

The Lonely Planet logo, consisting of the words "lonely planet" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font, with a white circle around the letter "o" in "planet".

lonely planet

A close-up photograph of several terracotta warrior statues from the Terracotta Army in China. The statues are shown in profile, facing right, and are illuminated with a warm, orange-red light. The focus is sharp on the statue in the foreground, showing its facial features and the texture of its armor.

China

China

Damian Harper, Steve Fallon, Katja Gaskell, Julie Grundvig,
Carolyn Heller, Thomas Huhti, Bradley Mayhew, Christopher Pitts



Quick Reference

Exchange Rates

Jan 2005		Chinese yuán (Y)	Hong Kong dollar (HK\$)	Mácau pataca (MOP\$)
Australia	A\$1	6.34*	5.95	6.30
Canada	C\$1	6.77	6.36	6.73
Euro zone	€1	10.99	10.33	10.92
Japan	¥100	7.91	7.44	8.86
New Zealand	NZ\$1	5.81	5.46	5.77
Singapore	S\$1	5.02	4.71	4.98
Switzerland	SFr1	7.08	6.66	7.04
UK	UK£1	15.59	14.65	15.49
USA	US\$1	8.28	7.78	8.23

For current exchange rates see www.oanda.com/convert/classic.

1 yuán (Y) = 10 jiǎo (máo) or 100 fēn.

Prices in this guide are quoted in Renminbi (yuán; Y) unless otherwise stated.

Business Hours

Banks 9am-noon & 2-5pm Mon-Fri

Restaurants 10.30am-11pm

Shops 10am-10pm

Variations to the above are listed in reviews.

Telephone Codes

When calling China from overseas, the country code is ☎ 86. Hong Kong's country code is ☎ 852 and Macau ☎ 853.

When making an international call from China, the access code is ☎ 00

Useful Numbers

Ambulance	☎ 120
Fire	☎ 119
International directory assistance	☎ 114
Police	☎ 110

Key Phrases

Hello.	Nǐ hǎo.
Goodbye.	Zàijiàn.
Thank you.	Xièxie.
I (don't) understand.	Wǒ (bù) míng bái.
Help!	Jiùmìng a!
How much is it?	Duōshǎo qián?

Text Symbols

- ☎ telephone
- 🕒 opening hours
- 🚭 nonsmoking rooms/areas available
- ❄️ air-con available
- 🌐 Internet available
- 🏊 swimming pool

- s single rooms
- d double rooms
- tw twin rooms
- tr triple rooms
- q quad rooms
- ste suite
- r rooms
- dm dorm beds

Prices for this guide are given for rooms with bathroom. Exceptions are noted in reviews.

Metric Conversions

TEMPERATURE

$$^{\circ}\text{C} = (^{\circ}\text{F} - 32) \div 1.8$$

$$^{\circ}\text{F} = (^{\circ}\text{C} \times 1.8) + 32$$

DISTANCE

$$1 \text{ in} = 2.54 \text{ cm}$$

$$1 \text{ cm} = 0.39 \text{ in}$$

$$1 \text{ m} = 3.3 \text{ ft} = 1.1 \text{ yd}$$

$$1 \text{ ft} = 0.3 \text{ m}$$

$$1 \text{ km} = 0.62 \text{ miles}$$

$$1 \text{ mile} = 1.6 \text{ km}$$

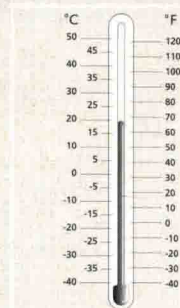
WEIGHT

$$1 \text{ kg} = 2.2 \text{ lb}$$

$$1 \text{ lb} = 0.45 \text{ kg}$$

$$1 \text{ g} = 0.04 \text{ oz}$$

$$1 \text{ oz} = 28 \text{ g}$$



VOLUME

$$1 \text{ L} = 0.26 \text{ US gallons}$$

$$1 \text{ US gallon} = 3.8 \text{ L}$$

$$1 \text{ L} = 0.22 \text{ imperial gallons}$$

$$1 \text{ imperial gallon} = 4.55 \text{ L}$$

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Contents

Highlights	6	Húnán	475
Getting Started	13	Hong Kong	491
Itineraries	17	Macau	529
The Authors	24	Guǎngdōng	546
Snapshot	27	Hǎinán	581
History	29	Guǎngxī	593
The Culture	51	Guìzhōu	622
Environment	73	Yúnnán	641
Food & Drink	80	Sìchuān	707
Běijīng	93	Chóngqìng	756
Tiānjīn	149	Cruising Downriver	768
Héběi	163	Xīnjiāng	774
Shāndōng	182	Gānsù	805
Jiāngsū	218	Níngxià	830
Ānhuī	253	Inner Mongolia	840
Shànghǎi	266	Tibet	854
Zhèjiāng	306	Qīnghǎi	874
Fújiàn	328	Directory	884
Liáoníng	345	Transport	906
Jílín	362	Health	926
Hēilóngjiāng	375	World Time Zones	935
Shānxī	390	Language	936
Shaanxi	406	Glossary	951
Hénán	427	Behind the Scenes	955
Húběi	447	Index	970
Jiāngxī	461	Legend	980

