

Guǎngdōng 广东



Feisty, rebellious Guǎngdōng is China's fastest-developing province and also one of the richest. For centuries it was isolated from the rest of China by its mountainous topography, forcing the Cantonese to rely on their own pragmatism and innovation for survival.

Situated in the fertile Pearl River Delta on the South China Sea, the Cantonese have always looked outward to the sea for their livelihood. It was along Guǎngdōng's 800km coastline that foreign merchants first made contact with China and the ancient Maritime Silk Road had its beginnings. Guǎngdōng's exposure to the outside world and the independent nature of the Cantonese has often been a thorn in the side of the authorities. In early times, Guǎngdōng was thought to be inhabited by barbarians; it was where disgraced officials from the north were sent into exile.

Guǎngdōng was an economic backwater until Deng Xiaoping's 'open door policy' opened up the province to development. With the establishment of the three Special Economic Zones (see p587) and trading links to Hong Kong, economic activity in the province took off like wildfire and hasn't slowed down yet. The once subtropical landscape is now hidden under a sprawl of smoke-spewing factories. Here you'll witness the future of modern China close up, warts and all.

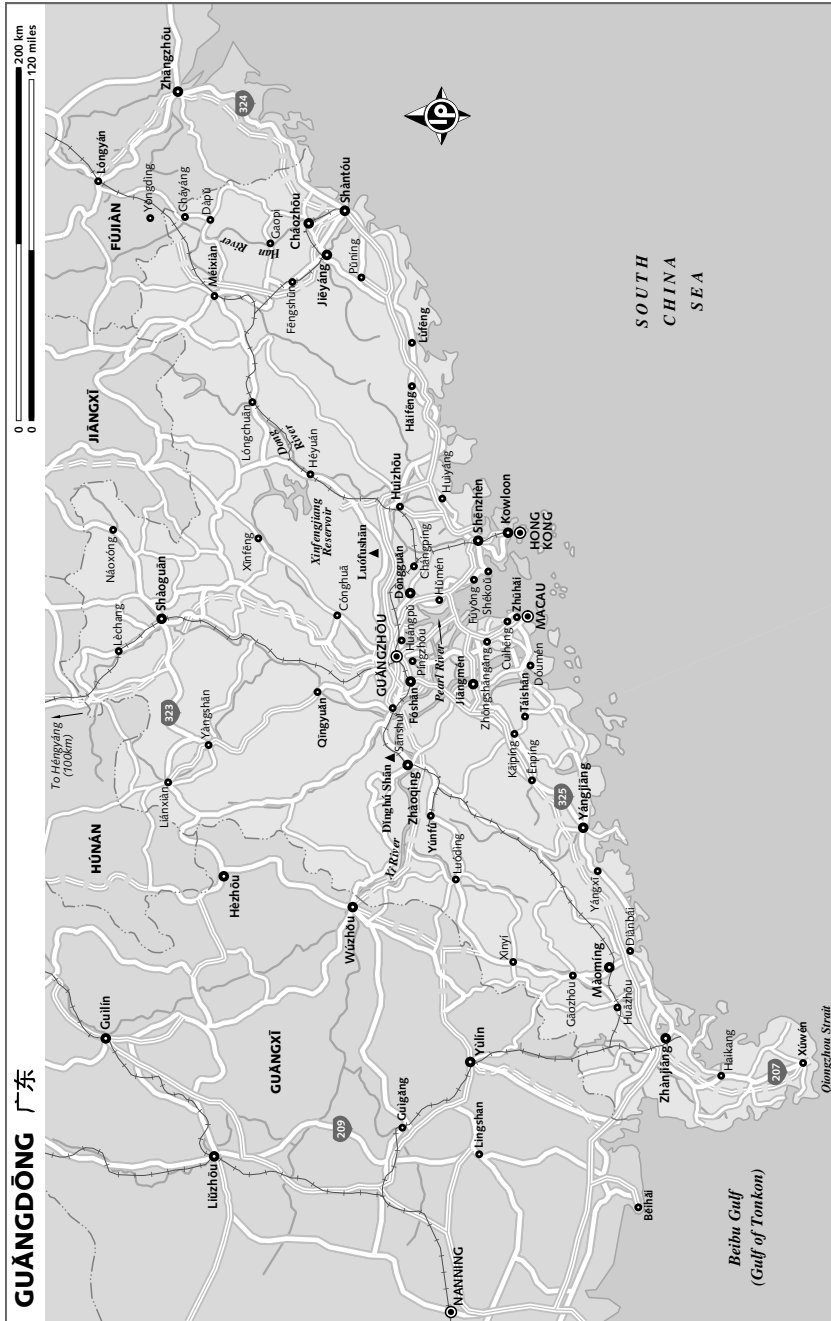
Even with all the development, there are still some worthwhile places to visit. Guǎngzhōu, the capital, may be chaotic and polluted but it's also world-renowned for its Cantonese cuisine. Close to Guǎngzhōu is Kǎipíng, famous for its unique watchtowers, and a journey downriver from Qīngyuǎn to see the ancient temples of Fēilái and Fēixiá is truly a one-of-a-kind experience.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Indulge yourself in the legendary Cantonese cuisine of **Guǎngzhōu** (p587)
- Sail downriver to the secluded temples of **Fēilái and Fēixiá** (p602)
- Explore the surreal fairy-tale watchtowers of **Kǎipíng** (p601)
- Create your own ceramic masterpieces at the **Nanfeng Ancient Kiln** (p604) at Fóshān



■ POPULATION: 75.9 MILLION



History

As China's southern gateway, Guǎngdōng has had contact with the outside world for over a millennium. Among the first outsiders to make their way here were the Romans, who appeared as early as the 2nd century AD. By the Tang dynasty (618–907 AD), Arab merchants were visiting regularly and a sizeable trade with the Middle East and Southeast Asia had developed.

The first Europeans to settle here were the Portuguese in 1557, who set up base down-river at Macau. They were followed by the Jesuits in 1582, who established themselves at Zhàoqing, west of Guǎngzhōu. The British came along in the 17th century and by 1685 merchant ships from the East India Company were calling at Guǎngzhōu. In 1757 an imperial edict gave the *cohong*, a local merchants' guild, a monopoly on China's trade with foreigners, who were restricted to Shamian Island. Trade remained in China's favour until 1773 when the British shifted the balance by unloading 1000 chests of Bengal opium at Guǎngzhōu. Addiction swept China like wildfire, eventually leading to the Opium War (see boxed text p611).

Guǎngdōng was a hotbed of revolt in the 19th century. The Taiping Rebellion (1848–64), led by the enigmatic Hong Xiuquan, who claimed to be the younger brother of Jesus Christ, tried to establish his own 'Kingdom of Heavenly Peace' and recruit members to overthrow the dynasty. The rebellion was crushed with the help of foreign powers.

Twentieth-century Guǎngdōng saw its share of hardships and successes, being the headquarters of both the Nationalist and Communist parties and enduring untold suffering during the Cultural Revolution. After 1978, with the rise of Deng Xiaoping and the decision to adopt an 'open door' economic policy, Guǎngdōng became the first province to experience firsthand the effects of economic reforms, with Shēnzhèn, Zhūhǎi and Shàntóu set up as Special Economic Zones. Guǎngdōng's continued economic success has made it a leading export centre for computers, clothing and household items.

Climate

Guǎngdōng's moody subtropical climate means chilly, wet winters and long, humid summers. The rainy season generally lasts from April/May to September and typhoons

can be frequent from July/August to October. The best times to visit are in late autumn (October–November) and early spring (March–April).

Language

The vast majority of the people of Guǎngdōng speak Cantonese, a dialect distinct from Mandarin. Though it enjoys much less exalted status than the so-called national language, Cantonese is in fact older than Mandarin and classical poetry sounds much better when read using that dialect's pronunciation.

Getting There & Away

Guǎngdōng is well connected to the rest of China by bus, plane and train. The easiest entry/exit point to/from the province is Hong Kong via the KCR East Rail line (p561).

Getting Around

Guǎngdōng is crisscrossed with a vast network of rail and road lines, making travelling around the province very easy. Trains run north through Shàoquǎn and onwards to Húnán province, east to Méizhōu, Shàntóu and Fújiàn province, and west through Zhàoqing to Guǎngxī province. Hydrofoils also run between the Pearl River Delta region and Hong Kong. Frequent buses run to all these locations and more, though they are less comfortable than trains. If you really need to get somewhere fast, there are flights between all major cities in the region.

GUǎNGZHŌU 广州

📍 20 / pop 3.24 million

Known to many in the West as 'Canton', Guǎngzhōu is the first city most travellers to mainland China visit. Wrapped in a perpetual haze of pink smog and flashing neon lights, the city overwhelms with its energy, colour, and sheer size. Influenced by neighbouring Hong Kong, consumerism has swept up the city in a head-spinning frenzy, but scratch away Guǎngzhōu's glittery surface and you'll find a place quite special among China's major urban centres. It just takes some time to grow on you.

It wasn't long ago that Guǎngzhōu exemplified the worst of rampant urbanisation: never-ending flyovers, ugly architecture and traffic-clogged streets. In recent years, the city has been given a makeover and its scrubbed-up appearance has given it a cosmopolitan

edge. Stodgy concrete apartment blocks are giving way to shiny high rises and shopping plazas. Efforts to relieve traffic congestion have resulted in a clean, modern metro system and tougher traffic laws. Trees and flowers have been planted on roadsides and well-kept gardens and parks add splashes of colour to the contemporary grey landscape.

The city remains as chaotic as ever, but underneath all the glitz and noise there are pockets that still retain their character from earlier years. Many of the elegant churches, villas and mansions on the former foreign enclave of Shamian Island have been restored, and you'll find hidden among Guǎngzhōu's back lanes some lovely old residences, temples and gardens that haven't been touched in generations.

Of course, you can't talk about Guǎngzhōu without mentioning the food. It's here that you'll try Cantonese cuisine cooked at its very best. The city boasts the largest number of restaurants per capita in China; the Cantonese will make certain you won't leave their city hungry.

History

Legend has it that Guǎngzhōu was founded by five immortals who descended from the sky on rams and saved the city from starvation. Thus the city earned the nickname 'Goat City' (Yáng Chéng). Goats or no goats, the first settlement on the site of the present-day city dates back to 214 BC, when the so-called First Emperor of Qin sent his troops south to gain control of the sea.

Because of its fortuitous location on the northern end of the Pearl River, Guǎngzhōu from early times was China's most important southern port. It was the starting point for the Silk Road of the Sea during the Tang dynasty (AD 618–907), an important maritime route for shipping silk and other goods to the West. It was a trading post for the Portuguese in the 16th century, and for the British in the 17th.

The city was a stronghold of the republican forces after the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911. Sun Yatsen (1866–1925), the first president of the Republic of China, was born in Cuihēng village (see p610), and in the early 1920s he led the Kuomintang (KMT; Nationalist Party) in Guǎngzhōu, from where the republicans mounted their campaigns against the northern warlords. Guǎngzhōu was also a centre of activities for the fledgling

Communist Party, and Mao Zedong and other prominent Communist leaders were based here in 1925/26.

Since liberation, Guǎngzhōu (Broad Region) has put all its energies into the business of making money. Even when China had effectively cut itself off from most of the rest of the world, what was then called the Canton Trade Fair was the only forum in which the Middle Kingdom did business with the West. Today, it remains a vital import-export centre.

Orientation

Central Guǎngzhōu is bounded by semi-circular Huanshi Lu, literally 'circle-city road', to the north and Pearl River (Zhū Jiāng) to the south. A larger ring road – the Huancheng Expressway – defines the roughly oval-shaped greater metropolitan area.

MAPS

Good maps of Guǎngzhōu in both English and Chinese can be found at newsstands and in the bus and train stations. Bookshops (below) also have a variety of maps for sale.

Information

BOOKSHOPS

Foreign Languages Bookshop (Wàiwén Shūdiàn; ☎ 8333 5185; 2nd fl, 326–328 Beijing Lu; ☎ 9am–6pm Mon–Sat, 10am–6pm Sun) You'll find a few English classics here, though the store is mainly for Chinese students learning English.

Tangning Bookstore (Tángníng Shūdiàn; ☎ 8385 5749; 37 Huale Lu; ☎ 10am–11pm) Has a small selection of contemporary novels written in English.

INTERNET ACCESS 网吧

Internet bars come and go in Guǎngzhōu, depending upon the mood of the authorities. The small lanes running off Yanjiang Xilu have some hole-in-the-wall cafes, most charging Y2–3 an hour. Coffee shops (p597) are also a good place to look for computers. Hotel business centres offer a wide range of Internet services but can be expensive.

Henan Webmail (Hénán Wǎnglùò; ☎ 8121 6061; Shamian Sanjie; ☎ 9am–11pm) This tiny café on Shamian charges a stiff but negotiable Y20 an hour.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Can-Am International Medical Centre (Jiāměi Guójí Yiliào Zhōngxīn; ☎ 8387 9057; 5th fl, Garden Tower, Garden Hotel, 368 Huanshi Donglu) Has English-speaking doctors on staff but it's necessary to call first.

Guǎngzhōu No 1 People's Hospital (Dìyī Rénmín Yīyuàn, 1 Panfu Lu) Has a medical clinic for foreigners on the first floor of the complex.

Guǎngzhōu Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine (Zhōngyī Yīyuàn; ☎ 8188 6504; 16 Zhuji Lu) Offers acupuncture, herbal medicine and other traditional Chinese remedies.

MONEY

Bank of China (Zhōngguó Yínháng; ☎ 8334 0998; 698 Renmin Beilu; ☎ 9am–6pm Mon–Fri, 9am–4pm Sat & Sun) Most branches change travellers cheques and have ATMs that take international cards. There's another branch at Guangdong International Hotel (ground fl, Main Tower, 339 Huanshi Donglu) next to the Friendship Hotel, and also opposite the Furama Hotel (316 Changdi Nanlu).

American Express Guǎngzhōu (Měiguó Yùntōng Guǎngzhōu; ☎ 8331 1611; fax 8331 1616; room 806, 8th fl, Main Tower, Guangdong International Hotel, 339 Huanshi Donglu; ☎ 9am–5.30pm Mon–Fri) Can cash and sell Amex travellers cheques.

POST & TELEPHONE

China Telecom (Zhōngguó Diànxìn; ☎ 1000; 196 Huanshi Xilu; ☎ 8am–6pm) The main branch is opposite the train station on the eastern side of Renmin Beilu.

Post Office (yóujú; Huanshi Xilu; ☎ 8am–8pm) Conveniently located next to the train station.

PUBLIC SECURITY BUREAU

PSB (Gōngānjú; ☎ 8311 5800/5808; 155 Jean Annul; ☎ 8–11.30am & 2.30–5pm) Helps with all 'aliens' needs. Between Dade Lu and Darin Lu.

TOURIST INFORMATION & TRAVEL AGENCIES

Most hotels offer travel services that, for a small charge, can help you book tickets and tours.

China International Travel Service (CITS; Zhōngguó Guójí Lǚxíngshè; ☎ 8666 6889; 179 Huanshi Xilu; ☎ 9am–6pm) Near the main train station. This office is experienced in helping foreigners book tickets and tours.

China Travel Service (CTS; Zhōngguó Lǚxíngshè; ☎ 8333 6888; 10 Qiaoguang Lu; ☎ 8.30am–6pm Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm Sat & Sun) Offers various tours and books tickets.

Sights & Activities

YUEXIU PARK 越秀公园

A bright swathe of green plunked down in the middle of Guǎngzhōu, this vast urban park (Yuèxiù Gōngyuán; 13 Jiefang Beilu; admission Y5; ☎ 6am–9pm) encompasses over 93 hectares of gardens, shaded wood paths, historical monu-

ments and museums. Within it, you'll find Guǎngzhōu's **Five Rams Statue** (Wúyáng Shíxiàng), a statue of the five immortals attributed to Guǎngzhōu's founding. On top of a hill in the centre of the park is the five-story **Zhenhai Tower** (Zhènghǎi Lóu), built in 1380. Later incorporated into Guǎngzhōu's city wall, it was used as a watchtower to keep out the pirates that once pillaged China's coastal cities. Now the red-walled tower stands alone, the city walls long since removed. During the First Opium War, British troops occupied the tower, and the grounds around the tower hold some of the cannons used by the British during that time. There are sweeping views of Guǎngzhōu from the top storey.

In 1928 the tower was rebuilt to house the **Guangzhou City Museum** (Guǎngzhōushì Bówùguǎn; ☎ 8355 0627; admission Y10; ☎ 9am–5.30pm), which has an excellent collection of exhibits that trace the history of Guǎngzhōu all the way back to the Neolithic period. There are also displays that outline Guǎngzhōu's trading history with the West, including an exhibit devoted to foreign repression. On the east side of the tower is the **Guangzhou Art Gallery** (Guǎngzhōu Měishùguǎn), currently under renovation.

Take metro line 2, Yuèxiù Gōngyuán station, or bus 5, 10, 33, 63, 122 or 244.

