am to 7pm; for Měnghǎi (¥8/$1) every 20 minutes from 7am to 6:40pm; for Měngyáng every half hour from 8am to 6:30pm; and for Měnglà (5–7 hr.; 4–5 buses a day).

There is no official **boat** service running between Jǐnghóng and Laos and Thailand. Only private small boats currently make the run to Gǎnlǎnbà.

GETTING AROUND **Taxis** cost ¥7 (85¢) for 2km (1¼ miles), then ¥1.50 (20¢) per kilometer until 20km (12 miles), when the cost rises to ¥2.30 (30¢) per kilometer. From 10pm to 6am, the cost is ¥8.40 ($1.05) for 2km (1¼ miles).

TOURS & GUIDES **CITS** at Lǚyóu Dùjiàqū, Sānhào Lù (✆ **0691/214-8520;** Mon–Fri 8:30–11:30am and 3–6pm) CITS can arrange day tours to the surrounding areas, with car hire for a day costing around ¥300 ($38), and an English-speaking guide for another ¥200 ($25) or so, though there's room for bargaining. Travelers' cafes such as the Měi Měi Café and the Mekong Café can also organize treks to nearby villages.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China** (open Mon– Fri, 8–11:30am, 3–6pm) is at Mínzú Nán Lù and Jǐngdé Xī Lù.

Internet Access **Màntīng Lù** has several Internet cafes, including one below the Mekong Café (¥2/25¢ per hour) at Màntīng Lù 111. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The post office (open 8am–8:30pm) is at Jǐnghóng Xī Lù 2.

Visa Extensions The **Gōngānjú (PSB)** is at Jǐnghóng Dōng Lù 5 (✆ **0691/213-0366;** open Mon–Fri, 8–11:30am and 3 –5:30pm).

EXPLORING JǏNGHÓNG

There is not much to see in Jǐnghóng itself. **Màntīng Gōngyuán** (admission 7:30am–7pm ¥15/$1.90; 7–10:30pm ¥80/$10) in the southeastern part of town, once an imperial garden for the Dǎi kings, hosts the annual Dǎi Water-Splashing Festival. Those who can't make it to the real festival can now be splashed in a faux daily ceremony as meaningless as your clothes are wet. In the

rear of the park is the **Zŏngfó Sì,** a Theravada-style temple complex that is the center of Dăi Buddhism, but the stupas and the temples complete with gilded statues of Sakyamuni all date only to the late 1980s. Many of the monks here have studied in Thailand.

The **Tropical Flower and Plants Garden (Rèdài Huāhuìyuán)** ★, (¥10/$1.25; open 8am–6pm) in the western part of town, has garnered good reviews from green thumbs impressed with the collection of over 1,000 plants from Yúnnán's tropical forests. Descriptions are mostly in Chinese.

WHERE TO STAY

Bănnà Bīnguăn ★ Before the days of the charmless modern hotels, this two-star hotel with laid-back retro Southeast Asian charm used to be *the* place to stay for foreigners. Today, a tired air hangs about the sprawling compound, but it has a wide variety of rooms at reasonable prices. They range from economy twins to the nicest river-view rooms in Building 1, which are spacious, clean, comfortable, and comparable to those in an average three-star hotel. The staff is friendly enough and is used to dealing with foreigners.

Gănlăn Zhōng Lù 11. ✆ **0691/212-3679.** Fax 0691/212-6501. 180 units. ¥190–¥390 ($23–$48) standard room; ¥500 ($62) suite. Up to 50% discounts. DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; tennis court; tour desk; business center; shopping arcade; room service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Dăiyuán Dàjiŭdiàn (Tai Garden Hotel) ★ Located in its own compound with a full range of facilities, this is the most luxurious hotel in town, but it's somewhat inconveniently situated in the southwest part of town. Guest rooms are fairly plush, comfortable, and well appointed, with large beds; bathrooms run a little small but are otherwise clean. The staff here is friendly and efficient.

Nónglín Nán Lù 8. ✆ **0691/212-3888.** Fax 0691/212-6060. 172 units. ¥670 ($80) standard room; from ¥1,200 ($150) suite. 20%–40% discounts. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; outdoor swimming pool; tennis court; health club; sauna; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; room service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV (Thailand and Hong Kong satellite channels only), minibar, hair dryer.

Xīshuāngbănnà Guānguāng Jiŭdiàn This newly designated four-star hotel in the tourist development zone is owned by Yúnnán Airlines and has all the modern conveniences. The hotel's aqua-blue smoked glass exterior is a terminal eyesore, but the interior is considerably cheerier than those of most Chinese hotels. Guest rooms are large, comfortable, and fitted with unobtrusive light brown furniture. Bathrooms are clean and come with full amenities.

Lŭyóu Dùjià Qū. ✆ **0691/214-4888.** Fax 0691/214-9666. 154 units. ¥638 ($80) standard room; from ¥1,380 ($170) suite. 20%–40% discounts. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants (Western dining available); bar; lounge; health club; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; room service; laundry/dry cleaning; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer.

Tips Dăi Etiquette

Always take off your shoes before entering a Dăi temple or household, as a sign of respect. Dress appropriately in temples, don't take photos of the monks or the interiors without permission, don't raise yourself higher than a Buddha figure, and never sit with your feet pointing at the Buddha or at anyone else.

WHERE TO DINE

Though all five tastes are represented in Dăi cuisine, the emphasis is on the sour, the pungent, and the fragrant. Famous Dăi dishes include *kăoyú* (grilled fish) and *kăo sŭnzi* (grilled bamboo shoots), often wrapped in banana leaves or lemon

grass; *xiāngzhú fàn* (fragrant bamboo rice, or glutinous rice stuffed inside a hollowed bamboo that is then cooked over an open fire), and *suānsǔn zhǔ yú* (fish boiled with sour bamboo shoots).

Informal Dǎi and Western food can be had at the travelers' cafes concentrated around Màntīng Lù, with prices about ¥10 to ¥30 ($1.25–$4) per dish. The pleasant **Mekong Café (Méigōng Cānguǎn),** at Màntīng Lù 111 (✆ **0691/212-8895;** open 8am–1am) is housed in a bamboo building nicely decorated with ethnic art. Menu items range from banana pancakes and pizzas to Dǎi dishes like steamed pineapple sticky rice to a Hāní set meal. There's a book exchange and an eclectic collection of Western music on the second floor. The **Měi Měi Café** (✆ **0691/212-7324**) at the Màntīng Lù traffic circle is also popular among travelers for its pizzas and pastas, juices, and coffees. The cafe has a laundry service and organizes treks to the surrounding villages. The **Dōngguān Jiǎozi Guǎn** (✆ **0691/214-9346**) on Jīngdé Dōng Lù (open 7am–10pm) serves your basic northern staples like dumplings, noodles, and steamed buns.

Cái Chūn Qīng ★ THAI This clean and informal restaurant along lively Màntīng Lù serves authentic and flavorful food, courtesy of the restaurant's Thai chef. Menu highlights include green papaya salad, *tom yum kung* (spicy shrimp) soup, and steamed fish with chili and lemon. The staff is friendly.

Màntīng Lù 193. ✆ **0691/216-1758.** English menu. Meal for 2 ¥40–¥80 ($5–$10). No credit cards. 9am–9:30pm.

Dǎi Jiā Měishí Cūn ★ DǍI Located in traditional bamboo buildings on the grounds of the Banna Bīnguǎn, this restaurant offers excellent Dǎi specialties like *kǎo yú* and *kǎo sǔnzi*. The *zhútǒng fàn* (glutinous rice cooked in bamboo) and the *suānsǔn zhǔjī* (chicken cooked with pickled bamboo) are also worth trying. The costumed staff is friendly and there is a nightly Dǎi song and dance performance.

Gǎnlǎn Zhōng Lù 11. ✆ **0691/212-3679.** Main courses ¥20–¥40 ($2.50–$5). No credit cards. 6:30–9pm.

SHOPPING

Jǐnghóng Nán Lù between Nónglín Lù and Jīngdé Lù is lined with shops selling **Burmese jade,** jewelry, and gems. You can pick up some of Yúnnán's famous **Pǔ'ěr tea** at the Tiānchéng Dàmàichǎng on Jǐnghóng Běi Lù; it's open from 8am to 11:30pm. **Dǎi minority souvenirs** such as tie-dyed T-shirts and woven bamboo items can be found in shops along Màntīng Lù.

JǏNGHÓNG AFTER DARK

The **Mínzú Fēngqíng Yuán** in the southwestern part of town hosts Dǎi and Jīnuò song and dance performances at ¥80 ($10) per person. The performance starts at 8:30pm and is followed by a barbecue, drinking, and audience participation in group dances and games, which may just make you want to run away. **Màntīng Gōngyuán** features a similar program from 7 to 10pm.

AROUND JǏNGHÓNG

GǍNLǍNBÀ (MĚNGHǍN)

Gǎnlǎnbà (Olive Plain) lies on the Mekong River about 27km (16 miles) southeast of Jǐnghóng. It used to be that you could sail down the Mekong (known in Yúnnán as the Láncāng Jiāng) to Gǎnlǎnbà, but few boats make the trip anymore and it's more convenient to take the minibus from Jǐnghóng's city bus station. The main attraction here is the **Dǎi Minority Folk Customs Park (Dǎi Zú Yuán;** ¥35/$4.25; open 7:30am–6:30pm). The collection of five pleasant

Dăi villages has now been "preserved" for tourists. The first village of **Mànchūnmàn** has the Mànchūnmàn Fó Sì, a regal temple first built in 1126. There is a gorgeous golden Burmese stupa here surrounded by four smaller golden stupas. Further in, **Màntīng** village has another impressive temple and white pagoda worth exploring, the **Màntīng Fó Sì Dà Dú Tă,** built in 669, which now houses Buddha statues donated by a Thai philanthropist.

MĚNGLÚN

About 42km (25 miles) east of Gănlănbà, the town of Měnglún is home to China's largest botanical garden, the 900-hectare (2,223-acre) **Xīshuāngbănnà Rèdài Zhíwùyuán** (¥35/$4.25; open 24 hours) which boasts around 7,000 species of tropical and subtropical plants from China and abroad. The sprawling grounds are divided into many sections, including a rubber and tea plantation, a stretch of natural tropical rainforest, and a bamboo forest. To get there, take a minibus from the city bus station. From the Měnglún bus station, turn left and walk to the corner of the second block. Turn left and walk down the road flanked by hawkers; follow this road until you come to a ticket booth in front of a footbridge across the Luósuō River. This is the western entrance to the garden. If you're coming by taxi, the entrance is way over in the east, but taxis should be able to let you off close to the Tourist Information Center (Yóukè Fúwù Zhōngxīn) in the middle of the park.

About 8km (5 miles) west of Měnglún (at the 63km marker on the Jĭnghóng–Měnglún road) is the **Bănnà Rainforest Valley (Bănnà Yŭlín Gŭ;** ¥20/$2.50; open 8am–6:30pm),a pleasant enough primary rainforest park. It has several aerial walkways and a number of ancient trees that include a giant strangling fig with long, gnarled roots.

MĚNGYĂNG

One of the highlights at this town 20km (12 miles) northeast of Jĭnghóng is an elephant-shaped banyan tree, **Xiàngxíng Róngshù,** that is a magnet for Chinese tourists. Considerably more interesting is the **Jīnuò Folk Custom Village (Jīnuò Mínsú Shānzhài),** about 6km (4 miles) east of Měngyăng near Jīnuò Shān, home of the Jīnuò people. Though the main village of Bāpō Zhài has been spruced up to become your usual tour group–friendly folk-custom village, it at least affords visitors a friendly introduction to the Jīnuò, who have not always been so welcoming towards individual travelers in the past.

Officially recognized as a minority group only in 1979, the Jīnuò have a population of just over 20,000, all living in 46 villages east of Jĭnghóng. Jīnuò men are famous hunters, while the women are known for their elaborately decorated ear lobes and black teeth, caused by a local medicinal plant used to prevent tooth decay. The Jīnuò's biggest festival is celebrated every February 6 to 8 with their characteristic solar drum dance, which visitors can now view upon entering the village. You can also visit a typical Jīnuò house, which is built 1m (3 ft.) aboveground and often houses four generations of a family. Admission to the village is ¥35 ($4.40) and includes entry to the Bănnà Wild Elephant Valley, as both are managed by the same company.

Tips Getting to LAOS

The border crossing is at Móhān, a 2-hour bus ride from Měnglà. Make sure your visa is in order—you cannot get one at the border. A morning crossing is best; things seem to wrap up on the Laos side by early afternoon.

About 28km (17 miles) north of Měngyǎng, the **Banna Wild Elephant Valley (Bǎnnà Yěxiàng Gǔ;** ¥25/$3; open 8am–5:30pm) is part of the 1.5-million-hectare (3.7-million-acre) **Sānchàhé Nature Reserve (Sānchàhé Zìrán Bǎohùqū).** There are hiking trails and a 2,063m (6,766-ft.) chairlift ride (¥40/$5) over the forest canopy, all designed to help visitors spot the roughly 40 wild elephants that live here. If you don't manage a sighting, there are wretched performances by more domesticated elephants near the eastern exit. By the southern entrance are some tacky hotels.

To get to the nature reserve, take any Sīmào-bound bus (1 hr.; ¥10/$1.25) from Jǐnghóng that passes the reserve. A daily tour that takes in the Elephant Valley and Jīnuò village costs ¥120 ($15), and includes admission, transportation, and lunch. The tour bus departs daily at 8:40am from the entrance to Peacock Lake (Jǐnghóng Dōng Lù) and returns around 5pm.

15 Jiànshuǐ

Yúnnán Province, 220km (132 miles) SE of Kūnmíng, 117km (70 miles) NE of Yuányáng

Located in southeast Yúnnán in the Hónghé Hānǐ and Yí Autonomous Prefectures, Jiànshuǐ is a charming, friendly town on the cusp of becoming an important tourist destination. Though it has a history dating back to the Hàn dynasty, Jiànshuǐ garnered more recent historical attention when a brief rebellion was staged here during the 1911 Revolution and it became the base for the Southern Army garrison. Besides its traditional mansions, old wells, and famous Confucius Temple, Jiànshuǐ is also an ideal gateway to Yuányáng, which has arguably the most beautiful terrace fields in the country. With a subtropical climate, a visit anytime during the year is possible, though November to April will allow you to catch the terrace fields at their prettiest.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Jiànshuǐ is on a narrow-gauge rail line between Shípíng and Kāiyuán, which in turn connects with the rail line from Kūnmíng to Hékǒu and Hanoi. Few people except for train enthusiasts choose this painfully slow method of travel. A 5:35pm train for Kūnmíng takes around 13 hours. For Hékǒu, change trains at Kāiyuán (5 hr.).

From the **long-distance bus station** (**Chángtú Qìchē Zhàn; ✆ 0873/765-2345**), **buses** run to Kūnmíng (4 hr.; ¥30–¥35/$3.75–$4.35) every half hour to hour from 7:10am to 10:50pm; to Yuányáng (3½ hr.; ¥13/$1.60) every half hour from 7:30am to 6:30pm; and to Hékǒu (¥33/$4.10) at 7:30am.

GETTING AROUND Taxis cost ¥3 (40¢) for 3km (2 miles), then ¥1.40 (20¢) per kilometer . Bus no. 1 loops through town from the Confucian Temple along Jiànzhōng Lù to the Cháoyáng Gate.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Jiànshuǐ Travel Agency (Jiànshuǐ Lǚxíngshè),** at Běizhèng Lù 1 (**✆ 0873/765-2241;** fax 0873/765-3787), can dispense maps and provide information on hotels and sights, but don't expect anyone conversant in English.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **China Construction Bank (Zhōngguó Jiànshè Yínháng)** at Cháoyáng Běi Lù 75 can change money Monday to Friday from 8 to 11am and 2 to 5pm.

Internet Access Access is available on the second floor of the **Xīnhuá Shūdiàn** (open 9am–10pm; ¥2/25¢/hr.) at Yǒngzhēn Xiāng 1. Dial-up is **163.**

ATTRACTIONS
Cháoyáng Mén 5
朝阳门
Chóngwén Tǎ 6
崇文塔
Dàbǎn Jǐng 12
大版井
Shuǐjīng Gōng 7
(Crystal Palace Well)
水晶宫
Three-pit well 3
三眼井
Two-pit well 9
双眼井
Wén Miào 10
文庙
Zhū Jiā Huāyuán 4
(Zhū Family Garden)
朱家花园
DINING
Hóngyùn Dàshìjiè compound 1
红运大世界
Huāyuán Bīnguǎn 8
(Garden Hotel)
花园宾馆
Měngzì Mínzú Fēngqíngyuán 1
勐子民族风情园
ACCOMMODATIONS
Lín'ān Jiǔdiàn 2
临安酒店
Yǒngshēng Bīnguǎn 11
永生宾馆
Zhū Jiā Huāyuán 4
(Zhū Family Garden Hotel)
朱家花园
China
Beijing
YUNNAN
Jianshui
Beizheng Lu
Qingyuan Lu
Yongzhen Xiang
Chaoyang Bei Lu
Beizheng Jie
Dongzheng Jie
Mashi Jie
Jianxin Jie
Shuyuan Jie
Yongning Jie
Chaoyang Nan Lu
Guilin Jie
Jianzhong Lu
Guandimiao Jie
Ruyi Xiang
Xizheng Jie
To Kunming
To Tuan Shan Cun and Yanzi Dong
Bus Station
Bank
Information
Pagoda
Post Office
Rail Station
Temple
Public-Security Visas
Travel Agent

Post Office The post office (open 8am–8pm) is just west of the bus station on Cháoyáng Běi Lù.

Visa Extensions The **Gōngānjú (PSB)** is at Jiànzhōng Lù 109 (✆ **0873/765-2434;** open Mon–Fri, 8–11:30am and 2–5:30pm).

EXPLORING JIÀNSHUǏ

Originally built in 1389 and renovated multiple times since, the red two-story gate in the center of town, **Cháoyáng Mén** (¥3/40¢), was once the east gate of Jiànshuǐ. Today, it's primarily a place for the elderly to congregate and play cards. There's a teahouse on the first floor. To the south at Guìlín Jiē 83 is **Chóngwén Tǎ,** an elegant 17-story square pagoda with Buddhist carvings, now hidden inside the Grain Bureau.

JIÀNSHUǏ'S WELLS

A delightful feature of Jiànshuǐ is its many Míng- and Qīng-dynasty stone **wells** ★★, which continue to provide residents with water for washing, cooking, and drinking. The water from one of the town's largest wells, **Dàbǎn Jǐng,** located in the southwestern part of town off Xīzhèng Jiē, is used to make Jiànshuǐ's famous *Xīmén dòufu* (tofu), which you can try at any of the outdoor barbecue stands around town. Other, smaller, three-pit wells with deep, worn grooves in their sides made over the years by ropes pulling buckets were built to prevent children from falling in. There is a **two-eye well** located in an alley south of the Zhū Family Garden, a **three-eye well** presided over by an altar about 100m (328 ft.) to the right of the Zhū Family Garden entrance, and a four-eye well known as **Shuǐjīng Gōng (Crystal Palace Well)** in the southern part of town just past Guìlín Jiē 39.

Wén Miào ★★ This Confucian Temple, the third largest in the country (after the temples in Qūfǔ in Shāndōng Province, Confucius's hometown, and in Běijīng), is Jiànshuǐ's pride and joy. First built in 1285 as a place to honor China's Great Sage, today's sprawling complex has been renovated about 50 times. Notable highlights include the **Zhū Sì Yuán Yuán Mén,** an archway notable for its carved pillars supported by lions, *qílín* (unicorns), and elephants. Further on, the unusual **Língxīng Mén (Spirit Gate)** is supported by four pillars that extend through the roof, an architectural feature seen only in the Imperial Palace in Běijīng. The main hall, **Dàchéng Diàn,** an impressive five-bay, three-door structure supported by two finely carved dragon-entwined outer pillars, houses statues of Confucius, 16 of his disciples, and stelae inscribed by eight different Qīng dynasty emperors.

Jiànzhōng Lù. Admission ¥20 ($2.50). 8am–5:30pm.

Zhū Jiā Huāyuán (Zhū Family Garden) ★★ Built over the course of 30 years in the late 19th century by a local merchant family, this sprawling Qīng dynasty residence with 214 rooms and 42 yards was completely renovated in 1998, with part of the complex now a guesthouse. Architectural highlights include the finely painted corbel brackets in the main parlor that overlooks the garden, as well as the exquisitely detailed carvings on all the lattice windows and doors. In the back is an exhibit on the history of the Zhū family, which made its fortune from tin and opium.

Jiànxīn Jiē 133. Admission ¥21 ($2.60). 8am–9pm.

WHERE TO STAY

Lín'ān Jiǔdiàn The next best option after the Zhū Family Garden Hotel, this rather ugly white-tiled two-star hotel near the center of town offers colorless but

comfortable accommodations at very reasonable prices. The higher-priced standard rooms, renovated in 2001, now come with firm beds and pleasant wooden floors. Bathrooms are large and quite clean. The staff tries to be helpful.

Běizhèng Lù 1. ✆ **0873/765-1888.** Fax 0873/765-4888. 117 units. ¥130–¥170 ($16–$21) standard room; ¥318 ($39) suite. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; concierge; business center; store; room service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Yǒngshēng Bīnguǎn) This nondescript hotel inconveniently situated in the southern part of town has good-sized rooms that are fairly clean and fitted with comfortable beds and wooden floors. Bathrooms are a little old, though. The staff doesn't speak English, but service is passable.

Cháoyáng Nán Lù 89. ✆ **0873/765-7638.** 25 units. ¥88–¥138 ($11–$17) standard room; ¥388 ($48) suite. 20%–30% discounts. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; business center; store; room service. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Zhūjiā Huāyuán Kèzhàn (Zhū Family Garden Hotel) ★★★ Occupying several courtyards of Jiànshuǐ's most famous Qīng dynasty residence, this charming guesthouse is the top place to stay in town. Rooms are arrayed around traditional *sìhéyuàn* courtyards and are equipped with chunky Qīng furniture and traditional old-style beds. Opt for the larger corner rooms at ¥280 ($35), as the ¥220 ($27) rooms are quite small. The hotel is frequently full, especially in summer and early fall, so book ahead. Hotel guests have free entrance to the entire Zhū Family Garden, and it's especially lovely to wander the grounds at night.

Jiànxīn Jiē 133. ✆ **0873/766-7988.** Fax 0873/766-7989. 28 units. ¥220–¥280 ($27–$35) standard room; ¥680 ($85) suite. 20% discounts when not full. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; lounge; concierge; shopping arcade; salon; room service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

WHERE TO DINE

Local specialties include *Xīmén dòufu* (barbecued squares of tofu), a vegetable called *cǎoyá* (literally "grass tooth"), and lotus root. A variety of delicious grilled meats, vegetables, and tofu are available at the **night food market** in the Hóngyùn Dàshìjiè compound on Běizhèng Jiē. The **Mùguā Lǎowù** at Jiànzhōng Lù 451 (open 8am–11pm) serves fresh juices, Chinese desserts, instant coffee, and *bōbà* tea (tea with tapioca pearls). For marginally more formal fare in a nicer environment, the **Huāyuán Bīnguǎn (Garden Hotel)** at Jiànzhōng Lù 36 (✆ **0873/765-6285;** open 9am–8pm) serves favorite foreigner staples like tomatoes with eggs *(fānqié chǎodàn),* and potatoes with peppers. The **Měngzì Mínzú Fēngqíngyuán** ★ restaurant (✆ **0873/766-0288;** open 11am–2pm and 5–8:30pm) is inside the Hóngyùn Dàshìjiè compound. It specializes in hot pot, Yí-style, with the soup base made from stewed chicken and Yí medicinal herbs.

AROUND JIÀNSHUǏ

Primarily an attraction for Chinese tourists, **Yànzi Dòng (Swallow's Nest Cave;** ¥30/$3.75; open 8:30am–5pm), located 28km (17 miles) east of Jiànshuǐ, hosts hundreds of screeching swallows which arrive every spring and summer to build their nests on the cave's walls and ceilings. In the past, locals would climb to the cave with bare hands and feet to collect the swallows' nests, which fetch a tidy sum on the market because of their supposed health-enhancing properties. Today, nest-collecting is formally organized, and visitors can view this process every August 9 to 11. To reach the cave, take any Gèjiù-, Kāiyuán-, or Měngz-bound bus for ¥4 to ¥5 (50¢–60¢), and ask to be let off at Yànzi Dòng.

Jiànshuǐ has about 60 traditional bridges, but the most famous and longest is the impressive 17-arch **Shuānglóng Qiáo (Double Dragon Bridge)** ★, which stretches across the confluence of the Lú and Tǎchōng rivers about 4km (2½ miles) west of town. The first three arches were built in the Qīng Qiánlóng emperor's era (1736–1796) and the remaining section was built later, but you wouldn't know it to look at them, perfectly matched as both sections are. A three-story pavilion with flying eaves sits in the middle of the bridge with two smaller pavilions flanking both ends. To get there, take bus no. 4 for ¥1 (15¢) from in front of the bus station in town.

Another 10km (6 miles) further on is **Tuán Shān Cūn** ★ (¥10/$1.25; open 8am–6pm), an authentic, ramshackle, traditional Qīng village containing **Zhāng Jiā Huāyuán** ★, a traditional residence built in the 1880s by a gold merchant family, and now partially given over to a school. Especially fine are the residence's ornately engraved pillars and some breathtakingly fine screen doors with layered woodcarvings of propitious animals and lotus flowers, all of which were once gilded. Taking a taxi for ¥50 to ¥60 ($6–$7.50) round-trip is the easiest way to reach the village.

Note: Please turn to Appendix A for Chinese translations of key locations above.

A SIDE TRIP TO YUÁNYÁNG

Located 117km (70 miles) south of Jiànshuǐ, the town of Yuányáng is the gateway to some of the most magnificent **terrace fields** ★★★ in the world. Hewn over generations by the Hānì and the Yí peoples on the southern slopes of the Āiláo Mountain range, the 27,000 hectares (66,690 acres) of fields are particularly sublime at sunrise and sunset between the fall harvest and the spring planting season, when the plots are filled with water.

There are actually two towns called Yuányáng. A new town (Nánshā) lies at the bottom of the hill 27km (16 miles) from the old town, Yuányáng Lǎoxiànchéng, sometimes called Xīn Jiē. The old town is a bit of a concrete jungle that the government is trying to spruce up in anticipation of a tourist stampede. From the old town, a host of mountain villages can be visited: **Jīngkǒu Mínsú Cūn** (¥10/$1.25) is a delightful Hānì village that looks more like a medieval Renaissance village, with its thatch-roof houses called *mógu fáng* ("mushroom houses"). The Hānì village of **Duōyī Cūn** has the best sunrise vistas, while the fields at **Měngpǐn** and **Bàdá** will take your breath away at sunset. Hiring a taxi for the day for ¥150 to ¥200 ($19–$25) is best.

GETTING THERE From the **main bus station** (✆ **0873/564-3485**) in the new town (Nánshā), regular **buses** run to Jiànshuǐ (3½ hr.; ¥13/$1.60) between 7:10am and 6:40pm. Minibuses make the 30-minute run up to the old town for around ¥5 (65¢).

WHERE TO STAY & DINE The nicest place to stay is in the old town at **Rénmín Zhāodàisuǒ (People's Guesthouse;** ✆ **0873/562-2993**) in the main square across from the bus station. Newly renovated rooms in the back cost ¥150 ($19); they have clean floors, firm beds, and new furniture, while bathrooms (shower only) are nice and clean. The guesthouse has a restaurant.

16 Hǎinán Island

Located off the southern coast of China in the South China Sea, the tropical island of Hǎinán is known primarily as a beach resort and China's most popular

winter haven. Historically the backwater of the Chinese empire to which banishment was seen as the ultimate of punishments, Hăinán came into its own only in 1988, when it became a self-administering province and when a special economic zone was developed here. The subsequent economic and building boom dropped off in the mid-1990s, leaving many unfinished construction projects all over town. Tourism has developed here in fits and starts as the local government, subject to frequent changes of power, can't seem to decide how to market the rest of the island's resources, which include sizable Lí and Miáo populations. In 2001, Hăinán made world news when the Chinese government refused, for a time, to return the United States spy plane that was forced to make an emergency landing at Língshuĭ after being clipped by a Chinese air force jet. *Note:* Please turn to Appendix A for Chinese translations of key locations.

HĂIKŎU

Hăinán Island, 520km (322 miles) SW of Guăngzhōu, 480km (288 miles) SW of Hong Kong

As the capital of Hăinán Island, Hăikŏu, formerly a treaty port in the late 1800s, is the transportation hub and center of all government and commercial services. In recent years, the town has developed into another modern Chinese city with large shops and colorful restaurants, but there's little for the average tourist here. Many take the first bus out to Sānyà.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE From Hăikŏu's Měilán Airport, 25km (15 miles) southeast of town, daily **flights** connect to Běihăi, Běijīng, Guăngzhōu, Shànghăi, and Shēnzhèn. There's a daily flight to Hong Kong and weekly flights to Bangkok, Macau, and Singapore. Tickets can be purchased at the **CAAC office** at Xīshā Lù 22 (✆ **0898/6676-3166**) from 8am to 7pm. **DragonAir** flies to Hong Kong and Gāoxióng (Kaohsiung in Taiwan), and has an office at the Hăinán Mandarin Hotel at Wénhuá Lù 18 (✆ **0898/6855-0312**). CAAC buses for ¥15 ($2) depart from the Mínháng Bīnguăn on Hăixiù Lù every half hour from 5:30am to 8pm. A taxi to the airport costs around ¥50 ($6.25).

Air-conditioned express **buses** run to Sānyà (3–3½ hr., ¥70/$8.75) every 20 minutes from 7am to 11pm; they depart from the **East Bus Station (Qìchē Dōng Zhàn)** at Hăifú Lù 148 (✆ **0898/6534-0753**). The **Long-Distance Bus Station (Chángtú Qìchē Zŏngzhàn)** on Nánbăo Lù (✆ **0898/6677-2791**) has ferry/sleeper buses to Guăngzhōu (15 hr.; ¥190/$23) from 9am to 8pm.

From the **Xiùyīng Mătóu** (✆ **0898/6866-1943**) 8km (5 miles) west of town, daily **boats** sail across the Qióngzhōu Straits to Běihăi (10 hr.; ¥ 211/$26 double) at 6pm; and to Shēnzhèn (18 hr.; ¥218–¥390/$27–$48 1st class) at 3:30pm. A boat to Guăngzhōu (21 hr.; ¥260–¥303/$32–$37) departs at 3pm every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Tickets can be bought at the dock. A taxi out to Xiùyīng Dock costs around ¥20 ($2.50).

GETTING AROUND **Taxis** charge ¥10 ($1.25) for 3km (2miles), then ¥2 (25¢) per kilometer thereafter.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China** (open Mon–Fri, 8:30am–5:30pm) is behind the International Finance Center at Dàtóng Lù 33.

Post Office The 24-hour post office is at Jiĕfàng Xī Lù 9.

Visa Extensions The **PSB** is in the western part of town at Jīnlóng Lù 43 (✆ **0898/6859-3666;** open Mon–Fri, 8am–noon, 2:30–5:30pm).

EXPLORING THE TOWN

One of the few interesting parts of Hǎikǒu is its **old town** just north of the negligible **Hǎikǒu Gōngyuán (Hǎikǒu Park).** Stroll around Xīnhuá Lù to Jiěfàng Lù and Zhōngshān Lù and see the shuttered colonial buildings with covered walkways now hidden under years of soot and grime. There are a few memorial halls (**Wǔgōng Cí,** or **Five Officials Temple,** in the eastern part of town) and a tomb (**Hǎiruì Mù** in the western part of town) dedicated to various Chinese historical figures who were banished to Hǎinán. However, these are usually of interest to Chinese tourists only.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE

Huándǎo Tàidé Dàjiǔdiàn (Huándǎo Tide Hotel) ★★ This modern 23-story five-star waterfront hotel is one of the top picks in town, usually catering to a business clientele. Guest rooms have comfortable beds, floral upholstery, and all the usual five-star amenities, while the clean bathrooms come with potable water. Service is efficient.

Hépíng Dàdào 18. ✆ **0898/6626-8888.** Fax 0898/66265588. 408 units. ¥1,176 ($147) standard room; from ¥2,596 ($324) suite. Up to 50% discounts. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 5 restaurants; bar; lounge; outdoor pool; health club and spa; bowling alley; Jacuzzi; sauna; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; room service; massage; laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

A NEARBY RESORT

Crowne Plaza Resort and Spa (Hǎinán Huángguān Bīnhǎi Wēnquán Jiǔdiàn) ★★★ This five-star resort is a little too remotely located for it to be a convenient stay if you're just passing through Hǎikǒu, but if you want a few days of unbridled pampering and uninterrupted rest, then this self-contained oasis is the place to be. Handsome neo-classical European-style buildings are set amid Balinese, Thai, and Caribbean-inspired gardens. Rooms, tastefully decorated in warm pastels, are fully equipped with plush beds and all the usual five-star accoutrements. The hotel's Tea Tree Spa, with a full range of facial, massage, and beauty treatments, is the most complete spa in China. Service is excellent and the staff is exceedingly friendly and helpful.

Qióngshān Dàdào 1. ✆ **0898/6596-6888.** Fax 0898/6596-0666. www.crowneplazahainan.com. 650 units. ¥1,400–¥1,600 ($175–$200) standard room; from ¥2,800 ($345) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; bar; lounge; outdoor pool; health club and spa; Jacuzzi; sauna; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

SĀNYÀ

Hǎinán Island, 285km (171 miles) S of Hǎikǒu

Sānyà's white-sand beaches, the nicest in China, are its main draw. Otherwise, there's not much to do here, and the town is even a little scruffy around the edges. December through February is the peak season.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE From Sānyà's **Phoenix Airport** (✆ **0898/8889-5961**) 20km (12 miles) northwest of downtown, daily **flights** connect to Běijīng, Guǎngzhōu, Shēnzhèn, Shànghǎi, and Hong Kong. Tickets can be bought at the **Hǎinán Airlines** office at Shāngpǐn Jiē, Dōngfāng Dàshà, 1st floor (✆ **0898/8827-9487**). A taxi to the airport costs around ¥45 ($5.50).

From the **bus station** on Jiěfàng Èr Lù (✆ **0898/8827-2440**), express buses run to Hǎikǒu (3–3½ hr.; ¥70/$8.75) every 20 minutes from 7am to 11pm; and minibuses run to Tōngzhá (2½ hr.; ¥20/$2.50) from 6:15am to 5pm. Long-distance buses run to Guǎngzhōu (16 hr.; ¥271/$33) from 11am to 4:10pm;

and to Shēnzhèn (15 hr.; ¥261/$32) at 11:50am. There are currently no passenger **boats** departing from Sānyà.

GETTING AROUND **Taxis** cost ¥10 ($1.25) for in-town destinations, and around ¥40 ($5) to Yàlóng Wān. **Buses** depart for Tiānyá Hǎijiǎo (¥4/50¢) from the eastern side of Jiěfàng Lù. Minibus no. 102 (30 min., ¥6/75¢) ostensibly runs every half hour from Yúyà Dàdào to Yàlóng Wān but is not very consistent. Otherwise, take a minibus to Tiāndū from just east of the traffic circle on Gǎngmén Lù and transfer to a motorcycle taxi (¥10/$1.25), which will take you the rest of the way.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China** (open Mon–Fri 8am–5:30pm) is on Jiěfàng Èr Lù.

Post Office The post office (open 8am–6pm) is on Jiěfàng Sān Lù just north of Xīnfēng Lù.

Visa Extensions Visas can be renewed only in Hǎikǒu.

EXPLORING SĀNYÀ & BEYOND

For sun and sand lovers, **Yàlóng Wān (Yàlóng Bay)** ★★★ is the place to be. About 15km (10 miles) or a half-hour bus ride east of Sānyà, this 7km (4-mile) stretch of dazzling white sand edging the calm and crystalline South Sea is perfect for walking, sunbathing, and swimming. Closer to town, the crescent-shaped **Dà Dōnghǎi Beach,** about 3km (2 miles) southeast of town, is the next best alternative. The beach is smaller and more crowded than Yàlóng Bay's but you can engage in all the same activities here, including snorkeling, boating, and scuba diving. The beach at **Tiānyá Hǎijiǎo** (¥46/$5.50), 23km (13 miles) to the west, is pretty and often considered to be the end of the earth (literally "edge of the sky, mouth of the sea"), it is best left to Chinese tourists who tramp through the sand in their patent-leather shoes to see Chinese calligraphy carved on giant boulders. A popular day trip is to **Xī Dǎo (West Island),** about a 10-minute boat ride off the coast of Tiānyá Hǎijiǎo, where you can dive, fish, or ride buggies in the sand dunes. Boats leave from the dock (✆ **0898/8834-3516**) just east of the Tiānyá Hǎijiǎo Tourist Area and cost ¥120 ($15) round-trip.

Too much sun? Take a day trip to the village of **Tōngzhá** or Tōngshí, located at the foot of Hǎinán's highest peak, Wǔzhǐ Shān (elev. 1,867m/6,123 ft.). This capital of the Lí and Miáo Autonomous Prefecture has a museum, **Mínzú Bówùguǎn** (¥10; open 8am–5:30pm) with exhibits on Lí and Miáo culture. If you wish to explore some of the minority villages around Tōngzhá, consult locals or a travel agency before setting off on your own.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Besides **swimming,** a plethora of watersports awaits the active. Several dive operations, including **Global Divers** (✆ **0898/8822-6600**) at Xiǎo Dōnghǎi Beach, organize **scuba diving** trips out to nearby reefs. **Sailing, windsurfing,** and **kayaking** are available at the **Gloria Resort Sānyà** (✆ **0898/8856-8855**), and you can rent water-skis and motorized skiffs from the beaches at Yàlóng Bay and Dà Dōnghǎi. Your hotel can arrange trips out to local **golf** courses.

WHERE TO STAY

YÀLÓNG WĀN

Gloria Resort Sānyà (Sānyà Kǎilái Dùjià Jiǔdiàn) ★★ Kids The next best option after the Holiday Inn, this 7-year-old resort is showing its age. Guest

rooms are large and have balconies and all the expected amenities, while bathrooms are a bit small. The hotel has a range of water and land sports and a children's playhouse with daily activities. Service is uneven.

Yàlóng Wān Guójiā Lǚyóu Dùjiàqū. ✆ **0898/8856-8855.** Fax 0898/8856-8533. www.gloriaresort.com. 408 units. ¥1,308–¥1,438 ($158–$173) standard room; ¥2,888 ($348) suite. 10%–20% discounts. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; lounge; outdoor pool; health club and spa; Jacuzzi; sauna; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe

Holiday Inn Resort Yàlóng Bay Sānyà (Sānyà Yàlóngwān Jiàrì Jiǔdiàn) ★★★ *Kids* This five-star hotel is easily the nicest place to stay on the southern tip of the island, at least until other international chains move in. Facilities are first-rate, and the staff, often dressed in island prints and sarongs to simulate a Southeast Asian resort, is friendly and helpful. Rooms are all luxuriously appointed with comfortable beds, plush linens, and rattan furniture. Bathrooms are a bit small but impeccably clean. Highlights include the spa, a nearby 18-hole golf course, and a Kids' Club with activities for children.

Yàlóng Wān Guójiā Lǚyóu Dùjiàqū. ✆ **0898/8856-5666.** Fax 0898/8856-5688. www.sixcontinentshotels.com. 358 units. ¥1,308–¥1,728 ($158–$208) standard room; from ¥2,588 ($312) suite. 10%–20% discounts. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; lounge; outdoor pool; health club and spa; Jacuzzi; sauna; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

DÀ DŌNGHǍI

Sānyà Shānhǎitiān Dàjiǔdiàn) ★★ The top choice for hotels at Dà Dōnghǎi Beach, this five-star sea-front hotel has a massive outdoor freshwater swimming pool but no private beach because it sits on a stretch of protected coral. A public beach next door serves just as well. Guest rooms are spacious and simply decorated with rattan furniture, comfy beds, and a very unexpected but welcome mini-washing machine and dryer. Bathrooms are large and spotless.

Dà Dōnghǎi. ✆ **0898/8821-1688.** Fax 0898/8821-1988. www.shthotel.com. 242 units. ¥1,098–¥1,218 ($133–$147) standard room; from ¥2,268 ($274) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; lounge; outdoor pool; health club and spa; Jacuzzi; sauna; concierge; business center; forex; shopping arcade; salon; room service; massage; laundry/dry cleaning; executive rooms. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

12

Yángzǐ & Beyond

by Michelle Sans

In addition to shared borders, the landlocked provinces of Sìchuān, Húběi, and Húnán and the municipality of Chóngqìng have in common the world's third longest river, the Cháng Jiāng ("Long River," aka Yángzǐ), whose navigable reaches start in Sìchuān, thread through Chóngqìng, and roughly define the border between Húběi and Húnán. Now China's heartland, this region—home to the Chǔ, Bā, and Shǔ cultures—was for centuries a land of exile and colonization for the ruling kingdoms of the North China Plain. The Qín (221–206 B.C.) banished thousands to faraway, inhospitable Shǔ (present-day Sìchuān), and China's most famous martyr, Qū Yuán, was exiled to the southern edges of his own Chǔ kingdom where he drowned himself in the Mìluò River (in present-day northern Húnán).

Five hundred years later, this same swath of central China was the battlefield on which the rulers of Wèi, Shǔ, and Wú contended for complete dominion over China. Many sights along the Yángzǐ commemorate the heroes of those 60 years of turmoil known simply as the Three Kingdoms Period (220–280). By the 3rd century, Buddhism and Daoism were spreading rapidly through the region, and many of the hundreds of temples that dot the sacred mountains of Sìchuān, Húběi, and Húnán were first constructed at this time.

In addition to being the home of five holy Buddhist and/or Daoist mountains, this area contains some of China's most beautiful scenery—in northern Sìchuān and northern Húnán—and lays claim to seven World Heritage Sites.

Until recently, most foreign travelers came to this part of central China to see the Three Gorges—the spectacular 24km (150-mile) channel comprising Qūtáng, Wū, and Xīlíng gorges—but with China's equivalent of the New Deal underway, new airports, rail lines, and expressways are opening all the time, making travel to remote areas much less painful.

If the Three Gorges are on your itinerary, try to leave yourself a few days on either end to explore Chóngqìng and Wǔhàn. And a day trip from Chóngqìng to the Buddhist grottoes at Dàzú is well worth the time. Sìchuān is best explored over 2 or 3 weeks. Use Chéngdū as a place to leave extra luggage and to return to for a break and some urban sightseeing before going out again. In Húnán, do the same with Chángshā. *Note:* Unless otherwise noted, hours listed for attractions and restaurants are daily.

1 Chéngdū ★

Sìchuān Province, 504km (313 miles) NW of Chóngqìng, 842km (523 miles) SW of Xī'ān

Ask a resident of Běijīng or Shànghǎi what to do in Sìchuān's capital of Chéngdū, and nine times out of ten they'll tell you to drink tea and eat hot pot, such is the city's reputation as a culinary capital that knows how to take it easy.

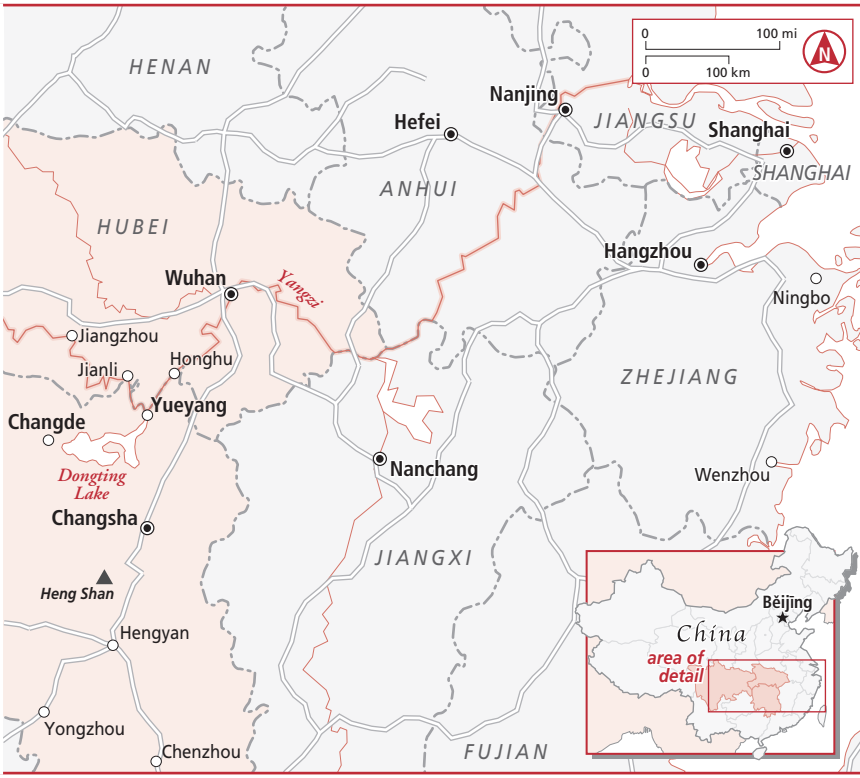
The Yángzǐ Region

Indeed, Chéngdū's cuisine is irresistible and tea drinking is a custom that took hold here 1,300 years ago and never let go. With few genuine ancient sights within the city proper (Dù Fǔ's cottage is only a replica; Wǔhòu Temple is ho-hum), drinking tea may be Chéngdū's most durable link to the past. But what Chéngdū lacks in ancient sites, it makes up for in charm and atmosphere. Like so many cities in central China, Chéngdū has a pretty little river running through it. The narrow Fǔ Hé and its southern tributary form a sort of moat around the city, sections of which are lined with attractive restaurants and teahouses. The city is also in the midst of a building boom, but a few old ramshackle warrens and outdoor markets still survive just west of the city square.

Chéngdū is the gateway to scenic Jiǔzhài Gōu, the Buddhist mountains of Éméi Shān and Lè Shān, and one of the most important panda breeding centers. It's also a traveler's haven and a place to gather information between trips. People are friendly and the pace unrushed. And because Chéngdū is one of the few cities with daily flights to Lhasa, many travelers come here to arrange transportation to Tibet.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **Shuāngliú Airport** is 17km (11 miles) south of Chéngdū. Destinations include Běijīng (many flights daily); Guǎngzhōu (8–9 flights daily); Hong Kong (1–2 flights daily); and Kūnmíng (8–10 flights daily). To Lhasa, there are 1–4 flights daily, but it's always best to book the 6am flight;

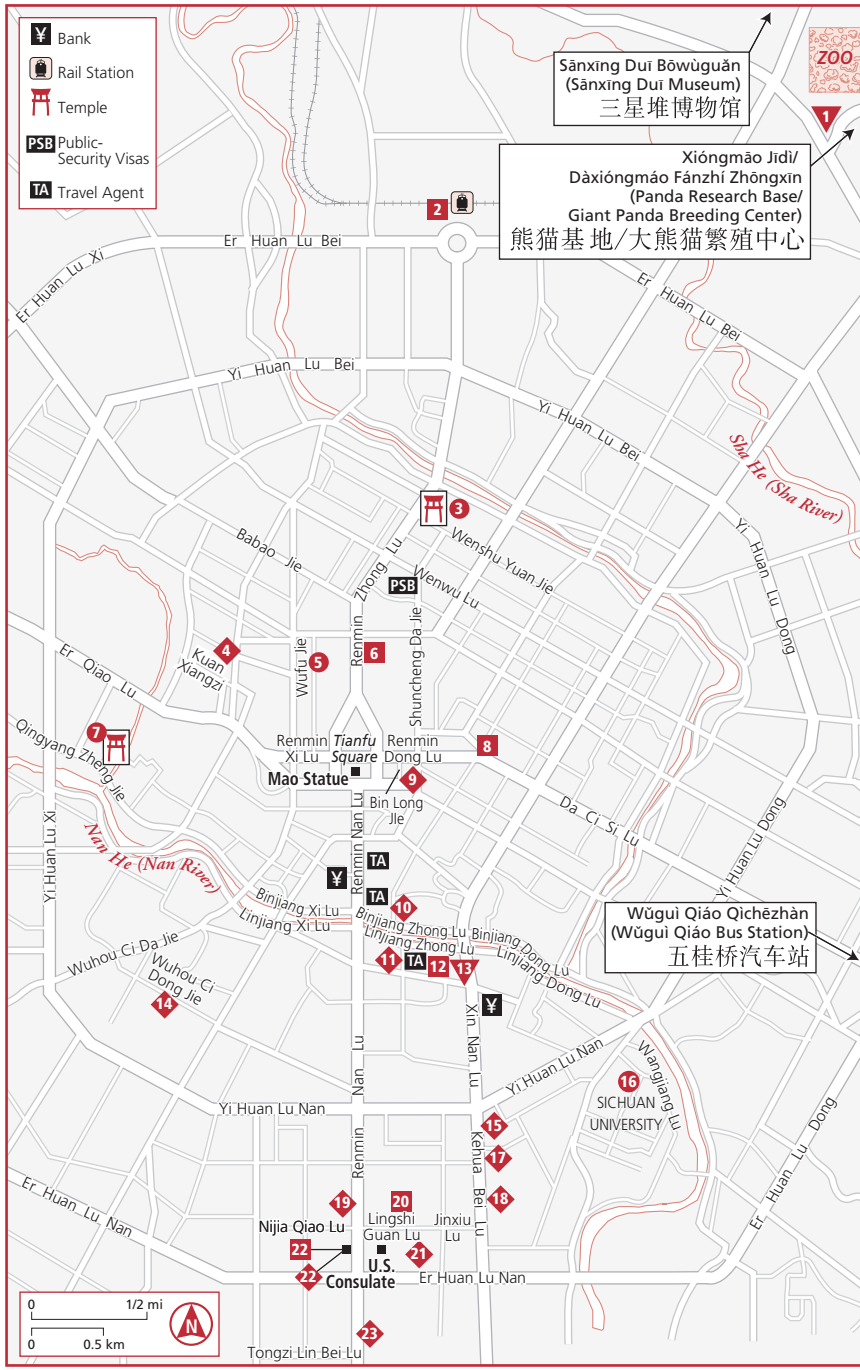


later flights are often canceled or delayed. As of January 2003, travelers are no longer required to enter Tibet with a group of five or more, but Tibet Tourism Bureau permits are, for the time being, still required. The price of a one-way flight to Tibet, TTB permit, and airport transfer in Chéngdū is around ¥2,000 ($250). All flights can be booked with any of the several English-speaking travel agents at and near the Traffic Hotel. **Dragonair** has an office in the Sheraton Lido (✆ **028/8676-8828**) at Rénmín Zhōng Lù 15, 1 Duàn. An **airport shuttle** from the China Southwest office on Rénmín Nán Lù (next to Mín Shān Fàndiàn) takes 45 minutes and costs ¥10 ($1.25); it departs every half hour. A less direct CAAC shuttle (Mínháng Bānchē), no. 303, leaves every half hour from 7am to 7pm from the CAAC office at the North Railway Station. The 22km (14-mile) ride takes 70 minutes and costs ¥6 (75¢). A **taxi** from the city center to the airport costs ¥50 to ¥75 ($6.25–$9), including ¥10 ($1.25) toll.

The main **railway station** is at the northern end of Rénmín Běi Lù, 8km (5 miles) north of the Máo statue in the city center. The ticket office is to the right of the main building; it's open 24 hours. Try to purchase tickets at least 2 days in advance. Major destinations: Běijīng (fast trains 28–31 hr.; hard sleeper ¥418/$52); Kūnmíng (fast trains 18½ hr.; ¥222/$27); and Shànghǎi (15½ hr.; hard sleeper ¥400–¥500/$50–$62).

Chéngdū's newly renovated **Xīn Nán Mén Bus Station (Xīn Nán Mén Qìchē Zhàn),** at the corner of Xīn Nán Lù and Línjiāng Zhōng Lù and next to

Chéngdū


Bank
Rail Station
Temple
PSB Public-Security Visas
TA Travel Agent
Sānxīng Duī Bówùguǎn
(Sānxīng Duī Museum)
三星堆博物馆
ZOO
Xióngmāo Jīdì/
Dàxióngmáo Fánzhí Zhōngxīn
(Panda Research Base/
Giant Panda Breeding Center)
熊猫基地/大熊猫繁殖中心
Er Huan Lu Bei
Er Huan Lu Xi
Yi Huan Lu Bei
Sha He (Sha River)
Babao Jie
Wenshu Yuan Jie
Renmin Zhong Lu
Wenwu Lu
Shuncheng Da Jie
Wufu Jie
Kuan Xiangzi
Er Qiao Lu
Qingyang Zheng Jie
Renmin Xi Lu
Tianfu Square
Renmin Dong Lu
Mao Statue
Bin Long Jie
Da Ci Si Lu
Yi Huan Lu Dong
Yi Huan Lu Xi
Nan He (Nan River)
Renmin Nan Lu
Binjiang Xi Lu
Linjiang Xi Lu
Binjiang Zhong Lu
Linjiang Zhong Lu
Binjiang Dong Lu
Linjiang Dong Lu
Wuhou Ci Da Jie
Wuhou Ci Dong Jie
Wǔguì Qiáo Qìchēzhàn
(Wǔguì Qiáo Bus Station)
五桂桥汽车站
Xin Nan Lu
Nan Lu
Yi Huan Lu Nan
Wangjiang Lu
SICHUAN UNIVERSITY
Renmin
Kehua Bei Lu
Er Huan Lu Nan
Er Huan Lu Dong
Nijia Qiao Lu
Lingshi Guan Lu
Jinxiu Lu
U.S. Consulate
Tongzi Lin Bei Lu
0 1/2 mi
0 0.5 km
N

ACCOMMODATIONS ■

Hàndū Dàjiǔdiàn **2**
(Grand Hotel)
汉都大酒店

Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza **8**
(Zǒng Fǔ Huánguān Jiàrì Jiǔdiàn)
总府皇冠假日酒店

Jiāotōng Bīnguǎn **12**
(Traffic Hotel)
交通宾馆

Sheraton Chéngdū Lido **6**
(Tiānfǔ Lìdū Xīláidēng Fàndiàn)
天府丽都喜来登饭店

Xīnzú Bīnguǎn **22**
(Sunjoy Inn)
心族宾馆

Yǒuyì Bīnguǎn **20**
(Friendship Hotel)
友谊宾馆

ATTRACTIONS ●

Qīngyáng Gōng **7**
(Green Ram Monastery)
青羊宫

Sìchuān Dàxué Bówùguǎn **16**
(Sìchuān University Museum)
四川大学 博物馆

Wáng Āntíng Xiàoxiào
Zhǎnlǎn Guǎn **5**
(Máo Museum)
王安廷小小展览馆

Wénshū Yuàn **3**
(Wénshū Monastery)
文殊院

BUS STATIONS ▼

Xīn Nán Mén Qìchē Zhàn **13**
(Xīn Nán Mén Bus Station)
新南门汽车站

Zhāojué Sì Qìchē Zhàn **1**
(Zhāojué Temple Bus Station)
昭觉寺汽车站

DINING ◆

Bāguó Bùyī **19**
巴国布衣

C'est la vie **18**
(Běnzhēn Shēnghuó)
本真生活

Càigēn Xiāng **23**
菜根香

Gingko **11**
(Yínxìng)
银杏

Grandma's Kitchen **17**
(Zǔmǔ de Chúfáng)
祖母的厨房

Highfly Pizza **10**
(Gāofēi Bīsà)
高飞比萨

Kuàilè Lǎojiā **21**
快乐老家

Lóngyǎn Bāozi **9**
龙眼包子

Paul's Oasis **4**

Tandoor Indian Cuisine **22**
(Téngdǔěr Yìndù Cāntīng)
腾都尔印度餐厅

Xīn Guānghuá Sùshíguǎn **15**
新光华素食馆

Xīzàng Fēngqíng Wū **14**
西藏风情屋

the Traffic Hotel, is clean, efficient, and tourist-friendly (has signs in English). Air-conditioned buses leave from here for Lè Shān (2½ hr.; ¥37/$4.50) and for Éméi Shān (2 hr., 15 min.; ¥32/$3.90). Air-conditioned buses to Chóngqìng leave throughout the day from the equally clean, efficient **Wǔ Guī Qiáo Bus Station (Wǔ Guī Qiáo Qìchē Zhàn)** southeast of the city center on Yínghuī Lù (4¼ hr.; ¥107/$13). Buses to Jiǔzhài Gōu, Wòlóng, Dūjiāng Yàn, and Qīngchéng Shān now leave from the brand-new **Chádiànzi Kèyùn Zhàn** in Chéngdū's western suburbs near the new Third Ring Road (Sān Huán Lù).

VISITOR INFORMATION Pick up the free monthly English-language ***Go West Magazine*** in hotels and Western-style restaurants for its listings of entertainment and shopping in Chéngdū and Chóngqìng.

GETTING AROUND Chéngdū's flat terrain and many bike lanes make walking and biking easy, but blocks are long, and crossing the river can require a trek before reaching a bridge. Rénmín Lù bisects the city on the north–south axis. Its east–west counterpart is less straightforward: At the heart of the city (Tiānfǔ Sq.), Rénmín Xī Lù runs west from the square and Rénmín Dōng Lù runs east; after a block in either direction, the names change every block or so. Unfortunately, most of Chéngdū's avenues have a multitude of names, making a street map essential. Traffic Hotel (Jiāotōng Bīnguǎn) at Línjiāng Zhōng Lù 77 rents **bicycles** for ¥15 ($1.85) per day with a ¥200 ($25) deposit. Take bus no. 6, 49, 50, or 55 and get off at the Xīn Nán Mén stop. City **buses** (¥1/15¢; air-conditioned ¥2/25¢) serve all parts of the city. Routes are on city maps. Both bus no. 16 and minibus no. 5 (not the full-size no. 5) running the length of Rénmín Lù from the North Railway Station to the South Railway Station are useful lines. The most common **taxi** is the mid-range Jetta. Taxi rates are ¥5 (65¢) for the first kilometer, then ¥1.40 (20¢) per kilometer, ¥1.70 (20¢) per kilometer above 7km (4⅓ miles). From 10pm to 7am the first kilometer costs ¥6 (75¢); after that the fare is ¥1.70 (20¢) per kilometer. Use taxi stands when possible.

TOURS Chéngdū has enough good, English-speaking **independent travel agents** that you needn't bother with CITS and its generally higher rates. The best deals can be found inside and in the vicinity of the **Jiāotōng Bīnguǎn (Traffic Hotel).** The Traffic Travel Service (inside the hotel) and Tiānfǔ International Travel Service at the entrance to the hotel both book air and train tickets and offer a variety of tour packages. For a **private guide,** Mr. Tray Lee is a highly recommended freelance guide. His prices are competitive, his English excellent, and he's always reachable by mobile phone (✆ **0139/0803-5353;** message only 028/8555-4250; fax 028/8556-4952; lee_tray@hotmail.com). A "Sìchuān Opera" tour (see "Chéngdū After Dark") costs ¥80 ($10) for admission, a backstage visit, one-way transportation, and an English-speaking guide. Die-hards stay for the whole 4 hours, but that's not required. **BikeChina Adventures,** an American company based in Chéngdū, arranges adventure bicycle tours through any part of China. Contact Peter Snow Cao (✆ **0139/8081-8666;** www.bikechina.com/index.htm.).

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China** (open Mon–Fri 8:30am–noon and 2–6pm), Zhìmín Lù 36 near the Traffic Hotel and Xīn Nán Mén Bus Station, has full foreign-exchange facilities and an ATM. The branch at Rénmín Nán Lù opposite the Mín Shān Fàndiàn also has an ATM, and is open the same hours.

Consulates The U.S. Consulate is at Lǐngshìguǎn Lù 4 (✆ **028/8558-9202;** open Mon–Fri, 8:30am–5:30pm). Take bus no. 16, 61, 49, or 50 to Lǐngshìguǎn Lù.

Internet Access Try the **Qílín Wǎngbā** and **Jīn Shǒu Wǎngbā,** which both charge ¥2 (25¢) per hour. Both are halfway down the alley off Lǐngshìguǎn Lù near the U.S. Consulate. The **Zìzài Wǎngbā** at Kēhuá Běi Lù 35 (above Xīn Guānghuá Vegetarian Restaurant) has work desks and a studious atmosphere; Internet access is ¥1 to ¥2 (15¢–25¢) per hour. There are many other Internet cafes around the university, the U.S. Consulate, and the Jiāotōng Bīnguǎn, most of them open 24 hours. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The Jǐnjiāng Hotel post office (open 8am–noon, 2:30–5:30pm) at Rénmín Nán Lù 80, 2 Duàn, opposite the Mín Shān Fàndiàn, is reliable and conveniently located.

Visa Extensions The Exit-Entry Office of the **PSB (Jìngwài Rényuán Bànzhèng Qiānzhèng Tīng)** is at Wénwǔ Lù 144 (✆ **028/8640-7067;** open Mon–Fri 9am–noon, 1–5pm). The entrance is on Shùnchéng Dà Jiē. Processing time is 3 days, but it's speedier if you show an ongoing ticket. Take bus no. 55, 62, or 73 from railway stations 16 or 64; get off at the junction of Rénmín Zhōng Lù and Wénwǔ Lù and walk east.

EXPLORING CHÉNGDŪ

The best way to enjoy Chéngdū is to take long walks through the city, relax in a few teahouses and hot pot restaurants, and spread your visits to the best sights over a few days—or longer if you're using Chéngdū as a base from which to visit out-of-town attractions. Here are some of my favorite strolls:

- Along **Línjiāng Zhōng Lù** between Xīn Nán Lù and Rénmín Nán Lù. This shady block along the south bank of Nán Hé (South River) has many restaurants, an upscale teahouse (**Guǎnghé Chálóu;** p. 687), and a Tibetan cabaret (**Tibet Sun;** p. 688).
- Much of Chéngdū's Tibetan community lives southeast of the Wǔhóu Temple, and the area around the Southwest Minority Nationalities College and the Tibetan Hospital is interesting for its bookstores, Tibetan shops, and people. **Wǔhóu Cí Héng Jiē,** in particular, has lots of shops selling Tibetan and minority goods. Have lunch at **Xīzàng Fēngqíng Wū** (see "Where to Dine," later in this chapter).
- Chéngdū's pedestrian street, **Chūnxī Lù Běiduàn,** is east of Tiānfú Guǎngchǎng, off Zōngfǔ Lù. Originally modeled after Shànghǎi's Nánjīng Lù, today it more closely resembles Běijīng's upscale walking street, Wángfǔjǐng. Equally great for shopping or people-watching day or night, this outdoor mall often hosts art and sculpture exhibitions. Nearby, on **Zōngfǔ Lù,** the Foreign Language Bookstore, Wángfǔjǐng Department Store, Parkson department store, and a few fast-food options (Pizza Hut, McDonald's, KFC) are all within a 10-minute walk of each other.

Qīngyáng Gōng (Green Ram Monastery) Directly west of the city center, this Daoist monastery is culturally and historically the most important sight in the city. It's said that at Qīngyáng Fair (its first incarnation), Lǎozǐ attained immortality. And it was here that he revealed the *Dàodé Jīng (Classic of the Dào)* to Yǐn Xǐ, frontier guardian at the Hángǔ Pass and last man to see Lǎozǐ before he left the world of men for Mount Kūnlún, gateway to the Western Paradise.

Today Qīngyáng Gōng is one of the most active and important Daoist monasteries in China. Among its treasures, of greatest historical significance is a set of rare and elegant pear-wood printing plates of abstracts of scriptures in the Daoist canon. The grounds contain six halls on a central axis, a room for printing Daoist texts which stands to the east, and a room for worshipping Daoist sages which stands to the west. The **Hall of Three Purities (Sānqīng Diàn)** is the monastery's main building, but the most emblematic has to be the **Bāguà Tíng (Pavilion of the Eight Trigrams).** This octagonal building sitting on a square pedestal (symbolic of the Earth) rises 20m (65 ft.) and has two flounces of upturned roofs covered in yellow, green, and purple ceramic tiles. Between the roofs, each facet of the octagon has at its center a plaque of the eight trigrams set off by a pattern of swastikas, symbolic of the sun or the movement of fire. The 81 carved dragons are said to symbolize the 81 incarnations of Lǎozǐ, but the number has closer associations with Chinese numerology and the belief in nine as the most "accomplished" of numbers. A bookstore in the **Hǔnyuán Diàn (Hall of Chaotic Origin)** sells souvenirs alongside Máo bookmarks, Daoist study guides, and a fortune-telling manual called "Unlocking the Secrets of the *Book of Changes*." If you buy one of the likenesses of Lǎozǐ that comes in a cloth envelope and hand it to the Daoist priest behind the counter, he'll burn incense over it to *kāiguāng* or "open its light."

Escape the din of the city at the partially covered outdoor **teahouse,** where you can sit in a bamboo chair and watch other customers play mahjong and chat with friends (albeit sometimes on cellphones.) A neighborhood artist often comes here to sculpt. Next door is a **vegetarian restaurant,** open 11am to 2pm.

Yī Huán Lù Xī, 2 Duàn (at Yī Huán Lù and Qīngyáng Zhèng Jiē intersection, on the grounds of Wénhuà Gōngyuán/Cultural Park). Admission ¥1 (15¢). 8am–5:30pm. Bus: no. 11, 42, 47, 59.

Sìchuān Dàxué Bówùguǎn (Sìchuān University Museum) ★ Construction of a new provincial museum is underway, but it will be hard to match Sìchuān University's fascinating, well-presented collection, which includes Hàn and Táng dynasty Buddhist carvings; important Daoist documents, ritual instruments, talisman blocks, and clothing worn by shamans from the Eastern Hàn dynasty (25–220) to the Qīng dynasty (1644–1912); bronzes from Bā and Shǔ cultures; a shadow puppet theater; and an ethnology collection featuring artifacts from a dozen central China minorities. Rarely are costumes displayed in such a dignified manner and without mannequins.

On the first floor, in the **Hall of Stone Carvings,** look for the exquisite 2m (7-ft.) carved Táng dynasty figure of a bodhisattva draped in cloth and jewels

On the second floor, there are several standouts. In the small room of ancient pottery from the Eastern Hàn dynasty, look for the life-size **clay dog** with hanging jowls and bulbous nose. The **Tibetan trumpet** made of a human femur can be found in the Exhibition Hall of Tibetan Artifacts. In the Daoist room, don't miss the **stone certificate of purchase** for a piece of subterranean real estate. In the bureaucratic netherworld, these funerary land deeds were taken to the grave as the deceased's proof of ownership of the land in which he or she was buried. Lastly, located in the same room is a circular **jade disk** (*bì*) from the Shāng dynasty, symbol of Heaven (thought to be round), which was used in worship and burial (when it was probably placed beneath the corpse's back).

Enter through east gate from Wàngjiāng Lù; walk to end, turn right; look for the lotus pond; the museum is adjacent. ✆ **028/8541-2451.** Admission ¥10 ($1.25). 8:30am–5:30pm. Bus: no. 3, 35, 19, 27.

Wáng Āntíng Xiǎoxiāo Zhǎnlǎnguǎn *Finds* Informally known as the **Máo Museum,** this very small exhibition hall/apartment is the most eccentric museum you're likely to find in China. The 57,000 badges and Máo pins, along with 2 more tons of Máo memorabilia still boxed in the attic, were all collected by the museum's owner, Wáng Āntíng—who said that Máo came to him in a dream instructing him to share his collection with the world. In addition to badges, there are busts, buttons, posters, magazines from the 1960s, and photographs from the same era. At the apartment's center, where a dining room table should be, is a large framed sepia-toned portrait of a beatific Máo. In front of it are burning incense and offerings of packages of instant noodles, and usually a plate of pears or a dish of candies. Other photos include one of a decrepit-looking Máo as he shakes the hand of Julie Nixon Eisenhower.

The best day to visit is December 26, when the museum and its small lane are packed with people who've come to celebrate Máo's birthday.

Wǔfú Jiē 23, northwest of the Máo statue; facing Máo, walk left (west). Turn right at the big street with a traffic light; pass Jīnjiābà (lane with a market); turn at the 2nd left down Píngān Xiàng; the entrance to Wǔfú Jiē is on the left. Admission ¥5 (65¢). 9am–5pm.

Wénshū Yuàn The best things about this active, Táng-founded Buddhist monastery are neither its gilded statues nor its relatively youthful buildings, but its teahouse filled with people reading, knitting, and just relaxing, and its excellent vegetarian restaurant with tables for two and windows overlooking the gardens. Outside, the street is lined with shops selling incense, paper money, and other Buddhist paraphernalia. Inside, locals come to worship and burn incense. The 1st and 15th days of the lunar month are the most active. Another day that draws large crowds is the 19th day of the second lunar month, when the monastery celebrates the birthday of China's favorite bodhisattva, Guānyīn, Goddess of Mercy. The Huáyán Scripture, written in human blood, and the cranial bones of the monk Xuánzàng (p. 244) are among the treasures housed at Wénshū. A pleasing and unusual Sòng fresco of a child worshipping Guānyīn can be found near the gold-plated bronze Guānyīn.

Wénshū Yuàn Jiē, just off Rénmín Zhōng Lù. Admission ¥1 (15¢). 8am–5:40pm; restaurant 10:30am–10:30pm. Enter to the right of main entrance. Bus: no. 16, 55.

Xióngmāo Jīdì/Dàxióngmāo Fánzhí Zhōngxīn (Panda Research Base/ Giant Panda Breeding Center) This research base, which has elements of a veterinary lab, a park, a panda habitat, and a zoo, is one of the best places to see giant pandas. The much more wild and natural Wòlóng Nature Reserve (p. 695) would be better, but—except in its panda enclosures—panda sightings are few and far between. The stated purpose of the breeding center is to increase the captive population of pandas in order to reintroduce a certain number to the wild. The grounds of the research base, covered with trees, flowers, and 14 species of bamboo, are lovely and, at the very least, provide a pleasant escape from the noise and congestion of Chéngdū proper. As you follow pathways through the reserve you may see not only giant pandas but red pandas (closer to a raccoon than a panda), black-necked cranes, and white storks. You might also run into visiting field researchers. Your best chance of seeing pandas is at feeding time, 8:30 to 10am, although a few, mostly those for breeding, are in cages. Ask if there are cubs around—a mother panda with babe in arms is a sight not to be missed. Allow an hour to get to the base, two to stroll the grounds.

Xióngmāo DàDào, northern suburb, northeast of the zoo. ✆ **028/8351-6748.** Admission ¥10 ($1.25). 8am–6pm. Bus: no. 9, 19, 201, 302 to zoo; from there, ¥8 ($1) taxi or ¥5 (60¢) trishaw. Traffic Travel in the Jiāotōng Bīnguǎn offers round-trip transport and entrance to the Panda Breeding Center for ¥50 ($6.25).

Sānxīng Duī Bówùguǎn This modern, spiral-shaped museum, opened in 1997, houses one of the most remarkable collections of ancient sculpture, masks, and ritual bronzes in China—don't miss it. Discovered in 1986, these otherworldly, artistically sophisticated tomb relics have sparked debate about the origins of the culture that produced them (as far back as the 14th century B.C.) and its connection, if any, to the later Shǔ culture. The museum brochure equates the Sānxīng Duī civilization with the Shǔ, but some scholars doubt this, and there are many unanswered questions. For example, why is there no mention of this culture in historical records? When and why did the civilization disappear? Why do many of the masks and human busts seem to have been burned and deliberately shattered—quite possibly by the very people who created them? Still, it's a marvelous collection. Highlights include a delightful ornament-bearing bronze holy tree supported by three kneeling guards and crowned with hawk-beaked birds. The piece most emblematic of the Sānxīng Duī is a 2.4m (8-ft.) standing bronze figure thought to be a sorcerer. Barefoot and standing on a pedestal of zoomorphic design, the creature has a long forehead, oversize eyes, and ears shaped like butterfly wings. Many of the bronze heads wear masks of pure gold. There is also an impressive gold-covered stick believed to be the ritual wand of a shaman. There are photos of the excavation process, English labels and, supposedly, an English-speaking guide on duty for ¥100 ($13). Give yourself about 2 hours to explore the museum.

Guǎnghàn, 40km (25 miles) north of Chéngdū. www.sanxingdui.com/musuem.htm. Admission ¥50 ($6.25). May–Sept 9am–6pm; Oct–Apr 9am–5:30pm. No direct buses to the museum. Go from Zhāojué Sì Qìchē Zhàn (Zhāojué Temple bus station) near the zoo to Guǎnghàn. Frequent departures throughout the day. Deluxe A/C bus ¥10 ($1.25), 30-min ride. Minivans leave Guǎnghàn for Sānxīng Duī every 20 min. for ¥2 (25¢). Return buses depart from same spot.

SHOPPING

Chéngdū abounds in supermarkets, including **Carrefour (Jiālèfú),** one of the best. Thanks to discounts and a broad selection of Chinese and imported products, shopping here always feels like the day before Christmas—festive, but impossibly crowded. If you abhor body contact with perfect strangers, go elsewhere. If you don't mind it, Carrefour is open from 9am to 10pm and is located at Bābǎo Jiē 1 (✆ **028/8626-6789**). Take bus no. 4, 56, or 76 to Bābǎo Jiē. **Trust-mart (Hǎoyòuduō Chāoshì)** is a block long, next to **McDonald's** and almost opposite **KFC,** and is one of the few stores in China to carry tampons. It's a grocery store, drug store, and department store in one, open from 9am to 10pm. It's located at Jǐnxiù Lù 2 near the corner of Kēhuá Běi Lù on the south side of town; take bus no. 6, 76, or 77. The best, most convenient supermarket at which to buy snacks for a long train journey is the huge **Rénmín Shāngchǎng (People's Market)** opposite the main railway station. It also has a bakery and a fast-food restaurant that serves a Chinese breakfast for ¥1 to ¥4 (15¢–50¢). Open 7:30am to 9:30pm.

WHERE TO STAY

EXPENSIVE

Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza (Zǒngfǔ Huángguān Jiàrì Jiǔdiàn) Located a few blocks from the city center and next door to Parkson, this five-star international hotel used to be the best in Chéngdū. It still is quite good, with clean

bathrooms and pleasant staff, but the Sheraton (see below) is a notch above and no more expensive. If you stay here, rooms with a single king-size bed rather than twins are slightly bigger.

Zǒngfǔ Jiē 31, 610016 (4 blocks east of the Máo statue). ✆ **800/465-4329** or 028/8678-8461. Fax 028/8678-9791. www.crowneplaza.com/hotels/ctuch. 434 units. ¥1,411–¥1,577 ($170–$190) standard room. Most rates include breakfast. 40% discount standard; add 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 3, 4, 7, 45, 58, 98. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; 2 bars; indoor pool; tennis court; health club; sauna; ticketing; business center; forex; 24-hr. room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, dataport, broadband Internet access, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Sheraton Chéngdū Lido (Tiānfǔ Lìdū Xīláidēng Fàndiàn) Opened in 2000 half a mile north of the city center, the Sheraton may be the most attractive of Chéngdū's luxury hotels. The lobby's fountain and large floral arrangement give this spot a warmer ambience than the standard hotel, and the front desk staff are amiable and efficient. Although the standard rooms aren't as spacious as those at the Holiday Inn, the cozy decor is more inviting. Many of the rooms have separate bath and shower.

Rénmín Zhōng Lù, 1 Duàn 15. ✆ **028/8676-8999.** Fax 028/8676-8888. www.sheraton.com/chengdu. 402 units. ¥1,440 ($180) standard room. Most rates include breakfast. 40%–50% seasonal discounts; 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 16. Minibus: no. 5 from railway station. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 bars; indoor heated pool; health club, Jacuzzi; sauna; ticketing; business center; forex; 24-hr. room service; massage; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, dataport, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe

MODERATE

Xīnzú Bīnguǎn (Sunjoy Inn) Located just a short walk from the U.S. Consulate, this three-star hotel was renovated in 2001. Management and staff pride themselves on continued maintenance of the building and guest rooms; clean hallway carpets and unstained sinks—rarities in all but the priciest hotels—attest to their sincerity. Guest rooms and bathrooms are medium in size. Furnishing is run-of-the-mill but better maintained than most in this range. The hotel is connected to one of the best non-Chinese restaurants in Chéngdū, **Tandoor Indian Cuisine** (see "Where to Dine," below).

Rénmín Nán Lù, 4 Duàn 34. ✆ **028/8552-0808.** Fax 028/8554-6598. www.sunjoy-inn.com. 189 units. ¥400–¥460 ($50–$57) standard room. Rates include breakfast. 20% discount is standard. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 16, 19, 72. Minibus: no. 5. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; exercise room; ticketing; small business center; forex; 24-hr. room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, fridge.

INEXPENSIVE

Hàndū Dàjiǔdiàn (Hàndū Grand Hotel) Two things recommend this hotel—the price, and its location next to the main railway station. This is a generic railway hotel with absolutely nothing to distinguish it from hundreds of others. That said, the reception clerks and bellhops are friendly and the rooms are clean, though they show wear. If you have an early train to catch or if you've arrived by train late at night, it will certainly serve. Budget and higher-priced rooms are available.

Huǒchē Běi Zhàn Cè (next to the North Railway Station, on its west side). ✆ **028/8317-0888.** Fax 028/8318-7250. 365 units. ¥258 ($32) standard room (20%–30% discount standard); ¥140 ($17) 2–3-persons, no A/C; ¥250 ($31) 4-person suite. Rates include breakfast. MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; ticketing; small business center; limited room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Jiāotōng Bīnguǎn (Traffic Hotel) Catering to independent travelers and backpackers, this one-star hotel puts Internet access, Tibet travel news, rental bikes, and bag storage at your fingertips. Equally important, room rates range from inexpensive to moderate. The staff are friendly and helpful (most speak

some English), and the cafe is *the* place to meet other travelers of like interests. Although the elevator has a disturbing rattle, the rooms are clean and sort of cozy. If you stay in a standard room, ask for room no. 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, which have bigger bathrooms at no extra cost.

Línjiāng Zhōng Lù 6 (next to the Xīn Nán Mén Bus Station). ✆ **028/8545-1017.** Fax 028/8544-0977. 151 units. ¥200 ($25) standard room; ¥210 ($26) triple with bathroom; ¥40 ($5) bed in 3-person room with no A/C and communal shower/toilet. Rates include breakfast. 10% seasonal discount. No credit cards. Bus: no. 15, 16, 28, 99. Minibus: no. 5. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; ticketing; business center; forex; limited room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Yǒuyì Bīnguǎn (Friendship Hotel) *Value* This six-story hotel is popular with young Chinese visitors, but few foreign travelers have discovered it, despite its proximity to the U.S. Consulate. Small, simple, and built around a pleasant garden and pond, it's basic but handy for lots of Chinese and Western restaurants, a Coffee Beanery, and Trust-mart Supermarket. Although there's no elevator or Internet access, the rooms—renovated in 2001—are clean with a decor that is slightly better than standard. Busy season is March through October, and the hotel fills up, especially on weekends. Without reservations you're unlikely to get a room here during national holidays.

Língshìguǎn Lù 1 (opposite U.S. Consulate). ✆ **028/8522-3442.** Fax 028/8522-1508. 83 units. ¥160–¥200 ($20–$25) standard room; ¥120 ($15) triple. Rates include breakfast. No credit cards. Bus: no. 16. Minibus: no. 5. **Amenities:** Restaurant; ticketing; business center; limited room service; dry cleaning/laundry; no elevator. *In room:* A/C, TV.