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China

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Destination China

China is unique among travel destinations. A journey through this colossus of a country is a mind-boggling encounter with the most populous and perhaps most culturally idiosyncratic nation on earth. Whatever China does to you – entertains, stimulates, beguiles or bemuses – you will witness a country undergoing a spectacular transformation. Long-range forecasts see China leapfrogging rival destinations to emerge as the world's leading tourist destination by 2020. Everyone is talking about China, so why not find out what all the fuss is about.

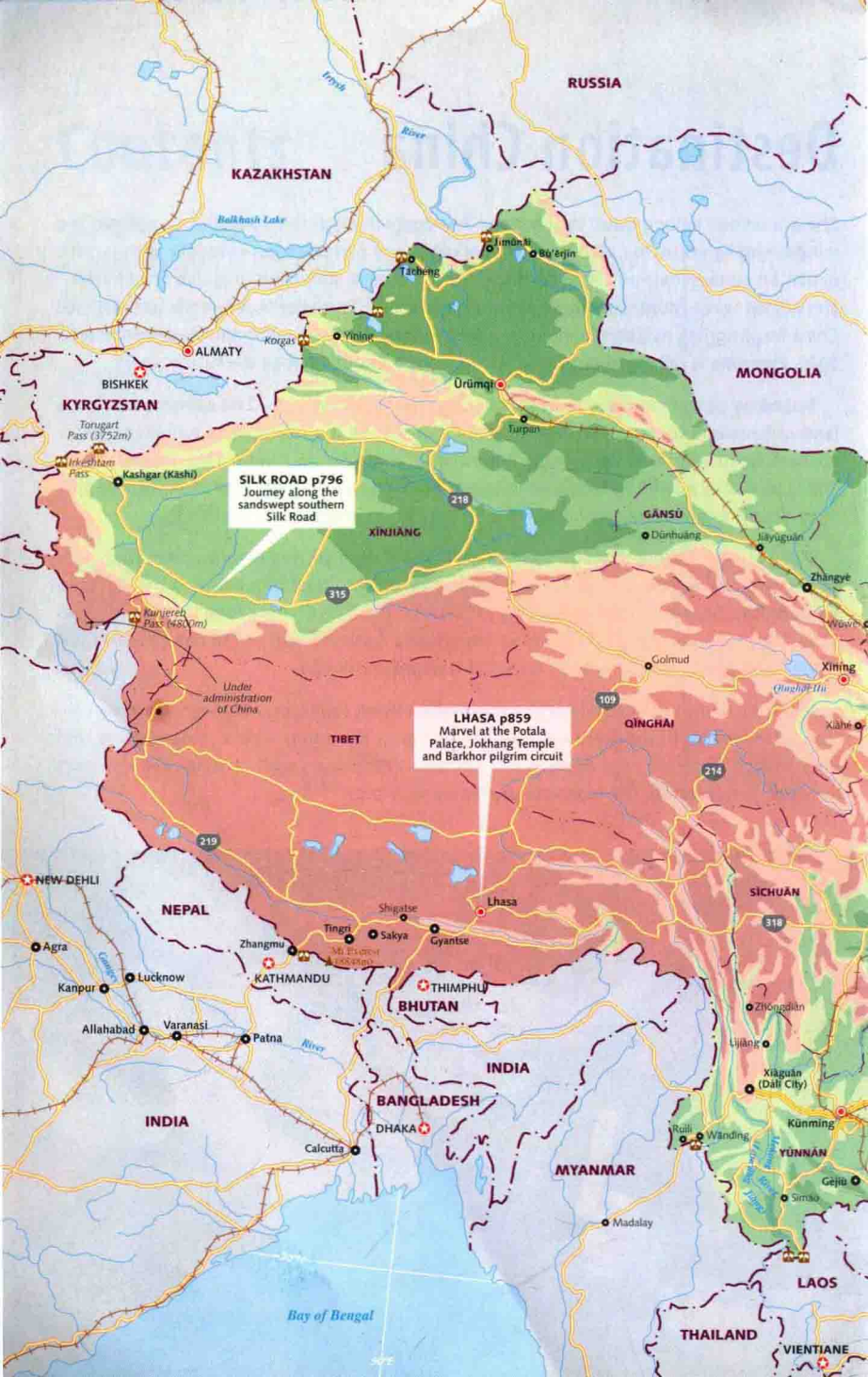
Tipped by pundits worldwide to shape – and perhaps lead – the 21st century, China is a land of ferocious contrasts. Shànghǎi's ambitious skyline is a triumphant statement, but it couldn't be further from the worldly renunciation acted out in Tibet's distant monasteries. The land is also a baffling tangle of tongues, from Tibetan to Uighur to Shànghǎihuà and, increasingly, badly spoken English.

