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Excursions ■

Excursions

He who has not climbed the Great Wall is not a true man.

Mao Zedong

Getting out of town can help blow the nitrogen dioxide and construction dust from your hair and lungs, while offering a glimpse of more rugged and exciting terrain. You've already made it to Běijīng, so why not go that extra mile and dig a bit deeper into the China experience.

Some of China's most famous monuments lie within Běijīng Municipality, outside the city proper. The **Great Wall** is an obligatory sight for visitors, and several restored stretches can be visited on day trips outside town. Trips to the Great Wall are often combined with visits to the **Ming Tombs**, the stately burial place of 13 of the Ming emperors. For those interested in dynastic remains and Chinese tomb architecture, further imperial tombs can also be explored at the **Eastern Qing Tombs**.

Several of Běijīng's most famous temples lie within reach of town, including **Tanzhe Temple** and **Jietai Temple**. The remoteness of the ancient hillside village of **Chuāndìxià** has partially protected its charming streets and buildings from full-scale commercialisation and the community still provides a fascinating snapshot of disappearing China.

Further from Běijīng (300km), the Ming dynasty garrison town of **Shānhàiguān** is being repackaged from the soles up, but visits allow travellers to skirt the edge of China's mighty northeast while exploring a famous section of the Great Wall north of town.

A one- or two-day trip to the imperial retreat of **Chéngdē**, 255km northeast of Běijīng, should be a high priority for travellers to Běijīng. The scenery is magnificent and beyond the grounds of the imperial estate rises an impressive scattering of hillside temple architecture.

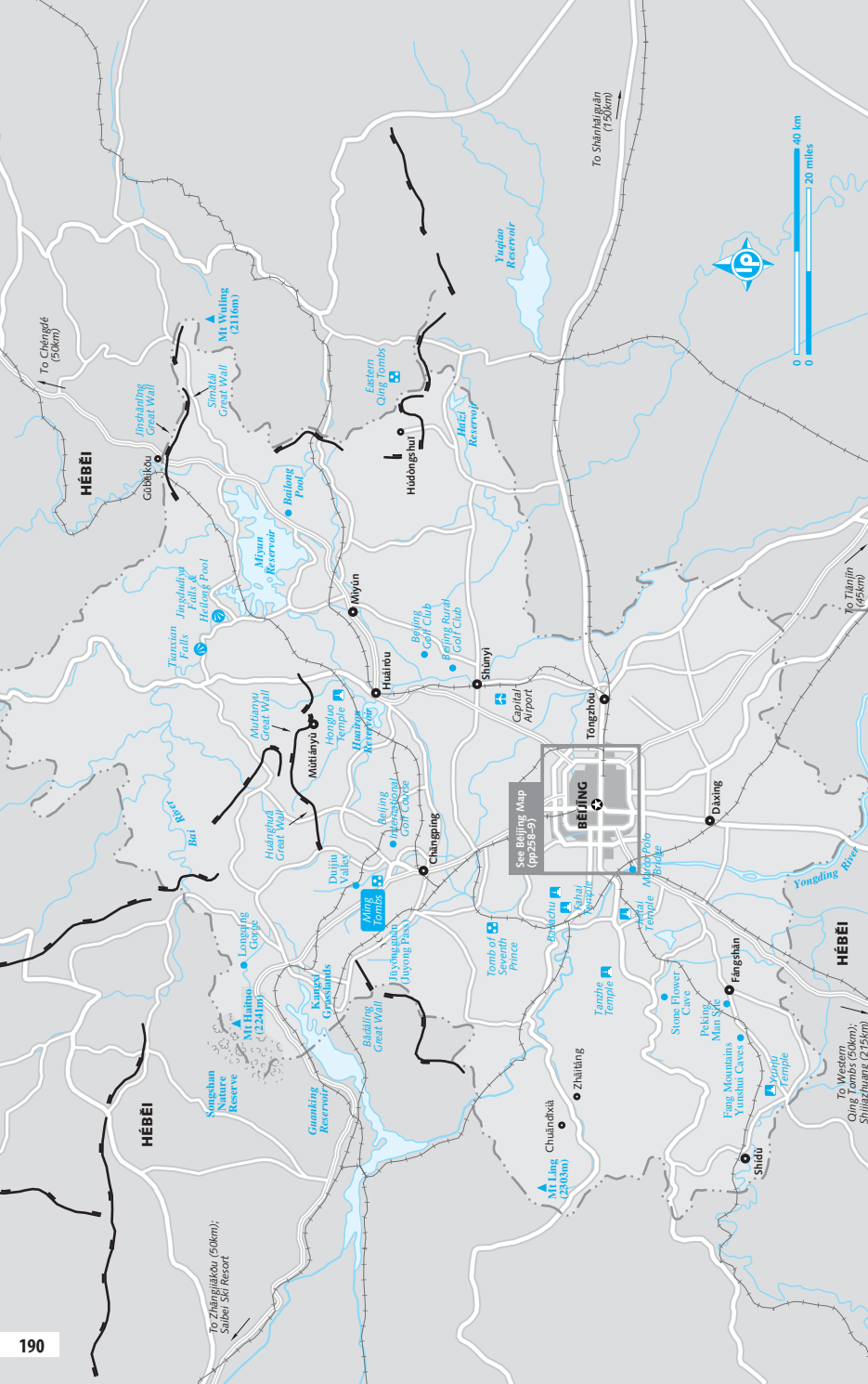
THE GREAT WALL 长城

Also known to the Chinese as the '10,000 Li Wall' (**Wànli Chángchéng**; 万里长城) – one 'Li' is a Chinese unit of distance equal to around half a kilometre, so this effectively means the '5000km Wall' – and famously ignored by Marco Polo in his travelogue, the piecemeal Great Wall (**Chángchéng**) meanders across China, snaking from its scattered remnants on the North Korean border through Inner Mongolia and staggering on to its earthen vestiges at Lop Nur in the mighty northwest province of Xinjiāng.

Standard histories emphasise the unity of the Wall. The 'original' Wall was begun over 2000 years ago during the Qin dynasty (221–207 BC), when China was unified under Emperor Qin Shihuang. Separate walls, constructed by independent kingdoms to keep out marauding nomads, were linked together. The effort required hundreds of thousands of workers, many of them political prisoners, and 10 years of hard labour under General Meng Tian. An estimated 180 million cu metres of rammed earth were used to form the core of the original Wall, and legend has it that one of its more gruesome building materials was the bones of workers.

The Wall never really did perform its function as an impenetrable line of defence. As Genghis Khan supposedly said, 'The strength of a wall depends on the courage of those who defend it'. Sentries could be bribed and loyalties could be swayed. However, it did work very well as a kind of elevated highway, transporting people and equipment across mountainous terrain. Its beacon tower system, using smoke signals generated by burning wolves' dung, transmitted news of enemy movements quickly back to the capital. To the west in Gānsū province was the fort at Jiāyùguān, a strategic link on the Silk Rd, where unwanted mortals were ejected through the gates to face the terrifying wild west.

Prior to the Ming era, the Wall was largely constructed of tamped earth, without an outer brick cladding. During the Ming dynasty a valiant effort was made to fortify the bastion, this time facing it with bricks and stone slabs – some 60 million cu metres worth. The project took over 100 years, and the costs in human effort and resources were phenomenal.



INJURIES ON THE GREAT WALL

Never in his most vivid nightmares could the Great Wall's first architect Emperor Qin Shihuang picture barbarians wobbling around his bastion in 'I climbed the Great Wall' T-shirts. His edifice occasionally retaliates, however, against ill-prepared or over-adventurous tourists.

Despite being a generally hazard-free outing for most day-trippers, more elderly or unfit travellers can drag a twisted ankle or even a broken leg back with them through customs. Certain parts of the rampart, especially the steeper reaches, can exhaust the unfit and the steps are often uneven.

Simātái can be precarious and Huánghuā, with its wilder sections, can be quite treacherous. Solo travel along the Great Wall can be perilous: walkers have fallen from the Wall, while there have been reports of travellers being assaulted on more remote parts of the Wall. In 2002, a British tourist was murdered on the Wall.

Avoid climbing the Great Wall during thunderstorms. A Greek tourist was killed by lightning in 2005; reports suggest she was using a mobile phone when struck, although it is uncertain whether there is any causal connection between lightning strikes and mobile phone use. Take bottled water and shoes with a good grip. If going on a long hike, be well-prepared for changeable weather.

Perhaps because they breached the bastion with little fuss at Shānhǎiguān (p200) to install the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), China's Manchu overlords had little time for the Wall, which fell into further disrepair during the republic (1911–1949). The war with Japan and the civil war further compounded the damage, a decline that was exacerbated by the communists under Mao Zedong, who encouraged the pillaging of the Wall for building materials. According to locals, the reservoir dam at Huánghuā (p196) was assembled with bricks from the neighbouring Wall.

Classic postcard images of the Wall – flawlessly clad in bricks and stoutly undulating over hills into the distance – stretch the truth of the bastion today. Much of the Wall has been either neglected or plundered for its raw materials (farmers have pillaged its earthen core for use on the fields and the Wall has generated a useful and free supply of stone, stripped from its rampart for use on road and building construction) leaving it either in a state of ruin or reduced to dust by the erosion of time. According to some estimates, two thirds of the Wall has now been lost.