WHERE TO DINE

Bāguó Bùyī ★★ *Value* SÌCHUĀN Delicious local fare made with fresh, natural ingredients is served here in artfully rustic surroundings—dried corn stalks and red peppers hang between photographs of farmhouses and peasant life. A spiral wooden staircase wrapped around a large artificial tree leads to second-floor tables with views of the open kitchen. There's enough space for privacy, and service is excellent. House specialties include the gelatinous green turtle stewed with taro *(yùer shāo jiǎyú)*—a regional delicacy, but not to everyone's taste. More reliable would be *huíguō hòupí cài* (twice-cooked thick-skinned greens), a leafy green vegetable boiled and stir-fried in a delicious broad bean sauce, and more inspired than its name suggests. Also try *yěcài bā* (steamed glutinous rice bread with wild vegetable wrapped in corn husks), and *dòufu jìyú* (tofu and golden carp). The tasty sauce, made of tomato, spring onion, chilies, and beans, makes this a particular favorite with locals.

Rénmín Nán Lù 20, 4 Duàn (near Língshìguǎn Lù). ✆ **028/8606-1818.** English menu. Meal for 2 ¥50–¥100 ($6–$12). No credit cards. 11:30am–2:30pm and 5–10pm. Bus: no. 16, 99.

Càigēn Xiāng ★ SÌCHUĀN With four outlets and a cooking school, this is one of Chéngdū's most popular restaurants. Specializing in dishes made with traditional pickled vegetables *(pào cài),* the restaurant has won awards for its *pàojiāo mòyú zǎi* (pickled pepper with baby squid). Two other distinctive dishes are Càigēn Xiāng spareribs *(Càigēn Xiāng páigǔ)* which fall off the bone and are cooked in a delicious sauce that renders them juicy and tender, and fish with pickled vegetables *(pàocài jiāyú).* This is a whole fish served in a red sauce with a variety of fresh and pickled vegetables. Bones have to be dealt with, but the fish is delicate and tasty.

Rénmín Nán Lù (near corner of Tóngzǐ Lín Běi Lù). ✆ **028/8518-5967.** Photo menu. Meal for 2 ¥40–¥200 ($5–$25). No credit cards. 9:30am–10:30pm. Bus: no. 16, 99 to Jǐnxiù Huáyuán.

C'est la vie (Běnzhēn Shēnghuó) FRENCH This may be the only place in town to get foie gras, great French soups, and salmon *en croute.* Service in this small restaurant is friendly and efficient, design is modern and comfortably minimalist, and prices are affordable. A delicious side dish is mashed potatoes with *ratatouille*—another you won't find anywhere else in Chéngdū. Desserts include chocolate mousse, tiramisu, and cheesecake. They have a small selection of French wines and liqueurs. Not far from Grandma's (see below).

Kēhuá Běi Lù 115 (just north of the west gate of Sìchuān University). ✆ **028/8524-4968.** Meal for 2 ¥50–¥100 ($6.25–$13). No credit cards. 10:30am–10:30pm

Gingko (Yínxìng) ★ SÌCHUĀN As much thought and energy went into the design of this upscale restaurant as into the menu; and in both cases, the results are elegant and sophisticated. Plush chairs and couches in the bar area, and dining tables overlooking the river, invite guests to relax and linger over drinks and dinner. The food is excellent, but expensive. This is one of the few restaurants in Sìchuān where you'll feel out of place unless you dress up to dine. Two of the best house specialties are king crab steamed with peppercorns *(jiāozǐ zhēng guìyú)* for ¥128 ($16) and crispy beef tenderloin *(sūpí niúliǔ)* for ¥48 ($6).

Línjiāng Zhōng Lù 12, about 150m/164 yd. beyond the Xīn Nán Mén Bus Station). ✆ **028/ 8545-1057.** English menu. Meal for 2 ¥200–¥400 ($25–$50). No credit cards. 11am–10pm. Bus: no. 16, 78, 99 along Rénmín Lù to Línjiāng Lù; walk east from there.

Grandma's Kitchen (Zǔmǔ de Chúfáng) AMERICAN HOME COOKING Farm-style chandeliers and wall lamps, straight-back wooden chairs with gingham cushions, and framed photos on the wall give this split-level restaurant an appropriately homey atmosphere. Tuna-fish pizza is a bad idea, but the rest of the menu, which includes fried chicken, a variety of steaks, and much more, is a prayer answered for any U.S. resident craving a taste of home. The pies and desserts are made next door at **Grandma's Deli,** which specializes in sandwiches and homemade desserts. A comfortable atmosphere with a small library upstairs containing donated English-language paperbacks makes this the perfect place to hole up on a rainy day and write postcards.

Kēhuá Běi Lù 75. ✆ **028/8524-2835.** Main courses ¥35–¥50 ($4.35–$6.25). No credit cards. English spoken. Mon–Fri 8:30am–10:30pm; weekends 8am–10:30pm.

Highfly Pizza (Gāofēi Bǐsà) PIZZA If you're lonely for friendly faces or other travelers, you'll find both in this cheerful restaurant serving pizzas, salads, and pastas. In general, the dishes are tasty; but the chocolate brownies topped with hot fudge are scrumptious. There's also Internet service (¥5/60¢ per hr.; first half hour free), takeout pizza, and eggs Benedict for breakfast (¥15/$1.80). The waitstaff speaks English.

Bīnjiāng Zhōng Lù 18. ✆ **028/8665-2656.** Pizza ¥15–¥32 ($2–$4). No credit cards. 9:30am–11pm.

Kuàilè Lǎojiā HOT POT You'll appreciate this hot pot restaurant as much for its good food as for its warmly lit, inviting dining room. The space is large and airy and affords privacy at every table. Ambience aside, the keys to great hot pot are the broth—here it is rich and flavorful—and the dipping sauce. Ingredients vary, but are likely to include bean sprouts, leeks, a variety of mushrooms, sausages, seafood, organ meats, and/or duck tongues. Photographs of dishes and ingredients remove the difficulty of ordering without an English menu. Prices depend on the ingredients you choose—the more exotic, the pricier. I recommend any of the *má là* (hot and numbing) hot pots, but plain mild broth is also available *(báitāng lǔ).*

Lǐngshìguǎn Lù 3 (south side of street, opposite Friendship Hotel; look for blue sign with big yellow dots). ✆ **028/8522-4999.** Meal for 2 ¥100–¥200 ($12–$24). No credit cards. 11am–midnight. Bus: no. 16, 50, 72, or 76 to Lǐngshì Guǎn Lù.

Paul's Oasis *Value* HOME-STYLE WESTERN & CHINESE Just before this book went to press, this popular bar and restaurant moved, but it's sure to have the same homey informality that gave the original its early 1970s aura and made it a haven for backpackers, young expats, and anyone craving good music (jazz, blues, reggae, and R&B). The food is decent and inexpensive and includes pizzas, sandwiches, delicious breakfasts (muesli with fruit yogurt, omelets), local dishes, and cold beer. Some staff speak English, and the owner, Paul, is a well-spring of information on Sìchuān and western China.

Kuān Xiàngzi 22 (new address). ✆ **028/8667-3074** (may have changed). Main courses ¥3–¥24 (40¢–$3). No credit cards. 9am until the last customer goes home—often open all night.

Tandoor Indian Cuisine (Téngdǔěr Yìndù Cāntīng) ★★ NORTHERN INDIAN Tandoor's Indian chef clearly takes care in buying and preparing ingredients to make authentic dishes from chiefly the north, but also from southern India. The food and service are equally superb. A delicious specialty from Goa is the Portuguese-influenced pork vindaloo. This very hot dish is made with Indian spices, vinegar, and chilies. One of the best northern specialties is *murgh malai* kabob, chunks of chicken marinated in ginger-garlic paste, then mixed with cheese, cream, coriander, chili, cinnamon, and anisette, and cooked in a tandoori oven. Connected to the Xīnzú Bīnguǎn (Sunjoy Inn), Tandoor, designed by an Indian architect, is airy and handsome; elegant wooden rafters give it flair, and soft Indian music enhances an already pleasing ambience.

Rénmín Nán Lù 34, 4 Duàn (directly behind the Xīnzú Bīnguǎn). ✆ **028/8555-1958.** Reservations recommended. Set meals ¥48–¥110 ($6–$14). AE, DC, MC, V. 11:30am–2pm and 5:30–10:30pm. Traditional Indian dance 7–9pm.

Xīn Guānghuá Sùshíguǎn ★ CHINESE VEGETARIAN This is one of the few vegetarian restaurants in Chéngdū that's not connected to a temple or monastery. It is reputed to be Chéngdū's best vegetarian restaurant, and from the dishes I sampled, I can believe that's true. It is also refreshing to eat vegetarian fare outside a temple setting for a change. While the ambience isn't particularly noteworthy, it's attractive enough, especially if you're seated at one of the three tables next to the front window that overlooks Kěhuá Běi Lù. Specializing in healthy, high-quality food, this restaurant has a broad selection of dishes that include faux meat as well as fresh vegetable dishes. A delicious example of the former is crisp vegetarian duck *(cuìpí shàngsù);* of the latter, stir-fried Indian vegetable curry *(Yìndù gālí chǎocài).*

Kěhuá Běi Lù 35 (just north of Grandma's Kitchen, on the 2nd floor of a European-style building topped with a cupola-like structure; look for 4 Corinthian columns). ✆ **028/8521-3888.** English menu. Meal for 2 ¥65–¥80 ($8–10). No credit cards. No alcohol served. 9:30am–10:30pm. Bus: no. 18, 72, 77.

Xīzàng Fēngqíng Wū *Value* TIBETAN Situated in a Tibetan neighborhood and frequented by Tibetans (many Khampas from western Sìchuān), this intimate three-room restaurant (with 4–6 tables in each room) serves top-quality dishes in a warm, cheerful environment. Tibetan music usually plays in the background, and almost any time of day you'll find monks at several of the tables, eating snacks and drinking milk tea. Three great dishes are *jiāróng suāncài kǎobǐng* (jiāróng Tibetan bread stuffed with pickled cabbage and barbecued pork) for ¥10 ($1.25); *máoniú ròubāo* (yak meat *bāozi*), ¥8 ($1) for 10

bāozi; and *suān luóbo chǎo máoniúròu* (pickled cabbage with fried yak meat) for ¥15 ($1.90). For a snack, try Tibetan bread with milk tea. A large pot of tea costs ¥10 ($1.25).

Wǔhóu Cí Dōng Jiē 3, Fù 2 (look for painting of yak on an ochre-yellow building with Tibetan script in blue, red, orange, and yellow). ✆ **028/8551-0112.** Menu has some English. Meal for 2 ¥30 ($3.80). No credit cards. 8am–10:30pm. Bus: no. 82 from Traffic Hotel.

TEAHOUSES

For the typical Chéngdū experience, go to Qīngyáng Gōng or Wénshū Yuàn monasteries (see "Exploring Chéngdū," earlier in this chapter). For something trendier, Chéngdū has upmarket teahouses for the connoisseur or connoisseur-in-training. The best of the bunch is **Guǎnghé Chálóu,** on the river at Línjiāng Zhōng Lù 16 (✆ **028/8550-1688**). Rattan chairs, palms trees, lots of large potted plants, and blonde wood lend a clean, spa-like atmosphere to this teahouse. The Chinese/English menu has pages of teas, some medicinal or therapeutic, others special for the locale in which they're grown. Under "Teas for Women" are "Aloe Beauty Face Tea," "Heart Tea," and "Chinese Yew Tea for Lady." A small pot of "Rose Love Things" is ¥48 ($6), but my favorite is always Wūlóng, of which there are many kinds. The best come from the high mountains of Táiwān and Fújiàn Province. A pot of tea costs ¥38 to ¥68 ($4.75–$8.50). The teahouse is open from 9am to midnight.

The Ways of Tea

In the 8th-century *Classic of Tea,* author and tea sage Lù Yǔ says that there are "nine ways by which man must tax himself when he deals with tea."

1. He must manufacture it.
2. He must develop a sense of selectivity and discrimination about it.
3. He must provide the proper implements.
4. He must prepare the right kind of fire.
5. He must select a suitable water.
6. He must roast the tea to a turn.
7. He must grind it well.
8. He must brew it to its ultimate perfection.
9. He must, finally, drink it.

In modern China, there are still many ways to drink tea, from the highly ritualized, heavy-on-equipage style prescribed by Lù Yǔ, to the style favored on long-distance trains (toss a pinch of tea leaves into a glass jar with a screw-top and keep adding water and drinking until you reach your destination). The Chéngdū way doesn't use a teapot or a glass jar: The typical setting is the riverside, a park, or temple grounds—in an outdoor teahouse with bamboo tables and chairs. Here, patrons sip tea from 3-ounce cups that sit on saucers small enough to rest in the palm of the hand while protecting it from the heat of the cup. A lid keeps the tea hot and can be used to sweep aside tea leaves that rise to the top as you drink. Melon seeds, boiled peanuts, or dried squid are typical snack accompaniments.

CHÉNGDŪ AFTER DARK

Unlike many Chinese cities, Chéngdū offers a variety of ways to pass the evening. **Sìchuān opera** is a favorite for foreign and Chinese tourists alike. Known for its humor and dynamism, an integral part of every performance is *biànliǎn* or "changing faces." The character is often a villain who changes his face to escape recognition. The reputed record is 14 changes in 24 seconds. Over its 300-year tradition, the trick has changed, but it has always been a closely guarded secret within the operatic community. Traditional stick puppets and flame balancing are also incorporated into the drama. Performances are at the teahouse next to the Jǐn Jiāng Theater on Huáxīng Zhèng Lù on Saturday for ¥15 ($2.75). Performances are also held at the strictly-for-tourists **Shǔfēng Yǎyùn** in Wénhuà Gōngyuán, from 8 to 9:30pm; the fee is ¥120 ($15). Take bus no. 25, 46, or 103 to Wénhuà Gōngyuán. **Xīzàng Yángguāng (Tibet Sun)** at Línjiāng Lù 18 (✆ **028/8543-6893**) is a small Tibetan saloon that has a wonderful cabaret atmosphere. From about 9pm Tibetan singers and dancers perform on a small wooden stage. The gorgeous costumes are reason enough to go. Snacks, Tibetan tea, beer, and local and Tibetan wines and alcohols are served. The saloon is open from 1:30pm to 1:30am; the daytime minimum charge is ¥10 ($1.25), the night minimum ¥30 ($3.75).

Don't miss the **Hóngsè Niándài (Red Generation)** nightclub, if only for the novelty of it. For a surreal package, go to the Máo Museum in the afternoon, and come here after dinner. You can't possibly miss the six-story building (3 stories of which belong to this nightclub), which is entirely red. The interior has red walls, red couches, red chairs, and a red floor. The walls sport Diego Rivera–style frescoes of Ché, Máo, Fidel, Lenin, and the model worker Léi Fēng, beneath whose likeness is Máo's famous exhortation to "Learn from Comrade Léi Fēng." Local, apolitical rock bands play nightly from 8pm until "everyone goes home." The crowd is young and hip and mostly Chinese. Lest you fear the political implications of patronizing this place (which happens to be within a 3-min. walk of the U.S. Consulate), the proprietor, when asked about the decor, said, "It's just a style thing." The nightclub is at Rénmín Nán Lù, at the corner of Nǐjiā Qiáo Lù (✆ **0139-8057-4490**).

2 Éméi Shān

Sichuān Province, 143km (89 miles) SW of Chéngdū, 36km (22 miles) E of Lè Shān

Éméi means "lofty eyebrows," but it's also a pun on a poetic expression referring to the delicate brows of a beautiful woman. The mountain was named for two of its high adjacent peaks, whose outlines, according to 6th-century commentary on the "Book of Waterways," did indeed conjure the image of two long, thin, graceful eyebrows. Once richly endowed with both flora and fauna, this sacred Buddhist mountain is still home to 10% of China's plant species; fauna have fared less well. Threatened species include Asiatic black bear, giant salamander (the famous "crying fish," or *wáwa yú* in Chinese), gray-hooded parrotbill, and Asiatic golden cat. You'll also bump into monkeys who want a handout, but try to resist—they already suffer from obesity and hypertension. As of December 2002, park wardens have put them on a diet.

Come here for scenic hiking and active Buddhist shrines and monasteries (where the monk and nun population was once as threatened as the golden cat but has now returned, albeit in smaller numbers). Nature enthusiasts will delight in the exotic insects and butterflies along the way.

A Proper Visit to Éméi Shān

The Chinese say a proper visit to Éméi Shān involves at least one of the following:

- Watching the **sunrise** from the summit (which requires staying the night on or near it—the earliest shuttle arrives after sun-up.)
- Standing in the **Cloud Sea.** Like many a Chinese mountain, Éméi is famous for its clouds and mists. The classic experience happens when layers of clouds gather between Jiǔlǎo Dòng and Xǐ Xiàng Chí (Elephant Bathing Pool). You see the clouds above, climb through them, then look down to see clouds billowing and surging at your feet like the sea. Of course, conditions aren't always right.
- Witnessing **Buddha's Halo.** When the sun shines through misty clouds, and you're standing between the clouds and the sun, you can see your shadow outlined by a halo-shaped rainbow. Optimal time: 2 to 5pm. Optimal place: Shèshēn Yán.
- Seeing the **"Strange Lamps" (Guài Dēng).** Photos and witnesses are both scarce, but supposedly in the evening when the moon is waning, especially after it has rained and the sky has cleared, those looking down from Shèshēn Yán at the layers of mountains in the distance can see thousands of floating orbs of light.

Altitudes on the mountain range from 500m to 3,099m (1,640 ft.–10,167 ft.) at the Wànfó Dǐng summit. Not surprisingly, average yearly temperatures vary significantly from one part of the mountain to another. In the subtropical zone at the bottom, the average is 63°F (17°C); at the summit, 37°F (3° C). Bring layers of clothes, and adjust them as you climb and descend. The best months to visit are late August through early October. The busiest months are July and August. Avoid national holidays.

Éméi Shān admission ¥80 ($10). Entrance to monasteries ¥6–¥10 (75¢–$1.25).

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE There are several **trains** from Chéngdū to Éméi Shān on the Chéngdū–Kūnmíng line. The trip takes 2 to 3 hours and costs ¥9 to ¥24 ($1–$3). Minibuses and taxis connect the **Éméi Railway Station** (3.2km/2 miles east of town) with the mountain entrance at Bàoguó. The fare is ¥30 ($3.75) and it's a 20-minute drive. The bus is faster and more direct than the train.

In Chéngdū, most **buses** to Éméi Shān depart from Xīn Nán Mén; the first leaves at 7am. Buses terminate at the Éméi Shān Bus Station or Bàoguó Town. Bàoguó is preferred, since this is where the mountain trails begin, but fewer buses go there. The Éméi Bus Station is connected to Bàoguó Sì, the monastery at Éméi's entrance, by **minibuses** that make the 20-minute, 6.4km (4-mile) drive for ¥10 ($1.25). You can also take one of the public buses leaving every 5 minutes; the fare is ¥2 (25¢). The bus from Chéngdū costs ¥32 ($3.90) each way and takes 2½ hours. Buses also run between Éméi Shān and Lè Shān bus stations every few minutes. Buy your ticket for the 1-hour trip inside the terminal for ¥5 (60¢). Buses unload at Lè Shān's north gate. You can also hop on one

of the many Lè Shān–bound minibuses that wait outside the Éméi gate. They don't depart until every seat is taken; the fare is ¥4 (50¢).

VISITOR INFORMATION The very modern and helpful **Éméi Shān Tourist Center (Lǚrén Zhōngxīn),** near Bàoguó Temple (✆ **0833/559-0111**), provides free information and materials about Mount Éméi. Guides can be hired here, although you're sure to pay less if you hire one of the many freelance guides (whose English may not be as good) outside Bàoguó Temple. For quiet and tranquility, you may opt to go it alone.

Bilingual maps are sold at the tourist center and at any of the many postcard and book stands near the entrance and along the trail. The map costs ¥3 (40¢); one side of the map shows Éméi Shān, the other Lè Shān (see below).

Note: For Chinese translations of selected establishments listed in this section, please turn to Appendix A.

EXPLORING ÉMÉI

There are two main **hiking routes** up Éméi Shān to the Jīn Dǐng summit, and two involving bus and/or cable car. Both hiking routes follow the same path from **Bàoguó Sì** (at the entrance) to **Niúxīn Tíng.** At Niúxīn Tíng, they split into a higher and a lower trail, which meet up again at **Xǐ Xiàng Chí,** where they merge into a single path that leads to **Jīn Dǐng Peak.** Since there are 80km (50 miles) of trails to the peak, a combination of hiking, buses, and cable car is recommended.

You can take a **bus** from Bàoguó Sì to Léidòng Píng; from there, take a **cable car** to the top. Buses travel between Bàoguó Sì and Léidòng Píng all day (5am–5pm holidays and July–Aug; 7am–4pm Nov–Apr; and 6am–4 or 5pm May–June and Sept–Oct). The trip each way takes 2 hours and costs ¥30 ($3.75). The cable car runs the 500m (1,666-ft.) leg between the last parking lot, at Jiēyǐn Diàn (next to Léidòng Píng), and Jīn Dǐng (Golden Peak); round-trip fare is ¥70 ($8.65).

An option is to take the bus as far as **Wànnián Cable Car Station (Wànnián Chēchǎng).** Begin your trek there or take the 8-minute cable car ride to Wànnián Sì and start climbing from there. The cable car ride costs ¥30 ($3.75) for the ascent, ¥20 ($2.50) for the descent, and ¥45 ($5.60) round-trip.

All roads lead to Jīn Dǐng, but the highest peaks are **Qiānfó Dǐng** and **Wànfó Dǐng.** These can be reached by a **monorail** that runs between Jīn Dǐng and Wànfó Dǐng. The round-trip takes 20 minutes and costs ¥45 ($5.60).

Note: If you get caught without enough warm clothing, rent a Chinese army jacket for ¥10 ($1.20) at several spots on the mountain, including the Léidòng Píng (Léidòng parking lot).

WHERE TO STAY

For the most comfort, stay in one of the several full-service hotels near the entrance to Éméi Shān. At the summit, the **Jīn Dǐng Dàjiǔdiàn** is quite comfortable (see below). Other than that, if you want to overnight on the mountain, be prepared for relatively spartan accommodations. Beginning at Bàoguó Sì—the first temple you encounter upon entering the Éméi Shān scenic area—and continuing to the summit, all the monasteries have guesthouses with rates ranging from ¥15 to ¥160 ($2–$20) per night. Accommodations are as basic as the rates suggest: The least expensive have dorm-style rooms for four to six people, limited or no hot water, and a hallway bathroom. In the $10-and-higher range, expect air-conditioning and limited hot water. Meals can consist of vegetarian,

mock-meat dishes or a simple bowl of noodles for around ¥6 (75¢). Two popular monasteries are **Xiānfēng Sì** and **Xǐ Xiàng Chí.** Guesthouses at the peak and in the vicinity of the cable-car terminus at Jǐng Shuǐ offer more comfortable lodging (with TV, air-conditioning, and hot showers) for a bit more—but not all of them accept foreigners. They charge ¥150 to ¥250 ($20–$30).

Éméi Shān Fàndiàn (Éméi Shān Hotel) Completed in 2002, this is the only hotel in Éméi with an Internet bar, and for now it's fresh and sparkling. Each deluxe standard room is spacious and comfortably furnished with a sofa, chair, and coffee table. Some rooms have picture windows with a garden view. Located next to the bus station, the hotel is convenient for late arrivals or early departures, but it's about 8km (5 miles) from Éméi Shān. To get to the mountain, catch a bus in front of the station for ¥2 (25¢) or take a taxi for ¥12 ($1.50) or less.

Bàoguó Sì 614201 (by the Éméi Shān Bus Station, 8km/5 miles from Bàoguó Sì.). ✆ **0833/559-0518.** Fax 0833/559-1399. 203 units. ¥300–¥480 ($37–$60) standard room. 20% to 30% discounts. Rates include Chinese breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar, business center, limited room service. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge/minibar in some rooms.

Hóngzhū Shān Bīnguǎn Located on park grounds with a lake and surrounded by dense forest, this is the most beautiful place to stay at Éméi Shān, and the choice of visiting dignitaries. Several buildings comprise the hotel, but no matter where you stay, you're guaranteed a gorgeous, wooded view. Wing no. 5, renovated and upgraded in 2002, is the best choice, with four-star accommodations; the guest rooms and bathrooms are large, with tastefully appointed furnishings. Wing nos. 7 and 8 are three-star standard; they're clean and comfortable, but the rooms are smaller and show wear. Wing no. 8 is slated for renovation in 2003.

Éméi Shān Bàoguó Sì Zuǒcè (approaching Éméi Shān from town, after passing Éméi Museum on the right, and just before reaching Bàoguó Sì, turn left and follow road to end). ✆ **0833/552-5888.** Fax 0833/552-5666. 283 units. ¥350–¥500 ($44–$62) 3-star standard room; ¥880–¥1,800 ($110–$225) 4-star standard room. Most rates include breakfast. 20%–40% discounts. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 bars; ticketing; business center; forex; limited room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* (4-star): A/C, TV, dataport, minibar/fridge, hair dryer. 3-star: A/C, TV.

Jīn Dǐng Dàjiǔdiàn (Golden Summit Hotel) If you'd like to see the sunrise, this two-star hotel close to the summit is the place to stay. The rooms may be standard issue, but the views are incredible.

Jīn Dǐng (at the Jīn Dǐng summit). ✆ **0833/509-8077.** ¥300–¥480 ($37–$60) standard room. No credit cards. 20%–30% discounts. **Amenities:** Restaurant; limited room service. *In room:* Heater, TV.

WHERE TO DINE

The two restaurants at **Hóngzhū Shān Bīnguǎn** serve excellent food. The prices are higher than usual, but basic meat and vegetable dishes are still quite reasonable. There are a number of restaurants along the road leading to Bàoguó Sì. The biggest draw for Western tourists is **Teddy Bear Cafe,** which serves Chinese and Western dishes and has an English menu.

3 Lè Shān

Sìchuān Province, 154km (96 miles) SW of Chéngdū, 36km (22 miles) W of Éméi Shān

The carved stone statue of the Great Buddha (Dà Fó) at Lè Shān is one of Sìchuān's top tourist destinations, but whether it's worth a day in a tight travel schedule is debatable. The thrill of Lè Shān is in your first sighting of the Great Buddha. Whether that's from the top looking down, from a boat looking

straight up, or from the path of nine switchbacks (Língyún Zhàndào) looking somewhere in between, the moment it dawns on you that the large, gracefully curved, stone wall (for example) that you're looking at is actually the lobe of a colossal ear, and that the ear is only a small slice of a well-proportioned giant—that moment is thrilling. But after you've marveled at the Great Buddha from all the various angles, what's left to explore is not much more than an overcrowded theme park.

The town of Lè Shān is not without charm, but with a 2,300-year history and situated as it is at a confluence of rivers, it should offer much more than it does. Mass demolition and reconstruction have rendered it indistinguishable (except for its pretty waterways) from a thousand others undergoing the same process. I suggest you skip the town and go directly to the mountain. Lè Shān is best done as a day trip from Chéngdū or as a stopover on the way back to Chéngdū from Éméi Shān. Two to three hours is plenty of time to enjoy it. Admission to the mountain is ¥40 ($5) and includes all the sights. It's open from 7:30am to 7:30pm, May through September; and from 8am to 6pm, October through April. *Note:* For Chinese translations of selected establishments listed in this section, please turn to Appendix A.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Air-conditioned buses depart for Lè Shān from Chéngdū's Xīn Nán Mén Bus Station every half hour from 7am to 7pm for ¥36 ($4.50); the ride takes 2½ hours. They arrive at the Lé Shān Long Distance Bus Station or a bus stop on the main road into town. Return buses for Chéngdū leave from the Lè Shān entrance every half hour or so. The last bus returning to Chéngdū from the entrance leaves between 5:30 and 6pm (whenever it fills up). Buses also leave for Chéngdū from Lè Shān's Long Distance Bus Station every 15 minutes, and from the Central Passenger Station every half hour. Buses run between Éméi Shān and Lè Shān bus stations every few minutes for ¥5.50 (70¢). Taxi fare between Éméi and Lè Shān is about ¥60 ($7.50).

GETTING AROUND Buses arrive in one of three places in Lè Shān: the Long Distance Bus Station, the Passenger Central Bus Station, or a bus stop on the main road into town. The Long Distance Bus Station is farthest from the Great Buddha site—a ¥15 ($2) taxi ride. From the Lè Shān bus stop, take bus no. 3 to the Great Buddha for ¥5 (60¢). What should be a 10-minute drive stretches to a half hour as the driver trawls for passengers along a circuitous route. The bus unloads at Lè Shān's north gate. It's a 7-minute walk to the park entrance, or you can hitch a motorcycle lift for a few *yuán.* Pedicabs are an option that will shave time off the journey between the bus stop and Lè Shān scenic area; they charge ¥8 to ¥10 ($1–$1.25). By taxi from the bus stop to the Lè Shān scenic area, expect to pay ¥12 to ¥15 ($1.50–$1.90). A round-trip **tour boat** or **motorboat** from the north gate to Wūyóu Temple costs ¥30 ($3.75) and allows time for photos of the Great Buddha. **Ferries** run between the Lè Shān City dock and both Língyún Shān and Wūyóu Sì for ¥7 (85¢); the last boat leaves Lè Shān at 6pm.

At the entrance to Lè Shān scenic area, vendors sell **maps** of the mountain for ¥3 (35¢). Maps are also sold at the small stands near the head of the Great Buddha. One side of this bilingual map shows Lè Shān; the other shows Éméi Shān.

EXPLORING LÈ SHĀN

On foot from the entrance, it's a 10-minute walk along a stone path to the Great Buddha. When the road forks into two staircases, take the staircase to the right.

This leads around the side of the mountain looking back at the town. It also affords a panoramic view of the three converging rivers, the Mín Jiāng, the Dàdū Hé (Cháng Jiāng), and the Qīngyī Jiāng. The path leads to a terrace and souvenir area beside and around the back of the Buddha's head. From here you can look into his ear and over his shoulder. For a variety of views of Dà Fó, descend the zigzag staircase called **Jiǔqū Zhàndao (Path of Nine Switchbacks)** by the statue's right side. This leads to a large viewing platform that puts visitors at toe level.

Dà Fó (The Great Buddha) At 71m (233 ft.) tall, Lè Shān's Dà Fó—hewn out of a mountain—is similar in size, subject, and artistic medium to the recently demolished Bamiyan Buddhas in the Hindu Kush. Carved some 500 years later, between 713 and 803, Dà Fó is one of the world's largest stone sculptures of Buddha. It was the inspiration of the Buddhist monk Hǎi Tōng, abbot of Língyún Monastery, who hoped that a giant Maitreya Buddha (Future Buddha) overlooking the water might subdue floods and violent currents. In 1996 it was added to UNESCO's World Heritage List, and in 2001 large-scale repairs were started: The Buddha's head, shoulders, and torso were cleaned up and repaired and a cement coating (added in modern times) was removed. The next stage took 10 months and was completed in September 2002. Repairs were made to the statue's ingenious, hidden drainage system that slowed, but could not stop, erosion; and cracks as deep as 4m (13 ft.) in the base of the Buddha were filled in. For an idea of how massive this statue is: Each eye is 3m (11 ft.) long; each ear 7m (23 ft.); and his middle finger is 8m (27 ft.) long. His head is covered with 1,021 buns of coiled hair, carved out of tapered stone blocks that fit into his head like pegs in a cribbage board.

Wūyóu Shān After viewing the Great Buddha, there isn't a lot more to do, except stroll the park grounds and enjoy the views. To reach the adjacent southern hill, Wūyóu Shān, cross the **Háoshàng Dà Qiáo** footbridge on the south side of the Great Buddha. The plain, six-hall monastery by the same name, built in the Táng dynasty and rebuilt many times since, sits atop the hill. The Luóhàn Táng contains an army of terra-cotta arhats, each in a different pose. Most impressive is the view of the rivers from the top of the complex.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE

At Língyún Temple, the **Jífēng Lóu Bīnguǎn** (✆ **0833/213-0853**) has clean standard rooms with private bathrooms for ¥240 ($30). Some, but not all, of the rooms are damp, so be choosy. The most comfortable place to stay in downtown Lè Shān is the **Jiā Zhōu Bīnguǎn,** Báitǎ Jiē 19 (✆ **0833/213-9888;** fax 0833/213-3233). It's a three-star hotel with basic modern rooms for ¥360 ($45) and a restaurant. There's also a number of good small restaurants in the vicinity of this hotel. **Yáng's** is inexpensive, with Chinese and Western food and an English menu; it's located at Báitǎ Jiē 49. A vegetarian restaurant specializing in faux meat dishes is on Wūyóu Shān behind Dàxióng Temple.

4 Qīngchéng Shān

Sìchuān Province, 55km (34 miles) NW of Chéngdū, 16km (10 miles) SW of Dūjiāng Yàn

As a convenient subalpine getaway, Qīngchéng Shān is better than all the other mountains in this chapter. It offers solitary climbing on stone steps and wooden paths through dense forests of pine, fir, and cypress. Along the way are caves, ponds, a pedestrian bridge, ancient ginkgoes, and 16 Daoist and Buddhist monasteries housing statues dating as far back as the 6th century.

More importantly (though it may have slim bearing on the travel plans of most Westerners), Mount Qīngchéng is considered the birthplace of China's only indigenous religion, Daoism—that is, "organized" Daoism, which gelled a half century after Lǎozǐ. It was to this mountainous part of western Sìchuān (the Shǔ Kingdom) that the pilgrim Zhāng Dàolíng came to cultivate the *Dào*. Some years later, in A.D. 142, the deified Lǎozǐ appeared at Hèmíng Shān (just south of Qīngchéng) and made Zhāng the first Celestial Master. Zhāng went on to establish 24 peasant communities throughout Shǔ, whose customs included confession and the regular payment of 5 pecks of rice to a communal grain reserve.

Less awe-inspiring than other World Heritage mountains, Qīngchéng Shān nevertheless makes an invigorating day trip from Chéngdū. If you wish to stay longer, there is lodging in monasteries and inns on the mountain. Escape crowds and high guesthouse rates by coming midweek. Summer is considered the best time to visit, but it's also the busiest, as Chéngdū residents flee the city heat.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Buses depart Chéngdū's Chádiànzi Bus Station every 20 minutes from 7am to 7pm (1 hr.; ¥40/$5). Return buses leave every 20 minutes from 7am to 5pm, from Qīngchéng's main entrance. An option is to take a bus to Dūjiāng Yàn and transfer to a Qīngchéng Shān bus. Buses make the 16km (10-mile) trip between Dūjiāng Yàn and Qīngchéng every half hour from 6:20am to 5:30pm for ¥5 (60¢).

GETTING AROUND The hike to the 1,260m (4,133-ft.) summit is less strenuous than the Éméi trail, but it includes a few short, steep sections. At a leisurely pace, Shàngqīng Gōng can be reached in about 2 hours. It's possible to cut that time in half by taking the ferry across Yuèchéng Hú and from there a cable car to just below Shàngqīng Gōng. Passage is ¥30 ($3.75) one-way; ¥50 ($6.25) round-trip. It's a fun way to go, but you sacrifice seeing the sights. Admission is ¥41 ($5).

EXPLORING QĪNGCHÉNG SHĀN

SUGGESTED ROUTE (3–4 HR.)

From the entrance, follow the main trail, keeping to the left. Pass **Yílè Wō (Nest of Pleasures);** continue to **Tiānshī Dòng (Celestial Master Cave).** This is the core site of Qīngchéng Shān. The six surrounding peaks were to act as natural inner and outer walls that would protect the area from the world of men. A temple first built in 730 now stands in the spot where Zhāng Dàolíng is supposed to have built a hut for himself. It's said that he planted the **ancient ginkgo tree** that grows here—which would make it about 1,700 years old. Continue on to **Zǔshī Diàn (Hall of the Celestial Master Founder)** and **Cháoyáng Dòng (Facing the Dawn Cave).** The narrow section of path between these two sights passes through beautiful dark forest and thick undergrowth. Continue on the path; after veering right and passing a couple of viewing pavilions, it leads to **Shàngqīng Gōng (Temple of Highest Clarity).** First built in the 4th century, the present building is considerably newer. The tearoom here also sells snacks. From here to the summit at **Lǎojūn Gé (Lord Lǎo Pavilion)** is a short but steep climb.

Return Hike: Coming back down the mountain, the road forks at Shàngqīng Gōng. The left trail leads to the cable car. The ride down takes you to the small **Yuèchéng Hú (Moon Wall Lake).** From here, boats ferry people across for ¥3 to ¥4 (35¢–50¢). If you don't take the cable car, it's only about a half-hour walk through pine forest to the lake.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE

If you've come to watch the sunrise, you'll need to spend the night on the mountain. Jiànfú Gōng (inside the entrance on the road to the right), Tiānshī Dòng, and Shāngqīng Gōng all have basic but clean lodgings for ¥40 to ¥100 ($5–$13). These monasteries also serve vegetarian meals. The **Língyún Shānzhuāng (Língyún Mountain Inn)** near the top cable-car station has lodgings and a restaurant.

5 Wòlóng Nature Reserve (Wòlóng Zìrán Bǎohù Qū)

Sichuān Province, 135km (84 miles) NW of Chéngdū, 50km (31 miles) NW of Dūjiāng Yàn

Established in 1963, Wòlóng isn't the only place to see giant pandas, nor is it the most convenient. (And erase any notion of observing pandas in the wild.) But scientists here have made more advances in artificial breeding and raising pandas in captivity than anywhere in the world. The Wòlóng Breeding Center currently has 44 giant pandas ranging in age from newborn to adult, and it is almost always possible to see panda cubs here.

Another aspect of Wòlóng's appeal is location. Situated in the high, densely forested mountains between the Sìchuān Basin and the Qīnghǎi–Tibetan Plateau, the area has a diverse topography that supports a broad range of vegetation and animal life—not that you're likely to see any of the panthers, macaques, white-lipped deer, or takins purported to live on the reserve. Nonetheless, the area is unspoiled and the flora is magnificent (and much more apparent than the fauna). You also have the chance to climb a mountain *sans* stairs—good news to some. The population is mostly Tibetan and Qiāng farmers who work the fields and make and sell handicrafts.

The best months to visit are May, August, and September. Allow 2 days to see the sights; add another day or two if you want to hike the several marked trails. *Note:* For Chinese translations of selected establishments listed in this section, please turn to Appendix A.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE At least one bus leaves Chéngdū's Chádiànzi Bus Station daily at 11:40am (3¾ hr.; ¥21/$2.60). Chádiànzi has taken over for Xī Mén Station, which closed in early 2003. Schedules were in flux, and may have changed. The return bus passes through Shāwān (also called Wòlóng Zhèn) between 8 and 9am daily; the fare is ¥21 ($2.60). Catch it on the main street or at the Panda Museum parking lot.

GETTING AROUND Getting around the three main sights must usually be done either on foot or by hiring a private taxi (without a meter). The exception is if you hit it just right and for a few *yuán* can hop on a passing bus from Chéngdū. Hétáo Píng—where the breeding center is—and Shāwān (Wòlóng Town), where the museum and most of the hotels are, are on the same road some 6.5km (4 miles) apart.

Tourist and administrative offices share the **Panda Museum** building in Shāwān, on the road from Chéngdū. The museum's parking lot is the terminus for buses from Chéngdū. The **tourist office** can answer questions in English and provide an English-speaking guide to the mountain.

Be sure to carry *yuán*. There are no foreign exchange services, and credit cards are not accepted.

Buy **maps** of the reserve at the Panda Museum in Shāwān or at the Panda Breeding Station in Hétáo Píng for ¥5 (60¢).

EXPLORING WÒLÓNG

Most tourists to Wòlóng come for the Panda Breeding Station in Hétáo Píng, which is good enough reason, but there are so few chances in China to enjoy nature, free of crowds, that you may want to do some hiking while you're here. If so, be prepared for temperature fluctuations and rain, especially in summer. Also consider hiring a guide at the Panda Museum if you plan to hike very far. Trails can be faint and muddy, and descents at times slippery (the downside of not having stairs).

A viable 2-day plan is to arrive in Shāwān in the afternoon. After checking into your hotel, visit the museum for an hour or so and roam around the very small town before dinner. The next morning, get up early and visit the breeding center in Hétáo Píng. Spend the late morning and afternoon hiking. Depart the next morning.

Dàxióngmāo Siyǎng Chǎng (Giant Panda Breeding Station) ★ *Kids* The pandas are housed either in enclosures or in semi-natural habitats—if they're being prepared to return to the open reserve. Unfortunately, Wòlóng has had less success with reintroducing pandas to the wild than with captive breeding, so the majority of pandas are in large enclosures that include an indoor room and an outdoor courtyard. For bird's-eye views of the pandas in open-air pens, an elevated trail runs along an adjacent cliff face above the enclosures.

Opposite are the **Lesser Panda Enclosures (Xiǎoxióngmāo Shēngtài Guǎn).** Although the smaller red pandas—related to the raccoon—don't get nearly as much press, they are undeniably appealing and usually more playful.

The best time to visit is between 8:30 and 10:30am, while the pandas feed.

In the town of Hétáo Píng, 5km (3 miles) before Shāwān on the road from Chéngdū. Buses go to Shāwān. If you want to get off here, notify the driver in advance. Admission ¥30 ($3.75). 8:30am–noon and 1–5pm.

Wǔyīpéng Shēngtài Guāncè Zhàn (Wǔyīpéng Field Observation Station) This used to be an active station for researching and monitoring the giant panda, but it is no longer in use. A visit here makes a nice 1- to 2-hour hike on a steep trail that flattens out the last mile or so. The habitat behind the station is prime forest, and Darjeeling woodpeckers and various species of pheasants have been sighted here.

The cost of a guide from the Panda Museum's Tourist Desk is ¥60 ($7.50) for the round-trip trek (¥100/$13 with lunch) and ¥40 ($5) for the taxi to and from the beginning of the trail, which is about 9km (5½ miles) southwest of the museum. Hire your own taxi round-trip for ¥15 to ¥20 ($2–$2.50), but you'll have to agree on a pick-up time. Allow about 3 hours. Pay at the end.

To go on your own from Shāwān, walk south on the main road until you reach a small village. Look for a large sign by the road with two big Chinese characters (for "Distillery"). Cross the wooden bridge on your left and follow it to the mountain. If at that point you regret not hiring a guide, you may be able to persuade one of the farmers on this patch of land to lead you. Unless you speak Chinese, you'll need the Chinese characters to indicate your destination and a calculator to settle on a fee. Expect to pay around ¥20 ($2.50)—more if weather conditions are poor or if the farmer has something else to do.

WHERE TO STAY

Before China's push to join the WTO, Chinese and foreigners were commonly charged different prices for the same service or merchandise. Now, the two-tiered pricing approach has virtually disappeared in large cities. Not so in

Wòlóng. Hotels make no attempt to hide the fact that they charge "foreign guests" a few dollars more for a room.

Panda Inn (Xióngmāo Shānzhuāng) More upscale than Shāwān's hotels, this pleasant inn has close connections with the Giant Panda Breeding Center, conveniently nearby. Rooms are well maintained and clean, and pleasant views through picture windows make up for the bland interiors. Although there's no town to explore, tour groups are better-managed here than in Shāwān, and the inn has the best restaurant in town.

Hétáo Píng (next to the Panda Breeding Station). ✆ **0837/624-3028.** Fax 0837/624-3014. 53 units. ¥320 ($40). 30%–50% discounts. **Amenities:** Restaurant; limited room service. *In room:* TV, 24-hr. hot water.

Sìtōng Bīnguǎn Renovated in 2001, this small, well-maintained hotel is the best place to stay in Shāwān (Wòlóng Town), and only a short walk from the museum. Rooms face a courtyard and some have back windows with a view of mountaintops. Standard rooms are basic; the bathrooms have squat toilets and showers without cubicles, but they also have welcome heat lamps. Two- and three-room suites with Western toilets and separate showers are a good value for groups of four to six. The staff are eager to please, and the restaurant prepares simple but excellent dishes.

Shāwān. Take the fork off the main street and walk to the end. Everyone in town knows this hotel. ✆ **0837/624-6872.** Fax 0837/624-6771. 48 units. ¥150–¥200 ($19–$25) standard room; ¥460–¥660 ($57–$82) 2–3-room suites. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; limited room service. *In room:* TV.

WHERE TO DINE

The **Sìtōng Bīnguǎn** prepares good, simple dishes. For more variety, try the **Panda Inn** (see "Where to Stay," above)**.** There are also a couple of small restaurants and stands on Shāwān's main street.

6 Jiŭzhài Gōu (Valley of Nine Villages)

Sìchuān Province, 450km (280 miles) N of Chéngdū, 102km (63 miles) NE of Sōngpān

Photographs of the World Heritage nature site, Jiŭzhài Gōu, look retouched. The lakes are too "jewel-like," the pools too "limpid," the fall colors too "flaming." Surprisingly, the brochures aren't lying; they aren't even exaggerating. For sheer scenic beauty and variety, Jiŭzhài Gōu has it all: dense forest, green meadow, rivers, rapids, ribbon lakes in various shades of blue and green, chalky shoals, and waterfalls of every kind—long and narrow, short and wide, terraced, rushing, and cascading. Of cultural interest are the six remaining Tibetan villages of the original nine from which this valley gets its name. Some 1,000 Tibetans, of 130 families, live within the site. And to facilitate sightseeing, so-called "green buses" run along special highways within the valley delivering passengers to various scenic spots. Another aid to tourism is a network of raised plank paths and wooden pavilions that afford visitors a proximity to natural wonders that would otherwise be unapproachable.

That said, you may lose your will to live just getting to Jiŭzhài Gōu from Chéngdū; you must then face the honking, belching traffic along the strip of hotels outside the main gate, not to mention the contagion of avarice that seems to have infected the town. Cabbies are in cahoots with the hotels; hotel managers beg bribes; the PSB is on the take; the place claims to be "green," but the air is polluted. It's not a pretty sight.

Jiŭzhài Gōu gets three stars for its scenery and is docked four for everything else. But despite the cons, few places on earth have prettier scenery, and except

for a few photo-taking forays, the majority of tourists stay on the bus, so it's not hard to find solitude along the plank paths. In the end, as much as I loathed the 12-hour ride on a smoke-filled bus and the tacky town outside the gate, the 2 days spent inside the reserve were absolutely worth it. Jiǔzhài Gōu can be seen in 1 day, but 2 is optimal.

The best time to go is from July to October, before the weather cools down significantly. Even at the height of summer, have a jacket on hand for rain and sudden temperature drops. To avoid crowds and get the best hotel discounts, come mid-week. Busy times are Chinese New Year, Labor Day week (1st week of May), and National Day week (1st week of Oct). Some hotels close between November and March. *Note:* For Chinese translations of selected establishments listed in this section, please turn to Appendix A.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE For now, the only major gateway to Jiǔzhài Gōu is Chéngdū, and the lone mode of mass transport is bus, but completion of the **Sōngpān Airport** 101km (63 miles) northeast of Jiǔzhài Gōu is expected in September 2003. Linking Jiǔzhài Gōu not only to the Sìchuān capital but to Kūnmíng, Xī'ān, and Lánzhōu, it will mean a tremendous increase in the number of tourists to this area.

Air-conditioned **buses** for ¥91 ($11) depart Chéngdū at 8am from the Xīn Nán Mén Bus Station and arrive approximately 12 hours later in Zhāngzhā Zhèn at the Long Distance Bus Station (Chángtú Qìchē Kèyùn Zhàn) behind the Jiǔtōng Bīnguǎn—leaving you the evening to check into a hotel and have dinner. Two return buses leave at 7am and 8am for ¥95 ($12). Buy tickets at least a day in advance. A bus leaves Chéngdū from the less convenient Chádiànzi Kèyùn Zhàn west of the city center at 8:40am and drops passengers near the Jiǔzhài Gōu entrance for ¥92 ($12).

GETTING AROUND Jiǔzhài Gōu's five designated scenic zones run along a Y-shaped route. Over 200 **shuttle buses** travel the 58km (36-mile) route from 7am until 6pm. The best sights and most of the plank paths are along the right branch, so if you haven't time to trace the entire route, go to the right first. If you're tempted to walk the full length, bear in mind that the distance from the entrance to the last scenic spot on this route—Yuánshǐ Sēnlín (Primeval Forest)—is about 32km (20 miles). For the best views, take the bus to the end and walk back. You can reboard at bus stops along the way. Very useful bilingual **tourist maps** are available for ¥5 (60¢) at the **Tourist's Center (Yóukè Zhōngxīn)** near the ticket office.

Note: Be sure to carry RMB. Only the five-star hotels accept credit cards. None accept traveler's checks, and only a few change U.S. dollars.

EXPLORING THE VALLEYS

With 2 days, using a combination of shuttle bus and walking, you can see all five scenic zones. For a more relaxed pace or extended walking, add a third day. Of the scenic zones, the two with the highest concentration of natural wonders are **Shùzhèng Jǐngqū** and **Rìzé Jǐngqū.** Each zone covers several miles and has wooden planks or stone paths that lead the visitor right up to waterfalls, across shoals, or to the edge of turquoise waters. These can be done in a day if that's all you have, or they can be spread over 2 days, leaving half of each day for wandering in the less-visited areas beyond **Panda Lake (Xióngmāo Hǎi)** to the right or beyond **Wǔcǎi Chí (Five-color Pool)** to the left. Admission to Jiǔzhài Gōu,

which is open from 7am to 6pm, is ¥145 ($18) per person, good for 2 days. The shuttle bus costs ¥90 ($11) per day.

WHERE TO STAY

For now, officials who say that tourists may not stay inside the park seem to be winning their battle with villagers who offer basic beds for around ¥20 ($2.50), and simple meals for ¥10 to ¥25 ($1.25–$3). Rooms have limited plumbing and no hot water, but some are in Tibetan style with brightly painted tables and window frames. If that appeals, inquire at the Zhārú Sì and at villages on the west side of the main road. You'll probably be asked to arrive after 6pm and leave before 7am, to avoid problems with officials.

Most visitors stay in one of the many hotels lining the 11km (7-mile) stretch of road outside Jiŭzhài Gōu Gōukŏu (Jiŭzhài Gŏu Entrance), identified on the map as Zhāngzhā Town.

EXPENSIVE

Jiŭzhài Gōu Dàjiŭdiàn (Jiŭzhài Gōu International Hotel) This immense hotel is Jiŭzhài Gōu's priciest and most luxurious. Rooms are elegantly appointed and include nice touches such as decorative pillows and throws of bright Tibetan fabric on the beds. The hotel has more restaurants and amenities than any other in town and, for now, is the only one with a swimming pool and sauna. The grounds include a 500-seat theater with revolving stage for nightly Tibetan song and dance performances.

Jiŭzhài Gōu Scenic Area (1.5km/1mile from entrance to Jiŭzhài Gōu). ✆ **0837/773-9988.** Fax 0837/773-9666. www.jiuzhaigouhotel.com. 566 units. ¥800–¥1,200 ($100–$150) standard room; ¥1,600–¥2,000 ($200–$250) suite. 20%–40% discounts, depending on occupancy. Some rates include breakfast. 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 10 restaurants; bar; indoor pool; gym; sauna; electronic game room; ticketing; business center; limited forex; limited room service; dry cleaning/laundry; Internet bar. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, dataport, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Xīngyŭ Guójì Dàjiŭdiàn (Xīngyŭ International Hotel) This perfectly comfortable four-star hotel opened in 2001 but already shows signs of wear. Fortunately, some newly renovated rooms are fresh and inviting. The price is the same; just ask for a better room. There are a few Tibetan touches, but for the most part, the rooms, lobby, and restaurants hold no surprises. Discounted prices are reasonable, and staff are friendly and professional. For the comfort of a pricier hotel (but without some of the five-star luxuries), this hotel serves well.

Jiŭzhài Gōu Scenic Area (under 1.5km/1mile from entrance to Jiŭzhài Gōu). ✆ **0837/773-9222.** Fax 0837/773-9773. xingyuhotel@scxingyu.com. 193 units. ¥520–¥780 ($65–$97) standard room; ¥1,680–¥2,800 ($210–$350) suite. Rates include breakfast. 20%–40% discounts. 15% service charge. No credit cards. Closed Nov–Dec. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; ticketing; business center; limited room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge in some rooms.

INEXPENSIVE

Jīnxīn Bīnguǎn Proximity to the Jiŭzhài Gōu entrance, reasonable rates with hefty discounts, and friendly staff are the best reasons to stay in this otherwise average three-star hotel. There are also a few standard rooms that have larger bathrooms with Jacuzzi for very little extra. Rooms are pleasantly decorated with Tibetan fabrics and patterns. Avoid rooms that are not in the main building—they tend to be dark and moldy. There are limited hours for hot water. Chéngdū's Jiāotōng Bīnguǎn (Traffic Hotel) has connections with this hotel, and can make reservations for you.

Jiǔzhài Gōu Scenic Area (300m/327 yards. from Jiǔzhài Gōu entrance). ✆ **0837/773-9599.** Fax 0837/773-9939. 153 units. ¥195–¥520 ($24–$65) standard room. 50%–60% discounts. Rates include breakfast. No credit cards. Closed roughly Dec–Mar, but dates vary. **Amenities:** Restaurant; ticketing; limited room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Yínyuàn Bīnguǎn Renovated in 2002, this small, few-frills hotel used to be Jiǔzhài Gōu's best—which says lots about how much building has taken place here in the last few years. Clean, good value, and staffed with cordial, conscientious people, it still doesn't come close to being the best anymore. Still, with only 60 rooms, it feels homier than most. Limited hours for hot water.

Jiǔzhài Gōu Scenic Area (150m/161 yards from Jiǔzhài Gōu entrance). ✆ **0837/773-4890.** Fax 0837/773-4114. 60 units. ¥160–¥400 ($20–$50) standard room; ¥560–¥600 ($70–$75) suite; ¥480 ($60) triple. 20%–50% discounts, depending on occupancy. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; ticketing; limited room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

WHERE TO DINE

Except for hotel restaurants, there aren't lots of dining choices. For inexpensive (but still overpriced) local food, try one of the several identical *huǒguō* (hot pot) restaurants on the main street of Zhāngzhā Town. Another option is to pay ¥160 ($20) for dinner and a performance of Qiāng and Tibetan folk entertainment, which includes dancing, singing, and audience participation. Tibetan-style barbecued mutton, Tibetan tea, and a ritual welcoming liqueur are included in the ticket price. The **Gésānglā Art Troupe (Gésānglā Yìshù Tuán)** performs twice nightly (at 7:30pm and 9:30pm) at Jiǔxīn Shānzhuāng (Jiǔxīn Mountain Villa), on the hotel strip a half-mile east of the Jiǔzhài Gōu entrance. For information, call ✆ **0837/773-9588.**

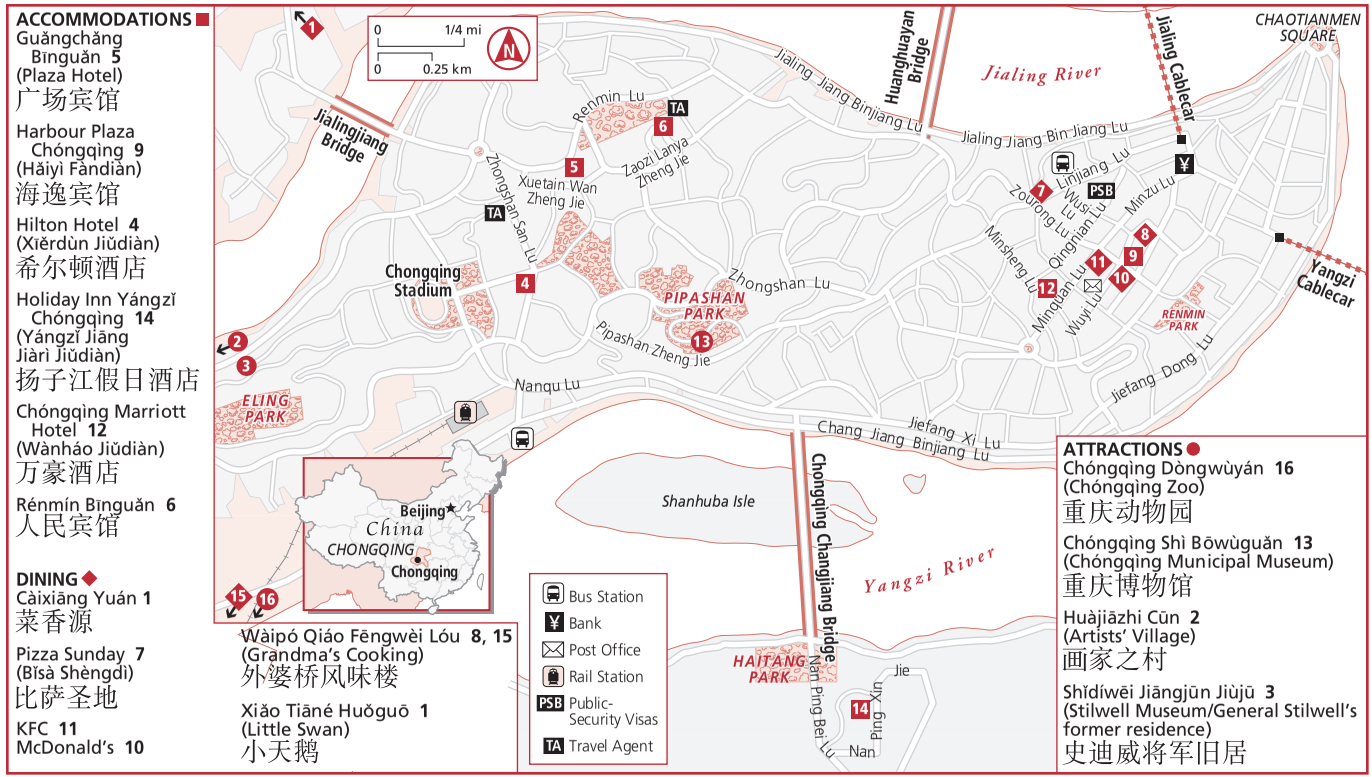
A snack bar selling kabobs, watermelon juice, pearl milk tea, and tofu on a stick is outside the Jiǔzhài Gōu entrance, next to the tourist center. Snacks are also sold inside the reserve, but they're overpriced and not very good.

7 Chóngqìng

Chóngqìng Municipality, 334km (208 miles) SE of Chéngdū, 1,346km (836 miles) S of Xī'ān, 1,000km (620 miles) upstream of Three Gorges Dam

If other major cities in China are undergoing face-lifts, Chóngqìng is having radical reconstructive surgery: In 1997, it became the fourth city to achieve the status of municipality (after Běijīng, Tiānjīn, and Shànghǎi). With summers so hot it's been dubbed one of China's Three Furnaces, and streets so steep that no one rides a bike, terrain and weather were once its chief claims to fame. Now, this cliffside city overlooking the confluence of the Cháng and Jiālíng rivers has much to boast about. Chóngqìng is the biggest metropolitan area in the world (surpassing Tokyo); it's got the world's biggest dam site downriver; it's in the midst of building the world's tallest skyscraper (the Chóngqìng Tower); and a 17-station monorail system will be up and running in 2005 (not a record breaker, but no mean feat). But whether all this development is a boom or a binge is yet to be seen.

As recently as the 19th century, Chóngqìng was a remote walled city. Even after the steam engine eased passage through the Three Gorges, few easterners had any reason or desire to make the trip. That all changed in 1938, when Hànkǒu fell to the Japanese and downriver residents made a mass exodus up the Cháng Jiāng (Yángzǐ River). Chóngqìng became China's last wartime capital, and after withstanding 3 years of Japanese bombing, the city never looked back.


ACCOMMODATIONS
Guǎngchǎng Bīnguǎn 5
(Plaza Hotel)
广场宾馆
Harbour Plaza Chóngqìng 9
(Hǎiyì Fàndiàn)
海逸宾馆
Hilton Hotel 4
(Xīěrdùn Jiǔdiàn)
希尔顿酒店
Holiday Inn Yángzǐ Chóngqìng 14
(Yángzǐ Jiāng Jiàrì Jiǔdiàn)
扬子江假日酒店
Chóngqìng Marriott Hotel 12
(Wànháo Jiǔdiàn)
万豪酒店
Rénmín Bīnguǎn 6
人民宾馆
DINING
Càixiāng Yuán 1
菜香源
Pizza Sunday 7
(Bīsà Shèngdì)
比萨圣地
KFC 11
McDonald's 10
Wàipó Qiáo Fēngwèi Lóu 8, 15
(Grandma's Cooking)
外婆桥风味楼
Xiǎo Tiāné Huǒguō 1
(Little Swan)
小天鹅
0 1/4 mi
0 0.25 km
Jialingjiang Bridge
Huanghuayan Bridge
Jialing River
Jialing Jiang Binjiang Lu
Jialing Jiang Bin Jiang Lu
Jialing Cablecar
CHAOTIANMEN SQUARE
Yangzi Cablecar
Renmin Lu
Zaozi Lanya Zheng Jie
Xuetain Wan Zheng Jie
Zhongshan San Lu
Chongqing Stadium
Zhongshan Lu
PIPASHAN PARK
Pipashan Zheng Jie
Linjiang Lu
Zourong Lu
Wusi Lu
Qinghuan Lu
Minzu Lu
Minsheng Lu
Minquan Lu
Wuyi Lu
RENMIN PARK
Jiefang Dong Lu
Nanqu Lu
ELING PARK
Jiefang Xi Lu
Chang Jiang Binjiang Lu
Shanhuba Isle
Chongqing Changjiang Bridge
Yangzi River
HAITANG PARK
Nan Ping Bei Lu
Nan Ping Xin Jie
China
CHONGQING
Beijing
Chongqing
Bus Station
Bank
Post Office
Rail Station
PSB Public-Security Visas
TA Travel Agent
ATTRACTIONS
Chóngqìng Dòngwùyán 16
(Chóngqìng Zoo)
重庆动物园
Chóngqìng Shì Bówùguǎn 13
(Chóngqìng Municipal Museum)
重庆博物馆
Huàjiāzhi Cūn 2
(Artists' Village)
画家之村
Shǐdíwēi Jiāngjūn Jiùjū 3
(Stilwell Museum/General Stilwell's former residence)
史迪威将军旧居
Chóngqìng

Very few of the old ramshackle neighborhoods rebuilt after the war have survived "urban improvement," and except for an old prison complex and a few small museums and memorials there is little evidence of earlier eras.

Most travelers come to Chóngqìng because it's the first or last stop on a Three Gorges cruise. But until recently, levels of sulfur dioxide and suspended air particles were so high that visitors couldn't wait to leave. As the city implements pollution control programs, that seems to be gradually changing. Chóngqìng's pleasures are modest, but there's enough here to make a 2- or 3-day stay enjoyable. The city is also just a 2-hour bus ride from the Buddhist Grottoes at Dàzú. *Note:* For Chinese translations of selected establishments listed in this section, please turn to Appendix A.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **Jiāngběi Airport** is 25km (15 miles) north of Chóngqìng, and 30 minutes by taxi (around ¥65/$8). It offers daily domestic service to Běijīng, Chéngdū, Guìlín, Hong Kong, Kūnmíng, Shànghǎi, and Xī'ān; it offers service to Lhasa on Tuesday and Saturday. International destinations include Tokyo, Seoul, Bangkok, and Düsseldorf. The Mínháng (CAAC) **airport shuttle bus** (✆ **023/6386-5824**) leaves every half hour from 6am to 6pm from Shàngqīng Sì for ¥15 ($1.90). Domestic and international air tickets are also on sale here from 7:30am to 6:30pm. **Dragonair** has offices in the Holiday Inn (Jiàrì Fàndiàn), Nánpíng Běi Lù 15 (✆ **023/6280-3380**).

The **Main Railway Station** and **Long-Distance Bus Station** are next to each other on Nánqū Lù, near the Yángzǐ River. **Trains** from Shànghǎi and Běijīng take approximately 44 and 35 hours, respectively. Trains to Chéngdū take approximately 10 hours. The overnight, leaving at 9:06pm and arriving the next morning at 7:29am, saves you the cost of a hotel for a night. Official reports claim that a new railway line scheduled to open in 2005 will cut the trip between Chóngqìng and Chéngdū to just 3 hours. The soft-seat waiting lounge is on the far right of the station complex.

Luxury **buses** with a uniformed attendant and bathroom onboard connect **Chóngqìng** to **Chéngdū;** the 4-hour trip costs ¥107 ($13). The bus makes two stops in Chóngqìng: the first, at Chénjiā Píng, for those going to the wharf; the second, at the Fùyuàn Bīnguǎn, next to the Long-Distance Bus Station. As you exit, ignore the throng of private drivers vying to overcharge you. Walk across the parking lot to the taxi queue in front of the railway station. Insist on using the meter. The ride to any of the major hotels is ¥5 to ¥10 (about $1). Large Volvo and Mercedes buses leave the Long Distance Bus Station for **Chéngdū** every half hour throughout the day for ¥110 ($4). Buses to **Lè Shān** leave from the Jiěfàng Bēi Qìchē Kèyùn Zhàn (Liberation Monument Bus Station) at Línjiāng Lù 60. (For Yángzǐ River travel, see section 9, "Middle Reaches of the Cháng Jiāng.")

GETTING AROUND There are three types of **taxis.** Rates for mid-range Xiàlì are ¥6 (75¢) for 3km (2 miles), then ¥1.40 (20¢) per kilometer. Add 50% from 10pm to 7am. In addition to the 10 bridges that span the Jiālíng and Yángzǐ rivers, there is a cable car line across each river. Leave from Xīnhuá Lù to cross the Yángzǐ for ¥2 (25¢), or leave from Cāngbái Lù to cross the Jiālíng for ¥1.50 (20¢). Cable cars run from 6:30am to 10:30pm. **Buses/trolleys** serve all parts of the city. Rides with air-conditioning are ¥1.50 to ¥2.50 (20¢–30¢); rides without are ¥1 to ¥1.50 (15¢–20¢). Cable cars and some buses/trolleys have attendants.

VISITOR INFORMATION **CITS** is located near the People's Square (Rénmín Guǎngchǎng). This branch, at 120 Zǎozi Lányā Zhèng Jiē, second floor (✆ **023/6385-0693;** fax 023/6385-0196; citscq@cta.cq.cn.), is particularly helpful. A move was planned at press time.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The main branch of **Bank of China** (open Mon–Fri 8:30am–noon and 2–5pm), north of Liberation Monument on the north side of Mínzú Lù, has full foreign-exchange services and an ATM. The branch catty-corner from Harbour Plaza Hotel, Zōurónɡ Lù at Bāyī Lù, has a 24-hour ATM and foreign-exchange service, but it doesn't cash traveler's checks.

Consulates Both the Canadian and United Kingdom consulates are in the Metropolitan Plaza building (Dàdūhuì Shāngshà) on Wǔyī Lù, and are open Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 5:30pm. The **Canadian Consulate** is in Suite 1705 (✆ **023/6373-8007;** cdncon@public.cta.cq.cn), and the **United Kingdom Consulate** is in Suite 2802 (✆ **023/6373-0321**). Take bus no. 306, 402, 413, or 601 to the Jiěfàng Bēi stop. From there, walk southeast on Zōurónɡ Lù to Wǔyī Lù. Metropolitan Plaza is next to the Harbour Plaza Hotel.

Internet Access The area around Liberation Monument has lots of Internet bars, including **Reader's Club (Dúzhě Jùlèbù),** open 24 hours and located on the third floor of the Xīnhuá Bookstore at Mínshēng Lù 181 (opposite Nǚrén Guǎngchǎng; ✆ **023/6371-6364**). Rates are ¥2 (25¢) per hour; less with membership card. Coffee and tea are served. Enter from Xīnhuá Shūdiàn or from the side door of the adjacent bank. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The main post office is near Jiěfàng Bēi (Liberation Monument), at Mínquán Lù 3.

Visa Extensions The **Administrative Division of Exit-Entry (Chūrùjìng Guǎnlǐ Chù)** processes visa extensions in 5 working days. Located at Wǔsì Lù 48, Fù 1 (✆ **028/8640-7067;** open Mon–Fri, 9–11:30am and 2–5pm), it's next to the Municipal PSB; enter on Shùnchénɡ Dàjiē. Take bus no. 16 or 64 to the Rénmín Zhōnɡ Lù and Wénwǔ Lù junction.

EXPLORING CHÓNGQÌNG

Chóngqìng Shì Bówùguǎn (Chóngqìng Municipal Museum) All Chinese museums were once as drab, dusty, and dark as this one is. Now, as more local governments put funds into raising their facilities to international standards, there is less reason to put up with moldy rooms absent of English signage and whole floors devoted to the sale of tacky modern paintings. Indeed, Chóngqìng does have plans to move this collection to a new building near People's Square. Until then, several items in this museum make the trip worthwhile.

Start with the second floor, which has a lovely collection of Táng and Sòng heads carved out of stone. Most are of Buddha, Guānyīn, and various bodhisattvas, but what distinguishes them are their human rather than heavenly miens. A fine collection of terra-cotta sculptures from an Eastern Hàn tomb is also on the second floor. Discovered in Chóngqìng north of the Yángzǐ, they are small, whimsical figurines of musicians, dancers, singers, and storytellers—a lively group to spend eternity with. The third-floor collections go back in time as far as the Shāng dynasty (ca. 1600–1045 B.C.). Of particular interest are the paulownia-wood "boat coffins" of the ancient Bā culture.

Pípa Shān Zhèng Jiē, left side on the way to Pípa Shān Park. Admission to the Natural History Museum (skip it!) and the City Museum, each ¥5 (60¢). 8:30am–5pm. Electric bus: no. 401, 402, 405. Bus: no. 109, 413, 418, 481 to Wénhuà Gōng stop on Zhōngshān Lù. A 10-min. walk up Pípa Shān Zhèng Jiē takes you to the City Museum and, further up the hill, Pípa Shān Park.

Gēlè Shān/Báigōng Guǎn/SACO (Gēlè Hill) Standing in a lovely setting with trees, shrubs, stone walkways, and a babbling brook, Báigōng Guǎn was originally a Sìchuān warlord's pied-à-terre, but it was taken over by the notoriously brutal Dài Lì—head of the Nationalist (KMT) secret police and guerrilla forces—and turned into a prison in 1939. Two years later, the U.S. spy agency SACO (Sino-American Cooperation Organization), which trained secret agents for the KMT, housed its servicemen here. It reverted to a prison in 1945, and it was here that the KMT slaughtered several hundred Communists and dissidents before retreating to Táiwān in 1949. The incident is known as the Bloodbath of 11/27, and many locals still come here to pay homage on that date.

The wooden buildings that were used as a prison are open to visitors. Photos of prisoners are displayed on the walls with poems and excerpts from letters—some in English translation—reflecting the political idealism of an earlier age.

Shāpíngbà Qū (3.2km/2 miles west of Hóngyán Cūn). Admission ¥4 (50¢); 4 prisons ¥10 ($1.25); 4 prisons and Hóngyán Hún Chénliè Guǎn ¥15 ($2). 8:30am–7pm. Bus: no. 210.

Stilwell Museum/Former Residence of General Stilwell (Shǐdīwēi Jiāngjūn Jiùjū) After Pearl Harbor, then-U.S. President Roosevelt sent Gen. Joseph Stilwell (1883–1946) to Chóngqìng as commander-in-chief of Allied forces in the China-Burma-India theater of the war. Unfortunately, "Vinegar Joe" and the KMT general he was supposed to advise—Chiang Kai-shek—had rather different agendas, not to mention temperaments, and in 1944, at Chiang's urging, Stilwell was relieved of his post. Nonetheless, his contribution to the Burma Road campaign was significant—reason enough for the local government to continue to maintain a museum honoring him. His disdain for Chiang must also have endeared him to the Party.

The museum—Stilwell's Chóngqìng residence—has a collection of newspaper clippings, photographs, letters, and Stilwell's personal belongings. A video tells the Chinese version of Stilwell's tour of duty and includes rare clips. Explanations are in English and Chinese. The Stilwell and Flying Tiger T-shirts sold here make unique gifts.

Jiālíng Xīn Cūn 63. ✆ **023/6360-9515.** Admission ¥10 ($1.25). No regular hours; doorman always on duty (or so it's claimed). Bus: no. 104, 215, 261 to Lǐzibà stop. By 2004 this will also be a monorail stop.

Chóngqìng Zoo (Chóngqìng Dòngwùyuán) If you're going to Chéngdū and have time to visit one of the panda breeding centers (in the northern suburbs or at Wòlóng), then don't bother with the Chóngqìng Zoo. But if this is your only chance to see pandas, consider spending part of a morning at the giant panda and red panda enclosures. To get to the red pandas, go to the left of the English introduction board and down the stairs. The outdoor enclosure has a half dozen extremely active small red pandas.

Don't bother with the rest of the zoo; it will only depress you.

Tip: The best chance of seeing pandas is during feeding—between 8:30 and 10:30am. If the pandas aren't out, poke your head in the office behind the English introduction board and ask the zoo warden if he'll feed them. Sometimes that's all it takes.

Jiǔlóng Pó Qū, Xījiāo Yī Cūn 1, in city's southeast quadrant. Admission ¥15 ($1.85). Zoo 6:30am–9pm summer; 7am–9pm winter. Panda enclosures 8:30–10:30am and 3:30–4:30pm. Bus: no. 341, 416 to Dòngwùyuán.

Artists' Village (Huàjiā zhi Cūn) Seventeen state-sponsored artists—some of them renowned—live in this complex of cottages overlooking the Jiālíng River. This sight is a favorite with tour groups who roll in for a quick buying frenzy before or after their Three Gorges tour. Even if you're not prepared to spend lots of money, the vine-covered studios and residences, connected by stone walkways and surrounded by small gardens, provide a more interesting respite from the traffic than just another city park. Each artist has a small studio, and visitors roam the grounds from one to the next. The colony goes back decades to the days when the function of art was to serve the state. There are few other places where the casual traveler can rub elbows with people who were part of that movement. Look for Niú Wén's pre- and post-1949 woodblock prints, which are rare finds.

Huá Cūn 24 (south bank of Jiālíng River near Huá Cūn bus stop; look for English sign at bus stop). ✆ **023/6331-3735.** 9am–6pm. Bus: no. 104, 215, 261 to Huá Cūn. Taxi from People's Square about ¥10 ($1.25). You will have to go through a guarded gate, so have the characters (from the map key) ready to show the guard.

Cíqìkǒu ★ This small neighborhood with cobblestone streets in the Shāpíng District is becoming popular with travelers who have a few days in Chóngqìng; as yet, it hasn't turned into a theme park. The two main streets—lined with modest eastern Sìchuān–style buildings—form a T from the entrance. Shops on the first street sell paintings, batik clothing, and other items geared mainly for tourists.

At the top of the T, a right turn leads to the wharf. Along the way are several teahouses and restaurants. One teahouse, Chuān Jù Zuòchàng Zhōngxīn, has **Sìchuān opera performances** several afternoons a month, from 2 to 5pm. The performers are retired singers and musicians. To find it, look on the left for a wooden board with blue lettering. Though there is no set schedule, performances are usually on the 1st, 5th, 10th, 15th, and 25th of the month. A cup of tea is ¥2 (25¢). At the **Qīngyùn Cháxuān,** the next tearoom, just a door or two down on the left, a group of retired musicians gathers afternoons to play traditional music until they feel like going home (2:30–7:30pm or until people leave).

SHOPPING

Carrefour Supermarket (Jiālèfú Chāoshì) is inside the Xīn Chóngqìng Building. It's open from 9am to 10:30pm; take bus no. 111 or 166 to the Xiǎo Shízì stop. The supermarket is absolutely crammed with customers because you can get anything here—and cheaply. **KFC** is inside the same building. A **Watson** drugstore is on the first floor of Metropolitan Plaza (Dàdūhuì Guǎngchǎng), next to the Harbour Plaza on Wǔyī Lù, 1 block southeast of Jiěfàng Bēi. This seven-floor indoor mall has restaurants, upscale and international clothing stores, and even an ice-skating rink on the sixth floor.

WHERE TO STAY

EXPENSIVE

Chóngqìng Marriott (Wànháo Jiǔdiàn) With its high-ceilinged lobby flanked by two sweeping staircases, palm trees, a steakhouse overlooking the rivers, and a Japanese restaurant with traditional architecture and decor, the Marriott is the most elegant hotel in town. Ask for one of the rooms above the 19th floor, which are slightly bigger and have separate bathroom and shower. Rooms with walk-in closets and bathroom window are an extra ¥80 ($10).

Qīngnián Lù 77 (corner of Qīngnián Lù and Mínshēng Lù). ✆ **023/6388-8888.** Fax 023/6388-8777. www.marriotthotels.com. 514 units. ¥1,480–¥1,780 ($180–$215) standard room; ¥1,780–¥2,580 ($215–$310) suite. 50%–60% discounts year-round; 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 306, 402, 413, 601 to

Jiěfàng Běi. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; 4 bars; indoor pool; health club; ticketing; business center; forex; 24-hr. room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV w/satellite channels, dataport, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Harbour Plaza Chóngqìng (Hǎiyì Fàndiàn) This five-star luxury hotel, which was fully renovated in 2001, has a convenient downtown location (next to deluxe shopping on the city's pedestrian mall) that's catty-corner to a 24-hour ATM. The new, enlarged reception area is open and airy. Guest rooms are decorated in rich blues and golds, and most have views of cityscape. Bathrooms are spacious and most have separate bath and shower. Though less glamorous than the Marriott, the Harbour Plaza still meets international standards in every way.

Wǔyī Lù (at Zōuróng Lù, 1 block southeast of Liberation Monument). ✆ **023/6370-0888.** Fax 023/6370-0778. www.harbour-plaza.com/hpcq. 390 units. ¥1,330–¥1,450 ($160–$175) standard room; ¥1,660–¥2,000 ($200–$240) suite. 50%–65% discounts year-round; 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 306, 402, 413, 601 to Jiěfàng Běi. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 4 bars; indoor pool; health club; ticketing; business center; forex; 24-hr. room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV w/satellite channels, IDD, dataport, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Hilton (Xīlěrdùn Jiǔdiàn) ★ Opened in 2002, this five-star hotel is one of Chóngqìng's finest, and highly recommended. Views are of the rivers and the Dàtiánwān Sport Stadium; rooms are attractively decorated. The hotel is well located near the business district and less than 3km (2 miles) from the railway station. It's also a short, interesting walk from Pípa Shān Gōngyuán and the City Museum. Plans for a women's floor are in the works.

Zhōngshān Sān Lù 139 (near Dàtiánwān Sport Stadium). ✆ **800/820-0600** or 023/6903-9999. Fax 023/6903-8738. www.hilton.com. 443 units. ¥1,440–¥1,680 ($180–$210) standard room; ¥2,160–¥3,280 ($270–$410) suite. 65% discounts year-round; 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 224, 368, 402, 411, 605 to Liǎng Lùkǒu stop. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants, 2 bars; indoor pool; health club; sauna; ticketing; business center; forex; 24-hr. room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, IDD, dataport, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Holiday Inn Yángzǐ Chóngqìng (Yángzǐ Jiāng Jiàrì Fàndiàn) Compared to the five-star Harbour, Hilton, and Marriott, this four-star isn't nearly as posh, nor can it boast a central location. But it does have beautiful views all around—on one side, the Cháng Jiāng, on the other, mountains. To compensate for the inconvenient location, a free shuttle service runs several times a day between the hotel and the French supermarket, Carrefour. The rooms are clean but slightly run down; bathrooms are small. The hotel feels like a Western budget inn, but even with the standard 50% discount, the rates aren't much better than those of a five-star property.