ORCHID GARDEN 兰园

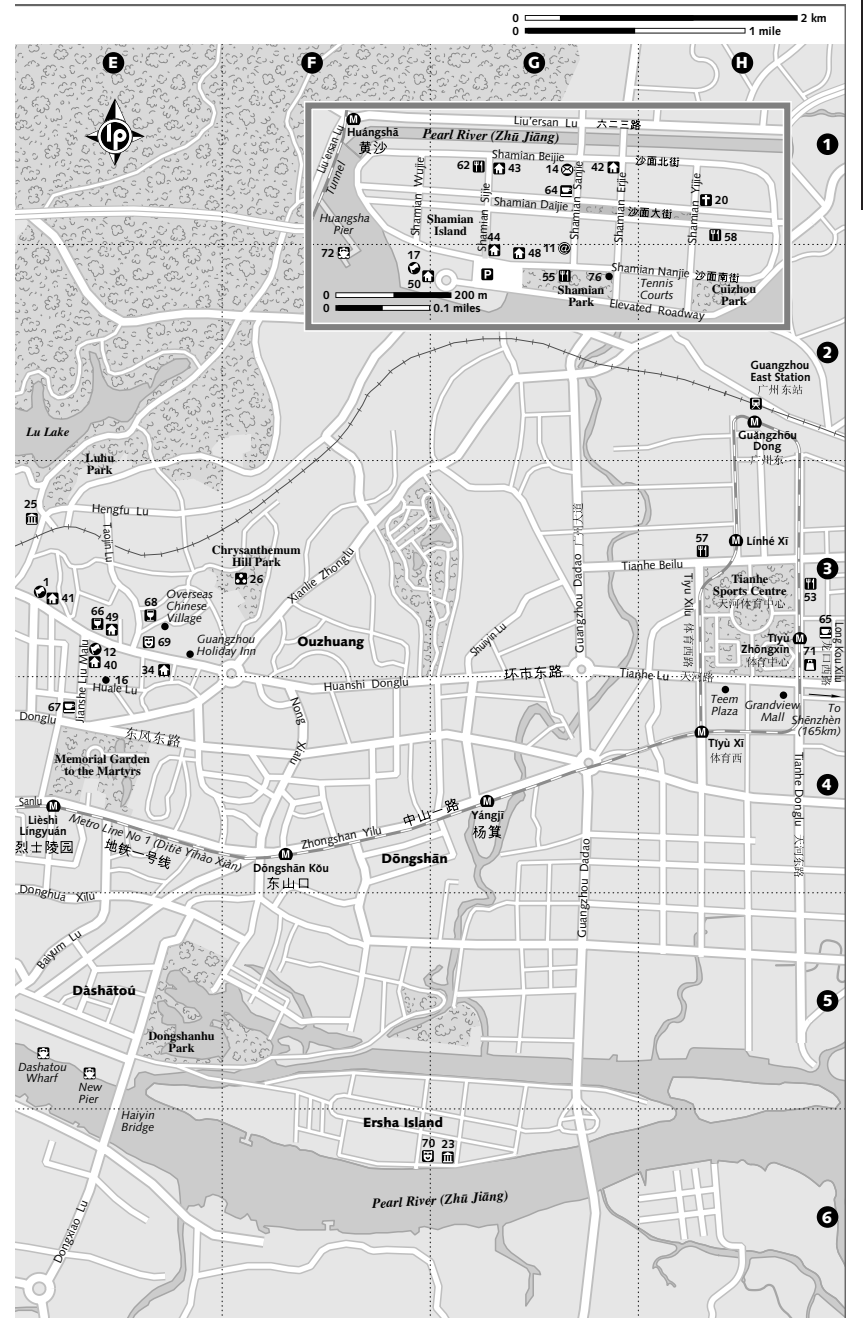
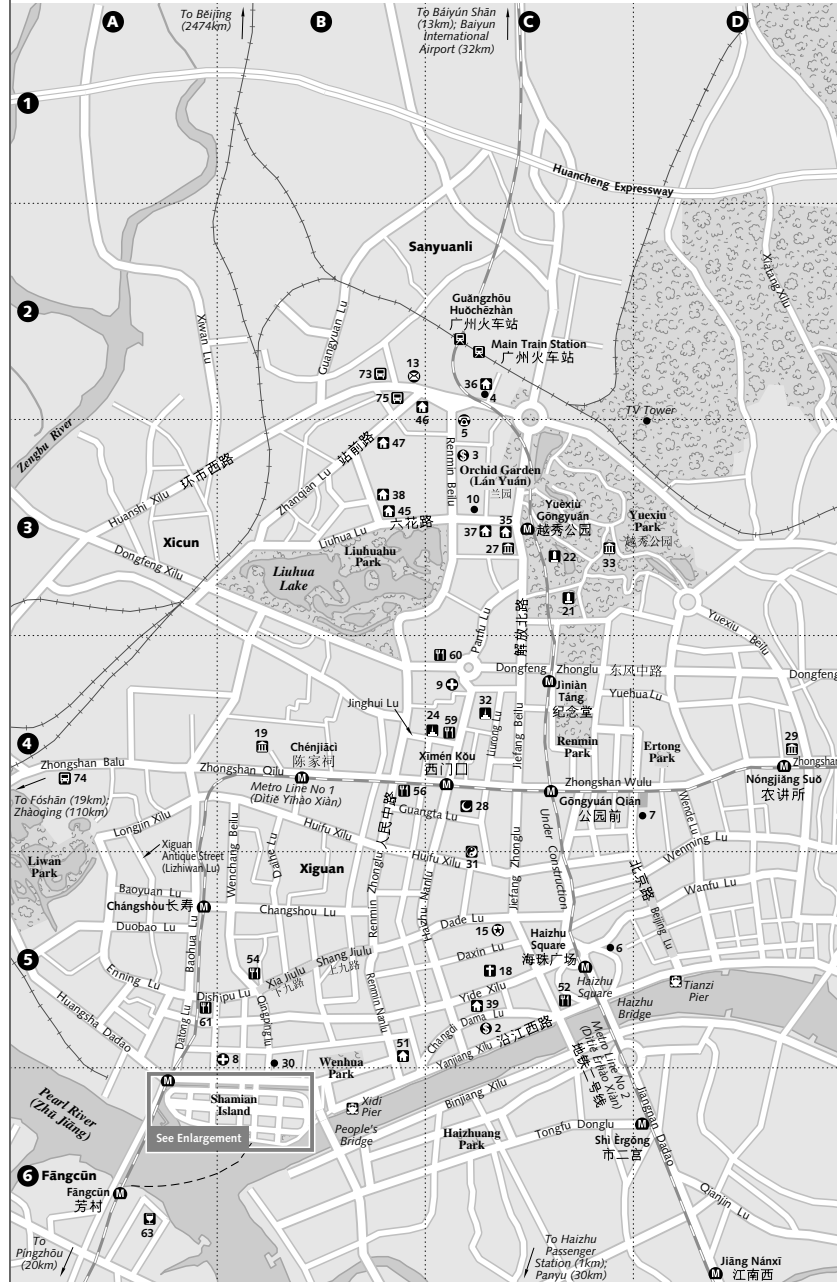
Across from Yuexiu Park on Jiefang Beilu is this charming **garden** (Lán Yuán; admission Y8; ☎ 8am–5pm) famous for its blossoming orchids. With its winding paths, arched stone bridges and willow-fringed ponds, you may forget you're even in Guǎngzhōu. Each admission ticket includes a pot of tea at one of the many teahouses, and if you pay Y20, you can see a traditional tea ceremony. The western edge of the park sits on the site an old Muslim cemetery, supposedly the burial site of Abu Waqas, the uncle of the Prophet, who is credited with bringing Islam to China. His tomb is in a plain stone building oriented towards Mecca. The cemetery is currently closed to non-Muslims.

MAUSOLEUM OF THE NANYUE KING

南越王墓

Just opposite the main entrance to Yuexiu Park, this superb **mausoleum** (Nányuèwáng Mù; ☎ 8666 4920; 867 Jiefang Beilu; admission Y12, audioguide Y10; ☎ 9am–5.30pm) sits on the site of the 2000-year-old Nanyue Kingdom, discovered in 1983 when surprised workers found an ancient

GUANGZHŌU 广州



INFORMATION		Guangdong Museum of Art		Chuānguó Yǎnyì 川国演义..... 53 H3	
American Express Guangzhou	美国运通广州.....(see 41)	广东美术馆.....23 G6	Guangxiao Temple 光孝寺.....24 C4	Guangzhou Restaurant	广州酒家.....54 B5
Australian Consulate	澳大利亚领事馆.....1 E3	Guangzhou City Museum	广州市博物馆.....(see 33)	La Seine 赛纳河法国餐厅.....(see 70)	Lucy's 露丝酒吧餐厅.....55 G2
Bank of China 中国银行.....2 C5	Bank of China 中国银行.....3 C3	Guangzhou Museum of Art	广州艺术博物馆.....25 E3	Moslem Restaurant 回民饭店.....56 B4	Roku Roku 六禄.....57 H4
Bank of China 中国银行.....(see 41)	Can-Am International Medical Centre 美家国际医疗中心.....(see 12)	Mausoleum of the 72 Martyrs 七十二烈士墓.....26 F3	Mausoleum of the Nangue King 南越王墓.....27 C3	Shanghai & Suzhou Restaurant	嚙江南.....58 H1
Canadian Consulate	加拿大领事馆.....(see 35)	Mosque Dedicated to the Prophet 怀圣寺.....28 C4	Peasant Movement Institute 农民运动讲习所.....29 D4	Shuiyúntián Vegetarian Restaurant 水云天.....59 C4	Tao Heung Seafood Hotpot Restaurant
China International Travel Service Guangdong	广东中国国际旅行社.....4 C2	Qingping Market 清平市场.....30 B5	Temple of the Five Immortals 五仙观.....31 C5	稻香海鲜火锅酒家.....60 C4	Tao Tao Ju Restaurant 陶陶居.....61 A5
China Telecom 中国电信.....5 C3	China Travel Service Guangzhou 广州中国旅行社.....6 C5	Temple of the Six Banyan Trees 六榕寺.....32 C4	Foreign Languages Bookshop 外文书店.....7 D4	Thai Zhen Cow & Bridge 泰珍牛桥.....62 G1	
French Consulate 法国领事馆.....(see 1)	German Consulate 德国领事馆.....(see 41)	SLEEPING ☹	Guangzhou Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine 中医医院.....8 B5		
Guangzhou No 1 People's Hospital 第一人民医院.....9 C4	Guangzhou Trade Fair Centre 广州交易会.....10 C3	Cathay Hotel 国泰宾馆.....34 E3	Henan Webmail 河南网络.....11 G2		
Japanese Consulate 日本领事馆.....12 E3	Netherlands Consulate 荷兰领事馆.....(see 1)	China Hotel 中国大酒店.....35 C3	PSB 公安局.....15 C5		
Post Office (Liuhua Post Office) 邮政总局(流花邮局).....13 B2	Post Office 邮局.....14 G1	CITS Hotel Guangdong 广东国旅酒店.....36 C2	Tangning Bookstore 唐宁书店.....16 E4		
UK Consulate 英国领事馆.....(see 1)	US Consulate 美国领事馆.....17 F2	Dong Fang Hotel 东方宾馆.....37 C3	UK Consulate 英国领事馆.....(see 1)		
		Elan Hotel 米兰花酒店.....38 B3	US Consulate 美国领事馆.....17 F2		
		Furama Hotel 富丽华大酒店.....39 C3			
		Garden Hotel 花园酒店.....40 E3			
		Guangdong International Hotel.....41 E3			
		Guangdong Victory Hotel (New Annex) 胜利宾馆(新楼).....42 G1			
		Guangdong Victory Hotel 胜利宾馆.....43 G1			
		Guangzhou City International Youth Hostel 广州国际青年旅社.....(see 36)			
		Guangzhou Youth Hostel 省外办招待所.....44 G2			
		Home Hotel 家园宾馆.....45 B3			
		Liuhua Hotel 流花宾馆.....46 B2			
		New Mainland Hotel 广州新大地宾馆.....47 B3			
		Shamian Hotel 沙面宾馆.....48 G2			
		White Cloud Hotel 白云宾馆.....49 E3			
		White Swan Hotel 白天鹅宾馆.....50 F2			
		Xinhua Hotel 新华大酒店.....51 B5			
		EATING ☹			
		1920 Restaurant and Bar 咖啡厅.....52 C5			

royal tomb in the course of excavation work for a shopping plaza. The tomb has been turned into one of China's best museums, making it a must on any itinerary.

The mausoleum houses the tomb of Zhao Mo, second king of Nanyue and grandson of the fabled Qin general Zhao Tuo, whom the emperor sent to the south in BC 214 to quell

unrest. Zhao Tuo established a sovereign state called the Nanyue Kingdom, with Guǎngzhōu as its capital. After the fall of the Qin and the establishment of the Han Dynasty in BC 206, Zhao Tuo declared himself king and was grudgingly recognized by the Han, who let him retain his local power. His grandson Zhao Mo succeeded him on the throne but

ruled unsuccessfully. Shortly after Zhao Mo's death, the Han plundered the kingdom in BC 111, claiming the territory as their own.

On display in the museum are Zhao Mo's burial suit, made of thousands of tiny jade tiles – jade was thought to preserve the body and make one immortal – gold jewellery and trinkets, as well as other beautiful artefacts found at the tomb site. Some say that the Nanyue tomb rivals the Ming tombs in Běijīng. Everything in the museum is expertly displayed and the English audio guide is recommended.

TEMPLE OF THE SIX BANYAN TREES

六榕寺

This Buddhist temple (Liúróng Sì; 87-89 Liurong Lu; admission ¥15; ☎ 8am-5pm) was built in AD 537 to enshrine Buddhist relics brought over from India. The relics were placed in the octagonal **Decorated Pagoda** (Huà Tǎ), a 57m pagoda which appears from the outside to contain only nine storeys but actually contains 17. The temple was given its current name by the exiled poet Su Dongpo in 1099, who commemorated the banyan trees in the courtyard with a poem. The banyan trees are long gone but you can see the characters (*liúróng*) he wrote hanging above the temple's gateway.

To get here, take bus 56.

GUANGXIAO TEMPLE 光孝禅寺

The **'Bright Filial Piety Temple'** (Guāng Xiào Cán Sì; 109 Jinghui Lu; admission ¥5; ☎ 6am-5pm), about 400m west of the Temple of the Six Banyan Trees, is the oldest temple in Guǎngzhōu and dates back to the 4th century. By the Tang dynasty, it was well established as a centre of Buddhist learning in southern China. Many prominent monks came to teach here, including Bodhidharma, the founder of Chan (Zen) Buddhism.

The temple complex originally contained over 19 halls and several restorations later still feels elegant and spacious. Most of the current buildings date from the 19th century. The most impressive building is the main hall, with its double eaves. Inside is a 10m-high statue of the Buddha. At the back of the hall sits an impressive statue of Guanyin, Goddess of Mercy.

Take metro line 1 to Ximén Kǒu station.

MOSQUE DEDICATED TO THE PROPHET

怀圣寺

The original building on the site of this **mosque** (Huáishèng Sì; ☎ 8333 3593; 56 Guangta Lu) is thought to have been established in AD 627 by Abu

Waqas, one of the Prophet Mohammed's uncles, making it the first of its kind in China. The present mosque dates from the Qing dynasty. The minaret is called 'Smooth Minaret' (Guǎng Tǎ) because of its smooth, unadorned appearance. The mosque is closed to non-Muslims and surrounded by heavy security.

Take metro line 1 to Ximén Kǒu station, or bus 5.

TEMPLE OF THE FIVE IMMORTALS 五仙观

Not far from the mosque is this Taoist temple (Wúxiān Guān; ☎ 8333 6853; Huifu Xilu; admission ¥5; ☎ 9am-5pm). It dates back to 1377 and is named after the mythical founders of Guǎngzhōu. A statue of the immortal five depicts three men and two women riding their legendary rams through the clouds. The temple includes a main hall, built in typical Ming fashion. To the east of the hall is a small pond with a foot-shaped depression, said to be the footprint of one of the immortals.

CHEN CLAN ANCESTRAL HALL 陈家祠

This enormous **compound** (Chénjiā Cí; ☎ 8181 4559; 34 Nelongji Lu; admission ¥10; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm), part of the Guangdong Museum of Folk Art (Guǎngdōng Mínhjiān Gōngyì Bówùguǎn), is both ancestral shrine and Confucian school. It was built in 1894 by the residents of 72 villages in Guǎngdōng, where the Chen lineage is the predominant family. The complex encompasses 19 buildings of the traditional Lingnan style (combining traditional Chinese, Japanese and Western traditions). All buildings contain exquisite carvings, statuary and paintings and are decorated with ornate scrollwork on the roof tiles, walls, stairs and woodwork of the window frames and doors. The scenes depict stories from Chinese literature and folklore and include real and mythical animals.

Take metro line 1 to Chénjiācǐ station, or bus 85 or 104.

CATHEDRAL OF THE SACRED HEART

石室教堂

The impressive twin-spired Roman Catholic **cathedral** (Shí Shì Jiàotáng; Yide Xilu; ☎ 8am-6pm), built between 1863 and 1888, was designed by a French architect in the neo-Gothic style and built entirely of granite. The massive towers reach an impressive height of 48m. The four bronze bells were made in France, as was the original stained glass, most of which has now disappeared. Take bus 8, 82 or 86.

