

# Hénán 河南



Unassuming and poor, agricultural Hénán lets its western provincial neighbour take credit as the 'cradle' of Chinese civilisation, yet here, Henanese could argue, is where it truly all began.

Neighbouring Shaanxi (Shǎnxī) garners acclaim as the wellspring of Chinese history, yet it is Hénán, smack in the middle of China's nine original regions, that was originally dubbed 'Central Region' – in both a cultural and geographical sense. The land lured settlers – trailing the fickle course of the Yellow River (Huáng Hé) – to take root and populate the fertile plains of its basin. Ancient capitals rose and fell and northern Hénán (particularly time-warped Kāifēng and overlooked Ānyáng) is an east-to-west melange of Chinese dynastic antiquity.

Spirituality blossomed within this dynastic milieu. The province witnessed the initial blooming of Buddhism in China proper; Luòyáng's White Horse Temple is arguably the oldest surviving Buddhist temple in the country. Later, Muslim traders and pilgrims intermarried with Han Chinese and established an Islamic presence. So welcoming were the early emperors that Hénán even found itself the site of China's oldest settlement of Jews.

Hénán today is looked down upon by much of China as a backward, *tǔ* (rural) region where the reform drive has seriously lost steam. But the province plays its history card with assurance and is eager to flaunt its indisputable dynastic credentials.

And it's not all about ancient cities and mouldering ruins: intrepid travellers can eke out some fabulous terrain, including the dizzying high-elevation perch of rural Guōliàngcūn. The province also swarms with pilgrims heading to two of China's drawcard sights, the Shaolin Temple and the stunning Buddhist artistry of the Longmen Caves.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Get a glimpse of nirvana alongside the astonishing Buddhist artistry at the **Longmen Caves** (p465) outside Luòyáng
- Turn over **Kāifēng's** (p468) rich historical heritage before wildly feasting at its night market
- Join Chinese artists decamping to remote, picturesque **Guōliàngcūn** (p467), one of China's most charming traditional villages
- Brush up on your iron-shirt *qigōng* at the **Shaolin Temple** (p460) before roaming the temple-dotted slopes of **Sōng Shān** (p460)
- Ascend a richly rewarding learning curve at the **Henan Provincial Museum** (p457) in Zhèngzhōu



■ POPULATION: 42.1 MILLION

■ [www.yunnantourism.net](http://www.yunnantourism.net)

## History

It was long thought that tribes who migrated from western Asia founded the Shang dynasty (1700–1100 BC). Shang dynasty settlement excavations in Hénán, however, have shown these towns to be built on the sites of even more ancient – prehistoric even – settlements. The first archaeological evidence of the Shang period was discovered near Anyáng in northern Hénán. Yet it is now believed that the first Shang capital, perhaps dating back 3800 years, was at Yǎnshī, west of modern-day Zhèngzhōu. Around the mid-14th century BC, the capital is thought to have moved to Zhèngzhōu, where its ancient city walls are still visible.

Hénán again occupied centre stage during the Song dynasty (AD 960–1279), but political

power deserted it when the government fled south from its capital at Kǎifèng following the 12th-century Juchen invasion from the north. Nevertheless, with a large population on the fertile (although periodically flood-ravaged) plains of the unruly Yellow River, Hénán remained an important agricultural area.

Not until the communist victory was the province able to begin keeping up with its neighbours. Zhèngzhōu, Luòyáng and Kǎifèng have sought to bury much of their history under concrete, but exploration yields some tempting glimpses of their ancestry.

## Climate

Hénán has a warm-temperate climate: dry, windy and cold (average of -2°C in January)

in winter, hot (average temperature 28°C) and humid in summer. Rainfall increases from north to south and ranges from 60cm to 120cm annually; most of it falls July to September.

## Language

The lion's share of Hénán's 96 million inhabitants speak one of nearly 20 subdialects of Zhōngyuán Huà, itself a dialect of Northern Mandarin. Two of 15 dialects of Jin, a distinct language or a simply a dialect of Mandarin (linguists wrangle), are found in northern Hénán.

## Getting There & Around

Hénán is that rarity in China: a province in which travellers can get from point A to point B (inside or outside the province) with relative ease. Zhèngzhōu is a major regional rail hub, and expressways laden with comfy express buses run parallel to rail lines and stretch into southern parts of the province.

Zhèngzhōu is the main hub for flying to/from Hénán (see p459); Luòyáng also has a smaller airport (p464) but it's recommended that you use Zhèngzhōu.

## ZHÈNGZHŌU 郑州

☎ 0371 / pop 2 million

The provincial capital of Hénán since 1949, Zhèngzhōu is a sprawling mini-metropolis that, despite its ancient history, retains fewer historical anachronisms than some of its neighbouring cities. The quickly modernising town is not unattractive – with clean, wide boulevards lined with numerous upmarket boutiques and shops branching off around the train station – but its role as a major rail transport junction in the region is the real reason it's the capital city.

## Orientation

All places of interest to travellers lie east of the railway line. Northeast of the train station, five roads converge at the prominent modern landmark 7 February Pagoda (Èrqī Tǎ) to form the messy traffic circle 7 February Sq (Èrqī Guǎngchǎng) that marks Zhèngzhōu's not unattractive commercial centre. Èrqī Lu runs northward from the traffic circle to intersect with Jinshui Lu near Renmin Park.

## Information

**Bank of China** (Zhōngguó Yínháng; 8 Jinshui Lu;

☎ 9am–5pm)

**China International Travel Service** (CITS; 中国国际旅行社; Zhōngguó Guójī Lǚxíngshè; ☎ 392 7758;

fax 381 1753; 8th fl, Hǎitōng Dàshà Bldg, 50 Jingqi Lu; ☎ 8.30am–noon & 2–6pm Mon–Fri) Inconveniently located in Zhèngzhōu's north. It has also representatives in the pricier Sofitel hotel.

**Foreign Languages Bookstore** (Wàiwén Shūdiàn; Zhèngshang Lu; ☎ 8.30am–6pm) Can put a copy of *Anna Karenina* or a chunky Trollope in your backpack.

**Hanbo Internet** (Hànbo Wǎngbā; Shangcheng Lu, per hr Y2; ☎ 8am–midnight) Opposite Chenghuang Temple.

**Henan Pharmacy** (Hénán Dàyào fáng; ☎ 6623 4256; 19 Renmin Lu; ☎ 24hr)

**Internet café** (wǎngbā; per hr Y3) Above restaurant at south end of train station concourse.

**Little Bear Internet** (Xiǎo Xióng Wǎngbā; Jiankang Lu; per hr Y2.50; ☎ 8am–midnight)

**Post office** (yóujú; ☎ 8am–8pm) South end of train station concourse.

**Public Security Bureau Exit-Entry Administrative Office** (PSB; Gōngānjū Chūrùjīng Guǎnlǐchū; ☎ 6962 0359; 70 Erqi Lu; ☎ 8.30am–noon & 3–6.30pm summer, 2pm–5.30pm Mon–Fri other seasons) For visa extensions.

**Xinhua Bookstore** (Xīnhuá Shūdiàn; ☎ 6628 7809; 22 Renmin Lu; ☎ 9am–7.30pm) Small selection of English-language titles

## Sights

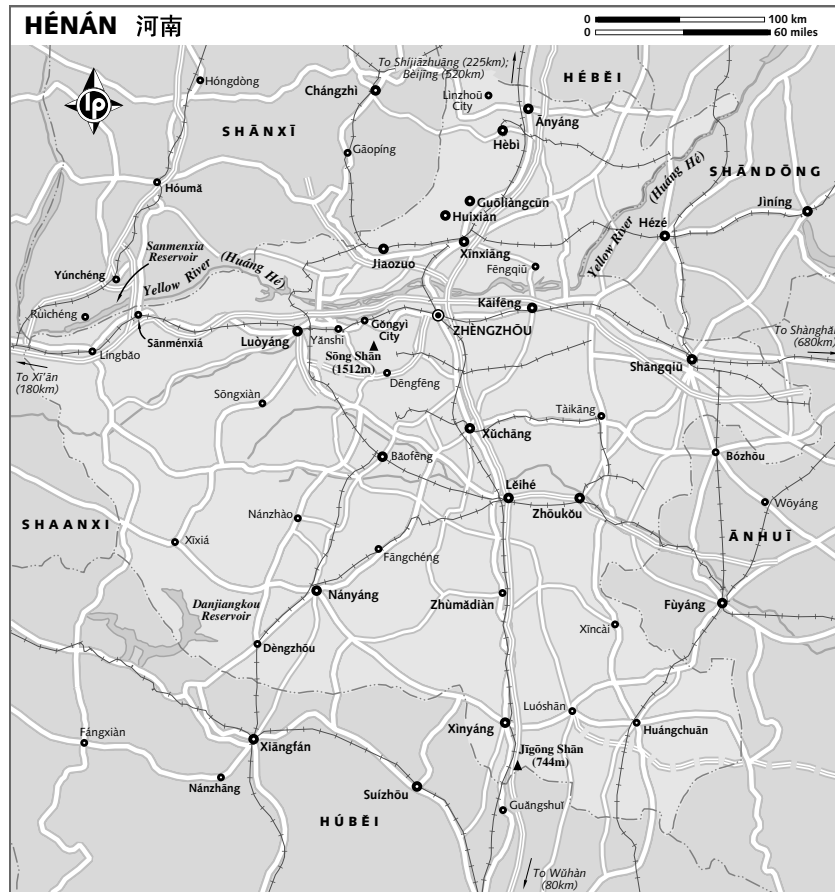
### HENAN PROVINCIAL MUSEUM

河南省博物馆

The emphatically excellent collection of the provincial **museum** (Hénán Shěng Bówùguǎn; 8 Nongye Lu; admission Y20; ☎ 8.30am–6pm) ranges from the awesome artistry of Shang dynasty bronzes (search out the stirring 'Bronze *bu* with beast mask motif'), oracle bones and further relics from the Yin ruins (so you can bypass Anyáng, p466) to gorgeous Ming and Qing porcelain specimens. The dioramas of Song dynasty Kǎifèng and the magnificent, and now obliterated, Tang dynasty imperial palace at Luòyáng serve to underscore that the bulk of Hénán's glorious past is at one with Nineveh and Tyre. Captions are in Chinese and English; there was no English audio tour at the time of writing.