In recent years the Great Wall has had to contend with a growing popularity as a venue for summer parties ('wild orgies' according to the *China Daily*). Attended by thousands of drunken revellers, the festivities at Jinshānlǐng sparked concern at the perceived desecration of a national monument. A company was recently fined US\$50,000 for driving a road through a section of the Wall in Inner Mongolia.

Popular sections of the Wall outside Běijīng have been restored and dolled up for tourist consumption and so arrive heavily packaged, replete with souvenir shops, raucous hawkers, restaurants, amusement park rides and guard rails. Seeking communion with the Wall *au naturel*, unimpressed travellers have increasingly ferreted out unrestored sections of the Wall where local communities charge far less than the official sites. Huánghuā (p196) is the most well-known example of such undeveloped chunks of the Great Wall. The authorities discourage such visits with threats of fines. They argue that they are seeking to prevent damage to unrestored sections of the Wall by traipsing visitors, but they are also keen to keep the tourist revenue flowing to designated parts of the Wall.

The myth that the Great Wall is visible with the naked eye from the moon was finally laid to rest in 2003, when China's first astronaut Yang Liwei failed to see the barrier from space. The Great Wall is certainly not visible from the moon, where even individual continents are barely perceptible. The Great Wall is not wide enough to be visible from space; motorways, which are far wider, would certainly be more visible at altitude. The myth is to be edited from Chinese textbooks, where it has cast its spell over generations of Chinese.

The most touristed area of the Wall is Bādǎlíng. Also renovated but less touristy are Simātái and Jinshānlǐng. The Jiǎo Shān section at Shānhǎiguān (p201) is also worth seeing.

When choosing a tour, it is essential to check that it visits the places you want to see. Tours to the Great Wall are often combined with trips to the Ming Tombs, so ask beforehand and if you don't want to visit the Ming Tombs, choose another tour. Far more

worryingly, less reputable tours make painful (and sometimes expensive) diversions to gem exhibition halls and Chinese medicine centres. At the latter, tourists are herded off the bus and analysed by white-coated doctors, who diagnose ailments that can only be cured with high-priced Chinese remedies (supplied there and then). The tour organisers receive a commission from the gem showroom/medicine centre for every person they manage to funnel through, so you are simply lining other people's pockets. See Organised Tours in the Sights for a selection of outfits that can arrange tours to the Great Wall, but ensure you know what the tour entails. The handiest tours to the Great Wall depart from the Beijing Sightseeing Bus Centre (Běijīng Lǚyóu Jísàn Zhōngxīn; ☎ 8353 1111) east and west of Front Gate (p76) at Qianmen alongside Tiananmen Square but your hotel may run an equally convenient tour; many of the youth hostel tours to the Great Wall come recommended. As with other popular destinations in China, avoid visiting the Great Wall at weekends and during the big national holiday periods in the first week of May and October.

If trudging along the Wall fails to get your heart pumping, consider turning your legs to stone tackling the 3700 steps and brutal inclines of the Great Wall Marathon (www.great-wall-marathon.com).

BĀDǎLÍNG 八达岭

This is a Great Wall and only a great people with a great past could have a great wall and such a great people with such a great wall will surely have a great future.

President Richard Nixon

At an elevation of 1000m, the Great Wall's most high-profile and most-photographed vista is 70km northwest of Běijīng at Bādǎlíng. Most visitors to the Great Wall take in Bādǎlíng, including US President Richard Nixon, on his 1972 visit to China.

The masonry here was first erected during the enterprising Ming dynasty (1368–1644), with subsequent heavy restoration work in the 1950s and 1980s. Punctuated with watchtowers (*dǎlóu*), the 6m wide wall is clad in brick, typical of the neat stonework so characteristic of the Ming.

Amid raw and striking scenery, this is the place to see the Wall snaking off in classic fashion into the hills. Also come here for guardrails, souvenir stalls, a fairground feel and the companionship of squads of tourists surging over the ramparts. If your visit coincides

TRANSPORT

Distance from Běijīng 70km

Direction Northwest

Tours All the operators under Organised Tours in the Sights chapter (p71) run tours to Bādǎlíng. Some hotels charge astronomical prices for tours, but they can be convenient and you can depart from your hotel. Youth hostels run popular and value-for-money tours.

Local Bus The cheapest route to Bādǎlíng is on bus 919 from just north of the Deshengmen gate tower, about 500m east of the Jishuitan subway stop. Buses leave regularly from 6.30am; ordinary buses take two hours and cost ¥5, while faster, nonstop buses take one hour and cost ¥12. The last bus leaves Bādǎlíng for Běijīng at 6.30pm.

Tour Bus Tour buses to Bādǎlíng depart from the twin depots of the Beijing Sightseeing Bus Centre (Běijīng Lǚyóu Jísàn Zhōngxīn; ☎ 8353 1111) east and west of Front Gate (p76) at Qianmen alongside Tiananmen Square. The main depot is the western station. Line C (¥90 return; price includes entry to Great Wall; departures 8am–11.30am) runs to Bādǎlíng; Line A runs to Bādǎlíng and Ding Líng at the Ming Tombs (¥160; includes entrance tickets and lunch; departures 6.30am–10.30am). Plan about nine hours for the whole trip. Touts for inexpensive Chinese tour buses patrol the Beijing Train Station forecourt, but they may detour to scam destinations and are best avoided.

Taxi A taxi to Bādǎlíng and back will cost a minimum of ¥400 for an eight-hour hire with a maximum of four passengers.

with a summer weekend crush, you won't be able to move, so aim to visit during the week. Winter trips are also possible, but you will need to seriously wrap up and be prepared for stinging cold and sharp winds – Bādǎling can be much colder than urban Běijīng.

Two magnificent sections of wall trail off to the left and right of the main entrance. The restored sections crawl for quite a distance before nobly disintegrating into ruins; unfortunately you cannot realistically explore these more authentic fragments. Cable cars exist for the weary (Y50 round trip).

Apart from the pristine battlements, you can be conveyed back into history via 15-minute films about the Great Wall at the **Great Wall Circle Vision Theatre**, a 360-degree amphitheatre. The admission fee also gets you into the **China Great Wall Museum**. The **Bādǎling Safari World** (Bādǎling Yěshēng Dòngwūyuán; admission Y70; ☎ 8am-5pm) is hardly what coming to the Wall is all about and children could be traumatised by watching live sheep being fed to the lions.

MÙTIÁNYÙ 慕田峪

The 2250m-long granite section of the Great Wall at Mùtiányù, in Huáiróu County, dates from Ming dynasty remains built upon an earlier Northern Qi-dynasty conception. Originally developed as an alternative to Bādǎling, this stretch of the Wall is, in the balance, a less commercial experience. Despite some motivated hawking and tourist paraphernalia, Mùtiányù is notable for its numerous Ming dynasty guard towers and stirring views. The Wall is also equipped with a **cable car** (Y50 round trip; ☎ 8.30am to 4.30pm). October is the best month to visit, for the autumn colours of the trees that envelop the surrounding countryside.

TRANSPORT

Distance from Běijīng 90km

Direction Northeast

Local Bus From Dongzhimen long-distance bus station (Dōngzhímén Chángtú Qichēzhàn; ☎ 6467 4995) take either bus 916 or 980 (both Y8, one hour 40 minutes) to Huáiróu (怀柔) then change for a minibus to Mùtiányù (Y25). Note: There is a possibility that buses from the Dongzhimen long-distance bus station could move to the nearby Dongzhimen Transport Hub (still under construction at the time of writing).

Tour Bus The Line A bus to Mùtiányù and Hongluo Temple (Hóngluó Sì) runs on Sundays and public holidays (Y110; price includes entrance ticket and return fare) between 6.30am and 8.30am from the Beijing Sightseeing Bus Centre (Běijīng Lǚyóu Jísàn Zhōngxīn; ☎ 8353 1111) east and west of Front Gate (p76) at Qianmen alongside Tiananmen Square and also from outside the South Cathedral at Xuanwumen.

JŪYŌNGGUĀN 居庸关

Originally constructed in the 5th century and rebuilt by the Ming, Jūyōngguān (Juyong Pass) was considered one of the most strategically significant parts of the Wall. Even though this section in Chāngpíng County feels as though all authenticity has been renovated out of it, it's the closest section of the Wall to Běijīng, it's usually reasonably quiet and the steep and somewhat strenuous circuit can be done in under two hours.

TRANSPORT

Distance from Běijīng 50km

Direction Northwest

Local Bus Jūyōngguān is on the road to Bādǎling, so the public buses for Bādǎling listed earlier will get you there.

Tour Bus From the Beijing Sightseeing Bus Centre (Běijīng Lǚyóu Jísàn Zhōngxīn; ☎ 8353 1111) east and west of Front Gate (p76) at Qianmen alongside Tiananmen Square, Line B buses travel to Jūyōngguān and Ding Líng at the Ming Tombs (Y125; includes entrance tickets and lunch) with departures between 6.30am and 10am.