QINGPING MARKET 清平市场

Just north of Shamian Island, what is bizarrely translated as **Peaceful Market** (Qingping Shichǎng; Qingping Lu; ☎ 8am-6pm) has vast displays of medicinal herbs, dried mushrooms and other plants, live birds, and tubs of squirming turtles, fish and frogs. Much harder to stomach, though, are its cages of live animals, including kittens and puppies, and more exotic creatures such as bats, owls and monkeys – all put out for human consumption, and some in the most pitiful distress. It is one of the most notorious markets in China, and though it has cleaned up its act in the past several years it remains a disturbing place and is *not* recommended.

SHAMIAN ISLAND 沙面岛

For an instant immersion in Guǎngzhōu's colonial history, head for the leafy oasis of **Shamian Island** (Shāmiàn Dǎo), which was acquired as a foreign concession in 1859 after the two Opium Wars. Shamian ('Sand Surface Island') was little more than a sandbank when early foreign inhabitants – mainly British and French – were granted permission to set up their warehouses here. The French and British established themselves at separate ends of the island; the French took the east and the British the west. The tear-shaped sandbank was connected to the mainland by several bridges, with staunch iron gates that prohibited any Chinese from entering the island.

Major renovation has restored some of the buildings to their original appearance, transforming them into chic restaurants, cafés and hotels. Traffic is restricted on Shamian, making it a peaceful respite from the city. The best way to experience the island is to wander around and look at some of the restored buildings, each bearing a plaque with a brief history.

Shamian Dajie, the main boulevard, is a gentle stretch of gardens, trees, and old men playing Chinese checkers. The Roman Catholic **Church of Our Lady of Lourdes** (Tiānzhǔjiào Lòushèngmǔ Táng; Shamian Dajie; ☎ 8am-6pm), built by the French in 1892, is on the eastern end of the thoroughfare.

Take metro line 1 to Huángshā station.

ART MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

The **Guǎngzhōu Museum of Art** (广州艺术博物馆; Guǎngzhōu Yìshù Bówùguǎn; ☎ 8365 9337; 3 Luhu Lu; admission Y20; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Fri, 9.30am-4.30pm Sat & Sun), which opened in 2000, has an extensive collection of works, ranging from ancient

to contemporary Chinese art and sculpture, including works by artists such as Guan Shanyue, Li Xiongcai and Lai Shaoqi. Other interesting exhibits include a fantastic room on the top floor with displays of rare Tibetan tapestries. Another highlight is the room devoted to Liao Bingxiong, a political cartoonist of the 20th century. Take bus 10 or 63.

Guǎngdōng Museum of Art (广东美术馆; Guǎngdōng Měishùguǎn; ☎ 8735 1468; www.gdmao.org; 38 Yanyu Lu; admission Y15; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun) is at the eastern end of Ersha Island (Ērshā Dǎo). Founded in 1997, the museum often shows exhibits of contemporary Chinese artists and has been the site of the Guangzhou Triennale, first held in 2003. Take bus 12, 18 or 89.

REVOLUTIONARY SIGHTS

Sun Yatsen Memorial Hall (Zhōngshān Jìniàn Táng; admission Y5 for the grounds & Y10 for the memorial; ☎ 8am-5pm) was built between 1929 and 1931 to commemorate the man whom both the Kuomintang and the Communist Party consider the father of modern China. The stately hall was modelled after the Temple of Heaven in Beijing. Inside is an auditorium, used now for cultural events, and photos depicting Sun's life. The hall is rather dull and there are no English captions.

The **Peasant Movement Institute** (Nóngmín Yùndòng Jiāngxísuǒ; ☎ 8333 3936; 42 Zhongshan Silu; admission Y5; ☎ 9am-4.30pm) was established in 1924 by the Communist Party at the site of a former Confucian temple. Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai both taught here, before the school closed in 1926. The Institute is subdivided into various departments, such as the main lecture hall, students' dormitories, cafeteria building and leadership quarters. You can see Mao Zedong's re-created personal quarters and even his bed. Take metro line 1 to Nóngjiāng Quǎo station.

South of the Institute on Zhongshan Sanlu is the **Memorial Garden to the Martyrs** (Lièshì Língyuán; admission Y3; ☎ 8am-7pm), dedicated to those killed on 13 December, 1927 under the orders of Chiang Kaishek. The massacre occurred when a small group of workers, led by the Communist Party, were gunned down by Kuomintang forces. In total, over 5,000 lives were lost.

PEARL RIVER CRUISES 珠江游覽船

The northern bank of Pearl River is one of the most interesting areas of Guǎngzhōu – filled with people, markets and dilapidated buildings, and a wonderful place to stroll on a warm summer's evening.

The **Guangzhou Passenger Ship Company** (☎ 8333 0397) has up to five evening cruises on the Pearl River (from Y38, 1½ hours) between 7pm and 9pm, and 9.30pm to midnight. Boats leave from the **Tianzi Pier** (Tiānzi Mǎtòu; Beijing Lu), just east of Haizhu Bridge (Hǎizhū Qiáo; catch metro line 2 from Hǎizhū Guǎngchǎng station), and head down the river as far as Ersha Island (Ērshā Dǎo) before turning back.

Festival & Events

The invitation-only, 10-day **Guǎngzhōu Trade Fair** (Zhōngguó Chūkǒu Shāngpǐn Jiāoyì Huì; ☎ 2608 8888; www.cantonfair.org.cn), also known as the Chinese Export Commodities Fair, has been held twice yearly, usually in April and October, since 1957. Apart from the Spring Festival (Chinese New Year) in late January/early February, this is the biggest event in Guǎngzhōu. The fair is held in complexes on Lihua Lu opposite the Dong Fang and China Hotels and south of the river in the Pázhoū district.

Sleeping

Guǎngzhōu hotels are expensive. Prices rise even higher during the Guǎngzhōu Trade Fair (above) in the spring and autumn. Despite the horror of posted rates, most hotels offer 50% discounts, depending on the season. Top end (and some midrange) places add 15% service charge to the quoted room rate. Most hotels offer in-room broadband internet access.

Accommodation of all types is centred in three principal areas: around the main train station in the north; along Huanshi Donglu in the northeast; and on Shamian Island and along the river in the south.

TRAIN STATION AREA**Budget**

Guǎngzhōu City International Youth Hostel (Guǎngzhōu Guójī Qīngnián Lǚguǎndiàn; dm Y60, s Y80-118, d Y148-178; ☎) For a rock-bottom cheapie stay at this Hostelling International-affiliated property inside the CITS Hotel. Rooms are grubby but the location near the train station is convenient.

CITS Hotel Guangdong (Guǎngdōng Guólǚ Jiùdiàn; ☎ 8666 6889, ext 3812; fax 8667 9787; 179 Huanshi Xilu; 环市西路179号; s Y120-430, d Y170-600, tr Y210-750; ☎ ☎) You've got a choice of rooms (and prices) in this busy hotel right next to the train station. The location is noisy and staff indifferent – only stay here if you have an early train to catch. Bring earplugs.

Home Hotel (Jiāyuán Bīnguǎn; ☎ 6115 6688; fax 6115 6689; 6 Zhanqian Heng Lu; 站前横路6号; s Y298, d Y260-328, tr Y320; ☎ ☎) Fresh, tidy accommodation can be had at this newish hotel near the train station. Bathrooms are spiffy with modern showers (no tubs). Rooms can be discounted up to 50%.

New Mainland Hotel (Guǎngzhōu Xīn Dàdì Bīnguǎn; ☎ 8622 1638; 108 Zhanqian Lu; 站前路108号; d Y380; ☎ ☎) Situated in the heart of the wholesale clothing district and very near the train station, this plain-looking hotel offers nondescript rooms with 30% discounts. The bathrooms are modern and clean.

Midrange

Elan Hotel (☎ Milán Huà Jiùdiàn; ☎ 8622 1788; www.hotel-kopak.com; 32 Zhanqian Heng Lu; 站前横路32号; d Y288-588; ☎ ☎) Immaculate contemporary-style rooms with a European ambience. There's a computer for guest use in the lobby and all suites contain wi-fi. Rooms can be discounted up to 40%. Staff speak English.

Lihua Hotel (Liúhuā Bīnguǎn; ☎ 8666 8800; www.lh.com.cn; 194 Huanshi Xilu; 环市西路194号; s&d Y638-788, ste from Y1680; ☎ ☎) This large, generic-looking hotel sits across from the train station and offers a choice of rooms, some good quality and others a bit tatty. Check the room before handing over your deposit. Discounts of up to 60% are available.

Top End

Dong Fang Hotel (Dōngfāng Bīnguǎn; ☎ 8666 9900; www.dongfanghotel-gz.com; 120 Lihua Lu; 流花路120号; r from Y800; ☎ ☎) This five-star luxury hotel, close to the Guǎngzhōu Trade Fair, has everything it takes to make guests happy. There are more than 880 rooms and five restaurants to choose from, and discounts of up to 60% are available.

China Hotel (Zhōngguó Dàjiùdiàn; ☎ 8666 6888; www.marriott.com/cnmc; Lihua Lu; 流花路; s & d US\$98-168, ste from US\$148; ☎ ☎) The rooms in this gigantic hotel are decent value, though not worthy of the hefty rates. Within the hotel are various restaurants, shopping plazas and bars. In fact, the place is so huge you don't even need to go outside. There are discounts of up to 30%.

NORTHEAST AREA

The northeastern part of the city has the highest concentration of top-end hotels and is probably the best area for business travellers.

Midrange

White Cloud Hotel (Báiyún Bīnguǎn; ☎ 8333 3998; www.baiyun-hotel.com; 367 Huanshi Donglu; 环市东路367号; s & d ¥938; 🏠 📺) Rooms at this hotel are decent, though nothing to jump for joy about. With over a dozen restaurants, you certainly won't go hungry.

Cathay Hotel (Guótài Bīnguǎn; ☎ 8386 2888; fax 8384 2606; 376 Huanshi Donglu; 环市东路376号; s & d ¥500-680, ste from ¥1080; 🏠 📺) This Hong Kong-owned hotel is a little creepy, with dark, gloomy corridors, heavy wood panelling and eclectic décor. There's an Internet café on the 3rd floor and rooms come with broadband internet for ¥50 a day. Discounts of up to 60% may be available.

Top End

Garden Hotel (Huāyuán Jiǔdiàn; ☎ 8333 8989; www.thegardenhotel.com.cn; 368 Huanshi Donglu; 环市东路368号; s & d US\$160-260, ste from US\$450; 🏠 📺 📺) This lavish five-star hotel claims to have the largest and grandest lobby in all of Asia – it even has its own waterfall (though the waterfall at the White Swan (right) is better). Rooms are elegant and the service is impeccable.

SHAMIAN ISLAND & RIVERFRONT

Shamian Island is by far the quietest and most attractive area to stay in Guangzhou; you are much more likely to meet other travellers here and the nightlife options are decent. The riverfront area, with its busy streets and overpasses, is noisier but less expensive.

Budget

Guangzhou Youth Hostel (Shèngwàibàn Zhāodaisuǒ; ☎ 8121 8606; fax 8121 8298; 2 Shamian Sijie; 沙面四街2号; dm ¥50, s/d/tr ¥150/200/240; 🏠) For the cheapest beds in Guangzhou, head to this affable hostel on Shamian Island. This place won't win any awards for décor, but rooms are clean and serviceable. There's a useful travel desk for booking train and plane tickets.

Midrange

Guangdong Victory Hotel (Shènglì Bīnguǎn; ☎ 8121 6688; www.vhotel.com; 53 & 54 Shamian Beijie; 沙面北街53&54号; 🏠 📺) There are two branches of the Victory Hotel on Shamian Island, an older one at 54 Shamian Beijie (enter from 10 Shamian Sijie) with adequate rooms between Y280 and Y360, and a newer wing at 53 Shamian Beijie with better value doubles between Y380 and Y660.

Shamian Hotel (Shāmiàn Bīnguǎn; ☎ 8121 8288; www.gdshamianhotel.com; 52 Shamian Nanjie; 沙面南街52号; s & d ¥238-345, tr ¥298; 🏠 📺) This appealing hotel is one of the most popular hotels on Shamian. It was getting a facelift at the time of writing. Some rooms have a waterfront view.

Xinhua Hotel (Xīnhuá Dàjiǔdiàn; ☎ 8188 9788; fax 8186 8809; 2-6 Renmin Nanlu; 人民南路2-6号; s/d ¥280/320; 🏠 📺) The best of all the riverfront hotels, this reasonably priced hotel has spotless rooms and friendly staff. Some rooms have river views and come with computers. Discounts of up to 50% are available.

Furama Hotel (Fúhúá Dàjiǔdiàn; ☎ 8132 3288; www.furama.com; 316 Changdi Dama Lu; 长堤大马路316号; s & d ¥450, ste from 900; 🏠 📺) Rooms in this hotel are musty and old, though good value when discounts of 50% are given. Some have sweeping views of the river and are outfitted with computers.

Top End

White Swan Hotel (Báitūn'é Bīnguǎn; ☎ 8188 6968; www.whiteswanhotel.com; 1 Shamian Nanjie; 沙面南街1号; s & d ¥1300-1500, ste from ¥3100; 🏠 📺 📺) This 843-room property is considered the most prestigious of Guangzhou's hotels, complete with a waterfall in the lobby and fish ponds. It has an excellent range of rooms and outlets (a dozen restaurants and bars), all business facilities and a shopping arcade.

Eating

Guangzhou's cuisine is justifiably legendary. Guangzhou is especially famous for its dim sum, or *yum cha* as it's called in these parts. You'll find *yum cha* served in restaurants around the city, especially in some of the older, more established restaurants. In addition to Cantonese cuisine, Guangzhou has plenty of other restaurants serving a variety of regional Chinese dishes. A large expat population means that there are also many other types of Asian restaurants, and a fair share of good European restaurants. Outside the restaurants, cheap food stalls abound, especially in the small lanes around major shopping areas. Here you can sample local snacks and delicacies *al fresco*, while bumping elbows with the locals.

CHINESE

Guangzhou Restaurant (Guǎngzhōu Jiǔjiā; ☎ 8138 0388; 2 Wenchang Nanlu; dishes ¥35-80; 🕒 7am-3pm, 5.30-10pm) This popular place has been around since 1939 and still draws the crowds. Spread across

three floors, there are a variety of dining rooms and menus. One of the restaurant's most notable dishes is *wenchang* chicken (文昌鸡; *wénchāng jī*), chicken slow-cooked in an aromatic broth and later steamed with vegetables and a light sauce.

Tao Tao Ju Restaurant (Tǎotǎo jū Jiǔjiā; ☎ 8139 6111; 20 Dishipu Lu; dishes from ¥35; 🕒 6.45am-midnight) The *yum cha* at this restaurant, housed in an academy dating back to the 17th century, is particularly famous. The menu is extensive – over 200 items! Specialities include their trademark ginger and onion chicken (陶陶姜葱鸡; *táotáo jiāngcōng jī*).

Tao Heung Seafood Hotpot Restaurant (Dàoxiāng Hǎixiān Huǒguō Jiǔjiā; ☎ 8331 8888; 197 Dongfeng Xilu; 🕒 6.30-1am) This busy restaurant is famous for its *yum cha* and pastries, especially the steamed egg custard buns (奶皇包; *nǎihuáng bāo*). There are several branches around Guangzhou – try the branch on the 2nd floor of the Guangzhou International Financial Building.

Moslem Restaurant (Huīmín Fàndiàn; ☎ 8130 3991; 325 Zhongshan Liulu; dishes from ¥25; 🕒 6.30am-midnight) This large restaurant with the imaginative name serves excellent Hui (Chinese Muslim) cuisine. Try the boiled sliced mutton (涮羊肉; *shuàn yáng ròu*) or the crispy goose (脆皮火鹅; *cuìpí huǒé*).

Shanghai and Suzhou Restaurant (Jiāo Jiāngnán; ☎ 8121 5201; 37 Shamian Beijie; dishes from ¥20; 🕒 11.30am-2pm, 5pm-late) The sweet and savoury flavours of the Jiangnan region are the speciality in this stylish yet unpretentious restaurant on Shamian Island. Some good dishes are the shrimp with tomatoes (虾仁番茄; *xiàrèn fānqiè*) or the Shanghai steamed buns (小笼包; *xiǎo lóngbāo*).

Chuanguo Yanyi (☎ 3887 9878; 140-148 Tiyu Donglu, Nanfang Securities Bldg; dishes from ¥20; 🕒 10am-2pm, 5-9pm) If you like your food hot, this restaurant will fry your tastebuds with its authentic Sichuan cuisine, served up with plenty of chillies and hot peppers. The fiery Sichuan hot pot is the best in Guangzhou.

OTHER ASIAN

Thai Zhen Cow & Bridge (Tàizhēn Niú Qiáo; ☎ 8121 9988; 54 Shamian Beijie; starters & salads ¥25-35, mains ¥58-78; 🕒 11am-11pm) Though bizarrely named, this upscale restaurant has some of the best Thai food in Guangzhou. The red and green curries are superb. The atmosphere is quite elegant, so put on a clean shirt.