### OTHER SIGHTS

Zhèngzhōu's eastern outskirts are marked by long, high mounds of earth, the remains of the erstwhile **Shang city walls** (Shàngdài Yízhì), which can be clambered for walks. The well-restored **Chenghuang Temple** (Chénghuáng Miào; Shangcheng Lu; admission free; ☎ 8am–6pm) bustles with worshippers, while the **Confucius Temple** (Wén Miào; 24 Dong Dajie) was currently undergoing massive restoration at the time of writing.





The **Yellow River** (Huáng Hé; admission Y25; ☎ 6.30am-sunset) is 25km north of town. The road passes near Huāyuánkǒu village, where in April 1938 Kuomintang general Chiang Kaishek blew a dyke to flood Japanese troops. This desperate, ruthless tactic drowned about one million Chinese people and left another 11 million homeless and starving. Bus 16 goes to the river from Erma Lu, north of the train station.

### Sleeping

**Erqi Binguǎn** (Erqi Hotel; ☎ 6661 7688; fax 6696 1268; 168 Jiefang Lu; 解放路168号; d with/without toilet Y216/96, tr Y126; 🚻) Net a standard double (pleasant, with a huge bathroom and wood floor) for Y180 after discount at this hotel overlooking the main square. The tiled, frugal Y96 doubles also offer tempting value. The hotel is the semicircular edifice next to the overhead walkway (no English sign).

**Golden Sunshine Hotel** (Jīnyángguāng Dàjiǔdiàn; ☎ 6696 9999; fax 699 9534; 86 Erma Lu; 二马路86号; d Y110-426; 🚻) Beds in the scuffed lower floor cheapies (prices rise with altitude) are like sleeping on planks of wood – good for the

spine or so they say. Bonuses include late check out (2pm).

**Express by Holiday Inn** (Zhōngzhōu Kuàiyì Jiàn Jiǔdiàn; ☎ 6595 6600, 800 830 4088; 115 Jinshui Lu; 金水路115号; s/d Y488/528; 🚻 🚰 📺) Neat, fresh and snappy new midrange option (linked to the Sofitel by a connecting walkway) with modern rooms. Breakfast included (Y58 for nonguests; open 6am to 10.30am), free broadband in business rooms.

**Sofitel** (Sūfēitè Guójī Fàndiàn; ☎ 6595 0088; www.acor-hotels-asia.com; 289 Chengdong Lu; 城东路289号; d incl breakfast Y1120; 🚻 🚰 📺) On balance, the five-star Sofitel may be more goodish four-star, but there are good discounts, useful free English-language maps from the concierge, and the well-designed atrium area bathes the café (with a popular afternoon tea buffet), bar and restaurants below in natural light. There's also wi-fi access.

### Eating & Drinking

**Guangcai Market** (Guāngcǎi Shìchǎng) For street food aplenty, wander this crowded cornucopia of snack stalls in the block northeast of Erqi Tǎ for *málà tàng* (麻辣烫; spicy soup, with

INFORMATION		SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES		EATING 🍴	
Bank of China 中国银行.....	1 D2	Chenghuang Temple 城隍庙.....	10 D3	Guangcai Market 光彩市场.....	17 B2
Foreign Languages Bookstore 外文书店.....	2 C2	Confucius Temple 文庙.....	11 D3	Quánjǔdé 全聚德.....	18 B2
Hanbo Internet 汉博网吧.....	3 C3	Shang City Walls 商代城墙遗址.....	12 D2		
Henan Pharmacy 河南大药房.....	4 C2			DRINKING 🍷	
Internet Café 网吧.....	5 B3			Exit 3 Bar.....	(see 16)
Little Bear Internet 小熊网吧.....	6 B1			Target Pub 目标酒吧.....	19 C2
Post Office 邮政大楼.....	7 B3	SLEEPING 🛏			
Public Security Bureau Exit-Entry Administrative Office 公安局出入境管理处.....	8 B2	Erqi Binguǎn 二七宾馆.....	13 B3	TRANSPORT	
Xinhua Bookstore 新华书店.....	9 C2	Express by Holiday Inn 中州快捷假日酒店.....	14 D2	Advance Booking Office (Train Tickets) 火车预售票处.....	20 B3
		Golden Sunshine Hotel 金阳光大酒店.....	15 B3	CAAC 中国民航.....	21 D2
		Sofitel 索菲特国际饭店.....	16 D2	Long-Distance Bus Station 长途汽车站.....	22 B3

ingredients chosen from skewered veggies and meat), *bàngzi* (棒子; corn-on-the-cob), *chūn juǎn* (春卷; spring rolls), *miàntiáo* (面条; noodles), *ròuchuán* (肉串; kebabs), *yúwán chuàn* (鱼丸串; fish balls on a stick), *guōtiē* (锅贴; fried dumplings) and more – they are all here among the crowds of diners and rickety tables. At the hub of it all is a small, tiled church.

**Quánjǔdé** (☎ 6623 5108; 108 Erqi Lu; half duck Y38) Escape the noise and fumes at street level for some finger-licking choice Peking duck in a smart upstairs setting. Flick through the photo menu, attended to by polite and efficient staff (who don plastic gloves to roll your pancakes), and observe the chefs firing up the ovens through a glass screen.

**Target Pub** (Mùbiāo Jiǔbā; ☎ 138 038 570 56; 10 Jingliu Lu; ☎ 7pm-late) A decade in the making, with a lived-in, laid-back vibe, good tunes, mezzanine and an outstanding selection of spirits. Join the expat regulars, seize a chilled beer and let proprietor Lao Wang regale you with his tales of taming the Taklamakan Desert and wheeling it to Paris.

**Exit 3 Bar** (Kōngjiān; ☎ 6595 0088, ext 8300; 3rd fl, Sofitel, 289 Chengdong Lu; ☎ 8pm-midnight) Formulaic bar with quilted green leather bar stools perhaps, but there's a bona fide snooker table beneath the atrium, plus the sweetener of unlimited Tsingtao beer (Y100).

### Getting There & Away

#### AIR

**Civil Aviation Administration of China** (CAAC; Zhōngguó Mínháng; ☎ 6599 1111; 3 Jinshui Lu) sells tickets. Airport shuttle buses (Y15, 40 minutes, hourly from 6am to 6.30pm) leave from the CAAC office for the airport, 30km south of the city centre. A taxi to the airport costs around Y100 (40 minutes).

There are daily flights to Běijīng (Y690), Shànghǎi (Y790), Guǐlín (Y1130) and Hōng Kōng (Y2200). Less frequent services fly to Wūhàn (Y500) and Xī'ān (Y510).

#### BUS

The most useful long-distance bus station is opposite the train station.

Buses run between approximately 6.30am to 7pm to Luòyáng (Y35, two hours, every 20 minutes), Kǎifēng (Y19, one hour, every 25 minutes), Xīnxiāng (Y24, one hour), Dēngfēng (Y19, one hour, every 35 minutes) and Ānyáng (Y50, every 40 minutes). Slow buses to Luòyáng make a stop in Gōngyì (Y20) or you can take a direct bus.

Buses to the Shaolin Temple (Y21, 1½ to 2½ hours) leave every 20 to 30 minutes between 6am and 11.30pm. Other destinations include Běijīng (Y170 to Y190, eight hours, every 40 minutes) between 8.30am and 10pm.

#### TRAIN

Zhèngzhōu is a major rail hub with trains to virtually every conceivable destination, including the Běijīng–Kowloon express.

Tickets are easy to buy at the **advance booking office** (☎ 6835 6666; cnr Zhengxing Jie & Foushou Jie; ☎ 8am-noon & 2-5pm).

Hard-seat prices include Ānyáng (Y29, three hours), Běijīng West (Y46 to Y94, seven hours), Hǎnkǒu (Y36 to Y73, five hours), Kǎifēng (Y5.50 to Y13, 1½ hours), Luòyáng (Y10 to Y20, 2½ hours), Shànghǎi (Y64 to Y130, 10 hours), Tàiyuán (Y45, 10 hours) and Xīnxiāng (Y13, 1½ hours).

For Xī'ān take the faster, two-tiered 'tourist train' (Y78 hard seat, 7½ hours) that leaves Zhèngzhōu at 9am and arrives in Xī'ān around 4.30pm.

## Getting Around

Bus 2 runs near the Shang City Walls. Bus 39 runs from the train station to the Henan Provincial Museum, and bus 26 runs from the train station past 7 February Sq and along Jinshui Lu to the CAAC office.

Taxis start at Y7, but an additional Y1 fuel charge is levied per trip.

## SŌNG SHĀN & DĒNGFĒNG

高山, 登封

☎ 0371

Three main peaks comprise Sōng Shān, rising to 1512m about 80km west of Zhèngzhōu. In Taoism, Sōng Shān is considered the central mountain, symbolising earth among the five elements. Occupying the axis directly beneath heaven, Taoist Sōng Shān is also famed as the sacred home of the Buddhist Shaolin Temple.

At the foot of 1494m-high **Tàishì Shān** (太室山), a short ride southeast of the Shaolin Temple, sits the squat little town of Dēngfēng. Tatty and squalid in parts, it is used by travelers as a base for trips to surrounding sights or exploratory treks into the hills.