SĪMĀTÁI 司马台

In Miyún County near the town of Gǔběikǒu, the stirring remains at Simātái make for an exhilarating Great Wall experience. Built during the reign of Ming dynasty emperor Hongwu, the 19km stretch is characterised by watchtowers, steep plunges and scrambling ascents.

This rugged section of wall can be heart-thumpingly steep and the scenery is dramatic, although the masonry was due for a makeover, which could pacify its wilder moments. The eastern section of wall at Simātái is the most treacherous, sporting 16 watchtowers and dizzyingly steep ascents. From around the 12th watchtower, the climb gets very precarious. A few slopes have 70-degree inclines and you need both hands free, so bring a day-pack to hold your camera and other essentials. One narrow section of footpath has a 500m drop, so it's no place for acrophobics. The cable car (Y50 round trip) saves time and could be an alternative to a sprained ankle. Take strong shoes with a good grip.

Simātái has some unusual features, such as 'obstacle-walls' – walls-within-walls used for defending against enemies who'd already scaled the Great Wall. Small cannon have been discovered in this area, as well as evidence of rocket-type weapons, such as flying knives and flying swords.

TRANSPORT

Distance from Běijīng 110km

Direction Northeast

Local Bus Take a minibus (Y10; 1¼ hours) to Míyún (密云) or bus 980 (Y10) from Dongzhimen long-distance bus station and change to a minibus to Simātái or a taxi (round trip Y120). Note: There is a possibility that buses from the Dongzhimen long-distance bus station could move to the nearby Dongzhimen Transport Hub (still under construction at the time of writing).

Tour Bus The weekend Line D tour bus (Y95; price includes entrance ticket) runs to Simātái from the Beijing Sightseeing Bus Centre (Běijīng Lǚyóu Jísàn Zhōngxīn; ☎ 8353 1111) east and west of Front Gate (p76) at Qianmen alongside Tiananmen Square and also from outside the South Cathedral at Xuanwumen. Buses depart on Fridays and Saturdays and public holidays between 6.30am and 8.30am.

Hotel Tours Backpacker hotels often run morning trips by minibus (Y60 to Y80, not including ticket).

Taxi Hiring a taxi from Běijīng for the day costs about Y400.

JĪNSHĀNLĪNG 金山岭

Though neither as steep nor as impressive as Simātái, the Great Wall at Jīnshānlǐng (Jinshanling Chángchéng; admission Y40) has 24 watchtowers and is relatively less developed, despite restoration work.

Jīnshānlǐng is also the starting point for a popular hike to Simātái. The distance between Jīnshānlǐng and Simātái is only about 10km, but it takes nearly four hours as the trail is steep and stony. Parts of the Wall between Jīnshānlǐng and Simātái have collapsed and much is in a state of ruin, but it can be traversed without too much difficulty even if you occasionally have to navigate around more precarious sections. Reaching Simātái, however, you will have to cross a suspension bridge (Y5), and you may be stung for another ticket to enter the Simātái section.

You can do the trek in the opposite direction, but getting a ride back to Běijīng from Simātái is easier than from Jīnshānlǐng. Of course, this won't be a problem if you've made arrangements with your driver to pick you up (and didn't pay him in advance).

TRANSPORT

Distance from Běijīng 110km

Direction Northeast

Local Bus From Dongzhimen long-distance bus station (☎ 6467 4995) take a minibus (Y10; 1¼ hours) or bus 980 (Y10) to Miyún (密云), change to a minibus to Gǔběikǒu (古北口) and get off at Bākèshìyíng (巴克什营; Y7). If you are heading to Chéngdé (p203) you will pass Jīnshānlǐng en route. Note: There is a possibility that buses from the Dongzhimen long-distance bus station could move to the nearby Dongzhimen Transport Hub (still under construction at the time of writing).

Hotel Tours Běijīng youth hostels typically run day tours to Jīnshānlǐng, picking up hikers at Simātái.

HUANGHUA 黄花

The ever popular sections of the Great Wall at Huanghua have breathtaking panoramas of partially unrestored brickwork and watchtowers snaking off in two directions. There is also a refreshing absence of amusement park rides, exasperating tourist trappings and the full-on commercial mania of Badaling and other tourist bottlenecks.

Clinging to the hillside on either side of a reservoir, Huanghua is a classic and well-preserved example of Ming defence with high and wide ramparts, intact parapets and sturdy beacon towers. Periodic but incomplete restoration work on the Wall has left its crumbling nobility and striking authenticity largely intact, with the ramparts occasionally dissolving into rubble. The Wall was much more impressive before parts of the Wall were knocked down to provide stones for the construction of the dam.

It is said that Lord Cai masterminded this section, employing meticulous quality control. Each *cun* (inch) of the masonry represented one labourer's whole day's work. When the Ministry of War got wind of the extravagance, Cai was beheaded for his efforts. In spite of the trauma, his decapitated body stood erect for three days before toppling. Years later a general judged Lord Cai's Wall to be exemplary and he was posthumously rehabilitated.

Despite its lucrative tourist potential, authorities have failed to wrest Huanghua from local villagers, who have so far resisted incentives to relinquish their prized chunks of heritage.

Official on-site signs declare that it's illegal to climb here, but locals pooh-pooh the warnings and encourage travellers to visit and clamber on the Wall. Fines are rarely enforced, although a theoretical risk exists.

From the road, you can go either way along the battlements. On the east side of the reservoir dam past the ticket collector (Y2; stick to the main entrance, other access points may charge Y4), the Wall climbs abruptly uphill from a solitary watchtower through an initial series of further watchtowers before going over and dipping down the hill to continue meandering on. Be warned that it's both steep and crumbling – there are no guardrails here and the Wall has not been restored. There may be further tickets ahead, depending on how far you venture. It's possible to make it all the way to the Mutiányù section of the Wall (see p194), but it'll take you a few days and some hard clambering (pack a sleeping bag). Local hawkers have got wind of foreigners in the vicinity, but they won't follow you up the Wall.

In the other direction to the west, climb the steps past the ticket collector (Y2) to the Wall, from where an exhilarating walk can be made along the parapet. At the time of writing the path beyond the second watchtower was being restored, but should be finished by the time you read this. Things get a bit hairier beyond the third watchtower as there's a steep gradient and the wall is fragile here, but the view of the overgrown bastion winding off into hills is magnificent.

Shoes with good grip are important for climbing Huanghua as some sections are either slippery (eg parts of the Wall south of the reservoir are simply smooth slopes at a considerable incline) or uneven and crumbling.

There are several simple outfits here if you want to spend the night at Huanghua, with rooms ranging in price from Y10 to around Y100. At the entrance to the western part of

TRANSPORT

Distance from Běijīng 60km

Direction North

Local Bus From Dongzhimen long-distance bus station, take bus 916 or 980 to Huairóu (怀柔; Y8; one hour 40 minutes; frequently from 5.30am–6.30pm) and get off at Míngzhū Guǎngchǎng (明珠广场), then cross the road and take a minibus and ask for Huanghuāchéng (黄花城; Y5; 40 minutes) – don't get off at the smaller Huanghuāzhèn by mistake. *Miāndì* (taxi van) drivers charge around Y30 to Y40 one way to reach Huanghuāchéng from Huairóu. Note: There is a possibility that buses from the Dongzhimen long-distance bus station could move to the nearby Dongzhimen Transport Hub (still under construction at the time of writing).

Tour Bus The weekend Line G tour bus (Y75; includes entrance ticket) runs on Sunday and public holidays to the Huanghuācheng Great Wall Lakeside Reserve (opposite) from where you can take a taxi van to Huanghua (Y10) or walk. Buses depart between 6.30am and 8.30am from the Beijing Sightseeing Bus Centre (Běijīng Lǚyóu Jìsàn Zhōngxīn; ☎ 8353 1111) east and west of Front Gate (p76) at Qianmen alongside Tiananmen Square, and from outside the South Cathedral at Xuanwumen.

the wall, the **Ténglóng Fàndiàn** (腾龙饭店; ☎ 6165 1929; summer/winter d Y60/30) has clean and simple rooms (no fan, common toilet), with winter heating and a restaurant. The **Fúwàng Fàndiàn** (福旺饭店; ☎ 6165 2224) has clean Y100 doubles with toilet, shower and TV. Many of the restaurants at Huanghua also offer rooms so ask around.

About 3km from Huanghua (Y15 by taxi van) is the **Huanghuācheng Great Wall Lakeside Reserve** (Huanghuāchéng Shuǐchángchéng Lǚyóuqū; 黄花城水长城旅游区; ☎ 6165 1111; admission Y25) which has undeniably splendid views of the Wall clambering downhill above a reservoir. You cannot actually get on the Wall here so it is ultimately disappointing, although you can walk around the reservoir, and speedboats (Y15) can whisk you across the water. Also look out for old local women selling charming handmade embroidered children's shoes decorated with tiger faces, butterflies and flowers (Y25 a pair).