Roku Roku (Liù Lù ☎ 2223 3066; 175-181 Tianhe Beilu 1F; dishes from ¥30; 🕒 11am-8pm) Fresh, delicious Japanese noodles, *teppanyaki*, sushi and sashimi are made to order in this friendly Japanese restaurant. Prices are at the high end but worth it for the quality of the food.

VEGETARIAN

Shuiyuntian (☎ 8107 2463; 42 Jinghui Lu; dishes from ¥10; 🕒 10am-10pm) Mock-meat specialities and other vegetarian fare are served in this Buddhist vegetarian restaurant. There's an excellent lunch buffet for ¥22 a person. The English menu is good for a giggle – anyone for 'vegetarian shrimp in bamboo underwear'?

WESTERN

1920 Restaurant & Bar (Kāfēiting; ☎ 8333 6156; 183 Yanjiang Xilu; mains from ¥30, beer from ¥28; 🕒 11am-2am) This German restaurant on the riverfront is well-liked by both foreigners and locals. The patio is a nice place to enjoy an imported beer. The menu includes sausages, meatballs and even stuffed goose, if you're really hungry.

La Seine (Sàinàhé Fāguó Cǎntīng; ☎ 8735 2531; 33 Qingbo Lu; soups ¥40-68, starters ¥48-138, fish & grills ¥68-218; 🕒 11am-2.30pm, 5.30pm-midnight) It doesn't get any more French than this in Guangzhou. For authentic *nouvelle* cuisine try this smart restaurant on the first floor of the Xinghai Concert Hall. The weekend brunch (¥78) attracts the well-heeled set.

Lucy's (Lùsī Jiǔbā Cǎntīng; ☎ 8121 5106; 3 Shamian Nanjie; ¥28-40; 🕒 11am-2am) For comfort food, head to this favourite on Shamian Island. Enjoy decent burgers, buffalo wings, pizza, and beer for ¥16 a pint (happy hour is 4pm to 6pm daily). Service is especially welcoming.

Drinking CAFÉS

Blenz Coffee (Bǎiyì Kāfēi; ☎ 8121 5052; 46 Shamian Dajie; 🕒 7.30am-11.30pm) You'll find this Canadian coffee chain on Shamian Island has palatable coffee and a choice of desserts. Even better than the coffee is the free computer with internet access on the first floor.

People's Cakes and Coffee (☎ 8376 6677; 17 Jiānshe Liu Ma Lu; coffee from ¥10, sandwiches ¥20, pastries from ¥9; 🕒 8am-midnight Mon-Fri, 🕒 11am-11pm Sat & Sun) Managed by two Korean sisters, this tiny café is well-recommended. The coffee is good and reasonably priced, especially compared to other establishments around town. Best are the homemade pastries and tasty sandwiches.

Coffee Beanery (Bīnlē Kāfēi; ☎ 8754 0215; 1F, Hilton Sunshine Building, 313 Long Kou Xilu; coffee Y12-68; ☎ 7am-2am) This comfortable coffee shop in the Tianhe area offers a huge range of coffees – from simple house blends to fancy espresso concoctions. For customers, internet access is available from the in-house PCs.

BARS

Guǎngzhōu has a number of international-style bars where, in addition to sinking chilled Tsingtao and imported beers, you can you can scoff pizza or burgers, rice or noodles.

Windflower (☎ 8358 2446; 387 Huanshi Donglu; ☎ 6pm-2am) Big comfy couches and a moody atmosphere. The music is contemporary and hip. There isn't a huge range of drinks to choose from, though that doesn't stop the place from being packed on the weekends.

Elephant and Castle (Dàxiàngbǎo Jiǔbā; ☎ 8359 3309; 363 Huanshi Donglu; ☎ 5pm-3am) Long frequented by Guǎngzhōu's expat crowd, this popular sports bar still pulls in the crowds. Happy hour is from 5pm to 8pm daily.

Located along the Pearl River, across from the White Swan Hotel (p596) is **Bailetan Bar Street** (Báilétán Jiǔbā; ☎ 7pm-2.30am), which is cut off from traffic. There are a number of outdoor Chinese restaurants here and it's a great place to eat. The **Overseas Chinese Village** on Heping Lu and nearby Huanshi Donglu has a string of bars catering to foreigners and trendy locals. The names of these places all change frequently so check *That's Guangzhou* (below) for the latest venues. Take metro line 1 to Fāngcūn station.

Entertainment

The free monthly entertainment guide *That's Guangzhou* (www.thatsguangzhou.com) is an invaluable source of information for what's on around town. It's available at most of the major hotels and international-style bars and restaurants.

Xinghai Concert Hall (Xīnghǎi Yīnyuè Tīng; ☎ 8735 2766; 33 Qingbo Lu) Home to the Guangzhou Symphony Orchestra (GSO), this is the city's premier venue for classical music. It's on Ersha Island and has two concert halls that are said to have perfect acoustics.

NIGHTCLUBS

The nightlife in Guǎngzhōu is growing fast, with new clubs and karaoke joints springing up everywhere. Venues change fast so check *That's Guangzhou* (above) for the latest info.

Wave Bar (Pòuqi Jiǔbā; ☎ 8349 4568; 6 Heping Lu, Overseas Chinese Village; beer Y30, cocktails Y35; ☎ 7pm-2am) This is a popular nightclub for expats to dance and drink. With a full range of tunes to suit everybody, it's one of the best bets for a good night out.

Shopping

Guǎngzhōu is a terrific place for shopping, as long as you know where to look. Outside the major department stores, prices are reasonably cheap (especially compared to Hong Kong) and with the overwhelming variety of goods on the market, you can unearth some real treasures.

Haizhu Square (Hǎizhū Guǎngchǎng) has always been a popular spot for discounted clothing and other merchandise. Nearby is one of Guǎngzhōu's favourite shopping spots, **Beijing Lu**, a 300m pedestrian street crammed full of shops big and small selling virtually everything imaginable. It's easily reachable from the Gongyuan Qian metro stop. It gets really crowded on the weekends, but that's part of the fun.

A pedestrian shopping street with a bit more character is **Xia Jiulu/Shang Jiulu** ('Up Down Nine Street'). It's in one of the oldest parts of the city, where the buildings retain elements of both Western and Chinese architecture. It's a good place to look for discounted clothing. Also for clothing, try the trendy boutiques on **Huale Lu** behind the Garden Hotel (p596).

If it's antiques you're after, there's no better place to head than **Xiguan Antique Street** (Xīguān Gǔwán Chéng; Liziwan Lu) in the Xiguan area, with shops selling everything from ceramic teapots to Tibetan rugs. Even if you're not interested in loading up your pack with ceramic vases, it's still a wonderful place to wander and browse.

Those with more modern desires might want to head to the Tianhe area, with its fashionable shopping plazas. **Teem Plaza** (Tiānhé Chéng Guǎngchǎng; 208 Tianhe Lu) and **Grandview Shopping Mall** (Zhèngjiā Guǎngchǎng; 228 Tianhe Lu) – the largest in Asia – are two of Guǎngzhōu's newest shopping malls. If you're interested in electronics, make sure to investigate the computer markets at the east end of Tianhe Lu.

Getting There & Away

AIR

China National Aviation Corporation (CNAC; Zhōngguó Mínháng) is represented by **China**

Southern Airlines (Zhōngguó Nánfāng Hánglóng; CZ; ☎ 800-820 6666, 8612 0330; www.cs-air.com; 181 Huanshi Lu; ☎ 9am-6pm), arguably China's best-run airline. The office is southeast of the main train station. The ticketing office on the 2nd floor is open round the clock. For general flight information ring ☎ 96060.

China Southern has six daily flights to Hong Kong (Y1219 one way, 35 minutes). There are also flights to Shànghǎi (Y1390) and Běijīng (Y1810). The domestic airport tax is Y50.

International destinations served by China Southern include Amsterdam, Bangkok, Ho Chi Minh City, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Los Angeles, Melbourne, Osaka, Paris, Penang, Singapore and Sydney. The international airport tax is Y80.

Some foreign airlines with offices in Guǎngzhōu:

Japan Air Lines (☎ 3877 3868; fax 3877 3967; room 4601, Citic Plaza, 233 Tianhe Beilu)

Malaysia Airlines (☎ 8335 8828; fax 8335 8838; shop M04-05, Garden Hotel, 368 Huanshi Donglu)

Singapore Airlines (☎ 2807 2808; fax 8732 0598; Dongshan Plaza, 69 Xianlie Lu)

Thai International (☎ 8365 2333; fax 8365 2488; G3, Garden Hotel, 368 Huanshi Donglu)

United Airlines (☎ 8333 8989, ext 3165; G05, Garden Hotel, 368 Huanshi Donglu)

Vietnam Airlines (☎ 8386 7093, ext 10; M04, Attic, Garden Hotel, 368 Huanshi Donglu)

BOAT

Guǎngzhōu is a major port on China's southern coast but most ferry and catamaran services have been discontinued, victims of improved land transportation. However, there are still services within the greater Guǎngzhōu metropolitan area to/from Hong Kong and far-flung Hǎinán. Tickets are available from CTS Guǎngzhōu (p589) and the travel desks at most top end hotels.

High-speed catamarans, run by the **Nanhai Pinggang Passenger Transport Co** (☎ 8444 8218), make two trips a day from the port of Nánhǎi in Píngzhōu, located about 23km southwest of Guǎngzhōu, to Hong Kong. Boats depart from Nánhǎi at 9.15am and 4pm and from Hong Kong at 8.05am and 2pm. The trip takes 2½ hours and costs Y180/170 in 1st/2nd class. Shuttles to Nánhǎi run from the Garden Hotel.

Ferries for Hǎikǒu on Hainan Island (Hǎinán Dǎo) depart from the pier at **Huángpǔ** (☎ 8227 9839), located some 32km southeast of

Guǎngzhōu, at 3.00pm on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. The trip takes 18 hours and the prices range from Y180 in 5th class to Y450 in 1st class. In the opposite direction, ferries leave Haikou's **Xiuying Harbour** (☎ 0898 6865 3315) on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 4pm.

BUS

Guǎngzhōu has several long-distance bus stations with services to all parts of Guǎngdōng, southern Fújiàn, eastern Guǎngxī and even further afield. There are three useful stations clustered around the main train station. These are the Liuhua bus station (Liúhuā Chēzhàn) across Huanshi Xilu in front of the train station, the **Guǎngdōng long-distance bus station** (Guǎngdōng shēng qìchē kèyùn zhàn; Huanshi Xilu) to the right and another long-distance bus station (shì qìchē kèyùn zhàn) over the footbridge leading from the train station. All of these stations have buses to Shēnzhèn (Y60, two hours, every 12 minutes 6am to 11pm), Zhūhǎi (Y72, 2½ hours, every 15 minutes 7am to 9pm), and Kǎipíng (Y45, 2 hours, every forty minutes).

Buses for other destinations leaving mostly from the long-distance bus stations include: Fóshān (Y12 to Y14, 45 minutes); Guǐlín (sleeper Y150 to Y180, 13 hours); Hǎikǒu (sleeper Y180 to Y280, 16 hours); Nánning (sleeper Y150 to Y180, 15 hours); Shàntóu (Y90 to Y180, six hours); Zhàoqing (Y30, 1½ hours); and Zhōngshān (Y30 to Y35, two hours).

If the train station area is too anarchic for you, head to the clean and orderly **Haizhu Passenger Station** (Hǎizhū Kèyùn Zhàn; 182 Nanzhou Lu) in the southern Hǎizhū district. You'll find buses to the same destinations listed above as well as buses to Qingyuán (Y20, 1½ hours) and Méizhōu (Y100, six hours). There are also buses to Yǒngding (Y130, sleeper, 11 hours) and Fúzhōu (Y240, sleeper, 15 hours) in Fújiàn. Express buses drop passengers off at the Luó Hú border checkpoint at Shēnzhèn (Y60, one hour, 6.50am to 8.20pm).

The easiest way to get to Hong Kong is by the deluxe buses that ply the Guǎngzhōu–Shēnzhèn freeway in 2½ hours. Most of the top end hotels (see p595), including the Dong Fang, China and Guangdong International Hotels, have tickets and they cost around Y100 (Y250 to Hong Kong International Airport). Direct buses through Zhūhǎi to Macau (Y60, 2½ hours) leave from the China and Garden Hotels.

TRAIN

Guǎngzhōu's main train station, which is useful for short-distance destinations such as Zhàoqing (Y24, 2½ hours), is a chaotic and seething mass of humanity. To get there, catch metro line 2 from Guǎngzhōu Huóchézhàn station; note that the train station will be moved to outlying Panyu in 2008. The Guǎngzhōu east train station, on the other hand, which serves more far-flung destinations, is a model of efficiency. To get there, take metro line 1 Guǎngzhōu Dōng Zhàn station. Bus 272 (Y2) links the two stations while bus 271 (Y2) goes between the Lihua bus station and the Guǎngzhōu east train station. Metro line 1 runs to the east train station and line 3 should be linked by the time this book goes to press.

Travellers will find ticketing at the east station a fairly straightforward affair, with separate **ticketing booths** (☎ 7.30am-9pm) for Hung Hom, in Hong Kong's Kowloon (Y186-196, HK\$180-190, 1¼ hours), and a dozen fast trains a day between 8.35am and 9.23pm. There are four high-speed through trains per day to Shēnzhèn (Y80, 55 minutes), on the border with Hong Kong. Signs are in English. There are local trains to Shēnzhèn (Y76, two hours) departing every half-hour from about 6.30am to 10.20pm.

Trains also head north from here to Shànghǎi (Y427, 21 hours) and Běijīng (Y458, 22 hours), as well as destinations all over the country. For details on trains to Lhasa, see p924.

Despite all the hassles at the main Guǎngzhōu train station, booking train tickets here is a lot easier than it used to be. There are two separate places to buy them at the station itself. A 24-hour ticketing office is in the hall to the left of the large clock as you face the station. Current, next-day and two-day advance tickets are sold in the white and silver building just east of the station, open daily from 5.30am to 10.30pm.

CITS Guǎngzhōu (p589) near the main train station will book train tickets up to five days in advance for a service charge of about Y20.

Getting Around

Greater Guǎngzhōu, as defined by the Huancheng Expressway, extends some 20km east to west and more than 10km north to south. Since most of the interesting sights are scattered throughout the city, seeing the place on foot is not exactly practical. The metro (see right) is the speediest and cleanest way to get around.

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Guǎngzhōu's new Baiyun International Airport (Báiyún Guóji Fēijīchǎng), which opened in June 2004, is 34km north of the city. There is an airport shuttle bus (Y13 to Y32, one hour, every 15 to 30 minutes, 7am to 10pm) that leaves from a half-dozen locations around Guǎngzhōu, including the China Southern Airlines main office (p598) near the train station. A taxi to/from the airport will cost about Y140.

BICYCLE

Rental bikes are usually available somewhere on Shamian Island; ask at your hotel for details. At the time of research there was a stall on Shamian Erjie in the northeast corner of Shamian Park (Shāmiàn Gōngyuán) with bicycles for rent for Y15 per hour (plus Y400 deposit).

BUS

Guǎngzhōu has a large network of motor buses and electric trolley-buses (Y2 to Y5). Unfortunately the network is overstretched and the buses are usually very crowded and slow.

METRO

At the time of writing, Guǎngzhōu had only two metro lines. Line 1 runs for 18.5km from Guǎngzhōu east train station in the northeast and across Pearl River in the southwest. It goes by many of the city's major sights along Zhongshan Lu, and is also a convenient way to get to Shamian Island. Line 2 goes essentially north-south for 23km from Pázhōu station in the south to Sānyuán Lǐ station in the northeast. It is good for the main train station, many of the sights around Yuexiu Park, and the riverfront hotels. The two lines intersect at one station: Gōngyuán Qián.

More lines are in the works: line 3 was being tested in 2006 and line 4 should be finished by the time this book goes to press.

Depending on the line, the metro runs from about 6.20am to just before 11pm. Fares are Y2 to Y7, depending on the number of stops you travel (eg Y5 for the 10 stops between the two train stations). A better deal for getting around is to buy a transit pass (Yáng chéng tōng; 羊城通), which can be bought from kiosks inside the metro stations and post offices. Passes start at Y50 and require a Y30 deposit, which can be refunded if you keep your receipt. The pass can be used for all public transport including taxis.

TAXI

Taxis are abundant on the streets of Guǎngzhōu but demand is great, particularly during the peak hours: from 8am to 9am, and at lunch and dinner.

Taxis are equipped with meters, which are always used, and flagfall is Y7. There is an additional Y1 added on for a fuel surcharge. A trip from the main train station to Shamian Island should cost between Y15 and Y20; from Guǎngzhōu east train station to the island is Y40 to Y45.

AROUND GUǎNGZHŌU

White Cloud Hills 白云山

These hills (Báiyún Shān; admission Y5), in the northern suburbs of Guǎngzhōu, are an adjunct to the **Dayu Range** (大庾岭; Dàiyù Lǐng), the chief group of mountains in Guǎngdōng. In total there are more than 30 peaks, which were once dotted with temples and monasteries. It's a good hike up to the top – or a leisurely walk down if you take the **cab car** (Y25) – and a refreshing escape from the polluted city below.