## Information

**Bank of China** (中国银行; Zhōngguó Yínháng; cnr Songshan Lu & Shaolin Dadao; ☎ 8am-5.30pm) ATM.

**CITS** (中国国际旅行社; Zhōngguó Guójí Lǚxíngshè; ☎ 6288 3442; Beihuan Lu Xiduan) Has helpful, English-speaking staff.

**No 2 People's Hospital** (第二人民医院; Dìèr Rénmín Yīyuàn; ☎ 6289 9999; 189 Shaolin Dadao) Located on the main road.

**Qianshou Internet** (牵手网吧; Qiānshǒu Wǎngbā; 55 Aimin Lu; per hr Y2; ☎ 7am-midnight)

## Sights & Activities

**SHAOLIN TEMPLE** 少林寺

The overpriced birthplace of *gōngfu*, the **Shaolin Temple** (Shàolín Sì; ☎ 274 9204; admission Y100; ☎ 8am-6.30pm), some 80km southwest of Zhèngzhōu, is a victim of its own success. A frequent target of war, the temple was last torched in 1928, and the surviving halls – many of recent construction – are today besieged by marauding tour groups. Restorations continue with the buzz of chainsaws and the hammering of chisels, occasionally drowned out by blaring music.

Amid the tourist mayhem, communing with the spirit of Shàolín is indeed a tall order. Much *wúshù* – athletic Chinese martial arts of the performance variety – is in evidence in nearby schools, but there's little true *gōngfu*, which requires not just a tracksuit but years of patient and gruelling physical and mental study.

Enter the temple past stela of dedication – some from abroad – and make for the signature sights, the **Pilu Pavilion** (毗卢殿; Pílú Diàn), with its famous depressions in the floor apocryphally the work of generations of monks practising their stance work, and the **Guanyin Hall** (观音殿; Guānyīn Diàn), which contains the celebrated frescoes of fighting monks.

Across from the temple entrance, the Arhat Hall within the **Shífāng Chányuàn** (十方禅院) contains legions of crudely fash-

## MIND & BODY

Legend records that the Shaolin Temple (Shàolín Sì) was founded in the 5th century by an Indian monk. Several decades later another Indian monk named Bodhidharma (Damo) came to the temple, but was refused entrance, so he retired to a nearby cave in which he calmed his mind by resting his brain 'upright'. To do this, Damo sat and prayed toward a cave wall for nine years; temple folklore says his shadow was left on the cave wall. This 'Shadow Stone' is within the Shaolin Temple.

For relief between long periods of meditation, Bodhidharma's disciples imitated the natural motions of birds and animals, movements that evolved over the centuries into physical and spiritual combat routines: Shaolin Boxing (少林拳; Shàolín Quán).

The monks of Shaolin have supposedly intervened continually throughout China's many wars and uprisings – always on the side of righteousness, naturally. Perhaps as a result, their monastery has suffered repeated sackings. The most recent episodes were in 1928, when local warlord Shi Youzan torched almost all the temple's buildings, and in the early 1970s, when Red Guards paid their own disrespects.

ioned *luòhàn* (monks who have achieved enlightenment and pass to nirvana at death), while the **Pagoda Forest** (少林塔林; Shàolín Tǎlín), a cemetery of 246 small brick pagodas including the ashes of an eminent monk, is worth visiting if you get here ahead of the crowds. Some of the stupas are in a bad state of neglect while others have entirely collapsed. As you face the Shaolin Temple, paths on your left lead up **Wuru Peak** (五乳峰; Wǔrǔ Fēng). Flee the tourist din by heading into the hills to see the **cave** (达摩洞; Dámó Dòng) where Damo (Bodhidharma) meditated for nine years, or view it through high-powered binoculars (Y2). Note the sign says the cave is 500m away, but it is in fact around 3km. All of the earlier sights are included on the main ticket.

At 1512m above sea level, **Shǎoshì Shān** (少室山) is the area's tallest peak, with a scenic trek beside craggy rock formations along a path that often hugs the cliff. The trek takes about six hours return, covers 15km and takes you to the 782-step **Rope Bridge** (索桥; Suǒ Qiáo). For safety reasons, monks recommend trekking with a friend. The path starts to the east of the Shàolín cable car (Y20), which takes you to part of Shǎoshì Shān. Maps in Chinese are available at souvenir stalls.

To reach the Shaolin Temple, take bus 8 from Dēngfēng (Y1.50, 15 minutes) to the drop off and then a buggy (Y5) to the temple entrance, or walk. Alternatively, take a minibus from either Luòyáng or Zhèngzhōu (Y21, 1½ to 2½ hours). From Shàolín, return buses leave from opposite the Pagoda Forest (last bus leaving at around 8pm).

**SONGYANG ACADEMY** 嵩阳书院

At the foot of Tàishì Shān (there's a Y10 fee to enter the Tàishì Shān scenic area) sits one of China's oldest academies, **Songyang Academy** (Sōngyáng Shūyuàn; admission Y25; ☎ 8am-6.30pm). In the courtyard are two cypress trees believed to be around 4500 years old – and still alive! The nearby **Songyue Pagoda** (嵩岳塔; Sōngyuè Tǎ; admission Y25; ☎ 8am-6.30pm), built in AD 509, is China's oldest brick pagoda.

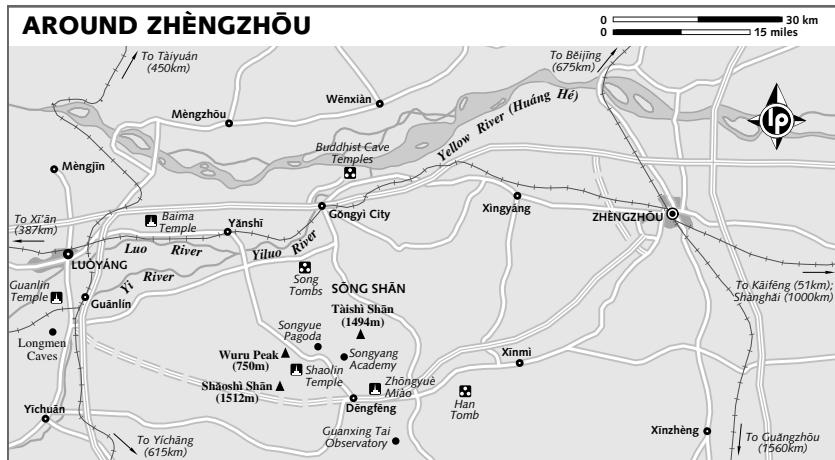
Take bus 2 (the green one that runs along Zhongyue Dajie) to the last stop and then a motor-rickshaw to the pagoda; the ride should cost Y10 to Y15. A return trip to the academy and pagoda by motor-rickshaw is Y20.

**ZHONGYUÈ MIÀO** 中岳庙

Exuding a more palpable air of reverence than the Shaolin Temple, the ancient and hoary **Zhōngyuè Miào** (admission Y25; ☎ 6.30am-6.30pm) is a colossal active Taoist monastery complex that originally dates back to the 2nd century BC. Besides attending the main hall dedicated to the Mountain God, walk through the **Huasan Gate** (化三门; Huàsān Mén) and expunge *pengju*, *pengzhi* and *pengjiao* – three pestilential insects that respectively inhabit the brain, tummy and feet. Pay a visit to the **Ministry of Hades** (七十二司; Qīshìèr Sì) and drop by the four **Iron Men of Song**, rubbed by visitors to fantastically cure ailments. The temple is 4km east of the city centre. Take the green bus 2 along Zhongyue Dajie.

**GUANXING TAI OBSERVATORY** 观星台

In the town of Gàochéng, 15km southeast of Dēngfēng, is China's oldest surviving



**observatory** (admission Y10; ☎ 8am-6.30pm). In 1276 the emperor ordered two astronomers to chart a calendar. After observing from the stone tower, they came back in AD 1280 with a mapping of 365 days, five hours, 49 minutes and 12 seconds, which differs from modern calculations by only 26 seconds. Regular southbound buses from Dēngfēng can take you there; catch them from any large intersection in the southeastern part of town.

### Sleeping & Eating

A growing band of four-star hotels charging astronomic rates is making an appearance in Dēngfēng.

**Jinan Hotel** (金安宾馆; Jīnān Bīnguǎn; ☎ 6285 8299; cnr Zhongyue Dajie & Dongshangju Jie; 中岳大街与东商埠街交叉口; d with/without shower Y158/238) Regular 50% discounts make rooms here – with crisp linen, serviceable showers and kettle – a bargain (despite grubby carpets).

**Shaolin International Hotel** (少林国际大酒店; Shàolín Guójí Dàjiùdiàn; ☎ 286 6188; www.shaolinhotel.com; 16 Shaolin Lu; 少林路16号; s/d from Y338/438; ☎) Increasingly overpriced tourist hotel in the eastern part of Dēngfēng with scads of black Buicks parked outside. Jiang Zemin stayed here, leaving his photo in the lobby and further pumping up prices.

**Little Sheep** (小肥羊; Xiǎo Féiyáng; ☎ 6286 0122; 131 Zhongyue Dajie; meals Y50) Stomach-warming hotpots from the experts. Shovel plateloads of lamb, lettuce, mushrooms and dòufu (tofu) into a scalding broth, extract, dip in sauce and munch.

Also look out for the string of shops along the **Shuyuan River** (书院河; Shùyuàn Hé) specialising in fruit and nuts.