MING TOMBS 十三陵

Shísān Líng

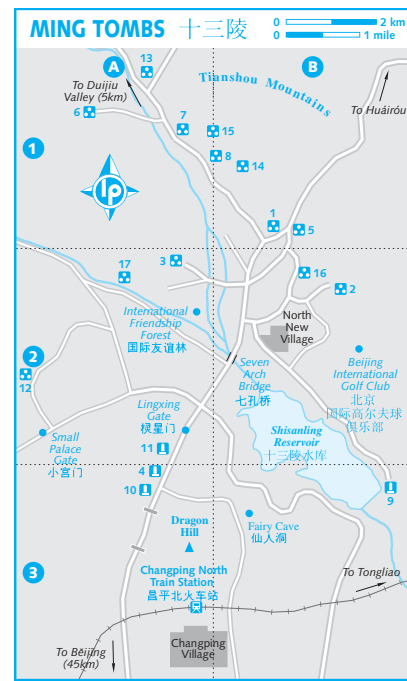
The Ming Tombs (Shísān Líng) are the final resting place of 13 of the 16 Ming emperors. The Confucian layout and design may intoxicate erudite visitors, but some find the necropolis lifeless and ho-hum. Confucian shrines lack the vibrancy and colour of Buddhist or Taoist temples, and their motifs can be bewilderingly inscrutable.

The first Ming emperor, Hongwu, is buried not here but in Nánjīng, the first capital of the Ming dynasty. Three tombs have been opened up to the public – Cháng Líng, Dìng Líng and Zhāo Líng.

The Ming Tombs follow a standard layout for imperial tomb design. The plan typically consists of a main gate (Líng Mén), leading to the first of a series of courtyards and the main hall, the Hall of Eminent Favours (Língēn Diàn). Beyond lie further gates or archways, leading to the Soul Tower (Míng Lóu), behind which rises the burial mound (tumulus).

Cháng Líng, burial place of the Emperor Yongle, is the most impressive, with its series of magnificent halls lying beyond its yellow-tiled gate. Seated upon a three-tiered marble terrace, the most notable structure is the Hall of Eminent Favours, containing a recent statue of Yongle and a breathtaking interior with vast *nanmu* (cedar wood) columns. The pine-covered burial mound at the rear of the complex is yet to be excavated and is not open to the public.

Dìng Líng is the burial place of the emperor Wanli, and contains a series of subterranean interlocking vaults and the remains of the various gates and halls of the complex. Excavated in the late 1950s, some visitors find this tomb of more interest, as you are allowed to descend into



SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

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Cháng Líng 长陵.....	1	B1
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Zhāo Líng 昭陵.....	17	A2

TRANSPORT

Distance from Běijīng 50km

Direction Northwest

Local Bus Take bus 345 (branch line, *zhixiàn* 支线) from Deshengmen (德胜门), 500m east of Jishuitan subway station, to the Chāngpíng Dōngguān stop (昌平东关; Y6; one hour) and change to bus 314 for the tombs. Alternatively, take the standard bus 345 to Chāngpíng (昌平) and then a taxi to the tombs (Y20). You can also reach the Chāngpíng Dōngguān stop on bus 845 (Y10) from Xizhimen long-distance bus station, just outside the Xizhimen subway stop. It's about a 10-minute ride from Chāngpíng to the entrance to the tombs.

Tour Bus The easiest way to reach the tombs is by tour bus. Most tour buses usually combine a visit to the Ming Tombs with a visit to the Great Wall at Bādǎlíng. The Line A bus (Y160; includes entrance tickets and lunch; departures 6.30am–10.30am) runs to Bādǎlíng and Ding Líng at the Ming Tombs from the Beijing Sightseeing Bus Centre (Běijīng Lǚyóu Jísàn Zhōngxīn; ☎ 8353 1111) east and west of Front Gate (p76) at Qianmen alongside Tiananmen Square. The Line B bus travels from the Beijing Sightseeing Bus Centre to Jūyōngguān and Ding Líng at the Ming Tombs (Y125; includes entrance tickets and lunch) with departures between 6.30am and 10am.

the underground vault. Accessing the vault down the steps, visitors are confronted by the simply vast marble self-locking doors that sealed the chamber after it was vacated. Note the depression in the floor where the stone prop clicked into place once the door was finally closed.

Zhāo Líng, the resting-place of the 13th Ming emperor Longqīng, follows an orthodox layout and is a tranquil alternative if you find the other tombs too busy. The rest of the tombs are in various stages of dilapidation and are sealed off by locked gates.

The road leading up to the tombs is a 7km stretch called the **Spirit Way** (Shén Dào; 神道). Commencing with a triumphal arch, the path enters the Great Palace Gate, where officials once had to dismount, and passes a giant *bixi* (a mythical tortoise–dragon like animal), which bears the largest stele in China. A guard of 12 sets of stone animals and officials follows this. Your tour-bus driver may well speed past them, so insist if you want to see them.

EASTERN QING TOMBS 清东陵

Qīng Dōng Líng

The area of the Eastern Qing Tombs (Qīng Dōng Líng) could be called Death Valley, serving as the resting place for five emperors, 14 empresses and 136 imperial consorts. In the mountains ringing the valley are buried princes, dukes, imperial nurses and others.

As at the Ming Tombs, a spirit way (Shén Dào; 神道) is a principle design feature. Five emperors are interred here: Qianlong (Yù Líng), Kangxi (Jǐng Líng), Shunzhi (Xiào Líng), Xianfeng (Ding Líng) and Tongzhi (Huì Líng). Emperor Qianlong (1711–99) started preparations when he was 30 and by the time he was 88 he had used up 90 tonnes of his silver. His resting place covers half a square kilometre. Some of the beamless stone chambers are decorated with Tibetan and Sanskrit sutras, and the doors bear bas-relief Bodhisattvas. Apart from Huì Líng, all of the tombs listed above are open to visitors.

Empress Dowager Cixi also got a head start. Her tomb, **Ding Dōng Líng**, was completed some three decades before her death and also underwent considerable restoration before she was finally laid to rest. Her

TRANSPORT

Distance from Běijīng 125km

Direction East

Tour Bus The easiest way to reach the Eastern Qing Tombs is on the Line E tour bus (Y145; price includes entrance ticket) which runs on Saturday and public holidays between 6.30am and 8.30am from the Beijing Sightseeing Bus Centre (Běijīng Lǚyóu Jísàn Zhōngxīn; ☎ 8353 1111) east and west of Front Gate (p76) at Qianmen alongside Tiananmen Square and also from outside the South Cathedral at Xuanwumen. Pedicabs are available at the tombs (Y15).

Taxi A taxi from Běijīng should cost around Y400 for a day trip to the tombs.

tomb lies alongside the tomb of Empress Cian. The phoenix (the symbol of the empress) appears above that of the dragon (the symbol of the emperor) in the artwork at the front of the tomb – not side by side as on other tombs. Both tombs were plundered in the 1920s.

Located in Zūnhuā County, Héběi province, the Eastern Qing Tombs are blessed with a more dramatic setting than the Ming Tombs, although getting there is an expedition and getting around is difficult without a vehicle.

TANZHE TEMPLE & JIETAI TEMPLE

潭柘寺、戒台寺

Tánzhè Sì & Jiètái Sì

The largest of all Běijīng's temples, Tanzhe Temple (Tánzhè Sì) dates as far back as the 3rd century, with considerable later modifications.

The Buddhist temple is attractively placed amid trees in the mountains, its ascending temple grounds overlooked by towering cypress and pine trees – many of which are so old that their gangly limbs are supported by metal props. Don't miss the small **Talin Temple** (Tǎlín Sì; 塔林寺), by the forecourt where you disembark the bus, with its assembly of stupas. Visits to Tanzhe Temple around mid-April are recommended, as the magnolias are in bloom.

About 10km southeast of Tanzhe Temple, the smaller Jietai Temple (Jiètái Sì) was originally built in the 7th century. The main complex is dotted with ancient pine trees. One of these, **Nine Dragon Pine**, is claimed to be over 1300 years old, while the **Embracing Pagoda Pine** does just what it says.

MARCO POLO BRIDGE 卢沟桥

Lúgōu Qiáo

Described by the great traveller himself, the 266m-long grey marble bridge (Lúgōu Qiáo) is host to 485 carved stone lions. Each animal is different (the smallest is only a few centimetres high), and folklore attests that they move around at night.

Spanning the Yongding River near the little walled town of Wǎnpíng, the stone bridge dates from 1189, but is a composite of different eras (it was widened in 1969).

The bridge would have rated as a mere footnote in the history of China were it not for the historic Marco Polo Bridge Incident, which ignited a full-scale war with Japan. On 7 July 1937 Japanese troops illegally occupied a railway junction outside Wǎnpíng. Japanese and Chinese soldiers started shooting, giving Japan an excuse to attack and occupy Běijīng.

The **Memorial Hall of the War of Resistance Against Japan** is a gory look back at Japan's occupation of China, but there are no captions in English. Also on the site are the Wanping Castle, Daiwang Temple and a hotel.