Nánpíng Běi Lù 15 (in Nán'ān District south of the Yángzǐ). ✆ **023/6280-3380.** Fax 023/6280-0884. www.holiday-inn.com/hotels/chgch. 320 units. ¥1,080–¥1,120 ($135–$140) standard room; ¥1,480–¥1,760 ($185–$220) suite. Additional ¥40 ($5) for rooms with Cháng Jiāng views. Most rates include breakfast. 50% discounts year-round; 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 304, 306, 402, 428, 901, 902. **Amenities:** 6 restaurants; bar; indoor pool; health club; ticketing; business center; forex; ATM; 24-hr. room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, dataport, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

MODERATE TO INEXPENSIVE

Guǎngchǎng Bīnguǎn (Plaza Hotel) Located opposite Rénmín Guǎngchǎng, this midsize three-star hotel is particularly good value for three people traveling together, even without the hefty discounts that are standard. With the discounts, all rooms are very reasonably priced. Room decor and furnishings are standard and forgettable, but the staff, outfitted in crisp uniforms, are warm and welcoming, despite (or perhaps, due to) the fact that few foreigners have discovered this hotel. There are two standard room types—A and B.

"A" rooms are slightly bigger and the bathroom ceilings slightly higher, but standard "B" rooms are perfectly acceptable. The difference isn't enough to warrant the additional $17 for an "A" room. The location puts guests within walking distance of the Municipal Museum, People's Square, People's Auditorium, and CITS.

Xuétiánwān Zhèng Jiē 2. ✆ **023/6389-6868.** Fax 023/6389-6260. 130 units. ¥328–¥468 ($41–$58) standard room; ¥788–¥888 ($98–$111) suite; ¥450 ($56) triple. 40%–50% discounts year-round. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 103, 162, 181, 261. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; ticketing; small business center; forex; room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar/fridge (suites only).

Rénmín Bīnguǎn Directly connected to the People's Auditorium, this mid-range hotel has a four-star east wing and a three-star south wing that isn't quite as plush, but is a good value for the price. The hotel has a central downtown location; a friendly, helpful staff; and a 1950s Russian architecture that offers a change from the usual. The south wing has several sizes of standards for different rates, so ask to see each option. The one room with the lowest rate (¥200/$25) is clean, but small and slightly mildewed. For ¥320 ($40) you get a bigger, airier room. But the east wing rooms are better still—with larger rooms and balconies in some units—worth the extra money.

Rénmín Lù 175 400015. ✆ **023/6385-6888.** 197 units. East wing ¥320–¥620 ($40–$77) standard room; south wing ¥198–¥320 ($25–$40) standard room; ¥360 ($45) large 2-room suite with balcony and large bathroom. Good value. Some rates include breakfast. 20% discount is standard. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 16, 19, 72. Minibus: no. 5. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; exercise room; ticketing; business center; forex; 24-hr. room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, fridge.

WHERE TO DINE

One of the dishes most identified with Sìchuān cooking (though it may have come from Mongolia) is hot pot or *huǒguō* (fire pot). It is so popular here that a block of Wǔyī Lù (just off Mínzú Lù) is called Huǒguō Jiē (Hot Pot Street). Street stalls and small restaurants serving this dish line the street, recognizable by their dining tables, the centers of which have a cooking pot with boiling broth and hot oil. Diners add meat, fish, sprouts, scallions, and any other ingredients they like to the pot. Once the submerged meat or vegetables are cooked, diners pluck pieces out with chopsticks and eat them plain or with a spicy dipping sauce. By tradition in both Sìchuān and Inner Mongolia, locals favor organ meats, intestines, brains, and chicken feet for this poor-man's stew, but these days, in restaurants, choices abound. Like the best meals, the best hot pots use ingredients that combine a variety of tastes, textures, shapes, and colors.

Near Liberation Monument there's a **McDonald's** on the corner of Zōuróng Lù and Wǔyī Lù, catty-corner from Harbour Plaza, and a **KFC** on Mínquán Lù at Jiěfàng Bēi.

Càixiāng Yuán ★ SÌCHUĀN Very popular with locals, this place serves traditional and nouveau Sìchuān. Strange-flavored duck *(guàiwèi Yāzi),* with its perfect blend of salty, sweet, tingling, hot, sour, savory, and fragrant flavors, is a favorite here, and for good reason.

Building C-4 Jiāzhōu Huāyuán (Jiāzhōu Garden in Yúběi District). ✆ **023/6762-9325.** Main courses ¥20–¥52 ($2.50–$6.50). No credit cards. 11:30am–2:30pm and 5:30–10pm. Bus: no. 465, 602 to Jiāzhōu Huāyuán.

Pizza Sunday (Bǐsà Shèngdi) PIZZA Of the many pizza choices, rosemary chicken is one of the best—with just the right blend of herbs and garlic. The crust could be thinner and more flavorful, but it's still a tasty slice.

Yúzhōng District, Línjiāng Mén Lù 1, Xiàndài Shūchéng (Modern Book City), 2nd floor. ✆ **023/6370-8349.** Meal for 2 ¥40 ($5).

Wàipó Qiáo Fēngwèi Lóu (Grandma's Cooking) ★★ SÌCHUĀN This extremely popular restaurant, which opened its second location in 2001, is more evidence that nostalgia is selling well in China. One manager, lumping over 500 years together, defined the cuisine as "Míng-Qīng," and a real *wàipó* (grandmother), dressed in simple garb, greets customers. The larger restaurant, in the Metropolitan Plaza, has a separate hot pot dining room next door that does an equally rousing business. Three of the best entrees in the main restaurant are *tiěbǎn shāo zhī yínxuěyú* (silver snow fish cooked on an iron plate), serves six; the slightly hot *qīngjiāo bào zǐjī* (baby chicken quick-fried with green pepper); and *guōbā ròupiàn* (pork with bamboo shoots over crispy rice). Faintly sweet corn cakes *(yùmǐ bǐng)* complement the latter two dishes well.

Two locations: Zōuróng Lù 68, Dàdūhuì Guǎngchǎng 7 lóu (Metopolitan Plaza, 7th floor near Jiěfàng Běi and next to Harbour Plaza Hotel). ✆ **023/6383-5988.** Bus: no. 306, 413, 601 to Jiěfàng Běi. 2nd location: TáodūChéngshì Jiǔdiàn èr Lóu (Táodū City Hotel, 2nd floor) Yángjiāpíng, Xījiào Lù 21 (near the zoo). ✆ 023/6878-1818. Meal for 2 ¥100 ($13). At press time, an English menu was in the works. 10:30am–2pm and 5–9pm.

Xiǎo Tiānέ Huǒguō (Little Swan) ★★ HOT POT One of the most popular hot pot restaurants in Sìchuān and beyond is a chain of 126 stores, the first of which opened over 20 years ago in Chóngqìng. Little Swan continues to be one of the best in town. This self-serve restaurant gives patrons a choice of hot or mild broth, and its buffet table of ingredients allows non-Mandarin speakers more control than usual over what goes into the pot.

Jiànxīn Běi Lù 78 ✆ **023/6785-5328.** Meal for 2 ¥30–¥80 ($3.50–$10). No credit cards. 11am–10pm. Bus: no. 181, 411, 601, 902 to Hǎiguān.

8 Dàzú (Dàzú Buddhist Grottoes) ★★★

Chóngqìng Municipality, 83km (52 miles) W of Chóngqìng, 251km (156 miles) SE of Chéngdū

Among the most impressive and affecting artistic monuments that have survived through the ages are the extensive Buddhist cave paintings, sculptures, and carvings of Dàtóng, Luòyáng, Dūnhuáng, and Dàzú. Of the four sites, **Dàzú's stone carvings,** executed between 892 and 1249, are among the subtlest and most sophisticated, and worth going out of your way to see.

An unusual aspect of Dàzú is that in addition to Buddhist images, it contains Daoist and Confucian statues and themes—not only in separate areas but, in rare instances, in the same cave. Initiated outside the monastic establishment, the Dàzú carvings also commemorate historical figures as well as the project's benefactors, including commoners, warriors, monks, and nuns. In addition to what these carvings reveal about artistic advances made from the late Táng to the late Sòng, the garments and ornaments, along with garden and architectural settings, shed much light on everyday life in ancient China.

Of the six largest sites scattered around the county seat of Dàzú, two are most worth a visit—**Běi Shān,** completed in the late Táng dynasty (618–907); and **Bǎodǐng Shān,** started and completed in the Sòng dynasty (960–1279). If you have time or interest for only one, make it Bǎodǐng Shān.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **Buses** leave Chóngqìng for Dàzú from the Long Distance Bus Station (next to the railway station) every 20 minutes. The earliest bus is at 7am; the last return bus is supposed to leave at 5:30pm, but if there aren't enough passengers, it doesn't go. It's best to be at the Dàzú bus station by 5pm

for the return trip to Chóngqìng. The 2-hour drive from Chóngqìng to Dàzú Xiàn Bus Station costs ¥31 to ¥37 ($3.85–$4.60). From the Dàzú Bus Station, catch a **minibus** for Bǎodǐng Shān. Buses depart as soon as they fill up. The half-hour ride each way costs ¥2.50 to ¥5 (30¢–60¢). Buses also depart from the small bus station in the north part of town for ¥2.50 (30¢). A **taxi** from Dàzú Xiàn to Bǎodǐng Shān is about ¥30 ($3.75).

Taking the **train** to Dàzú is slow and requires first going to Yóutíng; from Yóutíng, transfer to a bus going to the bus station. From the station, transfer to another bus to the grottoes. Whether coming from Chéngdū or Chóngqìng, the bus is considerably faster and more convenient.

TOURS & GUIDES Guided trips to Bǎodǐng Shān can be arranged at Chóngqìng **CITS,** Zǎozi Lányā Zhèng Jiē 120, second floor (✆ **023/6385-0693;** fax 023/6385-0196; citscq@cta.cq.cn). The ¥1,300 ($162) fee for one or two people includes admission to Bǎodǐng and Běi Shān, a guide, transportation, and lunch. Private, **English-speaking guides** can also be hired at the Bǎodǐng Shān CITS desk near the trolley parking lot. If you're lucky enough to get a good guide (a few are excellent), you will have a fascinating tour. But if you'd rather not take a chance, or you'd prefer to go at your own pace, English-language books give brief explanations of the more important carvings.

FAST FACTS

There are no useful services for visitors in Dàzú. Exchange money before you leave Chóngqìng.

EXPLORING DÀZÚ

Video cameras are permitted for a fee of ¥100 ($13), plus a ¥50 ($6.25) deposit for a permit. Plainclothes guards are stationed throughout the grotto area, so don't be tempted to tape without a permit. Still photography is allowed inside the grottoes except where signs indicate otherwise.

Bǎodǐng Shān ★★★ Carvings of the cliffside grottoes known as Dà Fó Wān (Big Buddha Cove) were initiated and directed by Zhào Zhìfèng, a self-styled Buddhist monk whose brand of Esoteric Buddhism incorporated current religious ideas and popular beliefs. Beginning in 1178 with the construction of Shèngshòu Temple at Xiǎo Fó Wān (Little Buddha Cove)—just north of Dà Fó Wān—the Bǎodǐng Shān project continued for 71 years, possibly halted by the Mongol offensive in Sìchuān. If Zhào lived that long (he'd have been 90) it would explain the unity of design and absence of repetition that mark Bǎodǐng Shān. The carvings are a series of instructive and cautionary scriptural stories arranged in order around a U-shaped cove with interludes of inscriptions and caves devoted to Buddhist deities. At the bottom curve of the U is a massive carving of a reclining **Sakyamuni Buddha** as he enters Nirvana (no. 11). It is just one of the many imposing sculptures at Bǎodǐng Shān. Others that should be noted include the stories of **parental devotion** (no. 15) and **Sakyamuni's filial piety** (no. 17). Local guides usually say these attest to the merging of Confucianism and Buddhism during the Sòng. But scholars see their inclusion as either a concession to Confucianism—when you want government endorsement, there's no point alienating folks—or, possibly, an answer to it from Buddhist scriptures. (In the parental devotion story, look for the nursing boy at the far right wearing the same split pants Chinese toddlers still wear today instead of diapers.) The gruesome **Hell of Knee-Chopping** (no. 20) captures the many faces of drunkenness (none flattering) without crossing the line into kitsch.

These carvings are first and foremost works of art. The last story in the cove (no. 30) depicts the taming of a water buffalo and is meant to be a metaphor for taming the mind in meditation. One of the most accomplished carvings in this cove is no. 8, the **Thousand-arm Avalokitesvara** (aka Guānyīn), said to be the only Thousand-arm Avalokitesvara that really has a thousand arms (1,007, actually). Remarkably, each of its hands is in a different pose. Expect to spend 1½ to 2 hours if you're exploring on your own, another hour if you've hired a guide.

Tip: The greatest obstacle to enjoying these caves is the crowds. The best time to visit Bǎodǐng Shān is at noon, when they go to lunch. Go to Běi Shān any time—tours usually skip it.

15km (9 miles) northeast of the town of Lónggāng Zhèn (often called Dàzú Xiàn). It's about a quarter-mile from the drop-off point (where the restaurants and souvenir stands are) to the entrance. Mini-trolley shuttle between parking lot and entrance ¥2 (25¢) one-way; ¥3 (35¢) round-trip. There's a private pay bathroom by the parking lot (5 máo/5¢) and another, cleaner restroom halfway to the entrance. No restrooms inside. Admission ¥60 ($7.50). Combination ticket for Bǎodǐng Shān and Běi Shān ¥85 ($11). 8:30am–5pm.

Běi Shān The problem with visiting Běi Shān after Bǎodǐng Shán is that it's a bit of a letdown. If you visit it first, though, you risk being glutted before properly feasting on the best. That said, Fó Wān (Buddha Cove), the cove at the top of Běi Shān, offers a fine series of religious and commemorative carvings, if somewhat less dazzling than the Sòng carvings. In 892, Wéi Jūnjìng, a military commander and imperial envoy, began carving Buddha images in what, at that time, was his encampment atop Běi Shān. That started a 250-year trend that resulted in the completion of nearly 10,000 statues scattered over the county by the end of the Sòng dynasty. Highlights of Běi Shān include the story of **Amitabha Buddha and his Pure Land** in Cave 245, which contains exquisite carved heads that look remarkably alive. Another is the statue of the **Bodhisattva Manjusri** in the largest cave at Fó Wān (no. 136). He appears high-minded and lofty, but it's the touch of self-satisfaction in his expression that captures his humanity and sets this statue apart.

2km (1¼ miles) north of the town of Lónggāng Zhèn (often called Dàzú Xiàn). Admission ¥40 ($5). Combination ticket for Běi Shān and Bǎodǐng Shān ¥85 ($11). 8:30am–5pm. Buses leave regularly from Dàzú Bus Station for ¥1 (15¢). A taxi from Dàzú Xiàn to Běi Shān is about ¥5 (60¢).

WHERE TO STAY

Dàzú Bīnguǎn This hotel and the Běi Shā Bīnguǎn accept foreign visitors, but the Dàzú, with comparable rates, is so far superior (and cleaner) that it's the only recommendation I'll make. Rooms are decorated without imagination and contain the usual twin beds with discount-colored bedspreads, but there is a range of rooms for two, making this hotel affordable for most. Rooms in the back wing are small and show wear; bigger, more recently renovated standards are in the front. Both have bathroms with combined bath and shower.

In the town of Lónggāng Zhèn, Dàzú County, Gōng Lóng Lù 47. From the Dàzú Bus Station, turn left (north) as you exit the station; cross the bridge over the Lài Xī River to its junction with Gōng Lóng Lù. Turn right (east). The hotel is about 275m (300 yd.) ahead on the right. ✆ **023/4372-1888.** Fax 023/4372-2827. 133 units. ¥180–¥400 ($23–$50) standard room. Rates include breakfast. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; room service. *In room:* A/C, TV.

WHERE TO DINE

The tourist town of Bǎodǐng Shān outside the entrance gate has a number of small restaurants, noodle shops, and kabob stands serving good, simple dishes at inflated (but still inexpensive) prices. It's usually the Qīngdǎo or imported beer that hikes the bill up; unless you ask for local, that's what you'll get.

9 Middle Reaches of the Cháng Jiāng

THE THREE GORGES DAM (SĀNXIÁ BÀ)

The dream of constructing an enormous dam to harness and utilize the power of the Cháng Jiāng (Yàngzǐ River) originally belonged to Sun Yat-sen in the early 1920s, but every Chinese leader since—including Máo and Dèng Xiǎopíng—has shared it. The appeal of this massive project to premiers and presidents may have more to do with classical Chinese flood myths than engineering logic. The most enduring is the story of Yǔ, who was born out of the belly of his father's corpse. Through superhuman feats of repositioning mountains and changing the courses of rivers, Yǔ quelled the great flood of the world and restored natural order. Selfless and moral, his efforts left his body half-withered, yet he went on to found the (semi-mythical) Xià dynasty (ca. 21st–16th centuries B.C.). There are also historical models of men who tamed rivers: Shǔ governor Lǐ Bīng supervised ancient China's largest irrigation project (256 B.C.) and is still admired for it; and the Suí Yángdì emperor (reigned 604–617) completed the building of the Grand Canal linking the north and south. Latest to see himself in the role of a new Yǔ out to suppress floods is the former premier Lǐ Péng (best remembered for suppressing the student democracy movement), who pushed approval of the dam through the National People's Congress in 1992, and with whom the dam is most identified, though he no longer holds office.

If all goes according to plan, the massive project will be finished in 2009, but whether it ensures Lǐ's fame or infamy is yet to be seen. It breaks so many records in terms of size, manpower utilized in its construction, volume of building materials (including 10 million lb. of cement), and projected energy output (equal to "10 nuclear power stations"), that there is no real precedent by which to assess the short-term, let alone long-term, effects. But that hasn't stopped pundits (and non-pundits) from trying.

The chief aims of the dam are flood control, power generation, safer navigation, and increased river shipping, but critics of the project cite more than a few concerns, such as the resettlement of 1 to 2 million people; the destruction of wildlife habitats, archaeological sites, and historical relics; and the environmental threat of trapped sewage and industrial waste.

DAM EFFECTS ALONG THE THREE GORGES ROUTE

Following are some of the immediate effects the 135m (443-ft.) water level is expected to have on sites along the Three Gorges route:

- The residents of Fēngdū have already been moved to the new city built across the river on higher ground. The mountain and kitsch, ghoulish temple complex with its sculptures of bugged-eyed demons and "scenes of hell" will remain, but the mountain will be a semi-island.
- The town of Shíbǎo Zhài will be submerged and the water level will reach the base of the fortress. Excursions will still be possible, but the intriguing old town is gone.
- Zhāngfēi Temple will be moved to higher ground across the river. The temple commemorates the upright Shǔ warrior who was beheaded by two dastardly commanders in his own army. The bulk of the temple and its collection were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. What stands is the restored building.
- Báidì Chéng (White Emperor City) will be half-submerged. Trackers' paths carved into the cliffs of Qūtáng Gorge will be submerged.

- Three-quarters of Wànxiàn will be inundated. The last quarter, renovated and developed, has become the new downtown.
- Fúlíng (site of ancient royal tombs of the Bā Kingdom and the port town of 150,000 people that is the setting of *River Town,* Peter Hessler's fine personal account) will be inundated. Excavation of the tombs is underway.
- There was talk of building an underwater viewing chamber for the ancient stone carvings at **White Crane Ridge,** said to be the world's oldest hydrological records. Recently, the talk has shifted to carving reproductions of the originals instead. Moving them has also been discussed.
- The Dàníng and Shénnóng gorges will be slightly diminished, but naturally not enough to stop tours. Boats will be able to venture further into these narrow gorges and provide a closer look at the ancient hanging coffins—among them a cluster of 24.
- The western part of Xīlíng Gorge will be submerged.
- The population of Bādōng has been moved upstream to the opposite side of the river. Landslide-prevention projects veil the nearby slopes.

TO CRUISE OR NOT TO CRUISE

Debate rages around the question of whether the **Three Gorges cruise** is the thrill of a lifetime or an overrated, overpriced yawn. Members of tour groups invariably rave about their luxury trip. The boats are plusher than they expected; the cabins roomier; the food better. If the scenery comes as a bit of a letdown—well, they weren't expecting *A Single Pebble.* And if the excursions aren't all they're cracked up to be, at least they're short. Perhaps one reason tour members find their Three Gorges cruise so delightful is that it puts a halt to the mania of touring for a few days.

While it's true that other parts of China have better scenery, prettiness isn't everything. The best part of these cruises is watching life on the river as it is today—in flux. A new city springs up on high, and a few hundred meters below it, the old city sits like a sloughed-off shell. If you choose to take an excursion, as most do, see "The Top Excursions," below, for the very best.

If you'd like to take the excursion but can't afford the steep cruise prices, cheaper tourist ferries and dirt-cheap passenger boats also make the trip. There

The River By Any Other Name

The name "Yangtze" is troublesome. English dictionaries usually give it two or three accepted pronunciations and an equal number of ways to spell it: Yangtze, Yangtse, Yángzǐ. The irony of it is that Chinese almost never use that name. As far back as the Zhōu dynasty (1045 B.C.–246 B.C.), China's longest river was simply called Jiāng, meaning "River." ("Hé," also meaning "River," was used to refer to the Yellow River, China's other great waterway.) Sometime in the 3rd century, Chinese started calling it the Cháng Jiāng (meaning "Long River"), and that's what it's called today. Theories abound on how the name Yángzǐ came about. Some say it came from Cantonese; others that it was a Western invention. In fact, in the 6th century the name Yángzǐ Jiāng started showing up in poetry to refer to a short stretch of the river near Yángzhōu. By the 19th century the name was applied to the whole river; and for a time, under the Republic, Yángzǐ Jiāng was even the official name. But it returned to Cháng Jiāng under the People's Republic, and that is the river's proper name.

are boats that sail all the way to Shànghǎi, but unless you're fanatical about river travel, limit your journey to the stretch between Chóngqìng and Yíchāng/Wǔhàn. From there eastward, the river widens and the scenery becomes decidedly prosaic, and train, bus, or plane is preferable.

The best times to go are September and October. In terms of weather, May, early June, and early November are risky, but they can be lovely. Summer is the rainy season, and winter is usually dry but quite cold. Fewer ships sail off season, and schedules are less reliable.

CRUISING INDUSTRY BE DAMMED?

No one, including cruise directors and travel agents, is entirely sure how the flooding of the Three Gorges all the way upstream to Chóngqìng will affect the Yángzǐ cruising industry. Though the rush is on to "see the Three Gorges before they change forever," for the next few years the high-water mark in the actual gorges (where land elevations range 800m–1,100m/2,625 ft.–3,609 ft.) will only reach 83m (172 ft.), just 4m (13 ft.) higher than before construction started. So, yes, the gorges will change, but perhaps not as dramatically as booking agents would have you believe.

THE CRUISE LINES

The following liners have the best English-speaking guides and the best ships. And after years of experience with foreign passengers, most have removed from their itineraries excursions that require a thorough familiarity with characters and events of the Three Kingdoms in order to enjoy them. Take advantage of off-season rates; book and buy in China; compare prices; bargain; and ask what the excursions are. The prices quoted here are rack rates, but 50% discounts are standard even during high season. Prices are expected to drop considerably after June 2003, when the "last chance" hype winds down for a few years—until the next inundation nears.

The cruising high seasons are April, May, September, and October. Shoulder seasons are late March, June, July, August, November, and early December. Some cruise ships offer specials in December, January, February, and March.

Orient Royal Cruises Orient Royal's *East King* and *East Queen* are arguably the plushest ships on the Yángzǐ—they're built to five-star standards—and they tie with the *Yellow Crane* (see the Presidential Cruises entry, below) for the best food. Their cruise directors, both from the Philippines, do a superior job of attending to passenger needs and special requests, and their Chinese river guides deliver expert commentary in well-spoken English. Standard cabins have twin beds, a desk, and small fridge. Orient Royal offers one route, between Chóngqìng and Yíchāng, for 4 days.

Orient Royal Cruise, Wǔhàn office. Xīnhuá Lù 316, 14th floor, E Zuò (Block E), Liángyóu Building. ✆ **888/664-4888** or 027/8576-9988. Fax 027/8576-6688. www.orientroyalcruise.com. 80 cabins. ¥5,920–¥6,400 ($740–$800) per person, standard cabin; ¥16,000 ($2,000) per person largest suite. Shore excursions ¥560 ($70) per person. 50%–60% discounts year-round. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 bars; exercise room; salon; massage; laundry. *In room:* A/C, closed-circuit TV, minibar/fridge, hair dryer on request.

Presidential Cruises The *Yellow Crane* is built to China's four-star standard, and its cabins aren't as spacious as those of Orient Royal, but the ship is attractively appointed and well staffed with an English-speaking crew. While the *Yellow Crane* lacks the slick promotion of Victoria and Orient Royal, the ship itself serves better food, is more luxurious than Victoria's ships, and very nearly meets the five-star standard of the *East King* and *East Queen.* Standard rooms are comparable in size and furnishing to those in Victoria Cruises' fleet.

The *Yellow Crane* travels between Chóngqìng and Wǔhàn. The downriver trip takes 3 days, upriver takes 4 days. Downstream passage is about $60 more than upstream. (CITS in Wǔhàn and Chóngqìng usually offers these for a couple of hundred dollars less. See contact information below under "Lower-Cost Cruise Alternatives: Local Passenger Boats & Tourist Ferries.")

Contact Wǔhàn Empress Travel, 15 Huìjì Lù, 7th floor Chánghàng Dàjiǔdiàn, Wǔhàn. ✆ **027/8286-5977.** Fax 027/8286-6351. 77 cabins. ¥4,400–¥5,600 ($550–$700) per person, standard cabin. 50% discounts. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; exercise room; forex;. salon; massage; laundry. *In room:* A/C, closed-circuit TV, hair dryer on request.

Victoria Cruises Based in New York, this is one of the few Western-managed lines. At one time, Victoria had the most luxurious liners on the Yángzǐ. While they still offer first-rate cruises with some of the best English-speaking cruise directors and river guides, other cruise lines equal or surpass their ships' cabins, kitchen, and facilities, and are equally well-staffed. Standard cabins have twin beds and writing desk, but are slightly smaller than Orient Royal's *East King* and *East Queen,* which have the largest standard cabins on the river.

Victoria offers two routes: between Chóngqìng and Wǔhàn (downriver 4 days, upriver 6 days); and between Chóngqìng and Nánjīng (downriver 8 days, upriver 9 days).

57–08 39th Ave., Woodside, NY 11377. ✆ **800/348-8084** or 212/818-1680. Fax 212/818-9889. www.victoriacruises.com. 74–87 cabins. Cruise between Chóngqìng and Wǔhàn: ¥6,000–¥6,400 ($750–$800) per person, standard cabin; ¥16,000 ($2,000) per person largest suite. Shore excursion ¥680 ($85) per person. Cruise between Chóngqìng and Nánjīng: ¥11,200–¥12,000 ($1,400–$1,500) per person, standard cabin. Shore excursion ¥1,800 ($225). 50%–60% discounts year-round; AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; exercise room; forex; salon; massage; acupuncture; laundry. *In room:* A/C, closed-circuit TV, hair dryer on request.

The Top Excursions

One of the best excursions is to **Shíbǎo Zhài (Stone Treasure Fortress).** This square-edged **red pagoda** built in the 18th century hugs the cliff and is an elegant vision from the river. The climb up its 12 narrow staircases is only difficult when other tour groups are pressing from behind or blocking the way in front. Since the descent is down a back staircase, just let them all go ahead. Inside, look for the two "magic" holes. The first is the **Hole of the Greedy Monk.** As the story goes, when monks lived in the tower, the hole spouted just enough rice for their daily rations. One monk, thinking he'd like rations to sell in the market, tried to make the hole bigger. His avarice shut the source for good. Of the second hole, it is said that if you drop a duck down it **(Duck Tossing Hole),** within seconds you'll see the duck floating far below on the river.

Close to the top of the pagoda, if you peek under the **arched bridge** (which is meant to be crossed in three steps or less), you'll get a good look at a *wáwa yú*—the **giant Chinese salamander** that supposedly cries like a baby. This one has been here for years—how it survives is a mystery. On the way down, as you exit the tower, look for the old gentleman who sells cups of his home-brewed rice wine for ¥5 (65¢); the wine is sweet and mild.

For impressive scenery, the half-day trip up **Shénnóng Stream** (near Bǎdōng) is the best of the excursions. Cruise passengers board a ferry that takes you to Shénóng Xī. There, you climb into "peapod" boats that are rowed and pulled upstream by trackers (in shorts and handmade sandals), most of whom are farmers in the off season. Each boat has a female guide whose English isn't always up to the task, but she makes up for it by singing a Tǔjiā minority song for the

group on the return trip. If the trackers are in the mood, one or two will join in. The scenery on this narrow stream is probably closer to what most travelers expect of the Three Gorges. **Towering cliffs** rise on either bank, and the water is crystal clear. On rare occasions, passengers catch sight of **monkeys** along the cliffs. The trackers used to go only far enough to glimpse the first **hanging coffin,** but now that the water level has risen, they may continue farther (though time is a factor, too). Depending on the ship and water conditions, you may go instead to the small gorges of the **Dàníng River** (near Wū Shān), where the scenery is equally beautiful and monkeys are more often sighted.

Whether or not you have any interest in engineering or construction, the sheer immensity of the **Three Gorges Dam Site** at **Sǎndòu Píng** makes this worth a visit. Not only is it a unique photo opportunity, its monumental size lends it the visual (if not yet the historical) power of the Great Wall or Xī'ān's Terra-Cotta Warriors. The luxury cruise ships usually include it on their itineraries, while local tourist ferries don't. Before booking, make sure it's included. Its absence from the itinerary is reason enough to look elsewhere.

LOWER-COST CRUISE ALTERNATIVES: LOCAL PASSENGER BOATS & TOURIST FERRIES

Yángzǐ River supercheap **passenger boats** depart from Wǔhàn (for upriver trips) and from Chóngqìng (for downriver trips) year-round, but their facilities are foul, and so is the food. Their raison d'être is transport, not tourism, so they make no effort to go through the gorges in the light of day, and naturally there are no tourist excursions.

Numerous Chinese **tourist ferries** operate on the Yángzǐ, some of them with quite comfortable cabins and facilities. Management and staff are not used to foreign travelers and they rarely speak English, but the price, even for first class, is considerably less than the price on a luxury ship. Fourth-class passage from **Chóngqìng to Wǔhàn** starts at ¥284 ($36) and isn't much better than ferry accommodation—a bunk in an eight-person dorm with a filthy toilet down the hall. Prices for first-class passage (2-bed cabin with private shower/toilet), excluding meals and excursions, start at ¥1,506 ($188) per person. Since you can pay on board or at the site for excursions, make sure they're *not* included in your ticket price, giving you more flexibility. Typically, excursions are to Fēngdū, Shíbǎo Zhài, and the Little Three Gorges, but these ships do not stop at the Three Gorges Dam construction site. First-class passage from **Chóngqìng to Nánjīng** starts at ¥2,021 ($253); **Chóngqìng to Shànghǎi** is ¥2,265 ($283). They can be booked in Chóngqìng inside the Navigation Office Building at Cháotiān Mén near the Cháotiān Mén Hotel, but you probably won't find an English speaker. Beware of so-called "government-run tour agencies" along the wharf; they are likely to charge much higher fees than the actual ticket cost. And be sure to ask which pier your boat will depart from. On the downstream passage, avoid a night in Yíchāng and a 4-hour bus ride from Yíchāng to Wǔhàn by booking a ticket all the way to Wǔhàn.

In this instance, the better way to book is through **China International Travel Service (CITS)** in Wǔhàn, Táiběi Yī Lù 26, 7th floor, Xiǎo Nán Hú Building (✆ **027-8578-4100;** fax 027-8578-4089; citswuh@public.wh.hb.cn). In Chóngqìng, CITS is at Zǎoz Lányā Zhèng Jiē 120 (✆ **023-6385-0693;** fax 023-6385-0196; citscq@cta.cq.cn). The booking fee of ¥50 ($6.25) is worth every cent. The agents in the international division of both these offices are unusually well informed and helpful, and speak excellent English.

10 Wŭhàn

Húběi Province, 1,125km (699 miles) W of Shànghăi, 1,354km (841 miles) E of Chóngqìng, 1,047km (650 miles) SE of Xī'ān

Wŭhàn is primarily an industrial and business center. Were it not for the fact that many of the Three Gorges tours begin or terminate in Wŭhàn, few Western tourists would ever make it here. However, trisected by the Yángzĭ River and its longest tributary, the Hànshuĭ, and dotted with a hundred-plus lakes and scores of parks, this city of 4.86 million urban residents is an agreeable place to spend a couple of days. Three districts—Wŭchāng, Hànyáng, and Hànkŏu—which used to be separate cities, comprise present-day Wŭhàn. Avoid summers when the city inevitably lives up to its reputation as one of China's Three Furnaces.

Wŭhàn is also the gateway to the Daoist mountain Wŭdāng Shān.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **Tiānhé Airport** is 26km (16 miles) northwest of Wŭhàn. Destinations include Bĕijīng (6–7 flights daily); Guăngzhōu (at least 5 flights daily); Hong Kong (1 to 2 flights daily); Shànghăi (7 flights daily); Chéngdū (1 to 4 flights daily); Chóngqìng (daily); and Fukuoka (2 weekly).

An **airport coach** between the airport and Hànkŏu Railway Station departs when full; board near the airport entrance. The trip takes 1 hour and costs ¥15 ($1.85). **Complimentary shuttle buses** to the airport leave from the China Southern (Nánfāng Hángkōng Gōngsī) office on Hángkōng Lú 2 hours before their flights. Buses from the airport to town leave 1 to 2 hours after China Southern arrivals. The trip takes 30 minutes. A **taxi** to Hànkŏu should be ¥50 to ¥70 ($6.25–$8.75), plus a ¥15 ($1.85) toll. Stand in the taxi queue and use the meter. Ignore independent drivers who will offer to drive you for hundreds of *yuán.*

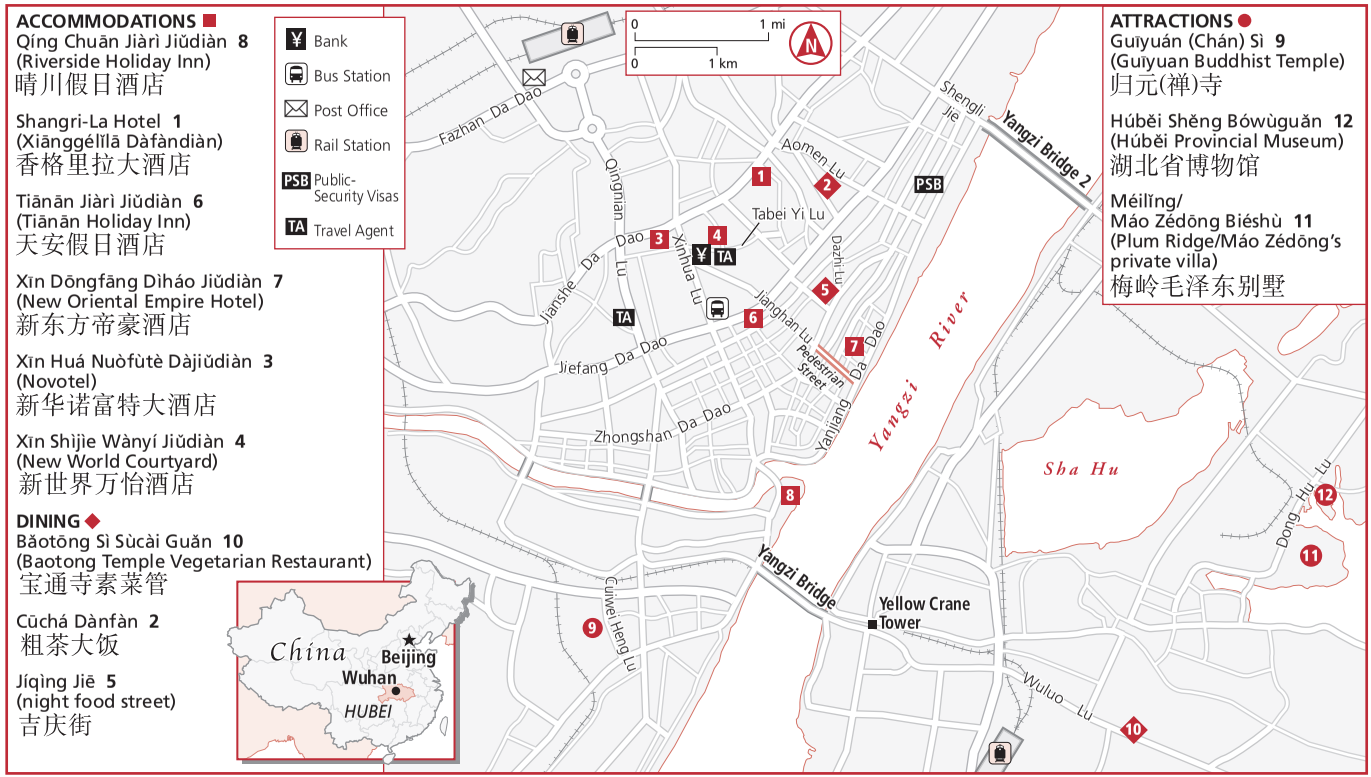
Wŭhàn has a number of **railway stations,** but the two major terminals are **Hànkŏu Huŏchē Zhàn** (mostly northbound) and **Wŭchāng Huŏchē Zhàn** (mostly southbound). Major connections from Wŭchāng Station are Bĕijīng (T37/T38, T79/T80; 12–13 hr.; hard sleeper ¥246–¥345/$31–$43); Guăngzhōu (2269/2270; 15½ hr.; hard sleeper ¥240/$30); Kūnmíng (K109/K110; 9½ hr.; hard sleeper ¥346/$43); and Shànghăi (K122/123; 17 hr.; hard sleeper ¥281/$35). Major connections with Hànkŏu Station are fewer: Bĕijīng (T77/T78; 12 hr.; hard sleeper ¥281/$35); and Chóngqìng (T257/T258; 15 hr.; hard sleeper ¥246/$31).

Tickets can be booked 3 days in advance at the respective stations. Hotels and CITS will book tickets for a ¥50 ($6.25) fee.

The two main **long distance bus stations** are the **Hànkŏu Chángtú Qìchē Zhàn** on Jiĕfàng Dàdào at the Yŏuyì Lù intersection (mostly northbound), and the **Wŭchāng Chángtú Qìchē Zhàn,** northeast of the railway station on Wŭluò Lù (mostly southbound). Buses for Shànghăi leave from both stations (15½ hr.; ¥320/$40). It's best to buy tickets a day in advance.

A **light rail** line is under construction and scheduled to begin operating in 2004. It will run along the old rail line on Jīng-Hàn Dàdào and make stops every kilometer.

GETTING AROUND Standard **taxi** rates are: ¥8 ($1) for 3km (2 miles), then ¥1.40 (20¢) for each additional kilometer up to 7km. Above 7km (4⅓ miles), add 50% per kilometer. ***Tip:*** The Hàn Shuĭ Bridge lets taxis with even-numbered license plates cross on even-numbered days and odd-numbered plates on odd-numbered days. If a taxi refuses you, that's usually the reason.


ACCOMMODATIONS ■
Qíng Chuān Jiàrì Jiǔdiàn 8
(Riverside Holiday Inn)
晴川假日酒店
Shangri-La Hotel 1
(Xiānggélǐlā Dàfàndiàn)
香格里拉大酒店
Tiānān Jiàrì Jiǔdiàn 6
(Tiānān Holiday Inn)
天安假日酒店
Xīn Dōngfāng Dìháo Jiǔdiàn 7
(New Oriental Empire Hotel)
新东方帝豪酒店
Xīn Huá Nuòfùtè Dàjiǔdiàn 3
(Novotel)
新华诺富特大酒店
Xīn Shìjìe Wànyí Jiǔdiàn 4
(New World Courtyard)
新世界万怡酒店
DINING ◆
Bǎotōng Sì Sùcài Guǎn 10
(Baotong Temple Vegetarian Restaurant)
宝通寺素菜管
Cūchá Dànfàn 2
粗茶大饭
Jíqìng Jiē 5
(night food street)
吉庆街
Bank
Bus Station
Post Office
Rail Station
PSB Public-Security Visas
TA Travel Agent
0 1 mi
0 1 km
N
China
Beijing
Wuhan
HUBEI
Fazhan Da Dao
Qinghan Lu
Jianshe Da Dao
Jiefang Da Dao
Zhongshan Da Dao
Xinhua Lu
Jianghan Lu Pedestrian Street
Dazhi Lu
Aomen Lu
Tabei Yi Lu
Shengli Jie
Yangzi Bridge 2
Da Dao
Yanliang
Yangzi River
Sha Hu
Dong Hu Lu
Yangzi Bridge
Yellow Crane Tower
Cuiwei Heng Lu
Wuluo Lu
ATTRACTIONS ●
Guīyuán (Chán) Sì 9
(Guiyuan Buddhist Temple)
归元(禅)寺
Húběi Shěng Bówùguǎn 12
(Húběi Provincial Museum)
湖北省博物馆
Méilǐng/
Máo Zédōng Biéshù 11
(Plum Ridge/Máo Zédōng's private villa)
梅岭毛泽东别墅

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMS Wǔhàn has no ATM machines that accept foreign cards. There's a large **Bank of China** just off the pedestrian street at Zhōngshān Dàdào 593 (at the junction with Jiānghàn Lù; look for a stately old European concession building near the overhead walkway). Foreign exchange is Monday through Friday from 8:30am to noon and 1:30 to 5pm. Cash advances on credit cards are available during the same hours, as well as on weekends from 8:30am to 5pm.

Internet Access Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office A useful post office is at the west side of the railway station opposite the city bus terminal. There's another one on the corner of Qīngnián Lù and Hángkōng Lù. Hours are from 8am to noon and 2:30 to 5:30pm.

Tours **China International Travel Service (CITS)** is exceptionally helpful and straightforward about prices. They book flights, train rides, and cruises, and arrange guided tours. CITS is located at Táiběi Yī Lù 26, 7th floor, Xiǎo Nán Hú Building, across from New World Courtyard (✆ **027/8578-4100;** fax 027/8578-4089; citswuh@public.wh.hb.cn).

Visa Extensions Applications are available at the **Gōngānjú Wàishì Kē (PSB Department of Foreign Affairs)** at Shènglì Jiē 306 (✆ **027/8271-2355**), which is open Monday through Friday from 9 to 11:30am and 2 to 5pm. The process takes 3 working days.

EXPLORING WǓHÀN

Guīyuán (Chán) Sì (Guīyuán Buddhist Temple) Best known for its hall of 500 gilded *luóhàn* (enlightened disciples), each in a different posture and having distinct features, this temple was founded in the mid–17th century by the monk Bái Guāng. The present buildings date from the late Qīng dynasty to the beginning of the Republican era (1911–1949), but the *luóhàn* were sculpted between 1822 and 1831. Men proceed to the left and women to the right, counting one *luóhàn* until the number equals their age. They note the number that designates that statue and, on their way out, for ¥3 (35¢) they buy the corresponding "*luóhàn* card," which tells their fortune. In the sutra library at the far end of the complex is a pretty jade Buddha with Indian influence that dates to the Northern Wèi dynasty (4th–5th c.).

Cuìwēi Héng Lù no. 20. ✆ **027/8283-2707.** Admission ¥10 ($1.25). 8am–4:30pm. Bus: no. 401 is the only bus that can enter the narrow Cuìwēi Héng Lù, but bus nos. 6 and 528 run along Yīngwǔ Dàdào, which intersects Cuìwēi Héng Lù. From this intersection, it's a short walk to Guīyuán.

Húběi Shěng Bówùguǎn (Húběi Provincial Museum) ★★ "When the Master was in Qí he heard the Shào (ceremonial music) and for three months was oblivious to the taste of food. He marveled, 'I never expected music to do this to me.'" –*The Analects,* Confucius

Since no musical notations survive from the time of Confucius (ca. 551–479 B.C.), there's no way of knowing what the music he refers to above sounded like, but thanks to the excavation in 1978 of the intact tomb of Marquis Yǐ of Zēng (d. ca. 433 B.C.), visitors to this museum can see some of the actual instruments on which the music was played. In addition to an ensemble of ancient musical instruments, the tomb included coffins, gold and jade decorative items, weapons, and impressive bronze- and lacquerware from China's Warring States period (474–221 B.C.) The centerpiece of the exhibition is a huge set of 65 bronze chime bells, said to be the heaviest and possibly oldest extant musical

instrument in the world. Inscriptions on the bells and hooks that hold them constitute the earliest known work on musicology. To give visitors an idea of how the bells were played and how their pentatonic scale sounded, musicians give an excellent 20-minute performance on classical instruments, which include replicas of the bronze bells. The performance schedule depends on the number of visitors. With the bell performance, give yourself about 2 hours here.

Wǔchāng, Dōng Hú Lù no. 188. ✆ **027/8679-4127.** Admission ¥30 ($3.75). 8–11:30am and 1:30–4:30pm. Bus: no. 14, 578.

Méilǐng/Máo Zédōng Biéshù ("Plum Ridge"/Máo Zédōng's Private Villa) If you have an extra hour or so after visiting the Provincial Museum (above), Máo's second-favorite pied-à-terre (after Běidài Hé) is a pleasant 10-minute walk from the museum. Built in 1958 as one of Máo's several private retreats, it was here that he hosted notables as diverse as labor activist Anna Louise Strong and U.S. president Richard Nixon. There are no English signs or explanations, but they're not necessary. The separate bedrooms of Máo and his wife Jiāng Qīng are as interesting for their plainness as Máo's private swimming pool is noted for its excessive size. Personal effects, such as Máo's blood-pressure gauge and his cherry-red house slippers, speak for themselves. However, those who don't read Chinese will miss such tidbits as what the chairman liked to eat (coarse multigrains and local snacks) and what Jiāng Qīng's hobbies were (photography, and that favored pastime of ambitious First Ladies—amassing shoes). Off the porch outside Jiāng Qīng's bedroom is an unmarked vault-door leading to the dank underground tunnels that would have sheltered Máo and his entourage in an emergency.

Dōnghú Lù no. 56. ✆ **027/8679-6106.** Admission ¥10 ($1.25). 8am–5pm; Bus: no. 578, 709, 14, 701; get off at the Provincial Museum, then follow the tree-lined drive behind the old museum building several hundred meters (a 10- to 15-min. walk).

SHOPPING & STROLLING

A few years ago, a half-mile stretch of **Jiānghàn Street** (between Jiānghàn Dà Dào and the wharf) was closed to motor traffic, and old stores were replaced with trendy new ones.

The street is a popular place to stroll, especially on hot summer evenings. If you walk south from Jiānghàn Street to the wharf, you'll get to the Customs Building and the former **foreign concession** area of Hànkǒu, which under the Treaty of Tiānjīn was forced open to British trade in 1859. The dozen or so remaining buildings in the European style of the 1920s and 1930s are spread along the wharf on **Yánjiāng Dàdào** (a left turn off the pedestrian st.). A number of the buildings (which include the Russian police station, the former German and U.S. consulates, several banks, businesses, and living quarters) are identified by signs in English. In efforts to entice foreign investors, Wǔhàn's mayor has invited overseas businesses to set up offices in these historical buildings.

The **Xīn Shìjiè Bǎihuò Shāngchǎng (New World Department Store)** on Jiànshè Dàdào (around the corner from Novotel Hotel) has a large supermarket on the basement level.

WHERE TO STAY

EXPENSIVE

Shangri-La Hotel (Xiānggélǐlā Dàfàndiàn) Whatever the time of day, the lobby and cafe of this international hotel is abuzz with businesspeople and

tourists. Its guest rooms are large, comfortable, and attractive—but nothing out of the ordinary for this level of hotel. Bathrooms are large and well designed, with separate shower cubicles.

Jiànshè Dàdào 700. ✆ **027/8580-6868.** Fax 027/8577-6868. www.shangri-la.com/eng/hotel/14. 507 units. ¥1,340–¥1,432 ($167–$179) standard room. Some rates include breakfast. 20%–40% discount available; 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 509 from railway station. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 bars; indoor pool; health club; sauna; ticketing; business center; forex; 24-hr. room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, dataport, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

MODERATE

Qíng Chuān Jiàrì Jiǔdiàn (Riverside Holiday Inn) *Kids* Perched on the west bank of the Yángzǐ River across from the Yellow Crane Tower—emblem of Wǔhàn—this four-star hotel, built in 1999, has the best views in the city. The rooms themselves are immaculate and comfortably appointed even if the decor isn't inspired. Hefty discounts, a children's center, weekend barbecues by the river, and a Western buffet breakfast make this a good choice for families. Rooms overlooking the Yellow Crane Tower are slightly more expensive, but all rooms have comparable river views. One possible disadvantage of the Riverside's location is that it's across the Hàn River from Hànkǒu; but the actual distance to the city center is only about 4km (2½ miles).

Xīmǎ Cháng Jiē 88 (next to Qíng Chuān Pavilion). ✆ **027/8471-6688.** Fax 027/8471-6181. http://www.sixcontinentshotels.com/h/d/hi/rates. 336 units. ¥1,328 ($160) business suite; ¥918 ($110) standard with river view; ¥828 ($100) standard room. Most rates include breakfast. 50% discount standard, with higher discounts possible; 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 568, 559, 411, 206. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 3 bars; tennis court; exercise room; sauna; reflexology center; children's center; ticketing; business center; forex; limited room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, fax (in some rooms), dataport, minibar, fridge, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

Tiānān Jiàrì Jiǔdiàn (Tiānān Holiday Inn) If you'd prefer a central location (northwest end of Wǔhàn's pedestrian street, Jiānghàn Lù) and a spiffier decor over terrific river views, pick this Holiday Inn over the Riverside. Otherwise, the two properties are very similar.

Jiěfàng Dàdào 868. ✆ **027/8586-7888.** Fax 027/8584-5353. http://www.sixcontinentshotels.com/h/d/hi/rates. 355 units. ¥1,328 ($160) business suite; ¥828 ($100) standard room. Most rates include breakfast. 50% discount standard, higher discounts possible; 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 532, 549. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; deli; 2 bars; exercise room, sauna; children's center; business center; forex; limited room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, fax in some rooms, dataport, minibar, fridge, coffeemaker, hair dryer; safe.

Xīn Dōngfāng Dìháo Jiǔdiàn (New Oriental Empire Hotel) The New World Courtyard is a better value, but this is a good choice if you want to be on the wharf. The staff is friendly and the royal blue carpets in the guest rooms haven't been damaged yet by cigarette burns and discarded tea leaves. Rooms are the standard model, but the view makes the difference. Try for a corner room, which overlooks the street and has two windows instead of one. Avoid rooms at the back, which face the back of a dark building and smell of mold. The price is the same, so it's only a matter of asking.

Yánjiāng Dàdào 136 (between Shànghǎi Jiē and Nánjīng Lù; opposite Wǔhàn Port). ✆ **027/8221-1881.** Fax 027/8277-5912. . 69 units. ¥358–¥458 ($42–$54) standard room; ¥558–¥888 ($66–$108) suite. Rates include breakfast. 20% discount available. No credit cards. Bus: no. 9 from railway station; another dozen city buses start and terminate from the bus station opposite the hotel. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; business center; forex; limited room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Xīnhuá Nuòfùtè Dàjiǔdiàn (Novotel) Touted as bringing "the European touch" to Wǔhàn, this new French joint-venture (part of the Accor group)

distinguishes itself from the pack of four-star hotels with its creative decor. In the guest rooms, cone-shaped bed lamps are set against blonde wood; the look is smart and streamlined. Though standard rooms are on the small side, they still feel light and airy. And smallish bathrooms are made to feel roomier by a black marble counter that is big enough to accommodate a travel case and toiletries and looks elegant against white tiled walls. Novotel's central location between the concession area and the Hànkǒu railway station is convenient for both shopping and sightseeing.

Jiànshè Dàdào 558 (next to New World Department Store Xīn Shìjiè Bǎihuò Shāngchǎng). ✆ **800/221-4542** (toll-free in U.S. & Canada), 027/8555-1188. Fax 027/8555-1177. www.accorhotels.com/asia. 303 units. ¥1,079 ($134) standard room; ¥1,162 ($145) deluxe standard; ¥1,328–¥1,494 ($166–$186) suite. 20%–40% discount; 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 509 from railway station. Cab from airport ¥65 ($8.15). **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bakery/deli; bar; health club; sauna; business center; forex; 24-hr. room service; dry cleaning/laundry; executive floors. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, fax in some executive rooms, dataport, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Xīn Shìjiè Wànyí Jiǔdiàn (New World Courtyard) *Value* Situated on a relatively sleepy lane in the center of Hànkǒu, the Courtyard is within walking distance of major shops and parks. The staff is used to repeat and extended-stay business guests, which may account for the genuine and universal warmth with which they treat even short-term guests. At the lower end of the Marriott chain, the Courtyard—with amenities such as English TV programming and a Western-style breakfast buffet—meets many of the standards of a more expensive hotel. Yet while the rooms are pleasant enough and very well maintained, they're not large, and the beds and furniture show wear. At $40 or $50 a night (standard room with a 50%-plus discount), this is the best bargain in town, but its popularity makes reservations advised. Call ahead from within China. An English speaker is always on duty.

Táiběi Yī Lù 9 (between Táiběi Lù and Xīnhuá Lù). ✆ **888/236-2427** (toll-free in U.S.) or 027/8578-7968. Fax 027/8578-9171. cywuhan@public.wh.hb.cn. 137 units. ¥925 ($109) standard room; ¥2,020–¥2,210 ($238–$260) suite. Most rates include breakfast. 50% discount standard, higher discounts possible; 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 9 or 519 from railway station. Cab from airport ¥65 ($8.10). **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; exercise room; sauna; ticketing; business center; forex; limited room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, minibar, fridge, hair dryer.

WHERE TO DINE

If you're after a meal that's *not* Chinese, the coffee shop at the Shangri-La hotel serves the best **Western buffet breakfast** in town (¥128/$16). The **deli** at Tiānhé Holiday Inn sells European cheeses, French bread, and good hard rolls. The Novotel also has plans for a deli/bakery. **Pizza Hut, McDonald's,** and **KFC** are all concentrated on the same intersection on Jiānghàn Lù 1 block northwest of the overhead walkway at the Zhōngshān Dàdào intersection. As you continue south, on the right side of the street, just before the Chinese Customs Building at Jiānghàn Lù 3, is the huge bakery **Huángguān Dàn'gāo,** which sells Western and Chinese cakes, cookies, and breads. It's open from 5am to midnight.

Bǎotōng Sì Sùcài Guǎn (Baotong Temple Vegetarian Restaurant) ★ BUDDHIST VEGETARIAN Almost as popular with nonvegetarians, this restaurant prepares *zhāicài* (Buddhist cuisine) in the temple tradition, specializing in faux meat, fish, and fowl dishes. A delicious appetizer is *wǔxiāng niúròu* (faux beef with blended spices). Made from *dòufu pí* (the top, most nutritious layer of the tofu), this cold dish is served with hot sesame oil and soy sauce. Another *dòufu pí* main dish is *hóngshāo fǔzhú* (braised *dòufu pí* rolls with bamboo shoots and green pepper). Two dishes that make no attempt to look like

anything other than what they are are *quánjiāfú* (several kinds of mushroom sautéed with dates) and sautéed *yóumài cài,* which is a dark-green leafy vegetable similar to spinach. Both dishes are delicate and tasty.

Wǔluò Lù no. 289 (next to the temple entrance). ✆ **027/8787-0309.** Meal for 2 ¥100 ($13). 9am–8pm. Bus: no. 18, 25, 518, 519, 577, or 710 to Hóng Shān Gōngyuán stop.

Cūchá Dànfàn ★★ *Value* HÚBĚI The menu of this popular two-story restaurant emphasizes breads, pastas, wild greens, mushrooms, and fish and game, and though the over-lit interior (painted in baby pink and yellow) isn't ideal, all's forgiven once the food arrives. Among the specialties are dishes served in bamboo stalks and hollowed-out melons and squashes. A few standouts: *Shuǐguǒ xiāngfàn,* sticky rice with pieces of watermelon, pineapple, and green melon, served in the melon shell; *xiǎomǐ zhútǒng páigǔ,* a Húběi specialty of spareribs and millet, steamed and served together in a halved bamboo stalk; and "Five Treasures in a Golden Squash" *(jīnguā kòu wǔbǎo),* a delicate sweet soup of lotus seeds, dates, peanuts, and pumpkin served in a small pumpkin. A favorite mushroom dish is *Fáng Xiàn huāgū* (flowering mushrooms from Fáng County)—sautéed mushrooms that are tender, juicy, and flavorful. For local vegetables, try sautéed baby turnip greens with dried red peppers *(jiānjiāo luóboyè);* the dish has a bite, but it is abundantly tasty. As an alternative to rice, try Wǔhàn's rice bread *(miànwō),* which looks and tastes a little like a bagel chip with black sesame seeds and spring onion. It's usually eaten for breakfast, but this bite-size version is a perfect accompaniment to a meal.

Àomén Lù no. 143. (From Jiěfàng Dàdào and Àomén Lù, head west for a block and a half; the restaurant is on the left.) ✆ **027/8242-0217.** Reservations accepted. Photo menu. Meal for 2 ¥50–¥100 ($6–$12). 11am–2pm and 5–9pm.

Jíqìng Jiē (night food street) ★ *Value* HÚBĚI Locals come in groups to this newly renovated half-block of outdoor restaurants and make an evening of dining and enjoying roving singers, musicians, sketch artists, flower sellers, photographers, and shoe shiners. Customers who don't want to be disturbed request a "quiet plaque" *(jìngyīn tái);* if they're still approached, they hold up the sign and interlopers retreat (at least they did a week after the reopening). For those who want to be serenaded, there are plenty of choices, from Běijīng opera to modern pop songs. Customers order from a song menu with a price list. For around ¥10 ($1.25), a male opera singer of female roles (in the tradition of Méi Lánfāng, China's most famous Peking opera singer, who specialized in female roles) will sing you an aria. A shoeshine costs ¥1 to ¥2 (15¢–25¢). Eating here, you'll see people from all walks of life. Even those who aren't dining come to hear the music, and nobody seems to mind when bystanders (usually neighborhood seniors) decide to sing along.

All the restaurants on this street serve similar fare, which is generally quite good. Fish is a specialty, and one of the best is braised yellow fish *(hóngshāo huángyú).* Served whole, it's only about 5 inches in length and bony, but the reward is tender, tasty flakes of saltwater fish. Like Sìchuān cuisine, Húběi dishes incorporate a lot of pepper—but not all the dishes are fiery *dànbái shāo gǔpái,* or pork ribs braised in egg white, is one such specialty that is succulent, flavorful, and *mild.* If you can stand the heat, a local favorite is *qiānbiān méi* or deep-fried *dòufu* with garlic, red pepper, and Sìchuān pepper. These tender rounds of slightly fermented *dòufu,* curled up like cinnamon rolls, are delicious. A meal consisting of six dishes easily feeds four. Add three large beers and the cost is ¥84 ($11), or about $2.60 per person.

Jíqìng Jiē starting from Dàzhì Jiē. No English menu. Meal for 2 ¥40–¥60 ($5–$7). From 6:30pm until everyone goes home; liveliest time is after 10pm.

11 Wŭdāng Shān

Húběi Province, 500km (311 miles) NW of Wŭhàn

In the hierarchy of sacred Daoist mountains, Wŭdāng is number one because of its association with the popular god Zhēnwŭ (Perfected Warrior). In the 7th century, a cult developed around him, and his popularity continued to grow for the next 7 centuries. By the Míng dynasty, Zhēnwŭ was considered the 82nd transformation of Lăozĭ, and even supplanted the deified Lăozĭ as the most important of the Daoist gods. Visitors to Wŭdāng have the Perfected Warrior to thank for many of the monasteries and temples that still stand on the mountain. It was in his honor that the Yŏnglè emperor ordered a massive building campaign on Wŭdāng Shān in 1412. Several of the extant buildings date back to that time.

Unlike Éméi Shān, Qīngchéng Shān, and Nán Yuè Héng Shān, Wŭdāng receives relatively few tourists, and it has preserved its temples and its Daoist tradition more successfully than the less remote mountains. The price of preservation for the traveler is a longer journey and less comfortable lodging. However, the mountain's rugged peaks covered in old-growth forest, along with its ancient monasteries—some built to fit the contours of the cliffs, others to mirror them—are well worth the sacrifice.

Another name associated with these mountains is Zhāng Sānfēng, the Daoist Immortal credited with inventing the discipline of *tàijíquán* in the late 14th century. Though less well known overseas, Wŭdāng's "internal" form of *wŭshù* (martial arts) is as highly regarded as Shàolín Temple's "external" form (p. 322). Students come from all parts of China to study at the many martial arts schools in town and on the mountain. The famous swords used in the Wŭdāng style are for sale everywhere.

The best times to visit are April through June and September through October, when the leaves turn as red as the gorgeous temple walls.

Note: For Chinese translations of selected establishments listed in this section, please turn to Appendix A.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The **train** from Wŭchāng to Shíyàn stops in Wŭdāng Shān village at 5:30am (K782/783, K784/781; 7 hr.; soft sleeper ¥200/$25). Unless you're staying more than a few days, buy your return ticket as soon as you arrive.

Less convenient, **buses** from Wŭhàn go to Shíyàn, where you transfer to a minibus to Wŭdāng Shān. Buses wait for passengers in front of the railway station and depart when full. The ride takes 30 to 45 minutes and costs ¥10 ($1.25).

EXPLORING THE MOUNTAIN

The entrance to the mountain is less than a mile east of Wŭdāng Shān village. From there to the main temples and trail head is another 12km (7 miles). Taxi vans for ¥5 (65¢) ply this stretch picking up passengers and dropping them at the base where hotels, shops, and the post office are located.

The peak can be reached **on foot** in 2½ hours up stone stairs. The views are magnificent. Save energy for the final very steep leg to the peak. Round-trip by

sedan chair is ¥120 ($15). A **cable car,** which starts a short way up the mountain, goes to Tàihé Sì (near the peak). The 25-minute trip costs ¥45 ($5.65) one-way, ¥80 ($10) round-trip.

Best preserved from the Míng dynasty building boom is Wǔdāng Shān's **Zǐxiāo Gōng (Purple Mist Palace),** located on **Zhǎnqí Peak** (below the cliff Tàizǐ Yàn). This large, still very active monastery was built in 1413. Its striking red halls often bustle with priests and pilgrims. You may also come upon a *tàijíquán* class practicing on one of the open terraces. Famous among its relics is a series of statues of Zhēnwǔ at various stages of his life.

The most dramatic of the existing temples, **Nányán Gōng (Southern Cliff Palace)**, is built into the side of a sheer cliff, recalling Northern Héng Shān's Xuánkōng Sì—another Daoist temple that seems to defy gravity (p. 200). From Zǐxiāo Gōng, follow the trail up the mountain (southwest) to Wūyā Líng (about 2.5km/1½ miles); Nányán is just after Nántiān Mén. **Jīn Diàn (Golden Hall),** which sits on **Tiānzhù Fēng,** highest of Wǔdāng's 72 peaks (1,612m/1 mile high), is part of the 15th-century **Tàihé Gōng (Palace of Supreme Harmony)** complex. Its two-tiered roof, covered in gilded bronze, is, naturally, best viewed on a clear day when it sparkles. To reach Jīn Diàn from Nányán Gōng, continue up the path to Huánglóng Dòng (Yellow Dragon Cave). From here, both ascending paths lead to the Golden Hall. The steeper route is to the right through the three "Heaven Gates."

Admission: Scenic area ¥80 ($10); each monastery ¥10 ($1.25).

WHERE TO STAY & DINE

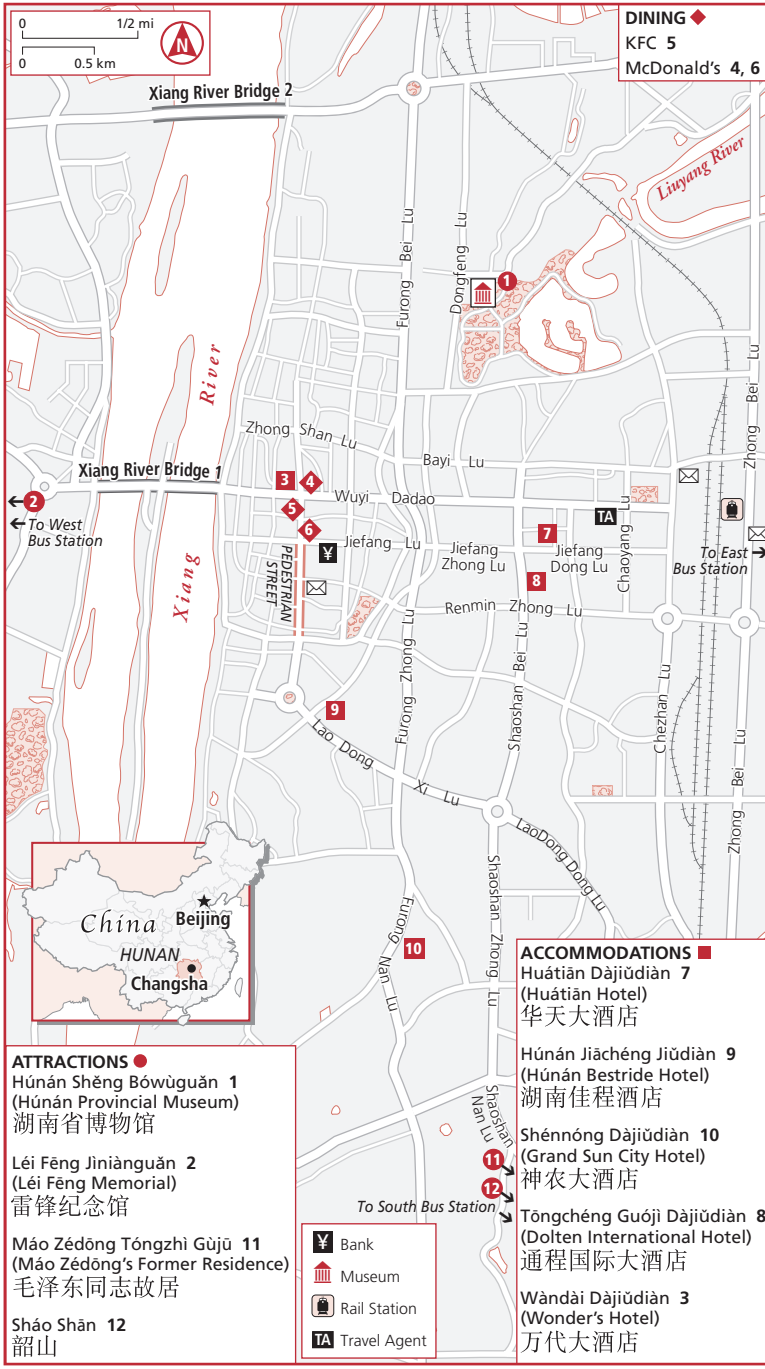
The best two places to stay are on the mountain near Tiānzhù Peak. **Tàihé Gōng** offers very basic accommodations in their **Daoist Association Hostel (Dàojiào Xiéhuì Zhāodàisuǒ).** The cost of ¥80 ($10) for two includes a room with twin beds, shared bathroom, and limited hot water. The **Jīndǐng Lǚguǎn,** just below the Jīn Diàn, has comparable accommodations at similar rates. Both are clean and have restaurants. The **Fǎngǔ Bīnguǎn** next to the Wūyā Líng parking lot is basic and satisfactory, and costs ¥70 ($8.75) per person in a standard room. None of the hotels in Wǔdāng Shān have the charm, views, or quiet of the mountain. The **Wǔdāng Shān Bīnguǎn** (Wǔdāng Shān Zhèn Yǒnglè Lù 33) is the most comfortable and cleanest. Furniture and bedspreads show wear, and the bathroom sink is a bit dingy but acceptable. There's a Chinese restaurant on the premises. The price of a standard room ranges from ¥120 to ¥200 ($15–$25).

12 Chángshā

Húnán Province, 1,419km (882 miles) SE of Chóngqìng, 707km (440 miles) N of Guǎngzhōu

Chángshā is another hazy, congested, modern Chinese city hurrying to divest itself of any architectural trace of its past. But it is the capital of Húnán Province and gateway to one of the Five Sacred Mountains of Daoism and the gorgeous scenic area of the World Heritage site, Wǔlíngyuánuán. It is also home to one of the most exciting tomb collections in China—the Mǎwáng Duī, which dates back to the Western Hàn dynasty.

The city itself—most often associated with Máo and the model worker Léi Fēng—receives few foreign tourists. While Western visitors are fairly common, most come here not to see sights, but to research dissertations or adopt babies from Chángshā's orphanage. In the international hotels, it's not unusual to see a large table of wide-eyed European couples, each cradling a new Chinese baby girl.


0 1/2 mi
0 0.5 km
N
Xiang River Bridge 2
Liuyang River
Furong Bei Lu
Dongfeng Lu
Zhong Shan Lu
Bayi Lu
Zhong Bei Lu
Xiang River Bridge 1
Xiang River
To West Bus Station
Wuyi Dadao
Jiefang Lu
PEDESTRIAN STREET
Jiefang Zhong Lu
Jiefang Dong Lu
Chaoyang Lu
To East Bus Station
Renmin Zhong Lu
Furong Zhong Lu
Shaoshan Bei Lu
Chezhan Lu
Lao Dong Xi Lu
LaoDong Dong Lu
Shaoshan Zhong Lu
Furong Nan Lu
Shaoshan Nan Lu
To South Bus Station
China
Beijing
HUNAN
Changsha
DINING
KFC 5
McDonald's 4, 6
ATTRACTIONS
Húnán Shěng Bówùguǎn 1
(Húnán Provincial Museum)
湖南省博物馆
Léi Fēng Jìniànguǎn 2
(Léi Fēng Memorial)
雷锋纪念馆
Máo Zédōng Tóngzhì Gùjū 11
(Máo Zédōng's Former Residence)
毛泽东同志故居
Sháo Shān 12
韶山
Bank
Museum
Rail Station
Travel Agent
ACCOMMODATIONS
Huátiān Dàjiǔdiàn 7
(Huátiān Hotel)
华天大酒店
Húnán Jiāchéng Jiǔdiàn 9
(Húnán Bestride Hotel)
湖南佳程酒店
Shénnóng Dàjiǔdiàn 10
(Grand Sun City Hotel)
神农大酒店
Tōngchéng Guójì Dàjiǔdiàn 8
(Dolten International Hotel)
通程国际大酒店
Wàndài Dàjiǔdiàn 3
(Wonder's Hotel)
万代大酒店

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The **Chángshā Airport** is 34km (21 miles) east of town. Destinations include Běijīng (4 or more flights daily); Guǎngzhōu (4 flights daily); Hong Kong (2 flights daily); Kūnmíng (4 flights daily); Chéngdū (4 flights daily); Shànghǎi (4 or more flights daily); and Xī'ān (2 flights daily). An **airport shuttle** from Mínháng Dà Jiǔdiàn (Mínháng Hotel) at Wǔyī Dà Dào 5 (cross street Cháoyáng Lù) takes about 40 minutes and costs ¥15 ($1.85); it departs the hotel 2½ hours before flights. A taxi to the airport is around ¥100 ($13). **Chángshā Huǒchē Zhàn (Chángshā Railway Station)** is at the east end of Wǔyī Dàdào. The city is on the Běijīng–Guǎngzhōu railway line. Major connections include Běijīng (T1, T2; 15½ hr.; hard sleeper ¥345/$43); Guǎngzhōu (5361, 5362; 11 hr.; hard sleeper ¥96/$12); and Kūnmíng (T61, T62; 27 hr.; hard sleeper ¥207/$26). Chángshā has three main **bus stations: Qìchē Nán Zhàn (South Station), Qìchē Dōng Zhàn (East Station),** and **Qìchē Xī Zhàn (West Station).** Buses to Nán Yuè Héng Shān, Sháo Shān, Xiàmén, and Guìlín leave from the South Station. Buses to Hànkǒu (Wǔhàn), Guǎngzhou, and Nánjīng leave from the East Station. Buses to Zhāngjiājiè and Yíchāng leave from the West Station.

GETTING AROUND **Public buses** with air-conditioning are ¥2 (25¢); non-air-conditioned buses cost ¥1 (15¢). Standard **taxi** rates are ¥8 ($1) for 3km (2 miles), then ¥1.60 (20¢) per kilometer up to 10km (6 miles). Beyond that, add 50% per kilometer.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The main **Bank of China** is on Jiěfàng Xī Lù, just east of Huángxìng Lù. It has full foreign-exchange services Monday through Friday from 8:30am to noon and 2 to 5pm, and an ATM. It also gives cash advances on credit cards. There's an **ATM** in the lobby of Huátiān Dàjiǔdiàn.

Internet Access Lù Shān Nán Lù, near Húnán University, has inexpensive Internet cafes on every block, but getting there requires crossing the Xiāng River. The hotels listed below all have Internet access in their business centers; it will cost more per hour at the hotels, but you'll save on taxi fare. If you walk from the railway west on Wǔyī Lù, there are a few Internet cafes on the left side of the street charging ¥2 (25¢) or ¥3 (40¢) per hour. Dial-ups are **163, 165,** or **169.**

Post Office The main post office is on the east side of the pedestrian block of Huángxìng Lù. Another is just south of the railway on Zhōng Běi Lù. It's open from 8am to noon and 2:30 to 5:30pm.

EXPLORING CHÁNGSHĀ

"Watered by the Yangtze and the Hàn, Chǔ is a land of lakes and rivers, of well-forested mountains. . . . The people live on fish and rice. Because there is always enough to eat, they are a lazy and improvident folk. . . . They believe in the power of shamans and spirits and are much addicted to lewd religious rites."
–1st-century historian Bān Gǔ concluding his survey of Chǔ history.

Húnán Shěng Bówùguǎn (Húnán Provincial Museum) ★ Between 1972 and 1974, the family plot of the chancellor to the prince of Chángshā (which

was in the Chǔ Kingdom) was excavated at **Mǎwáng Duī** in the eastern suburbs of Chángshā. Of the three tombs—one each for the husband, wife, and son—only wife Xīn Zhuī's tomb was left undisturbed. Inside her tomb and her son's tomb (the chancellor's was looted) were thousands of funeral objects and hitherto lost classics copied on silk. Among them are the earliest known text of the Zhōu *Book of Changes* and two important versions of the *Dàodé Jīng (The Lǎozǐ).* But the bulk of the manuscripts concern the quest for immortality through meditation, exercises, sexual practices, drugs, and alchemy. These rare records attesting to one family's search for the Dào are invaluable for what they reveal about the actual practice of religion in the early Hàn dynasty.

Perhaps the most astonishing object discovered in the tombs was the well-preserved corpse of Xīn Zhuī herself—who, after all, did achieve immortality of a kind. At the time of her death, she was 50 years old, stood 1.5m (5 ft.) tall, and weighed 75 pounds. She suffered from a variety of illnesses and ailments that included tuberculosis, hardening of the arteries, and lead poisoning; and her death was probably from a heart attack induced by an acute episode of gallstones. Reading her litany of ailments and looking at the intact corpse, it would appear that 50 years of life took a far greater toll on her body than did 2,100 years of death.

By the time you reach it, the extraordinary Mǎwáng Duī collection will be next door in a new building (which itself looks like a coffin). Hopefully more English signs will be added and the displays better lit, but even without such improvements, this museum is the one and only sight in Chángshā that must not be missed.

Dōngfēng Lù 28. ✆ **0731/451-4630.** Admission ¥20 ($2.50). July–Sept, Mon–Sat 8am–7pm; Oct–June, Mon–Sat 8am–5:30pm. Sun/holidays 8:30am–6pm. (Hours will change with the new museum.) Last ticket sold 45 min. before closing. Bus: no. 113, 303.

Léi Fēng Jìniànguǎn (Léi Fēng Memorial) Those looking for a trace of Máo's China will find it here. The selfless soldier whose only ambition was to be "a little screw that would never rust in the revolutionary machinery" ended up getting a whole memorial to himself, not to mention the Léi Fēng Hospital, the Léi Fēng Hotel, and the big statue of Léi Fēng that flanks the street to the museum. Unfortunately, there are no English signs in this monument to a past era, but much of the collection is self-explanatory. It includes propaganda posters that trace the life of Léi Fēng and his family members, some obviously retouched photographs, and a number of Léi Fēng's personal effects. Give yourself about 45 minutes to an hour here. See also "Model Citizens?" box on p. 155.

Léi Fēng Zhèn 9, across Xiāng River, about 10km (6 miles) beyond the West Bus Station. ✆ **0731/810-5014.** Admission ¥8 ($1). 8am–6pm Bus: no. 12 or 15 to terminus; museum is a short walk north.

SHÁO SHĀN

In 1893, Máo Zédōng was born in this village 98km (60 miles) south of Chángshā. Beginning with the frenzied early years of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) and continuing into the early 1990s, Sháo Shān was a mecca of sorts to millions of Chinese who made the pilgrimage here for reasons that changed over the years—from revolutionary zeal to coercion to, finally, nostalgia. Today the crowds have thinned out considerably, though they increase on holidays and on Máo's birthday, December 6. The sights include the house Máo grew up in, a memorial exhibition, the Máo Library, and the family ancestral home, but the latter two will be of little interest without knowledge of written Chinese. This is an easy day trip from Chángshā.

Máo's Roots

Máo's father was a poor peasant compelled out of poverty to join the army. Years later he returned to Sháo Shān with ambitions of bettering his lot. When Máo was born, his father owned 15 hectares (37 acres) of land and was a "middle peasant." By the time Máo was a teenager, his father had 22 hectares (55 acres) and the status of "rich peasant." Máo spent his childhood in Sháo Shān working in his father's rice paddies and, from age 8, studying the Confucian *Analects* and *The Five Classics*—meaning the most modern of his textbooks (the *Analects*) was from the 3rd century B.C.

In his interviews with Edgar Snow, Máo described a strict upbringing by a father he perceived as oppressive. What isn't often mentioned is that his mother was a devout Buddhist who raised her children in the religion. It wasn't until Máo broadened his reading that he lost his religious faith. Though Máo's family never went hungry, it was in Sháo Shān that he witnessed famine and the oppression of the poor. He claimed that such incidences and a natural rebelliousness inclined him toward revolution.

Máo Zédōng Tóngzhì Gùjū (Comrade Máo Zédōng's Former Residence) Best of the two main sights, Máo's former home doesn't look that different from some of the present farmhouses in Húnán and Sìchuān. The spartan but attractive brick buildings with curved wooden shingles have signs in Chinese and English that identify each room and contain a variety of intriguing implements, such as a large wok in the kitchen, grain-milling bowls, and equipment for hulling rice. Photos of Máo's family grace the walls. The barn is part of the house, and the bedroom of Máo's brother, Zétán, is right next to the pig pen. Forty-five minutes gives you time to see the house and stroll around the bucolic grounds.

Buses (Iveco) between Chángshā's South Station (Nán Zhàn) and Sháo Shān leave both places every half hour 8am–5pm for ¥20 ($2.50); the ride takes 1 hr. 40 min. The ride from Sháo Shān Bus Station to Máo's old home is 6km (3¾ miles). By motorcycle the trip costs ¥ 5 (60¢); by bus ¥1 (15¢). Free admission. 8am–5pm.

Máo Zédōng Yíwù Zhǎn (Máo's Personal and Household Effects Exhibition) The exhibition contains several hundred items used by Máo in his later years—the imported watch he wore most of his life, his personal seal with a dragon handle, his tattered pajamas patched 73 times, furniture, and record players are just a few examples. A half hour is sufficient here.

From Máo's former residence, follow the path past the souvenir stands; to the left is the gravesite of Máo's parents; turn right and walk through long, narrow, dank tunnel. At the end go up to the right (pond on your left); at bottom of drive, Máo Library will be to the left; walk to street and turn right, then left through parking lot. Admission ¥15 ($1.85).Open 7:30am–5:30pm summer; 8am–5pm winter.