### Getting There & Away

The Dēngfēng bus station is on Zhongyue Dajie. Buses to/from Zhèngzhōu (Y20, 1½ hours) and Luòyáng (Y15, two hours) run every 20 to 30 minutes. Four buses a day run to Gōngyì (Y8, one hour). Hotels in Zhèngzhōu and Luòyáng often arrange day tours (Y40, excluding entrance fees) that include sites along the way.

## LUÒYÁNG 洛阳

☎ 0379 / pop 1.4 million

Capital of 13 dynasties until the Northern Song dynasty moved its capital to Kāifēng in the 10th century, Luòyáng is one of China's true ancient dynastic cities. Today it's hard to

imagine that Luòyáng was once the centre of the Chinese universe, the Eastern Capital of the great Tang dynasty and home to over 1300 Buddhist temples. The heart of the magnificent Sui dynasty palace complex was centred on the point where today's Zhongzhou Lu and Dingding Lu intersect in a frenzy of honking traffic. Charted on maps of town, the Sui and Tang dynasty walls were arranged in an imposing rectangle north and south of the Luo River.

Luòyáng endured a sacking in the 12th century by Juchen invaders from which it never quite recovered. For centuries the city languished with only memories of greatness, its population dwindling to a mere 20,000 inhabitants by the 1920s. Despite modern overlays, the city remains suspended between eras: travellers may still see ducks wandering the pavements around the train station while sex toy shops and lurid, pink-lit foot-massage parlours infest the north end of Jingyuan Lu.

Its star long faded, Luòyáng now resembles other fume-laden modern towns in China, with choking air pollution, roaring streets, ample concrete and scant evidence of a once-great citadel.

The surviving signature sight is undoubtedly the splendid Longmen Caves outside town but an annual highlight is the Peony Festival, centred on Wangcheng Park (王城公园; Wángchéng Gōngyuán), held from 15 to 25 April, when the city is flooded with floral aficionados.

### Orientation

The bulk of Luòyáng extends across the northern bank of the Luo River (洛河; Luò Hé). The train station and long-distance bus station are located in the north of the city. The chief thoroughfare is Zhongzhou Zhonglu, which meets Jingyuan Lu leading down from the train station at Wangcheng Sq (王城广场; Wángchéng Guǎngchéng). Few places in town seem to have street numbers, making navigation a headache.

### Information

**Bank of China** (☎ 8am-4.30pm) The Zhongzhou Xilu office exchanges travellers cheques and has an ATM which accepts MasterCard and Visa, as does the ATM at the Zhōngguó Yínháng office. There's also a branch on the corner of Zhongzhou Lu and Shachang Nanlu that's open until 5.30pm, and another branch just west of the train station has foreign-exchange services.

**CITS** (Zhōngguó Guójí Lǚxíngshè; ☎ 432 3212, 433 1337; Changjiang Lu) There's also a branch at the Peony Hotel.

**Gudu Internet café** (Gūdū Wǎngbā; 111 Jingyuan Lu; per hr Y2; ☎ 24hr) One of several small 24-hour internet cafés on the east side of Jingyuan Lu just north of the junction with Tangong Zhonglu.

**Kaixinren Pharmacy** (Kǎixīnrén Dàyàofáng; ☎ 6392 8315; 483 Zhongzhou Zhonglu; ☎ 24hr)

**Luoyang Central Hospital** (Luòyáng Shì Zhōngxīn Yīyuàn; ☎ 6389 2222; 288 Zhongzhou Lu) In cooperation with SOS International; it also has a pharmacy.

**Post & China Telecom** (Yóudiànqū; cnr Zhongzhou Zhonglu & Jingyuan Lu)

**Public Security Bureau** (PSB; Gōngānjū; ☎ 393 8397; cnr Kaixuan Lu & Tiyuchang Lu; ☎ 8am-noon & 2-5.30pm Mon-Fri) The Exit-Entry department (出入境大厅; Chūrùjìng Dàtīng) is in the south building.

**Western Union** (☎ 800 820 8668; Zhongzhou Xilu) Next door to the Bank of China.

**Xinhua Bookstore** (Xīnhuá Shūdiàn; 3rd-4th fl, 287 Zhongzhou Zhonglu; ☎ 9am-6pm) In the building next to Luoyang Department Store.

### Sights & Activities

#### WHITE HORSE TEMPLE 白马寺

Founded in the 1st century AD, this temple (Báimǎ Sì; admission Y35; ☎ 7am-7pm Apr-Oct, hours vary rest of the year) is traditionally considered the first Buddhist temple built on Chinese soil, although the original structures have largely been replaced.

After two Han dynasty court emissaries went in search of Buddhist scriptures, they encountered two Indian monks in Afghanistan who returned together on two white horses to Luòyáng carrying Buddhist sutras and statues. The impressed emperor built the temple to house the monks; it is also their resting place.

In the Hall of the Heavenly Kings, Milefo laughs from within a wonderful old burnished cabinet. Other structures of note include the Big Buddha Hall, the Hall of Mahavira and the Pilu Hall at the very rear, and the standout **Qiyun Pagoda** (齐云塔; Qíyún Tǎ), an ancient 12-tiered brick tower a pleasant five-minutes walk away. It's an active temple, and you may catch the monks hoeing in the fields, or you can hop on an eponymous white horse for a photo-op (Y3).

The temple is located 13km east of Luòyáng, around 40 minutes away on bus 56 from the train station..

#### LUOYANG MUSEUM 洛阳博物馆

This museum (Luòyáng Bówùguǎn; 298 Zhongzhou Zhonglu; admission Y20; ☎ 8am-4.30pm) has a mod-

est collection of early pottery figures and fragments. Of more interest is the upstairs diorama of Sui and Tang dynasty Luòyáng: the outer Tang wall was punctured by 18 magnificent gates and embraced the Imperial City with the colossal, five-eaved and circular Tiāntáng (Hall of Heaven) at its heart. To get here, take trolleys 102 or 103, which depart from the train station.

#### OLD CITY 老城区

The scruffy old city (*lǎochéngqū*) lies east of rebuilt Lijing Gate (Lǐjīng Mén), where a maze of narrow and winding streets rewards exploration, with the **Wen Feng Pagoda** (Wén Fēng Tǎ) serving as a landmark. With a 700-year history, the square, brick pagoda has an inaccessible door on the 2nd storey and a brick shack built onto its south side. Look out for old courtyard houses that survive amid the modern outcrops in this area. The old **Drum Tower** (Gǔ Lóu) rises up at the east end of Dong Dajie (东大街), itself lined with traditional rooftops. A notable historic remnant survives in the two halls of the former **City God Temple** (Chéngguáng Miào; east of cnr Zhongzhou Donglu & Jinye Lu), although it is not open to visitors. Note the intriguing roof ornaments of the green-tiled first hall facing the street.

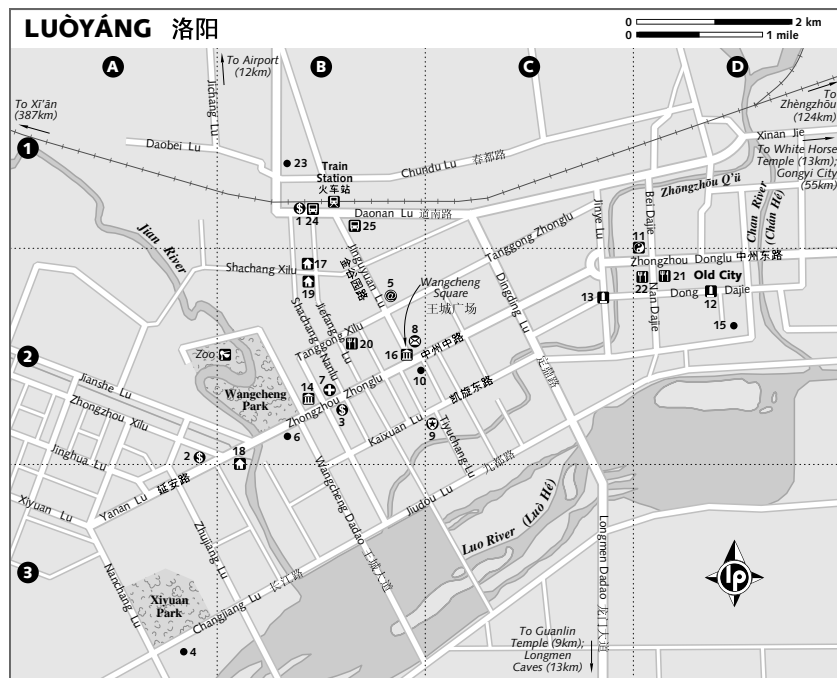
#### ZHOU WANGCHENG TIANZI JIALIU MUSEUM 周王城天子驾六博物馆

In 770BC, Zhou dynasty Emperor Ping moved his capital to Luòyì (洛邑) in present-day Luòyáng, which served as dynastic capital for over 500 years and where 25 emperors had their imperial seat. Beyond its collection of bronze ware from Zhou dynasty tombs, the highlight (for archaeologists at least) of this museum (Wangcheng Sq; admission Y25; ☎ 8am-10pm) beneath Wangcheng Sq is its excavated horse and chariot pits, also dating from the Zhou.

### Sleeping

**Mingyuan Hotel** (Míngyuán Bīnguǎn; ☎ 6319 1377/0378; lymingyuan@yahoo.com.cn; 20 Jiefang Lu; 解放路20号; dm Y60, s & d/tr Y188/240; ☎) This excellent hotel has a convincing CV: affiliation with Hostel-ling International, spacious, clean rooms with laminated wood flooring, smart furniture, a bowl of apples upon arrival and a tempting location near the train station. Internet access is Y10 per hour. Rates include breakfast.

**Shenjian Hotel** (Shénjiàn Bīnguǎn; ☎ 6390 1066; 32 Jiefang Lu; 解放路32号; s/d/tw Y188/198/238; ☎) ( )



Courteous staff, newly opened, with clean and well-furnished, spacious double rooms, this three-star hotel offers good value for money. It is situated near the train station. Push for discounts (20%). There's no English sign.