TRANSPORT

Tanzhe Temple & Jietai Temple It's easiest to take the Line L tour bus (Y115) which runs on Saturday and public holidays between 6.30am and 8.30am from the Beijing Sightseeing Bus Centre (Běijīng Lǚyóu Jísàn Zhōngxīn; ☎ 8353 1111) east and west of Front Gate (p76) at Qianmen alongside Tiananmen Square and also from outside the South Cathedral at Xuanwumen. Alternatively, take the subway to the Pingguoyuan stop and take bus 931 (Y3) to the last stop for Tanzhe Temple (don't take the bus 931 branch line, *zhixiàn* 支线, however). This bus also stops near Jietai Temple, where it's a 10-minute walk uphill from the bus stop.

Marco Polo Bridge Take bus 6 from the north gate of Temple of Heaven Park to the last stop at Liùlǐ Qiáo (六里桥), and then either bus 339 or 309 to Lúgōu Xīnqiáo (卢沟新桥); the bridge is just ahead.

CHUĀNDĪXIÀ 川底下

Nestled in a valley 90km west of Běijīng and overlooked by towering peaks is Chuandixia Village (Chuāndìxià), a gorgeous cluster of historic courtyard homes and old-world charm. The backdrop is lovely: terraced orchards and fields, with ancient houses and alleyways rising up the hillside.

Chuāndìxià is also a museum of Maoist graffiti and slogans, especially up the incline among the better-preserved houses. Despite their impressive revolutionary credentials, Chuāndìxià's residents have sensed the unmistakable whiff of the tourist dollar on the north-China breeze, and T-shirt vendors have appeared.

Two hours is more than enough to wander around the village as it's not big. A number of houses also sell local produce, including *fēngmì* (honey) and *hétào* (walnuts).

Sights

Badaling Great Wall (☎ 6912 1338/1423/1520; admission adult/student Y45/25; 🕒 summer 6am-10pm, winter 7am-6pm)

China Great Wall Museum (🕒 9am-4pm)

Chuāndìxià (admission Y20)

Eastern Qing Tombs (Ten tomb admission adult/student Y90/45; 🕒 8am-5pm)

Great Wall Circle Vision Theatre (🕒 9am-9.45pm)

Jietai Temple (admission adult/student Y35/20; 🕒 8am-6pm)

Jinshanling Great Wall (admission Y40)

Juyongguan Great Wall (☎ 6977 1665; admission Y40; 🕒 6am-4pm)

Marco Polo Bridge (☎ 8389 3919; 88 Luguouqiao-chengnei Xijie; admission adult/student Y10/5; 🕒 8am-5pm)

Ming Tombs (☎ 6076 1424; admission Cháng Líng Y45, Dìng Líng Y60, Zhāo Líng Y30; 🕒 8am-5.30pm)

Mutianyu Great Wall (☎ 6162 6873/6022; admission adult/student Y35/17.5; 🕒 6.30am-5.30pm)

Simatai Great Wall (☎ 6903 5025/5030; admission adult/student Y30/15; 🕒 8am-5pm)

Tanzhe Temple (admission adult/student Y35/17; 🕒 8.30am-6pm)

TRANSPORT

Distance from Běijīng 90km

Direction West

Local Bus Take bus 929 (make sure it's the branch line, or *zhíxiàn* 支线, not the regular bus) from the bus stop to the right of Pingguoyuan subway station to Zhāitáng (斋堂; Y7; two hours), then take a taxi van (Y10). If going off season, arrange with the taxi van to return to pick you up. The last bus returns from Zhāitáng to Pingguoyuan at 4.20pm. If you miss the last bus, a taxi will cost upwards of Y80 to Pingguoyuan. It's not easy to get to Chuāndìxià Village and if taking public transport bank on taking well over three hours from central Běijīng.

SHĀNHĀIGUĀN 山海关

The Great Wall meets the sea at Shānhǎiguān in Héběi province, where a strategic pass leads to northeast China. The area was originally part of the state of Guzhu during the Shang and Zhou dynasties but came into its own in 1381, when it was developed under General Xuda, who converted it into a fortified garrison town with four gates at the compass points and two major avenues running between them.

Until recently, considerable charm survived within the old walled enclosure, although colossal swathes have been levelled in an attempt to rebuild and repackage the historic town; Shānhǎiguān consequently – at the time of writing – resembled Grozny on a bad day. The obliteration is extensive (and unpardonable some might say), but at least some temple reconstruction has accompanied the devastation and the town now sports a newly built drum tower. The Great Wall here has been extensively rebuilt and is a major, and dramatic, tourist drawcard.

First Pass Under Heaven (Tiānxià Dìyī Guān) is also known as East Gate (Dōng Mén; 东门; also called Dōng Guān; 东关). Long views of factories stretch off to the east as decayed sections of battlements trail off into the hills. The Wall here is 12m high and the principal

watchtower – a two-storey structure with double eaves and 68 arrow slit windows – is a towering 13.7m high.

Several other watchtowers can also be seen and there's a *wèngchéng* (enceinte) extending east from the Wall. The Manchus stormed the gate in 1644 before enslaving China for 250 years.

Admission includes entry to the **Great Wall Museum** (Chángchéng Bówùguǎn), housed in a pleasant, one-storey traditional Chinese building with upturned eaves, with photographs and memorabilia relating to the Wall. Sadly, there is a lack of captions in English. The nearby **Wang Family Courtyard House** (Wángjiā Dàyuán; 3 Dongsantiao Hutong; 🕒 7.30am-6pm) is a large, historic *hùtòng*-style residence faced by a spirit wall.

Old Dragon Head (Lǎolóngtóu; 老龙头) was the serpentine conclusion of the Great Wall. The name derives from the legendary carved dragon head that once faced the waves (this is no more). Avoid buying the pricey ticket and instead take the left-hand road to the sea (under the arched gate) where you can walk along the sandy beach to Old Dragon Head or ride a horse (Y20).

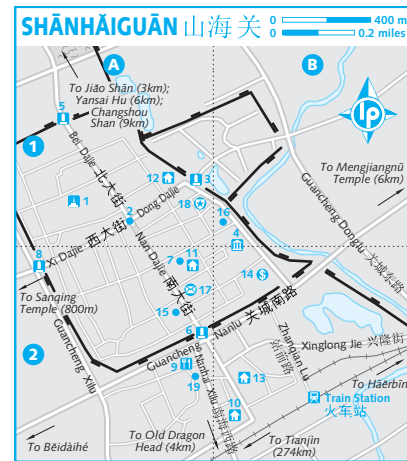
The views here are spectacular and you can also join the winkle-pickers and cockle-hunters along the rocks. To get here take bus 25 (Y1) from Shānhǎiguān's South Gate.

Among temples and historic structures undergoing reconstruction as part of Shānhǎiguān's full-on metamorphosis are the four (originally Ming-built) halls of the **Dabei Pavilion** (Dàbēi Gé) in the north-west of town, and the Taoist **Sānqīng Temple** (Sānqīng Guān 三清观; Beihou Jie), outside the walls.

Shānhǎiguān's **Drum Tower** (Gǔlóu) has been similarly rebuilt with a liberal scattering of newly constructed *páilou* (decorative arches) running off east and west along Xi Dajie and Dong Dajie.

Although the unrestored **North Gate** (Běi Mén) stands in a state of dreary neglect, you can climb up onto the overgrown sections of the city wall attached to it if you head up the brick steps to the east of the gate (go through the compound). Like the East Gate, the city gates once had circular enceintes attached to them – the excavated outlines of the enceinte outside the **West Gate** (Xī Mén) are discernible as well as slabs of the original Ming dynasty road, lying around 1m below the current level of the ground.

A half-hour walk (taxi Y10; motor tricycle Y5) beyond the North Gate is **Jiǎo Shān** (角山), where the Great Wall mounts its first high peak. It's a trying 20-minute clamber from the base, but a cable car can



SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES (pp200-2)

Dabei Pavilion (Dàbēi Gé) 大悲阁	1	A1
Drum Tower (Gǔlóu) 鼓楼	2	A1
First Pass Under Heaven (Tiānxià Dìyī Guān) 天下第一关	3	A1
Great Wall Museum (Chángchéng Bówùguǎn) 长城博物馆	4	B1
North Gate (Běi Mén) 北门	5	A1
South Gate 南门	6	A2
Wang Family Courtyard (Wángjiā Dàyuán) 王家大院	7	A2
West Gate (Xī Mén) 西门	8	A2

EATING (p202)

Mike Hamn Fast Food (Màikè Hànmù) 麦克汉姆快餐	9	A2
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SLEEPING (p202)

Friendly Cooperative Hotel (Yǐhé Jiùdiàn) 谊合酒店	10	B2
Jiguan Guesthouse (Jìguān Zhāodàisù) 机关招待所	11	A2
Jingshan Hotel 京山宾馆	12	A1
Longhua Hotel (Lónghuá Dàjiùdiàn) 龙华大酒店	13	B2

INFORMATION (p202)

Bank of China 中国银行	14	B2
Bike Rental (Giant Bikes) (Jiéāntè Zìxíngchē) 捷安特自行车	15	A2
Kodak Express (Kédá) 柯达	16	B1
Lüdao Kongjian Internet Cafe 绿岛空间网吧	(see 10)	
Post Office 邮局	17	A2
Post Office 邮局	(see 10)	
Public Security Bureau (Gōngānjū) 公安局	18	A1
Xinhua Bookstore 新华书店	19	A2

yank you up for Y20 (return trip). The views are spectacular on a clear day. Continue along the Wall or hike over to **Qixian Monastery** (Qixian Si; 栖贤寺).