WHERE TO STAY

EXPENSIVE

Huátiān Dàjiǔdiàn This newly renovated and upgraded (to five-star) hotel is Chángshā's biggest and most luxurious. It's also one of the most expensive, but with the 40% to 50% discounts that are standard here, the rates become

reasonable. Conformity usually defines hotel design in China, but the bold-colored fresco behind the reception counter of this hotel sets a tone of originality that carries throughout. For example, on the way to the elevator, guests cross a glass bridge that spans a fishpond full of goldfish. The guest rooms, too, have original touches. Bathroom sinks look like elegant glass bowls. In plusher rooms, a walk-in closet connects with both the bathroom and the bedroom. Business suites have huge bathrooms with bidets and very attractive separate shower and tub.

Jiěfàng Dōng Lù 380. ✆ **0731/444-2888.** Fax 0731/444-2270. www.huatian-hotel.com. 660 units. ¥660–¥780 ($82–$97) standard room; ¥1,080–¥1,380 ($135–$172) suite. Rates include breakfast. 40%–50% discount is standard. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 7, 12 from railway. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; bar; indoor pool; health club, ticketing; business center; forex; ATM; 24-hr. room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, dataport, broadband Internet access, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Húnán Jiāchéng Jiǔdiàn (Húnán Bestride Hotel) The competent staff and management of this midsize, Hong Kong–managed hotel go out of their way to make guests feel comfortable and appreciated. While it lacks some of the facilities of a five-star hotel, such as a pool and full-scale gym, the hotel is one of the best in town in terms of service, furnishings, upkeep, and comfort. Guest rooms were renovated in 2001 and still look well maintained. The rooms are airy and clean and have views of the city, which by night are stunning. The Chinese restaurant on the fourth floor serves outstanding food.

Láodòng Xī Lù 386. ✆ **0731/511-8888.** Fax 0731/511-1888. www.hnbrhotel.com. 238 units. ¥580–¥820 ($70–$99) standard room; ¥1,080–¥1,480 ($170–$208) suite. Rates include breakfast. 35%–50% discount is standard. 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 139 from railway, 202, 314. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; 2 bars; spa; ticketing; business center; forex; 24-hr. room service; therapeutic massage; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV w/pay movies, dataport, broadband Internet access, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe,.

Shénnóng Dàjiǔdiàn (Grand Sun City Hotel) This five-star hotel was renovated in 2002, but while the executive rooms qualify as luxury, the standard rooms feel cramped for the price. Decoration in each room is limited to one generic, modern framed print above the bed. And the only thing five-star about the comparatively small, uninspired bathroom is the presence of a hair dryer. What this hotel has to recommend it are its food and beverage outlets. Its restaurants serve delicious Húnán and Cháozhōu cuisine, and the City Pub has a comfortable atmosphere and friendly service. Best to stay elsewhere and come here for dinner and drinks.

Fúróng Nán Lù. ✆ **0731/521-8888.** Fax 0731/523-6112. www.grandsuncityhotel.com. 375 units. ¥880–¥980 ($105–$117) standard room; ¥1,680–¥1,980 ($200–$236) suite. Some rates include breakfast. 50% discount is standard. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 4, 104, 115. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; 6 bars; indoor pool; business center; forex; limited room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, dataport, broadband Internet access, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Tōngchéng Guójì Dàjiǔdiàn (Dolten International Hotel) This popular hotel competes with the Huátiān for the title of Chángshā's plushest, but it comes in second. The guest rooms are spacious, the bedspreads and furnishings are tasteful, service is efficient, staff are friendly and professional—nothing is missing here. But there's nothing extra, either. The Dolten is a standard five-star hotel, and for that it can be counted on.

Sháo Shān Běi Lù 149. ✆ **0731/416-8888.** Fax 0731/416-9999. www.dolton-hotel.com. 450 units. ¥918–¥1,118 ($115–$140) standard room; ¥1,380–¥1,688 ($170–$208) suite. Rates include breakfast. 35% discount is standard. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 7, 139 from railway. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 3 bars; gym, indoor pool; ticketing; business center; forex; 24-hr. room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, dataport, broadband Internet access, safe, minibar, fridge, hair dryer.

MODERATE

Wàndài Dàjiǔdiàn This pleasant four-star hotel, which opened in August 2002, occupies floors 7 to 15 in an office building. Guest rooms frame the indoor garden plaza, but the best views are on the east side, overlooking Wǔyī Square, and on the west side, facing the river. Each standard room is clean and comfortable, with a Japanese-inspired wooden screen between the bed and the living area that gives the illusion of two rooms.

Huángxìng Zhōng Lù 101 (cross st. Wǔyī Dàdào; reception is on 7th floor). ✆ **0731/488-2333.** Fax 0731/488-2111. 321 units. ¥328–¥428 ($41–$53) standard room; ¥1,280–¥2,800 ($160–$350) suite. Rates include breakfast. 15%–20% discount is standard. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 132 from railway to Wǔyī Guǎngchǎng stop. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; exercise room; ticketing; business center; limited forex; 24-hr. room service; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, hair dryer.

WHERE TO DINE

In the vicinity of Wǔyī Lù and Huángxìng Zhōng Lù, there's a **KFC** on the southwest corner of that intersection. A large **McDonald's** is on the northeast corner of Wǔyī Guǎngchǎng, and another is south of the intersection on Huángxìng Road opposite the Friendship Hotel. The Shénnóng Dàjiǔdiàn (Grand Sun City Hotel) **coffee shop** and **City Pub** both serve plausible Western fare. (See hotel review above.)

Xiāng Garden ★★ HÚNÁN The head chef of this fine restaurant on the fourth floor of the Bestride Hotel (Jiāchéng Jiǔdiàn) was once a chef in China's embassy in Germany. Here his kitchen puts out perfectly executed dishes that are beautifully presented and delicious. A few of the delicacies are *língjiǎo* (water chestnuts); *hóng zǎozi* (red dates); *qiàng qíncài xiàguǒ* (baby celery and pearl onions sautéed with macadamia nuts); *qīngjiāo qiézi* (eggplant sautéed with green pepper); and *mǐtāng sīguā* (rice soup with silk gourd).

Láodòng Xī Lù 386, Jiāchéng Jiǔdiàn (Bestride Hotel), 4th floor. ✆ **0731/511-8888.** Meal for 2 ¥50–¥160 ($6–$20). AE, DC, MC, V. 11:30am–3pm and 5–11pm. Bus: no. 139 from railway, 202, 314.

13 Nán Yuè Héng Shān

Húnán Province, 137km (85 miles) S of Chángshā

"Those who mix medicines, who are avoiding political turmoil, or who seek quietude in order to practice the Way, have always gone into the mountains."
–From The Master Who Embraces Simplicity, Gé Hóng (283–343)

Located on the southwestern bank of the Xiāng River in the middle of Húnán Province, Nán Yuè Héng Shān—known locally as Nán Yuè (Southern Mountain) *or* Héng Shān—is one of the five sacred peaks (symbolizing the four directions and the center) of Daoism. It was believed that these peaks were supernatural channels connecting heaven and earth. For Daoists, mountains were the sites where *qì* (cosmic energy) was at its most refined; herbs and minerals—the ingredients of health and longevity elixirs—were found on mountains; and it was on mountains and in mountain caverns that seekers were most likely to find transcendent beings.

As far back as the 6th century, Nán Yuè was also a place of Buddhist worship; and it is the birthplace of the Nán Yuè school of Southern Chán (Zen) Buddhism, which got its start here in the 8th century.

Late summer and fall are the best times to visit. Locals warn visitors to resist the temptation of shortcuts on overgrown and little-used paths, where you're likely to encounter snakes.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Direct **buses** (Iveco or Turbo) depart from Chángshā's South Bus Station every half hour from 6:30am to 6pm for the 2¼-hour drive; the fare is ¥32 ($4). Buses leave the station when they're full. Return buses leave every 20 minutes from the same drop-off point in the town of Nán Yuè. If you take an early bus, it is possible to make this a day trip. You'll have time to enjoy the mountain and its temples if you combine hiking with cable car, bus, or motorcycle taxi. A **train** also runs between Chángshā and Nán Yuè Railway Station, but the trip takes 3 hours, plus another 30 to 40 minutes from the railway station to the town of Nán Yuè.

GETTING AROUND The bus from Chángshā drops passengers off at the south end of town. To get to the mountain, walk north on the same road (Zhùróng Lù). The memorial archway *(páifang)* is straight ahead. Inside the archway, **minibuses** take passengers to the entrance for ¥1 (15¢). If the bus is slow to fill up, you can pay a bit more to be taxied there alone. Price is negotiable, but ¥5 (60¢) is about right. The distance is 1½km (just under a mile). The **mountain park entrance** is at the north end of the village. Admission is ¥40 ($5). Temples and monasteries have additional entrance fees from ¥2 to ¥15 (25¢–$1.85). **Buses** charging ¥11 ($1.35) to the midsection of the mountain depart every 10 minutes from the park entrance. Another bus for ¥11 ($1.35) from the midway station goes to the top. A mile-long **cable car** also operates from the midway point. The ride to **Nántiān Mén,** three-quarters of the way to the summit, takes 7 minutes; the round-trip costs ¥50 ($6.25). From Nántiān Mén, **minibuses** go to the summit. The footpath from bottom to top is 14km (9 miles) long and takes about 4 hours to walk at a comfortable but steady clip. Private drivers with motorcycles take people to the summit for around ¥30 ($3.75).

NÁN YUÈ SIGHTS

The best preserved and most famous of the mountain temples is Nán Yuè Dà Miào at the southern foot of the mountain. Originally built in the Táng dynasty (618–907), it was destroyed by fire a number of times. The present temple dates to the Qīng dynasty (1644–1911). The main hall is noteworthy for its double roof, which is supported by 72 columns representing the inevitable 72 peaks of Nán Yuè. Halfway up the mountain, past the cable car entrance, is the Daoist monastery Xuándū Guàn. Here, worshippers light firecrackers, kowtow in front of the white marble statues of three Daoist Celestial Masters, or cast their fortunes by throwing two halves of a wooden oval on the ground. Eleven Daoist priests live in this monastery. Lodging is available for up to 3 days here. There is also a vegetarian restaurant.

Daoist and Buddhist monasteries and temples are scattered over the mountain. Most are small and worth a peek, but they don't need lots of time. **Zhùróng Hall** is at Nán Yuè's highest peak, **Zhùróng Fēng** (1,290m/4,232 ft.), where the views are magnificent.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE

Lodging can be found at the summit near Zhùróng Diàn and midway up the mountain just above the bus parking lot, in the vicinity of the cable car. Directly opposite the Xuándū Guàn (Xuándū Monastery) is the **Bàn Shān Tíng Shānzhuāng** (**Bàn Shān Tíng Mountain Inn; ✆ 0734/567-6239**). Rooms are basic but very clean, and those on the south side have views of the mountain. The front-desk and kitchen staff are friendly and eager to make guests comfortable.

Rooms have bathrooms with separate tub and shower (with 24-hr. hot water) and TV. A standard room costs ¥208 ($26); a room with older furniture and fixtures costs ¥148 ($18). Thirty-percent discounts are standard, even in high season, but not during holidays. Two other satisfactory inns are next to each other just above the midway parking lot. Along the path toward Xuándū Temple, the first inn is the dirt-cheap **Yánshòu Dàjiǔdiàn** (✆ **0734/567-2346**), with six units. A non-air-conditioned room for four with shared bathroom is ¥50 ($6.25). In late 2002, the beds were brand new and the rooms freshly painted. Rooms for two tend to be moldy. Next door, the **Bàn Shān Tíng Tavern** (✆ **0734/567-6336**) is more expensive, but the rooms have better *fēngshuǐ*. A triple with TV, bathroom, and 24-hour hot water is ¥168 ($21). A slightly nicer standard room with the same in-room amenities is ¥228 ($29). Discounts up to 40% are possible.

At the summit, the **Fúróng Shānzhuāng** (✆ **0734/566-3013**) has clean standard rooms with stunning views for ¥100 to ¥180 ($12–$22). Discounts of 40% to 50% are often available.

It is also possible to stay in monasteries on the mountain for only a few dollars.

All of the inns on the mountain have small dining rooms and kitchens. Since there are no English menus, you may have to go to the kitchen and point to your order. Settle on a price in advance or you may end up getting the most expensive dish on the menu—or the largest serving. On average, each dish should cost about ¥5 to ¥10 (60¢–$1.25). In town, Dēng Shān Lù, running from the memorial archway through the center of town, has lots of restaurants serving local food.

14 Wǔlíngyuán/Zhāngjiā Jiè ★

Húnán Province, 269km (167 miles) NW of Chángshā, 480km (298 miles) SW of Wǔhàn

"O soul, go not to the south! In the south are a hundred leagues of flaming fire and coiling cobras; the mountains rise sheer and steep; tigers and leopards slink; the cow-fish is there, and the spit-sand, and the rearing python. O soul, go not to the south! There are monsters there that will harm you."
–From the third century poem, "Great Summons," Songs of Chǔ

Wǔlíngyuán's landscape might well have inspired the shamanistic poems of the classic collection, *Songs of Chǔ*. Unlike most famous sights in China, the area remained remote and little visited until relatively late. To the ancients, that part of northwestern Húnán (at the southern periphery of the Chǔ Kingdom) was an inhospitable wilderness—mountainous terrain populated by wild animals. And unlike the sacred Buddhist and Daoist mountains, it did not draw pilgrims.

But that's all changed. Wǔlíngyuán Scenic and Historic Interest Area (also called Zhāngjiā Jiè) became China's first National Forest Park in 1983, and in 1992, its core zone was inscribed as a World Heritage Site. Prior to that, whatever damage humans inadvertently spared this wild region over the centuries, they undid in a few decades of poaching, land clearing, tree felling, and polluting. Despite that, the natural beauty of the region—dominated by quartzite sandstone peaks and pillars—remains stunning and unusual; and opportunities to see rare plants and insects in this dense, subtropical forest still abound. What's more, restrictions on construction and pollution, as well as a total fire ban, are just a few of the measures now in place to protect this singular environment.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Chángshā is the gateway city to Zhāngjiā Jiè. In early 2003, the train was faster and more convenient than the bus, but that should change with a new expressway slated for completion in 2003.

Héhuā Airport is 5km (3 miles) from Zhāngjiā Jiè City (formerly called Dàyōng) and 37km (23 miles) from Zhāngjiā Jiè National Forest Park. It has flights connecting with many major cities in China, including Běijīng, Shànghăi, Guăngzhōu, and Wŭhàn. It also has air service from Hong Kong. If you arrive by plane, there's no reason to bother with charmless Zhāngjiā Jiè City (Zhāngjiā Jiè Shì). Go directly to **Zhāngjiā Jiè Village (Zhāngjiā Jiè Cūn),** which is located just outside the entrance to the national park. By taxi, it's ¥70 ($8.75).

The **Zhāngjiā Jiè Railway Station** is 8km (5 miles) southeast of town. Short of flying, the overnight train from Chángshā is the most comfortable choice. The K525/K528 leaves Chángshā at 7:28pm and arrives in Zhāngjiā Jiè City the next morning at 9:35am; the K526/527 leaves Zhāngjiā Jiè City at 5:05pm and arrives in Chángshā at 6:49am the next morning. Hard and soft sleepers cost ¥150 to ¥240 ($19–$30). The express train K552/553, leaving Chángshā at 8:20am and arriving in Zhāngjiā Jiè City at 2pm, is also convenient, though the return train (K554/551), with an evening arrival of 8:31pm, is less so. The railway station is also 45km (28 miles) southeast of Zhāngjiā Jiè Village, which is at the main park entrance and is the best place to find lodging. As you exit the station, taxi drivers, porters, and kids selling maps will pounce, but just keep walking. A bus from the railway station to Zhāngjiā Jiè Village departs from the square when it's full (an hour-plus wait sometimes). An alternative is a bus for ¥1 (15¢) leaving from the middle of the railway square to the bus station in town. From there, catch one of the many buses for the 1-hour trip to the village; the fare is ¥5 (60¢). Or you can take a taxi directly to Zhāngjiā Jiè Cūn (Village) for about ¥80 ($10). As you exit, go to the **taxi stand** at the left end of the railway square. Taxi rates are ¥5 (60¢) for 3km (2 miles), then ¥1.50 (20¢) per kilometer. After 10km (6 miles), add 50% per kilometer.

A new expressway is scheduled for completion in 2003, which will make bus travel between Chángshā and Zhāngjiā Jiè fast and comfortable. For now, though, the route, which winds through the mountains, is scenic but slow (7–11 hr.; ¥50–¥84/$6–$10) and much less comfortable than the train route. Schedules will change, but for now buses leave Chángshā between 7 and 8am from the terminal opposite the railway station. Returning buses leave Zhāngjiā Jiè at the same time. Sleeper buses aren't recommended because they arrive at either end between 1 and 3am.

GETTING AROUND Vehicular and hiking paths provide access to some 240 designated scenic spots within Wŭlíngyuán. The scenic area comprises the three adjoining parklands of **Zhāngjiā Jiè National Forest Park** to the south, **Tiānzĭ Shān Nature Reserve** to the north, and **Suŏxī Yù Nature Reserve** to the east. **Cable cars** for ¥48 ($6) lead to viewing platforms from Huángshí Zhài in the Zhāngjiā Jiè forest area and from the eastern edge of Tiānzĭ Shān. A local **bus** connects Suŏxīyù Village, located at the southeast entrance to the park, and Zhāngjiā Jiè City Bus Station. The 32km (20-mile) trip costs ¥5 (60¢).

In terms of lodging and proximity to the most sights, **Zhāngjiā Jiè Village** makes the best base. The village has one main street (Jīnbiān Dàdào), which is lined with hotels and leads to the National Forest Park entrance. As you

approach the park, you'll see a small street to the left; it leads to the Xiāngdiàn Mountain Villa and a few restaurants and Internet cafes.

FAST FACTS

Internet Access Zhāngjiā Jiè Village has several Internet cafes on the side street near the park. Turn left off the main street just before the park. The cafes charge ¥1 to ¥2 (15¢–25¢) per hour. Dial-up is **163.**

Tours For most of the sightseeing within the park, there's no need for a guide. But you must join a tour to go river rafting or to visit Huánglóng Cave (Huánglóng Dòng) in Suǒxī Yù. These can be organized by **Zhāngjiā Jiè National Forest Park Travel Service,** which is conveniently located and much more customer-oriented than the CITS branches in either Zhāngjiā Jiè City or Village. Although their storefront has no English, they have English guides and materials, and they are happy to answer questions even if you're not booking a tour (not the case with Zhāngjiā Jiè City's CITS office). Their office in Zhāngjiā Jiè Village is located on the main street (Jīnbiān Dàdào), on your left as you approach the park (✆ **0744/571-2213;** fax 0744/571-2288). It's next to the Mínsú Shānzhuāng (Mínsú Mountain Villa)—easy to recognize by its two-story building constructed of yellow wood and bamboo.

The freelance guides near the park entrance charge considerably less than the travel agencies, but you need to bargain. Price depends on the season and where you go, but generally, the asking price for an English-speaking guide starts at ¥100 ($13) a day. Be sure the person you hire has a guide's license; otherwise, you'll have to pay their entry fee.

Hiking Exploring the mountain means following stone paths through spectacular forests of bamboo, oak, and pine to scenic spots and terraces that afford breathtaking views. Since every tour group takes these paths, you won't be alone, but the crowds can be part of the fun. For solitude, take the less traveled paths, where the setting and scenery can be as dramatic as the popular sights.

Admission ¥108 ($14), good for 2 days.

TOP SPOTS IN THE THREE PARKLANDS

In Zhāngjiā Jiè National Forest Park: Huángshí Zhài. At the first fork after the entrance to the park, take the left road; hike 2 hours to this former mountain stronghold that is 1,080m (4,542 ft.) high and affords a panoramic view of forested peaks and jagged sandstone pillars. A cable car also goes to the plateau (see "Getting Around," above). Another path that leads through beautiful jade-green forest and passes a tight cluster of sandstone columns is reached by taking the right road at the first fork. Follow the path along Jīnbiān Stream. At the next fork, either take the left to Mǐhún Tái (and return the same way), or take the more traveled right-hand path to Zǐcǎo Tán. From there, take the right-hand path at the next two forks to return to the entrance.

In Tiānzǐ Shān Nature Reserve: Located just southeast of the cable car platform at Tiānzǐ Shān, **Yùbǐ Fēng** and **Tiānzǐ Gé** are two of the most famous spots for their imposing views of forested peaks and jutting sandstone pillars.

In Suǒxī Yù Nature Reserve: Bǎofēng Hú (Bǎofēng Lake). A boat ride on this lovely clear lake surrounded by lush forest is included in the admission fee of ¥62 ($7.75).

Huánglóng Dòng (Huánglóng Cave): The colored lights that illuminate famous Chinese caves are an acquired taste, but they shouldn't get in the way of

appreciating this 11km (7-mile) long cave that contains spectacular calcite deposits as well as a waterfall 50m (164 ft.) high. A guide is required (see "Tours," above). Most hotels can also arrange a guide.

WHERE TO STAY

In Zhāngjiā Jiè City, the only four-star hotel is the **Dragon International Hotel (Xiānglóng Guójì Dàjiǔdiàn),** 46 Jiěfàng Lù (✆ **0744/822-6888;** fax 0744/822-2935). Standard rooms are ¥600 ($75). Although the Dragon is the best the town has to offer, it doesn't deserve its rating—for facilities or services—but the rooms are clean. Hotels in Zhāngjiā Jiè Village are attractive and close to the park, and room rates are the most reasonable in the area.

Mínsú Shānzhuāng (Mínsú Mountain Villa) This friendly, affordable hotel is another good choice. Renovated in 2001, it is operated by Tǔjiā people, and it's the only hotel in town that has a cozy, cabin feel about it. Rooms have attractive wooden ceilings and private bathrooms with enclosed showers. Except for triples, all rooms have 24-hour hot water. Some have mountain views. The hotel has a restaurant with nightly Tǔjiā folk performances after dinner, which feature singing and dancing by Tǔjiā performers in traditional garb.

Jīnbiān Dàdào (on the left side as you approach the park; look for a 2-story building constructed of yellow wood and bamboo). ✆ **0744/571-9288.** Fax 0744/571-2516. 37 units. ¥220–¥280 ($27–$35) standard room; ¥260 ($32) triple. 20%–50% discounts possible. Some rates include breakfast. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant (Tǔjiā); limited forex; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Pípaxī Bīnguǎn This hotel and the Xiāngdiàn Mountain Villa are the best in Zhāngjiā Jiè Village. The majority of guests are with tour groups, and at holidays it's been so full here that latecomers have had to sleep in the dining room and lobby. Rooms are clean but unadorned, and most have picture windows overlooking gardens and/or mountains. Some standard rooms have balconies. Buildings 1 and 2 were renovated in 2002; unrenovated building 3 should be your last choice. From the hotel, it's a 7-minute walk along the main street (Jīnbiān Dàdào) to the park entrance. Manager Táng Míng speaks English and takes reservations on his mobile phone or by e-mail. Whether you call first or just turn up, do negotiate for a substantial discount.

Jīnbiān Dàdào. ✆ **137/0744-5536.** www.pipaxi-hotel.com. 191 units. ¥480–¥540 ($60–$68) standard room. Rates include breakfast. 20% discounts. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; business center; limited forex; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, fridge, hair dryer.

Xiāngdiàn Shānzhuāng (Xiāngdiàn Mountain Villa) ★ Visiting dignitaries usually stay at the Pípaxī Hotel (above), but that should change now that this hotel has upgraded to four-star. Rooms are simple, but pleasant and bright. Bathrooms combine tub and shower in a small, spotless space. The grounds have been beautifully landscaped and include lawns, a pond, and a pagoda; classical Chinese music plays faintly in the background—all to wonderful effect. Many of the rooms have close-up views of the mountains.

As you approach the park on the main street, turn left on the small lane just before you reach the park. The hotel is about 300m (330 yd.) ahead. ✆ **0744/571-2266.** Fax 0744/571-2172. 156 units. ¥400 ($50) standard room. Rates include breakfast. 20%–30% discounts. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; business center; limited forex; dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, fridge, hair dryer in some rooms, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

Zhāngjiā Jiè City and Village, Tiānzǐ Shān, and Suǒxī Yù all have inexpensive restaurants featuring spicy Hunanese dishes, but the food is not outstanding, nor are English-language menus available. Small restaurants serving Tǔjiā dishes

can be found all along the main street of Zhāngjiā Jiè Village. Tǔjiā cuisine specializes in fresh game (such as rabbit and various guinea-pig and weasel-like mammals), reptiles (including poisonous snakes), crawfish, eel, and crab, so if you're feeling adventurous, point to the creature that interests you, and they'll cook it for you. Settle on a price, first, though; these dishes can be expensive. The hotels have restaurants that are more accessible to foreign travelers, but the food is mediocre. The best I found was inside **Xiāngdiàn Shānzhuāng.** For a simple repast, on the main street about 150m (500 ft.) before the entrance to the park, across the stream, there's a row of small **noodle restaurants.** You can sit outside, watch the stream, and eat a bowl of noodles for under a dollar.

13

The Tibetan World

by Graeme Smith

Less than half of the world's Tibetans reside in the **Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR),** whose boundaries were established in 1965. Tibetans form the majority in large regions of neighboring Nepal, India, Sikkim, and Bhutan, as well as in the adjacent provinces of **Qīnghǎi, Gānsù, Sìchuān,** and **Yúnnán.** Disagreement over where Tibet begins and ends is an ongoing stumbling block in negotiations between the Tibetan government-in-exile, based in Dharamsala (in India), and the Chinese government.

For this guide, **Qīnghǎi** has been included, as it is part of the Tibetan plateau, and most of its area—which covers much of **Amdo** (northern Tibet) and **Kham** (eastern Tibet)—is culturally and ethnically Tibetan. In many ways a better destination than the TAR, it has yet to be overwhelmed by Hàn migration, and restrictions on both locals and travelers are less onerous.

Tibet became the "roof of the world" only recently, formed by the collision of the Indian subcontinent with the Eurasian landmass. Until 35 million years ago, the Himalayas formed the seabed of the Tethys Sea. Mollusks may still be found throughout the region.

Tibet is dominated by the vast, dry Tibetan plateau, a region roughly the size of western Europe, with an average elevation of 4,700m (15,400 ft.). Ringed by vast mountain ranges, such as the **Kunlun range** to the north and the **Himalayas** to the south, the plateau's west side features high plains, and the north is dominated by the deserts of the **Changtang** and the **Tsaidam Basin.** China's great rivers—the Yellow River and the Yángzǐ—rise in the east, carving out steep gorges. The greatest diversity in landscape, vegetation, and wildlife is found in the broad and fertile valleys of the Himalayas, but most of the border regions are closed to individual travel.

Most Tibetans still look back to the "heroic age" (7th–9th c.) of their history, when their armies dominated the Silk Routes and much of western China, assimilating the culture and technology of these regions. At the same time, Buddhism was introduced to Tibet from northern India. With the disappearance of Buddhism from India around the 13th century, Tibet became the new bearer of a complex faith, which combined a strict monastic code with Tantric Buddhism (with a strong emphasis on ritual). It is often characterized as "complete Buddhism."

The Tibetans went on to convert an entire people—the Mongols—despite being weakened by civil war and fighting between different schools of Tibetan Buddhism.

Just as China was often characterized as "closed" until it was "opened" by the West, the idea of Tibet as an inherently inward-looking Shangri-la is a long-standing myth. Isolationism was encouraged by the Manchu rulers from the 18th century onwards, with some success. Regents backed by the

Manchus held sway over young Dalai Lamas who often died mysteriously before they were old enough to rule.

Dalai Lama XIII (1876–1934) tried to reverse the policy of isolation, but encountered resistance from the conservative monastic hierarchy. Troubled by the destruction of Mongolia by Russian Communists during the 1920s, he prophesied, "The officers of the state, ecclesiastical and secular, will find their lands seized and their other property confiscated, and they themselves forced to serve their enemies, or wander about the country as beggars do. All beings will be sunk in great hardship and in overpowering fear."

In 1951, Chinese communist armies entered Lhasa, and the prophecy began to unfold. A revolt against Chinese rule rose in Kham (eastern Tibet) 5 years later, and Dalai Lama XIV (b. 1935) fled for India in March 1959, soon after the **Great Prayer (Monlam)** was celebrated in Lhasa. Tibet's darkest hour was the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), known to the Tibetans as the time when "the sky fell to earth." Monks and nuns were tortured, executed, and imprisoned. Monasteries were looted and razed, and a vast body of Tibetan art was lost. Adding to the pain is the fact that many Tibetans, either willingly or coerced, participated in the destruction.

A revival of Tibetan culture and religion throughout the 1980s was checked after pro-independence protests, led by monks from **Drepung Monastery,** resulted in the declaration of martial law in March 1989, signed by chief of the local Communist Party Hú Jǐntāo, now president of China.

Travel in Tibet should not be taken lightly. There are wide variations in temperature throughout the day, and many visitors experience altitude sickness, particularly those who fly directly to Lhasa (p. 755). The northern and western regions of Tibet are cold and arid, with an annual average temperature of about 32°F (0°C), while southern and eastern regions are warmer and wetter. Peak season runs from May to mid-October. Winter in Lhasa is cozy, but transport out can be difficult to arrange—the Friendship Highway from Nepal to Lhasa is effectively closed for the winter months. *Note:* Unless otherwise noted, hours listed for attractions and restaurants are daily.

1 Xīníng

232km (144 miles) W of Lánzhōu, 781km (484 miles) E of Golmud

Once a key trading post on the southern Silk Route, Xīníng is perched on the northern edge of the Tibetan plateau, and boasts a sizable Muslim population. Tibetan and Mongol monks and pilgrims may still be spied, drawn by **Kumbum (Tǎ'ěr Sì)** monastery to the south. There's little of interest in the city itself, but it's a useful base for exploring the **Amdo** and **Kham** regions to the south.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The **airport** is 29km (18 miles) east of Xīníng. An airport bus runs to the **CAAC** ticket office, Bāyī Lù 34 (✆ **0971/813-3333**). The bus trip from the airport takes a half hour and costs ¥16 ($2). From the bus drop-off point, the Zhōngfāyuán Bīnguǎn is a 15-minute walk west; or take bus no. 28 from Bāyī Lù to the railway and bus stations. CAAC delivers tickets free of charge. Oddly, discounts are possible during the peak season, but not in the off season. Other ticket offices are at the Qīnghǎi Bīnguǎn (✆ 0971/614-4888, ext. 2473) and at the Wǔsì Dàjiē Shòupiào Chù (✆ 0971/613-6454). There are

TARIM BASIN
Yecheng
Khotan
Dahongliutan
AKSAY QIN
(Disputed between India and China)
Beijing
QINGHAI
TIBET
China
XINJIANG
To Dunhuang
Lenghu
Chalengkou
Youshashan
Da Chaidan
Delingha
Qinghai Hu
Xining
Lanzhou
Golmud
Gonghe
Xunhua
Linxia
QINGHAI
KUNLUN SHAN
Kunlun Shankou
Tongren
Labrang
Huang He
AMNYE MACHEN
6282 M.
Henan
Hezuo
Luqu
CHANGTANG NATURE RESERVE
Huashixia
Erdaogou
Qumalai
Maqin
Maqu
Langmusi
Zhiduo
Qingshuihe
Huang He
Zaduo
Banma
Aba
Rutog
TIBETAN AUTONOMOUS REGION (TAR)
TANGGULA SHAN
Yushu
Shiqu
Shiquanhe (Ali)
Gertse
Tanggula Shankou
Nangqian
Maniangguo
Dege
TIBETAN PLATEAU
MT. KAILASH
6656 M.
Nyima
Amdo
Sok
SICHUAN
Chengdu
Barga
Tashi Namtso
Naqu
Tengchen
Chomdo
Tsochen
Lake Manasarovar
Namtso
Lhasa He
Batang
Purang
Paryang
INDIA
NYAINQENTANGLHA SHAN
Pomda
Markham
Litang
Lhasa
Bayi
Rawok
To Delhi and New Delhi
THE HIMALAYA
Zangzang
Lhatse
Yarlung Zangbo Jiang (Brahmaputra)
Shigatse
Tsetang
Sakya
Yandrok Tso
Mountain Pass
Kunlun Shankou
Pokhara
Tingri
Pelgar
Gyantse
Zhongdian
NEPAL
Nyalam
MT. EVERESTI
QOMOLANGMA
8850 M.
INDIA
Dibrugarh
0 150 mi
0 150 km
Zhangmu
Thimphu
BURMA
(MYANMAR)
Kathmandu
To Calcutta and Dhaka
BHUTAN
Brahmaputra

flights to Běijīng, Shànghǎi, Lhasa, Kūnmíng, Ürümqi, Chéngdū, Dūnhuáng, Golmud, and Xī'ān.

The **railway station** (✆ **0971/814-9970**) is at the north end of town, at the junction of Jiànguó Lù and Hùzhù Xī Lù. Counters 1 to 5 are for normal ticket sales. Trains connect with Lánzhōu (3 hr.) at 11:53am (T654) and at 7:41pm (T656). Trains also connect with Běijīng (T152; 29 hr.) at 8:18am; Shànghǎi (K378; 38 hr.) at 6:31pm; Yínchuān (K424; 12 hr.) at 6:47pm; and Golmud (5701; 15½ hr.) at 5:51pm. An express to Golmud (K427; 13 hr.) originates in Lánzhōu, passing through Xīníng at 9:42pm.

The railway station only sells tickets for the day of travel. You're better off purchasing tickets from the **Huǒchē Fēijī Shòu Piào Chù** (open 8am–noon and 2–6pm) at Wǔsì Dàjiē 40 (✆ **0971/613-6454**). A ¥5 (60¢) commission is charged. Train tickets can be purchased up to 5 days in advance, and airline tickets are also sold. Take bus no. 9 from the railway station to Shāngyè Xiàng.

The **Long-Distance Bus Station** (✆ **0971/814-9611**) is just south of the railway station. Buses service Lánzhōu (5 hr.; ¥27/$3.40) every half hour between 7am and 6:20pm; Tóngrén (4 hr.; ¥23/$2.90) roughly every hour between 7:30am and 5pm; Línxià via Xúnhuà (9 hr.; ¥37/$4.70) or via Liújiā Xiá (11 hr.; ¥36/$4.60) every 15 minutes between 7:15am and 9:15am; Hézuò (11 hr.; ¥43/$5.30) at 7:45am; Liújiā Xiá (3 hr.; ¥30/$3.80) at 10am, 10:30am, and 11am; Golmud (18 hr.; ¥80/¥85 [$10/$11] upper/lower berth) at 4pm—*take the train instead;* Tiānshuǐ (20 hr.; ¥105/$13) at 5pm and 6pm; Dūnhuáng (26 hr.; ¥164/¥189 [$21/$24] upper/lower berth) at 10:15am; Mǎqìn (14 hr.; ¥64/$8 seat, ¥90/$11 sleeper) at 7:30am (seat) and at 5pm and 6pm (sleeper); Bānmǎ (26 hr.; ¥89/$11 seat, ¥125/$16 sleeper) at 9:45am; Yùshù (24 hr.; ¥94/$12 seat, ¥133/$17 sleeper) at 11am and 3pm (seat), and at 5pm and 6pm (sleeper)—take the newer Nángqiān bus if you can; Nángqiān (30 hr.; ¥166/$21) on odd-numbered days at 5pm; and the wilds of Qūmálái (26 hr., ¥100/$13 seat) on even-numbered days at 8:45am.

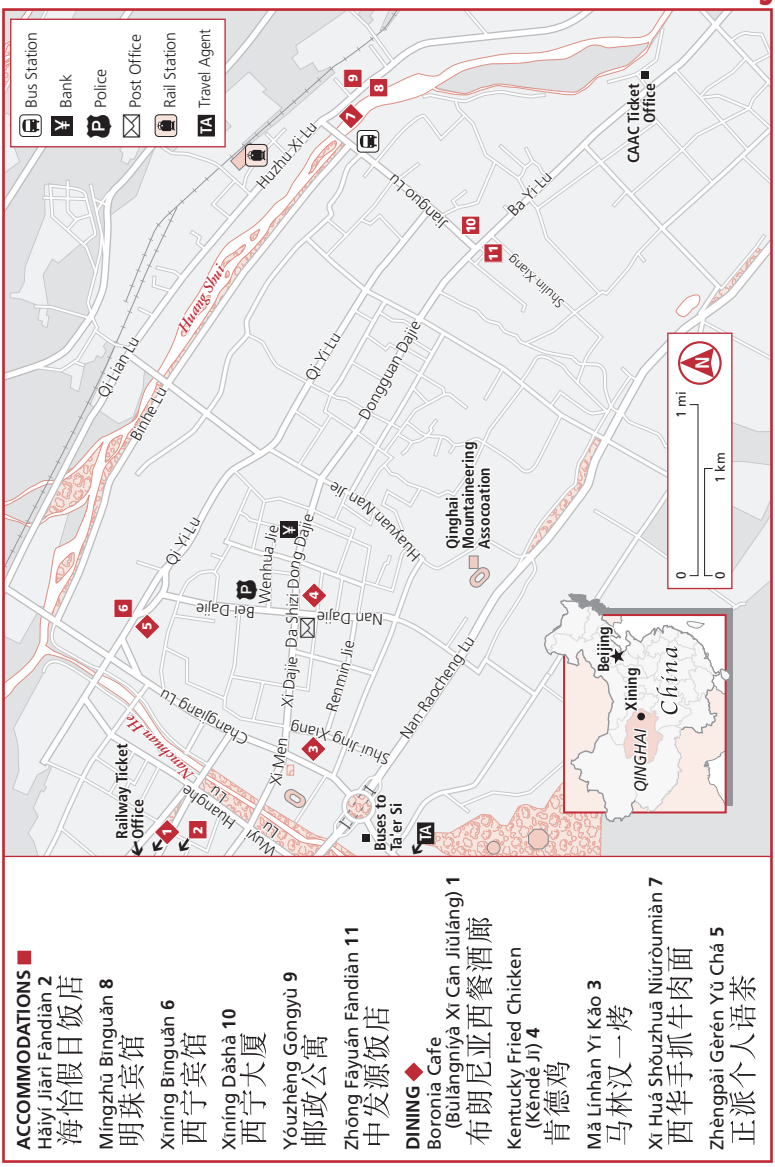
GETTING AROUND **Taxis** come in two varieties. Santanas charge ¥7 (85¢) for 3km (2 miles), ¥1.20 (15¢) per kilometer thereafter. From 10pm to 5am they charge ¥1.40 (20¢) per kilometer. The Xiàlì taxi is only slightly cheaper. **Buses** require you to pop ¥1 (15¢) in a box. Bus no. 1 runs from the railway station to the main intersection *(dà shízì),* passing the Bank of China. Bus no. 9 departs from opposite the railway station, passing the Hǎiyí Holiday Hotel, the railway ticket office, and the Boronia Cafe.

TOURS & GUIDES The main office of **CITS** (✆ **0971/614-4888,** ext. 2439) is inside the Qīnghǎi Bīnguǎn. A more competent branch is on the first floor of Xīníng Dàshà (✆ **0971/812-9842;** fax 0971/812-9842). Get far more reliable info and service from the refreshingly professional **Qīnghǎi Mountaineering Association,** Tǐyù Xiàng 7 (✆ **0971/823-8922;** fax 0971/823-8933; www.qma.org.cn; open 8am–noon and 2:30–6pm, May–mid-Oct; closed winter weekends). Take bus no. 33 to Nán Mén Tǐyùchǎng.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs Traveler's checks and cash may be changed at the **Bank of China,** Yínmǎ Jiē 23 (open Mon–Fri 9am–5pm; Sat–Sun 10am–4pm), but credit cards are not accepted.

Internet Access The 24-hour **Mǎn Hónghóng Wǎngbā,** Rénmín Jiē 3–6 (✆ **0971/822-3199**), is a 5-minute walk south from Dà Shízì. Across the road



ACCOMMODATIONS
Háiyí Jiàrì Fàndiàn **2**
海怡假日饭店
Míngzhū Bīnguǎn **8**
明珠宾馆
Xníng Bīnguǎn **6**
西宁宾馆
Xiníng Dàshà **10**
西宁大厦
Yóuzhèng Gōngyù **9**
邮政公寓
Zhōng Fāyuán Fàndiàn **11**
中发源饭店

DINING
Boronia Cafe (Bùlángníyà Xī Cān Jiǔláng) **1**
布朗尼亚西餐酒廊
Kentucky Fried Chicken (Kěndé Jī) **4**
肯德鸡
Mǎ Línhàn Yī Kǎo **3**
马林汉一烤
Xī Huá Shǒuzhuā Niúroumiàn **7**
西华手抓牛肉面
Zhèngpài Gèrén Yǔ Chá **5**
正派个人语茶

and just east of the Xīníng Bīnguǎn is **Shídài Wǎngbā** (✆ **0971/826-6073**). In the west of town, **Wǎngchóng Jùlèbù** is at Shènglì Lù 25. Near the station, **Liúxīngyǔ Wǎngbā** is downstairs at Zhàn Dōng Xiàng 9. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The main post office (2nd floor; open 8:30am–6pm) is on the southwest corner of the main crossroads.

Visa Extensions The **PSB** at Běi Dàjiē 35 (✆ **0971/826-3403;** open weekdays 8:30am–noon and 2:30–6pm) will arrange visa extensions in a couple of days.

AROUND XĪNÍNG

Kumbum (Tă'ĕr Sì) ★ Jesuit missionary Emmanuel Huc, who visited in 1860, recorded, "On either side of the ravine, and up the edges of the mountains, rise, in amphitheatrical form, the white dwellings of the Lamas, each with its little white terrace and wall of enclosure, adorned only by cleanliness, while here and there tower far above them the Buddhist temples, with their gilt roofs glittering with a thousand colours and surrounded by elegant peristyles. . . ."

One of the six largest **Geluk (Yellow Hat)** monasteries, Kumbum was established in 1560 to mark the birthplace of **Tsongkapa (Zōngkābā),** founder of the Geluk School (see below). The image of Tsongkapa is easily recognized by his pointed cap with long earflaps.

The entrance to the temple is downhill from the bus station, surrounded by a gauntlet of **souvenir shops.** If you're heading further into the Tibetan world, purchase some small pictures (¥0.50/5¢) of deities or of the late Panchen Lama as gifts. Images of the Dalai Lama are also on sale, but you should be extremely cautious in who you give these to—you are putting both yourself and the recipient at risk. Guides charging ¥50 ($6) cluster around the entrance, but as there are English signs, a guide is not essential. Facing away from the ticket office, a path leads up the hill from the left side of a row of eight white chorten (Tibetan stupas). Keep your ticket: It will be punched by bored monks lounging around the major temples. Shrill guides, huge Chinese tour groups, and glassed-in relics lend Kumbum the feel of a museum, but Hàn visitors are more respectful than in the past.

The most striking building is **Serdong Chenmo (Dà Jīnwǎ Diàn)** ★, at the heart of the complex, with its aquamarine tiles. The original structure is said to have been built by Tsongkapa's mother, around a sandalwood tree that sprouted from Tsongkapa's fertile placenta. The **Butter Sculpture Exhibition (Sūyóuhuā Zhǎnlǎnguǎn),** further up the slope, is popular with the locals. These sculptures were once only made for festivals, after which they would be destroyed.

Festivals are held the 8th to the 15th of the first **(Monlam)** and fourth **(Saka Dawa)** lunar months, as well as the third to eighth of the sixth lunar month, and the 20th to the 26th of the ninth lunar month, which celebrates **Tsongkapa's birthday.** Call ahead to check exact dates. Religious dancing, mass chanting, and "sunning the Buddha" can be seen, as well as crowds of Tibetans who, in Huc's day, "sang till they were fairly out of breath; they danced; they pushed each other about; they tumbled head over heels: and shouted till one might have thought that they had all gone crazy." Current festivals may be tamer.

✆ **0971/223-1357.** Admission ¥30 ($3.70). 8:30am–5:30pm. Buses (28km/17 miles; 1 hr.; ¥4/50¢) have their destination marked as HUÁNGZHŌNG, and depart after 6am from south of Kūnlún Qiáo (bus no. 3 from station). The last bus returns at 7:30pm.

Qīnghǎi Hú (Lake Kokonor) Large, high, salty, and stunningly blue, the lake that gave Qīnghǎi (Blue Lake) Province its name provides little reason to visit, unless you are there between April and early July. Over 100,000 birds migrate from the Indian Ocean to feed on spawn of Lake Kokonor's one variety of fish, the slow-growing scaly carp *(huángyú),* which swims up the Bùkā Hé each spring. The fattened birds crowd onto tiny **Niǎo Dǎo (Bird Island),** situated on the northwest side of the lake. Tibetans see this island as the plug for the lake. Peter Fleming explained that "it was once a fertile valley which was flooded by a demon by means of an underground tunnel from Lhasa. Disaster threatened the surrounding countryside, for there was no telling to what lengths such

Tsongkapa: Tibet's First Catholic?

While many portray **Tsongkapa** as a reformer or even revolutionary, in the history of Tibetan Buddhism he was actually a conservative who appealed to existing (but neglected) monastic precepts. Drawing on his prodigious knowledge of the Mahayana Buddhist canon, Tsongkapa emphasized monastic discipline, insisting on abstinence from sex and intoxicants. The Jesuit missionary Emmanuel Huc believed he saw a touch of Catholicism about the man, and hypothesized that "a premature death did not permit the Catholic missionary to complete the religious education of his disciple [Tsongkapa], who himself, when afterwards he became an apostle, merely applied himself . . . to the introduction of a new Buddhist liturgy."

malignance, backed by such plumbing, might go; happily a god, disguising himself as presumably a very large bird, took a rock and dropped it in the mouth of the tunnel, thus saving the situation. The top of the rock still projects above the surface of the water and a lamasery has been established on the island."

Lake Kokonor is an ecological disaster. Monks once received supplies only when the lake froze over, but Bird Island is now a peninsula. The waters recede by 10cm to 15cm (4 in.–6 in.) each year. The water may be seeping back to Lhasa, but intensive crop farming around the lakeshore is generally blamed. All farms near the lake were closed by government fiat in 2003, but this heavy-handed approach is unlikely to be effective. A fishing ban was also imposed in 1999, when it became apparent that tourists, rather than birds, were taking most of the catch. By most accounts, the scaly carp makes poor eating, but rarity appeals to some diners.

All hotels in Xīníng offer tours to Lake Kokonor, starting from ¥100 ($12). Be clear about what your tour includes. During the off season, you will only go as far as 151 Zhàngfáng Bīnguǎn (151 Tent Hotel), to the south of the lake: a less than riveting destination, despite an enormous poster of a smiling Jiāng Zémín. Bird-watchers should make for **Niǎo Dǎo Bīnguǎn** (✆ **0970/865-2447**) on Bird Island, which has all levels of accommodation.

Admission to Bird Island Sanctuary ¥45 ($5.60) plus ¥5 (65¢) for the electric car from the entrance. 8:30am–5:30pm. Closed Nov–Feb.

SHOPPING

Food supplies may be picked up from the second floor of **Běijīng Huálián,** Huáyuán Nán Jiē 5–7, which is open from 8:30am to 9:30pm. Outdoor gear and fuel may be purchased from **King Camp,** just north of the PSB at Běi Dàjiē 11 (✆ **0971/822-2489**), open from 9am to 9:30pm.

WHERE TO STAY

A 20% to 30% discount is standard at most establishments.

EXPENSIVE

Hǎiyí Jiārì Fàndiàn Located on the west side of town, this is the best of Xīníng's few upmarket lodgings. Rooms are well kept, spacious, and functionally furnished. For once, no corners are cut on the bathrooms, which feature nice

deep tubs. Service is friendly and effective. Appetizing burgers and beer are served in the second-floor restaurant.

Wǔsì Dàjiē 41. ✆ **0971/613-9666.** Fax 0971/615-2555. 93 units. ¥348 ($43) twin; ¥318 ($39) standard room; ¥459–¥658 ($57–$82) suite. Rates include breakfast. 10% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: no. 9 from railway station to Jiāotōng Xiàng. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; teahouse; exercise room; concierge; business center; same-day dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, safe.

MODERATE

Míngzhū Bīnguǎn *Value* Situated just east of the railway station, this three-star establishment, built in 1995 but opened in 2002, represents the best value in town. The slightly more expensive rooms on the south side overlook the murky Huángshuǐ River and are preferred; rooms to the north are affected by street noise. The midsize rooms have good beds. The bathrooms are spotless, although only advanced yoga practitioners will enjoy a satisfying soak in the tub.

Hùzhù Xī Lù 7. ✆ **0971/814-9569,** ext. 1 or 2. Fax 0971/817-4867. 147 units. ¥200–¥268 ($25–$33) standard room; ¥780 ($97) suite. Rates include Chinese-style breakfast. A 50% discount on rack rates is offered. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; cafe; small exercise room; concierge; overpriced business center; same-day laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* TV.

Zhōngfāyuán Fàndiàn ★ Located a mile south of the railway station, this spanking-new three-star hotel is doing everything right, within the standard formula. Rooms come in three different sizes, the most expensive being very spacious. All are well lit and well scrubbed; the south side is quieter. Handy to bus, train, and plane, and without the noise and sleaze of the railway district, this is the best mid-priced choice in town.

Shùlín Xiàng 1. ✆ **0971/711-1888.** Fax 0971/711-1999. . 137 units (some with shower only). ¥198–¥318 ($25–$40) standard room; from ¥368 ($46) suite. Rates include breakfast. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; concierge; tour desk; business center; same-day laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, Internet access (¥4.20/55¢ per hr.).

INEXPENSIVE

Yóuzhèng Gōngyù Such is the grip of this hotel on the Xīníng backpacker market that unaccompanied travelers emerging from the railway station will be met by a jolly chap with YOUZHENG GONGYU written on a piece of cardboard. He will take you to a different hotel. At least the man with the sign wants business (but still don't go with him). Staff at the Yóuzhèng repeat the word "renovation" slowly, as though hearing it for the first time. The run-down rooms and crumbling bathrooms bear them out. Hàn guests are offered a 20% discount, which foreigners won't get. Hot water runs from 7:30 to 9am, 1 to 3pm, and 8:30pm to midnight.

Hùzhù Xī Lù 20–2. ✆ **0971/813-3133,** ext. 8100. 50 units (20 with shared bathroom). ¥90 ($11) twin; ¥20–¥26 ($2.50–$3.20) dorm bed. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; tour desk; next-day laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* TV.

WHERE TO STAY NEARBY

Zōngkā Bīnguǎn (Silk Road Tsongkha Hotel) ★★ Located directly opposite Kumbum, this Tibetan guesthouse is overpriced but has that quality rare in China—imaginative design! Acquired by a Hong Kong real-estate magnate in 2001, this once-drab hotel now has exquisitely decorated rooms, with ornate Tibetan furnishings and comfortable *kàng*-style beds. Bathrooms are compact but clean, with nice deep tubs. A serene reading room on the second floor, with tatami mats and low tables, overlooks Kumbum. During festivals the guesthouse is heavily booked.

Huángzhōng Xiàn, Lǔshā'ěr Zhèn, Yíngbīn 4 Lù 57. ✆ **0971/223-6760.** Fax 0971/223-9968. 32 units. ¥680 ($85) Chinese-style twin; ¥880 ($110) Tibetan-style twin. 50%–70% discount available. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; concierge; same-day laundry. *In room:* TV.

WHERE TO DINE

Boronia Cafe (Bùlǎngníyà Xīcān Jiǔláng) WESTERN Situated in the university district at the west end of town, Xīníng's first serious attempt at a Western restaurant is charmingly kitsch. Nightly piano and guitar renditions, played to the newly rich dressed in dinner jackets, are instrumental versions of karaoke favorites; waitstaff hover nervously, unsure how to perform their role. But the food is excellent: The New Zealand sirloin is juicy and best enjoyed with pepper sauce, while the set meals are tasty and satisfying. The wine list even runs to a quaffable Bordeaux. Afternoon dining is more tranquil.

Wǔsì Xī Lù 10. ✆ **0971/631-0679.** Main courses ¥20–¥40 ($2.50–$5). No credit cards. Tues 11:30am–5:30pm; Wed–Mon 11:30am–2am. Bus: no. 9 from the railway station to Liújiā Zhài.

Mǎ Línhàn Yī Kǎo ★ BARBECUE Tucked in the middle of **Shuǐjǐng Xiàng,** this is the most famous eatery of Xīníng's most renowned eat street. For once, fame has not spoiled the place; service in this long-running family business is good-humored and confident. Most dishes are skewered and ready for roasting—no language barriers here. The field mushrooms *(pínggū)* are huge and delicious, the spicy potato *(tǔdòu)* sticks stick to the ribs, and the lamb kabobs *(yángròu chuàn)* are succulent and well seasoned. Favored side dishes are salty, roasted scones *(kǎo dàbǐng),* and cold noodles with chili tofu *(liángpí).*

Shuǐjǐng Xiàng 276. ✆ **0971/822-1835.** Meal for 2 less than ¥40 ($5). No credit cards. 10am–10pm. Bus: no. 1 from the station to Xī Mén.

Xīhuá Shǒuzhuā Niúròumiàn MUSLIM Just east of the station, this unpretentious family restaurant serves tasty Muslim fare. The portions are generous, and the food is fresh. You'll often struggle to find a seat, but the affable Huí manageress will help. Noodles—*bàn miàn* (mixed noodles), *lā miàn* (pulled noodles), and *niúròu miàn* (beef soup noodles)—are the specialty.

Hùzhù Xī Lù 136. ✆ **0971/817-0061.** Meal for 2 less than ¥40 ($5). No credit cards. 7:30am–9:30pm.

XĪNÍNG AFTER DARK

At Zhèngpài Gèrén Yǔ Chá, Běidà Jiē 6 (✆ **0971/824-7075**), the ambience is dark and moody, or it would be but for piped music and checkered tablecloths. Open 24 hours, this is as hip as Xīníng gets. Nude wooden statuary provides stimulation for daring young couples, who nibble furtively on banana chips and "poopcorn."

2 Tóngrén (Repkong)

181km (112 miles) S of Xīníng, 107km (66 miles) NW of Xiàhé

Tóngrén is at the center of a major revival in Tibetan art, particularly in sculpture and the painting of appliquéd *thangkas* (silk paintings). Although viewed by both Lhasa and Běijīng as being on the periphery of the Tibetan world, the locals remember their crucial role in the Sino-Tibetan peace treaty, signed in 822. This is still marked by the **Lurol Festival,** held in the middle of the sixth lunar month. With fertility dances and body piercing, it has a pagan feel. Monks are *not* allowed to attend. The major **Buddhist festival** is held from the fifth to the 12th day of the first lunar month, with debates, religious dancing, and the unveiling of large *thangkas* moving between the main temples of **Sengeshong**

Gompa, Gomar Gompa, and **Rongpo Gompa.** The town itself is drab; nearly all the sites of interest are located several miles north.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The **Tóngrén Bus Station** (✆ **0973/872-2014**) connects Tóngrén with Xīníng (14 buses; 4 hr.; ¥23/$2.90) between 7:20am and 4pm; with Lánzhōu (9 hr.; ¥45/$5.60) at 6:50am; with Xiàhé (5 hr.; ¥18/$2.20) at 8am; with Liújiā Xiá (3 hr.; ¥14/$1.70) at 9am and 11am; with Línxià (7 hr.; ¥27/$3.40) at 7:30am; and with the Mongolian town of Hénán (5 hr.; ¥21/$2.60) at 7:30am. Uphill from the bus station is a large roundabout with a statue of a horse. To the right is Zhōngshān Lù, the main street, which runs west to Tuánjié Lù, marked by an obelisk.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs None available.

Internet Access Immediately east of the entrance to the Telecom Hotel is the nonsmoking **Huángnán Diànxìn Fēngōngsī Wǎngbā** (✆ **0941/872-4196;** open 10am–11pm). Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The main post office is located on Tuánjié Nán Lù, diagonally across from the Huángnán Dàjiǔdiàn.

EXPLORING THE REGION

The main Geluk monastery of the region, **Rongpo Gompa (Lóngwù Sì;** ¥18/$2.20), is to the south of town. But the most popular outing for those interested in Tibetan art is a visit to the villages of **Shàng Wǔtún (Upper Wǔtún)** and **Xià Wǔtún (Lower Wǔtún).** These villages, located 6.4km (4 miles) north of Tóngrén, are full of monks and laypeople turning out masses of Buddhist art for temples as far away as western Tibet. The monks from **Sengeshong Yagotsang** (✆ **0973/872-9227;** ¥10/$1.25) in the upper village are exceptionally friendly, and happy to show their work. Don't keep them too long, as most of them are several months behind in meeting their orders. The most celebrated painter of this village is Shawu Tsering (✆ **0973/872-5032**), who is very sprightly for an octogenarian. Minivans charging ¥3 (40¢) depart when full for **Shàng Wǔtún** and **Xià Wǔtún** from the roundabout near the bus station, or hail a three-wheeler for ¥10 ($1.25). Directly across the river (Lóngwù Hé) is **Gomar Gompa** (**Guōmárì Sì;** ¥10/$1.25), marked by a spectacular five-tiered chorten (stupa). The climb to the top of the 38m (125-ft.) structure is a nervy one, as the ledges get narrower closer to the apex. The reward is a spectacular view down the valley. The monks are Tǔ, not Tibetan—even those fluent in the Amdo dialect won't understand a word they say.

WHERE TO STAY

Diànxìn Bīnguǎn (Telecom Hotel) If there is any truth in the rumor that CCP leaders get kickbacks on the sale of titanium dioxide, then they cleaned up with this white-tiled edifice that can only be viewed with eye protection under the midday sun. Inside are simple, functionally furnished rooms; clean, blue bathrooms; and refreshingly efficient service.

Zhōngshān Lù 2 (on the north side, halfway down the main road). ✆ **0973/872-6888.** 33 units (shower only). ¥136 ($17) standard room; ¥260 ($32) suite. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bowling alley; same-day laundry. *In room:* TV.

Huángnán Dàjiǔdiàn While many hotels in China take a while to get off the ground, the Huángnán sets new standards. Though it was built in 1990, a

sudden drying up of capital meant that the doors of this two-star hotel didn't open for 10 years. It's nevertheless an improvement on the run-down Huángnán Bīnguǎn, previously the only place where foreigners were allowed to stay. Beds are firm, and the rooms are large and bright, but the carpets are already pocked with cigarette burns. Watch your head in the bathroom.

Tuánjié Nán Lù (junction of Zhōngshān Lù and Tuánjié Lù). ✆ **0973/872-5655.** 22 units. ¥156 ($19) standard room; ¥345 ($43) suite. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; tour desk; same-day laundry. *In room:* TV, no phone.

WHERE TO DINE

Xīngyuè Cāntīng *Value* HOME-STYLE While most of Tóngrén's eateries rely on turning their televisions up as loud as possible to attract discerning clientele, this establishment takes the revolutionary approach of relying on its food. On cold nights, the clay pot chicken *(shāguō jī)* is very warming, and servings of noodles *(lā miàn)* are generous.

Zhōngshān Lù 17 (west of the Telecom Hotel). ✆ **0973/872-1972.** Meal for 2 ¥20–¥70 ($2.50–$8.70). No credit cards. 8am–11:30pm.

3 Yùshù (Jyekundo) ★★

819km (508 miles) SW of Xīníng

Because the Kham region inside the **Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR)** is closed to individual travel, **Yùshù** is your best opportunity to visit a large, thriving Khampa town. Though named for **Jyekundo Gompa,** which looms above the town, Yùshù has always been more trading center than monastic town. When he trundled through in 1921, surveying business prospects for a diminishing British empire, consular official Eric Teichman noted: "There is a touch of Mongolia and the north about the place, and a complete absence of anything Szechuanese. On a spur above and overlooking the village is a large Sajya Monastery containing 400–500 lamas. . . . Jyekundo is the most important trading centre in Eastern Tibet. Nearly all the caravans plying between Lhasa and China pass through it and usually rest a few weeks in the vicinity to enable their animals to recuperate on the surrounding grass-lands. Situated in the centre of the triangle Lhasa–Sining–Tachienlu (Chéngdū), it is equally in touch with Tibet, Szechuan, Kansu and Mongolia."

The fierce reputation of the Khampas keeps Hàn migration down (aside from the odd Sìchuān restaurant). Housing has improved, and locals are extremely friendly; strangers may rise and grasp your hand before you join them for a meal. The spectacular **Horse Festival** is free of the vagaries of the lunar calendar and commences on July 25, on a grassy plain south of town.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE An **airport** southeast of Yùshù is under construction, and there is talk of a Xīníng–Yùshù–Lhasa flight in the future. Check with CAAC in Xīníng.

The **bus** trip will make you think twice about visiting Yùshù. If the bus gets stuck—as it often does—the trip may last 40 hours. The road climbs steeply out of Xīníng, passing through **Yuèrì Shān** into vast grassland country. There are few towns along the way; take plenty of provisions. After **Mǎduō,** you enter an expanse of alpine lakes and gradually ascend to a pass at 5,082m (16,670 ft.). If you aren't overcome by altitude sickness, stop for fresh yogurt and perhaps some filling *tsampa* (roasted barley flour mixed with tea) in grasslands south of

Qīngshuǐ Hé. The last major town, 48km (30 miles) before Yùshù, is **Xiēwū,** where a dirt road branches east to **Shíqú** (95km/60 miles) and **Mǎnígāngē** in Sìchuān. If several passengers for Sìchuān disembark, a minibus can be arranged at the Xiēwū crossroads.

The bus station is on Shènglì Lù. Turning left (north), you pass the post office on your left; it's a 10-minute walk from there to the main T-junction with Mínzhǔ Lù, which runs left (west) towards the Yùshù Hotel and Zhìduō, and east towards Xiēwū and Xīníng. Jiēgǔ Sì commands a hill northeast of the T-junction.

Xīníng sleeper buses (24 hr.; ¥132/¥137 [$17/$18] upper/lower berth) depart Yùshù at 10am and 10:30am. Book your ticket well in advance—you *don't* want to be stuck at the back of the bus. A minivan to Shíqú can be negotiated for ¥300 ($37), but most drivers are reluctant to go further. The cheapest option is to get up early and hitch a lift on a truck to Shíqú (¥30/$3.70) or Gānzī (¥70/$8.70). The trucks depart from near the large yak statue, just west of the main T-junction.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs None available.

Internet Access **Zhōngtiān Wǎngbā** (✆ **0976/882-9153**) is opposite and slightly north of the post office. They are open from 11am to 10pm and charge ¥4 (50¢) per hour. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The main post office (open Mon–Fri 9:30am–5:30pm, weekends 11am–4pm) is just north of the bus station. Overseas calls can be made from the **Diànxìnjú,** west of Yùshù Bīnguǎn on the south side of the street.

EXPLORING YÙSHÙ

At the **market** ***(shāngchǎng)*** ★ on the southwest corner of the main T-junction, you can enjoy some of the sights, gestures, and attitudes described by Dutch missionary Susie Rijnhart, one of Tibet's earliest and most astute observers: "The men are mainly dressed in *pulu,* or colored drilling, have their hair mainly done in a great queue about which they adorn with bright rings and twist about their heads. . . .The women often wear a large disk of silver on their forehead and sometimes on the back of their head, and both sexes carry from their girdles silver needle cases, flint and steel boxes and occasionally an embroidered cloth case for their *tsamba* bowl. . . . "

Religious paraphernalia, including bells, prayer wheels, incense, and chanting tapes are sold alongside knives, snuff from India, and bundles of tea wrapped in bamboo. Prayer flags *(tar-choks)* handmade by printers from Dégé, and tailor-made *chubas* (Tibetan jackets), make excellent purchases. Kham is renowned for its richly colored carpets, but many are inferior weaves from Sìchuān. Better carpets are usually Nepalese imports. The craft is being revived locally—a **carpet factory** opened in April 2003.

Jiēgǔ Sì (Jyekundo Gompa) The striking red, gray, and deep-blue walls of this monastery dominate Yùshù. Built in the characteristic tapering farmhouse style of Tibetan architecture, it was established in 1398 by the Sakya School on the site of a small Bon temple. It still houses some very dedicated practitioners. One monk housed adjacent to the temple has yet to see the light of day, and is well into his forties. So keep the noise down! Evening chanting sessions are regularly held in the golden-roofed red temple. ***Note:*** Remove your shoes before entering. The *dzong* (fortress), whose ruins lie above the temple, once commanded an unassailable position, looking out over river valleys to the east, west,

and south. A stroll beyond the ruins up the ridge gives you a stunning panorama of Yùshù, and eventually of the surrounding peaks.

Free admission. Minivan ¥10 ($1.25), or walk up.

Mǎní Shíchéng ★★ ***Mani* stones *(mǎní shí)*** usually carry the most popular Buddhist mantra, *om mane padme hum,* while others are more intricate, containing entire scriptures carved with gold lettering. Tibet's largest collection of *mani* stones stands 5km (3 miles) west of Yùshù. In 1955, there were optimistically estimated to be over 2 billion stones surrounding the temple, and although some now grace toilets in the area, the site has been re-sanctified and the pile is growing once more. The mass of stones and prayer flags towers over pilgrims who circumambulate the 1-sq.-km (.39-sq.-mile) complex. It's a prodigious symbol of faith, especially when you consider that the temple is believed to have been established a little over 800 years ago. Stones were placed here by thankful pilgrims and traders from Sìchuān, Lhasa, and Xīníng, who would rest in Yùshù for several weeks. If you forgot to bring a *mani* stone, you can purchase one from some women of remarkable antiquity and persistence. On the road back to Yùshù, you may notice other stones by verges of the road, which have a less holy purpose and reflect the strength of Bon animistic traditions in the region. "Mouth stones" have the character for "mouth" inscribed one hundred times in a spiral pattern to seal the curse (usually against a business rival) on the reverse side. Understandably, these stones are carved and placed covertly.

Free admission. Open daylight hours. Minivan ¥10 ($1.25).

Vairocana Temple or Wénchéng Gōngzhǔ Miào (Temple of Princess Wénchéng) Situated 20km (12 miles) south of town, just to the left (east) of the road to Nángqiān, lies a temple associated with Princess Wénchéng, who married King Songtsen Ganpo in a bid to halt Tibetan raids. Hàn commentators credit her with bringing all manner of spiritual and agricultural advancements to the Tibetans. On her way to Lhasa, the princess stopped with her retinue for a month in this remote gorge, and carved statues of **Vairocana Buddha** (one of the five transcendent or Tathagata Buddhas, said to transform delusion and ignorance) and the eight bodhisattvas into the naked rock. Some commentators suggest the delay was due to a miscarriage, and that Wénchéng's child is housed within the central effigy. The hall sheltering the images was added in 710 by the next Táng princess, Jīnchéng. These political marriages were to no avail: The Tibetans sacked Cháng'ān in 763. Behind the temple is a great deal of Tibetan and Chinese script, but the passage of time makes it difficult to decipher. A spectacular view of the temple is gained by climbing the hill opposite, but the climb is a steep 2 hours.

Free admission. Open daylight hours. Return trip by minivan: ¥50 ($6).

WHERE TO STAY

Yùshù lacks quality accommodations, and prices at all establishments tend to double during the Horse Festival, when it is best to book in advance (with a firm agreement on the price). If you are without a bathroom, the **Chāo Háohuá Línyù Shìjiè,** a few minutes' walk north from the bus station and a left at Dāngdài Lù (the first crossroads), is recommended. The price should be ¥5 (65¢). ***Warning:*** Some bathhouses offer "extra services."

Yùshù Bīnguǎn Lying about 200m (218 yd.) west of the main T-junction, on the right (north) side of the road, are Yùshù's best (and only) two-star lodgings.

Beds can be spongy, and some of the staff are so rude you wonder if they should seek psychiatric help. Rooms on the north side are quieter. Renovations in 2000 brought enormous fiberglass shower/tub combos, surrounded by crumbling tiles. But alas, this is the best place in town.

Mínzhǔ Lù 10. ✆ **0976/882-6898.** Fax 0976/882-2428. 89 units (41 without bathroom). ¥120 ($15) twin; ¥480 ($60) suite; ¥15 ($1.90) dorm bed. **Amenities:** Restaurant; tour desk. *In room:* TV.

WHERE TO DINE

Hǎoyùnlái Dàngāo Miànbāo Shìjiè BAKERY Enter a surreal world where monks sip tea, nibble sponge cake, rock on swings, and nod their heads to the beat of F4, a boy band from Táiwān. Monks from Jiěgǔ Sì have been allowed to visit India; many speak good English, and may engage you in an earnest discussion on the current politics of the exiled Tibetan government in Dharamsala. Ordering is simple, as pictures of menu items adorn the walls. The milk tea is pleasant, but the pastries are fluffy and sugary.

Shènglì Lù, 2nd floor (200m/218 yd. south of the main T-junction on the east side). ✆ **0976/882-9323.** Less than ¥40 ($5) for 2. 8:30am–8pm.

Jīnpíngyuán Qīngzhēn Fànguǎn MUSLIM Noodles are the specialty of this perpetually full Huí-run establishment, found on the west side across the bridge south of the main T-junction, right in the center of the market. But it's also a meat-lover's paradise, with close to 50 different beef dishes on offer. The vibrant open-air market viewed from the window is a like a *National Geographic* story waiting to be told.

Shènglì Lù. ✆ **0976/882-7040.** Meal for 2 less than ¥40 ($5). 8am–10pm.

Xiāngbālā Cāntīng ★ SICHUANESE Dining in Jyekundo's most upmarket eatery is done in private rooms—not really suited to the solo traveler. But those with a few friends will enjoy lavishly painted rooms, friendly service, and (if you wish) karaoke. Potato-chip lovers should order the *gānbiān tǔdòu sī* (dry-fried potato)—crisp, spicy, and not oily. Other specialties include the mild *kǒudài dòufu* (minced soy chicken in tofu pockets) and the very fresh *xiāngbālā yángpái* (lamb chops).

Mínzhǔ Lù 57 (just east of Yùshù Bīnguǎn). ✆ **0976/882-4618.** Meal for 2 ¥50–¥150 ($6–$19). No credit cards. Noon–11pm.

AROUND YÙSHÙ

Travel to areas around Yùshù—**Nángqiān, Zāduō, Zhìduō,** and **Qūmálái**—no longer requires a permit. Thriving monasteries, remote nature reserves, and bumpy roads await the intrepid. The **Yùshù Bīnguǎn** (see "Where to Stay," above) rents Běijīng Jeeps for 1-day trips for ¥200 ($16), but more extensive tours are best arranged through the **Qīnghǎi Mountaineering Association** (p. 740) in Xīníng. Unlike other operators, they are willing to arrange tours to Lhasa via Yùshù, following the traditional trade route along riverbeds for much of the way. Give them at least 2 weeks' notice.

4 Mǎqìn (Dàwū)

552km (342 miles) S of Xīníng, 525km (326 miles) NW of Aba

Few capital cities are one-street towns, but **Mǎqìn,** the capital of Golok Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, is just that. Efforts to "settle" nomads are rarely successful (see below), and the town has a Wild West ambience. Nomads wander around for a few hours, and then amble out again. North of town is a picturesque **Mani**

temple, choked with *tar-choks* (prayer flags), and the bustling **market** to the left of the bus station is worth a look. But the main reason to come here is to visit **Amnye Machen,** Amdo's holiest mountain. ***Warning:*** Măqìn is the coldest town in Qīnghăi . . . and Qīnghăi is a cold place.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Compared to the trek out to Tibet's other renowned holy mountain, Kailash, getting to Amnye Machen is straightforward. The **bus** from Xīníng passes **Lājiā Sì,** a charming Geluk monastery on the upper reaches of the Yellow River, at daybreak, and arrives at Măqìn mid-morning. The **bus station** at Tuánjié Lù 137 (✆ **0975/838-2715**), open from 7am to 5:30pm, has services to Xīníng (14 hr.; ¥68/$8.50 seat or ¥93/$12 sleeper) at 8am (seat) and 4pm (sleeper). To continue south, you will need to arrange permits in Xīníng. There are buses for Dárì (4 hr.; ¥25/$3) at 7:30am; and on odd-numbered dates for Bānmă (10 hr.; ¥46/$5.70) and thence to Aba (1½ days; ¥80/$10) in Sìchuān, departing at 8am. Hiring a Běijīng **Jeep** through CITS, you can connect directly with Măduō (¥1,000/$125), Aba (¥1,500/$187), and Yùshù (¥2,000/$250). Facing out from the bus station, you are on Tuánjié Lù. As major streets go, that's it. The direction to your left is roughly north.

TOURS & GUIDES **CITS** (✆ **0975/838-3441;** fax 0975/838-3431;) is in the lobby of **Xuě Shān Bīnguǎn,** and goes by the name Amdo & Kham International Travel Service (open 9am–noon, and 3–5:30pm). While they are friendly enough, you're better off arranging the trip through the Qīnghăi Mountaineering Association in Xīníng. If want to tackle the *kora* (circuit) around Amnye Machen independently, avoid the Xuě Shān altogether. CITS keeps an eye out for foreigners, and will try to extract an "entrance ticket" of ¥100 ($12) and up, and an "environmental protection fee" of ¥30 ($3.70) per person per day. When asked what environmental projects this fee supports, they volunteer that there's an annual tourism fair in Hong Kong that they like to attend. They also rent Běijīng Jeeps for ¥500 ($62) per day.

The Panchen Lama's Letter

The Great Leap Forward (1959–1961) killed an estimated 30 million Chinese, but the horror of Qīnghăi was unparalleled. The leftist policies of the city's radical governor, Gāo Fēng, are said to have wiped out up to half the population. Starvation claimed most lives, while the PLA's policy of "fighting the rebellion on a broad front" *(píngpàn kuòdà)* saw countless monks and nuns murdered. The Panchen Lama, viewed as a puppet of Běijīng, was sent to Qīnghăi on a fact-finding mission in 1962. Upon his return, he penned a 70,000-word tract—*The Panchen Lama's Letter*—which implied genocide: "The population of [greater] Tibet has been seriously reduced. . . . it poses a grave danger to the very existence of the Tibetan race and could even push the Tibetans to the last breath." Máo was enraged, the "puppet" was put under house arrest, and he was only rehabilitated by the Party in 1988. Ending nomadism, of which Marxism takes a dim view, is still official government policy.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs None available.

Internet Access **Hóng Niú Wǎngbā** (✆ **0975/838-4994**) is across the road and just north of the bus station, on the second floor of a music shop. It's open from 10am to 10pm and charges ¥4 (50¢) per hour. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The main post office (weekdays 9:30am–5:30pm, weekends 10:30am–4:30pm) is a 5-minute walk north of the bus station.

WHERE TO STAY

Xuě Shān Bīnguǎn Located just south (right) of the bus station, this is Mǎqìn's premier hotel. That's not a big claim. Midsize rooms in building 2 *(èr lóu)* are sunny, beds are comfy, and there are new electric showers for the grubby tubs. Reception staff are so indolent they will ask *you* to go and tell the maid to check your room, rather than pick up the phone in front of them. Bargaining is fruitless.

Tuánjié Lù 109. ✆ **0975/838-2142.** 58 units (40 without bathroom). ¥96 ($12) twin; ¥144–¥388 ($18–$48) suite; ¥12–¥28 ($1.50–$3.50) dorm bed. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; tour desk. *In room:* TV.

Xuěyù Bīnguǎn To the left of the bus station, on the first corner, is this white-tiled, blue-glass monolith. Relatively new, it's the best choice if you want to avoid CITS. Guest rooms are narrow, but bathrooms are spacious with deep tubs, reversing the usual formula. Diagonally opposite is the **Diànxìn Bīnguǎn,** a similar property with dingier bathrooms.

Tuánjié Lù. ✆ **0975/838-1889.** 78 units (54 without bathroom). ¥96 ($12) twin; ¥20–¥26 ($2.50–$3.20) dorm bed. 20% discount possible. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant. *In room:* TV.

WHERE TO DINE

Fúxīng Lóu Měishíchéng SICHUANESE Slightly north of the market, this constantly busy eatery offers standard pan-Chinese and Sichuanese fare at reasonable prices. Chat with the staff downstairs, or join the locals for karaoke and drinking on the second floor.

Tuánjié Lù. ✆ **0975/838-1055.** 6:30am–11:30pm. Meal for 2 under ¥60 ($7.50).

A NEARBY HOLY MOUNTAIN

About 86km (53 miles) from Mǎqìn stands **Amnye Machen (Mǎjī Gāngrì)** ★★★. In 1929, American botanist Joseph Rock incorrectly measured its height at over 9,000m (30,000 ft.), making it (for a while) the world's highest peak. It actually comes in well short, at 6,282m (20,605 ft.), but it was unconquered until 1981 (partly because an earlier Chinese expedition climbed the wrong peak). One of the first Western visitors was the French adventurer, Grenard, who was impressed by "a prodigious and resplendent mass of snow and ice, which strikes any man, however accustomed to mountains, with admiration and astonishment." The protector deity who resides in the mountain, **Machen Pomra,** is popular with Bonpos (followers of the Bon faith) and is also revered by Buddhists.

Many pilgrims start the trek from **Sānchàkǒu (Tselnak Khamdo),** where the road meets the pilgrimage circuit. Further down the motor road is **Báitǎ (Chuwarna),** the traditional starting point for the trek where yaks and horses may be hired from ¥50 ($6) per day. The full circuit is a hefty 132km (82 miles), and there is no way of retracing your steps without incurring the wrath of Machen Pomra. Young folks whiz around in 4 days, carrying all their gear, but it's best to hire a yak or two to carry your gear and take 7 to 10 days. Riding on

horseback should take no more than 3 days. The atmosphere of the *kora* is pious and social. Entire villages or families make the trip, coming from all corners of the Tibetan world for a pilgrimage that is equal to Kailash in significance. The scenery is unsurpassed.

A tent, a sleeping bag, food and fuel, and a spare pair of light shoes or sandals for the numerous stream crossings are essential. A sturdy water filter would also be an idea—there is a lot of glacial silt in the streams. Most pilgrims abstain from meat during the *kora*—a real sacrifice for the meat-loving Tibetans. May and June are the best months, when the snow is still on the peaks, after the deadly cold of winter and before the summer rains. September and October are also fine.

A **pilgrim bus** to Sānchákǒu and Báitǎ crawls by at 8am, but a **Běijīng Jeep** (2½ hr.; ¥20/$2.50 per person) is quicker. ***Warning:*** The road is rough—windows are often broken from the *inside.*

5 Golmud (Gé'ěrmù)

1165km (722 miles) N of Lhasa, 781km (484 miles) W of Xīníng, 524km (325 miles) S of Dūnhuáng

Unless you plan to travel overland to Lhasa, or unless potash plants and oil refineries excite you, there is no reason to visit this blot on the wild and gloomy landscape of the **Tsaidam Basin.** For the overland journey to Lhasa, it's CITS Golmud or nothing (see "Highway Robbery," below, for details). *Note:* For Chinese translations of selected establishments listed in this section, please turn to Appendix A.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The **airport** is 20km (12 miles) west of Golmud. A bus making the 30-minute trip for ¥10 ($1.25) connects with the **CAAC** office, just east of the PSB, at Cháidámù Lù 66 (✆ **0979/841-0931,** ext. 8808). The one flight connects with Xīníng, Xī'ān, and Qīngdǎo.

Golmud is connected by **rail** to Xīníng (12½ hr.) and Lánzhōu (16 hr.) by the K428, which leaves at 4:46pm. Slower trains leave at 6:40pm (5702) and 10:06pm (8760). The left-luggage room is to the right (east).

The **Golmud Bus Station** (✆ **0979/845-3688**) is directly opposite, with buses to Dūnhuáng (11 hr.; ¥55/$6.90 seat, ¥90/$11 sleeper) at 8am and 6pm; and to Xīníng (15 hr.; ¥70/$8.70) at 4pm. Buses for Tibet leave from the **Tibet Bus Station** at Yánqiáo Lù Zhōngduàn 15 (✆ **0979/848-3532**); CITS is waiting here.