**Peony Hotel** (Mūdān Dàjiùdiàn; ☎ 6468 0000; peony smdept@yahoo.com.cn; 15 Zhongzhou Xilu; 中州西路15号; standard d Y480-550; ♻️) Renovated in 2004, standard 'A' doubles are small with midget bathrooms, but are prettily laid out and attractively furnished. A trendy café is on the ground floor.

## Eating

Luòyáng's famous Water Banquet resonates along China's culinary grapevine. The main dishes of this 24-course meal are soups and are served up with the speed of 'flowing water' – hence the name.

**Night market** (Nándàjiē yèshì; cnr Nan Dajie & Zhongzhou Donglu) This lively old city market is a great place for dinner. Barbequed beef and squid, cold dishes and an assortment of bugs can be had for as little as Y2 per dish. Other tasty roadside snacks include *jiǎnpào* (fried pastries filled with chopped herbs and garlic) and

*dòushā gāo* (豆沙糕; a sweet 'cake' made from yellow peas and Chinese dates).

**Zhèn Bù Tóng Fāndiàn** (One of a Kind Restaurant; ☎ 399 5787; Zhongzhou Donglu; dishes Y15-45, water banquet from Y60) This is the place to come for a water banquet experience – one half is for the hoi polloi, and one section is upmarket. If 24 courses seem a little excessive, you can opt to pick individual dishes from the menu.

**Deheng Roast Duck Restaurant** (☎ 6391 2778; 21 Tanggong Xilu; half duck Y30) Snobbish service aside, the duck here is well known in town, and although the restaurant is brightly lit with large tables and mainly geared to group dining, solitary diners can be well fed with half a duck and an extra dish from the menu.

## Getting There & Away

### AIR

You would do better to fly into or out of Zhèngzhōu. **CAAC** (Zhōngguó Mínháng; ☎ 6231 0121, 24hr 6539 9366; 196 Chundu Lu) is in an ugly white-tile building north of the railway line, but tickets can be obtained through hotels. Daily flights operate to Bèijīng (Y890, one hour), Shànghǎi (Y890, one hour) and other cities.

## INFORMATION

Bank of China 中国银行	1 B1
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CITS 中国国际旅行社	4 A3
CITS 中国国际旅行社	(see 18)
Gudu Internet Café 古都网吧	5 B2
Kaixinren Pharmacy 开心人大药房	6 B2
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Zhou Wangcheng Tianzi 周王城天子驾六博物馆	16 B2
Jialiu Museum 中国民航	23 B1
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## EATING

Deheng Roast Duck Restaurant 德恒烤鸭店	20 B2
Night Market 南大街夜市	21 D2
Zhèn Bù Tóng Fāndiàn 真不同饭店	22 D2
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Long-Distance Bus Station 长途汽车站	25 B1

## TRANSPORT

## BUS

Regular bus departures from the **Luòyáng long-distance bus station** (Luòyáng chángtū qūchēzhàn; ☎ 6323 3186) include Zhèngzhōu (Y30, 1½ hours, every 20 minutes), Gōngyì (Y8.50, 40 minutes, every 20 minutes), Kǎifēng (Y36, three hours, every 30 minutes) and Xīxiāng (Y50, 2½ hours). Other destinations include Ànyáng (Y61, four hours), Bèijīng (Y173, nine hours), Tàiyuán (Y98.50, eight hours) and Xī'ān (Y71, four hours). The bus station is across from the Luoyang train station.

Buses to similar destinations depart from the **Jinyuan bus station** (Jīnyuǎn qūchēzhàn) just west of the train station.

Fast buses to Shàolín (Y16, one to 1½ hours) depart every half hour until 4.30pm; slow buses (Y15, two hours) run until 6pm and pass by Dēngfēng. Travel time will speed up when the expressway to Dēngfēng is completed.

## TRAIN

Hard-sleeper train-ticket prices include Bèijīng West (Y117 to Y185, eight to 10 hours), Dūnhuáng (Y247 to Y401), Shànghǎi (Y153 to Y246, 14 to 15 hours) and Xī'ān (Y67 to Y103, six hours). Regional destinations include Kǎifēng (hard seat Y17, three hours) and Zhèngzhōu (hard seat Y11, 1½ hours).

## Getting Around

There is no shuttle bus from the CAAC office to the airport, 12km north of the city, but bus 83 runs from opposite the long-distance bus station (30 minutes). A taxi from the train station will cost about Y25.

Buses run until 8pm or 9pm, although bus 5 operates until 11pm. Buses 5 and 41 go to the old city from the train station. Buses 102 and 103 travel from the train station past Wangcheng Park to the Peony Hotel.

The cheapest taxis (*xiali*) are Y6 at flagfall. Motor-rickshaws are a good way to get around and start at Y2, and motorbike taxis (from Y3) are also ubiquitous.

## AROUND LUÒYÁNG Longmen Caves 龙门石窟

An invaluable Unesco World Heritage site, the ravaged grottoes at Longmen constitute one of China's few surviving masterpieces of Buddhist rock carving. A sutra in stone, the epic achievement of the **Longmen Caves** (Dragon Gate Grottoes; Lóngmén Shíkū; Map p460; admission Y80, English speaking guide Y100; ☎ 6am-8pm summer, 6.30am-7pm winter) was first undertaken by chisellers from the Northern Wei dynasty, after the capital was relocated here from Dàtóng in AD 494. Over the next 200 years or so, more than 100,000 images and statues of Buddha and his disciples emerged from over a kilometre of limestone cliff wall along either bank of the Yi River (Yi Hé), 16km south of the city.

In the early 20th century, many statues were beheaded by unscrupulous collectors or simply extracted whole, many ending up abroad. Also removed were two murals that today hang in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Atkinson Museum in Kansas City. Some effigies are slowly returning and heads are being slowly restored to their severed necks, but other statues have had their faces crudely smashed off, deliberate defacement that dates to the dark days of the Cultural Revolution (the Ten Thousand Buddha Cave was particularly damaged during this period).

## THREE BINYANG CAVES 宾阳三洞

Construction began on the Three Binyang Caves (Bīnyáng Sān Dòng) during the Northern Wei dynasty. Despite the completion of two of the caves during the Sui and Tang dynasties,

statues here all display the benevolent expressions that characterised Northern Wei style.

### TEN THOUSAND BUDDHA CAVE 万佛洞

South from Three Binyang Caves, the Tang dynasty Ten Thousand Buddha Cave (Wānfó Dòng) dates from 680. In addition to its name-sake galaxy of tiny bas-relief Buddhas there is a fine effigy of the Amitabha Buddha.

### LOTUS FLOWER CAVE 莲花洞

The Lotus Flower Cave (Liánhuā Dòng) was carved in 527 during the Northern Wei dynasty and has a large standing Buddha, now faceless. On the cave's ceiling are wispy aparas (celestial nymphs) drifting around a central lotus flower. An oft-employed symbol in Buddhist art, the lotus flower is a metaphor for purity and serenity.

### ANCESTOR WORSHIPPING TEMPLE 奉先寺

Carved in the Tang dynasty between 672 and 675, this temple (Fèngxiān Sì) is the largest structure at Lóngmén and contains the best works of art, despite the evident weathering.

Tang figures tend to be more three-dimensional than the Northern Wei figures. Their expressions and poses also appear more natural and, unlike the other-worldly figures of the Northern Wei, the Tang figures add a fearsome ferocity to their human forms.

The 17m-high seated central Buddha is said to be Losana. Allegedly, the face was modelled on Empress Wu Zetian of the Tang dynasty, who funded the carving of the statue.

### MEDICAL PRESCRIPTION CAVE 药方洞

Located south of Ancestor Worshipping Temple is the tiny Medical Prescription Cave (Yàofāng Dòng). The entrance to this cave is filled with 6th-century stone stelae inscribed with remedies for a range of common ailments.

### EARLIEST CAVE 古阳洞

Adjacent to the Medical Prescription Cave is the larger Earliest Cave (Gǔyáng Dòng), carved between 495 and 575. It's a narrow, high-roofed cave featuring a Buddha statue and a profusion of sculptures, particularly of flying aparas.

### CARVED CAVE 石窟洞

The Carved Cave (Shíkū Dòng) is the last major cave in the Lóngmén complex and features intricate carvings depicting religious processions of the Northern Wei dynasty.

### GETTING THERE & AWAY

The Longmen Caves are 13km south of town and can be reached by taxi (Y30) or bus 81 (Y1) from the east side of Luòyáng's train station.

### Guanlin Temple 关林寺

North of the Longmen Caves, this temple (Guānlín Sì; admission Y25; ☎ 8am-6pm) is the burial place of the legendary general Guan Yu (see boxed text, p410) of the Three Kingdoms period (220 to 265). The temple buildings were built during the Ming dynasty and Guan Yu was issued the posthumous title 'Lord of War' in the early Qing dynasty. Bus 81 runs past Guanlin Temple from the train station in Luòyáng.

### Gongyi City 巩义市

Located between Zhèngzhōu and Luòyáng, Gongyi City (Gōngyì Shì) is home to a fascinating series of Buddhist caves and tombs built by the Northern Song emperors (c AD 517).

The **Song Tombs** (Sòng Líng; admission Y20), scattered over an area of 30 sq km, are where seven of the nine Northern Song emperors were laid to rest. All that remain of the tombs are ruins, burial mounds and about 700 statues which, amid fields of wheat, line the sacred avenues leading up to the ruins.