Star Touching Peak (摩星岭; Móxīng Lǐng), at 382m, is the highest point in the hills. Local people rate the vista from a precipice called **White Cloud Evening View** (白云晚望; Báiyún Wǎnwàng) as one of the eight great sights of Guǎngzhōu.

Famous as a resort since the Tang and Song dynasties, the hills have been thematically restored to attract tourists and now boast a number of attractions, including the **Mingchun Valley Aviary** (鸣春谷鸟园; Míngchūngǔ Niǎoyuán; ☎ 3722 9528; admission Y25; ☎ 8.30am-5pm), which features a wide variety of bird species.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

The hills are about 15km from Guǎngzhōu. Bus 24 can take you from Dongfeng Zhonglu, just north of Rénmín Gōngyuán, to the cable car at the bottom of the hill near Luhu Park (Lùhú Gōngyuán). The trip takes between half an hour and one hour, depending on traffic. The bus stops at the park entrance.

KǎIPÍNG 开平

☎ 0750

Scattered throughout the countryside about 140km southwest of Guǎngzhōu are a collection of remarkable watchtowers called *diāolóu*. These towers, which display an eclectic mix of European architectural styles from Roman to rococo, were built in the 19th and early 20th

centuries by Chinese returning from overseas. Because of political instability, many of the towers were built as fortresses, meant to keep out bandits and later protect residents from Japanese troops. Each was built with sturdy walls, iron gates, and ports for defence and observation. Out of the 3,000 original *diāolóu*, only 1,833 remain. They are slowly being developed for tourism. The towers are unique to Guǎngdōng and can only be seen in the counties surrounding the town of Kǎipíng.

The best way to see the *diāolóu* is to head to Kǎipíng and from there rent a taxi or take public transport out to the countryside. The largest collection of *diāolóu* are in the quiet village of **Zili** (自立; Zìlì Cūn), about 20 minutes from Kǎipíng. Here, 15 crumbling towers, some tilting precariously, rise ominously above a cluster of ancient homes. If you walk to the rear of the village, you'll see **Míngshí Lóu** (铭石楼), the tallest tower, which is open to the public. This was once the most prosperous home in the village. On the top of the building are four towers known as 'swallow nests', each with embrasures, cobblestones and a water sprayer, which was used against bandits. From the windows you'll see a stretch of unspoiled countryside dotted with rice paddies, fish ponds and the jagged outlines of *diāolóu* in the distance.

Another collection of *diāolóu* worth visiting is at **Li Garden** (立园; Lì Yuán; admission Y40; ☎ 8am-5pm) in Tángkǒu county, about a 15-minute taxi ride from Kǎipíng. The *diāolóu* here were constructed in 1936 by Mr Xie Weili, a Chinese emigrant to the United States. Authorities have transformed this area into a park for tourists, and though admission is steep, it's a convenient way to see some *diāolóu* in an organized setting. Most of the towers are open to the public and have explanations of their history in English. Some have been left in their original condition to chilling effect, abandoned after residents fled from invading Japanese troops. Left behind are the remnants of smashed-up furniture and quilts torn to shreds by bayonets, among other things.

Other noteworthy *diāolóu* include **Déng Lóu** (灯楼), a five-storey tower built in 1920 called 'Light Tower' because of its powerful searchlight. There's also Nánxing Xié Lóu, or 'The Leaning Tower' of Nanxing Village, which tilts severely to one side, with its central axis over 2m off centre. Built in 1903, the seven-storey tower has survived numerous typhoons and earthquakes, but may still topple any day.

Also worth a visit is **Ruishi Lou** (瑞石楼) located behind Jinjiangli Village, about an hour from Kaiping. One of the most marvellous of the towers, it has nine stories with a Byzantine-style roof and Roman dome supported by elaborately decorated walls and pillars.

Sleeping

Most people see the *diāolou* on a day trip from Guangzhou but it's possible to stay overnight in Kaiping. For reasonable rooms by the river and provincial bus station try the **Overseas Chinese Hotel** (华侨大厦, Huáqiáo Dàshà; ☎ 221 2572; Changsha Xibu Lu; 长沙西郊路; d Y200; 📶 🚶).

Getting There & Away

There are about fifty buses daily to Kaiping from Guangzhou (Y45, two hours), leaving from the long distance bus stations near the main train station. There are also buses from Zhuhai (Y60, 2½ hours) and Shenzhen (Y65, 2½ hrs). Buses will drop you off at one of two bus stations, the central Kaiping bus station (Kaiping zhōngzhàn) or the provincial station (shì qìché zhàn), where you can switch to a local bus (Y4–5) that will take you out to the *diāolou*. Because the *diāolou* are scattered throughout several counties, most people find it easier to rent a taxi to take them around to the various sites. A taxi to Zili from Kaiping should cost between Y70 and Y80, with an hour's wait included. A taxi from Kaiping to Li Garden costs around Y22 each way. If you want to see all the towers, your best bet would be to charter a taxi for the day. You'll find taxi drivers waiting in front of the bus stations to take you around. A half day will cost around Y200 and a full day Y400, but you can negotiate these rates.

QINGYUAN 清远

☎ 0763

The industrial town of Qingyuan, about 70km northwest of Guangzhou, sits on the northern banks of the Bei River and serves as an important transit point for those heading up to northern Guangdong. Qingyuan itself, a jumble of warehouses and factories, holds little interest. The main attractions lie in the surrounding river valley, a peaceful refuge of pine forests, mountains and deeply eroded canyons. Tucked in the hills about 20km upstream from Qingyuan are the secluded temples of Feilái (飞来) and Feixiá (飞霞), both accessible to visitors and well worth visiting.

Ferries to the temples run from Qingyuan's **Bei River dock** (水陆客运站; Shuǐlù kèyùn zhàn), east of Nanmen Jie in the southwest part of town. The ferry costs Y50 per person, though boats don't leave until they're full. To rent a whole boat costs about Y350. The boat schedule varies – it's a good idea to arrive at the dock before 8am to see when boats are leaving that day. The entire trip, from Feilái onwards to Feixiá and the return takes about four hours. If the ferry is not available, it's possible to take a bus to Feixiá (see below).

The first part of the trip takes you along the river past some mountain villages and ancient pagodas to the stately Buddhist temple of **Feilái** (admission Y18), nestled at the foot of a steep mountain. Though Feilái has been around for over 1400 years, the current structure dates from the Ming dynasty. The temple is serenely located in a pine forest; follow the narrow path through the forest to the mountain-top pavilion that offers terrific views of the river gorge below. You'll be given about an hour to look around before your boat heads further upstream to the more modern Taoist temple of Feixiá.

When your boat arrives at **Feixiá** (admission Y45), about 4km upstream, you'll be dropped off at stairs that lead upwards from the riverbank and onwards to the temple. To get to the temple, follow the stairs from the riverbank through the woods for about 20 minutes. Founded in the late 18th century, it's actually a complex of different halls, courtyards and pavilions connected by tree-lined paths. The entire place, with its imposing walls, low ceilings and mazes of dark corridors feels more like Dracula's castle than a place of refuge. For those who love spooky things, this place will delight.

Sleeping & Eating

Near the Bei River dock in Qingyuan you'll find the **Overseas Chinese Hotel** (华侨大厦; Huáqiáo Dàshà; ☎ 333 7118; 70 Nanmen Jie; 南门街70号; d Y200-250; 📶 🚶), which has adequate rooms in a convenient location.

You'll find restaurants along Nanmen Jie that serve up decent meals. You can also try any number of boats docked along the Bei River that transform into lively restaurants at night. Dinner for two, which includes fresh-caught fish and wild vegetables, will cost about Y100.

Getting There & Away

Buses run about every 15 minutes from Guangzhou's long-distance bus stations near

the main train station (Y30, 1½ hours) from 6.30am to 7.30pm. There are also buses from Foshan (Y45, two hours) and Shenzhen (Y60, three hours). Qingyuan's main bus station is about 4km south of the Bei River. Bus 6 travels between the bus station and the town centre. Alternatively, a taxi from the bus station to Nanmen Jie will cost about Y6.

Six buses run daily from Qingyuan's old bus station (jiù qìchézhàn) to Feixiá (Y8, 1½ hour). To Feixiá buses run between 7.30am and 4.30pm and from Feixiá 9am to 5.30pm. Buses that run between Qingyuan and Yingde (Y10, two hours) can drop passengers off at Feilái.

FOSHAN 佛山

☎ 0757 / pop 960,000

Foshan, 19km southwest of Guangzhou, is one of China's oldest pottery towns. Dating back to the Han dynasty, the city, along with its neighbour Shiwān, is renowned for its ceramics, metal working and wood carving. In addition to its reputation for handicrafts, Foshan is famous for its magnificent ancestral temple. The city's name, 'Buddha Hill', is derived from three statues of the Lord Gautama that stood on a nearby hill under the Tang (AD 618–907), when Foshan was an important religious centre.

Information

Bank of China (Zhōngguó Yínháng; cnr Renmin & Zumiao Lu; ☎ 8.30am–5pm Mon–Fri, 9am–4pm Sat) Conveniently located by Zū Miào.

China International Travel Service (CITS; Zhōngguó Guójí Lǚxíngshè; ☎ 8363 6888; 75 Fenjiang Zhonglu; ☎ 8am–6pm) Very helpful branch in the Foshan Hotel.

Municipal government website (www.foshan.gov.cn) Excellent website on Foshan.

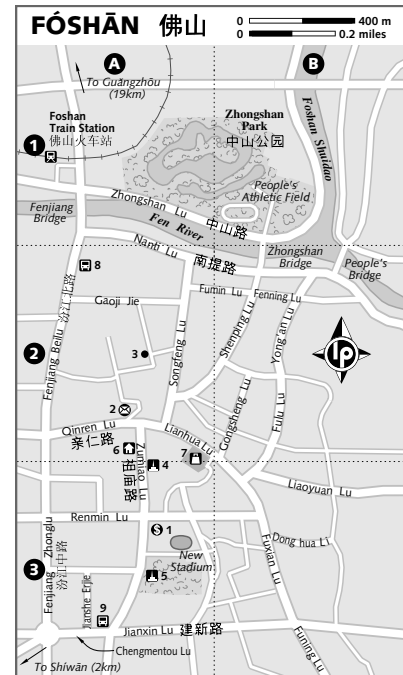
Post Office (yóujú; Qinren Lu; ☎ 8.30am–9.30pm) Mail your pottery home here.

Sights

ZŪ MIÀO 祖庙

This ancestral **temple complex** (☎ 8229 3723; 21 Zumiao Lu; admission Y20; ☎ 8.30am–6.30pm) was founded during the late 11th century and is a marvelous example of southern Chinese architecture. The temple is dedicated to Bèidi, Taoist God of the North, commonly represented by a turtle and a snake. You'll see an imposing statue of Bèidi in the main hall, along with some extraordinary carved wooden screens. Some of the buildings here have the 'wok-handle' roofs distinctive to the region, as well as ridge

tiles covered with delightful ceramic figures taken from folklore. The compound is part of the **Foshan Museum** (Fóshān Bówùguǎn) and contains some excellent collections, including an extensive display on Cantonese opera and martial arts.



INFORMATION

Bank of China 中国银行 1 A3
Post Office 邮局 2 A2

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Foshan Museum 佛山博物馆 (see 5)
Liang's Garden 梁园 3 A2
Renshou Temple 仁寿寺 4 A3
Zū Miào 祖庙 5 A3

SLEEPING

Carrianna Hotel 6 A2

EATING

Vegetarian Restaurant (see 4)

SHOPPING

Market 市场 7 A2

TRANSPORT

Long-Distance Bus Station 长途汽车站 8 A2
Zumiao Bus Station 祖庙汽车站 9 A3

A short walk north of the ancestral temple is the Buddhist **Renshou Temple** (Rénshòu Sì; ☎ 8225 3053; 9 Zumiao Lu; admission free; 🕒 8am-5pm), a former Ming monastery which remains an active place of worship today. Inside, you'll find a seven-storey pagoda built in 1656 as well as the **Foshan Folk Arts Studio**, famous for its intricately beautiful papercuts.

Still further north, **Liang's Garden** (Liáng Yuán; ☎ 8224 1279; Songfeng Lu; admission Y10; 🕒 8.30am-5.30pm) is an attractive garden complex that dates from the early 19th century. Within is a tranquil lotus pond, willow-lined pathways and carefully arranged rock formations. The residences of the family have all been elegantly restored and are a delight to explore.

Foshan is small enough to get around on foot and there are some places off of the main arteries that are worth investigation. Most interesting and historical is **Donghua Lane** (Dōnghuá Lǐ), between Renmin Lu and Jianxin Lu, where the homes, with their distinctive southern-style roofs and doorways, look like they've hardly changed since the Qing dynasty.

SHIWAN 石湾

A visit to Foshan must include a trip to neighbouring Shíwān, one of China's most important ceramics production centres. Streets are lined with pottery shops and you can find all kinds of earthenware here, from porcelain Buddhas to the finest tableware. The highlight is a visit to the **Nanfeng Ancient Kiln** (Nánfēng Gǔzāo; ☎ 8271 1798; 6 Gaomiao Lu; admission Y15; 🕒 8am-6pm), which contains two 'dragon kilns' from the early Ming that are more than 30m long and have never gone out since the day they fired up. Signs (in English) explain the four-day process from clay to glazed pot. You can visit the workshop, and there's a shop selling exquisite bowls and figurines. You can even try your own hand at making pottery. One-on-one **instruction** (Y35) is with a resident artist (some speak English), and you get to take your masterpiece home.

Sleeping & Eating

Pearl River Hotel (Zhūjiāng Dàjiǔdiàn; 1 Qinren Lu; 亲仁路1号; ☎ 8228 87512; d Y260-298, tr Y380; 🍷 🍴) Unfortunately, the youth hostel wing of the hotel has been closed down, though with 40% discounts Pearl River remains a good budget option. Rooms are big and spartan.

Carrianna Hotel (Jiāníngnà Dàjiǔdiàn; ☎ 8222 3828; www.fshq-hotel.com; 14 Zumiao Lu; 祖庙路14号; s Y478-648, d Y528-648, ste Y1288; 🍷 🍴) This four-star

property has friendly staff and bright, spacious rooms. The price includes breakfast. Expect 20% discounts.

In terms of eating options, the hotels mentioned above have reasonably good restaurants. There are some fast food joints and cheap noodle houses along Zumiao Lu and scattered throughout the city centre. For healthier fare, there's a very good **vegetarian restaurant** (dishes from Y10; 🕒 11am-2.30pm & 5-8.30pm) on the third floor of the Renshou Temple.

Getting There & Away

Frequent buses (Y8 to Y14, 45 minutes) link Foshan's **Zumiao bus station** (Zǔmiào chēzhàn; Chengmentou Lu) with the main bus stations in Guangzhōu. Buses leave every 15 minutes between 6.40am and 11pm. Minibuses (Y10) also go to Guangzhōu's **Guangfo Bus Station** (Guāngfó Qìchē Zhàn; Zhongshan Balu).

Destinations served from Foshan's **long-distance bus station** (Fóshān shèng qìchēzhàn; Fenjiang Beilu) include Shēnzhèn (Y80 to Y103) and Zhūhǎi (Y45 to Y60). To get to Hong Kong (Y160, three hours) the Carrianna and Foshan Hotels have daily buses, but you'll need to inquire about the schedule as it often changes.

Trains between Foshan and Guangzhōu (Y7 to Y10, 30 minutes) are faster than buses, but there are fewer daily departures. There are several trains daily between Shēnzhèn and Foshan (Y40, 2½ hours), some dropping passengers off at the Hong Kong border. There is also a direct express train to Hung Hom in Hong Kong (Y240, three hours), with a daily departure at 11.02am (2.20pm from Kowloon).

CITS Foshan in the Foshan Hotel provides a free shuttle to/from the port of Nánhǎi in Píngzhōu, from where high-speed catamarans depart for Hong Kong. There are two buses daily at 8.25am and 2.55pm. From Nánhǎi buses leave for the Foshan Hotel at 11am and 3.10pm.

There's no word on when the metro line between Guangzhōu and Foshan will be completed, though they were running a test line in 2006.

A taxi between Guangzhōu and Foshan costs about Y80.