GETTING AROUND **Taxis** charge ¥5 to ¥6 (65¢–75¢). **Buses** are infrequent, and cost ¥1 (15¢), paid to the conductor.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China** (open weekdays 8:30am–6:30pm, weekends 9:30am–4pm), Cháidámù Lù 19, changes cash and traveler's checks only.

Internet Access **"Ài wǒ ba" Wǎngbā** (✆ **0979/845-7871;** open 9am–midnight) is above a grocery store, on the corner of Xī Shìchǎng Sān Lù and Zhànqián Èr Lù. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The main post office (open 9am–6pm summer, 9am–5pm winter) is on the northeast corner of Kūnlún Lù and Cháidámù Lù.

Visa Extensions The **PSB** (open Mon–Fri, 8:30am–noon and 2:30–6pm) at Cháidámù Lù 68 (✆ **0979/841-8242**) grants 1-month extensions in 2 days. Permits for closed areas of the Tsaidam Basin are arranged here.

WHERE TO STAY

Foreigners were once forced to stay at the **Gé'ěrmù Bīnguǎn.** Rather than "Hello," the standard greeting is "Passport," and if you're foolish enough to hand it over, they will photocopy it for CITS, who lurk upstairs. Do not stay at this hotel. Discounts of 20% are standard at other establishments.

Wēi'ěrshì Dàjiǔdiàn Tucked in a quiet location between town and railway station, this two-star hotel was thoroughly renovated in 2002. The comfortably furnished rooms are kept spotlessly clean; service is efficient and unobtrusive. Well-scrubbed dormitory rooms are at the back *(hòu lóu),* but there are no common showers.

Jiāngyuán Nán Lù 26. ✆ **0979/841-9308.** Fax 0979/842-4888. 64 units (12 without bathroom). ¥148 ($19) twin; ¥158 ($20) standard room; ¥388 ($48) suite; ¥30–¥45 ($3.70–$5.60) dorm bed. Rates include breakfast. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; concierge; business center; same-day laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* TV.

Yóuzhèng Bīnguǎn (Post Hotel) This clean and friendly three-star establishment opened in 2002. Rooms vary in size; a larger room is worth paying more for. The friendly travel agency will provide free information, but it isn't allowed to arrange your trip to Lhasa.

Yíngbīn Lù (directly opposite railway station). ✆ **0979/845-7000.** Fax 0979/845-7020. 59 units (51 shower only). ¥128–¥168 ($16–$21) twin; ¥128 ($16) standard room; ¥388 ($48) suite. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bike rental; concierge; tour desk; business center; same-day laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* TV.

WHERE TO DINE

Tàipíngyáng Shífǔ MUSLIM This friendly restaurant is a pleasant break from the sensory deprivation of the world's ugliest town. The Huí chef produces specialties such as *huángmèn yángròu* (lamb stew), *xiāngsū jī* (crispy chicken), and *xiānggū càixīn* (mushrooms and Chinese greens).

Bāyī Lù 65. ✆ **0979/841-5845.** Meal for 2 ¥70–¥120 ($8.70–$15). No credit cards. Noon–10:30pm.

Highway Robbery

The only official way to reach Lhasa (28–50 hr.) overland is through CITS. You will be charged ¥1,700 ($212) for a trip that costs the locals ¥200 ($25). For ¥50 ($6) more, you can fly from Chéngdū. CITS proudly declares that the bus ticket costs exactly the same for foreigners, but when asked to itemize the remaining ¥1,500 ($187), they become vague and defensive. A tour of Lhasa and dormitory accommodations you don't want are included in the price. If being robbed isn't enough, you'll have to listen to unctuous apologies, such as, "Tibet is an autonomous region, there's nothing we can do," mixed with threats such as "You *must* go on the tour and stay at the Kirey Hotel."

Touts, whose vehicles always have three Americans waiting to leave, offer the unofficial option at the bus and railway stations. The asking price is ¥500 ($62), and while there is a risk (some have been deported), drivers are more generous with the police than CITS, so most get through. Inspect the vehicle first, and don't pay the balance until you reach Lhasa.

Railway on the Roof of the World

Golmud Railway Station staff are coy if asked when China's most ambitious railway link will open, but foundations have already been laid for over half of the track, and steel stretches far south of Golmud. Engineering challenges are substantial. The planned route will cross a 5,072m (16,636-ft.) pass through permanently frozen, earthquake-prone country. The central government is investing vast sums in this mega-project, and signs along the way, such as CONQUER NATURE and NEVER ADMIT DEFEAT, revisit the 1960s. Tibetans in Lhasa, already inundated by waves of Hàn migration that have made them a minority in their capital, are less excited by the project. One monk from Sera simply shrugged and sighed, "There's nothing we can do, but it will be the end for Tibet. The Chinese will come in, and our minerals will go out." A jaded CCP member admits, "There's going to be trouble, lots of unrest." He nods in the direction of an army barracks. "They're planning for it right now."

6 Lhasa (Lāsà)

1,165km (722 miles) S of Golmud, 278km (172 miles) E of Shigatse

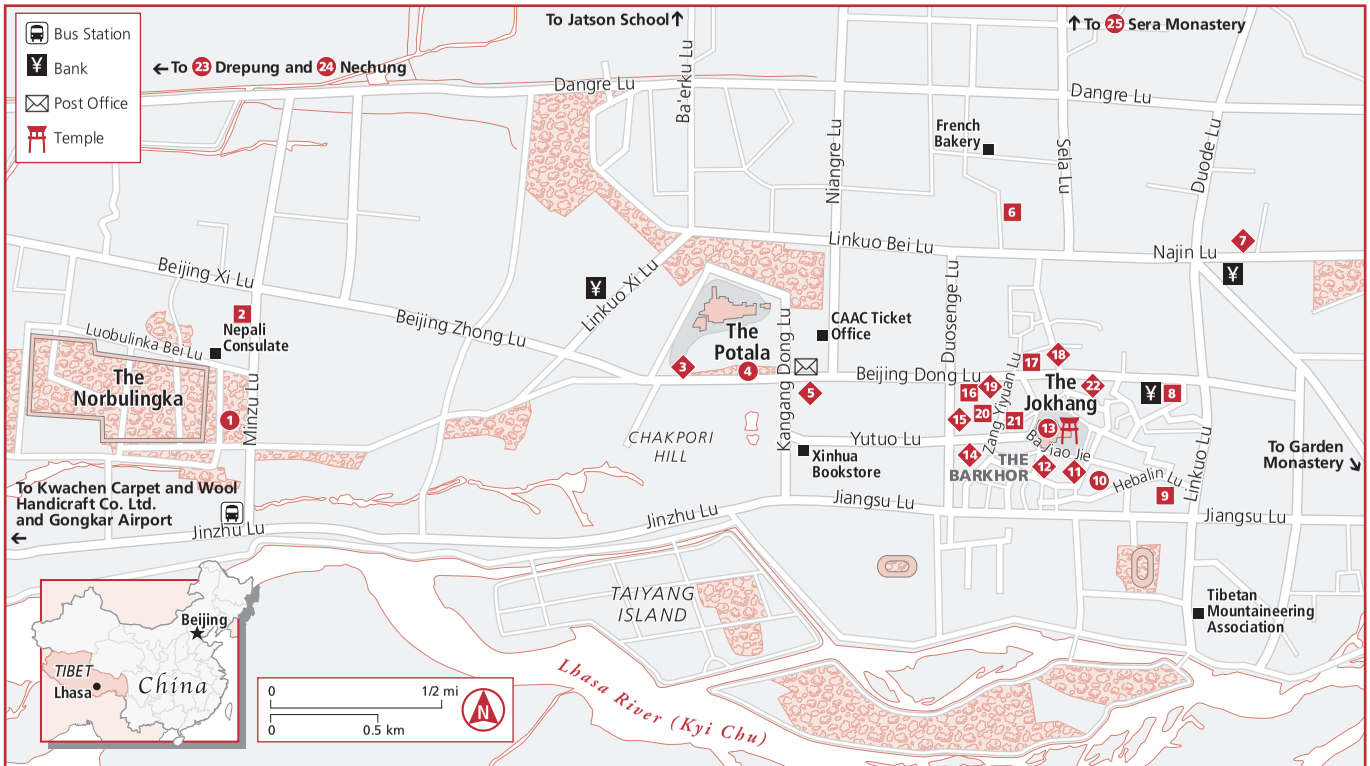
The religious and political heart of the Tibetan world, Lhasa sits on the north bank of the Kyi Chu, surrounded by colossal mountain ranges to the north and south. The first hint that you are entering the traditional capital of Tibet is the red and white palaces of the **Potala** ★★, home to Tibet's spiritual and temporal leaders, the Dalai Lamas, since the 17th century. Most Western visitors, however, are disillusioned to find a Chinese city. The Dalai Lama, the other enduring symbol of Tibetan purity and mystery, fled the grounds of his summer residence, the **Norbulingka,** more than 40 years ago.

Nowhere is the grip of Chinese rule tighter. The effects of martial law, declared in March 1989, are still felt in Lhasa, particularly in the nearby Geluk monasteries of **Drepung** ★ and **Sera.** Hú Yàobāng, general secretary of the CCP during the early 1980s, compared Chinese policies and attitudes in Tibet to colonialism, and this feeling is still hard to shake. Since the 1980s, waves of Hàn migration from poor neighboring provinces have made Tibetans a minority in their own capital. Ironically, Hú Yàobāng's policy of opening Tibet to migration and trade led to this influx of Hàn migrants, which most Tibetans consider the most odious aspect of Chinese rule.

All Tibetan Buddhists aim to visit Lhasa at least once in their lives, drawn by the sacred **Jokhang Temple** ★★★, which forms the heart of the Tibetan quarter. It is recommended that you spend most of your time exploring this captivating neighborhood, also known as the **Barkhor District.**

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Previously, visitors to Tibet needed a group of five to constitute a tour group and thus obtain a Tibet Tourism Bureau (TTB) permit, which allows entry to the TAR. Now you can be a group of one. Those arriving


Bus Station
Bank
Post Office
Temple
To Jatson School
To 25 Sera Monastery
To 23 Drepung and 24 Nechung
Dangre Lu
Ba'erku Lu
Niangre Lu
French Bakery
Sela Lu
Duode Lu
Linkuo Bei Lu
Najin Lu
Beijing Xi Lu
Beijing Zhong Lu
Linkuo Xi Lu
Duosenge Lu
Luobulinka Bei Lu
Nepali Consulate
The Norbulingka
Minzu Lu
The Potala
CAAC Ticket Office
Kangang Dong Lu
Beijing Dong Lu
The Jokhang
Zang Yiyuan Lu
Ba Jiao Jie
THE BARKHOR
Hebalin Lu
Linkuo Lu
CHAKPORI HILL
Yutuo Lu
Xinhua Bookstore
To Garden Monastery
To Kwachen Carpet and Wool Handicraft Co. Ltd. and Gongkar Airport
Jinzhu Lu
Jiangsu Lu
TAIYANG ISLAND
Tibetan Mountaineering Association
Lhasa River (Kyi Chu)
Beijing
TIBET
Lhasa
China
0
1/2 mi
0
0.5 km
N

ACCOMMODATIONS ■
Banak Shol Hotel **8**
(Bālángxué Lǚ guǎn)
八郎学旅馆
Huāshén Lǚ guǎn **9**
(Flora Hotel)
花神旅馆
Kyichu Hotel **16**
(Jíqū Fàndiàn)
吉曲饭店
Lhasa Hotel **2**
(Lāsà Fàndiàn)
拉萨饭店
Pentoc Guesthouse **20**
Snowlands Hotel **21**
(Xuěyù Bīnguǎn)
雪域宾馆
Tashi Nota Hotel **6**
(Jíxiáng Bǎomǎ Bīnguǎn)
吉祥宝马宾馆
Yak Hotel (Yà Bīnguǎn) **17**
亚宾馆

DINING ◆
Alu Cang Restaurant **15**
(Ā'luócāng Cāntīng)
阿罗仓餐厅
Dunya Restaurant and Bar **18**
Kalsangling Nightclub **7**
(Gésēnlín Cāntīng)
格森林餐厅
Mayke Ame **11**
(Mǎjī Ā'mǐ)
玛吉阿米
Mandala Restaurant **12**
(Mǎnzhāi Shítīng)
满斋食厅
New Mandala Restaurant **14**
(Xīn Mǎnzhāi Shítīng)
新满斋食厅
Shangrila Restaurant **22**
(Xiānggélǐlā Zāngshí)
香格里拉藏食
Tashi's I **19**
Xīn Shìjì Dàshà **5**
新世纪大厦
Xuěshén Gōng **3**
(Snow God Palace)
雪神宫

ATTRACTIONS ●
Ani Tshamkhung Nunnery **10**
(Ā'ní Gōng)
阿尼宫
Drepung Monastery **23**
(Zhébàng Sì)
哲蚌寺
Jokhang Temple **13**
(Dàzhāo Sì)
大昭寺
Nechung Monastery **24**
(Nǎiqióng Sì)
乃琼寺
Potala Palace **4**
(Bùdálā Gōng)
布达拉宫
Norbulingka **1**
(Luóbùlínkǎ)
罗布林卡
Sera Monastery **25**
(Sèlā Sì)
色拉寺

by **air** from Kathmandu can obtain a standard 1-month tourist (L) visa and a TTB permit only by joining a group tour through a travel agency. Two good choices are **Royal Mt. Trekking,** P.O. Box 10798, Durbar Marg, Kathmandu (✆ **977-1/424-1452;** fax 977-1/424-5318; www.royal-mt-trek.com); and **Green Hill Tours & Treks,** P.O. Box 5072, Kathmandu (✆ **977-1/441-4803;** fax 977-1/441-9985; www.greenhilltours.com). **Gongkar Airport** is 97km (60 miles) southeast of Lhasa. Buses (1½ hr.; ¥35/$4.40) connect the airport with the **CAAC** ticket office in Lhasa at Niángrè Lù 1 (✆ **0891/683-3446**). The buses depart the office for the airport about 3 hours before flights. Check when purchasing your ticket, or call ✆ **0891/682-6282.**

For tickets, fill out a form obtained from the information desk to the left, join a long line to book your flight, swap your passport for an invoice which you pay at the counter to the right, and finally pick up the ticket from the front of the original line. There are daily flights to Běijīng and Chéngdū; to Xī'ān (Mon, Wed, Thurs, Sun) via Xīníng; to Guǎngzhōu (Tues) via Chóngqìng; and to Zhōngdiàn (Wed). Flights from Chéngdū and Xīníng connect to most destinations in China.

Tickets for international connections with Kathmandu (Tues, Sat) and Hong Kong (Thurs) are purchased from the **International Tickets Desk** to the right. ***Tip:*** When lines are long and you're purchasing a domestic ticket, buy it from the international counter.

The **bus station** (✆ **0891/682-4268**) is at the south end of town. Those arriving from the overland trek from Golmud will find that purchasing a ticket back to Golmud is considerably less expensive. A direct bus to Golmud (1,165km/722 miles; 28–50 hr.; ¥210/$26) leaves at 8:30am; buses to Xīníng (1,947km/1,207 miles) leave at 11:30am. Buses to Lánzhōu (2,216km/1,374 miles) leave at 1:30pm and also pass through Golmud. Buses connect with Shigatse (6 hr.; ¥38/$4.70) every half hour from 8:30am; and buses for Tsedang (4 hr.; ¥27–¥40/$3.40–$5) depart at 9am, 10am, and 1pm.

GETTING AROUND **Taxis** within town are ¥10 ($1.25). **Minibuses** charging ¥2 (25¢) and **buses** (with conductors) charging ¥1 (15¢) are plentiful.

TOURS & GUIDES If you arrive in Lhasa without a tour arranged, and you wish to visit **closed areas** beyond Shigatse in the west, Tsetang in the east, Naqu in the north, and the region immediately south of Lhasa, you will need an **Aliens' Travel Permit.** This can only be obtained by joining a tour through **Foreign Individual Traveler (FIT)** branches in the Snowland Hotel at Zàng Yīyuàn Lù 4 (✆ **0891/634-9239;** fax 0891/634-3854) and in the Banak Shol Hotel at Běijīng Zhōng Lù 8 (✆/fax **0891/634-4397**). The latter currently enjoys the better reputation. FIT extracts the maximum amount from tourists while providing a minimum of service. Restrictions on travel tend to increase around certain dates, particularly the Monlam Festival (sometime mid-Jan to mid-Feb), the Saka Dawa Festival (sometime mid-May to mid-June), and the Dalai Lama's birthday on July 6. Those planning extensive trips should organize your tours through other agencies well before you arrive. Of the Lhasa-based tour operators, **Shigatse Travels,** located inside the Yak Hotel (✆ **0891/633-0489;** fax 0891/633-0482;), is highly recommended.

For journeys to **open areas,** and for a direct trip to the Nepali border, an Aliens' Travel Permit is not required. You can rely on public transport (where it exists), or proceed through independent drivers or tour operators. If you choose the latter, be sure to draw up a contract stating where you will visit and how long the trip will last, and withhold the balance until the tour is completed—many travelers have been left stranded. Those planning mountaineering expeditions must obtain permits from the **Tibetan Mountaineering Association** (✆ **0891/632-2981**), housed in a building immediately north of the Himalaya Hotel. Whatever difficulties you face, you won't be the first traveler in Tibet to have his or her way blocked by the authorities.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The main branch of the **Bank of China,** west of the Potala Palace at Línkuò Xī Lù 28, accepts traveler's checks and credit cards at counters 5 and 6. Summer hours are weekdays from 9am to 1pm and 3:30 to 6pm; weekends 10am to 5pm. Winter hours are weekdays from 9:30am to 1:30pm and 3:30 to 6pm; weekends from 10:30am to 4:30pm. A branch of the bank on the northeast side of town, at Nàjīn Lù 188, exchanges cash and traveler's checks at counter 1, open weekdays from 9am to 1pm and 3:30 to 6pm; weekends from 10am to 5pm. Another branch that deals only in cash and traveler's checks is just west of the Banak Shol Hotel on Běijīng Dōnglù. It's open weekdays from 9:30am to 1pm and 3 to 6pm.

Consulates North of the Norbulinka Palace, the **Nepalese Consulate-General** at Luóbùlínkǎ Běi Lù 13 (✆ **0891/682-2881;** fax 0891/683-6890) is open from 10am to 12:30pm on weekdays. Visas are processed in 1 day. Your

first Nepalese visa for the year is valid for 60 days, and costs ¥255 ($32). If it's your second visa for the year, it's only valid for 30 days. Non-Chinese nationals can arrange their visas at the border (Zhāngmù). Consular officials joke that this may be the only example of preferential treatment for foreigners in the TAR.

Internet Access The 24-hour **100M Wǎngbā,** Běijīng Zhōng Lù 155 (✆ **0891/633-3633**), offers broadband access for ¥5 (65¢) per hour. East of the post office is **Yóuzhèng Wǎngbā** (✆ **0891/624-1431**). The **Yak Hotel** at Běijīng Zhōng Lù 100 (✆ **0891/632-3496**) has several computers, and stays open until 4am. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The main post office is at Běijīng Dōng Lù 33. Summer hours are from 9am to 8pm; winter hours are from 9:30am to 6:30pm. The counter to the far left designated INTERNATIONAL POST BUSINESS is efficient; it's open from 9am to noon and 3:30 to 5:30pm.

Visa Extensions Here, travelers face the most feared **PSB** in China, at Běijīng Dōng Lù 4 (✆ **0891/632-4528**). At the entrance, a notice board instructs employees in the usage of polite language. Unfortunately, it's in Chinese. Visa officers spit out the word "individual traveler" as through it's a disfiguring and contagious affliction. They offer extensions of up to 5 days, usually processed in half a day. Hours are weekdays from 9am to 12:30pm and 3:30 to 6pm. Longer extensions are possible if you have an onward air ticket or have already arranged a tour. Extend your visa in Shigatse.

EXPLORING LHASA

Drepung Monastery (Zhébàng Sì) ★ Founded in 1416 by Tsongkapa's disciple Jamyang Choeje, Drepung was once Tibet's largest and most influential monastery, with over 10,000 monks. The seat of the Dalai Lamas before the "Great Fifth" Dalai Lama built the Potala Palace, many buildings survived the Cultural Revolution, but the order now pays a price for its prominent role in the pro-independence demonstrations of 1987. On September 27, 1987, about 20 Drepung monks unfurled banners and the Tibetan flag, and marched around the Barkhor before being arrested in front of the TAR Government H.Q. This politicization of the monks is remarkable, as they were once loyal to their college first, and country second. Monks at Loseling College fought *against* Tibetan independence after the fall of the Qīng. The effects of a program of political indoctrination undertaken in 1996 are still felt. A PSB compound sits below the monastery, and "cadre monks" keep a close eye on day-to-day activities.

A circuit of the monastery begins with **Ganden Podrang (Ganden Palace),** and continues on to **Tsokchen (Assembly Hall), Ngakpa Tratsang (College of Tantric Studies), Jamyang Drubpuk** (Jamyang Choeje's **meditation cave,** attached to the east wall of the Assembly Hall), **Loseling Tratsang (College of Dialectics),** and **Tashi Gomang Tratsang.** The pilgrimage trail continues southeast down to the shadowy and enthralling **Nechung Monastery (Nǎiqióng Sì)** ★, home of the Nechung Oracle, who is consulted by the Dalai Lama on important matters of state. Separate admission to Nechung is ¥10 ($1.25).

To the left (west) of Drepung's Assembly Hall is the **kitchen,** where butter tea is prepared in huge wooden vats. Make much-needed donations to the monastery here. With the passing of the charismatic teacher Gen Lamrim in 1997, Drepung lost a major source of income. This master's lectures once drew devotees from all over the Tibetan world. The first floor of the **Assembly Hall** ★★ holds a striking statue of Dalai Lama XIII, magnificently lit by filtered

sunshine and pungent yak butter lamps. Readings of the scriptures are often held at midday; hopefully you will be able to enjoy the spectacle of novices tumbling over one another in the race to fetch tea from the kitchen for their elders. Also popular with pilgrims is a chapel to the north of the second floor, which houses a mirror said to cure the facial diseases of those who gaze into it. The most revered image is a 15m (49-ft.) tall statue of the 8-year old **Maitreya Buddha,** designed by Tsongkapa and housed in the northwest section of the building, usually viewed from the third floor. You will be offered holy water: Cup your right hand above your left, take a quick sip, and splash the rest on your head.

Admission ¥35 ($4.40). 9am–4:30pm. Morning buses (10km/6¼ miles, 30 min., ¥3/37¢) depart from west of the Jokhang. Returning to Lhasa, take bus no. 302 from Nechung Monastery, or bus no. 301 from the bottom of the hill.

Jokhang Temple (Dàzhāo Sì) ★★★ To fully explore Tibet's spiritual heart, visit this temple twice. From 8am, pilgrims line up to enter the Jokhang. You'll have no trouble singling the eager out-of-towners from the more detached city folk. In the morning, the rooms are unlocked, allowing pilgrims to rub their foreheads furiously against the sacred images. Your visit can be a painfully slow shuffle, lasting up to 2 hours, but it can be a moving experience.

Don't miss the image of **Palden Lhamo** ★ on the third floor. The fierce protector of both Lhasa and the Dalai Lama, she is said to have murdered her own child to bring her husband and king to his senses and put an end to his endless military campaigns. Note the exquisite **deer and wheel motifs** on the roof. Both symbols allude to Sakyamuni's first sermon, "Turning the Wheel of the Doctrine," delivered in a deer park in Benares. Sakyamuni was initially reluctant to expound his teachings, believing they would be incomprehensible to most, but the god Brahma intervened. The deer and the wheel hark back to a time when believers respectfully avoided depicting the Buddha. A bodhi tree and a solitary footprint were also common symbols.

In the afternoon, a gate to the right of the main entrance admits tourists, and gives you an opportunity to view the ancient statuary and woodwork in relative peace, strident Chinese tour guides notwithstanding. The most revered object in Tibet is **Jowo Rinpoche** ★★★, a 1.5m (4.9-ft.) image of the young Buddha, which originated in India and was brought with Princess Wénchéng as dowry. Many credit her with selecting the temple's location according to the principles of geomancy *(fēngshuǐ).* Without the bustle of the morning crowd, take time to appreciate the ancient Newari door frames, columns, and finials (7th and 8th c.). Note the more recent *yab-yum* images of sexual union in a chapel to the south. Many mistakenly believe tantric practice has no place in the "reformed" Geluk School, but Tsongkapa simply restated the principle that only advanced practitioners should engage in tantric sex.

✆ **0891/632-3129.** Admission ¥25 ($3) after noon. 8am–6:30pm.

Norbulingka (Luóbùlínkǎ) Whatever traits the various manifestations of the Dalai Lama share, architectural taste is not one of them. The manicured gardens of the summer residence are pleasant—especially on weekends when locals gather for picnics—but the buildings, added by the 7th (who choose the site for its medicinal springs), 8th, 13th, and 14th incarnations, do not sit well together. The most interesting is **Takten Podrang,** commissioned by Dalai Lama XIV in 1954, 5 years before he fled to India. As at the Potala Palace, the lack of luxuries

is striking. On the second floor is a fascinating **mural** depicting the history of Tibet, from the legendary union of a wild ogress with a monkey (an emanation of Avalokiteshvara), to the final frame of the young Dalai and Panchen Lamas meeting with Máo Zédōng and Zhōu Ēnlái. Duck under the rope to get a good look.

Admission ¥35 ($4.40). Mon–Sat 9am–1pm and 2:30–5:30pm; Sun 10am–1pm and 4–5:30pm.

Potala Palace (Bùdálā Gōng) The Potala, commissioned by Dalai Lama V (17th c.), was built around the fortress of King Songtsen Gampo, which had stood on **Mount Mapori** for a millennium. "Potala" refers to a mountain in south India, the abode of Tibet's patron deity, Avalokitesvara (Chenresik). Both the ancient kings and the Dalai Lamas are said to be manifestations of this bodhisattva, feminized in the Chinese Buddhist pantheon as Guānyīn, the Goddess of Mercy. A monastery, a palace, and a prison, it symbolizes the fusion of secular and religious power in Tibet. Early Tibetan temples, such as Samye Monastery, followed the Indian practice of modest locations, allowing temples to adhere to a mandala design. The Great Fifth, the last significant Dalai Lama before Dalai Lama XIII, was fond of imposing hilltop locations, making adherence to the mandala pattern impossible. Tibetologist Guiseppe Tucci saw the Potala as an "outgrowth of the rock underlying it, as irregular and whimsical as nature's work," and it was not a simple project. **Podrang Marpo (Red Palace)** was completed under the regent Desi Sangye Gyatso, 15 years after the then–Dalai Lama's death in 1682, and involved over 8,000 workers and artisans.

Most visitors enter the palace via the central staircase up to the **Eastern Courtyard (Deyang Shar).** Buildings are denoted numerically. You first reach the **Eastern Apartments** of the Dalai Lama XIV (3). Portraits of Dalai Lamas XIV and XIII once hung above the entrance, but they were removed in 1996. Inside the entrance is a splendid mural of Wǔtái Shān in northeast China, the earthly Pure Land of Manjusri, a bodhisattva who symbolizes wisdom. The simplicity of the present Dalai Lama's personal chambers, with prayer beads still resting by the bed, is moving, particularly for those who have met His Holiness. You next enter the **Red Palace,** the spiritual center and home to the remains of all the Dalai Lamas (except Dalai Lama VI, who was fonder of wenches than worship, and was eventually chased into exile by the Mongols). The throne room of Dalai Lama VII, **Sasum Lhakang** (6), contains an exquisite silver statue of Avalokiteshvara and an inscription on the north wall, dated 1722, wishing that the Chinese emperor would reign for ten thousand years. The Kāngxī emperor died in 1722. The most sacred chapel is **Phakpa Lhakang** (10), part of the original seventh-century palace and housing a "self-arising" image of Avalokiteshvara. Even Chinese visitors are awed. As Tucci observed in the 1950s, "The crowds of pilgrims daily ascending the stairs of the Potala were a tangible proof of devotion. Rich or poor, dignitaries or peasants, they kneeled before each image: faith and ecstasy could be read on their faces. Holding copper pitchers full of clarified butter, they went to feed the temple lamps."

A meditation cave, **Chogyel Drupuk** (17), contains an image of Songtsen Gampo, with his Nepali and Chinese wives; it dates from the 7th or 8th centuries. The Dalai Lama V's death was kept secret for 12 years; his reliquary stupa is the most magnificent structure in the palace, containing over 3,000 kilograms (6,600 lb.) of gold, encrusted in jewels, and disappearing into the darkness of **Serdung Lhakang** (21).

Warning: Visits to the Potala are best made *after* you are accustomed to the altitude.

Běijīng Zhōng Lù. Admission ¥70 ($8.70). Relics museum and roof both ¥10 ($1.25) extra. 9am–3pm.

Sera Monastery (Sèlā Sì) This major Geluk monastery was founded in the early 15th century by Sakya Yeshe, a disciple of Tsongkapa. A pilgrimage circuit of the complex passes the colleges **Sera Me Tratsang, Ngakpa Tratsang,** and **Sera Je Tratsang** before reaching **Tsokchen,** the huge assembly hall (ca. 18th c.) which houses an image of Sakya Yeshe. The path continues up to **Sera Utse,** a hermitage that pre-dates the monastery, a stiff 1½-hour hike up the mountain. Most visitors are drawn to Sera by the lively **debates** ★★★ held in the Sera Je Tratsang Courtyard Monday to Saturday from 3 to 5pm.

Debates provide an opportunity for monks to demonstrate their scholarship and rise through the ranks. A prodigious body of religious literature must be digested before a monk can become a useful sophist. Visitors usually are struck by the physicality of the debates, with one monk sitting down, biding his time, while the other launches a verbal and physical attack. One monk noted that they were instructed that "the foot must come down so strongly that the door of hell may be broken open; and that the hands must make so great a noise that the voice of knowledge may frighten the devils all the world over."

✆ **0891/632-3139.** Admission ¥35 ($4.40). 9am–4:30pm. Bus: no. 5 from northwest corner of Běijīng Dōng Lù and Duǒsēngé Lù.

SHOPPING

Just east of the Lhasa Hotel, **Téngwáng Pīfā Gòuwù Zhōngxīn** at Běijīng Zhōng Lù 71 (✆ **0891/681-8025**) is a well-stocked supermarket (open 9am–11:30pm). **Sàikāng Dàshà** is a fancy department store, 1 block east of the post office, open from 10am to 9pm. The **French Bakery** in Tuánjié Xīncūn (✆ **0891/634-9279;** Mon–Sat; 11am–9pm) has wonderful *gâteaux.*

Jatson School (Cǎiquán Fúlì Tècán Xuéxiào) *Finds Kids* By shopping here, you are helping Tibet's handicrafts tradition to survive, and giving poor, orphaned, and disabled children a shot at life. They don't receive a *fēn* from the government, so your support is valued. Shopping doesn't have to be a guilty pleasure. The store, tucked away to the right of the entrance, sells traditional Tibetan clothing, paper, incense, mandala *thangkas,* yak-hide boots, dolls, door hangings, and more. Prices are more than fair, and you'll probably want to give more. The quality of work is astounding, and as nearly everything is made on-site, you can watch how it's done. Store hours are Monday to Saturday from 9:30am to 5:30pm. Xuě Xīn Èrcūn, 101 Xīnxiāng. ✆ **0891/682-2130.** Bus: no. 97 to Xuě Sǎncūn; walk south, and the school is on the right-hand (west) side.

Khawachen Carpet and Wool Handicraft Co. Ltd (Kāwǎjiān Dìtǎn Hé Yángmáo Gōngyìpǐn Yǒuxiàn Gōngsī) *Value* The hardy sheep of the Changtang produce wool that is ideal for carpet making. Unfortunately, most new Tibetan carpets or Hàn-inspired rugs use frightening themes or colors. This U.S.–Tibetan joint venture in the west of town gets it right: rich but tasteful shades woven into delightful traditional patterns. See the designs at www.innerasiarugs.com. You'll be able to pick them up a lot cheaper here than from the New York headquarters or the Lufthansa Center in Běijīng. Carpets can be made to order; allow a week for an average-size carpet. You're free to inspect the entire process from dyeing and drying to weaving and cutting. Unlike Lhasa's main Hàn-run factory (where 14-hr. shifts are common),

conditions here are excellent. A courtesy car to the factory is provided for visitors, credit cards are accepted, and shipping can be arranged. Hours are Monday to Saturday from 9am to 1pm and 3 to 7pm. Jīnzhū Xī Lù 103. ✆ **0891/683-3257.**

Outlook Outdoor Equipment (Biānsài Yuǎnjīng Hùwài Zhuāngbèi) In a town with a plethora of overpriced outdoor stores, this is a well-stocked and professional outfit. As well as renting equipment, they have detailed maps of popular trekking routes, such as Ganden to Samye. Hours are from 9:30am to 9:30pm. Běijīng Zhōng Lù 11. ✆ **0891/634-5589.**

WHERE TO STAY

From December to March, Lhasa sees very few tourists, and most hoteliers halve their prices.

VERY EXPENSIVE

Lhasa Hotel (Lāsà Fàndiàn) Situated in the Hàn part of town, north of the Norbulinka Palace, the former Holiday Inn Lhasa is no longer a well-run property. Many well-trained staff remain, but the enormous block-shaped hotel is disintegrating, from the stained carpets to the overgrown grounds, and you run the risk of dying a slow death waiting for service. The Tibetan-style rooms are more appealing and tend to be heavily booked. Aside from the older north wing *(běi lóu),* all rooms have piped-in oxygen.

Mínzú Lù 1. ✆ **0891/683-2221.** Fax 0891/683-5796. 456 units. ¥1,020–¥1,555 ($127–$194) twin or standard; from ¥2,058 ($257) suite. Rates include breakfast. 30% discounts. 15% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 5 restaurants; bar; cafe; health club; concierge; tour desk; business center; forex (8am–10pm); shopping arcade; 24-hr. room service; same-day dry cleaning/laundry. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, hair dryer.

MODERATE

Kyichu Hotel (Jíqū Fàndiàn) ★★ Located in the Tibetan quarter, the Kyichu combines Western comfort with a welcoming Tibetan atmosphere. Rooms in the new south wing opened in 2001. Overlooking an incongruous lawn with white outdoor furniture, these midsize rooms boast clean wooden floors, simple furnishings, and spotless bathrooms with deep tubs. The solar-heated hot water can be unreliable. The restaurant on the first floor prepares a superb buffet breakfast for ¥30 ($3.70).

Běijīng Dōng Lù 149. ✆ **0891/633-1541.** Fax 0891/632-0234. . 52 units (22 shower only). ¥230–¥320 ($29–$40) standard room. 20% discounts. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bike rental; concierge; business center; same-day laundry. *In room:* TV.

Tashi Nota Hotel (Jíxiáng Bǎomǎ Bīnguǎn) *Finds* Located to the west of the PSB in a quiet Tibetan residential area, this new hotel, set around a large courtyard, is friendly and keen for business. The manager was originally a carpenter, and this is reflected in the sumptuous wooden floors of the superior twin rooms. The custom-made beds are the firmest in town, and the massage showers are state-of-the-art, but cheaper twin rooms are disappointing, with drab tiled floors and cramped bathrooms.

Línkuò Běi Lù 24 Xiàng (Tuánjié Xīncūn Nán Lùkǒu). ✆/fax **0891/632-4791.** 61 units (shower only). ¥280–¥380 ($34–$46) twin; ¥680–¥888 ($85–$111) suite. 40–50% discounts. **Amenities:** Restaurant; teahouse; concierge; business center; same-day laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV.

INEXPENSIVE

Flora Hotel (Huāshén Lǚguǎn) Set to the east of Lhasa's main mosque, and run by a Nepali Muslim family who have made Lhasa their home, this tiny new hotel boasts spotless, spartan rooms with sparkling bathrooms. Staff speak

wonderful English and are more courteous than those of Lhasa's allegedly upmarket hotels.

Hébàlín Lù, Qīngzhēn Sì, 850000. ✆ **0891/632-4491.** Fax 0891/632-4901. 26 units (20 with bathroom). ¥180 ($23) twin; ¥200 ($25) standard; ¥30 ($3.70) dorm bed. 20% discounts. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bike rental; business center; same-day laundry. *In room:* TV.

Pentoc Guesthouse ★ *Value* Rising on the northwest side of the Barkhor Square District, this Swiss-run hostel with Christian leanings is ideally situated for exploring the Tibetan heart of Lhasa. The cozy dormitory-style rooms have soft beds and are immaculately kept. The two-bed dorms are especially charming, though the hot water in the communal showers can be temperamental. Given the nationality of the owners, it comes as no surprise to find delectable cakes and muesli on offer in the restaurant, decorated as a Tibetan tent. Movies are shown each night at 8pm. As their fame grows, so does the need to book ahead.

Zàng Yīyuàn Dōng Lù 5. ✆ **0891/632-6686.** Fax 0891/633-0700. 24 units (no bathrooms). ¥30–¥50 ($3.70–$6) dorm bed. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bike rental; business center; 24-hr. forex; next-day laundry. *In room:* No phone.

WHERE TO DINE

Alu Cang Restaurant (Ā'luócāng Cāntīng) ★ TIBETAN On the western edge of the Tibetan quarter, this restaurant is a longtime favorite with locals, who appreciate its unpretentious style and hearty cuisine. The second floor is packed at most hours. The English menu is unreliable, with beef and lamb often translated as yak. Specialties include radish with yak meat (lamb) and fried mutton spareribs. The simple curry rice is an excellent choice for those on the run. Notice the boycott of the Hàn-owned Lhasa Beer—Tibetans who can afford it drink Budweiser or Blue Label.

Duǒsēngé Lù 21–32. ✆ **0891/633-8826.** Meal for 2 ¥30–¥70 ($3.70–$8.70). 9am–10pm.

Dunya Restaurant and Bar ★★★ WESTERN Located on the east side of the Yak Hotel, Dunya serves the finest Western cuisine in town. The menu is filled with mouthwatering dishes, including the thin-crusted Dunya Pizza, covered in salami and mushrooms and drizzled with seasoned olive oil. Coffee and pasta are 100% authentic, served by competent and well-loved Tibetan staff. The convivial bar upstairs is a favorite with Lhasa's growing expat community.

Běijīng Dōng Lù 100. ✆ **0891/633-3374.** Reservations recommended. Main courses ¥10–¥45 ($1.25–$5.60). No credit cards. Apr–Oct only: 8am–10pm. Bar open noon–2am.

Mandala Restaurant (Xīn Mǎnzhāi Shítīng) NEPALI Restaurants in Lhasa change frequently, but for the moment, delectable Nepalese fare is to be found at this comfy old favorite, tucked away on the southwest side of the Barkhor. Specialties include the inevitable yak sizzler, the chicken curry set, and a filling mixed vegetable curry with dal and rice. Its partner restaurant, the **New Mandala,** has a sterile feel, though the view of Jokhang Temple from the rooftop is superb.

Bājiǎo Nán Jiē 31. ✆ **0891/632-9645.** Meal for 2 ¥50–¥120 ($6–$15). No credit cards. 7:30am–11:30pm.

Mayke Ame (Mǎjí Ā'mǐ) ★★ NEPALI/TIBETAN On the southeast corner of the Barkhor circuit stands Lhasa's most enchanting eatery. This may be the first Tibetan chain restaurant—they have outlets in Běijīng and Kūnmíng. If it's chilly, take a seat on the second floor, with its comfy sofas and relaxing Tibetan folk music. On a sunny day, soak up the spectacle of the *kora* (circuit) from the

third-floor balcony. The manners of the staff are strained by the Hàn clientele—the most popular Chinese guidebook lists one restaurant, and this is it. There are many excellent vegetarian choices, including spinach-tofu ravioli, and the vegetable curry set with delicious dal.

Bājiǎo Jiē Dōngnán Jiǎo. ✆ **0891/632-4455.** Main courses ¥15–¥35 ($1.90–$4.40). No credit cards. 10am–11:30pm.

Xuěshén Gōng (Snow God Palace) TIBETAN Located on the southwest side of the Potala Palace, this is where newly rich Tibetans dine. Look for your friends from FIT. A quick survey of the menu and you will realize why most Tibetans are solidly built, but whoever translated the menu was too fond of the term "deep-fried." The deep-fried lamb with potato is actually cooked in a light, sweet broth. The deep-fried mutton chop with butter seems to have been pan-fried, or even grilled. The lightly salted and spiced french fries may be the best in town. Tibetan cheesecake, made with yak butter, is an acquired taste.

Bùdálā Gōng Guǎngchǎng. ✆ **0891/633-5866.** Meal for 2 ¥90–¥180 ($11–$22). 9:30am–9:30pm.

LHASA AFTER DARK

It's doubtful whether the tongue-in-cheek performance offered by the **Shangrila Restaurant (Xiānggélǐlā Zàngshí)** inside the Kirey Hotel (✆ **0891/636-3880**) qualifies as art, but it's certainly entertainment. The campy pantomime is held nearly every night, and without giving away too much, watch out for the yak! The restaurant is open from 7:30am to 10:30pm, and the performance starts at 8pm. Reservations are recommended from July to September. An excellent Tibetan buffet can be enjoyed for ¥40 ($5).

Many wonder what the "Three Represents" (*Sāngè Dàibiǎo,* Jiāng Zémín's tortured political theory) means. Lhasa's urbanites say that "a Communist Party member represents China by being hungry as a Hàn, rotten as a Huí, and drunk as a Tibetan." While this saying reveals how mystified they are at the Hàn obsession with filling the belly, and their antipathy towards the Huí, it reflects a reality common to most dispossessed peoples—Tibetans find solace in the bottle. But there are several establishments in Lhasa where you can enjoy a beer, sing a song, and meet the locals. **Kalsangling Nightclub (Gésēnlín Cāntīng)** at Nàjīn Lù 61 (✆ **0891/688-7007**) is where older Tibetans meet for a beer after work, and linger for serious drinking on the weekend. Great Tibetan and Nepali food is served on the second floor. The hippest spot is the karaoke-cum-disco on the second floor of **Xīnshìjì Dàshà** at Běijīng Zhōng Lù 155 (✆ **0891/633-2239**). Suspicions about the real meaning of the Three Represents seem well-founded: A placard in the foyer announces that it is also the home of the Cadre Training Center. It's open nightly from 10pm to 3am.

AROUND LHASA

Ganden Monastery (Gāndān Sì) Shelled by the Chinese army during the peaceful liberation of Tibet, the most significant monastery of the **Geluk School** is slowly undergoing a revival. Perched on a mountain east of Lhasa, to the south of the Kyi Chu, it was built in 1409 by **Tsongkapa.** Drawing on support from monks of the older schools, as well as laypeople, the school rapidly expanded, with disciples opening Drepung and Sera monasteries in 1416 and 1419 respectively. Mongol support during the 17th century eventually assured their status as the preeminent school of Tibetan Buddhism, and more than 3,000 monks lived here prior to 1950.

Food and lodging at Ganden are basic, and both are provided by the guesthouse to the left (west) of the parking lot. In front of this decaying two-story building, peddlers hawk yak butter and fragrant grass *(sang)* to pilgrims. The **Meditation Hall (Ngachokhang)** ★, to the right (east) of the path beyond the bus stop, is atmospheric. Tsongkapa instructed his first disciples here. Chanting and the creation of *torma* (butter sculptures) take place throughout the day. Inside, to the left, is one of several dark and gruesome protector deity shrines that are off-limits to women. Other notable buildings are the **Assembly Hall,** behind and to the right of a prominent white chorten, where a jolly monk is likely to thwack you on the head with the shoes and hat of Tsongkapa. On the opposite side of a courtyard is a printing house, and above it stands **Tsongkapa's Reliquary (Serdung Lhakang),** which was devastated during the Cultural Revolution. Tsongkapa's tooth remains. Pilgrims waste little time in undertaking a spectacular ***lingkhor* (pilgrimage circuit)** ★★. The pilgrimage path commences from a tangle of *tar-choks* (prayer flags) to the left of the monastery. Allow at least an hour—you are above 4,000m (13,120 ft.). For the fit and acclimatized, the peak to the west offers spectacular views of the lush surrounding countryside.

✆ **0891/682-3149.** Admission ¥30 ($3.70). Photography ¥20–¥30 ($2.50–$3.70). Buses for Ganden depart from west of Barkor Sq. 6am or 6:30am (45km/28 miles; 2 hr.; ¥20/$2.50 round-trip, ¥10/$1.25 one-way). Bus returns at 2pm.

Samye Monastery (Sāngyē Sì) ★★ About 39km (24 miles) west of Tsetang, on the northern banks of the **Yarlung Tsangpo (Brahmaputra River),** stands Tibet's first monastery (late 8th c.), famous for its striking mandala design and as the site of the "Great Debate" (792–794) between the Indian Mahayanists and Chán (Japanese: Zen) Buddhists from China. This intriguing and protracted religious debate, held in the **Western Temple (Jampa Ling),** ended in victory for the Mahayanists. A predictable result, as Tibet was at war with China on several fronts. Chinese records claim that they won the theological battle, but the numerous Chinese monks and translators were nonetheless expelled from Tibet, and Mahayanist orthodoxy was established. Although Samye has been razed several times, the mandala symmetry is intact. The main temple, **Samye Utse,** symbolizes Mount Meru, the center of the universe, surrounded by the four temples of the continents, the eight temples of each subcontinent, and the sun (south, ruined) and moon (north) temples. The best view is gained from **Hepo-Ri** to the east of Samye, where Padmasambhava (Guru Rinpoche) is said to have subdued the local demons, making the site safe for construction. The secular support of King Trisong Detsen, who proclaimed Buddhism the state religion in 779, was perhaps more crucial.

Samye Utse (¥30/$3.70; open 8am–5:30pm) demonstrates the classic principles of Tibetan architecture. A solid barn-like first floor tapers to refined and intricate upper tiers. To left of the entrance is an original 5m (16-ft.) tall obelisk that proclaims Buddhism to be the state religion and urges future generations to obey Buddhist law and support the temple. Many of the murals on the first and second floors are original, but the lighting is poor, so bring a flashlight.

Basic accommodation is available at the **Samye Monastery Guesthouse** (✆ **0891/736-2086**) for ¥20 to ¥35 ($2.40–$4.20). Adequate fare is offered in the restaurant, which has an English menu.

From Lhasa, buses for Samye Crossing, or *dùkǒ* in Chinese*;* depart beginning at 7:30am for the 3½-hour trip (¥25/$3), just south of the New Mandala

restaurant. After a nippy crossing of the Brahmaputra in an open, flat-bottomed boat (1 hr.; ¥10/$1.25), tractors (40 min.; ¥3/40¢) connect with the monastery. Buses leave the monastery for Lhasa (6 hr.; ¥40/$5) via Tsetang at 8:30am.

Chimpu Caves (Qīngpǔ Shāndòng) The Chimpu retreat caves gave monks relief from constant study, but were also crucial in maintaining Buddhist traditions during periods of persecution, and in transmitting teachings before formal monasteries were established.

A warren of caves set in a lush U-shaped valley, Chimpu boasts some of the most sacred pilgrimage destinations in Tibet, including the cave where Guru Rinpoche first instructed his Tibetan disciples. Below is **Guruta Rock,** where Guru Rinpoche displayed his yogic prowess by leaving an enormous footprint. Above and to the left is the **meditation cave of Vairocana,** where the master translator dwelt for 12 years, eating the naked rock and thus solving the twin dilemmas of food and shelter. Grains and beans are appreciated as gifts by less-gifted retreatants; to understand why, imagine subsisting on *tsampa* for a year. It is possible to camp here (far from PSB checkpoints), and there is a small store.

Northeast of Samye Monastery. Free admission. A truck (15km/9¼ miles; 1 hr.; ¥10/$1.25) departs Samye Monastery Guesthouse about 8am, and returns early afternoon. The walk takes 4 hr.

7 Shigatse (Rìikāzé)

278 km (172 miles) W of Lhasa, 91 km (56 miles) NW of Gyantse

Set to the south of the confluence of the Brahmaputra River and the Nyang Chu, the second-largest town in Tibet is considerably smaller than Lhasa, its ancient rival for political power. For a period between the 16th and 17th centuries, **Shigatse** was the capital of Tibet, and even after the capital shifted to Lhasa, it maintained influence both as the center of the **Tsang region** and as the home of the **Panchen Lama,** who traditionally resides in **Tashilhunpo Monastery.** *Note:* For Chinese translations of selected establishments listed in this section, please turn to Appendix A.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **Air** tickets may be purchased from the **CAAC** office inside the Bank of China on Zhūfēng Lù (✆ **0892/882-4252**), open from 4 to 5pm. The **bus station** is on Shànghǎi Lù (✆ **0892/882-2903**), just north of the Shigatse Hotel. Buses connect with Lhasa (6 hr.; ¥38/$4.70) at 8am and 9:30am, and minibuses depart throughout the morning. Buses to Gyantse (1½ hr.; ¥20–¥25/$2.50–$3) depart every 2 hours from 9:30am to 5:30pm; to Sakya Monastery (6 hr.; ¥32/$4) every other day at 8am; to Lhatse (4 hr.; ¥30/$3.70) at 9am; and to Shelkar (Dìngrì; 6½ hr.; ¥65/$8.10) at 8:30am. An office just south of the bus station (✆ **0892/882-7222**) has minibuses to Zhāngmù (12 hr.; ¥300/$37) which depart at 6am. ***Note:*** Your chances of boarding a bus to Gyantse are slim, as police impose heavy fines on drivers who harbor foreigners.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs Cash and traveler's checks may be changed at counter 5 of the **Bank of China,** immediately south of the Shigatse Hotel, at Shànghǎi Lù 7. Credit cards are not accepted. (open weekdays 9am–1pm and 3:30–6:30pm, weekends 10am–5pm).

Internet Access *Avoid* China Telecom, with their WELCOME TO INTERNET sign. The welcome involves being fleeced. Continue north to **Guāngsù Zàixiàn**

Wǎngbā at Shànghǎi Zhōng Lù 41, where you'll pay the same price the locals do (¥4/50¢ per hr.) and enjoy a cup of jasmine tea. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The main post office (open 9am–7pm) is at Zhūfēng Xī Lù 12.

Visa Extensions The **PSB** at Jījílángkǎ Lù 3 (✆ **0892/882-2240**) offers 1-month extensions a week before expiry (open 9am–1pm, 4 –7pm summer; 10am–1pm, 3–6:30pm winter). Due to a recent visit from the TTC (Tibet Tourist Corporation), they are not issuing travel permits. The situation may change.

EXPLORING SHIGATSE

When Tucci visited, he found the ***dzong*** (fortress) in the north of town (a model for the Potala) to be "huge and dreary," but he needn't have worried. A few years later, PLA artillery did a thorough job: It is difficult to discern any structures, and the *dzong* does not appear on Chinese maps. The ruins are honeycombed with secret tunnels, but killjoys have barred up most of these.

Tashilhunpo Monastery (Zhāshílúnbù Sì) This vast monastery of the **Geluk School** was established by the first Dalai Lama in 1447. The monastery gained standing when Panchen Lama IV, head abbot of Tashilhunpo and teacher of Dalai Lama V, was accepted as the personification of Amitabha Buddha, the Buddha of Longevity, thus becoming the "number two" lama in Tibet. The Mongols, Hàn, and British have exploited this division to good effect. Due to the size of the complex, start early in the morning, as all the temples are locked at midday. In the afternoon, you are more likely to enjoy chanting in the ancient **Assembly Hall (Dukhang).**

The pilgrimage circuit begins at **Jamkhang Chenmo,** at the west end of the complex, which houses a massive 26m (85-ft.) Maitreya (ca. 1914), a mass of gold around a wood and metal core. It was built by hand; around 900 artisans dedicated 4 years of their lives to it. But from an artistic perspective, Tashilhunpo

Where Is the Panchen Lama?

In 1995, the world was stunned to learn that China's Marxist leaders were authorities on Tibetan Buddhism. Shortly after the Panchen Lama's death in 1989, then-premier Lǐ Péng declared that "outsiders" would not be allowed "to meddle with the selection process." It was clear Běijīng was keen to minimize the Dalai Lama's role in the selection of the child who will eventually become the teacher of the next Dalai Lama. The list of candidates was leaked to Dharamsala and the Dalai Lama announced his choice in May, catching the Chinese authorities by surprise. Predictably, the 6-year old candidate disappeared a month later and has not been seen since. Gyaltsen Norbu, the "official" Panchen Lama XI, was chosen in a clandestine ceremony held in the **Jokhang** in November 1995, and recently made his first public appearance at **Tashilhunpo Monastery.** Tibet's religious leaders, with a few brave exceptions, recognize Gyaltsen as the Panchen Lama. But Běijīng wasn't the only side playing politics with a young boy's life. As one of the few level-headed commentators on this tragedy noted, "The two protagonists in the dispute were clearly swayed by their eagerness to use the issue to gain maximum propaganda value."

is mediocre. As Tucci noted, "Everything was new and garish here. The collected composure of the primitives had been succeeded by baroque pomposity." Some composure remains in the gorgeous murals of Tsongkapa and his disciples that surround the reliquary stupa of Panchen Lama IV **(Kundung Lhakhang),** in the narrow cobblestone paths, and in the Assembly Hall, erected around an ancient sky-burial slab. The adjacent courtyard, with its striking flagpole, is the heart of the temple and the focus of religious dances.

Admission ¥45 ($5.60). Mon–Sat, summer 9am–12:30pm and 4–6pm; winter 10am–noon and 3–6pm.

SHOPPING

Shigatse bazaar stands in the shadow of the ruins, and aside from catering to the tourists, it has changed little. Khampa and Huí vendors hawk large knives, wooden tea bowls, prayer wheels, "bronze" statues, "ancient" coins, Tibetan medicine, incense from Calcutta, and cowboy hats and boots. The best-stocked supermarket is **Sìfāng Chāoshì** on Zhūfēng Lù (✆ **0892/883-7012**), open from 9am to 11pm.

WHERE TO STAY

The **Tenzin Hotel,** situated in a lively Tibetan district opposite the bazaar, should be reopened and refurbished when you reach town, with twin rooms in the region of ¥120 ($15).

Diànxìn Bīnguǎn (Telecom Hotel) Located in the north of town, this newly refurbished establishment is the best Hàn-run hotel. Comfortable midsize rooms in the brand-new building A have built-in oxygen and feature sparkling bathrooms. Building B is run-down, with that familiar smoky aroma.

Qīngdǎo Lù 2. ✆ **0892/882-5988.** Fax 0892/882-6666. 72 units. ¥220–¥358 ($27–$45) standard room; ¥580 ($72) suite. 30% discounts. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; concierge; business center; same-day laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* TV, minibar, fridge.

Shénhú Jiǔdiàn (Hotel Manasarovar) Despite its close involvement with FIT, this hotel, owned by the manager of the Yak Hotel, is tidy and well-run. Staff is well-trained and foreigner-friendly. Simple and functionally furnished rooms have polished wooden floors and even sport potted plants. While the dormitories and communal showers are the cleanest in Tibet, the asking price is ludicrous. The breakfast and lunch buffets in the attached Nepali restaurant are recommended.

Qīngdǎo Dōng Lù 20. ✆ **0892/883-9999.** Fax 0892/882-8111. 49 units (35 with bathroom). ¥350 ($44) twin; ¥888 ($111) suite; ¥80–¥95 ($10–$12) dorm bed. 40% discounts. No credit cards. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; cafe; nightclub; concierge; business center; same-day laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Wūzī Dàjiǔdiàn (Wutse Hotel) Located in a quiet Tibetan residential area to the southeast, this three-star hotel, run by the owners of the Wutse Hotel in Gyantse, is the newest in Shigatse. The competent, English-speaking staff works long hours. Spacious rooms are functionally furnished, the bathrooms are immaculate, but the hot water takes a while to warm up. A new wing will be open when you arrive, with dorm rooms and more dining options.

Sìchuān Nán Lù. ✆ **0892/883-8666,** ext. 8888. 60 units. ¥320 ($40) twin; ¥260 ($32) double; ¥580 ($72) suite. 20% discounts. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; concierge; business center; same-day laundry. *In room:* TV, minibar.

WHERE TO DINE

Following FIT's lead, many restaurants in Shigatse, such as Shigatse Kitchen, have separate Chinese and English menus, with rather different prices.

Greasy Joe's Cafe (Zhèngxīn Fàndiàn) SICHUANESE Not to be confused with "Gresy Joe's" a little further north, this friendly and reasonably priced cafe has been hit by the FIT monopoly, as he refuses to offer kickbacks and free meals to drivers and guides. The TTC has stakes in restaurants and hotels, and FIT guides who don't patronize them are routinely fined. Sichuanese food is Joe's forte, and portions are ample. Of the nearly Western food, the banana pancakes are light and tasty.

Kāisàlākāng Lù. ✆ **0892/882-5632.** Meal for 2 ¥20–¥60 ($2.50–$7.50). 9am–11pm.

Sangdotse Restaurant (Sāngzhūzī Xiǎochībù) TIBETAN *Finds* In a largely Hàn town, this is a welcome outpost of "real Tibet." Families crowd onto the sofas, and wizened grandmothers stuff *momos* (meat dumplings) down the throats of their rebellious but helpless grandchildren. The *momos* are delicious, if a touch salty. Other good choices are beef curry with rice *(shamjye),* yak noodles *(thukpa),* and sweet milk tea *(cha ngamo).*

Qīngdǎo Lù. ✆ **0892/882-4067.** Meal for 2 less than ¥40 ($5). 7am–11pm.

Tashi Restaurant (Zāshí Cāntīng) NEPALI/WESTERN Just north of the PSB, this is another arm of the Mandala Restaurant empire, run by younger brother Rem. The menu is identical, although some prices have been adjusted upwards.

Jǐjílángkǎ Lù. ✆ **0892/883-5969.** Meal for 2 ¥50–¥130 ($6–$16). 8am–11pm. Closed Nov–Feb.

8 Gyantse (Jiāngzī) ★★★

67km (42 miles) SE of Shigatse, 255km (158 miles) SW of Lhasa

Presided over by the spectacular **Gyantse Dzong,** and once the third largest town in Tibet, **Gyantse** is the only substantial settlement in the TAR to retain its vernacular architecture of sturdy two- and three-story farmhouses. Offering a rare and beautiful glimpse of Tibetan rural life, Gyantse should not be missed by any visitor to the TAR. Historically, it was a trading town for goods from Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan, and the closure of the border at Dromo (Yàdōng) has saved Gyantse from the ravages of development and Hàn colonization. Most members of Tibet's current generation of political leaders hail from Gyantse.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Shigatse **buses** arrive and depart from the main roundabout, but you'll need to persuade the driver to risk a large fine. The 91km (56-mile) journey takes 1½ hours and costs ¥20 to ¥25 ($2.50–$3).

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs None available.

Internet Access The fastest connection is at the **Rúyì Wǎngbā** (✆ **0892/817-3437**). Located just east of the main intersection, they're open from 9am to midnight. They charge ¥4 (50¢) per hour but may try to overcharge you. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The main post office (open 9am–12:30pm, 3:30–7pm) is a few minutes' walk east of the main intersection on the corner of Wèiguó Lù and Jiānghóng Lù.

EXPLORING GYANTSE

Gyantse Dzong (Jiāngzī Zōng) Towering above the settlement, this awesome fortress (ca. 13th c.) catches your eye as you approach Gyantse. It's a stiff

hike up, but views of Pelkhor Chode, the ancient alleyways, and the jagged surrounding peaks are breathtaking. The **Hall of Anti-British** provides entertainment for fans of the Chinese practice of "using the past to serve the present." Pick your favorite saying, though it's hard to beat "They (the British) tried to occupy the fertile land of Tibet" (so why did they leave?). Another says that the Tibetan troops were fighting for the unity of the (Chinese) motherland, of which "Tibet has always been an inseparable part." The Tibetans drove disunited Chinese forces out of Tibet less than 10 years later, and the Seventeen-Point Agreement signed in 1951 provides recognition that Tibet had strayed from the fold of the motherland. Beyond the crude propaganda—and look forward to more when **Nenying Temple,** south of Gyantse, opens to tourists in 2003—a photo of Tibetan soldiers clasping spears and clad in medieval armor shows why they were butchered by the poorly conceived Younghusband expedition. Next is an exhibit of the torture methods of "Old Tibet," said to include tearing out a man's intestines and forcing him to eat them. In New Tibet, more sophisticated methods, such as the electric baton, are preferred.

Admission ¥25 ($3). 9am–5:30pm. Closed Nov–Mar.

Pelkhor Choede (Báijū Sì) The once-mighty temple complex of Gyantse (ca. 1418) used to house several different orders under the one roof. While restoration is ongoing, only the **main temple,** a huge ***thangka* wall,** and **Gyantse Kumbum** stand intact. Many of the chapels in the main temple are locked; if you persist, one of the 30 remaining monks may open them. The different orders bequeathed different artistic styles, shown in the chapels of the second floor. To the right (east) is the bizarre **Neten Lhakhang,** decorated in Chinese style with leaping tigers and dragons, floating clouds, and pagodas, representing Manjusri's Pure Land in Wǔtái Shān.

The nine-story **Kumbum** ★★★, the largest chorten in Tibet, towers to a height of 42m (140 ft.). The first five floors are four-sided, while the upper floors are circular, forming a huge three-dimensional mandala. Kumbum means "the hundred thousand images," and while the actual number of Buddhist images is around one-third of that estimate, even the most dedicated pilgrim won't have time to properly inspect all the chapels. They house the finest art preserved in Tibet. Vibrant color and a lively, naturalistic style characterize the murals, while the broad faces of the statues point to Chinese influence. The mandalas of the upper levels are exquisite, though an extra fee may be required to gain access to the seventh through ninth floors. Bring a flashlight.

Admission ¥30 ($3.70). Photography ¥10 ($1.25). 9am–1pm and 3–6pm.

SHOPPING

Gyantse is famous for its carpets. **The Carpet Factory** (✆ **0892/817-2004;** open Mon–Sat, 9am–1pm, 3–7:30pm) is tucked away on the north side of Gyantse Dzong. The sales room is to the left of the entrance, but garish designs are prevalent. Near the factory, many people weave at home; you may be treated to a cup of sweet tea and a quick exhibition.

WHERE TO STAY

Look for rooms away from the road; mangy curs and nervous Hàn soldiers bark through the night. Discounts of 50% are negotiable November through April.

Jiàn Zàng Fàndiàn Just south of the Wutse Hotel, this small, orderly guesthouse was recently opened by a genial Tibetan doctor, Jiàn Zàng. His pharmacy still operates north of the hostel. Rooms are well-lit and beds are comfy, but

bathrooms are already showing signs of decay. More twin rooms and dormitories will be available when you arrive.

Yīngxióng Lù. ✆ **0892/817-3720.** Fax 0892/817-3910. 17 units. ¥200 ($25) twin. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; next-day laundry. *In room:* TV.

Wūzī Fàndiàn (Wutse Hotel) Just south of the main intersection, this cozy guesthouse opened in 1999, and a full renovation should be complete when you arrive. Twin rooms, attractively decorated and comfortably furnished, come with gleaming bathrooms. Balconies are promised, which should be ideal for throwing rocks at the yelping dogs and soldiers.

Yīngxióng Nán Lù 8. ✆ **0892/817-2909.** Fax 0892/817-2880. 48 units (40 with bathroom). ¥260 ($32) twin; ¥220 ($27) standard room; ¥40 ($5) dorm bed. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; next-day laundry. *In room:* TV, hair dryer.

WHERE TO DINE

Langsa (Lăngshā) TIBETAN *Finds* A short walk east of the Gyantse Hotel, this beer garden serves hearty Tibetan fare. They will be stunned to see you, and there's no English (or even Chinese) menu to fall back on here. Locals shoot pool, drink Budweiser from small tumblers, and parade their motorbikes while their children play in the park. Weekends are delightfully chaotic.

Jiānghóng Lù. ✆ **0892/817-4434.** Meal for 2 less than ¥40 ($5). 9am–11pm.

Tashi's (Zhāxī Zàngcān) NEPALI/WESTERN Located on the northwest side of the main intersection, at the foot of Gyantse Dzong, the final outpost of the Mandala Restaurant empire is run by yet another younger sibling. If the restaurant is quiet, ask the chef to show off and prepare something from the menu. Chicken Whitehouse, crumbed chicken breast stuffed with lamb mince, mushroom, ginger, and garlic, is his specialty. On the menu, the filling chicken curry set, creamy dal, and fresh flavored lassi are recommended.

Báijū Lù. ✆ **0892/817-2793.** Meal for 2 ¥50–¥130 ($6–$16). 7am–11pm. Closed Nov 20–Mar 1.

9 Sakya (Sàjiā)

150km (93 miles) SW of Shigatse, 55km (34 miles) SE of Lhatse

This remote Tibetan township boasts one of the most magnificent and best-preserved monasteries in the TAR, and is the home of the **Sakya** school of Buddhism. Founded by Konchok Gyalpo in 1073, it is similar to the Kagyu order in being heavily influenced by Indian Tantric Buddhism, but it differs in that its lineage is hereditary, passed down through the **Khon family.** In 1247, Kodan Khan offered the head lama, Sakya Pandita, absolute power to rule over Tibet, in exchange for submission to Mongol rule. Mindful of the fate of the Xīxià Kingdom to the north of Tibet, annihilated 20 years previously by the hordes of Genghis Khan, Sakya Pandita readily agreed. At this point, theocratic rule in Tibet was born, and the concept of "priest and patron," used to this day to justify Chinese rule in Tibet, was developed. Marco Polo noted that the magical powers of the Sakya lamas were highly regarded, and it is said they won over Kublai Khan when they triumphed in a battle of supernatural powers with Daoists and Nestorian Christians. You wonder what Sakyamuni would have made of this. He once reprimanded a follower who levitated above a crowd, likening him to a prostitute showing herself for a few coins. While the influence of Sakya faded with the Mongols, they produced stunning religious paintings

during the 15th and 16th centuries, and the monastery houses some remarkable statuary.

GETTING THERE **Buses** from Lhatse or Shigatse stop at the Sakya Monastery Guesthouse. *Before* you get off the bus, buy a ticket for the following day's ride at 11am to either Shigatse (6 hr.; ¥32/$4) or to the intersection with the Friendship Highway (1½ hr.; ¥10/$1.25), if you are continuing west. Otherwise, you're here for 3 days.

A 13TH-CENTURY MONASTERY

Sakya Monastery (Sàjiā Sì) ★★ The massive 35m (115-ft.) windowless gray walls of **Lhakhang Chenmo** tower above the village and fields on the southern bank of the Trum Chu. Completed in 1274, this monastery fort was largely funded by Kublai Khan, and unlike the older temples of north Sakya, it survived the Cultural Revolution. Little was left standing on the north side of the river, although a **nunnery** to the northeast is being revived.

Unlike the rich and confusing pantheon seen in most Geluk temples, most images in the **Assembly Hall (Dukhang)** ★★ are of the historical Buddha, Sakyamuni. You'll need a flashlight to see the exquisite statuary and murals. Look for a striking 11th-century image of the **"speaking" Buddha,** third from the left on the back wall, with its cheeky grin. Other great works include an image of the bodhisattva **Manjushri,** second from the right on the back wall, leaning gently to one side, suggesting a sympathetic ear to believers. Only 170 monks remain, but they're a young, friendly bunch. They may show you the monastery's greatest treasure—a white **conch shell,** said to have housed a very early incarnation of Sakyamuni. Mountains of white *kata* (silk cloths) give away its location.

✆ **0892/883-3938.** Admission ¥35 ($4.40). 8am–4pm.

WHERE TO STAY

Sakya Monastery Guesthouse (Sàjiā Zhèn Zhāodàisuǒ) Zhāodàisuǒ translates as "guesthouse," but "flea pit" is a more faithful rendering. Situated on the northeast side of the monastery, dank rooms and a pit toilet with a 360 degree panorama await the adventurous. Staying overnight allows you to visit the monastery in the early morning, when the light is enchanting.

✆ **0892/824-2233.** 9 units (none with bathroom). ¥10–¥15 ($1.25–$1.90) dorm bed. *In room:* No phone.

WHERE TO DINE

Gāoyuán Chuāncài SICHUANESE One block south and east of the Sakya Monastery Guesthouse, the Gāoyuán offers generous portions at decent prices. Specialties include old favorites such as *mápó dòufu* (spicy tofu with chopped meat), *yúxiāng qiézi* (eggplant in garlic sauce), and *gōngbào jīdīng* (spicy chicken with cashews). The **Sakya Monastery Restaurant** is also passable, but most restaurants with English-language menus are dire.

✆ **0892/824-2479.** Meal for 2 ¥30–¥60 ($3.70–$7.50). 8am–10pm.

10 Lhatse (Lāzī)

148km (92 miles) W of Shigatse, 325km (202 miles) NE of Zhāngmù

Stretching for a mile along the Friendship Highway, **Lhatse** is the jumping-off point for trips to **Mount Kailash** (p. 778) and **Ali,** or it can be an overnight stop between Lhasa and the Nepali border.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The **bus** will stop at Lhatse's only intersection. There is a bus to Shigatse (4 hr.; ¥30/$3.70) and the Sakya junction (40 min.; ¥5/60¢) at around 10am. A bus for Shelkar (81km/50 miles; 2½ hr.; ¥35/$4.40) passes through mid-morning, but a seat is not guaranteed. Sleeper buses for Ali (2–4 days; ¥650–¥750/$81–$94) pass by at 8am, and tickets for Ali are arranged by the **Yuèchuān Càiguǎn** (✆ **0892/832-2929**). Hitchhikers may need to walk 6km (3¾ miles) west past the PSB checkpoint to increase your chances. Here, the road branches off south (left) toward Shelkar and west towards Mount Kailash and Ali.

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs None available.

Internet Access Just south of the intersection, past the Diànxìnjú, is **Sānlǐ Wǎngbā** (✆ **0892/832-2449**), which charges ¥8 ($1) per hour for a good connection. It's open from 10am till 10pm, and charges ¥8 ($1) per hour for a good connection. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The post office is located east of the intersection, on the south side.

WHERE TO STAY

Nóngmín Yúlè Lǚguǎn (Tibetan Farmer's Adventure Hotel) Lhatse's most pleasant accommodation is a 5-minute walk east of the main intersection, on the north side of the highway. Set around a sunny courtyard, this welcoming Tibetan-run hotel offers you your last shot at a warm shower if you are bound for the Kailash region.

Zhōngní Lù 8. ✆ **0892/832-2333.** 38 units (with shared bathroom). ¥35–¥60 ($4.40–$7.50) dorm bed. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bike rental; limited room service. *In room:* TV, no phone.

Qìxiàng Bīnguǎn (Meteorological Hotel) Just west of the main intersection, on the right (north) side of the Friendship Highway, lies this uninspiring but honest establishment. Tibetan rooms have charm and scratchy bedding. Dà Shànghǎi Yùshì (✆ 0892/832-2868), north of the intersection, has hot showers for ¥8 ($1). Breakfast for ¥15 ($1.90) at the Lāzī Bīnguǎn, just to the west, is preferred.

✆ **0892/832-2697.** 35 units (no bathroom). ¥20–¥30 ($2.50–$3.70) dorm bed. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; limited room service. *In room:* TV, no phone.

WHERE TO DINE

Yuèchuān Càiguǎn ★ CANTONESE Not all Hàn migration is unwelcome: this restaurant would do a roaring trade in the middle of Guǎngzhōu, but it has ended up east of the main intersection in Lhatse, on the south side of the road. Much of their trade comes from the Ali bus route, for which they provide tickets. Specialties include vermicelli clay pot *(záchá fěnsī bāo),* beef fried rice *(niúròu chǎofàn),* and salty chicken *(chǐyóu jī).* The friendly staff may drag you away for karaoke after dinner.

✆ **0892/832-2929.** Meal for 2 ¥60–¥140 ($7.50–$18). May–Oct only: 7:30am–11:30pm.

11 Pelbar (Dìngrì)

228km (141 miles) SW of Shigatse, 255km (158 miles) NE of Zhāngmù

Confusingly, there are three towns known as **Dìngrì.** The county capital town of **Shelkar,** 7km (4⅓ miles) further west from **Pelbar (Dìngrì),** is referred to as

Xīn (New Tingri). Tingri, the other base for treks in the Everest region, 60km (37 miles) further west, is called **Lăo Dìngrì (Old Tingri).** Other than dodging children peddling mollusks and demanding pens—will the idiots who give them away *please* do something more useful with their consciences and money?—there is little of interest in Pelbar. Pick up your permit for the **Qomolangma Nature Reserve** (see "Everest Trekking," p. 776) at the Everest Family Hotel, just before the turnoff.

GETTING THERE The **bus** from Shigatse will drop you at the Shelkar turnoff. There is no public transport between here and Zhāngmù. Heading east, a bus to Shigatse (6½ hr.; ¥65/$8.10) originating in Shelkar passes through town just after 8am. Those looking to hitch towards Nepal have to walk 6km (3¾ miles) past the PSB checkpoint, which inspects all vehicles.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE

Xuěyù Fàndiàn (Snowlands Hotel) Located at the turnoff to Shelkar, this is the best of several grimy budget options. Unadorned and relatively clean rooms are set around a sun-drenched courtyard, but the pit toilets are diabolical. The cozy attached restaurant has an English menu.

✆ **0892/826-2848.** 15 units. ¥20 ($2.50) dorm bed. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant. *In room:* No phone.

Zhūfēng Bīnguǎn Located over the river on the left side of the road to Shelkar, this ramshackle one-star hotel has exorbitant rates, but you can enjoy a much-needed hot bath and make international calls. The restaurant prices are bare-faced robbery, and the grounds resemble an army base.

Báibà Xiàn. ✆ **0892/826-2775.** Fax 0892/826-2818. 60 units (46 with bathroom). ¥360 ($45) standard room; ¥865 ($108) suite; ¥60 ($7.50) dorm bed. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; business center. *In room:* TV.

12 Tingri (Lăo Dìngrì)

289km (179 miles) SW of Shigatse, 184km (114 miles) NE of Zhāngmù

An impoverished settlement with a breathtaking view of the world's highest peaks, **Tingri** is the favored starting point for those wishing to walk to **Everest Base Camp,** and a common overnight stop between Kathmandu and Lhasa. A row of white-tiled houses and shops under construction to the west of town suggests that a Hàn influx is planned. Magnificent views of Everest may be gained from the ruins of the late-18th-century **Tingri Dzong,** spread across a hill south of town.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE

The **Amdo Restaurant,** located on the north side of the road in the middle of town, is popular with locals and has an English-language menu.

Xuěbào Fàndiàn (Everest Snow Leopard Hotel) Only masochists will stay anywhere other than this charming inn, a 5-minute walk east of town. Clean beds with soft mattresses lull you to sleep, unless you have your first taste of altitude sickness. Hot water runs from 7 to 11pm.

✆ **0892/826-2775.** 46 units (no bathroom). ¥40 ($5) dorm bed. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant. *In room:* TV, no phone.

Everest Trekking

The trek out to **Everest Base Camp** follows two main routes—from **Pelbar** via the wretchedly poor village of Chay, and from **Tingri** via Lungjiang. The former route (113km/70 miles) is usually traveled by 4WD in 3 hours along a much improved road. The latter is a tough 3- to 4-day journey, and the path is hard to follow in places. Gary McCue's *Trekking in Tibet* is a reliable guide for this route and for other hikes in the Qomolangma Nature Preserve. A permit costs ¥65 ($8.10) per person and ¥405 ($51) per vehicle, purchased at Pelbar, Tingri or Chay. Accommodation is available in tents at **Base Camp** (¥20/$2.50) at an elevation of 5,150m (16,890 ft.). The "real" Base Camp with real expeditions and mountaineers is a couple of kilometers further on. There are also basic rooms at **Rongbuk Monastery** (¥40/$5) at an elevation of 4,980m (16,330 ft.). ***Warning:*** There have been accounts of "wandering fingers" in this guesthouse. Watch your valuables.

The height of Mount Everest was recently fixed at 8,846m (29,015 ft.), somewhat lower than first believed, but on a clear day it presents an astounding vista, particularly from Pang La and Lamma La. Insistence on the use of Qomolangma (Zhūmùlǎngmǎ) rather than Mount Everest to label the world's highest peak would have pleased Sir George Everest, who staunchly believed in using local place-names.

13 Zhāngmù (Dram)

473km (293 miles) SW of Shigatse

The Friendship Highway drops 1,400m (4,600 ft.) during the treacherous 30km (19 miles) of dirt road between **Nyalam** and the border town of **Zhāngmù.** The arid Tibetan plateau gives way to lush greenery and deliciously damp air. Nepalis complain about the cold, but you'll be shedding layers if you've arrived from Lhasa. A tiny collection of wooden houses before the border opened in 1980, Zhāngmù is now one of the wealthiest towns in Tibet, due to licit and illicit trade in gold, clothing, and footwear. Zhāngmù stretches for several miles through a series of switchbacks towards the border. Buildings are referred to in this section as though you are facing downhill.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE There is no public transport into Zhāngmù from Tibet. At present, arriving overland from Nepal involves arranging a "group visa" of 15 to 20 days through a travel agency in Kathmandu. You are, however, not obliged to stay with the group, and can extend the visa elsewhere in China.

The border is open from 9:30am to 6:30pm on the Chinese side, and from 10am to 6pm on the Nepali side, with a time difference of 2½ hours. If you haven't arranged for your driver to take you the extra 8km (5 miles) to Nepali Customs, taxis wait beyond the immigration building. From the Chinese side, there's no rush. Coming from Nepal, it is possible to get stuck. In the unlikely event that you make it across the border without a group tour, look for a lift to Lhasa (2 days; ¥250/$30) from 8am in front of the Zhāngmù Returned Tibetan Hotel (Zhāngmù Guīguó Zàngbāo Jiēdài Lǚguǎn), on the corner of the second-to-last hairpin bend.

GETTING AROUND **Taxis** are ¥10 ($1.25).

FAST FACTS

Banks, Foreign Exchange & ATMs The **Bank of China** (open Mon–Sat 9:30am–1pm, 3–6:30pm) is towards the top of the hill on the right-hand side. They accept traveler's checks, but not credit cards.

Internet Access The **Zhāngmù Wǎngbā** (✆ **0892/874-2492**), on the right-hand side, just down from the Premchi Guesthouse, charges ¥5 (65¢) per hour. It's open from 10am to 11pm. Dial-up is **163.**

Post Office The main post office (open weekdays 10am–1pm, 3:30–6pm; weekends 10:30am–12:30pm) is located on the left-hand side at the top of town. A more convenient branch is located just up from the Gangyen Hotel.

Visa Extensions On the left-hand side, just up from the border, the **PSB** (✆ **0892/874-2264;** open 9am–6pm) is located on the third floor of a wooden building. Knock loudly to rouse them. As the border is in sight, you're unlikely to need to extend your visa. They offer 14-day travel permits for ¥50 ($6) for individual travelers. Unfortunately, it is unlikely you'll be able to enter from Nepal overland without joining a tour group (although regulations frequently change).

WHERE TO STAY

Gangyen Hotel (Gāngjiān Bīnguǎn) On the left-hand side, opposite the Zhāngmù Bīnguǎn, this once dreadful hotel benefited from a thorough renovation in 2001. Rooms on the sixth floor are preferable, as rooms on the lower levels tend to be damp. Hot water runs all day.

✆ **0892/874-2188.** Fax 0892/874-2413. 23 units (no bathroom). ¥150 ($19) standard room; ¥50 ($6) dorm. No credit cards. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants. *In room:* TV.

Premchi Guesthouse (Yǒuyì Lǚguǎn) This brand-new guesthouse is much like thousands of cheap and friendly inns all over Nepal. Located on the right-hand side, above the Everest Restaurant, it offers superb views towards Nepal. The Nepalese-style toilets, although clean, may be a problem for some. The solar-heated common showers are reliable, but cramped.

✆ **0892/874-2356.** 14 units (no bathroom). ¥20 ($2.50) dorm bed. No credit cards. *In room:* No phone.