Buses running on the old highway (not the freeway) from Luòyáng to Gōngyì pass by one of these Song Tomb sites. You can get off the bus there and visit the tombs, or you can continue on into Gōngyì and hire a taxi to visit both the tombs and **Buddhist Caves** (Shíkū; admission Y15), where over 7700 Buddhist figures populate 256 shrines. It's possible to do this in half a day; expect to pay about Y80 for the taxi. If you're coming from the direction of Zhèngzhōu, get off at Gōngyì.

### ĀNYÁNG 安阳

☎ 0372 / pop 792,000

Ānyáng, north of the Yellow River near the Hénán-Héběi border, is the site of Yin, last capital of the antediluvian Shang dynasty.

In the late 19th century, peasants unearthed fragments of polished bone inscribed with an elemental form of Chinese writing. Further etchings on tortoise shells and bronze objects fuelled speculation that this was the site of the Shang capital. Modern Chinese writing derives from these very first pictographs.

Beyond its small scattering of history, modern Ānyáng is a city of limited interest to travellers of a nonarchaeological bent.

### Information

**CITS** (中国国际旅行社; Zhōngguó Guójí Lǚxíngshè;

☎ 592 5650; 1 Youyi Lu; ☎ 8am-noon & 2-6pm Mon-Fri) Has an office located on the 2nd floor of Ānyáng Bīnguǎn (on Youyi Lu).

**Dexin Internet Café** (德馨网吧; Dèxīn Wǎngbǎ; below UBC Café, Jiefang Dadao; per hr Y2; ☎ 24hr) It's near the intersection with Zhāngde Lu.

**Post office** (yóujiú; 1 Yingbin Lu; ☎ 8am-7pm)

**Xingkong Internet Café** (星空网吧; Xīngkōng Wǎngbǎ; per hr Y2; ☎ 24hr) Next to Railway Station Hotel as you exit train station.

### Sights & Activities

The **Museum of Yin Ruins** (殷墟博物馆; Yīnxū Bówùguǎn; ☎ 393 2171; admission Y50; ☎ 8am-6.30pm) records the achievements of Yin through pottery, oracle bone fragments, jade and bronze artefacts and tomb reconstructions (holding wheeled vehicles with horses and drivers). It's located quite far from town; take bus 1 from the train station to the museum turn-off and walk across the railway tracks, heading along the river for about 10 minutes.

The **Tomb of Yuan Shikai** (袁世凯墓; Yuán Shìkǎi Mù; ☎ 292 2959; Shengli Lu; admission Y30; ☎ 8am-6pm) is a grandiose epitaph to the Qing military official who wrested the presidency from Sun Yatzen and attempted a restoration of the imperial system, crowning himself emperor in 1916. The tomb is 3km east of the Yin museum; take bus 2 from the train station. Get off at the bridge and walk north to the site.

It's worth walking around the town's old quarter, a few blocks east of the train station and south of Jiefang Dadao, where the **Bell Tower** (钟楼; Zhōng Lóu) survives. In the centre of town, the highlight of the **Tianing Temple** (天宁寺; Tiānníng Sì; admission Y10; ☎ 8.30am-6pm) is the five-eaved, climbable **Wenfeng Pagoda** (文峰塔), decorated with splendid Buddhist carvings.

### Sleeping & Eating

**Sunlight Hotel** (阳光宾馆; Yángguāng Bīnguǎn; ☎ 591 0669; 9 Xinxing Jie; 新兴街9号; s & d incl breakfast Y98-168; ☎) The large, spacious and clean doubles with shower, piping-hot water, water cooler and snappy linen and are a bargain. From the train station, walk straight ahead a block to Xinxing Jie and turn right; it's on the left about 50m from the corner (ignore the taxi drivers at the train station).

**Anyang Hotel** (安阳宾馆; Ānyáng Bīnguǎn; ☎ 592 2219; fax 592 2244; 1 Youyi Lu; 友谊路1号; d Y138-468; ☎) The smarter rooms are in the glitzy main

four-star block, with cheaper two-star rooms thrown round the back in building No 3.

**Little Sheep** (Xiǎoféiyáng; 小肥羊; cnr Jiefang Dadao & Zhāngde Lu; meals Y40-50) Quality nationwide chain specialising in steamy lamb hotpot, both spicy Sichuan (鸳鸯; yuānyāng) and nonspicy Mongolian (内蒙古; nèi mǎnggǔ). No English menu, but if in doubt, point at the painting of the sheep. The restaurant is next to the Xiangzhou Hotel.

### Getting There & Away BUS

Ānyáng's long-distance bus station, at the end of Yingbin Lu, has regular connections to Zhèngzhōu (Y51, three hours, depart 6.20am to 6.40pm), Luòyáng (Y61, four hours), Xīnxiāng (Y17.50, two hours), Kāifēng (Y38, four hours) and less frequent buses to Tàiyuán (Y91, six hours). To reach the long-distance bus station, turn right after exiting the train station and then take the first left.

### TRAIN

Ānyáng is on the main Běijīng-Zhèngzhōu railway line. Regular trains to Zhèngzhōu (Y22, two hours) go through Xīnxiāng (Y14, 1½ hours). Connections to Guǎngzhōu (Y168), Shìjiǎzhuàng (Y50, three hours) and Běijīng (Y78, six hours) are easy as most express trains stop here.

### GUŌLIÀNGCŪN 郭亮村

☎ 0373 / pop 300

Nestled away on its cliff-top perch high up in the Wanxian (Ten Thousand Immortals) Mountains in north Hénán is this delightful high-altitude stone hamlet. For centuries sheltered from the outside world by a combination of sheer inaccessibility and anonymity, Guōliàngcūn shot to fame as the bucolic backdrop to a clutch of Chinese films, which firmly embedded the village in contemporary Chinese mythology.

Today the village attracts legions of artists who journey here to capture the unreal mountain scenery on paper and canvas. New hotels have menacingly sprung up at the village's foot, but the original dwellings – climbing the mountain slope – retain their simple, rustic charms, while long treks through the mind-boggling scenery more than compensate efforts at journeying here.

Approximately 6°C colder than Zhèngzhōu, Guōliàngcūn is cool enough to be devoid of

mosquitos year-round (locals say), but pack very warm clothes for winter visits, which can be bone-numbing (hotels are too primitive for central heating). Visiting off season may seem odd advice, but come evening the village can be utterly tranquil, and moonlit nights are intoxicating. Occasional power cuts plunge the village into candlelight, so pack a small torch.

Officially, the entrance charge for Guōliàngcūn is Y35 (admission to the Wanxian Mountains Scenic Area), although your mini-bus driver may offer you a slightly better price to speed you past the checkpoint.

### Sights

All of the delightful **village dwellings**, hung with butter-yellow *bàngzi* (sweet-corn cobs), are hewn from the same local stone that paves the slender alleyways, sculpts the bridges and fashions the picturesque gates of Guōliàngcūn. Walnut-faced old women peek from doorways and children scamper about, but locals are used to the sight of outsiders. There's no need to tiptoe around, but be respectful at all times.

Using the village as a base, set off to explore the gorgeous surrounding landscape. You will have passed by the **Taihang Precipice** (太行绝壁; Tàiháng Juébi) en route to the village, but backtrack down for a closer perspective on these plunging cliffs, with dramatic views from the tunnel carved from the rock face. The **Sky Ladder** (天梯; Tiān Tī) was traditionally the only way in and out of the village. The road beyond the hotel strip out of Guōliàngcūn away from the Sky Ladder does a bracing 5km loop through the mountain valley and past the awe-inspiring curtain of rock above the **Shouting Spring** (喊泉; Hǎn Quán; its flow responding to the loudness of your whoops, so the story goes), the **Old Pool** (老潭; Lǎo Tán) and two caves: the **Red Dragon Cave** (红龙洞; Hónglóng Dòng) and the **White Dragon Cave** (白龙洞; Báilóng Dòng). Vehicles whiz travellers along the route for Y5. Once you've seen the big sights, get off the beaten trail and onto one of the small paths heading off into the hills (eg the boulder-strewn brookside trail along the flank of Guōliàngcūn that leads further up into the mountain), but take water.

### Sleeping & Eating

Many homesteads in Guōliàngcūn proper have thrown open their doors to wayfarers, offering simple beds for a pittance (Y10 to Y30). Prices can be a bit higher during the summer but can be negotiable off season. The strip of

hotels at the foot of the village offers more spacious rooms, some with shower rooms and TVs (from Y30). One of the plushiest looking places is the **Guibin Yuan** (贵宾园; ☎ 671 0329) toward the end of the hotel strip. There are no restaurants per se, but hoteliers will cook up simple meals on request and a couple of shops sell snacks and essentials.

### Getting There & Away

You can reach Guōliàngcūn from Xīnxiāng (新乡), between Anyáng and Zhèngzhōu. Regular trains run to Xīnxiāng from Anyáng (Y14, 1½ hours) or Zhèngzhōu (Y13, one hour); buses also link Xīnxiāng with Zhèngzhōu (Y24, one hour, every 25 minutes). Exit the Xīnxiāng train station and take a motor-tricycle (Y2) to the bus stop 1km away for buses to Huixiàn (辉县, Y4, 45 minutes, regular). Ask the driver to drop you at the Huixiàn stop for buses to Guōliàngcūn (Y10, 2½ hours, depart 8am and 1pm). Note that buses from Huixiàn may have the characters for Guōliàng on the window, but may (depending on passenger number) only stop at Nánping (南坪), a village at the base of the road to Guōliàngcūn. From Nánping it is a steep 3km walk to Guōliàngcūn up the mountain road, otherwise taxis or local drivers are prone to fleecing (Y40) for the steep haul into the village, especially if travellers are scarce. In the other direction, Huixiàn-bound minibuses (Y10) depart from the bottom of the mountain road from Guōliàngcūn at 9am, noon and 3pm.