Getting Around

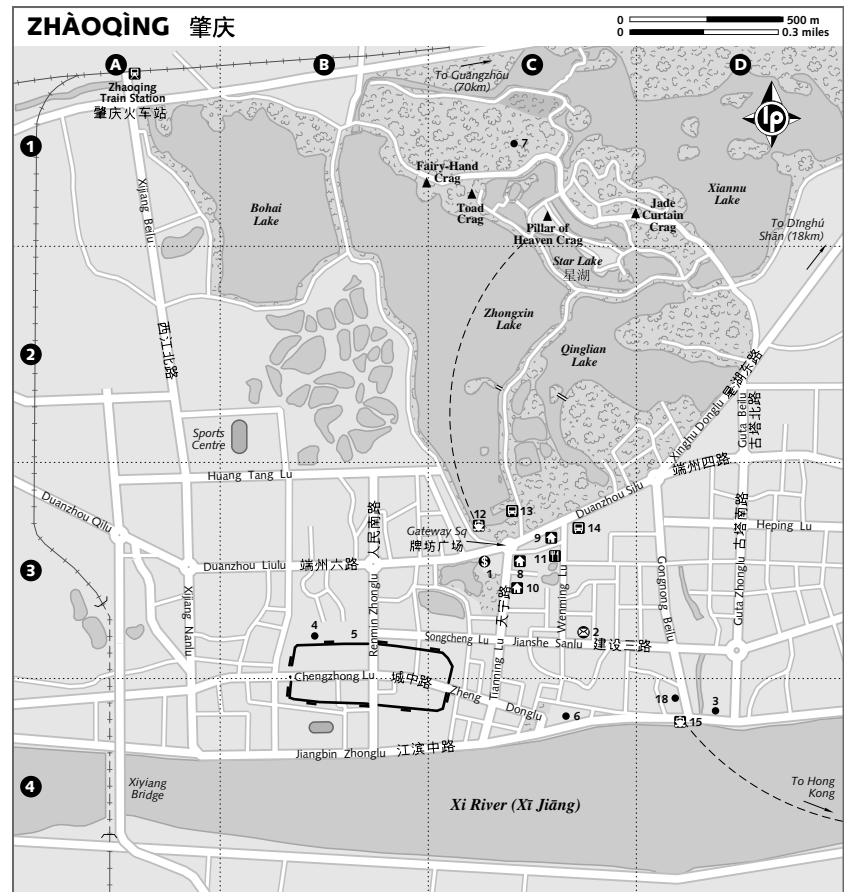
Bus 1 (Y2) links the train station with Zǔ Miào. Bus 1 is also good for Shíwān, as is bus 9. Taxis start at Y7; a taxi to Shíwān will cost around Y10.

ZHAOQING 肇庆

☎ 0758 / pop 3.9 million

Zhaoqing, lying on the Xi Jiang some 110km west of Guangzhōu, is bordered to the north by lakes and a series of limestone forma-

tions that together make up the Seven Star Crags (Qīxīng Yán). The Dinghú Shān (Mt Dinghu) protected area to the northeast is one of the most attractive scenic spots in Guangdong.



INFORMATION

Bank of China 中国银行 1 C3
China Travel Service
肇庆中国旅行社 (see 1)
Post Office 邮局 2 C3

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Chongxi Pagoda 崇禧塔 3 D4
Cloud Draped Tower
披云楼 4 B3
Old City Walls 古城 5 B3
River View Tower 阅江楼 6 C4

Seven Star Crags Park

七星岩公园 7 C1

SLEEPING

Hubin Hotel 湖滨大酒店 8 C3
Star Lake Hotel 星湖大酒店 9 C3
Zhenbao Big World Hotel
珍宝大世界酒店 10 C3

EATING

Restaurants & Food Stalls
餐馆与小吃 11 C3

TRANSPORT

Boats to Seven Star Crags Park
到七星岩公园的码头 12 C3
Local Bus Station (Buses to
Dinghú Shān)
公共汽车站 (往鼎湖山) 13 C3
Long-Distance Bus Station
长途汽车站 14 C3
Zhaoqing Ferry Pier
(Boats to Hong Kong)
肇庆码头 (去香港) 15 D4

Information

Bank of China (Zhōngguó Yínháng; Duanshou Wulu;

☎ 8.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat & Sun)

Post Office (yóujú; Jiānshe Sānlù; ☎ 8am-8pm)

China Travel Service (CTS; Zhōngguó Lǚxíngshè;

☎ 226 8090; Duanshou Wulu; ☎ 8am-9pm)

Sights

SEVEN STAR CRAGS PARK 七星岩公园

Central to this **island park** (Qīxīng Yán Gōngyuán; ☎ 227 7724, 238 7218; admission Y50; ☎ 8am-5.30pm) is a group of misty limestone hills, with concealed caves and grottoes among their craggy peaks. Willow and kapok trees line the paths around **Star Lake** (Xīng Hú). It's an attractive place to visit but certainly not worthy of the hefty admission price.

A motor boat (Y25) will take you from Gateway Square (Páifāng Guǎngchǎng) at the southernmost tip of the lakes to a small bridge leading into the park.

OTHER SIGHTS

Nine-storey **Chongxi Pagoda** (Chóngxī Tǎ; Gùtā Nānlù; admission Y5; ☎ 8.30am-5pm), a red, green and white tower facing the river in the southeast, has been restored to its original Song style and can be climbed. From the top are terrific views of the river and two similar pagodas on the opposite bank.

The oldest part of Zhàoqing is surrounded by **old city walls** (gǔ chéng) complete with fortifications: **River View Tower** (Yuèjiāng Lóu; ☎ 223 2968; Jiāngbīn Zhōnglù; admission Y8; ☎ 8.30am-5pm) to the southeast and, to the northwest, the more flamboyant **Cloud Draped Tower** (Píyú Lóu; Songchéng Xīlù).

Sleeping

Zhenbao Big World Hotel (Zhēnbào Dàshìjiè Jiǔdiàn; ☎ 229 1888; fax 229 0168; 76 Tiānníng Bèilù; s & d Y138; ☎) Rooms in this large hotel are faded but still a reasonable option and one of the better budget options in town. Staff is friendly and helpful and the restaurant inside has good food.

Hubin Hotel (Húbīn Dàjiǔdiàn; ☎ 223 2921; fax 227 2248; 82 Tiānníng Bèilù; 天宁北路82号; s & d Y298, tr Y388; ☎) Just a stone's throw from the lake, this hotel has excellent well-managed rooms with up to 30% discounts. The triple rooms have broadband Internet.

Star Lake Hotel (Xīnghú Dàjiǔdiàn; ☎ 616 8888; fax 619 3333; 37 Duānzhou Sīlù; 端州四路37号; s & d 500-600, ste from Y880; ☎) This 31-storey hotel towers over the lake and central Zhàoqing. Rooms have

great views, though are somewhat overpriced. For some dizzy fun, take the external glass elevator all the way to the top.

Eating

Unless you visit during the Dragon Boat Festival in June, you'll miss Zhàoqing's number 1 culinary speciality: glutinous rice dumplings (zongzi; zòngzi) that are wrapped in bamboo leaves and contain anything from peanuts and lotus seeds to dried sausage and salted duck-egg yolk. A number of restaurants and food stalls fill the pavements of Wenming Lu, due south of the Star Lake Hotel. The restaurant in Zhenbao Big World Hotel is notable for its *yum cha* and other Cantonese specialities.

Getting There & Away

BOAT

Boats for Hong Kong are currently leaving from the port of Gāomíng (高明), about an hour away by bus. You can buy your ticket (Y150, four hours, includes the price of the ferry) and board the bus at the **Zhaoqing Hong Kong Joint Passenger Transport Company** (☎ 222 5736; Gongnong Nānlù; ☎ 9am-6pm) up the road from the ferry pier. Buses depart at 7.30am and 1.45pm. Hong Kong passengers will also transfer at Gāomíng, before heading on to Zhàoqing.

BUS

Buses to Guǎngzhōu (Y30, 1½ hours) depart from Zhàoqing's **long-distance bus station** (qìchē kèyùnzhàn; Duānzhou Sīlù) opposite the lake every half hour. There are also buses to Shēnzhèn (Y90, three hours), to Zhūhǎi (Y60, four hours) at 2pm and 4.30pm and to Wúzhōu (Y35, three hours) in Guǎngxī province at 9.10am, 10.40am and 1.20pm.

TRAIN

The fastest train to Guǎngzhōu takes two hours; hard seat tickets are Y18. Tickets booked at CTS or major hotels include a Y10 service charge.

There is a direct express train to Hong Kong (Y240, 4½ hours), with a daily departure at 9.37am (2.20pm from Kowloon).

Getting Around

The **local bus station** (Duānzhou Sīlù) faces the lake just opposite Gateway Square. Bus 12 links the train and long-distance bus stations with the ferry pier via the centre of town. A taxi

to the train station from the centre will cost about Y15.

AROUND ZHAOQING Dinghu Shan 鼎湖山

This 11.3 sq km protected **reserve** (Mt Dinghu; ☎ 262 2510, 222 6386; 21 Paifang Lu; admission Y50), 18km northeast of Zhàoqing, offers excellent walks among lush vegetation, temples, springs, waterfalls and pools, including one where Sun Yatsen took the waters in the 1920s. As is the custom, every geographical feature has been given a fanciful appellation: Leaping Dragon Pool (Yuèlóng Tán), Immortal Riding a Crane (Xiānrén Qīhè) and so on.

Baoding Garden (Bǎodíng Yuán), at the reserve's northern edge, contains **Nine Dragon Vessel** (Jiǔlóng Bǎodíng), the world's largest *díng*, a ceremonial Chinese pot with two handles and three or four legs, unveiled for the millennium. A short distance to the southwest a small boat (Y15) will ferry you to the tiny wooded island in **Ding Lake** (Díng Hú), where there is a butterfly preserve. **Qingyun Temple** (Qīngyún Sì), an enormous Buddhist complex of over 100 buildings, was originally

built during the Ming dynasty. Don't miss the gilded statues of 500 Buddhist *arhats* (saints), the rice pot capable of feeding 1000 people and the camellia planted in the central courtyard in 1685.

About 1km up from the main gate there's a reserve office where, for a fee of Y30 and presentation of your passport, you can go **hiking** up the trail that follows the river's western bank. The hike takes about four hours and eventually ends up at Qingyun Temple.

INFORMATION	
Dinghu Shan Reserve Office 鼎湖山树木园	1 C3
SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES	
Baoding Garden 宝鼎园	2 B1
Ding Lake 鼎湖	3 B1
Main Gate 山门	4 D3
Qingyun Temple 庆云寺	5 C2
SLEEPING ☎	
Dinghu Summer Resort 鼎湖山森林建养俱乐部	6 C2
Mt Dinghu International Youth Hostel 鼎湖山国际青年旅馆	7 C2
TRANSPORT	
Bus Stop (Buses to Zhàoqing) 车站往肇庆	8 D3



Mt Dinghu International Youth Hostel (Dīnghú Shān Guójiā Qīngnián Lǚguǎn; dm Y38, s & d Y138-208) Within the Dinghu Summer Resort is this well-maintained hostel with clean, basic rooms not far from the temple. Rooms can be buggy so bring insect spray.

Dinghu Summer Resort (Dīnghú Sēnlín Jiànyǎng Jùlèbù; ☎ 262 1688; fax 262 1665; s & d Y288-368; 🚗 🚶) The scenic location and quiet setting make this place ideal if you want to get away from the city. Rooms are decent, though nothing special. It's the location that counts.

Bus 21 (Y3.50) goes to Dīnghú Shān from the local bus station in Zhàoqīng. From the reserve's main entrance you can follow the main road north on foot or you can catch one of the electric carts (Y20) that make a loop around the reserve. A taxi from Zhàoqīng to the reserve will cost about Y60.

ZHŪHǎI 珠海

☎ 0756 / pop 1.3 million

Like Shēnzhèn to the northeast, Zhūhǎi is a Special Economic Zone (SEZ). But 'Pearl Sea' has never reached the level of success – or excess – of its well-heeled step-sister across the Pearl River estuary. So much the better for residents and travellers, for this city just over the border from Macau is one of the cleanest and greenest metropolises in China. It is also an important university centre.

Zhūhǎi is so close to Macau that a visit can be arranged as a day trip; alternatively, you can use Zhūhǎi as an entry or exit point for the rest of China. Visas (MOP\$100) valid for thirty days are available at the border (🕒 7.30am-midnight).

Orientation

The city of Zhūhǎi is divided into three main districts. Gōngběi, which abuts the Macau border, to the south of the city, is the main tourist district, with lots of hotels, restaurants and shops; Gongbei Port (Gōngběi Kǒu'àn) is the large modern complex where visitors arrive from Macau.

To the northeast is Jídá, the eastern part of which contains some large waterfront hotels and resorts as well as Jiuzhou Harbour (Jiūzhōu Gǎng), where Hong Kong, Shēnzhèn and Guǎngdōng passenger ferries arrive and depart. Xiāngzhōu is the northernmost part of Zhūhǎi City and has many government buildings and housing blocks and a busy fishing port.

Information

Bank of China (Zhōngguó Yínháng) Gongbei (cnr Yingbin Dadao & Yuehai Donglu; 🕒 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun; Gongbei Port (🕒 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun) The first office listed is just after customs and immigration coming from Macau.

China Travel Service (Zhōngguó Lǚxíngshè; CTS; ☎ 888 5777; 33 Yingbin Dadao; 🕒 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun) Next door to the Zhuhai Overseas Chinese Hotel.

Post Office (yóujú; 1041-1043 Yuehai Donglu; 🕒 8am-8pm)

Public Security Bureau (PSB; Gōngānjú; ☎ 864 2114; Guihua Nanlu, Gongbei)

Sights

Apart from a museum and several parks, attractions in Zhūhǎi are few. In Jídá, the **Zhuhai City Museum** (Zhūhǎishì Bówùguǎn; ☎ 332 4116; 191 Jingshan Lu; admission Y10; 🕒 9am-5pm) is housed on two floors of a large building done up like a Ming-dynasty compound. It contains a small but interesting collection of Tibetan art and artefacts, including gilded cups formed from human skulls; and scroll paintings and calligraphy. Bus 2, 20 and 26 run to the museum.

Parks include waterfront **Haibin Park** (Hǎibīn Gōngyuán), and **Jingshan Park** (Jīngshān Gōngyuán; Haibin Beilu; admission Y2; 🕒 8am-7pm) noted for its 'boulder forest' covering **Paradise Hill** (Shíjǐng Shān) behind it, with a **cable car** (Shíjǐng Shān Sùdào; ☎ 213 6477; return Y60) that'll take you to the top.

In the bay near the park is the **Zhuhai Fisher Girl** (Zhūhǎi Yúnǚ), a large statue of a girl holding a pearl over her head – the symbol of the city. Pearls are still farmed off the coast to the northeast.

Sleeping

Very few travellers stay in Zhūhǎi, apart from people on business. There's little demand for budget accommodation, so prices are generally midrange to top end (though heavy discounting can blur the distinctions). Most hotels here add a 10% to 15% service charge to the bill. Expect higher prices at the weekend.

BUDGET & MIDRANGE

International Youth Hostel (Guójiā Qīngnián Xuéshēng Lǚguǎn; ☎ 7711 7712; Zhuhai Holiday Resort; dm Y60) Hidden away on the Zhuhai Holiday Resort grounds is this tiny hostel with separate eight-bed dorms for male and female guests. Beds need to be booked at the front desk of the resort.

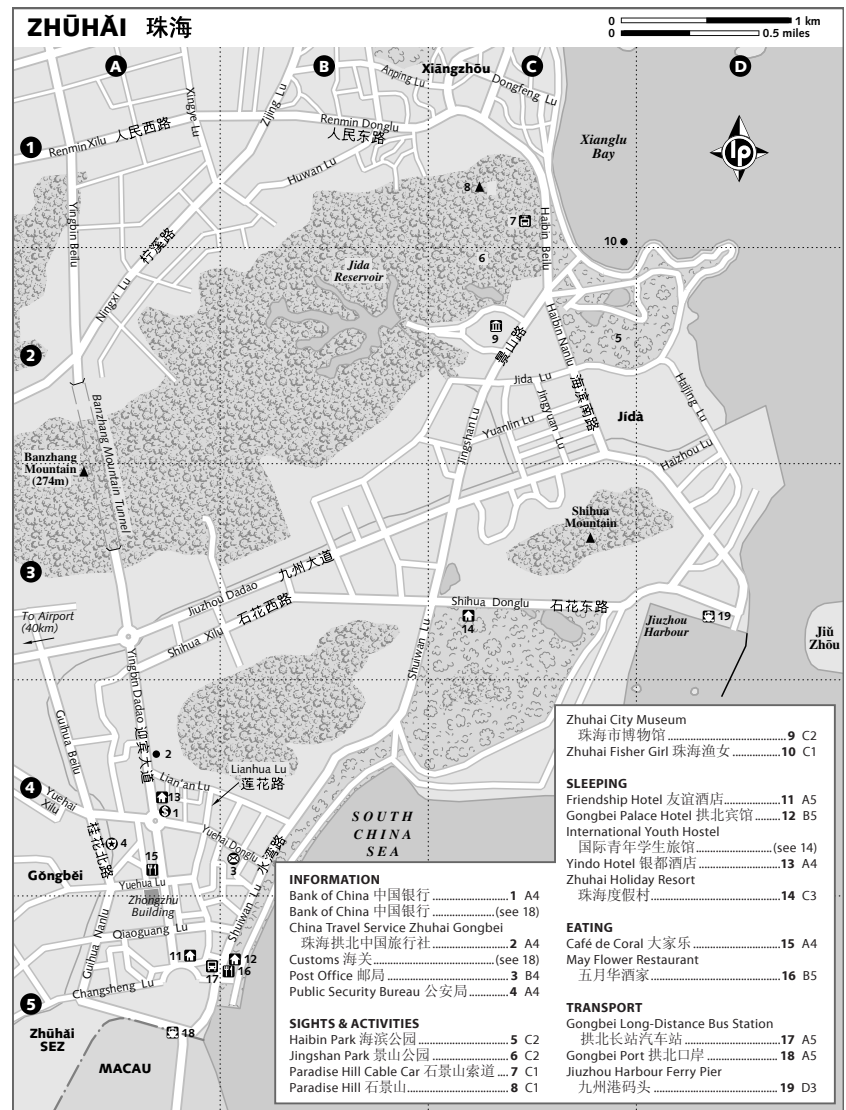
Friendship Hotel (Yóuyǐ Jiǔdiàn; ☎ 813 1818; fax 813 5505; 2 Youyi Lu; 友谊路2号; s Y368-418, d & tw Y388-418, ste from Y568; 🚗 🚶) This conveniently located hotel, opposite the border crossing, offers 50% discounts on its tidy but dated (peeling wallpaper, faded carpet) rooms.