Zhāngmù Bīnguǎn Located on the right-hand side, just before the border, the first modern hotel in Tibet is in need of repair. Although rooms are large and sunny, and the confined bathrooms are hygienic, carpets are fraying, and hot water only runs from 8 to 11pm.

✆ **0892/874-2277.** Fax 0892/874-2200. 40 units (33 with bathroom). ¥400 ($50) twin; ¥50 ($6) dorm bed. No credit cards. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; cafe; same-day laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* TV.

WHERE TO DINE

The restaurants close to the border tend to have imaginative prices.

Miteri Fast Food Restaurant (Yǒuqíng Kuàishídiàn) On the right-hand side of the last bend before the border, this cheerful second-floor restaurant provides a wonderful view of the bustling town, as Nepalese traders and baby-faced Hàn soldiers mingle with sex workers from Sìchuān and Sherpa goat herders. Beer is properly chilled, and the masala tea is delicious.

Meal for 2 ¥30–¥70 ($3.70–$8.70). 10am–11pm.

SHOPPING

A well-stocked supermarket, **Yěyě Chāoshì,** is on the right-hand side below the Premchi Guesthouse (open 9:30am–1am.)

Wild China: Mount Kailash & Lake Manasarovar

Worshipped by the followers of no less than four religions—Tibetan Buddhists, Bonpos, Hindus, and Jains—**Mount Kailash (Gangdise)** draws pilgrims from the Tibetan world and beyond. For Tibetan Buddhists, it is Mount Meru, the center of the universe, and many aim to circumambulate the mountain 108 times, thus attaining Buddhahood in this lifetime. For Hindu pilgrims, who are allowed to cross the border at **Purang (Pǔlán),** it is the abode of Shiva, one of the three supreme gods. The beauty of the 6,714m (22,028-ft.) peak, jutting up from the surrounding arid plain, is astounding, and the sight of **Lake Manasarovar** under a full moon is enough to have even the most cynical visitor believing in supernatural possibilities.

The **Saka Dawa Festival,** the traditional pilgrimage holiday held from late May to early June, is the most spectacular time to visit, but access (even for pre-booked tours) is often restricted during this festival. Regardless, try to time your visit to coincide with the full moon.

Most Western visitors reach Mount Kailash with a tour. This is the most reliable option. Short tours, from either Lhasa or Kathmandu, last 14 days. More extensive tours of the region run for 21 days. There are no petrol stations for large sections of the route, so the journey is undertaken with both a Landcruiser and a support truck (which can take 2 passengers). Beyond Zhongba (Zhòngbā, the road is in poor shape. Inspect your vehicle before you leave. The trip is not feasible from November to mid-April.

Sleeper buses (2–3 days; ¥750–¥900/$94–$112) connect Lhasa, Lhatse, and Ālǐ, though you take the chance of being turned back—permits are required. Bus services are seasonal, and usually take the northern route *(běi xiàn)* to Ālǐ, making it necessary to double back, as Ālǐis a 2-day drive northwest of Mount Kailash. Inquire at the **Ālǐ Bànshìchù** in Lhasa (✆ **0891/681-1577**), the **Yuèchuān Càiguǎn** in Lhatse (✆ **0892/832-2929**), or the **Ālǐ Bus Station** (✆ **0897/282-1527**).

Accommodation along the route is usually ¥30 ($3.75) per bed. Luxuries, such as hot showers, are not an option. Hitching is difficult, as few drivers are willing to risk a large fine, and most travel to Ālǐ via the bleak northern route.

The traditional gateway to the mountain is the village of **Darchen (Dàjīn),** which sits on the southern edge of the pilgrimage circuit, although you can't see the mountain from here. Admission for visitors is ¥100 ($12), usually collected at the **Gāngdǐsī Bīnguǎn,** which also asks an extortionate ¥100 ($12) for very basic accommodations (the real price is ¥25/$3). You can camp in the yard for ¥20 ($2.50), and luggage storage costs ¥10 ($1.25). Outside the eastern entrance of the hotel is the **Lhasa Restaurant,** run by a charming retired teacher from Tsetang.

Most people take 3 days to complete the 53km (33-mile) circuit. Buddhists undertake the journey in a clockwise direction, while a handful of Bonpos walk counterclockwise. Stick with the majority. Do *not* count on finding accommodations in monasteries along the route—bring a tent! Snacks and vegetables to supplement the local diet are also a good idea. Even if you intend to hire porters or yaks at ¥60 ($7.50) per day, you should be very fit, as the trek is above 4,500m (14,760 ft.), rising to over 5,600m (18,370 ft.) on the second day.

Hor Qu (Huò'ěr Qū), 39km (24 miles) southeast of Darchen, is the most common jumping-off point for **Lake Manasarovar** (4,560m/14,957 ft.). Here you can enjoy unparalleled views of the Himalayas across turquoise waters which freeze over in winter, visit monasteries carved from the naked rock of the lakeshore, and even attempt the 90km (56-mile) circuit of the lake.

Appendix A: The Chinese Language

by Peter Neville-Hadley

Chinese is not as difficult a language to learn as it may first appear to be—at least not once you've decided what kind of Chinese to learn. There are six major languages called Chinese. Speakers of each are unintelligible to speakers of the others, and there are, in addition, a host of dialects. The Chinese you are likely to hear spoken in your local Chinatown, in your local Chinese restaurant, or used by your friends of Chinese descent when they speak to their parents, is more than likely to be Cantonese, which is the version of Chinese used in Hong Kong and in much of southern China. But the official national language of China is **Mandarin** (**Pǔtōnghuà—**"common speech"), sometimes called Modern Standard Chinese, and viewed in mainland China as the language of administration, of the classics, and of the educated. While throughout much of mainland China people speak their own local flavor of Chinese for everyday communication, they've all been educated in Mandarin which, in general terms, is the language of Běijīng and the north. Mandarin is less well known in Hong Kong and Macau, but is also spoken in Táiwān and Singapore, and among growing communities of recent immigrants to North America and Europe.

Chinese grammar is considerably more straightforward than that of English or other European languages, even Spanish or Italian. There are no genders, so there is no need to remember long lists of endings for adjectives and to make them agree, with variations according to case. There are no equivalents for the definite and indefinite articles ("the," "a," "an"), so there is no need to make those agree either. Singular and plural nouns are the same. Best of all, verbs cannot be declined. The verb "to be" is *shì*. The same sound also covers "am," "are," "is," "was," "will be," and so on, since there are also no tenses. Instead of past, present, and future, Chinese is more concerned with whether an action is continuing or has been completed, and with the order in which events take place. To make matters of time clear, Chinese depends on simple expressions such as "yesterday," "before," "originally," "next year," and the like. "Tomorrow I go New York," is clear enough, as is "Yesterday I go New York." It's a little more complicated than these brief notes can suggest, but not much.

There are a few sounds in Mandarin that are not used in English (see the rough pronunciation guide below), but the main difficulty for foreigners lies in tones. Most sounds in Mandarin begin with a consonant and end in a vowel (or -n, or -ng), which leaves the language with very few distinct noises compared to English. Originally, one sound equaled one idea and one word. Even now, each of these monosyllables is represented by a single character, but often words have been made by putting two characters together, sometimes both of the same meaning, thus reinforcing one another. The solution to this phonetic poverty is to multiply the available sounds by making them tonal—speaking them at different pitches, thereby giving them different meanings. *Mā* spoken on a high level tone (1st tone) offers a set of possible meanings different to those of *má*

spoken with a rising tone (2nd tone), *mǎ* with a dipping then rising tone (3rd tone), or *mà* with an abruptly falling tone (4th tone). There's also a different meaning for the neutral, toneless *ma.*

In the average sentence, context is your friend (there are not many occasions in which the 3rd-tone *mǎ* or "horse" might be mistaken for the 4th-tone *mà* or "grasshopper," for instance), but, without tone, there is essentially no meaning. The novice best sing his or her Mandarin very clearly, as Chinese children do—a chanted sing-song can be heard emerging from the windows of primary schools across China. With experience, the student learns to give particular emphasis to the tones on words essential to a sentence's meaning, and to treat the others more lightly. Sadly, most books using modern Romanized Chinese, called *Hànyǔ pīnyīn* ("Hàn language spell-the-sounds"), do not mark the tones, nor do these appear on **pīnyīn** signs in China. But in this book, the authors, most of whom speak Mandarin, have added tones to every Mandarin expression, so you can have a go at saying them for yourself. Where tones do not appear, that's usually because the name of a person or place is already familiar to many readers in an older form of Romanized Chinese, such as Wade-Giles, or Post Office (in which Běijīng was written misleadingly as Peking); or because it is better known in Cantonese: Sun Yat-sen, or Canton, for instance.

Cantonese has *eight* tones plus the neutral, but its grammatical structure is largely the same, as is that of all versions of Chinese. Even Chinese people who can barely understand each other's speech can at least write to each other, since written forms are similar. Mainland China, with the aim of increasing literacy (or perhaps of distancing the supposedly now thoroughly modern and socialist population from its Confucian heritage), instituted a ham-fisted simplification program in the 1950s, which reduced some characters originally taking 14 strokes of the brush, for instance, to as few as three strokes. Hong Kong, separated from the mainland and under British control until 1997, went its own way, kept the original full-form characters, and invented lots of new ones, too. Nevertheless, many characters remain the same, and some of the simplified forms are merely familiar shorthands for the full-form ones. But however many different meanings for each tone of *ma* there may be, for each meaning there's a different character. This makes the written form a far more successful communication medium than the spoken one, which leads to misunderstandings even between native speakers, who can often be seen sketching characters on their palms during conversation to confirm which one is meant.

The thought of learning 3,000 to 5,000 individual characters (at least 2,500 are needed to read a newspaper) also daunts many beginners. But look carefully at the ones below, and you'll notice many common elements. In fact, a rather limited number of smaller shapes are combined in different ways, much as we combine letters to make words. Admittedly, the characters only offer general hints as to their pronunciation, and that's often misleading—the system is not a phonetic one, so each new Mandarin word has to be learned as both a sound and a shape (or a group of them). But soon it's the similarities among the characters, not their differences, which begin to bother the student. English, a far more subtle language with a far larger vocabulary, and with so many pointless inconsistencies and exceptions to what are laughingly called its rules, is much more of a struggle for the Chinese than Mandarin should be for us.

But no knowledge of the language is needed to get around China, and it's almost of assistance that Chinese take it for granted that outlandish foreigners

(that's you and me unless of Chinese descent) can speak not a word (poor things) and must use whatever other limited means we have to communicate—this book and a phrase book, for instance. For help with navigation to sights, simply point to the characters below. When leaving your hotel, take one of its cards with you, and show it to the taxi driver when you want to return. At the end of this section, there's a limited list of useful words and phrases, which is best supplemented with a proper phrase book. If you have a Mandarin-speaking friend from the north (Cantonese speakers who know Mandarin as a 2nd language tend to have fairly heavy accents), ask him or her to pronounce the greetings and words of thanks from the list below, so you can repeat after him and practice. While you are as much likely to be laughed *at* as *with* in China, such efforts are always appreciated.

1 A Guide to Pīnyīn Pronunciation

Letters in pīnyīn mostly have the values any English speaker would expect, with the following exceptions:

c ts as in bits
q *ch* as in *ch*in, but much harder and more forward, made with tongue and teeth
r has no true equvalent in English, but the *r* of *r*eed is close, although the tip of the tongue should be near the top of the mouth, and the teeth together
x also has no true equivalent, but is nearest to the *sh* of *sh*eep, although the tongue should be parallel to the roof of the mouth and the teeth together
zh is a soft j, like the *dge* in ju*dge*

The vowels are pronounced roughly as follows:

a as f*a*ther
e as in *e*rr (*leng* is pronounced as English "lung")
i is pronounced *ee* after most consonants, but after c, ch, r, s, sh, z, and zh is a buzz at the front of the mouth behind the closed teeth
o as in s*o*ng
u as in t*oo*
ü is the purer, lips-pursed u of French t*u* and German *ü*. Confusingly, u after j, x, q, and y is always ü, but in these cases the accent over "ü" does not appear.
ai sounds like *eye*
ao as in *ou*ch
ei as in h*ay*
ia as in *ya*k
ian sounds like *yen*
iang sounds like *yang*
iu sounds like *you*
ou as in t*oe*
ua as in g*ua*va
ui sounds like *way*
uo sounds like *or,* but is more abrupt

Note that when two or more third-tone "ˇ" sounds follow one another, they should all, except the last, be pronounced as second-tone "ˊ."

2 Mandarin Bare Essentials

GREETINGS & INTRODUCTIONS

ENGLISH	PINYIN	CHINESE
Hello	Nǐ hǎo	你好
How are you?	Nǐ hǎo ma?	你好吗？
Fine. And you?	Wǒ hěn hǎo. Nǐ ne?	我很好你呢？
I'm not too well/things aren't going well	Bù hǎo	不好
What is your name? (very polite)	Nín guì xìng?	您贵姓
My (family) name is . . .	Wǒ xìng . . .	我姓。。。
I'm known as (family, then given name)	Wǒ jiào . . .	我叫。。。
I'm [American]	Wǒ shì [Měiguó] rén	我是美国人
[Australian]	[Àodàlìyà]	澳大利亚
[British]	[Yīngguó]	英国
[Canadian]	[Jiānádà]	加拿大
[Irish]	[Àiěrlán]	爱尔兰
[New Zealander]	[Xīnxīlán]	新西兰
I'm from [America]	Wǒ shì cóng [Měiguó] lái de	我是从美国来的
Excuse me/I'm sorry	Duìbùqǐ	对不起
I don't understand	Wǒ tīng bù dǒng	我听不懂
Thank you	Xièxie nǐ	谢谢你
Correct (yes)	Duì	对
Not correct	Bú duì	不对
No, I don't want	Wǒ bú yào	我不要
Not acceptable	Bù xíng	不行

BASIC QUESTIONS & PROBLEMS

ENGLISH	PINYIN	CHINESE
Excuse me/I'd like to ask	Qǐng wènyíxià	请问一下
Where is . . . ?	. . . zài nǎr?	。。。在哪儿？
How much is . . . ?	. . . duōshǎo qián?	。。。多少钱？
. . . this one?	Zhèi/Zhè ge . . .	这个。。。
. . . that one?	Nèi/Nà ge . . .	那个。。。
Do you have . . . ?	Nǐ yǒu méi yǒu	你有没有。。。？
What time does/is . . . ?	. . . jǐ diǎn?	。。。几点？
What time is it now?	Xiànzài jǐ diǎn?	现在几点？
When is . . . ?	. . . shénme shíhou?	。。。什么时候？
Why?	Wèishénme?	为什么？
Who?	Shéi?	谁？
Is that okay?	Xíng bù xíng?	行不行？
I'm feeling ill	Wǒ shēng bìng le	我生病了

TRAVEL

ENGLISH	PINYIN	CHINESE
luxury (bus, hotel rooms)	háohuá	豪华
high speed (buses, expressways)	gāosù	高速
air-conditioned	kōngtiáo	空调

NUMBERS

Note that more complicated forms of numbers are often used on official documents and receipts to prevent fraud—see how easily one can be changed to two, three, or even ten. Familiar Arabic numerals appear on bank notes, most signs, taxi meters, and other places. Be particularly careful with *four* and *ten*, which sound very alike in many regions—hold up fingers to make sure. Note, too, that *yī,* meaning "one," tends to change its tone all the time depending on what it precedes. Don't worry about this—once you've started talking about money, almost any kind of squeak for "one" will do. Finally note that "two" alters when being used with expressions of quantity.

ENGLISH	PINYIN	CHINESE
zero	líng	零
one	yī	一
two	èr	二
two (of them)	liǎng ge	两个
three	sān	三
four	sì	四
five	wǔ	五
six	liù	六
seven	qī	七
eight	bā	八
nine	jiǔ	九
10	shí	十
11	shí yī	十一
12	shí èr	十二
21	èr shí yī	二十一
22	èr shí èr	二十二
51	wǔ shí yī	五十一
100	yì bǎi	一百
101	yì bǎi líng yī	一百零一
110	yì bǎi yī (shí)	一百一（十）
111	yì bǎi yī shí yī	一百一十一
1,000	yì qiān	一千
1,500	yì qiān wǔ (bǎi)	一千五百
5,678	wǔ qiān liù bǎi qī shí bāi	五千六百七十八
10,000	yí wàn	一万

MONEY

The word *yuán* (¥) is rarely spoken, nor is *jiǎo,* the written form for ⅒ of a *yuán,* equivalent to 10 *fēn* (there are 100 *fēn* in a *yuán*). Instead, the Chinese speak of "pieces of money," *kuài qián,* usually abbreviated just to *kuài,* and they speak of *máo* for ⅒ of a *kuài. Fēn* have been overtaken by inflation and are almost useless. Often all zeros after the last whole number are simply omitted, along with *kuài qián,* which is taken as read, especially in direct reply to the question *duōshǎo qián*—"How much?"

ENGLISH	PINYIN	CHINESE
¥1	yí kuài qián	一块钱
¥2	liǎng kuài qián	两块钱
¥0.30	sān máo qián	三毛钱

ENGLISH	PINYIN	CHINESE
¥5.05	wǔ kuài líng wǔ fēn	五块零五分
¥5.50	wǔ kuài wǔ	五块五
¥550	wǔ bǎi wǔ shí kuài	五百五十块
¥5,500	wǔ qiān wǔ bǎi kuài	五千五百块
Small change	língqián	零钱

BANKING & SHOPPING

ENGLISH	PINYIN	CHINESE
I want to change money (foreign exchange)	Wǒ xiǎng huàn qián	我想换钱
credit card	Xìnyòng kǎ	
traveler's check	lǚxíng zhīpiào	信用卡
department store	bǎihuò shāngdiàn	旅行支票
	gòuwù zhōngxīn	百货商店
convenience store	xiǎomàibù	购物中心
market	shìchǎng	小卖部
May I have a look?	Wǒ Kànyíxia, hǎo ma?	市场
I want to buy . . .	Wǒ xiǎng mǎi . . .	我看一下，好吗？
How many do you want?	Nǐ yào jǐ ge?	我想买。。。
Two of them	liǎng ge	你要几个？
Three of them	sān ge	两个
1 kilo (2.2 lb.)	yì gōngjīn	三个
Half a kilo	yì jīn	一公斤
	or bàn gōngjīn	一斤
1 meter (3¼ ft.)	yì mǐ	公斤
Too expensive!	Tài guì le!	一米
Do you have change?	Yǒu língqián ma?	太贵了
		有零钱吗

TIME

ENGLISH	PINYIN	CHINESE
morning	shàngwǔ	上午
afternoon	xiàwǔ	下午
evening	wǎnshang	晚上
8:20am	shàngwǔ bā diǎn èr shí fēn	上午八点二十分
9:30am	shàngwǔ jiǔ diǎn bàn	上午九点半
noon	zhōngwǔ	中午
4:15pm	xiàwǔ sì diǎn yí kè	下午四点一刻
midnight	wǔ yè	午夜
1 hour	yí ge xiǎoshí	一个小时
8 hours	bā ge xiǎoshí	八个小时
today	jīntiān	今天
yesterday	zuótiān	昨天
tomorrow	míngtiān	明天
Monday	Xīngqī yī	星期一
Tuesday	Xīngqī èr	星期二
Wednesday	Xīngqī sān	星期三
Thursday	Xīngqī sì	星期四
Friday	Xīngqī wǔ	星期五
Saturday	Xīngqī liù	星期六
Sunday	Xīngqī tiān	星期天

TRANSPORT

ENGLISH	PINYIN	CHINESE
I want to go to . . .	Wǒ xiǎng qù . . .	我想去。。。
plane	fēijī	飞机
train	huǒchē	火车
bus	gōnggòng qìchē	公共汽车
long-distance bus	chángtú qìchē	长途汽车
taxi	chūzū chē	出租车
airport	fēijīchǎng	飞机场
stop or station (bus or train)	zhàn	站
(plane/train/bus) ticket	piào	票

NAVIGATION

ENGLISH	PINYIN	CHINESE
North	Běi	北
South	Nán	南
East	Dōng	东
West	Xī	西
Turn left	zuǒ guǎi	左拐
Turn right	yòu guǎi	右拐
Go straight on	yìzhí zǒu	一直走
crossroads	shízì lùkǒu	十字路口
10 kilometers	shí gōnglǐ	十公里
I'm lost	Wǒ diū le	我丢了

HOTEL

ENGLISH	PINYIN	CHINESE
How many days?	Zhù jǐ tiān?	住几天？
standard room (twin or double with private bathroom)	biāozhǔn jiān	标准间
passport	hùzhào	护照
deposit	yājīn	押金
I want to check out	Wǒ tuì fáng	我退房

RESTAURANT

ENGLISH	PINYIN	CHINESE
How many people?	Jǐ wèi?	几位
waiter/waitress	fúwùyuán	服务员
menu	càidān	菜单
I'm vegetarian	Wǒ shì chī sù de	我是吃素的
Do you have . . . ?	Yǒu méi yǒu . . . ?	有没有。。。？
Please bring a portion of . . .	Qǐng lái yí fènr . . .	请来一份儿。。。
beer	píjiǔ	啤酒
mineral water	kuàngquán shuǐ	矿泉水
Bill, please	jiézhàng	结帐

SIGNS

Here's a list of common signs and notices to help you identify what you are looking for, from restaurants to condiments, and to help you choose the right door at the public toilets. These are the simplified characters in everyday use in China, but note that it's increasingly fashionable for larger businesses, and those with a long history, to use more complicated traditional characters, so not all may match what's below. Hong Kong and Macau also use traditional characters, and sometimes use different terms altogether, especially for modern inventions. Also, very old restaurants and temples across China tend to write their signs from right to left.

ENGLISH	PINYIN	CHINESE
hotel	bīnguǎn	宾馆
	dàjiǔdiàn	大酒店
	jiǔdiàn	酒店
	fàndiàn	饭店
restaurant	fànguǎn	饭馆
	jiǔdiàn	酒店
	jiǔjiā	酒家
vinegar	cù	醋
soya sauce	Jiàngyóu	酱油
bar	jiǔbā	酒吧
Internet bar	wǎngbā	网吧
cafe	kāfeīguǎn	咖啡馆
teahouse	cháguǎn	茶馆
department store	bǎihuò shāngdiàn	百货商店
	gòuwù zhōngxīn	购物中心
market	shìchǎng	市场
bookstore	shūdiàn	书店
police (Public Security Bureau)	gōng'ānjú	公安局
Bank of China	Zhōngguó Yínháng	中国银行
public telephone	gōngyòng diànhuà	公用电话
public toilet	gōngyòng cèsuǒ	公用厕所
male	nán	男
female	nǚ	女
entrance	rùkǒu	入口
exit	chūkǒu	出口
bus stop/station	qìchē zhàn	汽车站
long-distance bus station	chángtú qìchē zhàn	长途汽车站
luxury	háohuá	豪华
using highway	gāosù	高速
railway station	huǒchē zhàn	火车站
hard seat	yìng zuò	硬座
soft seat	ruǎn zuò	软座
hard sleeper	yìng wò	硬卧
soft sleeper	ruǎn wò	软卧
metro/subway station	dìtiě zhàn	地铁站
airport	feījīchǎng	飞机场

ENGLISH	PINYIN	CHINESE
dock/wharf	mǎtóu	码头
passenger terminal (bus, boat, and so on)	kèyùn zhàn	客运站
up/get on	shàng	上
down/get off	xià	下
ticket hall	shòupiào tīng	售票厅
ticket office	shòupiào chù	售票处
left-luggage office	xíngli jìcún chù	行李寄存处
temple	sì	寺
	miào	庙
museum	bówùguǎn	博物馆
memorial hall	jìniànguǎn	纪念馆
park	gōngyuán	公园
hospital	yīyuàn	医院
clinic	zhěnsuǒ	诊所
pharmacy	yàofáng/yàodiàn	药房/药店
travel agency	lǚxíngshè	旅行社

3 Selected Destinations by City

Following are some translations for desinations not covered in maps in this book. Just point to the characters when asking a cab driver to take you to the specific destination.

HÉBĚI (CHAPTER 3)

SHĀNHǍIGUĀN 山海关

Accommodations & Dining

Jīguān Zhāodàisuǒ	机关招待所
Lónghuá Dàjiǔdiàn	龙华大酒店
Yìhé Jiǔdiàn (Friendly Cooperate Hotel)	谊合酒店

Attractions

Aircraft Carrier *Kyev* (Jīfúhào Hángkōng Mǔjiàn)	基辅号航空母舰
Jiǎo Shān	角山
Lǎo Lóng Tóu	老龙头
Mèng Jiāng Nǚ Miào	孟姜女庙
Tiān Xià Dìyī Guān	天下第一关

THE NORTHEAST (CHAPTER 4)

CHÁNGBÁI SHĀN 长白山

Accommodations

Athlete's Village (Yùndòngyuán Cūn)	运动员村
Chángbái Shān International (Chángbái Shān Guójì Bīnguǎn)	长白山国际宾馆
Chángbái Shān Daewoo (Chángbái Shān Dàyú Fàndiàn)	长白山大宇饭店
Chángbái Shān Lǚyóu Shānzhuāng	长白山旅游山庄

Attractions

Báiyún Fēng	白云蜂
Chángbái Shān Waterfall (Chángbái Shān Pùbù)	长白山瀑布
Hot springs (wēnquán)	温泉

ALONG THE YELLOW RIVER (CHAPTER 5)

YÁN'ĀN 延安

Accommodations

Yán'ān Bīnguǎn	延安宾馆
Yàshèng Dàjiǔdiàn	亚圣大酒店

Attractions

Fènghuáng Shān (Phoenix Hill)	凤凰山
Gémìng Jìniànguǎn (Revolutionary Memorial Hall/Museum)	革命纪念馆
Wángjiāpíng Gémìng Jiùzhǐ (Former Revolutionary Headquarters at Wángjiāpíng)	王家坪革命旧址

PÍNGYÁO 平遥

Accommodations

Chāng Xīng Lóng (Chāng Xīng Lóng Guesthouse)	昌兴隆
Déjū Yuán (Déjū Yuán Guesthouse)	得居源
Tiān Yuán Kuí (Tiān Yuán Kuí Guesthouse)	天元奎

Attractions

Ancient city wall (gǔ chéngqiáng)	古城墙
Bǎi Chuān Tōng	百川通
Cáishén Miào (God of Wealth Temple)	财神庙
Chénghuáng Miào (City God Temple)	城隍庙
Léi Lǚtài Gǔjū (Former Residence of Léi Lǚtài)	雷履泰古居
Qiáo Jiā Dàyuàn (Qiáo Family Grand Courtyard)	乔家大院
Rìshēng Chāng	日升昌
Shì Lóu (Market Building)	市楼
Shuānglín Sì (Shuānglín Temple)	双林寺
Wáng Jiā Dàyuàn (Wáng Family Courtyard)	王家大院
Xiànyá Shǔ (Yámen)	县衙署
Zàojūn Miào (Kitchen God Temple)	灶君庙
Zhènguó Sì (Zhènguó Temple)	镇国寺

WǓTÁI SHĀN 五台山

Accommodations

Guǎnghuà Sì (Guǎnghuà Monastery)	广化寺
Qīxiángé Bīnguǎn	栖贤阁宾馆
Yínhǎi Shānzhuāng	银海山庄

Dining

Fúrén Jū Jiǔlóu	福人居酒楼
Jìngxīn Lián	净心莲
Màilì Lái Bakery	麦利来超市
Nèiměnggǔ Jiēdàichù	内蒙古接待处

Attractions

Fóguāng Si (Temple of Buddha's Light)	佛光寺
Lóngquán Sì	龙泉寺
Nán Shān Sì	南山寺
Nánchán Sì (Temple of Southern Meditation)	南禅寺
Tǎyuàn Sì	塔院寺
Tóng Diàn (Bronze Hall)	铜殿
Xiǎntōng Sì	显通寺

THE SILK ROUTES (CHAPTER 6)

TIĀNSHUǏ 天水

Accommodations

Màijī Dàjiǔdiàn 麦积大酒店

Dining

Niú Dàwǎn 牛大碗
Tiān Xǐ Xiǎochīdiàn 天喜小吃店

Attractions

Màijī Shān Shíkū 麦积山石窟

XIÀHÉ (LABRANG) 夏河

Accommodations

Lābǔléng Bīnguǎn (Labrang Hotel) 拉卜楞宾馆
Overseas Tibetan Hotel (Huáqiáo Fàndiàn) 华侨饭店
Tara Guesthouse (Zhuómǎ Lǚshè) 卓玛旅社

Dining

Lóngshèng Jiǔjiā 龙盛酒家

Attractions

Lābǔléng Sì (Labrang Monastery) 拉卜楞寺
Sāngkē Cǎoyuán (Sāngkē Grasslands) 桑科草原

KUQA (KÙCHĒ) 库车

Accommodations

Kùchē Bīnguǎn 库车宾馆
Kùchē Fàndiàn 库车饭店
Jiāotōng Bīnguǎn 交通宾馆
Qiūcí Bīnguǎn 龟兹宾馆

Dining

Wúmǎi'ěrhóng Měishí Chéng (Umerjam Resturani) 吾买尔红美食城
Wūqià Guǒyuán Cāntīng (Uqa Bhag Resturani) 乌恰果园餐厅

Attractions

Kèzī'ěr Qiān Fó Dòng (Kizil Thousand Buddha Caves) 克孜尔千佛洞
Kùchē Dà Sì (Kuqa Grand Mosque) 库车大寺
Sūbāshí Gǔchéng (Jarakol Temple) 苏巴什古城
Xīngqīwǔ Dàshìchǎng (Friday Bazaar) 星期五大市场

KHOTAN (HÉTIÁN) 和田

Accommodations

Hétián Yíng Bīnguǎn 和田迎宾馆
Huāyuán Bīnguǎn 花园宾馆
Tiānhǎi Bīnguǎn 天海宾馆

Dining

Gāoyáng Kǎoròu Kuàicāndiàn 羔羊烤肉快餐店

Attractions

Carpet Factory (Dìtǎn Chǎng) 地毯厂
Jade Factory (Gōngyì Měishù Yǒuxiàn Gōngsī) 工艺美术有限公司

Silk and Mulberry Research Center (Sīsāng Yánjiūsuǒ)	丝桑研究所
Sunday Market (Xīngqītiān Dàshìchǎng)	星期天大市场

EASTERN CENTRAL CHINA (CHAPTER 7)

AROUND ZHÈNGZHŌU

Gǒngyì	巩义
Běi Sòng Huánglíng (Imperial Tombs of the Northern Sòng Dynasty)	北宋皇陵
Shíkū Sì	石窟寺

DĒNGFĒNG & SŌNG SHĀN 登封

Fēngyuán Dàjiǔdiàn	丰源大酒店
Gàochéng Guānxīng Tái	告城观星台
Shàolín Guójì Dàjiǔdiàn (Shàolín International Hotel)	少林国际大酒店
Shàolín Sì (Shàolín Monastery)	少林寺
Shàoshì Shān	少室山
Sōng Shān	嵩山
Sōngyuè Tǎ (Sōngyuè Pagoda)	嵩岳塔
Tǎ Lín (Forest of Stupas)	塔林
Tàishì Shān	太室山
Tiānzhōng Dàjiǔdiàn	天中大酒店
Zhōngyuè Miào	中岳庙

LUÒYÁNG 洛阳

Accommodations

Luòyáng Mǔdān Dàjiǔdiàn (Luòyáng Peony Hotel)	洛阳牡丹大酒店
Mǔdān Chéng Bīnguǎn (Peony Plaza)	牡丹城宾馆
Xīn Yǒuyì Bīnguǎn (New Friendship Hotel)	新友谊宾馆

Dining

Churrascaria Do Brasil	亚玛逊巴西烤肉
Zhēn Bù Tóng	真不同

Attractions

Báimǎ Sì (White Horse Temple)	白马寺
Gǔmù Bówùguǎn (Ancient Hàn Tombs)	古墓博物馆
Lóngmén Shíkū (Dragon Gate Grottoes)	龙门石窟
Luòyáng Bówùguǎn (Luòyáng Museum)	洛阳博物馆
Wángchéng Gōngyuán	王城公园

JÌ'NÁN 济南

Bàotū Quán (Bàotū Spring)	趵突泉
Crowne Plaza Guìhé Jī'nán (Guìhé Huángguān Jiǔdiàn)	贵和皇冠假日酒店
Jī'nán Fǔ Dàpáidàng	济南府大排挡
Jī'nán Tiědaò Dàjiǔdiàn	济南铁道大酒店
Lán & Bái (Blue & White)	蓝&白
Qílǔ Bīnguǎn	齐鲁宾馆
Quánchéng Dàjiǔdiàn	泉城大酒店
Sofitel Silver Plaza Jī'nán (Suǒfēitè Yínzuò Dàfàndiàn)	索菲特银座大饭店

QŪFŬ 曲阜

Accommodations

Quèlǐ Bīnshè (Quèlǐ Hotel)	阙里宾舍
Qūfǔ Yóuzhèng Bīnguǎ (Qūfǔ Post Hotel)	曲阜邮政宾馆

Dining

Kǒng Fǔ Dàjiǔjiā	孔府大酒店
Night market	夜市

Attractions

Kǒng Fǔ (Confucian Mansion)	孔府
Kǒng Lín (Confucian Forest and Cemetery)	孔林
Kǒng Miào (Confucius Temple)	孔庙
Shào Hào Líng (Tomb of theEmperor Shào Hào)	少昊陵
Xìngtán Jùchǎng	杏坛剧场

WÚXĪ 无锡

Accommodations

Húbīn Fàndiàn	湖滨饭店
New World Courtyard Wúxī (Wúxī Xīnshìjiè Wànyí Jiǔdiàn)	无锡新世界万怡酒店
Sheraton Wúxī Hotel & Towers (Xīláidēng Dàfàndiàn)	喜来登大饭店
Tài Hú Fàndiàn	太湖饭店

Dining

Chuān Mèizi	川妹子
Wángxìng Jì	王兴记
Wúxī Kǎoyā Guǎn (Wúxī Roast Duck Restaurant)	无锡烤鸭馆

Attractions

Huì Shān	惠山
Jìchàng Yuán	寄畅园
Lóngguāng Tǎ (Dragon Light Pagoda)	龙光塔
Tài Hú (Lake Tài)	太湖
Xī Shān	锡山
Xīhuì Gōngyuán	锡惠公园

YÍXĪNG 宜兴

Shànjuǎn Dòng	善卷洞
Yíxīng Guójì Fàndiàn (Yíxīng International Hotel)	宜兴国际饭店
Yíxīng Táocí Bówùguǎn	宜兴陶瓷博物馆
Zhānggōng Dòng	张公洞

HÉFÉI 合肥

Accommodations

Holiday Inn Héféi (Héféi Gǔjǐng Jiàrì Jiǔdiàn)	合肥古井假日酒店
Huáqiáo Fàndiàn (Overseas Chinese Hotel)	华侨饭店
Míngzhū Guójì Dàjiǔdiàn (Grand Park Zenith Hotel & Resort)	明珠国际大酒店
Novotel Héféi (Héféi Nuòfūtè Qíyún Shānzhuāng)	合肥诺富特齐云山庄

Dining

Jīn Mǎn Lóu Huāyuán Jiǔdū	金满楼花园酒都
Sīdǎopǔ Miànguǎn (Noodle Stop)	思岛铺面馆

Attractions

Ānhuī Shěng Bówùguǎn (Ānhuī Provincial Museum)	安徽省博物馆
Bāo Gōng Mùyuán (Lord Bāo's Tomb)	包公墓园
Bāo Hé Gōngyuán	包河公园
Lǐ Hóngzhāng Gùjū	李鸿章故居

TÚNXĪ 屯溪

Accommodations

Huáng Shān Guójì Dàjiǔdiàn (Huáng Shān International Hotel)	黄山国际大酒店
Huáng Shān Guómài Dàjiǔdiàn	黄山国麦大酒店
Huáng Shān Huāxī Fàndiàn	黄山花溪饭店
Jiànguó Shāngwù Jiǔdiàn (Jiànguó Garden Hotel)	建国商务酒店

Dining

Bǎo Húlu	宝葫芦
Lǎo Jiē Dìyī Lóu	老街第一楼

Attractions

Bǎolún Gé (Bǎolún Hall)	宝纶阁
Chéngkǎn	呈坎
Dòushān Jiē	斗山街
Hóng Cūn	宏村
Huāshān Míkū (Mysterious Caves of Flower Mountain)	花山谜窟
Huīzhōu District	徽州区
Nánpíng	南屏
Qiánkǒu	潜口
Shè Xiàn	歙县
Xīdì	西递
Tángyuè Páifang Qún (Tángyuè Memorial Arches)	棠樾牌坊群
Xǔguó Shífáng (Xúgúo Stone Archway)	许国石坊
Yī Xiàn	黟县

SHÀNGHǍI (CHAPTER 8)

SŪZHŌU 苏州

Accommodations & Dining

Gloria Plaza Hotel Sūzhōu (Kǎilái Dàjǐudiàn)	凯莱大酒店
Sheraton Sūzhōu Hotel & Tower (Xīláidēng Dàjǐudiàn)	喜来登大酒店
Sōnghè Lóu (Pine and Crane Restaurant)	松鹤楼

Attractions

Humble Administrator's Garden (Zhuō Zhèng Yuán)	拙政园
Lingering Garden (Líu Yuán)	留园
Master of the Nets Garden (Wǎng Shī Yuán)	网师园
Pán Mén	盘门
Tiger Hill (Hǔ Qiū Shān)	虎丘山
Wúmén Qiáo	无门桥

HÁNGZHŌU 杭州

Accommodations & Dining

Holiday Inn Hángzhōu (Hángzhōu Jiàrì Fàndiàn)	杭州假日饭店
Lóu Wài Lóu (Pavilion Beyond Pavilion)	楼外楼
Shangri-La Hotel Hángzhōu (Hángzhōu Xiānggélǐlā Fàndiàn)	杭州香格里拉饭店

Attractions

Bai Causeway (Bái Dī)	白堤
Chinese Tea Museum (Zhōngguó Cháyè Bówùguǎn)	中国茶叶博物馆
Island of Small Seas (Xiǎo Yíng Zhōu)	小瀛洲
Língyǐn Sì	灵隐寺
Solitary Island (Gū Shān Dǎo)	孤山岛
Sū Causeway (Sū Dī)	苏提
West Lake (Xī Hú)	西湖
Zhèjiāng Provincial Museum (Zhèjiāng Shěng Bówùguǎn)	浙江省博物馆

THE SOUTHEAST (CHAPTER 9)

NÍNGBŌ 宁波

Accommodations

Jīngāng Dàjiǔdiàn (Golden Port Hotel)	金港酒店
Nányuàn Fàndiàn	南苑饭店
Níngbō Fàndiàn	宁波饭店
Yàzhōu Huāyuán Bīnguǎn (Asia Garden Hotel)	亚洲花园宾馆

Dining

Shàngdǎo Kāfēi	上岛咖啡
Y-Town Club (Wàitān Huìguǎn)	外滩会馆

Attractions

Bǎoguó Sì	保国寺
Sān Jiāng Kǒu	三江口
Tiān Yī Gé Bówùguǎn	天一阁博物馆

WĒNZHŌU 温州

Accommodations

Fán Dōng Bīnguǎn	繁东宾馆
Jiāngxīn Liáoyǎngyuàn	江心疗养院
Wànháo Shāngwù Dàjiǔdiàn (Wànháo Grand Hotel)	万豪商务大酒店

Dining

Hǎigǎng Měishí Fáng	海港美食舫
Jīnwàng Jiào Dàjiǔdiàn	金旺教大酒店
Shàngdǎo Kāfēi	上岛咖啡

Attractions

Jiāngxīn Gū Yǔ	江心孤屿
Wǔ Mǎ Jiē	五马街

TÀISHÙN COUNTY 泰顺县

Accommodations

Ā Guó Fàndiàn	阿国饭店
Tàishùn Bīnguǎn	泰顺宾馆
Zhōulǐng Xiāng Lǚshè	洲岭旅社

Attractions

Běi Jiàn Qiáo	北涧桥
Dēngyún Qiáo	登云桥
Dōng Yáng Qiáo	东洋桥
Liúzhái Qiáo	刘宅桥
Mù Gǒng Láng Qiáo	木拱廊桥
Sān Tiáo Qiáo	三条桥
Wénxīng Qiáo	文兴桥
Xiānjū Qiáo	仙居桥
Xuēzhái Qiáo	薛宅桥
Yùwén Qiáo	毓文桥

FÚZHŌU 福州

Accommodations & Dining

Golden Resources International Hotel (Jīnyuán Guójì Dàjiǔdiàn)	金源国际大酒店
Jùchūnyuán Dàjiǔdiàn	聚春园大酒店
Ramada Plaza (Měilún Huáměidá Guǎngchǎng Dàjiǔdiàn)	美伦华美达广场大酒店

Attractions

Xi[i] Hú Gōngyuán	西湖公园
Yāntái Shān Gōngyuán	烟台山公园
Yú Shān	于山

WǓYÍ SHĀN 武夷山

Accommodations & Dining

Bǎodǎo Dàjiǔdiàn	宝岛大酒店
Wǔyí Shān Jiǔdiàn	武夷山酒店
Wǔyí Shānzhuāng (Wǔyí Mountain Villa)	武夷山庄

Attractions

Dà Wáng Fēng	大王峰
Tiānyóu Shān	天游山
Wǔyí Gōng	武夷宫
Xīng Cūn	兴村

JǏNGDÉZHÈN 景德镇

Accommodations & Dining

Jīnshèng Bīnguǎn	金盛宾馆
Ji[i]nyè Dàjiǔdiàn	金叶大酒店

Attractions

Sān Bǎo Shuǐduì (Water-powered Hammers)	三宝水碓
Táocí Bówùguǎn (Museum of Porcelain)	陶瓷博物馆
Táocí Lìshǐ Bówùguǎn (Ceramic Historical Exhibition Area)	陶瓷历史博物馆

JIǓJIĀNG 九江

Accommodations & Dining

Báilù Bīnguǎn	白鹿宾馆
Lú Lín Hotel (Lú Lín Fàndiàn)	芦林饭店
Lú Shān Hotel (Lú Shān Bīnguǎn)	庐山宾馆
Qí Shì Jiǔjiāng Dàjiǔdiàn	其士九江大酒店
Tiělùdū Lú Shān Xī Hú Bīnguǎn	铁道都庐山西湖宾馆
Wǔ Fēng Bīnguǎn	五丰宾馆
Xīn Tàizǐ Dàjiǔdiàn	新太子大酒店

Attractions

Lú Shān	庐山
Lú Shā Bówùguǎn	庐山博物馆
Měi Lú Biéshù	美庐别墅
Néngrén Chán Sì	能仁禅寺
Yānshuǐ Tíng (Misty Water Pavilion)	烟水亭

SHĒNZHÈN 深圳

Accommodations & Dining

Bàn Xī Jiǔdiàn	半溪酒店
Guǎngxìn Jiǔdiàn	广信酒店
Shangri-La (Xiānggélǐlā Dàjiǔdiàn)	香格里拉大酒店

Attractions

Luó Hú Shāngyè Chéng (Luó Hú Commercial City)	罗湖商业成
Minsk World (Míngsīkè Hángmǔ Shìjiè)	明思克航母世界

THE SOUTHWEST: MOUNTAINS & MINORITIES (CHAPTER 11)

AROUND NÁNNÍNG

Détiān Pùbù (Détiān Waterfall)	德天瀑布
Détiān Shānzhuāng	德天山庄
Yángměi	扬美
Yílǐng Yán	伊岭岩

LÍ RIVER 漓江

Buddha Cave	菩萨洞
Gǔróng Gōngyuán	古榕公园
Huángbù Dǎoyǐng	黄布倒影
Jiǔmǎ Huàshān (Nine Horses Fresco Hill)	九马画山
Moon Mountain	月亮山
Water Cave	水岩
Yángdī	杨堤
Zhújiāng Pier	竹江码头

AROUND YÁNGSHUÒ

Báishā	白沙
Fúlì	福利
Xīngpíng	兴坪
Yú Cūn	渔村
Yùlóng Hé	遇龙河

LÓNGSHÈNG 龙胜

Lǎnyuè Gé (View Place Inn)	揽月阁
Lìqíng Lǚshè (Lìqíng Guesthouse)	丽晴旅社
Lóngjǐ Dùjià Shānzhuāng (Lóngjí Riverside Hotel)	龙脊度假山庄
Lóngjǐ Tītián (Dragon's Backbone Terrace Fields)	龙脊梯田
Lóngshèng Dàjiǔdiàn	龙胜大酒店
Lǜsè Càiguǎn	绿色菜馆
Píngān Cūn	平安村
Riverside Hotel (Kǎikǎi Lǚshè)	凯凯旅舍

SĀNJIĀNG 三江

Bātuán Zhài	巴团寨
Bāxié Zhài	八协寨
Chéngyáng Wind and Rain Bridge (Chéngyáng Fēngyǔ Qiáo)	程阳风雨桥
Chéngyángqiáo Zhāodàisuǒ (Chéngyáng Bridge National Hostel)	程阳桥招待所
Dúdòng	独峒
Mǎpàng	马胖
Píngliú Zhài	平流寨
Sānjiāng Dòngzú Zìzhìxiàn Rénmín Zhèngfǔ Zhāodàisuǒ (Guesthouse of the People's Government of the Sānjiāng Dòng Autonomous County)	三江侗族自治县人民政府招待所
Xīngyí Kuàicāntīng	兴宜快餐厅

BĚIHǍI 北海

Hǎitān Dàjiǔdiàn	海滩大酒店
Rìrìxiān Hǎixiān Lóu	日日鲜海鲜楼
Shangri-La Hotel (Xiānggélǐlā Fàndiàn)	香格里拉饭店
Wàishā	外沙
Wēizhōu Dǎo	涠洲岛
Yíntān (Silver Beach)	银滩

AROUND GUÌYÁNG

Huángguǒshù Pùbù (Huángguǒshù Falls)	黄果树瀑布
Lónggōng Dòng (Dragon Palace Caves)	龙宫洞
Shítóu Zhài (Stone Village)	石头寨
Tiānlóng Túnbǎo	天龙屯堡
Xīn Huángguǒshù Bīnguǎn	新黄国树宾馆

KǍILǏ 凯里

Guótài Dàjiǔdiàn	国泰大酒店
Kǎilǐ Lántiān Dàjiǔdiàn	凯里蓝天大酒店
Màidéshì	麦德士
Minorities Museum (Zhōu Mínzú Bówùguǎn)	州民族博物馆
Shāngmào Jiē	商贸街

MIÁO/DÒNG AREAS

Róngjiāng Bīnguǎn	榕江宾馆
Yuèliàng Shān Bīnguǎn	月亮山宾馆
Zhàoxìng	肇兴

Lulu's Homestay (Fēngqíng Lǚyóu Shèwài Mínjū Lǚguǎn)	风情旅游涉外民居旅馆
Wénhuàzhàn Zhāodàisuǒ	文化站招待所
Bāshā	岜沙
Cóngjiāng	从江
Dìpíng	地坪
Fǎnpái	反排
Huángpíng	黄平
Xījiāng	西江
Jìtáng	纪堂
Lángdé	郎德
Mátáng	麻塘
Róngjiāng	榕江
Táijiāng	台江
Zhàoxìng	肇兴
Zhōuxī	舟溪

AROUND DÀLǏ

Ěr Hǎi Lake	洱海湖
Cāng Shān (Green Mountains)	苍山
Fèngyǎn Dòng (Phoenix Cave)	凤眼洞
Gǎntōng Sì	感通寺
Guānyīn Gé (Guānyīn Pavilion)	观音阁
Jīnsuō Dǎo	金梭岛
Pǔtuó Dǎo	普陀岛
Qīngbì Xī	清碧溪
Shāpíng	沙坪
Xǐzhōu	喜州
Zhōnghé Sì	中和寺
Zhōu Chéng	周城

AROUND LÌJIĀNG

Báishā	白沙
Bīngchuān Gōngyuán (Glacier Park)	冰川公园
Chángjiāng Dìyī Wān (First Bend of the Yángzǐ)	长江第一湾
Lúgū Hú (Lúgū Lake)	泸沽湖
Máoníu Píng (Yak Meadow)	牦牛坪
Shígǔ	石鼓
Tiger Leaping Gorge (Hǔtiào Xiá)	虎跳峡
Yùfēng Sì (Yùfēng Temple)	玉峰寺
Yù Hú (Nguluko)	玉湖
Yùlóng Xuěshān (Jade Dragon Snow Mountain)	玉龙雪山
Yúnshān Píng (Spruce Meadow)	云杉坪

XIĀNGGÉLǏLĀ (ZHŌNGDIÀN) 香格里拉（中甸）

Accommodations

Díqìng Bīnguǎn	迪庆宾馆
Lóngfèng Xiáng Dàjiǔdiàn (Holy Palace Hotel)	龙凤祥大酒店

Dining

Shangri-La Traveller Club	香格里拉旅行者俱乐部
Tibet Café	西藏咖啡馆

Attractions

Báishuǐ Tái (White Water Terraces)	白水台
Bìtǎ Hǎi (Bìtǎ Lake)	碧塔海
Ganden Sumtseling Gompa (Sōngzànlín Sì)	松赞林寺
Old town	古城
Old Town Scripture Chamber (Gǔchéng Zàngjīng Táng)	古城藏经堂

JĪNGHÓNG & XĪSHUĀNGBǍNNÀ (景洪 & 西双版纳)

Accommodations

Bǎnnà Bīnguǎn	版纳宾馆
Dǎiyuán Dàjiǔdiàn (Tai Garden Hotel)	傣园大酒店
Xīshuāngbǎnnà Guānguāng Jiǔdiàn	西双版纳观光酒店

Dining

Cái Chūn Qīng	财春青
Dǎi Jiā Měishí Cūn	傣家美食村
Dōngguān Jiǎozi Guǎn	东关饺子馆
Měi Měi Café	美美咖啡
Mekong Café (Méigōng Cānguǎn)	湄公咖啡馆

Attractions

Màntīng Gōngyuán	曼听公园
Mínzú Fēngqíng Yuán	民族风情园
Tropical Flower and Plants Garden (Rèdài Huāhuìyuán)	热带花卉园

AROUND JĪNGHÓNG

Bǎnnà Rainforest Valley (Bǎnnà Yǔlín Gǔ)	版纳雨林谷
Banna Wild Elephant Valley (Bǎnnà Yěxiàng Gǔ)	版纳野象谷
Dǎi Minority Folk Customs Park (Dǎi Zú Yuán)	傣族园
Gǎnlǎnbà (Měnghǎn)	橄榄坝 (勐罕)
Jīnuò Folk Custom Village (Jīnuò Mínsú Shānzhài)	基诺民俗山寨
Měnglà	勐腊
Měnglún	勐仑
Měngyǎng	勐养
Móhān	磨憨
Sānchàhé Nature Reserve (Sānchàhé Zìrán Bǎohùqū)	三岔河自然保护区
Xīshuāngbǎnnà Rèdài Zhíwùyuán	西双版纳热带植物园
Xiàngxíng Róngshù	象形榕树

AROUND JIÀNSHUǏ

Bàdá	坝达
Duōyī Cūn	多依村
Jīngkǒu Mínsú Cūn	菁口民俗村
Měngpǐn	猛品
Nánshì	南市
Rénmín Zhāodàisuǒ (People's Guesthouse)	人民招待所
Shuānglóng Qiáo (Double Dragon Bridge)	双龙桥
Tuán Shān Cūn	团山村

Yànzi Dòng (Swallow's Nest Cave)	燕子洞
Yuányáng Lǎoxiànchéng (Yuányáng Old Town)	元阳老县城
Yuányáng	元阳
Zhāng Jiā Huāyuán	张家花园

HǍINÁN ISLAND 海南岛

Hǎikǒu	海口
Crowne Plaza Resort and Spa (Hǎinán Huángguān Bīnhǎi Wēnquán Jiǔdiàn)	海南皇冠滨海温泉酒店
Hǎikǒu Gōngyuán (Hǎikǒu Park)	海口公园
Hǎiruì Mù	海瑞墓
Huándǎo Tàidé Dàjiǔdiàn (Huándǎo Tide Hotel)	寰岛泰得大酒店
Wǔgōng Cí (Five Officials Temple)	五公祠

SĀNYÀ 三亚

Dà Dōng Hǎi Beach	大东海
Gloria Resort Sānyà (Sānyà Kǎilái Dùjià Jiǔdiàn)	三亚凯来度假酒店
Holiday Inn Resort Yálóng Bay Sānyà (Sānyà Yálóng Wān Jiàrì Jiǔdiàn)	三亚亚龙湾假日酒店
Mínzú Bówùguǎn	民族博物馆
Sānyà Shānhǎitiān Dàjiǔdiàn	三亚山海天大酒店
Tiānyá Hǎijiǎo	天涯海角
Tongzha (Tōngshí)	通什
Xī Dǎo (West Island)	西岛
Yálóng Wān (Yálóng Bay)	亚龙湾

YÁNGZǏ & BEYOND (CHAPTER 12)

ÉMÉI SHĀN 峨眉山

Accommodations

Éméi Shān Fàndiàn	峨眉山饭店
Hóngzhū Shān Bīnguǎn	红珠山宾馆
Jīn Dǐng Dàjiǔdiàn (Golden Summit Hotel)	金顶大酒店

Attractions

Bàoguó Sì	报国寺
Fúhǔ Sì	伏虎寺
Hóngchūn Píng	洪椿坪
Jīn Dǐng (Golden Peak)	金顶
Jiēyǐn Diàn (Jiēyǐn Hall)	接引殿
Jiǔlǎo Dòng (Jiǔlǎo Cave)	九老洞
Léidòng Píng (Léidòng Terrace)	雷洞坪
Niúxīn Tíng (Niúxīn Pavilion)	牛心亭
Qīngyīn Gé	清音阁
Qiānfó Dǐng (Qiānfó Peak)	千佛顶
Shèshēn Yán (Shèshēn Cliff)	摄身岩
Tourist Center (Lǚrén Zhōngxīn)	旅人中心
Wànfó Dǐng (Wànfó Peak)	万佛顶
Wànnián Sì (Wànnián Monastery)	万年寺
Wànnián Cable Car Station (Wànnián Chēchǎng)	万年车场
Xǐ Xiàng Chí (Elephant Bathing Pool)	洗象池
Xiānfēng Sì (Xiānfēng Monastery)	先峰寺

LÈ SHĀN 乐山

Accommodations

Jífēng Lóu Bīnguǎn 集风楼宾馆
Jiā Zhōu Bīnguǎn 嘉州宾馆

Attractions

Dà Fó (Great Buddha) 大佛
Jiǔqū Zhàndào (Path of Nine Switchbacks) 九曲栈道
Wūyóu Shān (Wūyóu Mountain) 乌尤山

WÒLÓNG 卧龙

Towns

Hétao Píng 核桃坪
Shāwān 沙湾

Accommodations

Panda Inn (Xióngmāo Shānzhuāng) 熊猫山庄
Sìtōng Bīnguǎn 四通宾馆

JIǓZHÀI GŌU 九寨沟

Accommodations

Jīnxīn Bīnguǎn (Jīnxīn Hotel) 金鑫宾馆
Jiǔzhài Gōu Dàjiǔdiàn (Jiǔzhài Gōu International Hotel) 九寨沟大酒店
Xīngyǔ Guójì Dàjiǔdiàn (Xīngyǔ International Hotel) 星宇国际大酒店
Yínyuàn Bīnguǎn (Yínyuàn Hotel) 银苑宾馆

CHÓNGQÌNG 庆

Accommodations

Guǎngchǎng Bīnguǎn (Plaza Hotel) 广场宾馆
Harbour Plaza (Hǎi Yì Fàndiàn) 海逸宾馆
Hilton Hotel (Xīěrdùn Jiǔdiàn) 希尔顿酒店
Holiday Inn (Yángzǐ Jiāng Jià Rì Jiudiàn) 扬子江假日酒店
Marriott Hotel (Wànháo Jiǔdiàn) 万豪酒店
Rénmín Bīnguǎn 人民宾馆

Attractions

Chóngqìng Dòngwù Yuán (Chóngqìng Zoo) 重庆动物园
Chóngqìng Shì Bówùguǎn (Chóngqìng Municipal Museum) 重庆博物馆
Huàjiāzhi Cūn (Artists' Village) 画家之村
Shǐdíwēi Jiāngjūn Jiùjū (Stilwell Museum/ General Stilwell's former residence) 史迪威将军旧居

WǓLING YUÁN/ZHĀNGJIĀ JIÈ 武陵源/张家界

Accommodations

Dragon International Hotel (Xiānglóng Guójì Dàjiǔdiàn) 湘龙国际大酒店
Mínsú Shānzhuāng (Mínsú Mountain Villa) 民俗山庄
Pípaxī Bīnguǎn 琵琶溪宾馆
Xiāngdiàn Shānzhuāng (Xiāngdiàn Mountain Villa) 湘电山庄

THE TIBETAN WORLD (CHAPTER 13)

GOLMUD (GÉ'ĚRMÙ) 格尔木

Accommodations & Dining

Gé'ěrmù Bīnguǎn	格尔木宾馆
Tàipíngyáng Shífǔ	太平洋食府
Wēi'ěrshì Dàjiǔdiàn	威尔士大酒店
Yóuzhèng Bīnguǎn (Post Hotel)	邮政宾馆

SHIGATSE (RÌKĀZÉ) 日喀则

Accommodations

Dànzēng Lǚshè (Tenzin Hotel)	旦增旅社
Diànxìn Bīnguǎn (Telecom Hotel)	电信宾馆
Rìkāzé Fàndiàn (Shigatse Hotel)	日喀则饭店
Shénhú Jiǔdiàn (Hotel Mansarovar)	神湖酒店
Wūzī Dàjiǔdiàn (Wutse Hotel)	乌孜大酒店

Dining

Sāngzhūzī Xiǎochībù (Sangdotse Restaurant)	桑珠孜小吃部
Tashi Restaurant (Zhāshí Cāntīng)	扎什餐厅
Zhèngxīn Fàndiàn (Greasy Joe's Cafe)	正鑫饭店

Attractions

Jímào Shìchǎng (Shigatse Bazaar)	集贸市场
Rìkāzé Zōngchéngbǎo (Shigatse Dzong)	日喀则宗城堡
Zhāshílúnbù Sì (Tashilhunpo Monastery)	扎什伦布寺

Appendix B: The Chinese Menu

One of the best things about any visit to China is the food, at least for the independent traveler. Tour groups are often treated to a relentless series of cheap, bland dishes designed to cause no complaints and to keep the costs down for the Chinese operator, so do everything you can to escape and order some of the local specialties we've described for you in each chapter. Here they are again, listed alphabetically under the cities in which they are mentioned, and with characters you can show your waiter or waitress (but check back to the review first, as some of the dishes are unique to certain restaurants). Widely available Chinese standards are together at the top, so check there if the recommended dish isn't listed under its city heading.

Supplement this list by bringing along the bilingual menu from your local Chinese restaurant at home. The characters will not be quite the same as those used on the mainland (more similar to those used in Hong Kong and Macau), but they will be understood. Don't expect the dishes to be the same, however. Expect them to be *better.*

Any mainstream nonspeciality restaurant can and will make any common Chinese dish, whether it's on the menu or not. But ask for a spicy Sìchuān dish in a Cantonese restaurant in Guǎngzhōu, and you'll be sorely disappointed.

Outside Hong Kong and big hotels and expat cafe ghettos on the mainland, few restaurants have English menus. If, near your five-star hotel, you see restaurants with signs saying ENGLISH MENU, there's a fair chance you are going to be cheated with double prices, and you should eat elsewhere (unless it's an obvious backpacker hangout).

Menus generally open with *liáng cài* (cold dishes). For hygiene reasons in mainland China, except in top-class Sino-foreign joint-venture restaurants, you are strongly advised to avoid these cold dishes, especially if you're on a short trip. The restaurant's specialties also come early in the menu, often easily spotted by their significantly higher prices, and if you dither, the waitress will recommend them, saying, "I hear this one's good." Waitresses always recommend ¥180 ($23) dishes, never ¥18 ($2.25) ones. Occasionally, some of these may be made from creatures you would regard as pets or zoo creatures (or best in the wild), may be made from parts you consider inedible, or may contain an odd material like swallow saliva (the main ingredient of bird's nest soup, a rather bland and uninteresting Cantonese delicacy).

Main dishes come next, various meats and fish before vegetables and *dòufu* (tofu), and drinks at the end. There are rarely desserts, although Guǎngdōng (Cantonese) food has absorbed the tradition of eating something sweet at the end of the meal from across the border in Hong Kong, where all restaurants have something to offer of this kind, if only sliced fruit.

Soup is usually eaten last, although dishes arrive in a rather haphazard order. Outside Guǎngdōng Province, Hong Kong, and Macau, rice usually arrives towards the end, and if you want it with your meal you must ask (point at the characters for rice, below, when the first dish arrives).

There is no tipping. Tea, chopsticks, and napkins should be free, although if a wrapped packet of tissues arrives, there may be a small fee. Service charges do

not exist outside of major hotels, and there are no cover charges or taxes. If you are asked what tea you would like, then you are going to receive something above average and will be charged. You should be careful, since some varieties of tea may cost more than the meal itself.

Most Chinese food is not designed to be eaten solo, but if you do find yourself on your own, ask for small portions *(xiǎo pán)*.

xiǎo pán	small portion	小盘

These are usually about 70% the size of a full dish and about 70% the price, but they enable you to sample the menu properly without too much waste.

POPULAR DISHES & SNACKS

PINYIN	ENGLISH	CHINESE
bābǎo zhōu	rice porridge with nuts and berries	八宝粥
bāozi	stuffed steamed buns	包子
bīngqílín	ice cream	冰淇淋
chǎofàn	fried rice	炒饭
chǎo miàn	fried noodles	炒面
cōng bào niúròu	quick-fried beef and onions	葱爆牛肉
diǎnxin	dim sum (snacks)	点心
gānbiān sìjìdòu	sautéed string beans	干煸四季豆
gōngbào jīdīng	spicy diced chicken with cashews	宫爆鸡丁
guōtiē	fried dumplings/ potstickers	锅贴
hóngshāo fǔzhú	braised tofu	红烧腐竹
hóngshǎo huángyú	braised yellow fish	红烧黄鱼
huíguō ròu	twice-cooked pork	回锅肉
huǒguō	hot pot	火锅
jiǎozi	dumplings/ Chinese ravioli	饺子
jīngjiàng ròusī	shredded pork in soya sauce	京酱肉丝
mápó dòufu	spicy tofu with chopped meat	麻婆豆腐
miàntiáo	noodles	面条
mǐfàn	rice	米饭
mù xū ròu	sliced pork with fungus (mushu pork)	木须肉
niúròu miàn	beef noodles	牛肉面
ròu chuàn	kabobs	肉串
sānxiān	"three flavors" (usually prawn, mushroom, pork)	三鲜
shuǐjiǎo	boiled dumplings	水饺
suānlà báicài	hot-and-sour cabbage	酸辣白菜
suānlà tāng	hot-and-sour soup	酸辣汤
sù miàn	vegetarian noodles	素面
sù shíjǐn	mixed vegetables	素什锦
tángcù lǐji	sweet-and-sour pork tenderloin	糖醋里脊

PINYIN	ENGLISH	CHINESE
tǔdòu dùn niúròu	stewed beef and potato	土豆炖牛肉
xīhóngshì chǎo jīdàn	tomatoes with eggs	西红柿炒鸡蛋
yóutiáo	fried salty doughnut	油条
yúxiāng qiézi	eggplant in garlic sauce	鱼香茄子
yúxiāng ròusī	shredded pork in garlic sauce	鱼香肉丝
zhēngjiǎo	steamed dumplings	蒸饺
zhōu	rice porridge	粥
Běihǎi		北海
bǎizhuó xiā	quickly blanched fresh prawns	白灼虾
jīnshā yóuyú	spicy cuttlefish	金沙鱿鱼
jiǔhuáng chǎo shāchóng	sandworms stir-fried with leeks	韭黄炒沙虫
qīngzhēng shíbān	steamed garoupa	清蒸石斑
Běijīng		北京
dà pán jī	diced chicken and noodles in tomato sauce	大盘鸡
gǒubùlǐ bāozi	pork-stuffed bread dumplings	狗不 理包子
jiàngshāo qiézi	braised eggplant	酱烧茄子
jīngjiàng ròusī	shredded pork with green onion rolled in tofu skin	京酱肉丝
kǎo yángròu	roast mutton	烤羊肉
lǎogānmā shāo jī	spicy diced chicken with bamboo and ginger	老干妈烧鸡
làròu dòuyá juǎnbǐng	spicy bacon and bean sprouts in pancakes	腊肉豆芽卷饼
làwèi huájī bǎozǎi fàn	chicken and sweet sausage on rice in clay pot	腊味滑鸡煲仔饭
málà lóngxiā	spicy crayfish	麻辣龙虾
mǐlà luófēi yú	diced deep-fried fish with garlic and hot peppers	米辣罗非鱼
mìzhì zhǐbāo lúyú	paper-wrapped perch and onions on sizzling iron plate	秘制纸包鲈鱼
qiáomiàn māo ěrduo	"cat's ear" buckwheat pasta with chopped meat	荞面猫耳朵
ròudīng báicài xiànbǐng	meat cabbage pie	肉丁白菜馅饼
shēngjiān baōzi	pork-stuffed fried bread dumplings	生煎包子
shǒubā fàn	Uighur-style rice with raisins and mutton	手扒饭
suànxiāng jīchì	garlic paper-wrapped chicken wings	蒜香鸡翅
xiāngcǎo cuìlà yú	whole fried fish with hot peppers and lemon grass	香草脆辣鱼
xiǎolóng bāozi	pork-stuffed steamed bread dumplings	小笼包子

PINYIN	ENGLISH	CHINESE
xièsānxiān shuǐjiǎo	boiled crab dumplings with shrimp and mushrooms	蟹三鲜水饺
yángròu chuàn	spicy mutton skewers with cumin	羊肉串
yángyóu mádòufu	mashed soy bean with lamb oil	洋油麻豆腐
yánjú xiā	shrimp skewers in rock salt	盐局虾
yì bǎ zhuā	fried wheat cakes	一把抓
yóutiáo niúròu	sliced beef with fried dough in savory sauce	油条牛肉
zhāngchá yā	crispy smoked duck with plum sauce	樟茶鸭
zhá qiéhé	pork-stuffed deep-fried eggplant	炸茄合
zhǐbāo lúyú	paper-wrapped perch in sweet sauce	纸包鲈鱼
zhūròu báicài bāozi	steamed bun stuffed with pork and cabbage	猪肉白菜包子
Chángchūn		长春
bènjīdàn bàn xiǎocōng	spicy shredded pork and egg salad with green onion	笨鸡蛋拌小葱
dà páigu	roasted pork ribs	大排骨
Mǎnzhōu jiǎozi	steamed pork and shrimp dumplings with egg and chive	满州饺子
tiěbǎn lùròu	sliced venison on sizzling iron plate	铁板鹿肉
Chángshā		长沙
hóng zǎozi	red dates	红枣子
língjiǎo	water chestnuts	菱角
mǐtāng sīguā	rice soup with silk gourd	米汤丝瓜
qiàng qíncài xiàguǒ	baby celery and pearl onions sautéed with macadamia nuts	炝芹菜夏果
qīngjiāo qiézi	eggplant sautéed with green pepper	青椒茄子
Chéngdé		承德
cōng shāo yězhū ròu	wild boar cooked with onions	葱烧野猪肉
lù ròu chǎo zhēnmó	venison stir-fried with hazel mushrooms	鹿肉炒榛磨
Qiánlóng shuǐjiǎo	jiǎozi dumplings	乾隆水饺
què cháo shān jī piàn	“Sparrow’s nest” pheasant slices	雀巢山鸡片
zhēn mó shānjī dīng	nuggets of pheasant with local mushrooms	榛磨山鸡丁
Chéngdū		成都
báitāng lǔ	plain broth	白汤卤
Càigēn Xiāng páigu	Càigēn Xiāng spareribs	菜根香排骨

PINYIN	ENGLISH	CHINESE
cuìpí shàngsù	crisp vegetarian duck	脆皮上素
dòufu jìyú	tofu and golden carp	豆腐鲫鱼
gōngbò jīdīng	spicy diced chicken	宫宝鸡丁
huíguō hòupí cài	twice-cooked thick-skinned greens	回锅厚皮菜
jiāozǐ zhēng guìyú	king crab steamed with peppercorns	椒子蒸桂鱼
Jiāróng suāncài kǎobǐng	Jiāróng bread stuffed with cabbage and barbecued pork	嘉绒酸菜烤饼
jiāzhōu niúròu miàn	California beef noodles	加州牛肉面
lóngyǎn bāozi	dragon eye bāozi	龙眼包子
máoniú ròubāo	yak meat bāozi	牦牛肉包
pào cài	pickled vegetables	泡菜
pàocài jiāyú	fish with pickled vegetables	泡菜佳鱼
pàojiāo mòyú zǎi	pickled pepper with baby squid	泡椒墨鱼仔
suān luóbo chǎo máoniúròu	pickled cabbage with fried yak meat	酸萝卜炒牦牛肉
sūpí niúliǔ	crispy beef tenderloin	酥皮牛柳
yěcài bā	steamed rice bread with wild vegetable wrapped in cornhusks	野菜粑
Yìndù gālí chǎocài	Indian vegetable curry	印度咖喱炒菜
yùer shāo jiǎyú	green turtle stewed with taro	芋儿烧甲鱼
Chóngqìng		重庆
guàiwèi yāzi	strange-flavored duck	怪味鸭子
guōbā ròupiàn	pork with bamboo shoots over crispy rice	锅巴肉片
qīngjiāo bào zǐjī	baby chicken quick-fried with green pepper	青椒爆仔鸡
tiěbǎn shāo zhī yínxuěyú	silver snow fish cooked on an iron plate	铁板烧汁银雪鱼
yùmǐ bǐng	corn cakes	玉米饼
Dàlǐ		大理
ěr kuài	stuffed rice dough	饵块
mùguā jī	fried chicken Bái style	木瓜鸡
rǔshàn	milk fan	乳扇
shāguō yú	stewed fish casserole	砂锅鱼
shuǐzhǔ ròupiàn	pork and vegetable in spicy broth	水煮肉片
Dàlián		大连
gōngbào yúdīng	diced shark with peanuts and peppers	宫爆鱼丁
wénchóng hé tāng	clam and bok choy soup	蚊虫河汤
xiānggū guīshì wēi tǔjī	chicken mushroom stew in clay pot	香菇归氏煨土鸡
xiānglà xiè	crab and vegetables in spicy broth	香辣蟹
yùmǐmiàn bǐng	corn cakes	玉米面饼

PINYIN	ENGLISH	CHINESE
Dāndōng		丹东
lǎncài hǔpíjiāo	pork-stuffed bell peppers in black bean sauce	榄菜虎皮椒
Dàtóng		大同
chǎo lāmiàn	fried wheat noodles	炒拉面
shāo qiézi	stewed eggplant	烧茄子
sōng yùmǐ	corn cooked with pine nuts	松玉米
Dūnhuáng		敦煌
lǘròu huángmiàn	donkey meat yellow noodles	驴肉黄面
Fúzhōu		福州
Fó tiào qiáng	Buddha jumping over the wall	佛跳墙
Golmud/Gé'ěrmù		格尔木
huángmèn yángròu	lamb stew	黄焖羊肉
xiānggū càixīn	mushrooms and Chinese greens	香菇菜心
xiāngsū jī	crispy chicken	香酥鸡
Guǎngzhōu		广州
huā zhōu zhù jī	chicken cooked in yellow wine	花周住鸡
jiǔ huáng ròu sī	sliced pork with yellow chives	韭黄肉丝
táng cù sū ròu	sweet-and-sour pork	糖醋酥肉
xiān gū xiān xiā wán	stir-fried fresh shrimp with straw mushroms	鲜菇鲜虾丸
xī níng jú ròu pái	baked sparerib in lemon sauce	西宁肉排
wǔ shé bāo lǎo jī	boiled five snakes and old chicken in soup	五蛇煲老鸡
zhī shì niúyóu jú hǎixiān dòufu	baked seafood and bean curd	芝士牛油海鲜豆腐
Guìlín		桂林
dāndān miàn	noodles in spicy peanut sauce	担担面
Guìlín mǐfěn	Guìlín rice noodles	桂林米粉
mǎròu	horse meat	马肉
shāncūn làròu zhēng yúpiàn	steamed taro with smoked meat	山村腊肉蒸芋片
shāncūn tǔjī	free-range chicken	山村土鸡
shuǐzhǔ niúròu	beef and vegetables in a chili sauce	水煮牛肉
tángcù cuìpíyú	crispy sweet-and-sour fish	糖醋脆皮鱼
záliáng zhútǒng fàn	bamboo cooked rice	杂粮竹筒饭
Guìyáng		贵阳
báizuó xiā	fresh blanched prawns	白灼虾
Miáojiā ānyú	Miáo sour fish	苗家胺鱼
Miáojiā tǔdòu piàn	Miáo deep-fried potato coins	苗家土豆片
Miáowèi páigǔ	spicy Miáo spareribs	苗味排骨

PINYIN	ENGLISH	CHINESE
qīngzhēng yú	steamed fish	清蒸鱼
ròusī chǎomiàn	stir-fried noodles with pork	肉丝炒面
xiándànhuáng jìn qīngguā	salted eggs on a bed of cucumber	咸蛋皇浸青瓜
xiānhuáishān kòulǔròu	braised pork and vegetables	鲜淮山扣卤肉
yáng làjiāo	fried hot peppers	阳辣椒
Hángzhōu		杭州
Dōngpō ròu	a soya pork dish named after the poet	东坡肉
Hángzhōu jiàohuà jī	"beggar's chicken"—baked in clay	杭州叫化鸡
jīzhī yínxuěyú	parcels of fish deep-fried in a light batter with a slightly peppery lemon sauce	鸡汁银雪鱼
lóngjǐng xiārén	shelled shrimp sprinkled with lóngjǐng tea	龙井虾仁
Harbin		哈尔滨
dàlièbā	Russian-style crusty bread	大烈巴
hóngcháng	Russian-style red sausage	红肠
jiācháng tǔdòuní	garlic mashed potatoes	家常土豆泥
pá yángròu tiáo	thinly sliced lamb in soy-garlic sauce	扒羊肉条
sōngrén yùmǐ shuǐjiǎo	boiled corn and pine-nut dumplings	松仁玉米水饺
Héféi		合肥
huīshì xiǎochǎo	stir-fried pork, leeks, and bean curd strips	徽式小炒
suànzhēng shànbèi	garlic steamed scallops with glass noodles	蒜蒸扇贝
tàijí sùcài gēng	puréed vegetable soup	太极素菜羹
zhájiàng miàn	noodles with meat sauce	炸酱面
Hohhot/Hūhéhàotè		呼和浩特
chǎo fěn	millet granules	炒粉
chǎo miàn	fried noodles	炒面
dùndun	husked-wheat pancakes	钝钝
guǒtiáo	crisp fried dough	果条
guōzǎi	stew	锅仔
guōzǎi suāncài yáng zásuì	pickled vegetables and sheep organ stew	锅仔酸菜羊杂碎
jiācháng dòufu	home-style tofu	家常豆腐
lā miàn	pulled noodles	拉面
liángfěn	cold translucent noodles with sauce	凉粉
nǎichá	milk tea	奶茶
nǎi pízi	milk skin	奶皮子
shénxiān báicài tāng	immortals' cabbage soup	神仙白菜汤
shǒubā ròu	hand-held mutton	手扒肉
sù hézi	fried vegetable pie	素合子

PINYIN	ENGLISH	CHINESE
suāncài ròu chǎo fěn	wheat noodles with shredded pork	酸菜肉炒粉
tèsè kǎo rǔniú	barbecued marinated veal	特色烤乳牛
wō bǐng	corn cakes	窝饼
wōwo	husked wheat pasta in steamer	窝窝
Huáng Shān		黄山
huángshān èrdōng	stir-fried winter mushrooms and bamboo shoots	黄山二冬
Jiànshuǐ		建水
bōbà nǎichá	milk tea with tapioca pearls	波霸奶茶
cǎoyá	"grass tooth" vegetable	草牙
Xīmén dòufu	Xīmén tofu	西门豆腐
Jiāyùguān		嘉峪关
fùguì niúròu	roast beef on sesame toast	富贵牛肉
Jiāngnán qiánjiāng ròu	Jiāngnán chicken	江南钱江肉
xīqīng bǎihé chǎo xiān yóu	squid with celery, field mushroom, and lotus	西青百合炒鲜鱿
yángpái	lamb chops	羊排
Jílín		吉林
liū ròuduàn	deep-fried pork strips with green pepper	熘肉段
shǒusī yángròu	hand-torn mutton with soy-garlic sauce	手撕羊肉
Jìnán		济南
shāguō	casserole	砂锅
zhuābǐng	flaky fried pastry	抓饼
Jǐngdézhèn		景德镇
sāngná niúròu	"sauna" beef	桑拿牛肉
jǐnggāng lǎobiǎo sǔn	peppery bamboo shoots with dried tofu	井岗老表笋
Jǐnghóng		景洪
kǎo sǔnzi	grilled bamboo shoots	烤笋子
kǎo yú	grilled fish	烤鱼
suānsǔn zhǔjī	chicken cooked with pickled bamboo	酸笋煮鸡
suānsǔn zhǔyú	fish boiled with sour bamboo shoots	酸笋煮鱼
xiāngzhú fàn	fragrant rice cooked in bamboo	香竹饭
zhútǒng fàn	glutinous rice cooked in bamboo	竹筒饭
Jiǔjiāng		九江
xiāng jiān mǐfěn ròu	minced pork in rice floor	香煎米粉肉
Kāifēng		开封
wǔxiāng shāobǐng	five-spice roasted bread	五香烧饼
xiǎolóng bāo	dumplings filled with pork and broth	小笼包

PINYIN	ENGLISH	CHINESE
yángròu chuàn	spicy lamb kabob	羊肉串
zhīma duōwèi tāng	sesame soup	芝麻多味汤
Kǎilǐ		凯里
gǒuròu	dog meat	狗肉
Kashgar/Kāshí		喀什
Bāchǔ mógu	Bachu mushrooms	巴楚蘑菇
bàn sān sī	capsicum, onion, carrot, and cucumber noodle salad	拌三丝
chǎokǎo ròu	beef stir-fry	炒烤肉
gānbiān tóngzǐjī	dry-fried spring chicken	干煸童子鸡
lāmiàn	"pulled" noodles	拉面
lǔ gēzi	whole pigeon soup	卤鸽子
tanglegush	lamb broth and naan	
wánzimiàn	beef ball noodles	丸子面
zhuā fàn	pilaf	抓饭
Kūnmíng		昆明
cuìpí rúyì yú	crispy vegetarian fish in a sweet-and-sour sauce	脆皮如意鱼
cuìpí yā	crispy fried vegetarian duck	脆皮鸭
guòqiáo mǐxiàn	crossing-the-bridge noodles	过桥米线
hóngshāo niúròu miàn	spicy beef noodles	红烧牛肉面
hóngshāo shīziqiú	vegetarian mushroom ball	红烧狮子球
hùnhé chǎo	fried mixed vegetables	混合炒
huǒshāo gānbā	barbecue dried beef	火烧干巴
jīnbì yān huóxiā	spicy prawn sashimi	金碧腌活虾
qìguō jī	steamed chicken	汽锅鸡
shànyú miàn	noodles with eel	鳝鱼面
sūpí guànguàn jī	chicken soup with puff pastry	酥皮罐罐鸡
yēzi qìguō jī	coconut chicken	椰子汽锅鸡
yìndù gālí jī miàn	curry chicken noodles	印度咖喱鸡面
zhēng lǎo nánguā	steamed pumpkin	蒸老南瓜
zhútǒng ròu	pork cooked in bamboo	竹筒肉
Kuqa/Kùchē		库车
dàpán jī	Uighur chicken	大盘鸡
gānzhá niúròu tiáo	spicy beef strips	干炸牛肉条
lǎohǔ cài	"tiger" salad	老虎菜
shuǐguǒ shālà	fruit salad	水果沙拉
tángbàn huángguā	sweet cucumber salad	糖拌黄瓜
Lánzhōu		兰州
bóbǐng yángròu	deep-fried lamb and green pepper pancake	薄饼羊肉
kǎo yángtuǐ	roast leg of lamb with walnuts	烤羊腿
shǒu zhuā ròu	roast lamb	手抓肉
Měnggǔ yángpái	Mongolian lamb	蒙古羊排
xìliè niúròu miàn	beef noodles	系列牛肉面
xīshì jīnjú bǎihé	lily and chrysanthemum salad	西式金菊百合