If you're after history, indulge yourself on China's imperial monuments, stretching from Běijīng to Xī'ān and beyond. Seekers of modernity will find their requirements met in Hong Kong, Macau, Shànghǎi, Běijīng, Dàlián and Qīngdǎo, but if it's Chinese food that has seduced you, prepare for an aromatic adventure from highly spiced Húnán to the dainty morsels of Hong Kong and on to the Islamic dishes of the vast northwest.

Domestic tourism is in a state of supernova, showering sights around the land with much-needed investment (and less-needed noise pollution and litter). China remains huge and wild enough to satisfy your explorer instinct, and, crisscrossed with an extensive transport network, you won't be left high and dry. Enjoy your trip!

PHIL M. WEYMOUTH





KAZAKHSTAN

RUSSIA

KYRGYZSTAN

MONGOLIA

SILK ROAD p796
Journey along the sandswept southern Silk Road

LHASA p859
Marvel at the Potala Palace, Jokhang Temple and Barkhor pilgrim circuit

NEPAL

INDIA

BHUTAN

BANGLADESH

INDIA

MYANMAR

SICHUAN

YUNNAN

LAOS

THAILAND

VIENTIANE

ALMATY

BISHKEK

Torugart Pass (3752m)

Kashgar (Kashi)

Kanjieret Pass (6800m)

Under administration of China

TIBET

QINGHAI

NEW DEHLI

KATHMANDU

SHIGATSE

LHASA

Tingri

Sakya

Gyantse

Zhangmu

Agra

Kanpur

Lucknow

Allahabad

Varanasi

Patna

Calcutta

DHAKA

Madalay

Zhongdian

Lijiang

Xiaguan (Dali City)

Kunming

Gejiu

Simso

Bay of Bengal

Irtysh River

Yiliqin

Tacheng

Jimonsai

Wu'erjin

Ürümqi

Turpan

GANSU

Dinhuang

Jiayuguan

Zhangye

Wuwei

Xining

(Beiqing Hu)

Xiahe

318

219

218

315

109

214

219

318

318



HÄERBĪN p377
Bustling northern capital with Russian architecture and cuisine

PINGYÄO p395
A town straight off a movie set: beautifully preserved Ming dynasty architecture, city walls and flagstone streets

TÄI SHÄN p190
Clamber into the clouds

XĪ'ÄN p409
Bustling ancient capital ringed with some of China's most amazing archaeological sites

GREAT WALL p141
Come face to face with the wall of all walls outside Beijing

CHÄNGBÄI SHÄN p371
China's largest nature reserve, with a spectacular volcanic crater lake

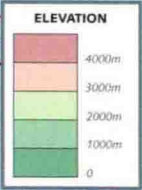
THE BUND p273
Relive the grandeur of Shängäi past

YÄMGSHUO p611
Sleepy yet hip village - and travellers mecca - plunked within otherworldly topography

HÄNGZHÖU p308
Strolling along the shores of legendary West Lake

HONG KONG p491
Bright lights, big city of grandeur and glamour, shopping and schmoozing

MACAU p529
'East meets West' gets real in food and architecture



The external boundaries of India on this map have not been authenticated and may not be correct



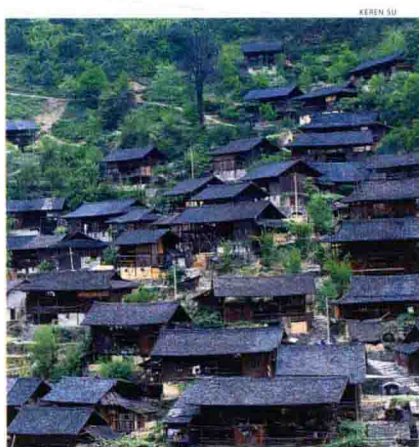
PHILIPPINES

China harbours an amazing number of traditional villages where you can step back in time. Amble alongside the picturesque canals of **Zhōuzhuāng** (p250) in Jiāngsū. Escape into the terraced orchards and courtyard homes of **Chuāndìxià** (p148) outside Běijīng or experience traditional Dong culture in Guìzhōu's colourful village of **Zhàoxìng** (p640). Trundle round **Píngyáo** (p395), a splendid portrait of traditional China, in Shānxī. **Yung Shue Wan** (p510) is Hong Kong village living at its 21st-century best: peace, solitude, restaurants, bars and even some shopping. Drop in on a local artist in **Tóng rén** (p880) and buy a *thangka* direct.