Gongbei Palace Hotel (Gōngběi Bīnguǎn; ☎ 888 6833; fax 888 1900; 21 Shuiwan Lu; 水湾路21号; s Y280, d & tw

Y280-380, tr 450, ste from Y680; 🚗 🚶) Its advertised rates notwithstanding, this over-the-top kitsch palace by the waterfront has deep discounts on singles and doubles (as low as Y238).

TOP END

Yindo Hotel (Yīndū Jiǔdiàn; ☎ 888 3388; fax 888 3311; cnr Yingbin Dadao & Yuehai Zhonglu; 迎宾大道与粤海中



路交界; s & d Y860-1240, ste from Y1360; 酒店) This 310-room hotel next to the main Bank of China is within striking distance of the border and popular with business travellers. Outlets include the Tea Palace (Chá Huángdiàn), which serves traditional Chinese brews and snacks from 8am to 5pm (from Y60 per person).

Zhuhai Holiday Resort (Zhūhǎi Dūjiàcūn; ☎ 333 3838; www.zhuhai-hotel.com; 9 Shihua Dong Lu; 石花东路9号; s & d Y880-980, ste from Y1380, villas Y680-2362; 酒店) This massive five-star resort near Jiuzhou Harbour offers both hotel and private villa accommodation in a secluded garden setting. Facilities include tennis courts, a bowling alley and a large swimming pool.

Eating

The area of Gōngběi near the Macau border has restaurants, night markets and street hawkers. Try Lianhua Lu for bakeries and restaurants serving inexpensive Cantonese food. Opposite the Gongbei Palace Hotel, the **May Flower Restaurant** (Wúyuèhuā Jǐujǐa; ☎ 818 1111; 31 Shuiwan Lu; meals Y100; ☎ 7am-2.30pm & 5pm-midnight) has very good Cantonese seafood. On the corner of Yangbin Dadao and Yuehua Lu is the modern-looking **Café de Coral** (Dàijālè; Yangbin Dadao; mains from Y8; ☎ 11am-11pm) with inexpensive noodle and rice dishes.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Zhūhǎi's airport serves destinations in China, including Běijīng (Y2050), Shànghǎi (Y1380) and Hángzhōu (Y1230).

BOAT

Jetcats between Zhūhǎi and Hong Kong (Y150, 70 minutes) depart six times a day between 8am and 5pm from **Jiuzhou Harbour** (☎ 333 3359) for the China ferry terminal in Kowloon, and eight times a day from 9am to 9.30pm for the Macau ferry pier in Central.

A high-speed ferry operates between Jiuzhou Harbour and Shēnzhèn's port of Shékǒu (Y70, one hour). There are departures every half-hour between 8am and 5.30pm or 6.30pm, depending on the season. They leave from Shékǒu every half hour between 7.30am and 5.30pm or 6.30pm. Local buses 3, 12, 25 and 26 all go to Jiuzhou Harbour.

BUS

Air-conditioned buses to Guǎngzhōu (Y55 to Y75, 2½ hours) leave from **Gongbei long-distance**

bus station (Gōngběi qīchē zhàn; Youyi Lu), departing every 20 minutes between 6am and 9pm. Buses to other points in China depart from either this station or the Kee Kwan bus station below the shopping centre at Gongbei Port. Destinations include Dōngguān (Y60 to Y70, 2½ hours), Fóshān (Y60 to Y70, three hours), Hūmén (Y50 to Y65, two hours), Kǎipíng (Y40 to Y55, 2½ hours), Shàntóu (Y160 to Y180, seven hours), Shēnzhèn (Y80 to Y90, 2½ hours), Zhàoqing (Y55 to Y70, 4½ hours) and Zhōngshān (Y15 to Y20, one hour). Most of the top end hotels have bus services travelling to and from Hong Kong (Y150, 2½ hours).

Getting Around

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Zhūhǎi's airport is 43km southwest of the city. An airport shuttle bus (Y20) runs reasonably frequently from outside the **Zhongzhu building** (Zhōngzhū Dàshà; cr Yuehua Lu & Yingbin Dadao); ask CTS Zhuhai Gongbei for the current schedule. A taxi will cost about Y130.

BUS

Zhūhǎi has a clean, efficient and cheap bus system, with fares pegged at Y2.

TAXI

Taxis have meters and the cost is Y10 for the first 3km, then Y0.60 for each additional 250m. To go from the Macau border to Jiuzhou Harbour costs around Y20.

AROUND Zhūhǎi

Cuihèng 翠亨

This small village 33km north of Zhūhǎi is the site of the **Dr Sun Yatsen Residence Memorial Museum** (孫中山故居紀念館; Sūn Zhōngshān Gūjū Jìniànguǎn; ☎ 0760-550 1691; Cuihèng Dadao; admission Y10; ☎ 9am-5pm), where the revolutionary hero was born in 1866 and returned to live with his parents for four years in 1892. A solemn place of pilgrimage for Chinese of all political persuasions, the museum re-creates the house (the original was torn down in 1913) where Sun grew up; the village compound includes a remarkable collection of furniture and objects from everyday life. The main hall has exhibits examining his life and accomplishments, with signs in English.

To reach the museum board bus 10 from Yingbin Dadao in Zhūhǎi. Alight at the terminus, walk 10 minutes past the gate to the next bus stop and board bus 12.

HŪMÉN 虎门

☎ 0769 / pop 197,000

Also known as Tàipíng (太平), 'Tiger Gate' is a small city on the Pearl River whose impact on China's – and the West's – history has been far greater than its present size would suggest. It was here that Commissioner Lin Zexu declared war on the opium trade in China (see boxed text below) by publicly burning shipments of the narcotic in two pits in what is now **Lin Zexu Park** (林則徐公園; Lín Zéxú Gōngyuán; Jiefang Lu; admission Y12; ☎ 8am-5.30pm). The park's **Opium War Museum** (鴉片戰爭博物館; Yāpiàn Zhànzhēng Bówùguǎn; ☎ 551 2065; admission Y10; ☎ 8am-5.30pm), commemorating this heroic man's deeds and tracing the history of opium in China, is full of dusty (and rusty) objects and not unreasonable diatribes against the West.

To the north and northwest of the town centre are three batteries that figured prominently in the First Opium War, including the Bogue Fort (沙角炮台; Shājiǎo Pàotái), now part of a closed military base. Just south of **Weiyuan Fort** (威遠炮台; Wēiyuǎn Pàotái) on Weiyuan Island (威遠島; Wēiyuǎn Dǎo) is the superb **Sea Battle Museum** (海戰博物館; Hǎizhàn Bówùguǎn; ☎ 550 0322; admission Y20; ☎ 8am-5.30pm), which examines the naval battle of the First Opium War through scale models, dioramas, simulated battle scenes and massive artwork, most with explanatory notes in English. There are numerous other exhibits scattered through four large halls, including large artillery pieces and other relics, as well as an enlightening exhibition on drug addiction in China today.

DIRTY FOREIGN MUD

Although trade in opium had been banned in China by imperial decree at the end of the 18th century, the *cohong* (local merchants' guild) in Guǎngzhōu helped ensure that the trade continued, and fortunes were amassed on both sides. When the British East India Company lost its monopoly on China trade in 1834, imports of the drug increased to 40,000 chests a year.

In 1839, the Qing government sent Imperial Commissioner Lin Zexu to stamp out the opium trade once and for all. Lin successfully blockaded the British in Guǎngzhōu and publicly burned almost half a tonne of the 'foreign mud' in Tàipíng. Furious, the British sent an expeditionary force of 4,000 men from the Royal Navy to exact reparations and secure favourable trade arrangements.

What would become known as the First Opium War began in June 1840 when British forces besieged Guǎngzhōu and forced the Chinese to cede five ports – Hong Kong, Guǎngzhōu, Xiàmén, Níngbō and Shànghǎi – to the British. With the strategic city of Nanking (Nánjīng) under immediate threat, the Chinese were forced to accept Britain's terms in the Treaty of Nanking.

The treaty abolished the monopoly system of trade, opened the 'treaty ports' to British residents and foreign trade, exempted British nationals from all Chinese laws and ceded the island of Hong Kong to the British 'in perpetuity'. The treaty, signed in August 1842, set the scope and character of the unequal relationship between China and the West for the next half-century.

Buses link Hūmén's long-distance bus station on Yong'an Lu with Dōngguān (Y5, 30 minutes), Guǎngzhōu (Y30 to Y45, 1½ hours), Shēnzhèn (Y35 to Y45, 1½ hours) and Zhūhǎi (Y50 to Y65, two hours). Minibuses (Y10) also go directly from the bus station in Dōngguān to the Sea Battle Museum.

You can get to Hong Kong (Y120 to Y170, 1½ hours) from Hūmén by boat, with three departures a day from the **Taiping Port Pier** (太平港碼頭; Tàipínggǎng Mǎtóu; ☎ 519 0888) southwest of the park at 9.30am, 3.30pm and 5.35pm. They leave Hong Kong for Hūmén at 9am, 1.45pm and 5.30pm.

SHĒNZHÈN 深圳

☎ 0755 / pop 10 million

Shēnzhèn, the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) straddling the Hong Kong border, went from a poor fishing village to China's richest city in just twenty years. The city draws a mix of businessmen, investors and illegal migrant workers to its golden gates, all of them trying to find a place in China's economic miracle. At least half of Shēnzhèn's population is illegal – the SEZ is a restricted zone and, in theory, Chinese nationals require a special pass even to enter it, much less live and work here. Though commercially successful, Shēnzhèn isn't a pleasant city and the extreme imbalance of wealth and poverty lends an air of desperation. The crime rate is high and visitors should be wary of walking alone after dark. Most travellers give the place a wide berth, but it is a useful transportation hub if you're coming from Hong Kong.



INFORMATION	SLEEPING	SHOPPING
Bank of China 中国银行.....1 C2	Century Plaza Hotel 新都酒店.....8 C2	Citic Plaza 中心城市广场.....12 B2
China Travel Service Shenzhen 深圳中国旅行社.....2 C2	Hailian Hotel & Unotel 海联会馆, 东一居.....9 C2	Dongmen Market 东门市常.....13 D1
HSBC 汇丰中国.....3 C2	Shangri-La Hotel 香格里拉大酒店.....10 C3	Luohu Commercial City 罗湖商业城.....(see 17)
Post Office 邮局.....4 C1	Shangri-La Hotel 香格里拉大酒店.....10 C3	MixC Shopping Mall 万象城.....14 C2
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Tourist Information Centre.....6 C3	Ocean King Restaurant 海上皇酒家.....11 C2	Hualian Hotel (Buses to Airport) 华联大厦.....16 A2
SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES Shenzhen Museum 深圳博物馆.....7 A2	DRINKING Bar Leo.....(see 12)	Luohu Bus Station 罗湖汽车站.....17 C3
	Henry J Bean's Bar & Grill.....(see 10)	

At the time of research, visas for US citizens were *not* available at the Luóhú border crossing.

History

Shēnzhèn was no more than a backwater until it won the equivalent of the National Lottery and became a SEZ in 1980. Developers added a stock market, hotels and towering office blocks and the world as Shēnzhèn knew it came to an abrupt end.

Nowadays Shēnzhèn is a big shopping mall for Hong Kong residents, much to the chagrin of the Special Administrative Region's retailers. It's also a good place for cheap (legitimate and otherwise) massage and *yum cha*.

Orientation

The name Shēnzhèn refers to three areas: Shenzhen City (Shēnzhèn Shi), opposite the border crossing at Lóuhú; the Shenzhen SEZ; and Shenzhen County (Shēnzhèn Xiàn),

which extends several kilometres north of the SEZ.

Information

SE Party (www.shenzhenparty.com) For current events in Shēnzhèn.

MONEY

Bank of China (Zhōngguó Yínháng; 23 Jianshe Lu; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat & Sun)
HSBC (Huífēng Zhōngguó; Renmin Nanlu; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri) In the Century Plaza Hotel but on the east side.

POST

Post Office (yóujú; 3002 Jianshe Lu; ☎ 9am-8pm)

PUBLIC SECURITY BUREAU

PSB (Gōngānjú; ☎ 2446 3999; 4018 Jiefang Lu)

TOURIST INFORMATION & TRAVEL AGENCIES

China Travel Service Shenzhen (CTS; Zhōngguó Lǚxíngshè; ☎ 2519 2595; 3023 Renmin Nanlu; ☎ 9am-6pm)

Tourist Information Centre (Shēnzhèn Shì Yóukè Wēnxùnrù; ☎ 8236 5043; ground fl, West Exit Hall, Luohu Train Station; ☎ 8am-6pm)

Sights

Shēnzhèn is known more for business than culture but there are a few interesting places to visit.

The **Shenzhen Museum** (Shēnzhèn Bówùguǎn; ☎ 8210 2993; Tongxin Lu; bus 3 & 12; admission Y10, Fri free; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun), in Lychee Park (Lizhī Gōngyuán), contains some 20,000 jade, porcelain and bronze artefacts and has halls devoted to ancient Shenzhen, zoology and underwater life.

The **Shenzhen Art Gallery** (Shēnzhèn Měishùguǎn; ☎ 2540 9307; Aiguo Lu; admission Y5, Fri free; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun), within Donghu Park (Dōnghú Gōngyuán) to the northeast, holds decent exhibits of both traditional and contemporary Chinese art.

OCT Contemporary Art Terminal (Dǎngdài Yishù Zhōngxīn; ☎ 2691 1976; Enping Lu, Overseas Chinese Town; admission free; ☎ 10am-5.30pm Tue-Sun) Out in 'Overseas Chinese Town' (Huáqiáo Chéng) is this excellent museum with exhibits of international and local contemporary Chinese artists. Take metro line 1 to Qiáochéng Dōng station.

THEME PARKS

West of Shenzhen City and about halfway to Shékou are three theme parks. **Splendid China** (Jīnxù Zhōnghuá; ☎ 2660 0626; www.chinafcv.com; admis-

sion Y120; ☎ 9am-9.30pm) is a humdrum assembly of China's sights in miniature. Contiguous to Splendid China and included in the admission price, **China Folk Culture Villages** (Zhōngguó Mínrú Wénhuá Cūn) recreates two dozen ethnic minority villages and a number of dwellings. Famous monuments of the world are scrutinised at **Window of the World** (Shìjiè Zhìchuāng; ☎ 2660 8000; www.szwwco.com; admission Y120; ☎ 9am-10.30pm). The parks can be reached by metro line 1 to 'Window of the World' station (Shìjiè Zhìchuāng Zhàn) or by catching bus 101 or minibus 423 from the centre. A taxi will cost about Y50.

Some 12km to the east of Shenzhen City is a 40,000-tonne decommissioned Soviet aircraft carrier called **Minsk World** (Míngsīkè Hángmǔ Shìjiè; ☎ 2525 1415; Shatoujiao, Dapeng Bay, Yantian District; admission Y110; ☎ 9.30am-6pm), complete with choppers and MiG fighter planes parked on the deck. Take bus 205 from the train station.

Sleeping

Hotels in Shēnzhèn commonly slash as much as 50% off the regular rack rates on weekdays, though you should ask for a discount at any time. This is also partially offset by the 10% or 15% tax/service charge levied by many hotels. All hotels have in-room broadband.

BUDGET & MIDRANGE

Happy Valley International Youth Hostel (Huānlè Gǔ Qīngnián Lǚguǎn; ☎ 8557 0315; Overseas Chinese Town, Nanshan District; 南山区华侨城欢乐谷内; adm Y55, d Y180; ☎ ☎) Located in a resort area only three minutes from Window of the World, this HI hotel has spotless rooms with internet access and bike hire. However, the location is isolated and a fair distance from town. Take bus 473 from the train station.

Hailian Hotel (Hǎilián Huìguǎn; ☎ 2518 0888; fax 2518 0218; 12 Yingchun Lu; 迎春路12号; d Y538-728; ☎ ☎) Centrally located, this friendly hotel has good-sized rooms, though slightly worn around the edges.

Unotel (Yóuyùjū; ☎ 2586 3300; 6th fl, Hailian Hotel; d Y600; ☎ ☎) Located on the sixth floor of the Hailian Hotel (see above), this small chain hotel is like a breath of fresh air with its large, contemporary style rooms, wood floors and attractive bathrooms.