### KĀIFĒNG 开封

☎ 0378 / pop 581,000

Of Hénán's ancient capitals, none has more resolutely repelled China's construction offensive than the walled bastion of Kāifēng. You may have to squint a bit here and there, and learn to sift fake overlays from genuine historical sights, but Kāifēng still juggles up a riveting display of age-old charm, magnificent market food, relics from its long-vanished apogee and colourful chrysanthemums (the city flower).

Erstwhile prosperous capital of the Northern Song dynasty (960 to 1126), Kāifēng was established south of the Yellow River, albeit not far enough to escape the river's capricious wrath. After centuries of flooding, the city of the Northern Song largely lies buried 8m to 9m below ground. Between 1194 and 1938 the city was flooded 368 times, an average of once every two years.

It's not Píngyáo (p407) – the city is hardly knee-deep in history, and white-tile buildings blight the low skyline – but enough survives above ground level to hint at past glories and reward ambitious exploration. One reason you won't see soaring skyscrapers here is because buildings requiring deep foundations are prohibited, for fear of destroying the city below.

Dynasties aside, Kāifēng was also the first city in China where Jewish merchants settled when they arrived, via India along the Silk Road, during the Song dynasty. A small Christian community also lives in Kāifēng alongside a much larger local Muslim Hui community.

### Orientation

The south long-distance bus station and the train station are both about 1km south of the city walls that enclose the larger part of Kāifēng. The city's pivotal point is the Sihou Jie and Madao Jie intersection, where the famed street market really starts hopping at night. Many of the wooden restaurants, shops and houses in this area were constructed during the Qing dynasty in the traditional Chinese style.

### Information

**Bank of China** (Zhōngguó Yínháng) Gulou Jie (64 Gulou Jie); Xi Dajie (cnr Xi Dajie & Zhongshan Lu) Twenty-four hour ATM (MasterCard & Visa) at the Xi Dajie branch.

**CITS** (Zhōngguó Guójī Lǚxíngshè; ☎ 393 4702; 98 Yingbin Lu; ☎ 9am-5pm) Just north of the Dōngjīng Dàfāndiàn. No maps, little English.

**Jidi Internet Café** (Jidi Wǎngbā; per hr Y1.50; ☎ 24hr) Off Zhongshan Lu, just south of the PSB.

**Kaifeng No 1 People's Hospital** (Kāifēng Dìyī Rénmín Yīyuàn; ☎ 567 1288; 85 Hedao Jie)

**Post office** (yóujú; Ziyou Lu; ☎ 8am-5.30pm) West of Temple of the Chief Minister.

**Public Security Bureau** (PSB; Gōngānjū; ☎ 532 2242; 86 Zhongshan Lu; ☎ 8.30am-noon & 3-6pm) Gets fairly good reviews on visa renewals.

### Sights

**TEMPLE OF THE CHIEF MINISTER** 大相国寺 First founded in AD 555, this frequently rebuilt **temple** (Dà Xiàngguó Sì; ☎ 566 5982; Ziyou Lu; admission Y30; ☎ 8am-6pm) was destroyed along with the city in the early 1640s when rebels breached the Yellow River's dikes.

Within the **Hall of the Heavenly Kings**, the mission of chubby **Milefo** (the Laughing Buddha) is proclaimed in the attendant Chinese characters

'Big belly can endure all that is hard to endure in the world'. But the temple showstopper is the mesmerising **Four-Faced Thousand Hand Thousand Eye Guanyin** (四面千手千眼观世音), towering within the octagonal **Arhat Hall** (罗汉殿; Luòhàn Diàn) beyond the Great Treasure Hall. Fifty-eight years in the carving, the 7m-tall gilded statue bristles with giant fans of 1048 arms, an eye upon each hand. Note neither photography nor 'fireworks' are allowed. Elsewhere in the temple you can divine your future by drawing straws (*chōuqiān*) in front of a smaller statue of Guanyin, dine at the on-site vegetarian restaurant or listen to the song of caged birds, one of which squawks 'gui fō' ('kneel down to Buddha').

### SHANSHANGAN GUILD HALL 山陕甘会馆

The elaborately styled **guild hall** (Shānshān Gān Huiguǎn; ☎ 598 5607; 85 Xufu Jie; admission Y15; ☎ 8.30am-6.30pm) was built as a lodging and meeting place during the Qing dynasty by an association of merchants from other provinces. Note the carvings on the roofs, and delve into the exhibition on historic Kāifēng for fascinating dioramas of the old Song city walls and photographs of the city's standout historic monuments.

### IRON PAGODA 铁塔

The 55m 11th-century **pagoda** (Tiě Tǎ; ☎ 286 2279; 210 Beimen Dajie; admission Y20; ☎ 7am-7pm) is a slender brick edifice wrapped in glazed rust-coloured tiles. Climb to the top for a further Y10.

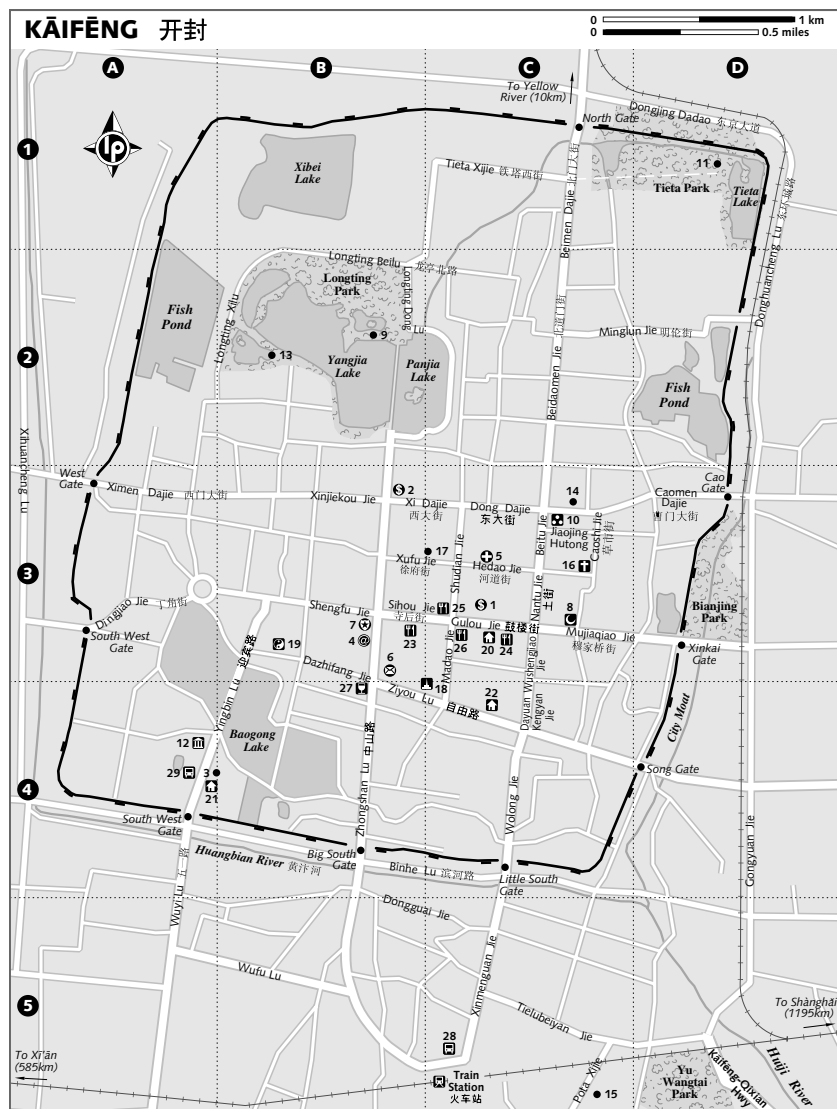
Take bus 3 from the train station via Jiefang Lu to the route terminus, not far from the Iron Pagoda; it's a short walk east to the park's entrance from here.

### PO PAGODA 繁塔

This stumpy **pagoda** (Pō Tǎ; Pota Xijie; admission Y10; ☎ 8am-6pm) is the oldest Buddhist structure in Kāifēng, dating back to 974. The original was a nine-storey hexagonal building, typical of the Northern Song style. The pagoda is clad in tiles decorated with 108 different Buddha images – note that all the Buddhas on the lower levels have had their faces smashed off. The pagoda is all that survives of Tianqing Temple (天清寺; Tiānqīng Sì), but worshippers still flock here to light incense and pray.

The pagoda is hidden down alleyways east of train station. Cross southward over the railway tracks from Tielubeian Jie and take the first alleyway on your left. From here follow the red arrows spray-painted on the walls.





Bus 15 gets relatively close; ask the driver to let you off at the right stop or grab a taxi.

#### KAIFENG MUSEUM 开封博物馆

Kaifeng's **museum** (Kāifēng Bówùguǎn; ☎ 393 2178; 26 Yingbin Lu; admission Y10; ☎ 8.30-11.30am & 2-5pm Tue-Sun) is a forlorn place, its lobby decorated with the plundered heads of bronze Bodhisattvas

and other Buddhist deities. A turgid exhibition on revolutionary Kaifeng can be missed, but an extra Y50 allows you to examine two notable Jewish stelae on the 4th floor. The **Kaifeng Institute for Research on the History of Chinese Jews** (☎ 393 2178, ext 8010) has detailed information about the history of the region's Jewish people. Buses 1, 4, 9 and 23 all travel past here.