PINYIN	ENGLISH	CHINESE
Lhatse/Lāzī		拉孜
chǐyóu jī	salty chicken	豉油鸡
niúròu chǎofàn	beef fried rice	牛肉炒饭
záchá fěnsī bāo	vermicelli clay pot	杂搽粉丝煲
Lìjiāng		丽江
fēngwèi cān	special Nàxī meal	风味餐
guòqiáo mǐxiàn	crossing-the-bridge noodles	过桥米线
jīdòu chǎo mǐfàn	fried rice with soya bean	鸡豆炒米饭
kǎoyú	barbecue fish	烤鱼
Lìjiāng bābā	Lìjiāng baked pastry	丽江粑粑
Lìjiāng dàguōcài	vegetables in broth	丽江大锅菜
Nàxī sāndiéshuǐ	Nàxī 36-dish special	纳西三叠水
qìguō jī	stewed chicken	汽锅鸡
zhá rǔ bǐng	fried goat cheese	炸乳饼
Lóngshèng		龙胜
làròu	smoked pork	腊肉
zhútǒng fàn	fragrant rice cooked in bamboo	竹筒饭
Mǎnzhōulǐ		满洲里
sūbā tāng	Russian-style creamy tomato soup	苏巴汤
Nánchāng		南昌
Jiāngxī zá cài	spicy mixed vegetables	江西杂菜
yútóu dòufu	fish head tofu	鱼头豆腐
Nánjīng		南京
bājué shíliùdào	eight features sixteen dishes	八绝十六道
pánsī yú	sweet-and-sour deep-fried fish tail filets	盘丝鱼
shuǐjīng xiārén	sautéed shrimp	水晶虾仁
Tiānmùhú yútóu	Tiānmù fish-head soup	天目湖鱼头
Nánníng		南宁
fēngwèi niúzá	special seasoned tripe	风味牛杂
jiāoyán yāxiàba	spicy duck's tongue	椒盐鸭下巴
jiǔcài héxiā	river shrimp with chives	韭菜河虾
Píngyáo		平遥
jiàohuà jī	beggar's chicken	叫化鸡
lǎolǎo yóumiàn	husked oat pasta	栳栳莜面
māo ěrduo	cats' ears (pasta)	猫耳朵
tǔdòu shāo niúròu	corned beef with potatoes	土豆烧牛肉
xiāngsū jī	crispy aromatic chicken	香酥鸡
yóuzhá gāo	crispy puff with date and red bean paste	油炸糕
Qīngdǎo		青岛
jīngjiàng ròusī	shredded pork Peking style	京酱肉丝
shāo èrdōng	sautéed mushrooms with garden asparagus	烧二冬
sōngshǔ guìyú	deep-fried sweet-and-sour fish	松鼠桂鱼
suànxiāng gǔ	fried pork chop with garlic	蒜香骨

PINYIN	ENGLISH	CHINESE
xiāng sū jī	fragrant chicken	香酥鸡
yóubào hǎiluó	fried sea snails	油爆海螺
Quánzhōu		泉州
niúpái	beefsteak	牛排
Xiàmén hǎilì jiān	Xiàmén-style baby oysters	厦门海蛎煎
Qūfǔ		曲阜
dàizi shàngcháo	stewed pork, chicken, chestnuts, and ginseng	带子上朝
shīlǐ yínxìng	sweet ginkgo	诗礼银杏
yángguān sāndié	chicken, vegetables, and egg folded together	阳关三叠
Shànghǎi		上海
bābǎo fàn	sweet glutinous rice with nuts and berries	八宝饭
bābǎo jiàng	spicy paste of soya beans, nuts, and berries	八宝酱
chǎo niángāo	stir-fried glutinous rice cakes with meat and vegetables	炒年糕
cōngyóu bǐng	scallion pancakes	葱油饼
hóngshāo típǎng	braised pig thighs	红烧蹄膀
jiāoyán páigǔ	salt-and-pepper pork ribs	椒盐排骨
jiǔcài hézi	leek pie	韭菜盒子
méicài kòuròu	braised pork with mustard greens	梅菜扣肉
Nánxiáng xiǎolóng bāo	Nánxiáng crabmeat and pork dumplings	南翔小龙包
sānsī méimáo sū	pork, bamboo, and mushroom-stuffed crisp	三丝眉毛酥
shēngjiān bāo	steamed then fried pork buns	生煎包
shīzi tóu	lion's head meatballs	狮子头
sùjī	vegetarian chicken	素鸡
sùyā	vegetarian duck	素鸭
xūnyú	cold smoked fish	熏鱼
yóumèn sǔn	braised bamboo shoots	油焖笋
zuìjī	drunken chicken	醉鸡
Shàoxīng		绍兴
jiǔ niàng zāo sǔn	drunken bamboo shoots	酒酿糟笋
luóbo sī jiān dàiyú	shredded radish pan-fried with local fish	萝卜丝煎带鱼
méi qiān zhāng zhēng ròu bǐng	dried stinky tofu steamed with mincemeat	霉千张蒸肉饼
qīng zhēng chòu dòufu	steamed "stinky" tofu	清蒸臭豆腐
ròu tiáo mèn cài	pork strips with vegetables	肉条焖菜
Xiāo Shān luóbo gān	shredded radish	肖山萝卜干
yóu zhá chòu dòufu	fried stinky tofu	油炸臭豆腐
Yuèzhōu zāo jī	drunken chicken	越州糟鸡
zāo xiāng yuè jī	chicken marinated in local wine	糟香越鸡

PINYIN	ENGLISH	CHINESE
Shěnyáng		沈阳
biānxiàn sānxiān jiǎozi	boiled shrimp, egg, and Chinese chive dumplings	煸馅三鲜饺子
chuántǒng shāomài	steamed dumplings with beef and ginger	传统烧麦
zhūròu báicài jiǎozi	boiled pork-and-cabbage dumplings	猪肉白菜饺子
Shigatse/Rikāzé		日喀则
cha ngamo	sweet milk tea	
momo	meat dumplings	
shamjye	beef curry with rice	
thukpa	yak noodles	
Sūzhōu		苏州
guìhuā táng'ǒu	lotus root pancake	桂花糖藕
gūsū lǔyā	marinated duck	姑苏卤鸭
huángmèn hémàn	braised river eel	黄焖河鳗
sānsī chūnjuǎn	spring rolls	三丝春卷
sōngshǔ guìyú	sweet-and-sour deep-fried fish	松鼠桂鱼
sōngzǐ dōngpō ròu	braised meat with pine nuts	松子东坡肉
xiāròu xiǎolóng	steamed shrimp and pork dumplings	虾肉小笼
zǎoní lāgāo	date mash cake	枣泥拉糕
zuìjī	drunken chicken	醉鸡
Tàiyuán		太原
cù	vinegar	醋
cuōjiāner	twisted points pasta	搓尖儿
liángfěn	potato starch noodle	凉粉
tóunǎo	mutton soup	头脑
xiǎobǐng	flat bread	小饼
Téngchōng		腾冲
dàjiùjià	rice-flour pastry stir-fried with ham, mushrooms, and vegetables	大救架
fèngyuán dòufu	tofu deep-fried in milk with eggs and coconut	凤园豆腐
gōngbǎo tiánjī	kung-pao frogs' legs	宫保田鸡
sānsè yángyúsī	potato with red and green peppers	三色洋芋丝
shāguō mángmènjī	braised chicken casserole	砂锅芒焖鸡
Téngchōng suānsǔn yú	Téngchōng sour fish with bamboo	腾冲酸笋鱼
Tiānshuǐ		天水
shā guō jī kuài	chicken clay pot	砂锅鸡块
Tónglǐ		同里
mín bǐng	sweet glutinous rice pastry	闵饼
xiǎo xūnyú	smoked fish	小熏鱼
zhuàngyuán tí	braised pig's trotters	状元蹄

PINYIN	ENGLISH	CHINESE
Tsetang/Zédāng		泽当
cuìpí xiāngjiāo	banana fritters	脆皮香蕉
hóngshǔ bǐng	sweet-potato cakes	红薯饼
Túnxī		屯溪
chòu dòufu	"smelly" tofu	臭豆腐
huángshān sùwèiyuán	stir-fried mountain vegetables, tofu, and herbs	黄山素味园
wǔcǎi shànsī	stir-fried eel with peppers, mushrooms, and bamboo shoots	五彩鳝丝
Yángzhōu chǎofàn	Yángzhōu fried rice	扬州炒饭
Turpan/Tǔlǔfān		吐鲁番
kǎo bāozi	samsa	烤包子
sāngshèn jiǔ	mulberry wine	桑椹酒
Ürümqi/Wūlǔmùqí		乌鲁木齐
bàn miàn	mixed noodles	拌面
yuányuàn hóngshāo ròu	yuányuàn pork	圆苑红烧肉
Wǔhàn		武汉
dànbái shāo gǔpái	pork ribs braised in egg white	蛋白烧骨排
dòufu pí	tofu skin	豆腐皮
Fáng Xiàn huāgū	flowering mushrooms from Fáng County	房县花菇
jiānjiāo luóboyè	sautéed baby turnip greens with dried red peppers	尖椒萝卜叶
miànwō	rice bread	面窝
qiānbiān méi	deep-fried fermented tofu	千煸霉
quánjiāfú	mushrooms sautéed with dates	全家福
shuǐguǒ xiāngfàn	sticky rice with watermelon, pineapple, and melo	水果香饭
wǔxiāng niúròu	faux beef with blended spices	五香牛肉
xiǎomǐ zhútǒng páigǔ	spareribs and millet	小米竹筒排骨
yóumài cài	sautéed yóumài	油麦菜
Wǔtái Shān		五台山
dàdùn gǔtou	seared pork ribs	大炖骨头
dāoxiāo miàn	knife-pared wheat noodles	刀削面
jiàngmèn xiǎo tǔdòu	stewed baby potato with sesame paste	酱焖小土豆
lào bǐng	fried flat bread	烙饼
májiàng fěnpí	sesame paste with transparent green-pea noodles	麻酱粉皮
málà huǒguō	hot and numbing hot pot	麻辣火锅
shāo táimó	simmered wild mushrooms	烧台蘑

PINYIN	ENGLISH	CHINESE
Wúxī		无锡
chuānmèi dìyī gǔ	house special spareribs	川妹第一骨
chuānmèi hóngfú jī	house spicy chicken	川妹红福鸡
suànxiāng jīn chǎo xiè	crab stir-fried with garlic	蒜香金炒蟹
Tài Hú yínyú	deep-fried Tàihú fish	太湖银鱼
Wúxī xiǎolóng	Wúxī pork dumplings	无锡小笼
xiānròu húntun	pork wontons	鲜肉馄饨
xièfěn xiǎolóng	crabmeat and pork dumplings	蟹粉小笼
yīngtáo gǔyā	roast duck	樱桃谷鸭
Xiàmén		厦门
dāngguī miànjīn tāng	Chinese angelica and gluten soup	当归面筋汤
gāli xiān yóu	curried squid	咖喱鲜鱿
hǎilì jiān	pan-fried oysters	海蛎煎
luóhàn zhāi	stew of pine nuts, cabbage, cucumber, corn, mushrooms, and fresh coriander	罗汉斋
lúsǔn dòufu tāng	asparagus and tofu soup	芦笋豆腐汤
wāng jì xiànbǐng	small pastries stuffed with a variety of different sweet fillings	汪记馅饼
xiāng ní cáng zhēn	vegetables mashed into a paste	香泥藏珍
Xī'ān		西安
bā bǎo tián xīfàn	"eight treasure" sweet rice porridge	八宝甜稀饭
bái máohóu chá	white-haired monkey tea	白毛猴茶
bìlǜ zá shuāng gū	bok choy with mushrooms	碧绿杂双菇
fēnzhēng yángròu	shredded lamb	纷争羊肉
gāo shān chá	high mountain oolong tea	高山茶
guàntāng bāozi	guàntāng bāozi	灌汤包子
hóngshāo niúwěi	stewed oxtail	红烧牛尾
liáng pí	spicy cold noodles	凉皮
rénshēn chá	ginseng tea	人参茶
ròu jiā mó	Xī'ān hamburger	肉夹馍
shǎn nán xiāngyù bǐng	sweet-potato pancake	陕南香芋饼
suāncài chǎo mǐfàn	pickled vegetable fried rice	酸菜炒米饭
suān tāng shuǐjiǎo	lamb dumplings	酸汤水饺
wōtóu	steamed corn bun	窝头
yángròu pàomó	lamb and bread broth	羊肉泡馍
Xīníng		西宁
kǎo dàbǐng	roasted scones	烤大饼
liángpí	cold noodles with chili tofu	凉皮
Xúnhuà		循化
bàochǎo yějī	quick-fried pheasant	爆炒野鸡
hóngshāo niúwěi	oxtail braised in soy sauce	红烧牛尾
miàn piàn	flat noodle soup	面片

PINYIN	ENGLISH	CHINESE
Yán'ān		延安
dāoxiāo miàn	dāoxiāo noodles	刀削面
jiǎozi	Chinese ravioli	饺子
yángròu pàomó	mutton soup	羊肉泡馍
Yángshuò		阳朔
bàochǎo tiánluó	Lí River snails stuffed with pork	爆炒田螺
píjiǔ yú	fish cooked in beer and spices	啤酒鱼
Yángzhōu		扬州
bāshāo zhěngzhūtóu	stewed pig's head with a red glaze	扒烧整猪头
chāihuì liányútóu	stewed fish head with tofu and vegetables	拆烩鲢鱼头
fěicuì tíjīn	braised pork tendon	翡翠蹄筋
xièfěn shīzitóu	braised meatballs with crabmeat	蟹粉狮子头
yǎngyóu báichǎo xiārén	stir-fried fresh shrimp	养油白炒虾仁
Yánjí		延吉
lěngmiàn	cold noodles in vinegar broth	冷面
Yínchuān		银川
guàntāng bāozi	unleavened bāozi	灌汤包子
hézi	savory pies	盒子
suānlà tǔdòu sī	shredded potatoes	酸辣土豆丝
Yīníng		伊宁
géwǎsī	kawas liquor	格瓦斯
náng bāo ròu	lamb and vegetable stew	馕包肉
nàrén	roast horse meat noodle salad	纳仁
tǔdòu sī	fried potato strips	土豆丝
yì bǎ zhuā	samsa	一把抓
yóu tǎzi	steamed dumplings	油塔子
zhīma ròunáng	sesame bread and lamb casserole	芝麻肉馕
Yùshù		玉树
gānbiān tǔdòu sī	dry-fried potato	干煸土豆丝
kǒudài dòufu	minced soy chicken in tofu pockets	口袋豆腐
xiāngbālā yángpái	Shambala lamb chops	香巴拉羊排
Zhèngzhōu		郑州
bā sùshíjǐn	mushrooms, seasonal greens, and bamboo shoots	扒素什锦
guōtiē dòufu	tofu casserole	锅贴豆腐
tèyōu huìmiàn	house specialty noodles	特优烩面
xiāngmá shāobǐng jiā niúròu	marinated cold beef sandwich	香麻烧饼夹牛肉

Index

Abakh Hoja Mosque (Xiāngfēi Mù; Kashgar), 302
Abercrombie and Kent, 45
Aberdeen (Hong Kong), 532
  restaurant, 550
Academic Travel Abroad, 45
Accommodations
  best, 10–11
  shopping online for, 37
  tips on, 54–57
Acrobatics
  Běijīng, 125
  Shànghǎi, 434
Adventure Center, 45
AIDS, 34
Aircraft Carrier *Kyev* (Jīfúhào Hángkōngmǔjiàn; Shānhǎiguān), 136–137
Airfares
  shopping online for, 36–37
  tips for getting the best, 40–41
Airlines, 39–40, 49–50
Āi Sīqí, former residence of (Āi Sīqí Gùjū), 656–657
Aitígā'ěr Qīngzhēn Sì (Idkah Mosque; Kashgar), 302
Ali (Shíquán Hé), 300
Altitude sickness, 34
Amchog (Ā'mùqùhū), 268
American Express, 61
  Běijīng, 74
  emergency check cashing system, 24
  emergency number, 63
  Hong Kong, 534
  Shànghǎi, 404
Amnye Machen (Mǎjī Gāngrì), 4, 751, 752
Amoy. *See* Xiàmén
Ancestor Worshipping Temple (Fèngxiān Sì; Luòyáng), 326
Ancient Hàn Tombs (Gǔmù Bówùguǎn; Luòyáng), 327
Ancient Observatory (Gǔ Guānxiàng Tái; Běijīng), 108
Angler's Terrace (Diàoyú Tái; Yángzhōu), 376
Ānhuī, 15
Ānhuī Shěng Bówùguǎn (Ānhuī Provincial Museum; Héféi), 387
Ānjì Qiáo (Safe Crossing Bridge; Zhào Xiàn), 142
Antiques
  Běijīng, 122
  Hong Kong, 557
  Jiāyùguān, 272
  Shànghǎi, 433
  Shǎnxī, 11
  Xī'ān, 247–248
Ānyuán Miào (Temple of Distant Peace; Chéngdé), 132
Aodàyíxīkè Qīngzhēn Sì (Ordaisnki Mosque; Kashgar), 303
Apricot Altar (Xìng Tán; Qūfǔ), 347
Artists' Village (Huàjiā zhi Cūn; Chóngqìng), 705
Ashab Mosque (Qīngjìng Sì; Quánzhōu), 482
Assembly Hall (Dukhang; Sakya), 773
Astana tombs (near Turpan), 284
ATMs (automated teller machines), 23
Audubon Nature Odysseys, 48
Australian Embassy (Běijīng), 75

Back Lakes area (Hòu Hǎi or Shíchà Hǎi; Běijīng), 2, 72
  accommodations around, 86
  bars, 127
  restaurants, 95–96
  walking tour, 110–112
Bàdá, 668
Bà Dà Guān (Eight Passes; Qīngdǎo), 353
Bādálǐng, the Great Wall at, 113
Bādōng, 712
Bāguà Tíng (Pavilion of the Eight Trigrams; Chéngdū), 680
The Bái, 632
Bǎi Cǎo Yuán (Hundred Grasses Garden; Shàoxīng), 447
Bai Causeway (Bái Dī; Hángzhōu), 440
Bǎi Chuān Tōng (Píngyáo), 221
Báidì Chéng (White Emperor City), 711
Bǎi É Tíng (Níngbō), 457
Bái Fēng de nèige Jiǔbā (No Name; Běijīng), 127
Báijū Sì (Pelkhor Choede; Gyantse), 771
Bǎilín Sì (Zhào Xiàn), 138, 142
Báilóng Gōngyuán (Nánníng), 578
Báimǎlóng Tán (Lìjiāng), 639
Báimǎ Sì (White Horse Temple; Luòyáng), 327
Bǎinián Chéng Diāo (Centennial Monument; Dàlián), 163
Báishā (near Lìjiāng), 644
Báishuǐ Tái (White Water Terraces; Sānbā), 651
Báitǎ (Chuwarna), 752
Bái Tǎ (White Dagoba; Yángzhōu), 375–376
Bái Tǎ Sì (White Dagoba Temple; Běijīng), 106, 108
Báiyáng Gōu (White Poplar Gully), 294
Báiyún Fēng, 181
Báiyún Guàn (Běijīng), 107
Bamboo Temple (Qióngzhú Sì; Kūnmíng), 624
Banana (Bānànà; Běijīng), 127
Bàngchuí Dǎo (near Dàlián), 163

Bank of Communications Building (Shànghǎi), 423
Bank of Táiwān Building (Shànghǎi), 423
Bānnà Rainforest Valley (Bānnà Yǔlín Gǔ), 663
Banna Wild Elephant Valley (Bānnà Yěxiàng Gǔ), 663, 664
Bànpō Bówùguǎn (Bànpō Neolithic Village; Xī'ān), 246
Banque de L'Indo-Chine (Shànghǎi), 423
Bànshān Sì (Mid-Level Temple; Huáng Shān), 391
Banyan Lake (Róng Hú; Guìlín), 584
Bǎodǐng Shān (Dàzú), 8, 708, 709–710
Bāo Gōng Mùyuán (Lord Bāo's Tomb; Héféi), 387
Bǎoguó Sì (Níngbō), 457
Bǎohé Diàn (Hall of Preserving Harmony; Běijīng), 102
Bāo Hé Gōngyuán (Héféi), 387
Bǎolún Gé (Bǎolún Hall; Chéngkǎn), 398
Bǎoshān, 652
Bǎo Shù Táng (Shàoxīng), 452
Bàotū Quán (Bàotū Spring; Jì'nán), 335
Bǎoyún Gé (Precious Clouds Pavilion; Běijīng), 106
Bāpō Zhài, 663
Bāshā, 612–613
Bātuán Zhài, 598
Bā Xiān ān (Temple of the Eight Immortals; Xī'ān), 242, 247–248
Bāxié Zhài, 598
Bayan Bulak (Bāyīn Bùlǔkè), 4, 311
Bā Zì Qiáo (Shàoxīng), 448–449
Beaches
Colôane, 572
Dàlián, 162–163
Hong Kong, 555
Qīngdǎo, 354–355
Beacon Hill Park (Yāntái Shān Gōngyuán; Fúzhōu), 475
Beginning to Believe Peak (Shǐxìn Fēng; Huáng Shān), 391
Běidào Qū, 257–260
Běi Fēng (North Peak; Huá Shān), 256
Běihǎi, 598–601
Běihǎi Park (Běihǎi Gōngyuán; Běijīng), 108
Běihǎi Sunrise (Huáng Shān), 391
Běi Jiàn Qiáo (Sìxī), 470, 471
Běijīng, 67–145
accommodations, 76–88
airport hotels, 88
Běijīng Station and south, 87–88
Cháoyáng District (Embassy Areas), 83–86
near the Forbidden City and Qián Mén, 77, 82–83
West Second Ring, 86–87
American Express, 74
ATMs (automated teller machines), 74
Back Lakes area. *See* Back Lakes area
bars and clubs, 126–127
bicycling, 73
brief description of, 14
bus travel, 71, 73
cafes and teahouses, 127–128
doctors and dentists, 74
embassies and consulates, 74–75
emergencies, 75
hútòng, 110
Internet access, 75
layout of, 71–72
maps and books, 75
markets, 122–123
neighborhoods, 72–73
nightlife and entertainment, 124–128
parks and gardens, 108
performing arts, 124–126
pharmacies, 76
post office, 76
restaurants, 88–97
aboard canopied flat-bottom boats, 96
Back Lakes and Dōng Chéng, 95–96
Cháoyáng District (North), 91–93
Cháoyáng District (South), 93–95
fast food, point-to-order food courts, and night markets, 89
around Wángfǔjǐng Dàjiē, 89–90
Western Běijīng, 96–97
shopping, 121–124
side trips from, 113–121
sights and attractions, 97–113
Forbidden City (Gù Gōng), 97, 101–103
streets, 72
taxis, 68, 73
temples, mosques, and churches, 106–108
tours, 113
Forbidden City (Gù Gōng), 101
hútòng, 110
transportation, 73–74
traveling to/from, 68–71
visitor information, 71
walking in, 73–74
weather forecasts, 76
Běijīng CD Jazz Club (Běijīng CD Juéshì Jùlèbù), 125–126
Běijīng Concert Hall (Běijīng Yīnyuè Tīng), 126
Běijīng Natural History Museum, 284
Běijīng Opera (Jīngjù; Běijīng), 124
Běijīng Opera, in Shànghǎi, 434
Běijīng Railway Station (Běijīng Zhàn), 70
Běijīng Tourist Information Centers (Běijīng Shì Lǚyóu Zīxún Fúwù Zhōngxīn), 71
Běijīng United Family Hospital (Hémùjiā Yīyuàn), 74
Bēilín Bówùguǎn (Forest of Stelae; Xī'ān), 243
Běi Líng (Shěnyáng), 151
Běi Shān (Dàzú), 708, 710
Běi Sòng Huánglíng (Imperial Tombs of the Northern Sòng Dynasty; Gōngyì), 319–320
Bella (Bèilā; Běijīng), 127
Bell Tower (Zhōng Lóu; Kūnmíng), 624
Běndiwān, 646
Bezeklik Thousand Buddha Caves (Bózīkèlǐkè Qiān Fó Dòng; near Turpan), 284, 285
Bicycling tours, 48
Big Empty Hill (Dàkōng Shān), 657
Big Stone Bridge (Dà Shí Qiáo; Zhào Xiàn), 142
Bike China Adventures, 48
Bìlián Fēng (Green Lotus Peak; Yángshuò), 590
Bīnān Lóu (Tower of Refuge; Qūfǔ), 347

Bīngchuān Gōngyuán (Glacier Park), 645
Bīngdòng, 191
Bīnglíng Sì (near Liújiā Xiá), 263
Bīngxuě Jié (Ice and Snow Festival; Harbin), 182
Bīnhǎi Lù (Dàlián), 163
Bīnyáng Sān Dòng (Three Bīnyáng Caves; Luòyáng), 326
Bird & Flower Market (Shànghǎi), 433
Bird Island (Niǎo Dǎo), 742–743
Bird-watching, tours, 48
Bishǔ Shānzhuāng (Mountain Resort for Escaping the Heat; Chéngdé), 6, 128, 130–131
Bìtǎ Hǎi (Bìtǎ Lake), 651
Bìxiá Cí (Temple of the Princess of the Azure Clouds; Tài Shān), 341–342
Black Dragon Pool (Hēilóng Tán; Tài Shān), 342
Black Dragon Pool Park (Hēilóng Tán Gōngyuán; Lìjiāng), 641
Black Mountains (Hēi Shān), 274
Boat travel and tours
Ěr Hǎi Hú (Ěr Hǎi Lake), 635
Liǎngjiāng Sìhú (Two Rivers and Four Lakes; Guìlín), 584
Lí River (Guìlín), 2, 588
Macau, 564, 566
North Korea, 158
Pǔtuó Shān, 460
Shànghǎi, 428
Shénnóng Stream (Yángzǐ River), 2–3
Summer Palace (Yíhé Yuán; Běijīng), 106
Three Gorges, 712–715
Xiàmén, 489–490
Xī Hú (West Lake; Hángzhōu), 440
Yángshuò area, 593
Bodhisattva Manjusri (Dàzú), 710
Bodhisattva Palace (Púsa Diàn; near Píngyáo), 223
Bójiā Jiàozàng Diàn (Dàtóng), 198
Books, recommended, 59–61
Bouyi, 606
Bózīkèlǐkè Qiān Fó Dòng (Bezeklik Thousand Buddha Caves; near Turpan), 284, 285
Bridges of Tàishùn County, 4
British Embassy (Běijīng), 75
Broken Bridge (Duàn Qiáo; Hángzhōu), 440
Bronze Hall (Tóng Diàn; Táihuái Zhèn), 230
Bucket shops, 41
Buddha Cave (near Yángshuò), 594
Buddha of the Future (Maitreya; near Liújiā Xiá), 264
Buddhism, 228
Dàzú (Dàzú Buddhist Grottoes), 708–710
Pǔtuó Shān, 459, 460, 462
Silk Routes and, 234–235
Theravada, 659, 661
Tibetan, 7, 31, 107, 216, 269, 620, 643, 737, 743, 765, 768
Zen (Chán), 141, 142, 503
The Bund (Shànghǎi), 15, 402
sights and attractions, 423
Burma Road, 630
Business hours, 61
Bus travel, 41, 52
Butter Sculpture Exhibition (Sūyóuhuā Zhǎnlǎnguǎn; Xīníng), 742

Cǎiquán Fúlì Tècán Xuéxiào (Jatson School; Lhasa), 11–12, 762
Cáishén Miào (Píngyáo), 222
Cài Yuánpéi Jìniànguǎn (Shàoxīng), 450
Calendar of events, 27–32
California (Hong Kong), 562
Calligraphy, 449, 451, 452
Cambodian Embassy (Běijīng), 75
Camel Hill (Luòtuo Shān; Guìlín), 585
Canadian Embassy (Běijīng), 75
Cāng Shān (Green Mountains), 634–635
Cāngyán Shān, 138, 143
Cáo Shīfu Qípáo Shop (Běijīng), 124
Capital Airport (Běijīng), 68
Carpet Factory (Dìtǎn Chǎng; Khotan), 312
Casa Museu da Taipa (Taipa House Museum), 572
Casinos, Macau, 572
Catholic church (Tiānzhǔ Jiàotáng)
Dàlǐ, 632
Jílín City, 176
Níngbō, 456
Qīngdǎo, 353–354
Cat Street Galleries (Hong Kong), 557
Causeway Bay (Hong Kong), 532, 556
accommodations, 542
bars, 563
restaurants, 548–549
C Club (Hong Kong), 561
CD Café (CD Kāfēwū; Běijīng), 126
Cedar Lake (Shàn Hú; Guìlín), 584
Celestial Palace Pavilion (Tiāngōng Lóugé; Dàtóng), 198
Cellphones, 38–39
Centennial Monument (Bǎinián Chéng Diāo; Dàlián), 163
Centers for Disease Control, 33
Central District (Hong Kong), 532, 556
accommodations, 540
bars, 562–563
restaurants, 546–548
Ceramic Historical Exhibition Area (Táocí Lìshǐ Bówùguǎn; Jǐngdézhèn), 499
Chairman Máo's Mausoleum (Máo Zhǔxí Jìniàn Guǎn; Běijīng), 104
Chá Jiā Fù (The Teahouse of Family Fù; Běijīng), 128
Cháng'ān. ***See*** **Xī'ān**
Cháng'ān Dàjiē (Běijīng), 72
Chángbái Shān (Long White Mountain), 4, 168, 172, 174, 175, 178–181
Chángbái Shān Nature Preserve, 178
Chángbái Shān waterfall, 179
Chángchūn, 167–172
Chángchūn Yuán (Garden of Eternal Spring; Běijīng), 108
Cháng Jiāng (Yàngzǐ River), Sānxiá Bà (Three Gorges Dam), 711–713
Cháng Jiāng Dìyī Wān (Shígǔ & The First Bend Of The Yángzǐ), 645
Cháng Láng (Long Corridor; Běijīng), 106
Chánglè Mén (Zhèngdìng), 142
Chāng Líng (the Jiāqìng emperor's tomb), 118

Cháng Líng tomb, 116
Chángníng District (Hóngqiáo Development Zone; Shànghǎi), 402, 403
accommodations, 413–414
restaurants, 421–422
Chángqìng (Glory) Qiáo (Tónglǐ), 383
Chángshā, 16, 724–730
Chāng Xī Líng tomb, 118
Chàngyīn Gé (Cíxǐ's Theater; Běijīng), 103
Cháotiān Gōng (Nánjīng), 366
Cháoyáng District (Embassy Areas; Běijīng), 72
accommodations, 83–86
Cháoyáng Gōngyuán (Běijīng), 127
Cháoyáng Jùchǎng (Běijīng), 125
Cháoyáng Mén (Jiànshuǐ), 666
Cháoyīn Dòng (Sound of the Tide Cave; Pǔtuó Shān), 462
Charlotte Horstmann and Gerald Godfrey (Hong Kong), 557–558
Chartered Bank of India, America, and China (Shànghǎi), 423
Chasers (Hong Kong), 562
Chéngdé, 71, 128–134
Chéngdū, 16, 673–688
accommodations, 682–684
nightlife, 688
restaurants, 684–687
shopping, 682
sights and attractions, 679–682
tours, 678
transportation, 678
traveling to, 674–675, 678
visitor information, 678
Chénghuáng Diàn (Shàoxīng), 451
Chénghuáng Miào (Píngyáo), 222
Chéngkǎn, 398
Chénglíng Tǎ (Zhèngdìng), 141
Chéngtiān Sì and Níngxià Bówùguǎn (Chéngtiān Temple and Níngxià Museum; Yínchuān), 215
Chéngyáng Fēngyǔ Qiáo (Chéngyáng Wind and Rain Bridge; Sānjiāng), 597
Chén Jiā Cí (Chen Clan Academy; Guǎngzhōu), 512–513
Chén Lú (Shǎnxī), 11, 254
***Cheongsam,* 12**
Cheung Chau, 556
Cheung Chau Bun Festival (Hong Kong), 29
Children's Park (Értóng Gōngyuán; Harbin), 186
Chimpu Caves (Qīngpǔ Shāndòng; Lhasa), 767
China Art (Hong Kong), 558
China Focus, 45–46
China International Travel Service (CITS), 42
China Merchants Bank (Shànghǎi), 423
China Puppet Art Theater (Zhōngguó Mù'ǒu Jùyuàn; Běijīng), 125
China Travel Service (CTS), 42
China Youth Travel Service (CYTS), 42
Chinese Arts and Crafts Ltd (Hong Kong), 558–559
Chinese New Year (Spring Festival; Chūn Jié), 24, 27
Chinese opera, Hong Kong, 561
Chinese Revolution, Museum of the (Zhōnguó Gémìng Bówùguǎn; Běijīng), 109
Chinese Tea Museum (Zhōngguó Cháyè Bówùguǎn; Hángzhōu), 441
Chogyel Drupuk (Lhasa), 761
Chóngběn Táng (Tónglǐ), 383
Chóngguāng Mén (Qūfǔ), 347
Chóng Líng (Guāngxù) tomb, 118
Chóngqìng, 16, 700–708
Chóngqìng Shì Bówùguǎn (Chóngqìng Municipal Museum), 703–704
Chóngwén Tǎ (Jiànshuǐ), 666
Chóngwǔ, 484–485
Chūn Jié (Spring Festival; Chinese New Year), 24, 27
Chūnxī Lù Běiduàn (Chéngdū), 679
Chúnyáng Gōng (Tàiyuán), 226
Church of St. Sophia (Shèng Suǒfēiyà Jiàotáng; Harbin), 185
The Churin Department Store (Qiúlín Bǎihuò; Harbin), 190
Chǔwáng Líng Dìgōng (Mausoleum of King Chǔ; Xúzhōu), 384
Chuwarna (Báitǎ), 752
Cíguāng Gé (Huáng Shān), 391
Cíqikǒu (Chóngqìng), 705
Circular Altar (Yuán Qiū; Běijīng), 105
CITIC Industrial Bank (Běijīng), 74
CITS (China International Travel Service), 42
City Museum (Xiàmén Shì Bówùguǎn; Xiàmén), 492
City Wall (Xī'ān Chéngqiáng; Xī'ān), 245
Cíxǐ's Theater (Chàngyīn Gé; Běijīng), 103
Climate, 25
Clothing, 12
Cloud Dispelling Pavilion (Páiyún Tíng; Huáng Shān), 391
Cloud Rock Pagoda (Yúnyán Tǎ; Sūzhōu), 437
The Club @ Sānlǐtún (Sānlǐtún Jùlèbù; Běijīng), 126
ClubFootball (Wànguó Qúnxīng Zúqiú; Běijīng), 126
Club 97 (Hong Kong), 562
Colôane, 572
Colôane Village, 572
Communist Party, 218
Site of the First National Congress of the (Zhōnggòng Yīdàhuìzhǐ; Shànghǎi), 431
Comrade Máo Zédōng's Former Residence (Máo Zédōng Tóngzhì Gùjū; Sháo Shān), 728
Confucian Forest & Cemetery (Kǒng Lín; Qūfǔ), 348–349
Confucian Mansion (Kǒng Fǔ; Qūfǔ), 347–348
Confucian Temple (Wén Miào)
Héshùn Qiáoxiāng, 656
Jiànshuǐ, 666
Nánjīng), 366
Shànghǎi), 429
Tàiyuán), 226
Confucius, 313, 343, 344
Birthday of (Qūfǔ), 31
Qūfǔ sights, 346–350
tomb (Qūfǔ), 348
Cóngjiāng, 612
Consolidators, 41
Consulates, 62
Shěnyáng, 150

Cormorant fishing (Yángshuò), 591
Credit cards, 23
Crescent Moon Pavilion (Yuèyá Tíng; Huáng Shān), 391
Crystal Palace Well (Shuǐjīng Gōng; Jiànshuǐ), 666
CTS (China Travel Service), 42
Cuì Hú (Green Lake; Kūnmíng), 620
Cuìhú Gōngyuán (Green Lake Park; Kūnmíng), 620
Cuìwēi Yuán (Guìyáng), 604
Culture Square (Wénhuà Guǎngchǎng; Chángchūn), 170
Currency and currency exchange, 21–23
Curve (Hong Kong), 562–563
Customs regulations, 21
Cypress of Loyalty (Tài Shān), 340
CYTS (China Youth Travel Service), 42

Dàbǎn Jǐng (Jiànshuǐ), 666
Dàbǎojiì Palace (Lìjiāng; near Lijiāng), 644
Dà Bēi Lóu, 118
Dàchéng Diàn (Hall of Great Achievements; Qūfǔ), 346–347
Dàchéng Diàn (Jiànshuǐ), 666
Dà Cí'ēn Sì (Temple of Great Goodwill; Xī'ān), 244
Dàdiéshuǐ Fēilóng Bù (near Kūnmíng), 627
Dà Dōnghǎi Beach (Sānyà), 671
Dà Fó (The Great Buddha; Lè Shān), 691–693
Dàfó Diàn (Hall of the Great Buddha; near Táihuái Zhèn), 231
Dàguān Fēng (Tài Shān), 342
Dàguān Lóu (Grand View Tower; near Kūnmíng), 624
Dàguān Yuán (near Kūnmíng), 624
Dà Hóng Mén (Great Red Gate), 116
The Dǎi, 659–663
Dàilóu Peak, 229
Dài Miào (Tài Shān), 340
Dǎi Minority Folk Customs Park (Dǎi Zú Yuán), 662–663
Dàizōng Fāng (Tài Shān), 341
Dà Jīnwǎ Diàn (Serdong Chenmo; Xīníng), 742
Dàkōng Shān (Big Empty Hill), 657
Dálài Hú (Hūlún Hú), 192–193
Dalai Lamas, 21, 25, 107, 108, 267, 650, 738, 742, 755, 758–761, 768
Dàlǐ, 3, 628–636
Dàlián, 159–167
Dàlián International Fashion Festival (Dàlián Guójì Fúzhuāng Jié), 160
Dàlǐ Bówùguǎn (Dàlǐ Museum), 631
Dàmíng Sì (Yángzhōu), 376–377
Dāndōng, 156–159
Dànìng River, 715
Daoism, 242
Dà Qīngzhēnssì (Great Mosque; Xī'ān), 243–244
Darchen (Dàjīn), 779
Dà Shí Qiáo (Big Stone Bridge; Zhào Xiàn), 142
Dàtóng, 195–201
Dà Wáng Fēng, 478
Dà Xià Hé (Sang Chu), 266
Dà Xiàngguó Sì (Kāifēng), 330
Dàxióng Bǎodiàn, 657
Dàxióng Bǎo Diàn (Dàtóng), 198
Dàxióngmāo Siyǎng Chǎng (Giant Panda Breeding Station; Wòlóng), 696
Dà Yàn Tǎ (Great Goose Pagoda; Xī'ān), 237, 244
Dà Zhài, 596, 597
Dà Zhàlán (Běijīng), 122
Dà Zhào (Hohhot), 205
Dàzhāo Sì (Jokhang Temple; Lhasa), 760
Dàzhōng Tíng (Nánjīng), 364
Dàzú (Dàzú Buddhist Grottoes), 708–710
Delaney's (Hong Kong), 562
The Den (Dūnhuáng; Běijīng), 126
Dēngfēng, 320–324
Dēng Jié (Lantern Festival), 28
Dēngyún Qiáo (Nán Mén Qiáo), 468
Dentists, 61
Department stores, Běijīng, 123
Departure tax, 39
Détiān Pùbù, 580–581
Deyang Shar (Eastern Courtyard; Lhasa), 761
DHL-Sinotrans (Běijīng), 76
Diān Chí (Lake Diān), 624–626
Diànchūn Cottage (Sūzhōu), 437
Diǎn Chūn Táng (Hall of Heralding Spring; Shànghǎi), 427
Di'ān Mén (Běijīng), 72
Diāokè Shíguāng (Sculpting in Time; Běijīng), 127–128
Diàoyú Tái (Angler's Terrace; Yángzhōu), 376
Diécǎi Shān (Folding Brocade Hill; Guìlín), 584
Dièr Hǎishuǐ Yùchǎng (Number Two Bathing Beach; Qīngdǎo), 355
Diéshuǐ Hé Pùbù (Téngchōng), 654
Dìliù Hǎishuǐ Yùchǎng (Number Six Bathing Beach; Qīngdǎo), 354
Diners Club, 63
Dìng Dōng Líng tombs (the Cíxī dowager empress and the Cí'ān empress), 116, 117
Dīng Líng, 218
Dìng Líng (Xiánfēng) tomb, 116
Dìngrì (Pelbar), 774–775
Dìpíng, 614
Disabilities, travelers with, 35–36
Dìsān Hǎishuǐ Yùchǎng (Number Three Bathing Beach; Qīngdǎo), 355
Discrimination, 35
Dìtǎn Chǎng (Carpet Factory; Khotan), 312
Dìxià Huàláng (Underground Art Gallery; near Jiāyùguān), 274
Dìxià Sēnlín (Underground Forest), 179
Dìxià Shāngchǎng (Dàlián), 164
Diyī Hǎishuǐ Yùchǎng (Number One Bathing Beach; Qīngdǎo), 355
Doctors, 61
Dog meat, 167, 605, 609
Dōngbā Wénhuà Bówùguǎn (Museum of Nàxī Dōngbā Culture; Lijiāng), 641
Dōngběi (the Northeast), 146–194
Dōngběi Hǔ Línyuán (Siberian Tiger Park; Harbin), 187
Dōng Chéng (Běijīng), restaurants, 95–96

Dóngchéng (Běijīng), 72
Dōng Dàdiàn (Eastern Great Hall; near Táihuái Zhèn), 232
Dōngdān Běi Dàjiē (Běijīng), 122
Dōngfāng Guǎngchǎng (Oriental Plaza; Běijīng), 123–124
Dōngfāng Míngzhū Diànshì Tǎ (Oriental Pearl TV Tower; Shànghǎi), 431–432
Dōng Hán Cūn, 255
Dōng Hú (East Lake; Shàoxīng), 450
Dòng people and region, 607, 609, 611–614
Dōngsì Tǎ (East Pagoda; Kūnmíng), 620
Dōng Tǎ (Wēnzhōu), 465
Dōngtái Antiques Market (Shànghǎi), 433–434
Dōng Yáng Qiáo, 472
Dōngyuè Miào (Běijīng), 107
Dōng Zhí Mén Chángtú Qìchē Zhàn, 71
Double Dragon Bridge (Shuānglóng Qiáo; Jiànshuǐ), 668
Dǒubōtáng Pùbù, 606
Dǒumǔ Gōng (Tài Shān), 341
Drag-on (Lóng Bā; Běijīng), 127
Dragon Boat Festival (Lóngzhōu Jié; Shīdòng), 29, 611
Dragon Boat Races (Tuen Ng Festival; Hong Kong), 29–30
Dragon Culture (Hong Kong), 558
Dragon Darkness Cave (Lóngyīn Dòng; Guilín), 585
Dragon Gate (near Kūnmíng), 625
Dragon Gate Grottoes (Lóngmén Shíkū; Luòyáng), 325
Dragon Light Pagoda (Lóngguāng Tǎ; Wúxī), 381
Dragon Palace Caves (Lónggōng Dòng), 606
Dragon Pavilion Park (Lóngtíng Gōngyuán; Kāifēng), 330
Dragon's Backbone Rice Terraces (Lóngjǐ Tītián), 595, 596
Dragon Well Tea Village (Hángzhōu), 441
Drepung Monastery (Zhébàng Sì; Lhasa), 759–760
Driving rules, 61
Drugstores, 62
Drum Tower (Gǔ Lóu; Běijīng), 112
Dukhang (Assembly Hall; Sakya), 773
Dūnhuáng, 15, 276–282
Dūnhuáng (The Den; Běijīng), 126
Dūnhuáng Research Institute, 279
Duōyī Cūn, 668
Dusk til Dawn (Hong Kong), 563
Dúxiù Fēng (Solitary Beauty Peak; Guilín), 584

Eastern Apartments (Lhasa), 761
Eastern Central China, 15, 313–398
Eastern Courtyard (Deyang Shar; Lhasa), 761
Eastern Great Hall (Dōng Dàdiàn; near Táihuái Zhèn), 232
Eastern Qīng tombs, 116–117
East Lake (Dōng Hú; Shàoxīng), 450
East Pagoda (Dōngsì Tǎ; Kūnmíng), 620
Echo Wall (Huíyīn Bì; Běijīng), 105
Eighteen Bends (Shíbā Pán; Tài Shān), 341
Eight Immortals (Bā Xiān), legend of the, 242
Eight Outer Temples (Wài Bā Miào; Chéngdé), 128, 131–132
Eight Passes (Bā Dà Guān; Qīngdǎo), 353
Elderhostel, 46
Electricity, 62
Elephant Trunk Hill (Xiàngbí Shān; Guilín), 585
Éluósī Fēnqíng Jiē (Russian Street; Dàlián), 162
Embassies and consulates, 62
Éméi Shān, 688–691
Emergencies, 62
Emperor Shào Hào, Tomb of (Shào Hào Líng; Qūfǔ), 349
English language, 62
Entry requirements, 18–21
Ěr Hǎi Hú (Ěr Hǎi Lake), 635–636
Erlíngsān Gāodì (203-Meter Mountain; Dàlián), 163–164
Erqī Tǎ (Monument to the February 7 Workers' Uprising; Zhèngzhōu), 316
Értóng Gōngyuán (Children's Park; Harbin), 186
Escorted tours, 43–48
Everest Base Camp, 5, 775, 776
Expedia, 36
Exquisite Jade (Yù Líng Lóng; Shànghǎi), 427

Factory outlets, Hong Kong, 559
Fǎlún Gōng, 155
Fǎmén Sì (Fǎmén Temple; near Xī'ān), 247
Families with children, 36
Fángchuān, 174
Fánghóng Shènglì Jìniàntǎ (Flood Control Monument; Harbin), 185
Fānpái, 611
Fan Peak (Shànzifēng), 644
Farmers' paintings (Hù Xiàn), 254–255
Fǎyǔ Sì (Pǔtuó Shān), 462
FedEx (Běijīng), 76
Fēilái Fēng (Peak That Flew from Afar; Hángzhōu), 441
Fēilái Shí (Rock that Flew from Afar; Huáng Shān), 391
Fēngdū, 711, 715
Fènghuáng Shān (Phoenix Hill; Yán'ān), 219
Fèngxiān Sì (Ancestor Worshipping Temple; Luòyáng), 326
Fèngyǎn Dòng (Phoenix Cave; Dàlǐ), 635
Ferries, 42
Festivals and special events, 27–32
  best, 9
  in the southwest, 574
First Gate of Heaven (Yī Tiān Mén; Tài Shān), 341
Five Linked Lakes (Wǔ Dà Liánchí), 190–191
Five Pavilion Bridge (Wǔ Tíng Qiáo; Yángzhōu), 375
Five Pine Pavilion (Wǔ Sōng Tíng; Tài Shān), 341
Flag-raising ceremony, Běijīng, 104

Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware (Hong Kong), 553
Flaming Mountains, 284–286
Flood Control Monument (Fánghóng Shènglì Jiniàntǎ; Harbin), 185
Flower and Bird Market (Huāniǎo Shìchǎng; Kūnmíng), 620
Flower and Bird Pavilion (Hángzhōu), 440
Flower Cap Mountain (Huā Gài Shān), 270
Flying Horse (Tóng Bēn Mǎ; Lánzhōu), 263
Fódǐng Shān Tiāndēng (Pǔtuó Shān), 462
Fóguāng Sì (Temple of Buddha's Light; near Táihuái Zhèn), 231
Fójiào Bówùguǎn (Museum of Buddhism; Quánzhōu), 483
Folding Brocade Hill (Diécǎi Shān; Guìlín), 584
Forbidden City (Gù Gōng; Běijīng), 1, 5–6
accommodations near, 77, 82–83
background and layout, 101–102
renovation of, 101
sights and attractions, 97, 101–103
Foreign Languages Bookstore (Wàiwén Shūdiàn; Běijīng), 75–76
Forest of Lions Garden (Shī Zi Lín Yuán; Sūzhōu), 436
Forest of Stelae (Bēilín Bówùguǎn; Xī'ān), 243
Forest of Stelae (Guìhǎi Bēilín; Guìlín), 585
Forest of Stupas (Tǎ Lín; Shàolín Sì), 322
Former Kwantung Army headquarters (Chángchūn), 170
Fragrant Concubine, Tomb of the (Xiāngfēi Mù; Kashgar), 302
French Cathedral (Wēizhōu Dào), 600–601
French Concession (Shànghǎi), 2, 15, 402, 403
accommodations, 407, 412
restaurants, 418–420
shopping, 433
Friendship Store (Dàlián), 164
Friendship Store (Yǒuyì Shāngchǎng; Běijīng), 76, 123
Front Gate (Qián Mén; Běijīng), 104
Fúbō Shān (Wave-Subduing Hill; Guìlín), 584
Fújiàn, 15
Fù Jiā Zhuāng Beach (Dàlián), 163
Fúlì, 593, 594
Fù Lín Táng (Kūnmíng), 620
Fúyù Lóu (Yǒngdìng), 497
Fúzhōu, 473–476
Fūzǐ Miào (Confucian Temple; Nánjīng), 366

Ganden Monastery (Gāndān Sì; Lhasa), 765–766
Ganden Sumtseling Gompa (Sōngzànlín Sì; Xiānggélǐlā), 650
Gangdise (Mount Kailash), 773, 774, 778
Gānsù, 15
Gāntōng Sì (near Dàlǐ), 635
Gāochāng (Karakhoja; near Turpan), 284, 285
Gāochéng Guānxīng Tái (near Dēngfēng), 323
Gāodī Mosque (Kashgar), 302
Gāozēng, 613
Garden of Eternal Spring (Chángchūn Yuán; Běijīng), 108
Garden of Rest (Yù Fēi Yuán Qín), 117
Gate of Heavenly Peace (Tiān'ān Mén; Běijīng), 102
Gate of Heavenly Purity (Qiánqīng Mén; Běijīng), 103
Gate of Martial Spirit (Shénwǔ Mén; Běijīng), 103
Gate of Supreme Harmony (Tàihé Mén; Běijīng), 102
Gate to the Inner Apartments (Nèizhái Mén; Qūfǔ), 347–348
Gay and lesbian travelers, 36
Běijīng bars, 127
Hong Kong nightlife, 561, 562
Gecko's Adventures, 46
Géjiā people, 610
Gémìng Jìniànguǎn (Revolutionary Memorial Hall/Museum; Yán'ān), 219
Gémìng Lǐngxiù Shìchá Jìniànguǎn (Harbin), 186
Gémǔ Nǚshén Shān, 647
German Concession, former
Jǐ'nán, 335
Qīngdǎo, 353–354
Get Lucky Bar (Háoyùn Jiǔbā; Běijīng), 126
Gè Yuán (Yángzhōu), 376
Giant Panda Breeding Station (Dàxióngmāo Siyǎng Chǎng; Wòlóng), 696
Giant Tian Tan Buddha (Lantau), 555
Girl Street (Nǚrén Jiē; Běijīng), 123
Glacier Park (Bīngchuān Gōngyuán), 645
Glen Line Building (Shànghǎi), 423
Gliding, near Jiāyùguān, 274
Golden Temple (Jīn Diàn; Kūnmíng), 624
Golmud (Gé'ěrmù), 753–755
Gomar Gompa (Guǒmárì Sì), 746
Gōng Wáng Fǔ (Prince Gōng's Mansion; Běijīng), 6, 109, 112
Gōngyì, 319
Gōngyì Měishù Yǒuxiàn Gōngsī (Jade Factory; Khotan), 309
Gordon House (Tiānjīn), 120
Grand Canal (Dà Yùnhé), 15, 313–314, 374, 380, 381, 436, 437, 439
Grand View Tower (Dàguān Lóu; near Kūnmíng), 624
Grape Valley (Pútao Gōu; near Turpan), 284
The Great Buddha (Dà Fó; Lè Shān), 691–693
Great Goose Pagoda (Dà Yàn Tǎ; Xī'ān), 237, 244
Great Hall of the People (Běijīng), 104
Great Mosque (Dà Qīngzhēnssì; Xī'ān), 243–244
Great Mosque (Qīngzhēn Dà Sì; Hohhot), 207
Great Red Gate (Dà Hóng Mén), 116
The Great Wall, 2, 113–115
hiking, 5
"unofficial" sections of, 114
Xuánbì Chángchéng (Overhanging Great Wall), 274
Green Lake (Cuì Hú; Kūnmíng), 620

Green Lake Park (Cuìhú Gōngyuán; Kūnmíng), 620
Green Lotus Peak (Bìlián Fēng; Yángshuò), 590
Green Mountains (Cāng Shān), 634–635
Green Ram Monastery (Qīngyáng Gōng; Chéngdū), 679–680
Guāndì Miào (Quánzhōu), 482
Guǎngdōng, 15
Guǎngdōng Guildhall and Theatre Museum (Guǎngdōng Huìguǎn Xìjù Bówùguǎn; Tiānjīn), 120
Guānghuá Sì (Běijīng), 112
Guǎnghuì Sì (Zhèngdìng), 141–142
Guāngmíng Dǐng (Huáng Shān), 391
Guāngrén Sì (Xī'ān), 245
Guǎngxī, 16
Guǎngxī Shěng Bówùguǎn (Guǎngxī Provincial Museum; Nánníng), 578
Guǎngxī Yàoyòng Zhíwùyuán (Medicinal Herb Botanical Garden; Nánníng), 578
Guǎngzhōu, 505–513
accommodations, 517–519
banks, foreign exchange, and ATMs, 511
restaurants, 519–520
sights and attractions, 511–513
tours and guides, 510
transportation, 510
traveling to, 508–510
visitor information, 510–511
Guǎngzhōu Bówùguǎn (Guǎngzhōu), 513
Guānyīn (Goddess of Mercy), 7, 29, 119, 132, 140, 223, 230, 330, 457, 459, 462, 482, 493, 620, 632, 681, 703, 710, 761
Guānyīn Diàn, 119
Guānyīn Gé (Guānyīn Pavilion), 635
Guānyīn Leap (Guānyīn Tiào; Pǔtuó Shān), 462
Gǔchéng Zàngjīng Táng (Old Town Scripture Chamber; Xiānggélǐlā), 650
Gǔ'ěrbāng Jié (Kurban Bairam), 28
Gù Gōng (Imperial Palace; Shěnyáng), 152
Gǔ Guānxiàng Tái (Ancient Observatory; Běijīng), 108
Guides, 44
Guìhǎi Bēilín (Forest of Stelae; Guìlín), 585
Guìlín, 581–588
Guīshān Hàn Mù (Jiǔlǐ Shān Jìsù Kāifāqū; Xúzhōu), 385
Guìyáng, 601–607
Guīyuán Buddhist Temple (Wǔhàn), 718
Guīyuán (Chán) Sì (Guīyuán Buddhist Temple; Wǔhàn), 718
Guìzhōu, 16
Guìzhōu Provincial Museum (Guìzhōu Shěng Bówùguǎn; Guìyáng), 604
Gǔlàng Yǔ Piano Museum (Xiàmén), 492
Gǔlǐng, 503
Gǔ Lóu (Drum Tower; Běijīng), 112
Gǔlóu (Nánjīng), 364
Gǔmù Bówùguǎn (Ancient Hàn Tombs; Luòyáng), 327
Guòkè Jiūbā (Pass-by Bar; Běijīng), 127
Guōmárì Sì (Gomar Gompa), 746
Guó Mén (Sino-Russian border crossing; near Mǎnzhōulǐ), 192
Guózǐjiàn (the Imperial College; Běijīng), 107
Guruta Rock (Lhasa), 767
Gūshān Dǎo (Solitary Island; Hángzhōu), 439
Gǔyáng Dòng (Luòyáng), 327
Gyalthang, 648
Gyantse (Jiāngzī), 3, 770–772
Gyantse Dzong (Jiāngzī Zōng), 3, 770–771

Hǎibǎo Tǎ/Běi Tǎ (Sea Treasure Pagoda/North Pagoda; Yínchuān), 215
Hǎidiàn (Běijīng), bars and clubs, 127
Hǎidiàn (Běijīng), 73
Hǎikǒu, 669–670
Hǎikǒu Gōngyuán (Hǎikǒu Park), 670
Hǎinán Island, 16, 668–672
Hǎiruì Mù (Hǎikǒu), 670
Hǎiwài Jiāotōng Shǐ Bówùguǎn (Maritime Museum; Quánzhōu), 482–483
Hakka people, 496
Hall for Viewing the Grand Rockery (Yǎngshǎn Táng; Shànghǎi), 427
Hall of Benevolence and Longevity (Rénshòu Diàn; Běijīng), 106
Hall of Celestial Kings (Tiān Wáng Diàn; near Táihuái Zhèn), 231
Hall of Chaotic Origin (Hùnyuán Diàn; Chéngdū), 680
Hall of Clocks (Zhōngbiǎo Guǎn; Běijīng), 103
Hall of Eminent Favor, 117
Hall of Great Achievements (Dàchéng Diàn; Qūfǔ), 346–347
Hall of Heavenly Gifts (Tiānkuáng Diàn; Tài Shān), 340
Hall of Heralding Spring (Diǎn Chūn Táng; Shànghǎi), 427
Hall of Jade Magnificence (Yù Huá Táng; Shànghǎi), 427
Hall of Mental Cultivation (Yǎngxīn Diàn; Běijīng), 103
Hall of Offerings (Xiàn Diàn; Tàiyuán), 227
Hall of Perfect Harmony (Zhōnghé Diàn; Běijīng), 102
Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests (Qínián Diàn; Běijīng), 105
Hall of Preserving Harmony (Bǎohé Diàn; Běijīng), 102
Hall of Supreme Harmony (Tàihé Diàn; Běijīng), 102
Hall of the Great Buddha (Dàfó Diàn; near Táihuái Zhèn), 231
Hall of the Holy Mother (Shèngmǔ Diàn; Tàiyuán), 227
Hall of Three Purities (Sānqīng Diàn; Chéngdū), 680
Hall of Three Sages (Sān Shèng Diàn; Dàtóng), 198
Hall of Union (Jiāotài Diàn; Běijīng), 103
Hammer Rock (Qìngchuí Fēng; Chéngdé), 132
Hàn Dynasty Tomb Museum (Hàn Mù Bówùguǎn; Yángzhōu), 377
Hanging Temple (Xuánkōng Sì; Dàtóng), 200

Hángzhōu, 15, 399, 438–441
Hàn Mù Bówùguǎn (Hàn Dynasty Tomb Museum; Yángzhōu), 377
Háoyùn Jiǔbā (Get Lucky Bar; Běijīng), 126
Happy Valley (Hong Kong), 554
Harbin (Hā'ěrbīn), 181–190
Harbin Architecture Arts Center, 185–186
Health concerns, 32–34
Health insurance, 32
Heavenly Bridge (Tiān Qiáo; Sīmǎtái), 114–115
Heavenly Lake (Tiān Chí), 14, 146, 178, 181, 294
The Heavenly Mountains (Tiān Shān), 236
Heavenly Star Bridge Scenic Area (Tiānxīng Qiáo Jǐngqū), 606
Heaven's Well (Tiān Jǐng; Huá Shān), 256
Héběi, 14
Héfei, 386–388
Hēilóngjiāng, 14
Hēilóng Tán (Black Dragon Pool; Tài Shān), 342
Hēilóng Tán Gōngyuán (Black Dragon Pool Park; Lijiāng), 641
Hēi Shān (Black Mountains), 274
Hēiwǎé Dǎo, 647
Hémùjiā Yīyuàn (Běijīng United Family Hospital), 74
Hénán, 15
Hénán Bówùguǎn (Hénán Provincial Museum; Zhèngzhōu), 316
Hépíng Fàndiàn (Peace Hotel; Shànghǎi), 432
Hepo-Ri (Lhasa), 766
Héshùn Qiáoxiāng, 656
Hétao Yuán (Walnut Grove), 646
Hé Yuán (Yángzhōu), 376
Hézuò, 266
The Hidden Tree (Yǐnbì de Shù; Běijīng), 126
Hiking
Chángbái Shān, 181
Dàlián, 163
Great Wall, 5
Hong Kong, 554
Jǐnshānlǐng, 115
Lángmù Sì, 270
Qīngchéng Shān, 694
Tiān Chí, 179
Xī'ān, 247
The Himalayas, 16
Everest Base Camp, 5, 775, 776
Hmong. *See* Miáo people
Hohhot, 202–211
Hole of the Greedy Monk, 714
Holidays, 24–26
Hóngcūn, 397
Hóngfǔ Sì (near Guìyáng), 604
Hong Kong, 16, 525–572
accommodations, 536–543
American Express, 534
arriving in, 525, 528
banks, foreign exchange, and ATMs, 534–535
business hours, 61
consulates, 535
currency, 22
doctors and dentists, 535
holidays, 26–27
hospitals, 535
Internet access, 535
layout of, 531–533
liquor laws, 63
newspapers, 535
nightlife, 560–563
organized tours and cultural activities, 553
outdoor pursuits, 553–555
pharmacies, 535
police, 535
post offices, 535–536
restaurants, 543–550
sights and attractions, 550–556
special events and festivals, 27–30
taxes, 64–65
taxis, 534
temples, 552
transportation, 533–534
traveling to, 40
traveling to and from the mainland, 528–531
visas, 20–21
visitor information, 17, 531
weather forecasts, 536
Hongkong and Shanghai Bank (Shànghǎi), 423
Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, 561
Hong Kong Heritage Museum, 551
Hong Kong International Airport, 525, 528
accommodations near, 543
Hong Kong International Film Festival, 29
Hong Kong Museum of Art, 551
Hong Kong Museum of History, 6, 551–552
Hong Kong Park, 553
Hong Kong Sevens Rugby Tournament, 28
Hóngkǒu (Northeast Shànghǎi), 403
accommodations, 414–415
Hóng Mén Gōng (Red Gate Palace; Tài Shān), 341
Hóngqiáo Airport (Shànghǎi), 400
accommodations, 416
Hóngqiáo Development Zone, 402, 403
accommodations, 413–414
restaurants, 421–422
Hóngqiáo Jímào Shìchǎng (Běijīng), 122
Hor Qu (Huò'ěr Qū), 779
Horse Festival (Yùshù), 747
Horse racing, Hong Kong, 554–555
Hospital of the Shànghǎi Navigation Co., 423
Hot lines, 62
Hot springs, Jílín City, 179
Huā Gài Shān (Flower Cap Mountain), 270
Huáihǎi Zhōng Lù (Shànghǎi), 432
Huáiyáng cuisine, 378
Huàjiā Zhi Cūn (Artists' Village; Chóngqìng), 705
Huángbù Dàoyǐng, 588
Huáng Dǎo (Qīngdǎo), 355
Huángguǒshù, 606
Huángguǒshù Pùbù (Huángguǒshù Falls), 606
Huáng Hé (Yellow River), 15, 316
Huáng Hé Huāyuán Kǒu Lǚyóu Qū, 316
Huáng Hé Yóulǎn Qū (Yellow River Tourist Zone), 316
Huánglóng Dòng (Huánglóng Cave), 734–735
Huāngluó Zhài, 596
Huángpíng, 610
Huángpǔ (Downtown Shànghǎi), 403
accommodations, 406–407
restaurants, 417–418
Huángpǔ River cruises, 428–429
Huáng Qióng Yǔ (Imperial Vault of Heaven; Běijīng), 105
Huáng Shān (Yellow Mountain), 5, 15, 314, 388–393
Huāniǎo Shìchǎng (Flower and Bird Market; Kūnmíng), 620

Huánxīng Lóu (Yǒngdìng), 496–497
Huáqiáo Bówùguǎn (Overseas Chinese Museum; Xiàmén), 493
Huá Shān, 255–257
Huā Shān Míkù (Mysterious Caves of Flower Mountain), 398
Huāshí Lóu (Qīngdǎo), 354
Huá Tǎ (Zhèngdìng), 141–142
Huátíng S (near Kūnmíng), 625
Huáyán Sì (Dàtóng), 198
Húběi, 16
Húběi Shěng Bówùguǎn (Húběi Provincial Museum; Wǔhàn), 718–719
Húguāng Guild House (Húguāng Huìguǎn Xilóu; Běijīng), 124–125
Huìjiàn Suǒ (Shuǐshì), 163
Huì Jì Mén (Jiāyùguān), 272
Huìjì Sì (Pǔtuó Shān), 461–462
Huímǎ Líng (Tài Shān), 341
Huì Shān (Wúxī), 381
Huíyīn Bì (Echo Wall; Běijīng), 105, 118
Huīzhōu architecture, 396
Huīzhōu Qū (Huīzhōu District), 396, 398
Húkēng, 496
Húlǐ Shān Pàotái (Xiàmén), 493
Hulun Buir Grasslands (Hūlúnbèi'ěr Cǎoyuán), 5, 191, 193
Hūlún Hú (Dàlài Hú), 192–193
Humble Administrator's Garden (Zhuō Zhèng Yuán; Sūzhōu), 436–437
Húnán, 16
Húnán Shěng Bówùguǎn (Húnán Provincial Museum; Chángshā), 726–727
Hundred Grasses Garden (Bǎi Cǎo Yuán; Shàoxīng), 447
Hǔnyuán Diàn (Hall of Chaotic Origin; Chéngdū), 680
Huò'ěr Qū (Hor Qu), 779
Huǒshān Gōngyuán (Volcano Park), 657
Hǔ Qiū Shān (Tiger Hill; Sūzhōu), 437
Hǔshān Chángchéng (Tiger Mountain Great Wall), 158–159
Hǔtiào Shí (Tiger Leaping Stone), 646
Hǔtiào Xiá (Tiger Leaping Gorge), 645–646
Hútòng (Běijīng), 110
Hù Xiàn, 11, 254–255
Húxīntíng Teahouse (Húxīntíng Cháshì; Shànghǎi), 431

Ice and Snow Festival (Bīngxuě Jié; Harbin), 9, 31–32, 182
Idkah Mosque (Aitígā'ěr Qīngzhēn Sì; Kashgar), 302
The Imperial College (Guózǐjiàn; Běijīng), 107
Imperial Garden (Yù Huāyuán; Běijīng), 103
Imperial Palace (Gù Gōng; Shěnyáng), 152
Imperial Tombs of the Northern Sòng Dynasty (Běi Sòng Huánglíng; Gǒngyì), 319–320
Imperial Vault of Heaven (Huáng Qióng Yǔ; Běijīng), 105
Imperial Way (Běijīng), 104
Information sources, 17–18
The Inner Court (Běijīng), 102
Inner Garden (Nèi Yuán; Shànghǎi), 427
Inner Mongolia, 14, 15
Inner Mongolia Museum (Nèiměnggǔ Bówùguǎn; Hohhot), 206–207
Insomnia (Hong Kong), 563
Insurance, 32
Intellicast, 38
International Fashion Festival (Dàlián), 31
International Festival of Folk Songs and Folk Arts (Nánníng), 31, 576
International Film Festival, Hong Kong, 29
International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA), 36
International Medical Center (Běijīng), 74
International Motorcycle Tourism Festival (Yínchuān), 30
International Shàolín Martial Arts Festival (Sōng Shān), 30
International SOS Clinic and Alarm Center (Běijīng), 74
Internet access, 37–38
InTouch USA, 39
Intrepid Travel, 46
Iron Pagoda (Tiě Tǎ; Kāifēng), 333
Islam, Silk Road and, 236
Islamic Saints, Tombs of the (Yīsīlán Jiào Shèng Mù; Quánzhōu), 483
Island of Small Seas (Xiǎo Yíng Zhōu; Hángzhōu), 440
Itineraries, suggested, 58–59
Ivan Bazaar (Kashgar), 302

Jade Buddha Temple (Yùfó Sì; Shànghǎi), 429
Jade Dragon Bridge (Yùlóng Qiáo; Báishā), 594
Jade Dragon Snow Mountain (Yùlóng Xuěshān), 4, 644–645
Jade Factory (Gōngyì Měishù Yǒuxiàn Gōngsī; Khotan), 309
Jade Islet (Běijīng), 108
Jade Market (Hong Kong), 560
Jade Screen Peak (Yùpíng Fēng; Huáng Shān), 391
Jampa Ling (Western Temple; Lhasa), 766
Jardine Matheson & Co (Shànghǎi), 423
Jatson School (Cǎiquán Fúlì Tècán Xuéxiào; Lhasa), 11–12, 762
Jazz-ya (Juéshì; Běijīng), 127
Jewish Cultural Exhibit Center (Yóutài Wénhuà Zhǎnlǎnguǎn; Kāifēng), 333
Jews
  Harbin, 185
  Kāifēng, 332
  Shànghǎi, 430
Jiànfēng Chí, 626
Jiāngnán Gòngyuàn Lìshǐ Chénlièguǎn (Nánjīng), 366
Jiāng Qīng, 218
Jiāngsū, 15
Jiànguó Mén Wài Dàjiē (Běijīng), 122
Jiāngxī, 16
Jiāngxī Huìguǎn (Yángshuò), 590
Jiāngxīn Gū Yǔ (Wēnzhōu), 465
Jiāngzī Zōng (Gyantse Dzong), 770–771
Jiànshuǐ, 10, 574, 664–668

Jiàn Zhēn Memorial Hall (Yángzhōu), 376–377
Jiāohé, 284
Jiāohé (Yarkhoto; near Turpan), 285
Jiǎo Shān (Shānhǎiguān), 136
Jiāotài Diàn (Hall of Union; Běijīng), 103
Jiǎxiù Lóu (Guìyáng), 604
Jiāyīn Táng (Tónglǐ), 383
Jiāyùguān, 271–276
Jiāyùguān Chénglóu (Jiāyùguān Fort), 272
Jiāyùguān Gate, 274
Jìchàng Yuán (Wúxī), 381
Jīdū Jiàotáng (Protestant Church; Qīngdǎo), 354
Jiēgǔ Sì (Jyekundo Gompa; Yùshù), 748
Jiètái Sì (Temple of the Ordination Platform; Běijīng), 119
Jièzhū Sì (Shàoxīng), 450
Jīfūhào Hángkōngmǔjiàn (Aircraft Carrier *Kyev;* Shānhǎiguān), 136–137
Jílè Sì (Temple of Bliss; Harbin), 186
Jílín, 14
Jílín City, 172–178
Jílì (Luck) Qiáo (Tónglǐ), 383
Jì'nán, 334–337
Jīn Diàn (Golden Temple; Kūnmíng), 624
Jìng ān (Northwest Shànghǎi), 403
accommodations, 412–413
restaurants, 420–421
Jìng ān Sì (Shànghǎi), 429
Jīngdézhèn, 498–501
Jǐnghóng, 658–664
Jīngjù (Běijīng Opera), 124
Jīngkǒu Mínsú Cūn, 668
Jǐng Líng (Kāngxī) tomb, 116, 117
Jǐng Shān Park (Jǐng Shān Gōngyuán; Běijīng), 108
Jīngshí Yù (Stone Sutra Valley; Tài Shān), 341
Jingyuǎn Sì (Chá Xiàn), 310
Jǐn Jiāng Lǐ, 516
Jīnmǎ Bìjī Fáng (Kūnmíng), 620
Jīnquán Qiánbì Bówùguǎn (Xiàmén), 492
Jīnshānlǐng, 115
Jīnsuō Dǎo, 635
Jìn Temple (Jìn Cí; Tàiyuán), 226
Jīnuò Folk Custom Village (Jīnuò Mínsú Shānzhài), 663
Jīnuò people, 663
Jīnzhú Zhài, 596
Jìtáng, 614
Jiǔjiāng, 502–505
Jiǔlǐ Shān Jisù Kāifāqū (Guīshān Hàn Mù; Xúzhōu), 385
Jiǔlong Bì (Nine Dragon Screen; Běijīng), 103
Jiǔlóng Bì (Nine Dragon Wall; Dàtóng), 197–198
Jiǔmǎ Huà Shān (Nine Horses Fresco Hill), 588
Jiǔ Qǔ Xī (Nine Bend Stream), 477
Jiǔqū Zhàndao (Path of Nine Switchbacks; Lè Shān), 693
Jiǔyīībā Bówùguǎn (9.18 Museum; Shěnyáng), 152
Jiǔzhài Gōu (Valley of Nine Villages), 3–4, 697–700
JJ's (Hong Kong), 563
Jokhang Temple (Dàzhāo Sì; Lhasa), 7, 16, 755
Jowo Rinpoche (Lhasa), 760
Juéshì (Jazz-ya; Běijīng), 127
Jùnjí Féng, 321
Jūyōngguǎn, the Great Wall at, 114
Jyekundo Gompa (Jiēgǔ Sì; Yùshù), 748–749
Jyekundo Horse Festival, 30

K
āifēng, 15, 329–334
Kāifēng Bówùguǎn (Kāifēng Museum; Kāifēng), 330
Kāifēng Night Market, 8, 334
Kailash, Mount (Gangdise), 773, 774, 778
Kǎilǐ, 607–614
Kāipíng, 508
Leaning Towers of (diāolóu), 5, 513–516
Kāiyuán Sì (Quánzhōu), 482
Kāiyuán Sì (Zhèngdìng), 141
Kāizhāi Jié, 31
Kàngměi Yuáncháo Jìniànguǎn (Memorial Hall of the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea; Dāndōng), 158
Karakhoja (Gāochāng; near Turpan), 285
Kashgar (Kāshí), 236, 298–305
Kashgar Sunday Bazaar (Kāshí Xīngqītiān Dàshìchǎng), 8, 302
Kèzī'ěr Qiān Fó Dòng (Kizil Thousand Buddha Caves; Kuqa), 295
Khawachen Carpet and Wool Handicraft Co. Ltd (Kāwājiān Dìtǎn Hé Yángmáo Gōngyìpǐn Yǒuxiàn Gōngsī; Lhasa), 12, 762–763
Khotan (Hétián), 307–312
Khotan Sunday Bazaar, 8, 307, 308
Kirti Gompa (Lángmù Sì), 269
Kite-flying galas, Wéifāng International Kite Festival, 9, 28–29
Kizil Thousand Buddha Caves (Kèzī'ěr Qiān Fó Dòng; Kuqa), 295
Kokonor, Lake (Qīnghǎi Hú), 742–743
Kǒng Fǔ (Confucian Mansion; Qūfǔ), 347–348
Kǒng Lín (Confucian Forest & Cemetery; Qūfǔ), 348–349
Kǒng Miào (Confucius Temple; Qūfǔ), 7, 107, 346
Kǒng Shāngrén, Tomb of (Qūfǔ), 348–349
Kowloon (Hong Kong), 532
accommodations, 536–539
bars, 562
restaurants, 543–546
Kowloon Park (Hong Kong), 555
Kùchē (Kuqa), 294–298
Kùchē Dà Sì (Kuqa Grand Mosque), 295
Kuíjù Lóu (Yǒngdìng), 497
Kuíwén Gé (Worship of Literature Pavilion; Qūfǔ), 346
Kuíxīng Lóu (Yángměi), 580
Kuling, 502, 503
Kumarajiva, 294
Kumbum (Gyantse), 771
Kumbum (Tǎ'ěr Si), 31, 738, 742
Kunlun range, 16
Kūnmíng, 615–628
accommodations, 621–622
consulates, 618–619
Internet access, 619
outdoor activities, 619
restaurants, 622–623
shopping, 623–624
sights and attractions, 620–621
tours, 619
transportation, 618
traveling to, 615, 618

Kūnmíng Lake (Běijīng), 106
Kūnmíng Shì Bówùguǎn (Kūnmíng City Museum), 620
Kūnmíng Sports Stadium (Kūnmíng Tǐyù Guǎn), 619
Kūnníng Gōng (Palace of Earthly Tranquility; Běijīng), 103
Kuqa (Kùchē), 236, 294–298
Kuqa Bazaar, 295
Kuqa Grand Mosque (Kùchē Dà Sì), 295
Kurban Bairam (Gū'èrbāng Jié; Kashgar), 9, 28
Kwantung Army, former headquarters of (Chángchūn), 170

Lǎo Lóng Tóu (Shānhǎiguān), 136
Labor Day, 24–25
Labrang Monastery (Lābǔléng Sì; Xiàhé), 267–268
Ladies' Market (Hong Kong), 560
Lady Yú, tomb for (Qūfǔ), 348
Láifēng Shān Guójiā Sēnlín Gōngyuán (Láifēng Shān National Forest Park; Téngchōng), 654
Láifēng Sì (Téngchōng), 654
Lakeshore Promenade (Hángzhōu), 440
Lama Temple (Yōnghé Gōng; Běijīng), 7–8, 107–108
Landmark (Hong Kong), 559
Lángdé, 610
Lángmù Sì (Taktsang Lhamo), 4, 236, 269–271
Lan Kwai Fong (Hong Kong), 532
Lantau island (Hong Kong), 554, 555–556
  shopping, 556–560
Lantau Trail (Hong Kong), 554
Lantern Festival (Dēng Jié), 28
Lán Tíng (Orchid Pavilion; Shàoxīng), 452
Lánzhōu, 260–265
Lǎo Dìngrì (Old Tingri), 775
Lǎohēi Shān (Hēilóng Shān, or Black Dragon Mountain), 191
Laos, 663
Láo Shān (near Qīngdǎo), 359–360
Lǎo Shě Jìniànguǎn (Former Residence of Lǎo Shě; Běijīng), 109
Lǎo Shě Teahouse (Lǎo Shě Cháguǎn; Běijīng), 125
Laotian Embassy (Běijīng), 75
Laurus Travel, 46
Leaning Tower of Nán Xìng (Nán Xìng Xié Lóu), 515
Leaning Towers of Kāipíng, 5, 513
Léi Fēng, 155
Léi Fēng Jìniànguǎn (Léi Fēng Memorial; Chángshā), 727
Léi Lǔtài Gǔjū (Píngyáo), 222
Lè Shān, 691–693
Lesser Lí River (Xiǎo Lí Jiāng), 594–595
Lesser Panda Enclosures (Xiǎoxióngmāo Shēngtài Guǎn; Wòlóng), 696
Lhakhang Chenmo (Sakya), 773
Lhasa (Lāsà), 16, 755–767
  accommodations, 763–764
  nightlife, 765
  restaurants, 764–765
  shopping, 762–763
  sights and attractions, 759–762, 765–767
  tours and guides, 758
  transportation, 758
  traveling to, 755, 757–758
Lhatse (Lāzī), 773–774
Liàng Dàfó (Hohhot), 204
Liángmín Zōngcí (Zhèngdìng), 141
Liánhuā Dòng (Lotus Flower Cave; Luòyáng), 326
Liánhuā Fēng (Lotus Flower Peak; Huáng Shān), 391
Liánhuā Tái, 263
Liáoníng, 14
Liáoníng Provincial Museum (Liáoníng Shěng Bówùguǎn; Shěnyáng), 151
Lǐ Fènglán, 255
Lǐ Hóngzhāng Gùjū (Héféi), 387
Lìjiāng, 1, 4, 636–648
  accommodations, 641–643
  nightlife, 643
  sights and attractions, 639–641
  tours and guides, 639
  transportation, 638
  traveling to, 638
Lí Jiāng (Lí River), 588
Lí Museum of Chinese Ancient Chariots (Línzī Zhōngguó Gǔchē Bówùguǎn; near Zībó), 358
Líng'ēn Diàn, 116
Lingering Garden (Liú Yuán; Sūzhōu), 437
Línggǔ Sì (Nánjīng), 367
Língxiāo Tǎ (Zhèngdìng), 140
Língxīng Mén (Spirit Gate; Jiànshuǐ), 666
Língyǐn Temple (Hángzhōu), 441
Línjiāng Zhōng Lù (Chéngdū), 679
Línjì Sì (Zhèngdìng), 141
Línxià, 265
Lín Zéxú Jìniànguǎn (Fúzhōu), 475
Línzī Zhōngguó Gǔchē Bówùguǎn (Lí Museum of Chinese Ancient Chariots; near Zībó), 358
Lion Hill (Shīzi Shān; Lìjiāng), 640
Lion Pavilion (Shīzi Tíng; near Kūnmíng), 627
Liquor laws, 62–63
Lí River (Guìlín), 2
Liú Yuán (Lingering Garden; Sūzhōu), 437
Liú Family Memorial Hall (Liúshì Zōngcí; Héshùn Qiáoxiāng), 656
Liù Hé Tǎ (Pagoda of the Six Harmonies; Chéngdé), 131
Liújiā Xiá, 263
Liúlichǎng (Běijīng), 122
Liù Róng Sì (Temple of the Six Banyan Trees; Guǎngzhōu), 513
Liúshì Zōngcí (Liú Family Memorial Hall; Héshùn Qiáoxiāng), 656–657
Liúzhái Qiáo, 470
Lǐwùbǐ Dǎo, 647
Líyuán Theater (Líyuán Jùchǎng; Běijīng), 124
Li Yuen Street East & West (Hong Kong), 560
Lìzé Qiáo Chángtú Kèyùn Zhàn, 71
Lóng Bā (Drag-on; Běijīng), 127
Long Corridor (Cháng Láng; Běijīng), 106
Longevity Hill (Wànshòu Shān; Běijīng), 106
Lónggōng Dòng (Dragon Palace Caves), 606
Lónggōng Shuǐshàng Lèyuán (Xī'ān), 247