TOP END

Century Plaza Hotel (Xīndū Jiùdiàn; ☎ 8232 0888; 1 Chunfeng Lu 1; 春风路1号; s & d Y1024-1266, ste from

Y1900; 🏠 📞 📧) This 401-room hotel offers a variety of high-standard rooms, though some are in better condition than others. It's a good idea to inspect before committing. There are discounts up to 50% and a choice of restaurants, including Laurel (see below).

Eating

Because of the influx of migrants and the proximity of Hong Kong, Shēnzhèn has a wide selection of restaurants representing various styles of Chinese and Western cuisines. The city is justly famous for its fresh seafood.

Laurel (Dǎnguixuān; 📞 8232 3888; 2nd fl, Century Plaza Hotel, 1 Chungfeng Lu; meals from Y150; 🕒 7am-11pm) Considered one of the finest Chinese restaurants in town; expect to wait in line. *Yum cha* is served from opening till 3pm daily.

Ocean King Restaurant (Hǎishàng Huáng Jiǔjiǎ; 📞 8223 9000; 1116 Jianshe Lu; meals from Y100; 🕒 7am-midnight) This is one of Shēnzhèn's best seafood restaurants and is always full.

Muslim Hotel Restaurant (穆斯林宾馆大餐馆; Mùsīlín Bīnguǎn Dà Cānguǎn; 📞 8225 9664; ground fl, Muslim Hotel, 2013 Wenjing Nanlu; dishes Y28-45; 🕒 10am-11pm) If you fancy trying Huí (Chinese Muslim) food (eg various beef and mutton dishes, onion cakes) head for this hotel done up like a mock mosque. What's more, it's all halal.

Drinking

Most top-end hotels have international-style bars, including **Henry J Bean's Bar & Grill** (📞 8233 0888, ext 8270; 2nd fl, Shangri-La Hotel, 1002 Jianshe Lu; 🕒 5.00pm-2am) at the Shangri-La Hotel, which has occasional live music. In town there's also a bunch of places around Citic City Plaza (Zhōngxīn Chéngshì Guǎngchǎng), including **Bar Leo** (📞 2598 9898; ground fl, shop A4, Citic City Plaza, 1093 Shennan Zhonglu, Futian District; 🕒 11am-2am). Take the metro to Kèxué Guǎn.

Further afield, in the port of Shékǒu, are a number of bars, including **McCawley's Irish Bar & Restaurant** (📞 2668 4496; shop 118, Sea World; 🕒 11.30am-2am), off Taizi Lu, with a great rooftop beer garden, and **Soho Restaurant & Night Club** (📞 2669 2148; Taizi Lu, Shékǒu; 🕒 11am-2am), a popular dance club with super, up-to-date décor.

You can reach Shékǒu from the city centre on bus 204 or 226.

Shopping

For many, Shēnzhèn is all about shopping. Truth be told, most of the 'bargains' to be had can be found much cheaper in other mainland

cities. The first port of call for most is overrated **Luohu Commercial City** (Luóhú Shāngyè Chéng), which greets visitors as they emerge from customs and immigration. Here you'll find five stories of shopping insanity, with corridor after corridor of stalls selling ceramics, curios, knockoff handbags, clothing, wigs, massages and pirated DVDs. This area is rife with pickpockets, drugs and prostitutes so keep your valuables hidden and stay safe. The quietest days to shop here are Wednesday and Thursday.

Another shopping area is at **Dōngmén**, a district full of department stores, stalls and boutiques. Here's where you can find shops selling a nice assortment of clothing, fashion copies, jewellery, bags, shoes, and even art and antiques. The main area is centred on Dongmen Zhonglu, with pedestrian streets running perpendicular to the main thoroughfare. By metro, get off at Lao Jie station and leave from exit 'A'. You can also take bus 102, 113 or 103.

MixC Shopping Mall (Wǎnxiàngchéng; 📞 8266 8266; 1881 Bao'an Nanlu) is the largest shopping mall in Shēnzhèn and has a large selection of high-end clothing shops, a cinema, supermarket with imported items, as well as a collection of Western restaurants. There's even an Olympic-sized skating rink.

An invaluable book to guide you is *Shop in Shenzhen: An Insider's Guide* (HK\$95/US\$12) by Ellen McNally, available in bookshops throughout Hong Kong. You can also check the information out on the author's website at shopinshenzhen.com.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Shēnzhèn airport (Shēnzhèn Fēijīchǎng; 📞 2777 6789; www.szairport.com) is now China's fourth busiest. There are flights to most major destinations around China.

BOAT

There are 13 jet-cat departures daily between **Shékǒu port** (📞 2669 5600) and Hong Kong (day/night sailing Y108/125, 50 minutes) between 7.45am and 9.30pm. Seven of these go to the Macau ferry pier in Central, with the balance heading for the China ferry terminal in Kowloon. The same number of boats leave Hong Kong for Shékǒu from 7.45am to 9pm. Chikong Passenger Transport runs hourly ferries (Y238, 9am to 9.20pm, 2½ hours) from Shékǒu to Hong Kong International Airport.

TALLY, HO TAI TAI!

Mrs Ho is a *tai tai*. *Tai tai* simply means 'Mrs' and, strictly speaking, every married Chinese woman is a *tai tai*. But *tai tai* in southern China – and especially Hong Kong – has a somewhat different connotation. *Tai tais* are the well-to-do, leisured wives of successful businessmen. They lunch, take tea in the lobby of the Peninsula Hotel, gossip with their friends (mostly via mobile phone) and play mahjong. And they shop, especially in Shēnzhèn, because *tai tais* – however wealthy – are always in search of a bargain.

Mrs Ho took us to Shēnzhèn the first time we visited. No, that's not true in the strictest of senses. In fact, the incomparable *HK Magazine* had recently run a cover story about a *tai tai* named Ho who would board the KCR East Rail for Lóuhú in the morning at least once a week, spend the day shopping, nibbling and being pampered and return at the end of the day thoroughly relaxed, satiated and clothed – at half the price it would have cost her in Hong Kong.

Mrs Ho 'took' us for a tour of the Luohu Commercial City, then for lunch at the Laurel and to her favourite massage parlour (legitimate of course – after all, Mrs Ho is a married woman with children!) for an hour's worth of foot rubbing after pounding the pavements of the SEZ all day. We did stop short of following Mrs Ho into the manicurist's where, 'feeling particularly whimsical', she had tiny flowers, butterflies and birds painted on each fingernail. That was, we thought, beyond the call of duty – for a guidebook writer.

Some people are snide about *tai tais*, dismissing them as lazy, self-indulgent creatures whose main concern is the quality of the oolong tea and the price of the knockoff Louis Vuitton bag. But we – and now you – know differently. *Tai tais* have got something to teach us all.

There are six departures daily to Kowloon's China ferry terminal from the **Fuyong ferry terminal** (Fúyǒng kǎiyùnzhàn; Shenzhen airport) and three to the Macau ferry pier in Central between 9am and 8.30pm (2nd/1st class Y171/271, one hour).

You can also reach Zhūhǎi (Y70, one hour) from Shékǒu every half-hour between 7.30am and 6.30pm.

Boats run between Hǎikǒu and Shékǒu (Y138 to Y450, 18 hours) every day except Saturday, leaving at 4pm.

BUS

Intercity buses leave from Luohu bus station (Luóhú qìchēzhàn) under the shopping centre. There are regular services to Cháozhōu (Y160, five hours), Guǎngzhōu (Y60, 1½ hours), Hǔmén (Y35, one hour), Shàntóu (Y150, four hours), Xiàmén (Y210, eight hours) and Zhōngshān (Y70, 1½ hours). For information on getting to/from Hong Kong, see p560.

TRAIN

There are frequent local trains (Y70, two hours) and high-speed trains (Y80, 55 minutes) between Guǎngzhōu and Shēnzhèn. The Kowloon-Canton Railway's East Rail offers the fastest and most convenient transport to Shēnzhèn from Hong Kong (see p561).

Getting Around TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Shēnzhèn's airport is 36km west of the city. Airport buses (Y20, 30 to 40 minutes) leave from the **Hualian Hotel** (Huálián Dàshà; Shennan Zhonglu), which can be reached on bus 101. A taxi to the airport will cost Y130 to Y150.

Many of the top-end hotels, including the New Times Hotel, run shuttles to/from Hong Kong International Airport (one way/return Y180/320).

BUS

Shēnzhèn has an efficient network of buses and minibuses (Y1 to Y3). From the train station, buses 12 and 101 head north and then east, passing Lychee Park. Bus 204 to Shékǒu leaves from a station north of the intersection of Jianshe Lu and Jiabin Lu.

METRO

Shēnzhèn's has two metro lines (tickets are between Y2 and Y5). Line 1, most useful for visitors, covers the stretch from the Luóhú border crossing to the Window of the World theme park (p613).

TAXI

The taxi flagfall is Y12.5 (Y16.10 from 11pm to 6am). It's then Y0.60 for every additional 250m travelled. Taxi drivers have a poor

reputation in Shēnzhèn – make sure they turn on the meter. Women should avoid travelling solo in taxis at night.

SHÀNTÓU 汕头

☎ 0754 / pop 1.3 million

Shàntóu is one of China's five original SEZs. It's a port on the border with Fújiàn and seldom visited by travellers.

Language

The people who live here are largely Chiu Chow. They speak a dialect they call Taejiu (Chaoshan in Mandarin, a combination of Cháozhōu and Shàntóu, the two most important cities here), which is completely different from Cantonese. It is the language of many of the Chinese in Southeast Asia, especially those who emigrated to Thailand.

History

As early as the 18th century, when today's Shàntóu was just a fishing village, the East India Company had a station on an island outside the harbour. By the mid-19th century it had grown into an important trading port known to the outside world as Swatow.

The port was officially opened to foreign trade in 1860 under the Treaty of Tientsin, which ended the Second Opium War. By 1870 foreigners were living and trading in the town itself. A few of the old colonial buildings remain, but most are extremely dilapidated.

Orientation

Most of Shàntóu lies on a peninsula, bounded to the south by the South China Sea and separated from the mainland to the west and north by a river and canals. Most tourist amenities are in the southwestern corner of the peninsula.

Information

Bank of China (Zhōngguó Yínháng; 55 Changping Lu; ☎ 8.30am-noon & 2.30-5pm Mon-Sat, 8.30am-noon Sun)

China Travel Service (CTS; Zhōngguó Lǚxíngshè;

☎ 863 6332; 41 Shanzhang Lu; ☎ 8am-9.30pm) Bus and air tickets are sold at this office next to the Shantou Overseas Chinese Hotel.

Post Office (yóujú; Waima Lu; ☎ 8am-6pm)

Sights

If you're heading down memory lane, most of what remains of Shàntóu's **colonial buildings** can be seen in the area bounded by Waima Lu, Minzu Lu and Shengping Lu.

The centrepiece of **Stone Fort Park** (Shí Pàotái Gōngyuán; Haibin Lu; admission Y10; ☎ 7.30am-11pm), which faces the sea and the breezy **embankment** running above the shore, is a castle-like **battery** with solid walls and loopholes built in 1874. The fort is surrounded by a moat.

Sleeping

Shantou Overseas Chinese Hotel (Shàntóu Huáqiáo Dàshà; ☎ 862 9888; fax 825 2223; 41 Shanzhang Lu; 汕樟路41号; www.overseaschinese.com; d Y380-480, ste from Y580; ☎) This rambling, 300-room pile conveniently located south of the city bus station has a variety of rooms. It offers up to 40% discounts.

Swatow Peninsula Hotel (Tuódǎo Bīnguǎn; ☎ 831 6668; www.pihotel.com; 36 Jinsha Lu; 金沙路36号; s & d Y388-788, ste from Y988; ☎) The Thai- and Chinese-owned Swatow Pen offers smart upmarket rooms and huge discounts. You should be able to get a single or double for Y200.

Shantou Harbour View Hotel (Shàntóu Hǎijīng Jiǔdiàn; ☎ 854 3838; fax 855 0280; stvh@pub.shantou.gd.cn; 18 Haibin Zhonglu; 海滨中路18号; s & d Y668-788, ste from Y1400; ☎) This waterfront hotel offers wonderful views of the harbour and friendly service. Rooms are slightly worn around the edges but deep discounts of 50% make staying here a good deal.

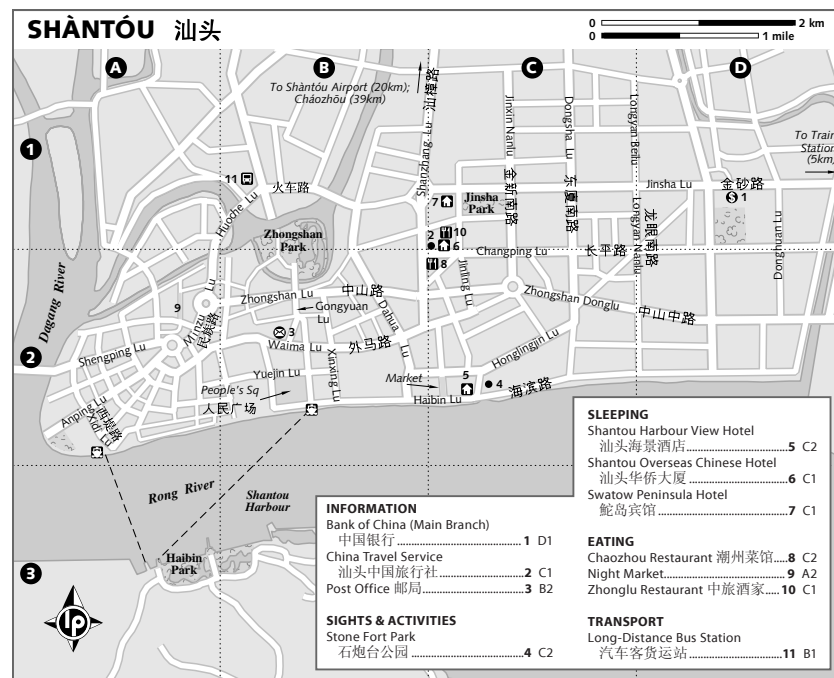
Eating

Chiu Chow has a distinct cuisine that makes great use of seafood and accompanying sauces. A few specialities include: *chui jau lou sui nghoh* (Chiu Chow soy goose); *tim suen hung xiu ha/ha kau* (deep-fried shrimp/crab balls with honey sauce); and *chui jau yi min* (pan-fried egg noodles served over chives). And no meal here is complete without thimble-sized cups of strong and bitter *ti kwan yu*, a fermented oolong tea called 'Iron Buddha'.

Zhonglu Restaurant (Zhōnglù Jiǔjiā; ☎ 862 6207; 41 Shanzhang Lu; meals from Y25; ☎ 11.30am-4pm, 5.30-9pm) This friendly place in the courtyard between the Overseas Chinese Hotel and city bus station specialises in seafood.

Chaozhou Restaurant (Cháozhōu Cǎiguǎn; ☎ 854 6498; 2 Changping Lu; meals from Y35; ☎ 10.30am-4.30pm, 5.30-10.30pm) This is an excellent place to try Chiu Chow specialities such as prawn balls and crab noodles.

There's a positively frenetic **night market** (Fuping Lu) with an entire street of food stalls just west of Minzu Lu. If your Chinese isn't up to it, let your fingers do the talking.



The restaurant on the second floor of the Harbour View Hotel has a very good breakfast buffet for Y20 per person.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Shàntóu airport, 20km northeast of the centre, has flights to Bangkok and Hong Kong (Y1230, twice daily). Domestic destinations include Běijīng, Fúzhōu, Guǎngzhōu (Y610 to Y630), Guǎnlín, Hǎikǒu, Nánjīng and Shànghǎi. A taxi will cost about Y40 from the centre. You can also catch the airport shuttle (Y10) which runs between major hotels and the airport.

BUS

Buses arrive/depart from the **long-distance bus station** (Shàntóu shèng qìchēzhàn; Huoche Lu) and the more central city station behind CTS and the Overseas Chinese Hotel. Destinations include Fúzhōu (Y140, seven hours), Guǎngzhōu (Y130 to Y150, six hours), Hong Kong (Y180, five hours), Shēnzhèn (Y100, four hours) and Xiàmén (Y90, four hours). Buses to Hong Kong (Y210) leave from the

Shantou International Hotel. Minibuses to Cháozhōu (Y11, one hour) leave from a small office just south of the city station.

TRAIN

There are daily trains between Shàntóu and Guǎngzhōu (Y138, seven hours) and trains to Cháozhōu (Y20, 35 minutes). The station is 5km to the east of the centre.

Getting Around

Bus 2 links the centre with the train station via Jinsha Lu. Pedicabs and motorbikes are plentiful; flagfall is Y5.

CHÁOZHŌU 潮州

☎ 0768 / pop 1.24 million

A much prettier city than Shàntóu, Cháozhōu is an ancient commercial and trading city dating back some 1700 years. It is situated on the Han River (Hán Jiāng) and surrounded on three sides by the Jīn Shān (Golden Hills) and Húlu Shān (Calabash Hills). While travelling between the two cities you'll pass a number of fortified Hakka villages chock-a-block with traditional houses and ancient temples.