Mengjiangnü Temple (Mèngjiāngnǚ Miào; 孟姜女庙) is a famous and historic temple 6km east of Shānhǎiguān. A taxi should cost around Y12.

Information

Bike Rental (Giant Bikes; Jiéāntè Zìxíngchē; 115 Nan Dajie; Half/full day Y20/30)

Bank of China (Zhōngguó Yínháng; Diyi Guan Lu; ☎ 8.30am-noon & 1.30-5.30pm) No international ATM.

Lüdao Kongjian Internet Cafe (Lüdao Kōngjiān Wǎngbā; per hr Y2; ☎ 24hr) In between Friendly Cooperate Hotel and post office.

Kodak Express (Kēdǎ; south of First Pass Under Heaven; CD burning per disc Y15)

Post office (Yóujú; eastern side of Nan Dajie; ☎ 8am-5.30pm); further branch on Nanhai Xilu.

Public Security Bureau (PSB, Gōngānjū; ☎ 0335 505 1163) Opposite entrance to First Pass Under Heaven on corner of small alleyway slightly to the south.

Sights

First Pass Under Heaven (cnr Dong Dajie & Diyi Guan Lu; admission Y40; ☎ 7.30am-5.30pm) Open longer hours in summer.

Great Wall Museum (Diyi Guan Lu; admission incl in First Pass Under Heaven ticket, Y10; ☎ 8am-6pm)

Jiǎo Shān (admission Y15; ☎ 5am-sunset) 3km north of Shānhǎiguān.

Mengjiangnü Temple (admission Y40; ☎ 7am-5.30pm) 6km east of town.

Old Dragon Head (4km south of Shānhǎiguān; admission Y50; ☎ 7.30am-5.30pm)

Qixian Monastery (Qixian Si; admission Y5)

Wang Family Courtyard House (29-31 Dong Santiao; admission Y25, joint ticket with First Pass Under Heaven Y50)

TRANSPORT

Distance from Běijīng 300km

Direction East

Train Shānhǎiguān is accessible directly by train from Běijīng. As more trains stop at nearby Qínhuángdǎo, it is often more convenient to go there first. Express trains from Běijīng to Qínhuángdǎo (soft seat Y75, 3 hours) leave at 7.30am, 8.30am, 2pm and 7.47pm; from Qínhuángdǎo take bus 33 to Shānhǎiguān (Y2, 30 minutes). An alternative is the night sleeper to Shānhǎiguān from Běijīng (Y70; seven hours).

Long-Distance Buses depart from Běijīng's Bawangfen bus station (p214) from Qínhuángdǎo (Y62 to Y66, 3½ hours) between 7am and 7pm. Direct buses also run from Qínhuángdǎo to Chéngdé (Y61, 5½ hours), departing hourly from 7am to 11am, and at 5pm.

Air There's a small airport between Shānhǎiguān and Qínhuángdǎo, with flights to several cities.

Eating

At the time of writing the walled part of town was being bulldozed, but restaurants may have resurfaced by the time you read this. Restaurants concentrate in the area south of the city wall in the direction of the train station.

Mike Hamn Fast Food (Màikè Hànmǔ; Guancheng Nanlu) The Héběi fast-food experience (chicken meals, chips, 'Hotel California' on the stereo etc). One of the few places where you can find a coffee.

Sleeping

Jiguan Guesthouse (Ji Guan Zhāodàisuǒ; ☎ 0335 505 1938; 17 Dongsitiao 东四条17号; d Y100-180, ste Y320) This pleasant hotel has rooms off two courtyards. The simple doubles come without bathrooms, but have clean, tiled floors and TVs. The Y180 doubles have showers.

Longhua Hotel (Lónghua Dàjiǔdiàn; ☎ 0335 507 7698; 1 Nanhai Dajie 南海大街1号; s/d/large d Y168/188/288) This hotel has spacious, so-so rooms with 20% discounts the norm.

Friendly Cooperate Hotel (Yīhè Jiǔdiàn; ☎ 0335 593 9069; fax 0335 507 0351; 4 Nanhai Xilu 南海西路4号; d/tr Y288/388) Large two-star hotel large, cleanish double rooms, with water coolers, TVs, phones and bathrooms. Staff are pleasant and there's a restaurant next door.

Jingshan Hotel (Jīngshān Bīnguǎn; ☎ 0335 505 1130; 1 Dong Dajie 东大街1号; s/d/tr Y580/580/680) OK but rather musty rooms; pleasant surroundings. Healthy discounts, so ask.

CHÉNGDÉ 承德

Once known as Jehol, Chéngdé is an 18th-century imperial resort area boasting the remnants of the largest regal gardens in China.

Chéngdé was an obscure town until 1703 when Emperor Kangxi began building a summer palace with all the court trappings, including a throne room. More than a home away from home, Chéngdé became a seat of government, since wherever the emperor went his seat went too. Kangxi called his summer creation the **Imperial Summer Villa** or **Fleeing-the-Heat Mountain Villa** (Bìshǔ Shānzhūāng).

By 1790, during the reign of Kangxi's grandson Qianlong, it had grown to the size of both Běijīng's Summer Palace and the Forbidden City combined. Qianlong extended an idea started by Kangxi, to build replicas of minority architecture in order to make envoys feel comfortable. In particular he was keen on promoting Tibetan and Mongolian Lamaism. This explains the Tibetan and Mongolian features of the monasteries north of the Imperial Summer Villa, one of them a replica of the Potala Palace in Lhasa. Emperor Xianfeng died in Chéngdé in 1861, an event that initiated the gradual demise of the imperial retreat: Chéngdé was never used again by the emperors, who associated it with misfortune.

Today Chéngdé has slipped back into being the provincial town it once was, its grandeur long decayed and its emperors long gone. Chéngdé is on Unesco's World Heritage list, but sadly this does not guarantee a programme of full restoration and some features are gone for good.

Visiting Chéngdé in autumn is an option as tourists choke the place in summer. Autumn adds its own rich colours to the landscape and sees far less visitors in town, while remaining warm enough to be comfortable. The train from Běijīng to Chéngdé passes level fields, dark mountains, factories, terraced slopes, occasional pagoda-capped hills and crumbling lengths of the Great Wall.

Imperial Summer Villa

Bìshǔ Shānzhūāng

The Imperial Summer Villa is a park covering a vast 590 hectares and bounded by a splendid 10km wall. About 90% of the Imperial Summer Villa is composed of lakes, hills, mini-forests and plains. Passing through the **Main Gate** (Lìzhèng Mén) you reach the **Front Palace** (Zhèng Gōng), containing the main throne hall. The refreshingly cool **Hall of Simplicity and Sincerity** is built of an aromatic hardwood called *nánmì*; on display is a carved throne. There are also the emperor's fully-furnished bedrooms, as well as displays of ceramics, drum stones and calligraphy.

The double storey **Misty Rain Tower** (Yǔ Lóu), on the northern side of the main lake, was an imperial study. While here, you can also take boats out for trips around the lake (Y10 per hour). Further north is the **Wenjin Chamber** (Wénjīn Gé) built in 1773 to house a copy of the *Sikuquánshū*, a major anthology of classics, history, philosophy and literature commissioned by Qianlong.