Lóngguāng Tǎ (Dragon Light Pagoda; Wúxī), 381
Lónghuá Sì (Shànghǎi), 429
Lóngjǐ Gǔ Zhài, 596
Lóngjǐ Tītián (Dragon's Backbone Rice Terraces), 595, 596
Lóngmén Shíkū (Lóngmén or Dragon Gate Grottoes; Luòyáng), 8, 313, 324, 325
Lóngquán Sì (near Táihuái Zhèn), 230–231
Lóngshèng, 595–597
Lóngtàn Pù (near Qīngdǎo), 360
Lóngtíng Gōngyuán (Dragon Pavilion Park; Kāifēng), 330
Long White Mountain (Chángbái Shān), 168, 172, 174, 175, 178–181
Lóngwù Sì (Rongpo Gompa), 746
Lóngxīng Sì (Zhèngdìng), 138, 140
Lóngyīn Dòng (Dragon Darkness Cave; Guìlín), 585
Lóngzhōu Jié (Dragon Boat Festival; Shìdòng), 29, 611
Lord Bāo's Tomb (Bāo Gōng Mùyuán; Héféi), 387
Lost and found, 63
Lost-luggage insurance, 32
Lotus Flower Cave (Liánhuā Dòng; Luòyáng), 326
Lotus Flower Peak (Liánhuā Fēng; Huáng Shān), 391
Lower Wǔtún (Xià Wǔtún), 746
Lo Wu, 25, 521
Lǔ Bì (Qūfù), 347
Lúdí Yán (Reed Flute Cave; Guìlín), 585
Lufthansa Center (Yānshā Yǒuyì Shāngchǎng; Běijīng), 123
Lúgū Hu (Lúgū Lake), 4, 647
Lú Lín, 504
Luóbùlínkǎ (Norbulingka; Lhasa), 760–761
Luó Hú Shāngyè Chéng (Luó Hú Commercial City; Shēnzhèn), 523
Luòkè Gùjū Chénlièguǎn (Joseph Rock's former residence; near Lìjiāng), 644
Luòshuǐ Cūn, 647
Luósītān Pùbù, 606
Luòtuo Shān (Camel Hill; Guìlín), 585
Luòyáng, 15, 313, 324–329
Luòyáng Bówùguǎn (Luòyáng Museum), 327–328
Luòyáng Peony Festival, 28
Luòyáng Qiáo (Quánzhōu), 483
Lurol Festival (Tóngrén), 30, 745
Lú Shā Bówùguǎn, 504
Lú Shān, 502, 503–505
Lǚ Dòngbīn, 226, 242
Lǚshùn (Port Arthur), 163
Lǚ Zǔ Diàn (Tàiyuán), 226
Lúwān (French Concession; Shànghǎi), 2, 15, 402, 403
  accommodations, 407, 412
  restaurants, 418–420
  shopping, 433
Lǔ Xùn, 447–448, 454
Lǔ Xùn Gùjū (Shàoxīng), 446
Lǔ Xùn Jìniànguǎn (Shàoxīng), 446
Lǔ Xùn Park and Memorial Hall (Lǔ Xùn Gōngyuán; Shànghǎi), 430
Lǔ Xùn Zǔjū (Shàoxīng), 448

M

Mǎ'ān, 597
Macau, 16, 563–572
  currency, 22–23
  holidays, 27
  special events and festivals, 27, 28, 30
  taxes, 65
  visas, 20, 21
  visitor information, 17–18
MacLehose Trail (Hong Kong), 554
Mad Dogs (Hong Kong), 563
Mǎ Fù (Kūnmíng), 620
Màijī Shān Shíkū (near Tiānshuǐ), 7, 58, 257–259
Mail, 63
Main Palace (Zhèng Gōng; Chéngdé), 131
Maitreya Buddha (Future Buddha), 27, 200, 264, 693, 760
  statue of (Běijīng), 108
Mǎjī Gāngrì (Amnye Machen), 751, 752
Malaria, 33–34
Malls and shopping plazas, Běijīng, 123
Manasarovar, Lake, 778, 779
Manchukuo State Council (Wěi Mǎnzhōuguó Guówùyuàn; Chángchūn), 170
Mànchūnmàn, 663
Manchurians, 151
Mandarin Duck Hall (Sūzhōu), 437
Manichean Hall (Móní Diàn; Zhèngdìng), 140
Máníhuì (Hohhot), 204
Mǎní Shíchéng (Yùshù), 749
Mani temple (Màqìn), 750–751
Manjusri, 228, 230
Man Mo Temple (Hong Kong), 552
Màntīng, 663
Màntīng Fó Sì Dà Dú Tǎ, 663
Màntīng Gōngyuán (Jǐnghóng), 660
Mǎnzhōulǐ, 3, 191–194
Máoniú Píng (Yak Meadow), 645
Máo Zédōng, 218, 431, 443
  Méilǐng/Máo Zédōng Bièshù ("Plum Ridge"/Máo Zédōng's Private Villa; Wǔhàn), 719
  portrait at Gate of Heavenly Peace (Tiān'ān Mén; Běijīng), 102
  Sháo Shān, 727–728
  statue of (Shěnyáng), 150
Máo Zédōng Tóngzhì Gùjū (Comrade Máo Zédōng's Former Residence; Sháo Shān), 728
Máo Zédōng Yíwù Zhǎn (Máo's Personal and Household Effects Exhibition; Sháo Shān), 728
Máo Zhǔxí Jìniàn Guǎn (Chairman Máo's Mausoleum; Běijīng), 104
Mápàng, 598
Maps, 63
Màqìn (Dàwū), 750–753
Maritime Museum (Hǎiwài Jiāotōng Shǐ Bówùguǎn; Quánzhōu), 482–483
Maritime Museum (Macau), 571–572
Markets, best, 8
Market Square (Sìfāng Jiē; Lìjiāng), 639–640
Martial Arts Training Center (Shàolín Wǔshù Guǎn; Shàolín Sì), 322
The Master Calligrapher's Native Place (Shūshèng Gùlǐ; Shàoxīng), 449–450
MasterCard ATM Locator, 38
MasterCard emergency number, 63
Master of the Nets Garden (Wǎng Shī Yuán; Sūzhōu), 437

Mátáng, 610
Mausoleum of King Chǔ (Chǔwáng Líng Dìgōng; Xúzhōu), 384
Medical insurance, 32
Medical Prescription Cave (Yàofāng Dòng; Luòyáng), 327
Medicinal Herb Botanical Garden (Guǎngxī Yàoyòng Zhíwùyuán; Nánníng), 578
Méilǐng/Máo Zédōng Biéshù ("Plum Ridge"/Máo Zédōng's Private Villa; Wǔhàn), 719
Měi Lú Biéshù, 504
Měirén Sōng Sēnlín (Sylvan Pine Forest), 179
Memorial Hall of the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea (Kàngměi Yuáncháo Jìniànguǎn; Dāndōng), 158
Memorial to the Victims of the Nánjīng Massacre (Nánjīng Dàtúshā Jìniànguǎn), 368
Mèngjiāngnǚ Miào (Shānhǎiguān), 136
Měnglún, 663
Měngpǐn, 668
Měngyǎng, 663–664
Meridian Gate (Wǔ Mén; Běijīng), 102
Meteorite Museum (Yǔnshí Bówùguǎn; Jílín City), 176
Miáo New Year Festival (Xījiāng, Lángdé), 9, 31, 610
Miáo people, 607–612, 671
Mid-Autumn Festival (Tuányuán Jié), 30–31
Middle Gate of Heaven (Zhōng Tiān Mén; Tài Shān), 341
Mid-Levels (Hong Kong), 532
  accommodations, 540
Mid-Level Temple (Bànshān Sì; Huáng Shān), 391
Milarepa Tower (Hézuò), 266
Míng City Wall Park (Míng Chéng Qiáng Gōngyuán; Běijīng), 109
Míng Filial Tomb (Míng Xiào Líng; Nánjīng), 367
Míng Gùgōng (Nánjīng), 364
Míngshí Lóu (Kāipíng), 514
Míngsīkè Hángmǔ Shìjiè (*Minsk* World; Shēnzhèn), 522–523
Míng Tombs, 115–116
Míng Tombs Museum (Shísān Líng Bówùguǎn), 116
Míng Xiào Líng (Míng Filial Tomb; Nánjīng), 367
Minorities Museum (Zhōu Mínzú Bówùguǎn; Kǎilǐ), 609
Minsk World (Míngsīkè Hángmǔ Shìjiè; Shēnzhèn), 522–523
Mínzú Bówùguǎn (Tōngzhá), 671
Mínzú Fēngqíng Yuán (Jǐnghóng), 662
Misty Water Pavilion (Yānshuǐ Tíng; Jiǔjiāng), 503
Mògāo Shíkū (Mògāo Caves; Dūnhuáng), 7, 58, 279
Mohammed Kashgari, Tomb of (near Kashgar), 305
Money matters, 21–24
Mongkok (Hong Kong), 533
Mongol Global Tour Co., 48
Mongolian Embassy (Běijīng), 75
Móní Diàn (Manichean Hall; Zhèngdìng), 140
Monlam Festival, 25, 27, 267
Monument to the February 7 Workers' Uprising (Erqī Tǎ; Zhèngzhōu), 316
Monument to the People's Heroes (Rénmín Yīngxióng Jìniàn Bēi; Běijīng), 104
Moon Hill (Yuèliàng Shān; near Yángshuò), 593
Moslem Quarter (Huímín Qū; Hohhot), 204
Mountain Flattening Hall (Píng Shān Táng; Yángzhōu), 377
Mountain Resort for Escaping the Heat (Bìshǔ Shānzhuāng; Chéngdé), 128, 130–131
Móxī Huìtáng (Ohel Moshe Synagogue; Shànghǎi), 430
Mù Fǔ (Mù's Residence; Lìjiāng), 641
Mùgǒng Láng Qiáo, 471
Mù Líng, 118
Museum of Ancient Chinese Sex Culture (Zhōngguó Gǔdài Xìng Wénhuà Bówùguǎn; Shànghǎi), 430
Museum of Buddhism (Fójiào Bówùguǎn; Quánzhōu), 483
Museum of Chinese History (Zhōngguó Lìshǐ Bówùguǎn; Běijīng), 109
Museum of Macau, 571
Museum of Nàxī Dōngbā Culture (Dōngbā Wénhuà Bówùguǎn; Lìjiāng), 641
Museum of Porcelain (Táocí Bówùguǎn; Jǐngdézhèn), 500–501
Museum of Sūzhōu Embroidery, 438
Museum of the Chinese Revolution (Zhōngguó Géming Bówùgǔan; Běijīng), 109
Museum of the Western Hàn Dynasty Mausoleum of the Nán Yuè King (Xī Hàn Nán Yuè Wáng Mù Bówùguǎn; Guǎngzhōu), 511–512
Museums, best, 6–7
Mùtiányù, the Great Wall at, 114
Myanmar (Burma), 653, 658
Mysterious Caves of Flower Mountain (Huā Shān Míkù), 398
Myths and Mountains, 48–49

Naadam (Hohhot), 30, 204
Nà Family Mosque (Nàjiāhù Qīngzhēnsì; Yínchuān), 215–216
Nǎi Chūn Miào (Hohhot), 205
Nǎigǔ Shílín (near Kūnmíng), 627
Nǎiqióng Sì (Nechung Monastery; Lhasa), 759
Nàjiāhù Qīngzhēnsì (Nà Family Mosque; Yínchuān), 215–216
Nánchán Sì (Temple of Southern Meditation), 231
Nánchéng Ancient Mosque (Kūnmíng), 620
Nán Hǎi (Pǔtuó Shān), 462
Nánjīng, 15, 360–373
  accommodations, 369–371
  banks, foreign exchange, and ATMs, 363
  Internet access, 363
  nightlife, 372–373
  restaurants, 371–372
  shopping, 372
  sights and attractions, 364–369
  tours, 363
  transportation, 363
  traveling to, 360–361, 363
  visa extensions, 364
  visitor information, 363
Nánjīng (Shànghǎi), 402
Nánjīng Bówùguǎn (Nánjīng Museum), 367–368

Nánjīng Dàtúshā Jìniànguǎn (Memorial to the Victims of the Nánjīng Massacre), 7, 368
Nánjīng Road (Shànghǎi), 432
Nán Mén Guāndì Miào (Chóngwǔ), 485
Nán Mén Qiáo (Dēngyún Qiáo), 468
Nánníng, 576–581
Nánpíng, 397
Nán Pǔtuó Sì (Xiàmén), 493
Nán Shān Sì (near Táihuái Zhèn), 230–231
Nánshì (Old Town; Shànghǎi), 403
  restaurants, 418
Nán Tiān Mén (South Gate of Heaven; Tài Shān), 341
Nán Xìng Lǐ, 515
Nán Xìng Xié Lóu (Leaning Tower of Nán Xìng), 515
Nányán Gōng (Southern Cliff Palace; Wǔdāng Shān), 724
Nán Yuè Héng Shān, 730–732
National Day, 24–25
Nàxī Gǔyuè Huì (Nàxī Music Academy; Lìjiāng), 643
Nàxī people and culture, 636, 638–645
Nechung Monastery (Nàiqióng Sì; Lhasa), 759
Ned Kelly's Last Stand (Hong Kong), 562
Nèiměnggǔ Bówùguǎn (Inner Mongolia Museum; Hohhot), 206–207
Nèi Yuán (Inner Garden; Shànghǎi), 427
Nèizhái Mén (Gate to the Inner Apartments; Qūfǔ), 347–348
Néngrén Chán Sì (Jiǔjiāng), 503
Nestorian Christians, 243
Neten Lhakhang (Gyantse), 771
New Rice Tasting Festival (Xīnjiāng), 610
Newspapers and magazines, 64
New Tingri (Xīn), 775
New Zealand Embassy (Běijīng), 75
Nguluko (Yù Hú; near Lìjiāng), 644
Niǎo Dǎo (Bird Island), 742–743
Niè Ěr Zhī Mù (near Kūnmíng), 625
Night markets
  Kāifēng, 8
  Nánjīng, 372
  Temple Street Night Market (Hong Kong), 8, 560
Nine Bend Stream (Jiǔ Qǔ Xī), 477
Nine Dragon Screen (Jiǔlong Bì; Běijīng), 103
Nine Dragon Wall (Jiǔlóng Bì; Dàtóng), 197–198
Nine Horses Fresco Hill (Jiǔmǎ Huà Shān), 588
9.18 Museum (Jiǔyībā Bówùguǎn; Shěnyáng), 152
Níngbō, 455–459
Níngshòu Gōng Huāyuán (Běijīng), 103
Níngxià, 15
Niú Jiē Qīngzhēn Sì (Ox Street Mosque; Běijīng), 107
No Name (Bái Fēng de nèige Jiǔbā; Běijīng), 127
Norbulingka (Luóbùlínkǎ; Lhasa), 760
North China Daily News Building (Shànghǎi), 423
The Northeast (Dōngběi), 14–15, 146–194
Northeast Third Ring Road North (Běijīng), 122
North Korea, 156–159
North Peak (Běi Fēng; Huá Shān), 256
North Sea (Běi Hǎi; Běijīng), 108
North Shànghǎi, 402
Number One Bathing Beach (Diyī Hǎishuǐ Yùchǎng; Qīngdǎo), 355
Number Six Bathing Beach (Diliù Hǎishuǐ Yùchǎng; Qīngdǎo), 354
Number Three Bathing Beach (Disān Hǎishuǐ Yùchǎng; Qīngdǎo), 355
Number Two Bathing Beach (Dièr Hǎishuǐ Yùchǎng; Qīngdǎo), 355
Nuòyǔ, 646
Nǚrén Jiē (Girl Street; Běijīng), 123
Nyalam, 776
NYK Building (Shànghǎi), 423

Ohel Moshe Synagogue (Móxī Huìtáng; Shànghǎi), 430
Old Tingri (Lǎo Dìngrì), 775
Old Town Scripture Chamber (Gǔchéng Zàngjīng Táng; Xiānggélilā), 650
On/Off (Shàng Xià Xiàn; Běijīng), 127
Opal (Wūpà'ěr), 305
Orbitz, 36
Orchid Pavilion (Lán Tíng; Shàoxīng), 452
Ordaisnki Mosque (Aodàyíxīkè Qīngzhēn Sì; Kashgar), 303
The Oriental-List, 38
Oriental Pearl TV Tower (Dōngfāng Míngzhū Diànshì Tǎ; Shànghǎi), 431–432
Oriental Plaza (Dōngfāng Guǎngchǎng; Běijīng), 123–124
The Outer Court (Běijīng), 102
Overhanging Great Wall (Xuánbì Chángchéng; near Jiāyùguān), 274
Overseas Chinese Museum (Huáqiáo Bówùguǎn; Xiàmén), 493
Ox Street Mosque (Niú Jiē Qīngzhēn Sì; Běijīng), 107

Pacific Delight, 46–47
Package tours, 42
Pagoda of the Six Harmonies (Liù Hé Tǎ; Chéngdé), 131
Páiyún Tíng (Cloud Dispelling Pavilion; Huáng Shān), 391
Pak Tai Temple (Cheung Chau), 556
Palace Hotel (Shànghǎi), 423
Palace of Earthly Tranquility (Kūnníng Gōng; Běijīng), 103
Palace of Heavenly Purity (Qiánqīng Gōng; Běijīng), 103
Palace of Ten Thousand Buddhas (Wànfó Diàn; Píngyáo), 222
Pamirs, 234, 298
Panchen Lamas, 131, 267, 742, 751, 761, 767–769
Panda Research Base/Giant Panda Breeding Center (Xióngmāo Jīdì/Dàxióngmáo Fánzhí Zhōngxīn; Chéngdū), 681–682
Pānjiāyuán Jiùhuò Shìchǎng (Běijīng), 8, 122
Pán Mén (Sūzhōu), 437
Pass-by Bar (Guòkè Jiǔbā; Běijīng), 127

Passports, 18
Path of Nine Switchbacks (Jiǔqū Zhàndao; Lè Shān), 693
Pavilion of Great Benevolence (Zhèngdìng), 140
Pavilion of Literary Delight (Wénjīn Gé; Chéngdé), 131
Pavilion of Ten Kings (Shí Wáng Tíng; Shěnyáng), 152
Pavilion of the Eight Trigrams (Bāguà Tíng; Chéngdū), 680
Peace Bridge (Tàipíng Qiáo; Tónglǐ), 383
Peace Hotel (Hépíng Fàndiàn; Shànghǎi), 423, 432
Peak That Flew from Afar (Fēilái Fēng; Hángzhōu), 441
Peak Tower (Hong Kong), 550
Peak Tram (Hong Kong), 550
Peak Viewing Pavilion (Wàngfēng Tíng; near Kūnmíng), 627
Pearl Market (Hóngqiáo Jímào Shìchǎng; Běijīng), 122
Pearls, buying, 12, 121, 123, 433, 600
Pelbar (Dìngrì), 774–775
Pelkhor Choede (Báijū Sì; Gyantse), 771
People's Square (Rénmín Guǎngchǎng; Guìyáng), 602
Peregrine Adventures, 47
Phakpa Lhakang (Lhasa), 761
Phoenix Cave (Fèngyǎn Dòng; Dàlǐ), 635
Phoenix Hill (Fènghuáng Shān; Yán'ān), 219
Píng'ān, 596
Píng'ān Dàdào (Běijīng), 72
Píngliú Zhài, 598
Píng Shān Táng (Mountain Flattening Hall; Yángzhōu), 377
Píngyáo (Shānxī), 10, 15, 58, 220–224
Píng Zhài, 597
Píntáo Zhái (Jǐngdézhèn), 501
"Plum Ridge"/Máo Zédōng's Private Villa (Méilǐng/Máo Zédōng Biéshù; Wǔhàn), 719
Poacher's Inn (Yóuyì Qīngnián Jiǔdiàn; Běijīng), 127
Podrang Marpo (Red Palace; Lhasa), 761
Police, 64
Po Lin Monastery (Lantau), 555–556
Pollution, 33
Port Arthur (Lǚshùn), 163
Pōshuǐ Jié (Water-Splashing Festival), 28, 659
Pō Tǎ (Kāifēng), 331
Potala Palace (Bùdálā Gōng; Lhasa), 5, 16, 650, 755, 761–762
Potala Temple (Pǔtuózōngchéng Zhī Miào; Chéngdé), 131–132
Pottery and ceramics
Chén Lú, 254
Jǐngdézhèn, 499–501
Shànghǎi, 433
Shěng Bówùguǎn (Provincial Museum; Lánzhōu), 263
Yíxīng, 379, 380, 384–385
Praya (Cheung Chau), 556
Precious Clouds Pavilion (Bǎoyún Gé; Běijīng), 106
Prince Gōng's Mansion (Gōng Wáng Fǔ; Běijīng), 6, 109, 112
Propaganda (Hong Kong), 561
Protestant Church (Jīdū Jiàotáng; Qīngdǎo), 354
Provincial Museum (Shěng Bówùguǎn; Lánzhōu), 263
PSB (Public Security Bureau), 64
Pǔdōng International Airport (Shànghǎi), 400
accommodations, 416–417
Pǔdōng New Area (Shànghǎi), 402, 403, 423, 428
accommodations, 415–416
restaurants, 422
Púhādǐng Yuán (Yángzhōu), 377
Pǔjì Sì (Pǔtuó Shān), 460
Pǔlè Sì (Temple of Universal Joy; Chéngdé), 132
Pǔníng Sì (Temple of Universal Peace; Chéngdé), 132
Puppet shows
Běijīng, 125
Xī'ān, 253
Purang (Pùlán), 778
Purple Bamboo Forest Zen Institute (Zǐzhúlín Chányuàn; Pǔtuó Shān), 462
Purple Gold Mountain (Zǐjīn Shān; Nánjīng), 366
Purple Mist Palace (Zǐxiāo Gōng; Wǔdāng Shān), 724
Púsa Diàn (Bodhisattva Palace; near Píngyáo), 223
Pútao Gōu (Grape Valley; near Turpan), 284
Pǔtuó Dǎo, 635
Pǔtuó Shān, 459–463
Pǔtuózōngchéng Zhī Miào (Potala Temple; Chéngdé), 131–132
Pǔyí (Xuāntǒng emperor), 118
Pǔyòu Sì (Chéngdé), 132
Pǔzhào Sì (Temple of Universal Light; Tài Shān), 342

Q

Qapqal, 310
Qiān Fó Diàn (Thousand Buddha Hall; Shàolín Sì), 322
Qiānfó Dǐng, 690
Qiánkǒu, 398
Qiánlíng Gōngyuán (near Guìyáng), 604
Qiánlóng emperor (reigned 1736–96), 29, 103, 112, 116, 117, 128, 302, 310, 335, 347, 373, 375, 376, 381
Qián Mén (Front Gate; Běijīng), 104
accommodations near, 77, 82–83
Qiánqīng Gōng (Palace of Heavenly Purity; Běijīng), 103
Qiánqīng Mén (Gate of Heavenly Purity; Běijīng), 103
Qiān Shān, 152–153
Qiántáng Lóu (Qūfǔ), 348
Qiānxún Tǎ (Dàlǐ), 632
Qiányì Wǎngluò Kāfēiwū (Běijīng), 75
Qiáo Jiā Dàyuàn (near Píngyáo), 6, 222
Qíluó Qiáoxiāng, 657
Qín Bīngmǎyǒng Bówùguǎn (Terracotta Warriors; Xī'ān), 237, 241, 245–246
Qín Chéng, 257–259
Qīngbì Xī (near Dàlǐ), 635
Qīngchéng Shān, 693–695
Qìngchuí Fēng (Hammer Rock; Chéngdé), 132
Qīngdài Yìtiáo Jiē (Yángměi), 580

Qīngdǎo, 350–360
accommodations, 356–357
restaurants, 357–358
sights and attractions, 353–355
tours and guides, 353
transportation, 353
traveling to, 350, 352–353
visitor information, 353
Qīngdǎo International Beer Festival (Qīngdǎo), 30
Qīngdǎo Píjiǔ Chéng (Qīngdǎo), 355
Qīngdǎo Yíngbīnguǎn (Qīngdǎo Welcome Guest House; Qīngdǎo), 354
Qīng Dōng Líng, 116
Qīng dynasty, 146, 147, 151, 152, 176, 310
Qīnghǎi, 737
Qīnghǎi Hú (Lake Kokonor), 742–743
Qīngjìng Sì (Ashab Mosque; Quánzhōu), 482
Qīngliáng Tái (Refreshing Terrace; Huáng Shān), 391
Qīngmíng (Tomb-Sweeping Festival), 28
Qīngmíng Shànghé Yuán (Kāifēng), 332–333
Qīngpǔ Shāndòng (Chimpu Caves; Lhasa), 767
Qīng tombs
Eastern, 116–117
Western, 117–118
Qīngtóng Xiá Yībǎilíngbā Tǎ (108 Dagobas; Yínchuān), 215–216
Qīng Xī Líng, 118
Qīngxiù Shān Fēngjǐngqū (Nánníng), 578
Qīngyáng Gōng (Green Ram Monastery; Chéngdū), 679–680
Qīng Yuán Shān (Quánzhōu), 483
Qīngzhēn Dà Sì (Great Mosque; Hohhot), 207
Qínhuángdǎo, 71
Qīnhuá Rìjūn Dìqīsānyāo Bùduì Jiùzhǐ (Unit 731 Museum; Harbin), 186–187
Qínián Diàn (Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests; Běijīng), 105
Qióngzhú Sì (Bamboo Temple; Kūnmíng), 624
***Qípáo,* 12**
Qiūcí, 294
Qiúlín Bǎihuò (The Churin Department Store; Harbin), 190
Qīxīng Gōngyuán (Seven Star Park; Guìlín), 585
Qīxīng Yán (Seven Star Cave; Guìlín), 585
Qomolangma Nature Preserve, 776
Quánzhōu, 10, 16, 480–486
Qū Bówùguǎn (Regional Museum; Ürümqi), 291
Qūfǔ, 313, 334, 337, 343–350

R
ailfans, 49
rbt (Xiānzōnglín; Běijīng), 127
R. Crusoe & Son, 47
Rèdài Huāhuìyuán (Tropical Flower and Plants Garden), 661
Red Gate Palace (Hóng Mén Gōng; Tài Shān), 341
Red Palace (Podrang Marpo; Lhasa), 761
Reed Flute Cave (Lúdí Yán; Guìlín), 585
Refreshing Terrace (Qīngliáng Tái; Huáng Shān), 391
Rè Hǎi (Sea of Heat), 657–658
Rénmín Guǎngchǎng (People's Square; Dàlián), 162
Rénmín Guǎngchǎng (People's Square; Guìyáng), 602
Rénmín Yīngxióng Jìniàn Bēi (Monument to the People's Heroes; Běijīng), 104
Rénshòu Diàn (Hall of Benevolence and Longevity; Běijīng), 106
Restaurants, best, 12–13
Restrooms, 64
Retreat and Reflection Garden (Tuìsī Yuán; Tónglǐ), 383
Revolutionary Memorial Hall/Museum (Gémìng Jìniànguǎn; Yán'ān), 219
Rhinoceros Pool (near Guìyáng), 606
Rice terraces, 5
Rìguān Fēng (Sunrise Watching Peak; Tài Shān), 342
Riguāng Yán (Sunlight Rock; Xiàmén), 492
Rìshēng Chāng (Píngyáo), 221
Ritz Tours, 47
Rive Gauche (Zuǒ An; Běijīng), 127
River (Hé; Běijīng), 126
Rìzé Jīngqū, 698
RoadPost, 39
Rock, Joseph, former residence of (Luòkè Gùjū Chénlièguǎn; near Lìjiāng), 644
Rock that Flew from Afar (Fēilái Shí; Huáng Shān), 391
Róng Hú (Banyan Lake; Guìlín), 584
Róngjiāng, 612
Rongpo Gompa (Lóngwù Sì), 746
Round City (Tuán Chéng; Běijīng), 108
Róu Yuǎn Mén (Jiāyùguān), 272
Ròuzī Jié, 31
Rozi Heyt (Ròuzī Jié or Kāizhāi Jié), 31
Ruìlì, 658
Ruìshí Lóu, 516
Rúshēng Lóu (Yǒngdìng), 497
Russian Embassy (Běijīng), 75
Russian Street (Éluósī Fēngíng Jiē; Dàlián), 162
Russo-Chinese Bank Building (Shànghǎi), 423

S
afe Crossing Bridge (Ānjì Qiáo; Zhào Xiàn), 142
Safety, 34–35
Sàimǎ Chǎng Mǐnggǔ Dà Huì Gōng (Hohhot), 211
St. Paul's Church (Macau), 571
Sàjiā Sì (Sakya Monastery), 773
Saka Dawa Festival, 9, 25, 29, 778
Sakya (Sàjiā), 772–773
Sakya Monastery (Sàjiā Sì), 773
Sam Tung Uk Museum (Hong Kong), 552
Samye Monastery (Sāngyē Sì; Lhasa), 766
Samye Utse (Lhasa), 766
Sān Bǎo Shuǐduì (Water-powered Hammers; Jíngdézhèn), 500
Sānchàhé Nature Reserve (Sānchàhé Zìrán Bǎohùqū), 664

Sānchàkǒu (Tselnak Khamdo), 752
Sang Chu (Dà Xià Hé), 266
Sāngkē grasslands, 268
Sāngyē Sì (Samye Monastery; Lhasa), 766
Sānjiāng, 597–598
Sān Jiāng Kǒu (Níngbō), 456
Sān Kuí, 470
Sānlǐtún (Běijīng), 126
Sānlǐtún Jùlèbù (The Club @ Sānlǐtún; Běijīng), 126
Sānqīng Diàn (Hall of Three Purities; Chéngdū), 680
Sānqīng Gé (near Kūnmíng), 625
Sān Shān Dǎo, 381
Sān Shèng Diàn (Hall of Three Sages; Dàtóng), 198
Sān Tǎ Sì Gōngyuán (Three Pagodas Park; Dàlǐ), 631–632
Sān Tiáo Qiáo, 468
Sānwèi Bookstore (Sānwèi Shūwū; Běijīng), 126
Sān Wèi Shūwū (Shàoxīng), 447–448
Sānxiá Bà (Three Gorges Dam), 711–715
Sān Xiá Dam, 263
Sānxīng Duī Bówùguǎn (Chéngdū), 6, 682
Sānyà, 670–672
Sānyuè Jié (Third Month Fair; Dàlǐ), 9, 29
Sasum Lhakang (Lhasa), 761
Scams, 35
Sculpting in Time (Diāokè Shíguāng; Běijīng), 127–128
Sea of Heat (Rè Hǎi), 657–658
Sea of Stone (Shí Hǎi), 191
Seasons, 24
Sea Treasure Pagoda/North Pagoda (Hǎibǎo Tǎ/Běi Tǎ; Yínchuān), 215
Second Spring Under Heaven (Tiānxià Dìèr Quán; Wúxī), 381
Sèlā Sì (Sera Monastery; Lhasa), 762
Sengeshong Yagotsang, 746
Senior travelers, 36
Sera Monastery (Sèlā Sì; Lhasa), 762
Serdong Chenmo (Dà Jīnwǎ Diàn; Xīníng), 742
Serdung Lhakang (Lhasa), 761
Sertri Gompa (Lángmù Si), 269
Sevens Rugby Tournament, Hong Kong, 28
Seven Star Cave (Qīxīng Yán; Guilín), 585
Seven Star Park (Qīxīng Gōngyuán; Guilín), 585
Seventeen-Arch Bridge (Shíqī Kǒng Qiáo; Běijīng), 106
Sexually transmitted diseases, 34
Shāndōng, 15
Shànghǎi, 399–441
accommodations, 406–417
American Express, 404
arriving in, 400–401
banks, foreign exchange, and ATMs, 404–405
brief description of, 15
doctors and dentists, 405
embassies and consulates, 405
French Concession, 2
Internet access, 405–406
layout of, 402
neighborhoods in brief, 402–403
nightlife, 434–435
pharmacies, 406
post office, 406
restaurants, 417–422
shopping, 432–434
sights and attractions, 423–432
temples, 429
tours, 432
transportation, 403–404
visa extensions, 406
visitor information, 401–402
Shànghǎi Art Museum (Shànghǎi Měishùguǎn), 430
Shànghǎi Botanical Gardens (Shànghǎi Zhíwùyuán), 429–430
Shànghǎi Bówùguǎn (Shànghǎi Museum), 6, 427–428
Shànghǎi Centre Theatre (Shànghǎi Shāngchéng Jùyuàn), 434
Shànghǎi Club, 423
Shànghǎi Customs House, 423
Shànghǎi Municipal History Museum (Shànghǎi Shì Lìshǐ Bówùguǎn), 430
Shànghǎi Museum of Arts and Crafts (Shànghǎi Gōngyì Měishù Yánjiūsuǒ Jiùgōngyìpǐn Xiūfù Bù), 432
Shànghǎi Tang (Hong Kong), 559
Shànghǎi Urban Planning Centre, 431
Shàngqīng Gōng (near Qīngdǎo), 360
Shàng Wǔtún (Upper Wǔtún), 746
Shàng Xià Xiàn (On/Off; Běijīng), 127
Shānhǎiguān, 134–137
Shàn Hú (Cedar Lake; Guilín), 584
Shànhuà Sì (Dàtóng), 198
Shànjuǎn Dòng (Yíxīng), 385
Shānshǎngān Huìguǎn (Kāifēng), 333
Shānshuǐ Yuán (Yángshuò), 590
Shānxī, 15
Shānxī Grand Opera House (Shānxī Gēwǔ Dà Xìyuàn; Xī'ān), 2, 253
Shānxī History Museum (Shānxī Lìshǐ Bówùguǎn; Xī'ān), 6, 237, 244–245
Shānxī Lìshǐ Bówùguǎn (Shānxī History Museum; Xī'ān), 6, 244–245
Shànzifēng (Fan Peak), 644
Shànzǐ Yá (Tài Shān), 342
Shào Hào Líng (Tomb of Emperor Shào Hào; Qūfù), 349
Shàolín Sì (Shàolín Monastery), 321–322
Shàolín Sì Tǎgōu Wǔshù Xuéxiào (Shàolín Monastery Wǔshù Institute at Tǎgōu), 322
Shàolín Wǔshù Guǎn (Martial Arts Training Center; Shàolín Si), 322
Shàoshì Shān, 321
Shàoxīng, 3, 16, 443–455
accommodations, 453–454
restaurants, 454–455
shopping, 453
sights and attractions, 446–453
transportation, 446
traveling to, 444, 446
visitor information, 446
Shāpíng, 636
Sha Tin (Hong Kong), 554–555
Shelkar, 774
Shén Dào (Spirit Way), 115, 116
Shěng Bówùguǎn (Provincial Museum; Lánzhōu), 263
Shēngfēng Lóu, 516

Shèngmǔ Diàn (Hall of the Holy Mother; Tàiyuán), 226
Shèng Suǒfēiyà Jiàotáng (Church of St. Sophia; Harbin), 185–186
Shèngyà Hǎiyáng Shìjiè (Sun Asia Ocean World; Dàlián), 163
Shénnóng Stream, 714
Shénwǔ Mén (Gate of Martial Spirit; Běijīng), 103
Shěnyáng, 71, 146–156
banks, foreign exchange, and ATMs, 150
consulates, 150
post office, 150
sights and attractions in and around, 150–153
transportation, 150
traveling to, 149–150
visa extensions, 150
Shēnzhèn, 520–524
Shè Xiàn, 396, 397
Shíbǎo Zhài (Stone Treasure Fortress), 711, 714, 715
Shíbā Pán (Eighteen Bends; Tài Shān), 341
Shìdòng, 611
Shigatse (Rìkāzé), 767–770
Shígǔ, 645
Shí Hǎi (Sea of Stone), 191
Shí Jiā Dàyuàn (near Tiānjīn), 119, 121
Shíjiāzhuāng, 71, 137–145
Shíkū Dòng (Stone Room Cave; Luòyáng), 327
Shíkū Sì (near Gōngyì), 320
Shí Lín (Stone Forest; near Kūnmíng), 626–627
Shì Lóu, 514
Shì Lóu (Market Building; Píngyáo), 221
Shipton's Arch (Tushuk Tash), 305
Shíqī Kǒng Qiáo (Seventeen-Arch Bridge; Běijīng), 106
Shíquán Hé (Ali), 300
Shísān Líng Bówùguǎn (Míng Tombs Museum), 116
Shítou Zhài (Stone Village), 606–607
Shí Wáng Tíng (Pavilion of Ten Kings; Shěnyáng), 152
Shíxiàng Lù (Nánjīng), 367
Shǐxìn Fēng (Beginning to Believe Peak; Huáng Shān), 391
Shī Zi Lín Yuán (Forest of Lions Garden; Sūzhōu), 436
Shīzi Shān (Lion Hill; Lìjiāng), 640
Shīzi Tíng (Lion Pavilion; near Kūnmíng), 627
Shopping
best buys, 11–12
stops on escorted tours, 43–44
Shòu Xī Hú (Slender West Lake; Yángzhōu), 374–375
Shuānglín Sì (near Píngyáo), 223
Shuānglóng Qiáo (Double Dragon Bridge; Jiànshuǐ), 668
Shuǐjīng Gōng (Crystal Palace Well; Jiànshuǐ), 666
Shǔshèng Gùlǐ (The Master Calligrapher's Native Place; Shàoxīng), 449–450
Shuǐyán (Water Cave; near Yángshuò), 594
Shuǐyǎng Sì (Qíluó Qiáoxiāng), 657
Shùzhèng Jīngqū, 698
Siberian Tiger Park (Dōngběi Hǔ Línyuán; Harbin), 187
Sìchuān, 2, 16
Sìchuān Dàxué Bówùguǎn (Sichuān University Museum; Chéngdū), 680
Sichuan opera, 688, 705
Sīdàlín Gōngyuán (Stalin Park; Harbin), 185
Sìfāng Jiē (Market Square; Lìjiāng), 639–640
Sīgān Táng (Shàoxīng), 451–452
Signal Hill Park (Xīnhǎo Shān Gōngyuán; Qīngdǎo), 355
Silk and Mulberry Research Center (Sī Sāng Yánjiūsuǒ; Khotan), 312
Silk Routes, 15, 234–236
Silk Street (Xiùshuǐ Jiē; Běijīng), 122–123
Silver Beach (Yín Tān; Běihǎi), 599
Silver Ingot Bridge (Yíndìng Qiáo; Běijīng), 112
Sīmǎtái, the Great Wall at, 114
Sino-Russian border crossing (Guó Mén; near Mǎnzhōulǐ), 192
Sī Sāng Yánjiūsuǒ (Silk and Mulberry Research Center; Khotan), 312
Sisters' Meal Festival (Zīmèifàn Jié), 28, 611
Six Dynasties museum (Nánjīng), 366
Sìxī, 470
Sky Lounge (Hong Kong), 562
Slender West Lake (Shòu Xī Hú; Yángzhōu), 374–375
Smoking, 64
SoHo (Hong Kong), 532
Solitary Beauty Peak (Dúxiù Fēng; Guìlín), 584
Solitary Island (Gūshān Dǎo; Hángzhōu), 439
Sòngbālìn (Hohhot), 202, 204
Sōngjiāng Hé, 180
Sòngjīng Dà Fāhuì (Hohhot), 202
Sōng Shān, 313, 320–323
Sōng Shān Diào Qiáo, 321
Sōng Shān Shàolín Suǒdào, 321
Sòngyáng Suǒdào, 321
Sōngyuè Tǎ (Sōngyuè Pagoda; Tàishì Shān), 322–323
Sōngyuè Temple Pagoda (Tàishì Shān), 321
Sōngzànlín Sì (Ganden Sumtseling Gompa; Xiānggélǐlā), 650
Soong Ching-ling's Former Residence (Běijīng), 112
Soong Ching-ling's Former Residence (Sòng Qìnglíng Gùjū; Shànghǎi), 431
Sorrow of Ten Thousand Stelae (Wànrénchóu Jùbēi; Qūfǔ), 349
Sound of the Tide Cave (Cháoyīn Dòng; Pǔtuó Shān), 462
The South (Běijīng), 72–73
The Southeast, 15–16, 442–524
Southern Cliff Palace (Nányán Gōng; Wǔdāng Shān), 724
South Gate of Heaven (Nán Tiān Mén; Tài Shān), 341
South Shànghǎi, 402
The Southwest, 16, 573–672
Special events and festivals, 27–32
best, 9
in the southwest, 574
Special-interest trips, 48–49
Spirit Gate (Língxīng Mén; Jiànshuǐ), 666
Spirit Way (Shén Dào), 115, 116
Spring City Golf and Lake Resort (near Kūnmíng), 619
Spring Festival (Chinese New Year; Chūn Jié), 24, 27

Spruce Meadow (Yúnshān Píng), 645
Stalin Park (Sīdàlín Gōngyuán; Harbin), 185
Stanley (Hong Kong), 532, 549
Stanley Market (Hong Kong), 557, 559–560
Star Ferry (Hong Kong), 2
Stele without Words (Wúzì Bēi; Tài Shān), 342
Steppes East, 47–48
Stomach upsets, 32–33
Stone Forest (Shí Lín; near Kūnmíng), 626–627
Stone Room Cave (Shíkū Dòng; Luòyáng), 327
Stone Sutra Valley (Jīngshí Yù; Tài Shān), 341
Stone Village (Shítou Zhài), 606–607
Student travelers, 36
Sūbāshí Gǔchéng (near Kuqa), 296–297
Sū Causeway (Sūdī), 440
Sūgōng Minaret (near Turpan), 284
Sūgōng Tǎ or Émǐn Tǎ (Sūgōng Minaret; near Turpan), 285–286
Suìkāng Qiánzhuāng (Shàoxīng), 451
Summer Palace (Yíhé Yuán; Běijīng), 105–106
Sun Asia Ocean World (Shèngyà Hǎiyáng Shìjiè; Dàlián), 163
Sunday Bazaar
  Kashgar (Kāshí Xīngqītiān Dàshìchǎng), 8, 302
  Khotan, 8
Sunday Market (Xīngqītiān Dàshìchǎng)
  Kāilǐ, 609
  Khotan), 308
  Róngjiāng), 612
Sun Dong An Plaza (Xīn Dōng'ān Shìchǎng; Běijīng), 124
Sunlight Rock (Riguāng Yán; Xiàmén), 492
Sun protection, 34
Sunrise Watching Peak (Riguān Fēng; Tài Shān), 342
Sun Yat-sen's Former Residence (Sūn Zhōngshān Gùjū; Shànghǎi), 431
Sun Yat-sen Square (Zhōngshān Guǎngchǎng; Shěnyáng), 150
Suǒxī Yù Nature Reserve, 734
Sutra Library (Táihuái Zhèn), 230
Sūxī Huáng (World of Suzie Wong; Běijīng), 127
Sūyóuhuā Zhǎnlǎnguǎn (Butter Sculpture Exhibition; Xīníng), 742
Sūzhōu, 15, 399, 435–438
Sūzhōu No. 1 Silk Mill, 438
Swallow's Nest Cave (Yànzi Dòng; Jiànshuǐ), 667
Swan Lake (Tiān'é Hú), 4, 311
Sylvan Pine Forest (Měirén Sōng Sēnlín), 179

Tǎ'ěr Sì (Kumbum), 738, 742
Tài, Lake (Tài Hú), 314, 379, 380–381
Tài'ān, 337, 338, 343
Tai chi (tàijíquán), Hong Kong, 554
Tàihé Diàn (Hall of Supreme Harmony; Běijīng), 102
Tàihé Mén (Gate of Supreme Harmony; Běijīng), 102
Tài Hú (Lake Tài), 314, 379, 380–381
Táihuái Zhèn, 228–230
Tàihuá Sì (near Kūnmíng), 625
Táijiāng, 611
Tài Líng Fēi Yuán Qín tombs, 118
Tailors, Běijīng, 124
Taipa, 572
Taipa House Museum (Casa Museu da Taipa), 572
Tàipíng Heavenly Kingdom Historical Museum (Tàipíng Tiānguó Lìshǐ Bówùguǎn; Nánjīng), 368–369
Tàipíng Qiáo (Peace Bridge; Tónglǐ), 383
Tàipíng Rebellion, 364–365
Tàipíng Shān Gōngyuán (Qīngdǎo), 355
Tàipíng Tiānguó Lìshǐ Bówùguǎn (Tàipíng Heavenly Kingdom Historical Museum; Nánjīng), 368–369
Tàiqīng Gōng (near Qīngdǎo), 360
Tài Shān, 15, 313, 337–343
Tàishì Shān, 321
Tàishùn County, bridges of, 4, 467–472
Tàiyuán, 71, 224–228
Taklamakan Desert, 15, 234, 236
Takten Podrang (Lhasa), 760–761
Tǎ Lín (Forest of Stupas; Shàolín Sì), 322
Tángān, 614
Táng Dynasty (Táng Yuè Gōng; Xī'ān), 253
Táng Qián Líng (Táng Qián Tomb; near Xī'ān), 246–247
Tángyuè Páifang Qún (Tángyuè Memorial Arches; Shè Xiàn), 397
Tánzhè Sì (Temple of the Pool and Wild Mulberry), 119
Táocí Bówùguǎn (Museum of Porcelain; Jīngdézhèn), 500
Táocí Lìshǐ Bówùguǎn (Ceramic Historical Exhibition Area; Jīngdézhèn), 499
Tashilhunpo Monastery (Zhāshílúnbù Sì; Shigatse), 768–769
Tashkurgan (Tǎshíkùěrgān), 306–307
Tashkurgan Fort, 306
Taxes, 64–65
Taxis, 52–54
Tǎyuàn Sì (Táihuái Zhèn), 230
The Teahouse of Family Fù (Chá Jiā Fù; Běijīng), 128
Telephone, 65–66
Temple of A-Ma (Macau), 572
Temple of Bliss (Jílè Sì; Harbin), 186
Temple of Buddha's Light (Fóguāng Sì; near Táihuái Zhèn), 231–232
Temple of Distant Peace (Ānyuán Miào; Chéngdé), 132
Temple of Great Goodwill (Dà Cí'ēn Sì; Xī'ān), 244
Temple of Happiness and Longevity at Mount Sumeru (Xūmífúshòu Miào; Chéngdé), 131
Temple of Heaven (Tiān Tán; Běijīng), 7, 105
Temple of Princess Wénchéng (Vairocana Temple or Wénchéng Gōngzhǔ Miào; Yùshù), 749
Temple of Southern Meditation (Nánchán Sì), 231

Temple of the Eight Immortals (Bā Xiān ān; Xī'ān), 242
Temple of the Ordination Platform (Jiètái Sì), 119
Temple of the Pool and Wild Mulberry (Tánzhè Sì), 119
Temple of the Princess of the Azure Clouds (Bìxiá Cí; Tài Shān), 341–342
Temple of the Six Banyan Trees (Liù Róng Sì; Guǎngzhōu), 513
Temple of Universal Joy (Pǔlè Sì; Chéngdé), 132
Temple of Universal Light (Pǔzhào Sì; Tài Shān), 342
Temple of Universal Peace (Pǔníng Sì; Chéngdé), 132
Temples, best, 7–8
Temple Street Night Market (Hong Kong), 8, 560
Téngchōng (Yúnnán), 10, 574, 652–658
Ten Thousand Buddha Cave (Wànfó Dòng; Luòyáng), 326
10,000 Flowers Maze (Wànhuā Zhèn; Běijīng), 108
Ten Thousand People Rock (Sūzhōu), 437
Terracotta Warriors (Qín Bīngmǎyǒng Bówùguǎn; Xī'ān), 15, 237, 241, 245–246
Thangka Wall (Xiàhé), 267
Theravada Buddhism, 659, 661
Third Month Fair (Sānyuè Jié; Dàlǐ), 9, 29
Thousand Buddha Cave (Guilín), 584
Thousand Buddha Hall (Qiān Fó Diàn; Shàolín Sì), 322
Three Bīnyáng Caves (Bīnyáng Sān Dòng; Luòyáng), 326
Three Gorges cruise, 16
Three Gorges Dam (Sānxiá Bà), 711–715
Three Pagodas Park (Sān Tǎ Sì Gōngyuán; Dàlǐ), 631–632
Three Pools Mirroring the Moon (Hángzhōu), 440
Tiān'ān Mén (Gate of Heavenly Peace; Běijīng), 102
Tiān'ān Mén Square (Tiān'ān Mén Guǎngchǎng; Běijīng), sights and attractions, 104
Tiān Chí (Heavenly Lake), 14, 146, 178, 181, 294
Tiān Chí monster (guàiwu), 179
Tiāndū Fēng (Huáng Shān), 391
Tiān'é Hú (Swan Lake), 311
Tiāngōng Lóugé (Celestial Palace Pavilion; Dàtóng), 198
Tiān Hòu Gōng (Níngbō), 456
Tiānhòu Gōng (Quánzhōu), 483–484
Tiānhóu Gōng (Jīngdézhèn), 500
Tiānjīn, 68, 70, 71, 119–121
Tiānjīn Art Museum (Tiānjīn Wénwùguǎn Cáng), 120
Tiān Jǐng (Heaven's Well; Huá Shān), 256
Tiānjīn Wénwùguǎn Cáng (Tiānjīn Art Museum), 120
Tiānkuáng Diàn (Hall of Heavenly Gifts; Tài Shān), 340
Tiānlóng Túnbǎo, 607
Tiānníng Sì (Zhèngdìng), 140
Tiān Qiáo (Heavenly Bridge; Sīmǎtái), 114–115
Tiān Qiáo Happy Tea House (Tiān Qiáo Lè Cháguǎn; Běijīng), 125
Tiān Shān (the Heavenly Mountains), 236
Tiānshuǐ, 257–260
Tiān Tán (Temple of Heaven; Běijīng), 7, 105
Tiān Wáng Diàn (Hall of Celestial Kings; near Táihuái Zhèn), 223, 231
Tiānxià Dìèr Quán (Second Spring Under Heaven; Wúxī), 381
Tiānxià Dìyī Guān (Shānhǎiguān), 135–136
Tiānxīng Qiáo Jīngqū (Heavenly Star Bridge Scenic Area), 606
Tiānyá Hǎijiǎo, 671
Tiān Yī Gé Bówùguǎn (Níngbō), 456–457
Tiānyóu Shān, 478
Tiānzhǔ Jiàotáng (Catholic Church)
Dàlǐ), 632
Jílín City, 176
Níngbō, 456
Qīngdǎo), 353–354
Tiānzǐ Shān Nature Reserve, 734
Tibet, 16, 27, 737–779
climate, 25
holidays, 25
special events and festivals, 27, 29–31
Tibetan Buddhism, 7, 31, 107, 216, 269, 620, 643, 737, 743, 765, 768
Tiě Tǎ (Iron Pagoda; Kāifēng), 333
Tiě Tǎ (Tài Shān), 340
Tiger Hill (Hǔ Qiū Shān; Sūzhōu), 437
Tiger Leaping Gorge (Hǔtiào Xiá), 4, 645–646
Tiger Leaping Stone (Hǔtiào Shí), 646
Tiger Mountain Great Wall (Hǔshān Chángchéng), 158–159
Time zone, 66
Tingri (Lǎo Dingri), 775
Tipping, 66
guides and drivers on escorted tours, 44
Tomb-Sweeping Festival (Qīngmíng), 28
Tóng Bēn Mǎ (Flying Horse; Lánzhōu), 263
Tóng Diàn (Bronze Hall; Táihuái Zhèn), 230
Tónglǐ, 383
Tóngrén (Repkong), 745–747
Tóng Tíng (Tài Shān), 340
Tōngzhá, 671
Tourist information, 17–18
Tours
escorted, 43–48
package, 42
Tower of Refuge (Bīnān Lóu; Qūfù), 347
Traffic, 34
Trains Unlimited, Tours, 49
Train travel, 41–42, 50–52
Transportation, 49
Trans-Siberian railroad, 70
Traveler's checks, 23
Travel insurance, 32
Travelocity, 36
Travel warnings, 38
Trip-cancellation insurance, 32
Tropical Flower and Plants Garden (Rèdài Huāhuìyuán), 661
True Arts & Curios (Hong Kong), 558
Tselnak Khamdo (Sānchàkǒu), 752
Tsimshatsui (Hong Kong), 532, 556

Tsimshatsui East (Hong Kong), 533
Tsingtao Brewery (Qīngdǎo), 355
Tsongkapa (Zōngkābā), 31, 107, 742–743, 760, 765, 766, 769
Tuán Chéng (Round City; Běijīng), 108
Tuán Shān Cūn (near Jiànshuǐ), 668
Tuányuán Jié (Mid-Autumn Festival), 30–31
Tuen Ng Festival (Dragon Boat Races; Hong Kong), 29–30
Tuisī Yuán (Retreat and Reflection Garden; Tónglǐ), 383
Tǔlǔfān Bówùguǎn (Turpan), 284
Tung Wan Beach (Cheung Chau), 556
Túnxī, 389, 393–398
Turning Wheel Storage Hall (Zhuǎnlún Cáng Diàn; Zhèngdìng), 140
Turpan (Tǔlǔfān), 282–288
Turtle Head Isle (Yuántóuzhǔ), 381
Tushuk Tash (Shipton's Arch), 305
Tuyoq, 286
203-Meter Mountain (Erlíngsān Gāodì; Dàlián), 163–164

Underground Forest (Dìxià Sēnlín), 179
Underground Palace (Dìng Líng), 116
Union Insurance Co. Building (Shànghǎi), 423
Unit 731 Museum (Qīnhuá Rìjūn Dìqīsānyāo Bùduì Jiùzhǐ; Harbin), 6, 186–187
Universal Currency Converter, 38
University holidays, 25
Upper Wǔtún (Shàng Wǔtún), 746
UPS (Běijīng), 76
Ürümqi, 288–293

Vairocana Buddha, 326, 749, 767
Vairocana Temple or Wénchéng Gōngzhǔ Miào (Temple of Princess Wénchéng; Yùshù), 749
Valley of Nine Villages (Jiǔzhài Gōu), 697–700
Victoria Peak (Hong Kong), 550
Vietnamese Embassy (Běijīng), 75
Visa ATM Locator, 38
Visa emergency number, 63
Visas, 18–20
  extensions, 19, 76
Visitor information, 17–18
Volcanoes, Téngchōng area, 657
Volcano Park (Huǒshān Gōngyuán), 657

Wài Bā Miào (Eight Outer Temples; Chéngdé), 128, 131–132
Wàiwén Shūdiàn (Foreign Languages Bookstore; Běijīng), 75–76
Walnut Grove (Hétao Yuán), 646
Wanchai (Hong Kong), 532
  accommodations, 542
  bars, 563
Wànfó Diàn (Palace of Ten Thousand Buddhas; Píngyáo), 222
Wànfó Dīng, 690
Wànfó Dòng (Ten Thousand Buddha Cave; Luòyáng), 326
Wáng Āntíng Xiǎoxiào Zhānlǎnguǎn (Máo Museum), 7, 681
Wángchéng Gōngyuán (Luòyáng), 328
Wáng Family Courtyard (Wáng Jiā Dàyuàn; near Píngyáo), 223
Wàngfēng Tíng (Peak Viewing Pavilion; near Kūnmíng), 627
Wángfǔjǐng Bookstore (Běijīng), 75
Wángfǔjǐng Dàjiē (Běijīng), 72, 121–122
  restaurants around, 89–90
Wáng Jiā Dàyuàn, 5
Wángjiāpíng Gémìng Jiùzhǐ (Former Revolutionary Headquarters at Wángjiāpíng; Yán'ān), 219
Wàng Shì Xiào Yuàn (Yángzhōu), 376
Wǎng Shī Yuán (Master of the Nets Garden; Sūzhōu), 437
Wàngǔ Lóu (Lìjiāng), 640
Wànguó Qúnxīng Zúqiú (ClubFootball; Běijīng), 126
Wáng Xīzhī, 243, 449, 450, 452
Wànhuā Zhèn (10,000 Flowers Maze; Běijīng), 108
Wànrénchóu Jùbēi (Sorrow of Ten Thousand Stelae; Qūfù), 349
Wànshèng Jùchǎng (Běijīng), 125
Wànshòu Shān (Longevity Hill; Běijīng), 106
Wànxiàn, 712
Water, drinking, 66
Water Cave (Shuǐyán; near Yángshuò), 594
Water Curtain Cave (Guìyáng), 606
Water-powered Hammers (Sān Bǎo Shuǐduì; Jingdézhèn), 500
Water-Splashing Festival (Pōshuǐ Jié), 28, 659
Watson's (Běijīng), 76
Wave-Subduing Hill (Fúbō Shān; Guilín), 584
Weatherbase, 38
Weather.com, 38
Websites (online resources), 36–37
Wéifāng International Kite Festival, 9, 28–29
Wèi Huáng Gōng, 6, 170
Wèi-Jìn Tombs (Xīnchéng Wèi Jìn Mù; near Jiāyùguān), 274
Wěi Mǎnzhōuguó Guówùyuàn (Manchukuo State Council; Chángchūn), 170
Wēizhōu Dǎo, 600–601
Welcoming Guest Pine (Yíngkè Sōng; Tài Shān), 341
Welcoming Guests Pine (Yíngkè Sōng; Huáng Shān), 391
Well of the Pearl Concubine (Zhēnfēi Jǐng; Běijīng), 103
Wéncāng Gōng (Qíluó Qiáoxiāng), 657
Wénchāng Gōng (Táijiāng), 611
Wénchāng Pavilion (Jiāyùguān), 272
Wénhuà Guǎngchǎng (Culture Square; Chángchūn), 170
Wénjīn Gé (Pavilion of Literary Delight; Chéngdé), 131

Wén Miào (Confucian Temple)
Héshùn Qiáoxiāng, 656
Jiànshuǐ), 666
Jílín City), 176
Shànghǎi), 429
Tàiyuán), 226
Wēnquán Yù (Jílín City), 179
Wénshū Yuàn (Chéngdū), 681
Wénxīng Qiáo, 471–472
Wēnzhōu, 463–472
Western District (Hong Kong), 532
Western Hills (Xī Shān; near Kūnmíng), 625
Western Journey Festival (Xīqiān Jié), 29
Western Qīng tombs, 117–118
Western Temple (Jampa Ling; Lhasa), 766
Western Thousand Buddha Caves (Xī Qiān Fó Dòng; Dūnhuáng), 280
Western Union, 24
Western Xià Tombs (Xī Xià Wáng Líng; Yínchuān), 216
West Island (Xī Dǎo), 671
West Lake (Xī Hú; Hángzhōu), 438–440
West Pagoda (Xīsì Tǎ; Kūnmíng), 620
West Second Ring (Běijīng), accommodations, 86–87
West Slope Mountain Gate (Xī Pō Shān Mén), 181
West Station (Xī Kè Zhàn; Běijīng), 70–71
White Crane Ridge, 712
White Dagoba (Bái Tǎ; Yángzhōu), 375–376
White Dagoba Temple (Bái Tǎ Sì; Běijīng), 106, 108
White Horse Temple (Báimǎ Sì; Luòyáng), 327
White Poplar Gully (Báiyáng Gōu), 294
White Water Terraces (Báishuǐ Tái; Sānbā), 651
Wind and rain bridge (Dìpíng), 614
Wòlóng Nature Reserve (Wòlóng Zìrán Bǎohù Qū), 695–697
Wong Tai Sin (Hong Kong), 552
World Heath Organization, 33
World of Suzie Wong (Sūxī Huáng; Běijīng), 127
Worship of Literature Pavilion (Kuíwén Gé; Qūfǔ), 346
Wǔ Dà Liánchí (Five Linked Lakes), 190–191
Wǔdāng Shān, 723–724
Wǔhàn, 716–723
Wǔhóu Cí Héng Jiē (Chéngdū), 679
Wǔlíngyuán, 4, 732–736
Wǔ Mén (Meridian Gate; Běijīng), 102
Wúmén Qiáo (Sūzhōu), 437–438
Wūpà'ěr (Opal), 305
Wúsōng Kǒu (Shànghǎi), 429
Wǔ Sōng Tíng (Five Pine Pavilion; Tài Shān), 341
Wǔtái Shān, 228–233
Wū Tǎ Sì (Hohhot), 206
Wǔ Tíng Qiáo (Five Pavilion Bridge; Yángzhōu), 375
Wúxī, 379–384
Wǔyí Gōng, 478
Wǔyīpéng Shēngtài Guāncè Zhàn (Wǔyīpéng Field Observation Station), 696
Wǔyí Shān, 476–480
Wǔyí Shān Fēngjǐng Qū, 477–478
Wūyóu Shān (Lè Shān), 693
Wǔ Zétiān, Empress, 246, 247, 320, 322, 326
Wúzì Bēi (Stele without Words; Tài Shān), 342

Xiābiān Cūn, 514
Xiāgāng, 515
Xiàhé (Labrang), 3, 236, 266–269
Xiàmén, 16, 486–498
accommodations, 494–495
restaurants, 495, 498
shopping, 493
sights and attractions, 491–493
transportation, 490
traveling to, 488–490
visitor information, 490
Xiàmén Dàxué (Xiàmén), 493
Xiàmén Shì Bówùguǎn (City Museum; Xiàmén), 492
Xī'ān, 1, 15, 237–255
accommodations, 248–251
banks, foreign exchange, and ATMs, 242
Internet access, 242
layout of, 241
nightlife, 253–254
outdoor pursuits, 247
restaurants, 251–252
shopping, 247–248
side trips from, 254–255
sights and attractions, 242–247
tours, 241–242, 245
transportation, 241
traveling to, 237, 241
Xī'ān Chéngqiáng (City Wall; Xī'ān), 245
Xiàn Diàn (Hall of Offerings; Tàiyuán), 227
Xiàngbí Shān (Elephant Trunk Hill; Guilín), 585
Xiāngfēi Mù (Abakh Hoja Mosque or Tomb of the Fragrant Concubine; Kashgar), 302
Xiānggélǐlā (Zhōngdiàn), 648–652
Xiángjí Lòng Mín Zhái (Jǐngdézhèn), 501
Xiàngxíng Róngshù (Měngyǎng), 663
Xiāngyáng Clothing Market (Shànghǎi), 434
Xiānjū Qiáo, 467, 468
Xiǎntōng Sì (Táihuái Zhèn), 230
Xiányáng Museum (Xiányáng Bówùguǎn; near Xī'ān), 246
Xiànyá Shǔ (Píngyáo), 222
Xianzai.com, 38
Xiǎo Cūn, 471
Xiǎo Lí Jiāng (Lesser Lí River), 594–595
Xiào Líng (the Shùnzhì emperor) tomb, 116, 117
Xiǎoxióngmāo Shēngtài Guǎn (Lesser Panda Enclosures; Wòlóng), 696
Xiǎo Yíng Zhōu (Island of Small Seas; Hángzhōu), 440
Xià Wǔtún (Lower Wǔtún), 746
Xīchéng District (Běijīng), 72
Xī Dān Bǎihuò Shāngchǎng (Běijīng), 123
Xī Dǎo (West Island), 671
Xīdì, 397
Xī Hán Cūn, 255
Xī Hàn Nán Yuè Wáng Mù Bówùguǎn (Museum of the Western Hàn Dynasty Mausoleum of the Nán Yuè King; Guǎngzhōu), 511–512
Xī Hú (West Lake; Hángzhōu), 438–440
Xīhuì Gōngyuán (Wúxī), 381
Xījiāng, 610–611
Xī Kè Zhàn (West Station; Běijīng), 70–71
Xīlíng Bridge (Hángzhōu), 439

Xílìtú Zhào (Hohhot), 205–206
Xīn (New Tingri), 775
Xīnchéng Wèi Jìn Mù (Wèi-Jìn Tombs; near Jiāyùguān), 274
Xīn Dōng'ān Shìchǎng (Sun Dong An Plaza; Běijīng), 124
Xīngcūn, 477
Xīnghǎi Gōngyuán (Dàlián), 163
Xīnghǎi Guǎngchǎng (Dàlián), 163
Xīngpíng, 588, 593, 594
Xīngqītiān Dàshìchǎng (Sunday Market; Khotan), 308
Xìng Tán (Apricot Altar; Qūfǔ), 347
Xìnhào Shān Gōngyuán (Signal Hill Park; Qīngdǎo), 355
Xīníng, 738–745
Xīnjiāng, 15, 236
Xīntiāndì (Shànghǎi), 2, 402
Xióngmāo Jīdì/Dàxióngmáo Fánzhí Zhōngxīn (Panda Research Base/Giant Panda Breeding Center; Chéngdū), 681–682
Xī Pō Shān Mén (West Slope Mountain Gate), 181
Xī Qiān Fó Dòng (Western Thousand Buddha Caves; Dūnhuáng), 280
Xī Shān (Western Hills; near Kūnmíng), 625
Xī Shān (Wúxī), 381
Xīshuāngbǎnnà, 658–664
Xīshuāngbǎnnà Rèdài Zhíwùyuán (Měnglún), 663
Xīsì Tǎ (West Pagoda; Kūnmíng), 620
Xī Tǎ (Wēnzhōu), 465
Xiùshuǐ Jiē (Silk Street; Běijīng), 122–123
Xī Xià dynasty, 212
Xī Xià Wáng Líng (Western Xià Tombs; Yínchuān), 216
Xī Zhí Mén Chángtú Qìchē Kèyùn Zhàn (Běijīng), 71
Xīzhōu, 635
Xuánbì Chángchéng (Overhanging Great Wall; near Jiāyùguān), 274
Xuánkōng Sì (Hanging Temple; Dàtóng), 200
Xuánzàng, 141, 142, 237, 244, 285, 296, 307, 367, 681
Xú Ǎo, 472
Xuēzhái Qiáo (Sān Kuí), 470
Xǔguó Shífáng (Xǔguó Stone Archway; Shè Xiàn), 397
Xúhuì (Southwest Shànghǎi), 403
  accommodations, 414
  restaurants, 421
Xūmífúshòu Miào (Temple of Happiness and Longevity at Mount Sumeru; Chéngdé), 131
Xūmí Tǎ (Zhèngdìng), 141
Xúnhuà, 265
Xūn Mǎ Kēng (Ancient Horse Relics Museum; near Zībó), 358
Xúzhōu, 384
Xúzhōu Hàn Bīngmǎyǒng Bówùguǎn (Xúzhōu Terracotta Army Museum; Xúzhōu), 384

Yak Meadow (Máoniú Píng), 645
Yākǒu (near Qīngdǎo), 360
Yàlóng Wān (Yàlóng Bay), 671
Yālù Jiāng Qiáo (Dāndōng), 158
Yán'ān, 217–220
Yánbiān Korean Autonomous Region, 10, 168, 174–175
Yángdī, 588
Yángměi, 580
Yángshān Táng (Hall for Viewing the Grand Rockery; Shànghǎi), 427
Yángsháo culture, 246, 316
Yángshuò, 3, 588–595
Yángshuò Gōngyuán (Yángshuò Park), 590–591
Yangtze Insurance Building (Shànghǎi), 423
Yǎngxīn Diàn (Hall of Mental Cultivation; Běijīng), 103
Yǎngxīn Zhāi (Běijīng), 103
Yángzhōu, 314, 373–379
Yángzhōu Shì Bówùguǎn (Yángzhōu City Museum), 377
Yángzǐ region, 673
Yángzǐ River, 16
Yánjí, 174
Yán Jiā Dàyuàn (Yán Family Compound), 635
Yānshā Yǒuyì Shāngchǎng (Lufthansa Center; Běijīng), 123
Yānshuǐ Tíng (Misty Water Pavilion; Jiǔjiāng), 503
Yāntái Shān Gōngyuán (Beacon Hill Park; Fúzhōu), 475
Yànzi Dòng (Swallow's Nest Cave; Jiànshuǐ), 667
Yàofāng Dòng (Medical Prescription Cave; Luòyáng), 327
Yarkhoto (Jiāohé; near Turpan), 285
Yaumatei (Hong Kong), 533
Yǎxiù Fúzhuāng Shìchǎng (Běijīng), 123
Yellow Mountain (Huáng Shān), 5, 15, 314, 388–393
Yellow River (Huáng Hé), 15, 316
Yellow River region, 195–233
Yellow River Tourist Zone (Huáng Hé Yóulǎn Qū), 316
Yìcàn Quán (Lìjiāng), 639
Yíhé Yuán (Summer Palace; Běijīng), 105–106
Yílíng Yán (near Nánníng), 580
Yínbì de Shù (The Hidden Tree; Běijīng), 126
Yínchuān, 211–218
Yíndìng Qiáo (Silver Ingot Bridge; Běijīng), 112
Yíngkè Sōng (Welcoming Guest Pine; Tài Shān), 341
Yíngkè Sōng (Welcoming Guests Pine; Huáng Shān), 391
Yīng Xiàn Mù Tǎ (Yīng Xiàn Wooden Pagoda; Dàtóng), 200–201
Yīníng (Gulja), 310–311
Yin Shān Yuèguó Wáng Líng (Shàoxīng), 452–453
Yín Tān (Silver Beach; Běihǎi), 599
Yīsīlán Jiào Shèng Mù (Tombs of the Islamic Saints; Quánzhōu), 483
Yī Tiān Mén (First Gate of Heaven; Tài Shān), 341
Yī Xiàn, 396
Yī Xiàn Tiān (Huáng Shān), 391
Yíxīng, 379, 380, 384–386
Yíxīng Táocí Bówùguǎn, 385
Yǒngdìng, 9
  earth houses of, 496–497
Yōnghé Gōng (Lama Temple; Běijīng), 7–8, 107–108
Yǒng Zhào Líng (Gōngyì), 320
Yóǒgníng, 647
Yóujī Yámen (Jiāyùguān), 272

Yóutài Wénhuà Zhǎnlǎnguǎn (Jewish Cultural Exhibit Center; Kāifēng), 333
Yóuyì Qīngnián Jiǔdiàn (Poacher's Inn; Běijīng), 127
Yǒuyì Shāngchǎng (Friendship Store; Běijīng), 123
Yuán Míng Yuán (Běijīng), 108
Yuán Qiū (Circular Altar; Běijīng), 105
Yuántōng Sì (Kūnmíng), 620–621
Yuántóuzhǔ (Turtle Head Isle), 381
Yuányáng, 668
Yúcūn, 594
Yuèliàng Shān (Moon Hill; near Yángshuò), 593
Yuen Po Street Bird Garden (Hong Kong), 553–554
Yuèyá Tíng (Crescent Moon Pavilion; Huáng Shān), 391
Yù Fēi Yuán Qīn (Garden of Rest), 117
Yùfēng Sì (near Lìjiāng), 643–644
Yùfó Sì (Jade Buddha Temple; Shànghǎi), 429
Yù Garden (Yù Yuán; Shànghǎi), 423, 427
Yù Hú (Nguluko; near Lìjiāng), 644
Yùhuáng Dǐng (Tài Shān), 342
Yùhuáng Miào (Tài Shān), 342
Yù Huá Táng (Hall of Jade Magnificence; Shànghǎi), 427
Yù Huāyuán (Imperial Garden; Běijīng), 103
Yù Líng Lóng (Exquisite Jade; Shànghǎi), 427
Yù Líng (Qiánlóng) tomb, 116, 117
Yùlóng Qiáo (Jade Dragon Bridge; Báishā), 594
Yùlóng Xuěshān (Jade Dragon Snow Mountain), 644–645
Yúnfēng Shān, 657
Yúngǎng Shíkū (Yúngǎng Caves; Shānxī), 8, 198–200
Yúngǔ Sì cable car (Huáng Shān), 390
Yúnnán, 16, 615
Yúnnán Mínzú Cūn (Yúnnán Nationalities Village; Kūnmíng), 625–626
Yúnnán Museum of Minority Nationalities (Yúnnán Mínzú Bówùguǎn; near Kūnmíng), 625
Yúnnán Provincial Museum (Yúnnán Shěng Bówùguǎn; Kūnmíng), 621
Yúnnán Shěng Bówùguǎn (Yúnnán Provincial Museum; Kūnmíng), 621
Yúnshān Píng (Spruce Meadow), 645
Yǔnshí Bówùguǎn (Meteorite Museum; Jílín City), 176
Yúnyán Tǎ (Cloud Rock Pagoda; Sūzhōu), 437
Yùpíng cable car (Huáng Shān), 390
Yùpíng Fēng (Jade Screen Peak; Huáng Shān), 391
Yú Shān (Fúzhōu), 475
Yùshù (Jyekundo), 747–750
Yùshù (Qīnghǎi), 9
Yùtíng Huā Niǎo Shìchǎng (Běijīng), 123
Yùwén Qiáo (Zhōulǐng), 470

Zàojūn Miào (Píngyáo), 222
Zen (Chán) Buddhism, 141, 142, 503
Zha, 776
Zhālàinuò'ěr (Mǎnzhōulǐ), 193
Zhānggōng Dòng (Yíxīng), 385–386
Zhāng Jiā Huāyuán (near Jiànshuǐ), 668
Zhāngjiā Jiè, 4–5, 732–736
Zhāngjiā Jiè National Forest Park, 734
Zhāngmù (Dram), 776–777
Zhāng Residence (Zhāng Xuéliáng Jiùjū Chénlièguǎn; Shěnyáng), 152
Zhàn Qiáo (Qīngdǎo), 354
Zhàn Shān Sì (Zīquán Lù 4; Qīngdǎo), 355
Zhàogōngkǒu Chángtú Kèyùn Qìchē Zhàn (Běijīng), 71
Zhào Xiàn, 138
Zhàoxìng, 611, 613–614
Zhàozhōu Qiáo (Zhào Xiàn), 138, 142
Zhāshílúnbù Sì (Tashilhunpo Monastery; Shigatse), 768–769
Zhébàng Sì (Drepung Monastery; Lhasa), 759–760
Zhèjiāng, 15
Zhèjiāng Provincial Museum (Zhèjiāng Shěng Bówùguǎn; Hángzhōu), 439–440
Zhènchéng Lóu (Yǒngdìng), 496
Zhēnfēi Jǐng (Well of the Pearl Concubine; Běijīng), 103
Zhèngdìng temple buildings (Héběi), 7, 138, 139–142
Zhèng Gōng (Main Palace; Chéngdé), 131
Zhèng Hé Gōngyuán (Kūnmíng), 626
Zhènguó Sì (Píngyáo), 222
Zhèngyǐcí Xìlóu (Běijīng), 125
Zhèngzhōu, 314–320
Zhōng Běi Jiùhuò Shìchǎng (Xī'ān), 11, 248
Zhōngbiǎo Guǎn (Hall of Clocks; Běijīng), 103
Zhōngdiàn (Xiānggélǐlā), 648–652
Zhōnggòng Yīdàhuìzhǐ (Site of the First National Congress of the Communist Party; Shànghǎi), 431
Zhōngguó Cháyè Bówùguǎn (Chinese Tea Museum; Hángzhōu), 441
Zhōngguó Gǔdài Xìng Wénhuà Bówùguǎn (Museum of Ancient Chinese Sex Culture; Shànghǎi), 430
Zhōngguó Lìshǐ Bówùguǎn (Museum of Chinese History; Běijīng), 109
Zhōngguó Mù'ǒu Jùyuàn (China Puppet Art Theater; Běijīng), 125
Zhōnghé Diàn (Hall of Perfect Harmony; Běijīng), 102
Zhōnghé Sì (Dàlǐ), 635
Zhōnghuá Mén Chéngbabǎo (Nánjīng), 365
Zhōng Lóu (Bell Tower; Kūnmíng), 624
Zhōngshān Gōngyuán (Qīngdǎo), 355
Zhōngshān Guǎngchǎng (Dàlián), 162
Zhōngshān Guǎngchǎng (Shěnyáng), 150
Zhōngshān Líng (Nánjīng), 366–367

Zhōng Tiān Mén (Middle Gate of Heaven; Tài Shān), 341
Zhōnguó Gémìng Bówùguǎn (Museum of the Chinese Revolution; Běijīng), 109
Zhongwen.com, 38
Zhōngyáng Dàjiē, 1
Zhōngyuè Miào (near Dēngfēng), 323
Zhōuchéng, 635–636
Zhōu Ēnlái's Former Residence (Zhōu Gōng Guǎn; Shànghǎi), 431
Zhōulǐng, 468
Zhōu Mínzú Bówùguǎn (Minorities Museum; Kǎilǐ), 609
Zhōuxī, 610
Zhuàng Minority Culture Park (near Nánníng), 580
Zhuǎnlún Cáng Diàn (Turning Wheel Storage Hall; Zhèngdìng), 140
Zhū Jiā Huāyuán (Zhū Family Garden; Jiànshuǐ), 666
Zhuō Zhèng Yuán (Humble Administrator's Garden; Sūzhōu), 436–437
Zhū Sì Yuán Yuán Mén (Jiànshuǐ), 666
Zhúzhuàng Jiélǐ, 657
Zībó, funeral pits of, 358–359
Zǐjīn Shān (Purple Gold Mountain; Nánjīng), 366
Zìlì Cūn (Kāipíng), 514
Zīmèifàn Jié (Sisters' Meal Festival), 28, 611
Zīquán Lù 4 (Zhàn Shān Sì; Qīngdǎo), 355
Zǐxiāo Gōng (Purple Mist Palace; Wǔdāng Shān), 724
Zǐzhúlín Chányuàn (Purple Bamboo Forest Zen Institute; Pǔtuó Shān), 462
Zǒngfó Sì (Jǐnghóng), 661
Zǒngtǒng Fǔ (Nánjīng), 365–366
Zoological and Botanical Gardens (Hong Kong), 554
Zuǒ An (Rive Gauche; Běijīng), 127