#### INFORMATION

Bank of China 中国银行..... 1 C3  
 Bank of China 中国银行..... 2 B3  
 CITS 中国国际旅行社..... 3 A4  
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 Kaifeng No 1 People's Hospital  
 开封第一人民医院..... 5 C3  
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#### SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

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#### Kaifeng Riverside Scenic Park

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 清明上河园..... 13 B2  
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 Sacred Heart of Jesus Church  
 耶稣圣心堂..... 16 C3  
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#### Yanqing Temple 延庆观

Yanqing Temple 延庆观..... 19 B3  
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#### EATING

Diyilou Bāozi Guǎn  
 第一楼包子馆..... 23 B3  
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 Jiǎozi Guǎn 饺子馆..... 25 C3  
 Night Market 鼓楼夜市..... 26 C3

#### DRINKING

Xinyue Bar 馨悦酒吧..... 27 B4

#### TRANSPORT

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 铁路票务中心..... (see 3)  
 South Long-Distance Bus  
 Station 长途汽车南站..... 28 C5  
 West Long-Distance Bus  
 Station 长途汽车西站..... 29 A4

#### CITY WALLS 城墙

Kāifēng is ringed by a relatively intact, much-restored Qing dynasty wall. Encased with grey bricks, the ramparts can be scaled at various points along the perimeter, including the South West Gate. Look out for the sheer rough paths snaking up the incline. Today's bastion was built on the foundations of the Song dynasty **Inner Wall** (内城; Nèichéng). Rising up beyond was the mighty, now-buried **Outer Wall** (外城; Wàichéng), a colossal construction containing 18 gates, which looped south of the Po Pagoda, while the **Imperial Wall** (皇城; Huángchéng) protected the Imperial Palace.

#### LONGTING PARK 龙亭公园

Site of the former imperial palace, this **park** (Lóngtíng Gōngyuán; ☎ 566 0316; Zhongshan Lu; admission Y35; ☎ 7am-6.30pm) is largely covered by lakes, into which hardy swimmers dive in winter. Climb the **Dragon Pavilion** (Lóng Tíng) for town views.

#### KAIFENG RIVERSIDE SCENIC PARK

##### QINGMING GARDEN 清明上河园

High on historic kitsch, this overpriced **theme park** (Qíngmíng Shànghéyuán; admission Y60; ☎ 9am-10pm, performances 9am-7.50pm) re-creates the Kaifeng of its heyday, complete with cultural performances, folk art and music demonstrations. There is an entrance and an 'exportation' (exit).

#### YANQING TEMPLE 延庆观

The modest Taoist **Yanqing Temple** (Yánqíng Guān; ☎ 393 1800; 53 Guāngqian Jie; admission Y15; ☎ 8am-5.30pm) dates to 1233. The intriguingly shaped **Tower of the Jade Emperor**, repeatedly buried during the floods, contains a domed ceiling. At the rear is the **Hall of the Three Clear Ones**, where a trinity of Taoist deities welcomes worshippers.

#### OTHER SIGHTS

Sadly nothing remains of the **Kāifēng synagogue** (Kāifēng Youtai Jiàotáng Yizhi; 59 Beitu Jie), except a well with an iron lid in the boiler room of the No 4 People's Hospital. The spirit of the synagogue lingers, however, in the name of the brick alley immediately south of the hospital – **Jiaojing Hutong** (Teaching the Scripture Alley; 教经胡同). Delve along the alley until it meets the small Caoshi Jie (草市街), then head south and you will soon see the 43m-high spire of the 1917 **Sacred Heart of Jesus Church** (Yēsù Shèngxīntáng; nr Caoshi Jie & Lishiting Jie). South is Kāifēng's main Muslim district, whose landmark place of worship is the Chinese-temple-styled **Dongda Mosque** (Dōngdà Sì; 39 Mujiacao Jie). Streets here have colourful names, such as Shaoji Hutong (Roast Chicken Alley).

The **Old Guanyin Temple** (Gǔ Guānyīn Táng; Baiyige Jie) just northeast of the No 4 People's Hospital was undergoing a lavish refurbishment at the time of writing. The large temple complex includes a notable hall with a twin-eaved umbrella roof and a sizable effigy of a recumbent Sakyamuni in its Reclining Buddha Hall (卧佛殿; Wòfó Diàn). You can visit the **Yellow River**, about 10km north of the city, although there is little to see as the water level is low these days. Bus 6 runs from near the Iron Pagoda to the Yellow River twice daily. A taxi will cost Y50 to Y60 for the return trip.

#### Sleeping

Kāifēng's hotel industry is diverse, befitting the town's popularity with travellers. Those on very tight budgets can try their luck at one of the cheap flophouses identified by Chinese signs, otherwise aim for one of the following.

**Dajintai Hotel** (Dàjìntái Bīnguǎn; ☎ 255 2999; fax 595 9932; 23 Gulou Jie; 鼓楼街23号; dm Y60, junior/senior

d Y130/160, tr Y75, all incl breakfast; 🍽️) Dating from 1911, this two-star old-timer combines excellent value with a central location on the very fringe of the bustling night market. Try to secure one of the spacious Y160 doubles, with clean furniture, bathroom and water cooler. Winter heating can be sluggish coming on.

**Dongjing Hotel** (Dōngjīng Dàfāndiàn; ☎ 398 9388; fax 595 6661; 99 Yingbin Lu; 迎宾路99号; bldg 4/3/2 d Y120/200/288; 🍽️ 🚗) A sprawling, musty and threadbare midrange option dissected into separate buildings and fitfully pepped up by sprinklings of grass and trees.

**Kaifeng Hotel** (Kāifēng Bīnguǎn; ☎ 595 5589; fax 595 3086; 66 Ziyou Lu; 自由路66号; s Y260, d Y260-360; 🍽️) With its harmonies of Chinese roofing and well-tended magnolias, this inviting Russian-built hotel offers a variety of rooms and a central location, although the Dajintai offers better value. Rooms in the pricier Mènghuá Lóu (Building Two) were recently restored.

## Eating & Drinking

**Night market** (nr Gulou Jie & Madao Jie) This veritable marvel and phenomenon alone justifies trips to Kāifēng, especially at weekends. Join the scrums weaving between stalls busy with hollering Hui Muslim chefs cooking up kebabs and *náng* bread, red-faced popcorn sellers and vendors of *shāo bing* (sesame-seed cakes), cured meats, foul-smelling *chòu gānzi* (臭干子; dry strips of doufu), sweet potatoes, crab kebabs, sugar-coated pears and Thai scented cakes. Pass on the *yāxuě tāng* (鸭血汤; duck blood soup) if you insist.

Among the flames jetting from ovens and steam rising in clouds prance the vendors of *xīng rén chá* (杏仁茶; almond tea), a sugary sauce made from boiling water thickened with powdered almond, red berries, peanuts, sesame seeds and crystallised cherries. A bowl costs a mere handful of kuài. Two to three bowls constitute a (very sweet) meal. *Xīng rén chá* stalls stand out for their unique red pompom-adorned dragon-spouted copper kettles. Also set out to sample *ròu hé* (肉合; a local snack of fried vegetables and pork, or mutton, stuffed into a 'pocket' of flat bread); there's also a good veggie version. Join the locals at one of the rickety tables. The market slowly peters out into stalls selling clothes, toys and books.

**Jiǎozǐ Guǎn** (Gulou Jie; dishes from Y3) On the corner of Shudian Jie and Sihou Jie, this gorgeous three-storey Chinese building has traditional

verandas hung with lanterns, excellent dumpings and great views over the night market.

**Diyílóu Bāozǐ Guǎn** (☎ 565 0780; 8 Sihou Jie; dumpings Y5; 🕒 7am-10.30pm) The *xiǎolóng bāo* (small buns filled with pork) served here are so tasty, the restaurant is always packed.

**Háoxiǎnglái** (☎ 597 5799; 19 Gulou Jie; 🕒 24hr) Grilled-meat sets kick off from Y25, which gets you a large grilled chop, spaghetti, fried egg, bowl of soup, salad, toast, tea, a desert plus the smallest shot of apéritif imaginable. Kids will love it, there's a handy photo menu and waitresses wheel dim sum and sweet snacks past on carts.

**Xinyue Bar** (Xīnyuè Jiǔbā; 🕒 393 6198; first alley south of cnr of Dazhifang Jie & Zhongshan Lu; bottle of Qingdao beer Y10) It's a dark, quiet and cosy bar tucked away west off Zhongshan Lu; look for the green glow of the Heineken sign.

## Getting There & Away

### AIR

The nearest airport is at Zhèngzhōu (p459).

### BUS

Regular buses run to Zhèngzhōu (Y11, every 15 minutes, 6am to 7pm) and Luòyáng (Y35, 8am to 2.30pm) from the west long-distance bus station. Other destinations include Ànyáng (Y24, three hours) and Xīnxiāng (Y18.50, 1½ to two hours). Buses to similar destinations also leave from the south long-distance bus station (opposite the train station).

### TRAIN

Kāifēng is on the railway line between Xī'ān and Shànghǎi so trains are frequent, but sleeper tickets can be scarce, so consider leaving from Zhèngzhōu. If time is tight or tickets in short supply, try the **rail ticket office** (tiělù piàowù zhōngxīn; ☎ 396 6888; Yingbin Lu; 🕒 8am-noon & 2-5pm), next to CITS, for trains from Zhèngzhōu and board the train at Kāifēng (but check the train stops here). Express trains to Zhèngzhōu take about one hour (Y12). Eight trains a day run to Shànghǎi (12 hours). Other destinations include Xī'ān, Héféi, Hángzhōu, Běijīng West and Jǐ'nán.

## Getting Around

Buses (Y1) departing from both of Kāifēng's bus stations travel to all the major tourist areas. Gulou Jie, Sihou Jie and Shudian Jie are all good for catching buses. The streets swarm with taxis (flag fall Y5) and pedicabs. Budget hotels may help you rent a bike (Y10 per day).

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