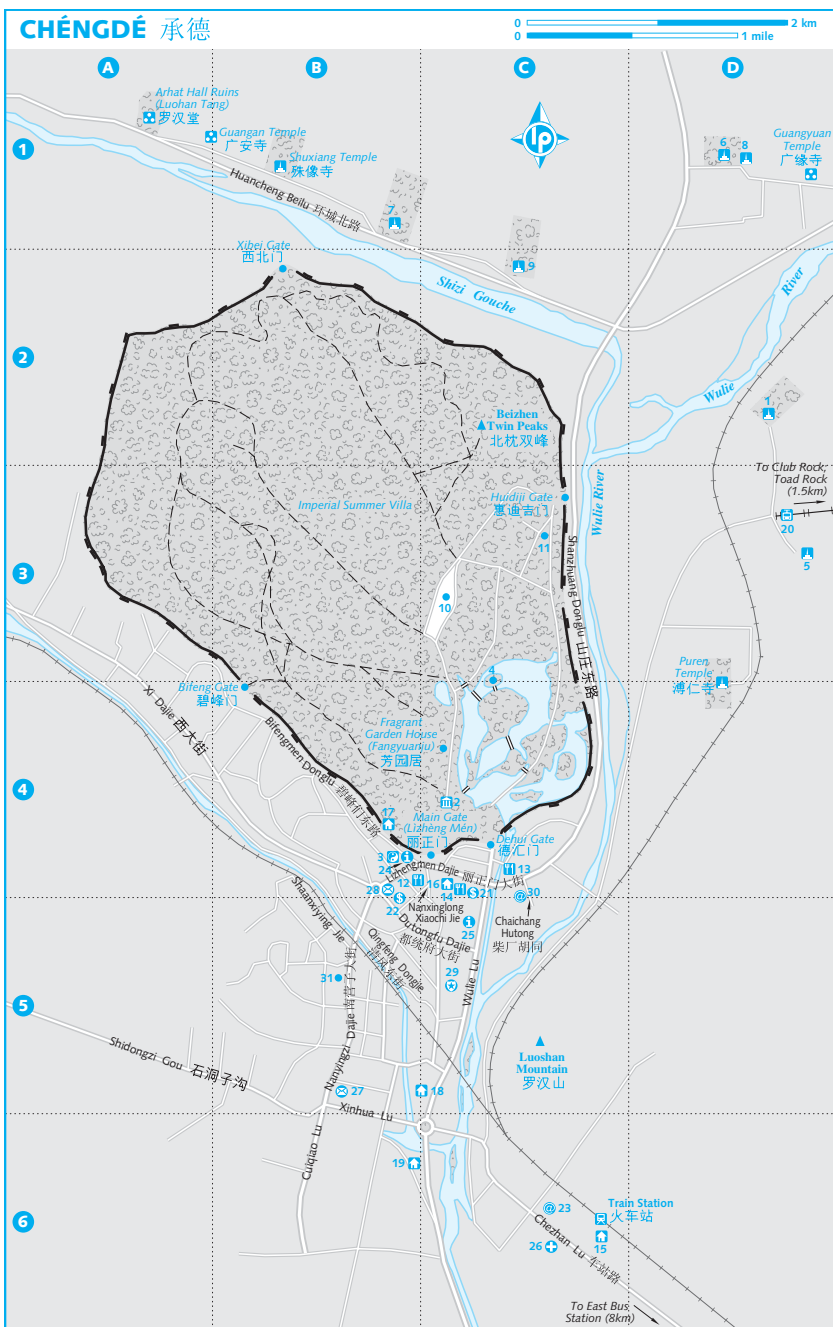
In the east, the tall green and yellow **Yongyousi Pagoda** (Yǒngyòusì Tǎ) soars above the fragments of its vanished temple and dominates the area.

Guandi Temple

Guāndi Miào

Also called the Wumiao, the Guandi Temple is a Taoist temple first built in 1732 and located outside the Imperial Summer Villa to the southwest of the Main Gate. In the courtyard at the rear are two steles, supported on the backs of a pair of disintegrating and distressed-looking *bixi* (mythical tortoise-dragon like creatures).

The **Hall of the Three Clear Ones** stands at the rear to the left. The temple is home to a band of Taoist monks, garbed in distinctive jackets and trousers, their long hair twisted into topknots.



Eight Outer Temples & Other Sights

Wàibā Miào

Some fine examples of religious architecture can be found in the foothills outside the northern and northeastern walls of the Imperial Summer Villa. Some of the Eight Outer Temples remain closed, but there are enough to keep you occupied. The temples and monasteries were all built between 1750 and 1780 and are 3km to 5km from the garden's front gate; bus 6 taken to the northeastern corner will drop you in the vicinity – going by bike is an excellent idea.

Puning Temple (Pūning Sì) – the Temple of Universal Tranquility – is a Chinese-style (*hànshi*) temple with more Tibetan-style (*zàngshì*) features at the rear. Enter the temple grounds to a stele pavilion with inscriptions by the Qianlong emperor in Chinese, Manchu, Mongol and Tibetan.

Behind are halls arranged in a typical Buddhist temple layout, featuring the **Hall of Heavenly Kings** and the **Mahavira Hall** (Dàxióngbào Diàn) beyond. Behind lie steep steps (the temple is arranged on a mountainside) leading to a gate tower, a terrace and the **Mahayana Hall**. The highlight of the temple is the heart-arresting golden statue of the Buddhist **Goddess of Mercy** (Guanyin) in the Mahayana Hall. The effigy is astounding: it's over 22m high (the highest of its kind in the world) and radiates a powerful sense of divinity. Hewn from five kinds of wood (pine, cypress, fir, elm and linden), Guanyin has 42 arms, with each palm bearing an eye, and each hand holds instruments, skulls, lotuses and other Buddhist devices. On Guanyin's head sits the **Teacher Longevity Buddha**. To her right stands **Shancai**, a male guardian and disciple, opposite his female equivalent, **Longnü** (Dragon Girl).

You can clamber up to the first gallery (Y10) for a closer inspection of Guanyin; torches (flashlights) are provided to cut through the gloom so you can pick out the uneven stairs (take care). Sadly, the higher galleries are often out of bounds, so an eye-to-eye with the goddess may be impossible. If you want to climb the gallery, try and come in the morning, as it is often impossible to get a ticket in the afternoon (especially outside of summer).

Puning Temple has a number of friendly lamas who manage their domain, so be quiet and respectful at all times. You can catch bus 6 from in front of the Mountain Villa Hotel to Puning Temple.

The largest of the Chéngdé temples, **Putuozecheng Temple** (Pūtuózhōngchéng Zhī Miào) – also called the Little Potala Palace (Xiǎo Bùdálá Gōng; 小布达拉宫) – is a mini facsimile of Lhasa's Potala Palace. The temple is a marvellous sight on a clear day, its vast red walls standing out against its mountain backdrop.

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

(pp203–6)

Anyuan Temple (Ānyuǎn Miào) 安远庙	1	D2
Front Palace (Zhèng Gōng) 正宫	2	C4
Guandi Temple (Guāndi Miào) 关帝庙	3	B4
Misty Rain Tower (Yú Lóu) 雨楼	4	C3
Pule Temple (Pūlè Sì) 普乐寺	5	D3
Puning Temple (Pūning Sì) 普宁寺	6	D1
Putuozecheng Temple (Pūtuózhōngchéng Zhī Miào) 普陀乘之庙	7	B1
Puyou Temple (Pūyòu Sì) 普佑寺	8	D1
Temple of Sumner, Happiness and Longevity (Xūmfúshòu Zhī Miào) 须弥福寿之庙	9	C2
Wenjin Chamber (Wénjīn Gé) 文津阁	10	C3
Yongyouzi Pagoda (Yǒngyòuzi Tǎ) 永佑寺塔	11	C3

EATING

(p207)

Beijing Roast Duck Restaurant (Běijīng Kǎoyādiàn) 北京烤鸭店	12	B4
Dongpo Restaurant (Dōngpō Fànzhǎng) 东坡饭庄	13	C4
Máojiā Xiāngcǎiguǎn 毛家湘菜馆	14	C4

SLEEPING

(p207)

Jingcheng Hotel (Jīngchéng Fàndiàn) 京承饭店	15	C6
Mountain Villa Hotel (Shānzhuāng Bīnguǎn) 山庄宾馆	16	C4
Qiwanglou Hotel (Qīwànglóu Bīnguǎn) 绮望楼宾馆	17	B4
Shenghua Hotel (Shènghuá Dǎjiùdiàn) 盛华大酒店	18	B5
Yunshan Hotel (Yúnshān Dǎjiùdiàn) 云山大酒店	19	B6

TRANSPORT

(p206)

Chairlift to Club Rock & Toad Rock 棒槌峰索道	20	D3
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INFORMATION

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Bank of China (Zhōngguó Yínháng) 中国银行	21	C4
Bank of China (Zhōngguó Yínháng) 中国银行	22	B5
Chaosu Internet Café (Chāosù Wǎngbǎ) 超速网吧	23	C6
CITS 中国国际旅行社	24	B4
CITS 中国国际旅行社	25	C5
Industrial and Commercial Bank of China 中国工商银行	(see 31)	
Kodak Express (Kédá) 柯达	(see 12)	
No 5 Hospital 第五医院	26	C6
Post Office (Yóujú) 邮局	27	B5
Post Office (Yóujú) 邮局	28	B4
Public Security Bureau (Gōngānjú) 公安局	29	C5
Tiancheng Internet Café (Tiānchéng Wǎngbǎ) 天成网吧	30	C4
Xiandai Internet Café (Xiàndài Wǎngbǎ) 现代网吧	(see 23)	
Xinhua Bookstore 新华书店	31	B5

Fronted by prayer wheels and flags, the **Red Palace** (also called the Great Red Terrace) contains most of the main shrines and halls. Continue up and past an exhibition of Thangka (Tibetan sacred art) in a restored courtyard and look out for the marvellous sandalwood pagodas further up. Both are 19m tall and contain 2160 effigies of the Amitabha Buddha. Among the many exhibits on view are displays of Tibetan Buddhist objects and instruments, including a *kapala* bowl, made from the skull of a young girl (all captions are in Chinese). The main hall is housed at the very top, surrounded by several small pavilions; the climb to the top is worth it for the views.

The **Temple of Sumeru, Happiness and Longevity** (Xūmífúshòu Zhī Miào) is a further huge temple, around 1km to the southeast of the Putuozongcheng Temple. It was built in honour of the sixth Panchen Lama, who stayed here in 1781; and being an imitation of a temple in Shigatse, Tibet, it incorporates elements of Tibetan and Han architecture. Note the eight, huge, glinting dragons (each said to weigh over 1000kg) that adorn the roof of the main hall.

Pule Temple (Pūlè Sì) was built in 1776 for the visits of minority envoys (Kazakhs among them). At the rear of the temple is the unusual Round Pavilion, reminiscent of the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests at the Temple of Heaven in Běijīng. It's a 30-minute hike to **Club Rock** (Bàngchuí Fēng) from the Temple of Universal Happiness – the rock is said to resemble a club used for beating laundry dry. Nearby is **Toad Rock** (Hámá Shí). There is pleasant hiking, good scenery and commanding views of the area. You can save yourself a steep climb to the base of Club Rock (Y20) and Toad Rock by taking the chairlift (Y40 return), but it's more fun to walk if you're reasonably fit. Bus 10 will take you to Pule Temple. East of Puning Temple is **Puyou Temple** (Pūyòu Sì). While it is in a somewhat sad state, there is a plentiful contingent of merry gilded *luòhàn* (*arhat*, or a Buddhist monk who has attained enlightenment and passes to nirvana at death) in the side wings.

Anyuan Temple (Ànyuǎn Miào) is a copy of the Gurza Temple in Xīnjiāng. Only the main hall remains and it contains deteriorating Buddhist frescoes. Further south, **Puren Temple** (Pūrén Sì) is not open to the public. Located to the northwest of the Imperial Villa and surrounded by a low red wall, **Shuxiang Temple** (Shūxiàng Sì) is sometimes closed, although it may open in the summer months (unless it is being restored). Just to the west of Shuxiang Temple is a sensitive military zone where foreigners are not allowed access, so don't go wandering around.

Information

Bank of China (Zhōngguó Yínháng; 4 Dutongfu Dajie & east of the Mountain Villa Hotel) ATM access

Chaosu Internet Café (Chāosù Wǎngbā; Chezhan Lu; per hr Y2; ☎ 24hr) Northwest of the train station.

China International Travel Service (CITS, Zhōngguó Guóji Lǚxíngshè; ☎ 0314 202 4816; 3 Wulie Lu, 2nd fl) It's the building on your right in a dishevelled courtyard on the western side of Wulie Lu; not much use. Further small branch on Bifengmen Donglu.

Kodak Express (Kédá; 5-7 Lizhengmen Dajie, opposite the Guandi Temple) CD burning (Y15 per disc)

Luggage Storage East Bus Station ticket hall and train station ticket hall.

No 5 Hospital (Dìwǔ Yīyuàn; Chezhan Lu)

Post office (Yóujú; Nanyingzi Dajie; ☎ 8am-6pm) The main post office is on Nanyingzi Dajie and there's a smaller branch on Lizhengmen Dajie just east of the Main Gate (Lizhèng Mén) of the Imperial Summer Villa.

PSB (Gōng'ànjú; ☎ 0314 202 2352; Wulie Lu)

Tiancheng Internet Cafe (Tiānchéng Wǎngbā; Chaichang Hútóng; per hr Y2; ☎ 8am-midnight)

Xiandai Internet Café (Xiàndài Wǎngbā; Chezhan Lu; per hr Y2; ☎ 24hr) Northwest of train station.

Sights

Anyuan Temple (admission Y10; ☎ 8am-5.30pm)

Guandi Temple (Lizhengmen Dajie; admission Y20; ☎ 8am-5pm),

Imperial Summer Villa (admission Y90, winter Y60, guide Y50; ☎ park 5.30am-6.30pm, palace 7am-5pm)

Pule Temple (admission Y30, winter Y20; ☎ 8am-6pm)

Puning Temple (Puningsi Lu; admission Y50, winter Y40; ☎ summer 7.30am-6pm, winter 8am-5pm)

Putuozongcheng Temple (Shizigou Lu; admission Y40, winter Y30; ☎ 8am-6pm)

Puyou Temple (admission Y20; ☎ 8am-6pm)

Temple of Sumeru, Happiness and Longevity (Shizigou Lu; admission Y30, winter Y20; ☎ 8am-5.30pm)

Eating

For street food, try the restaurants on **Shaanxi-ying Jie** (at the northern end of Nanyingzi Lu), with its barbecue (*shāokǎo*) restaurants (and dog meat outlets). **Qingfeng Dongjie** just north of the railway line and south of Dong Dajie has a colourful choice of restaurants. Also try **Nanxinglong Xiaochi Jie** (across from Lizhèng Mén, the main gate of the Imperial Summer Villa), for local dishes, including pheasant, dog meat (*gǒuròu*; 狗肉) and many Chinese staples. **Chéngdé's** local speciality is wild game – deer (*lùròu*; 鹿肉) and pheasant (*shānjīshānjī*; 山鸡), which you can find all over town.

Dongpo Restaurant (Dōngpō Fànzhǎng; ☎ 0314 210 6315; Shanzhuang Donglu; meals Y30) With red lanterns outside, steaming *shāguō* (clay pot) at the door and a large aquarium, this lively and popular restaurant has no English menu but a large choice of Sichuan dishes.

Máojiǎ Xiāngcǎiguǎn (☎ 0314 296 5511; Lizhengmen Dajie; meal Y30) Small, handy and unassuming Húnán restaurant serving up staples from the fiery province; go for the *máoshì hóngshāoròu* (毛氏红烧肉; chunky nuggets of pork in sauce; Y18) or the hot, sour and tasty *suāncài dòufutāng* (酸菜豆腐汤; sour cabbage and tofu soup; Y8).

Beijing Roast Duck Restaurant (Běijīng Kǎoyādiàn; ☎ 0314 202 2979; 5-12 Lizhengmen Dajie; duck Y50) Central restaurant with tasty duck roasted over fruit-tree wood. It's opposite Guandi Temple.

Sleeping

Touts around the train station could well find you a room in a family hotel near the train station for around Y80.

Jingcheng Hotel (Jīngchéng Fāndiàn; ☎ 0314 208 2027; next to train station; d/tw/tr/quad Y260/260/240/240) Convenient location by the train station but rather tatty with plain rooms.

Mountain Villa Hotel (Shānzhūāng Bīngguǎn; ☎ 0314 202 3501; fax 202 2457; 11 Lizhengmen Lu 丽正门路 11号; d Y280-480, tr Y210) This recently renovated hotel has clean, cheap rooms and pole positioning for trips inside the Imperial Summer Villa. Take bus 7 from the train station and from there it's a short walk.

Qiwanglou Hotel (Qīwǎnglóu Bīngguǎn; ☎ 0314 202 2196; 1 Bifengmen Donglu 碧峰门东路1号; tw Y500-800) With peacocks strolling around the green grounds, the attractive and secluded setting of this hotel next to the summer villa is alluring, but cheaper rooms are worn and you will have to strain for views of the villa grounds over the treetops.

Shenghua Hotel (Shènghuá Dàjiǔdiàn; ☎ 0314 227 1000; www.shenghuaHotel.com; 23 Wulie Lu 武烈路 23号; s/d Y700/780) Decent four-star hotel with a modern exterior of glass and steel and a voluminous marble foyer.

Yunshan Hotel (Yúnshān Dàjiǔdiàn; ☎ 0314 205 5888; fax 0314 205 5885; 2 Banbishan Lu 半壁山路2号; d/stc Y780/1600) Despite the ghastly exterior (white tiles, office-block style), rooms at this four-star hotel are clean, elegant and spacious.

TRANSPORT

Distance from Běijīng 255km

Direction Northeast

Long-Distance Bus Buses (Y46; four hours) to Chéngdé depart hourly from the Liuliqiao and Sihui long-distance bus stations (p214). Minibuses for Běijīng (Y45) leave every 20 minutes from outside the Chengde Train Station. Buses for Běijīng (Y45) also leave every 20 minutes from outside the Yunshan Hotel. The Jingcheng Expressway (Běijīng-Chéngdé) should be completed by 2007, which will shorten the voyage to 2½ hours. For Shānghǎiguān, first take a bus to Qīnhuángdǎo from the East Bus Station (Dōngzhàn 东站; Y80; four hours; five to six per day), 8km south of Chengde Train Station, reachable by bus 1 or taxi (Y10).

Train Regular trains run between Běijīng and Chéngdé, with the first and most convenient departing Běijīng at 7.16am, and returning at 2.40pm. The fastest trains take four hours (Y41 hard seat, Y61 soft seat); slower trains take around seven hours.

Local Transport Taxis are Y5 at flag fall, which should get you to most destinations in town, but be warned most drivers don't use meters. There are half-a-dozen bus lines (Y1), including bus 5 and 15 from the train station to the Imperial Summer Villa, bus 1 from the train station to the East Bus Station and bus 6 to the Eight Outer Temples (Wǎibā Miào). Hiring a bike is an excellent way to get around, but at the time of writing the only place renting out bicycles was the Mountain Villa Hotel (Y50 per day).

Tours The only practical way to see all the sights in one day is to take a hotel tour by minibus, most of which start out at 8am. The cheapest bus tours cost around Y30 (check at the Mountain Villa Hotel), but are Chinese-speaking only; a personal tour costs about Y100, excluding admission prices.

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