Explore Hakka roundhouses in Yǒngdìng (p340) in remote south-western Fújiàn

Miao houses with tiled roofs in Kǎilì (p637), Guìzhōu



Black Dragon Pool Park (p669) in Lijiang, Yúnnán. Wander through Lijiang's cobbled streets and busy markets



Travellers interested in the tangible legacies of the colonial period will want to visit Macau for the magnificent ruins of the **Church of St Paul** (p537) and spend time in Hong Kong for the spectacle of the **Central business district** (p498). Enjoy the backstreets and villas of Shànghǎi's **French concession** (p278), travel to **Qíngdǎo** (p203) for its historic German haunts, peruse **Yantai Hill Park** (p212) in Yāntái or tour the pompous Treaty Port architecture of **Tiānjīn** (p150). For a further taste of yesteryear, stroll about the European-style villas of **Lúshān** (p470), **Jigōng Shān** (p441) or **Gùlàng Yǔ** (p339), admire the mouldering nobility of **Shamian Island** (p555), or explore the Russian heritage of Hāěrbīn's **Dàoqiū district** (p379).



RICHARD FANSON

Enjoy Macau's Portuguese architecture (p529)

Admire the church of St Dominic (p534) in Macau



MICHAEL AW

Take an early morning stroll along the old-world Bund (p273) in Shànghǎi



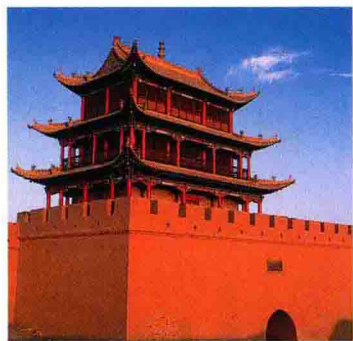
GLENN BEANLAND

The Han Chinese heartland provinces are embellished with imperial remains and dynastic relics, such as Běijīng's **Ming City Wall** (p109). Admire the Buddhist carvings at the **Yungang Caves** (p403) outside Dàtóng or journey to the ancient dynastic capitals of **Hángzhōu** (p308), **Kāifēng** (p441) and **Lüoyáng** (p435). Roam among the riverside Buddhist statues at the **Longmen Caves** (p438) outside Lüoyáng and put aside a few days for a visit to **Xī'ān** (p409), where you can clamber up the city's Tang dynasty **pagodas** (p412). Visit the **Confucius Temple** (p198) in Qūfù and make your way up the slopes of sacred **Tài Shān** (p191).



DIANA MAYFIELD

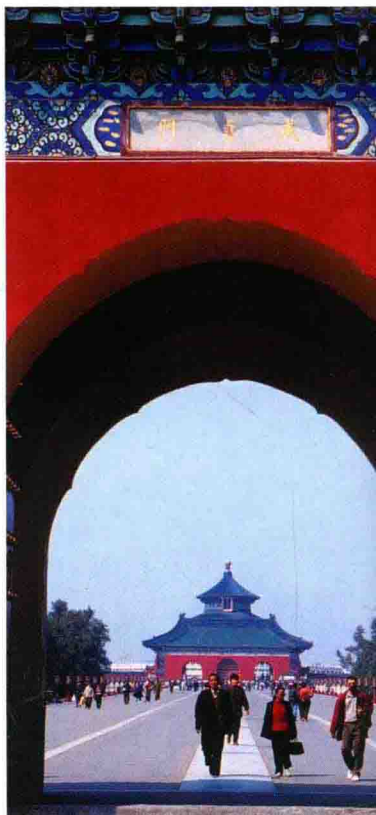
The Three Pagodas (p662) reflected in a lake in Dàlǐ, Yúnnán



AEREN SU

Tower at the west end of the Great Wall at Jiāyùguān (p820) in Gānsù

The gates leading to the Temple of Heaven (p109) in Běijīng





BILL BACHMANN

Traverse restored sections of the Great Wall, such as at Jīnshānlǐng (p144) outside Běijīng



LEE FOSTER

Terracotta warrior in Emperor Qīn Shì Huáng's tomb (p418) outside Xī'ān, Shaanxi

One of the many ornate halls at the Forbidden City (p110) in Běijīng



GLENN BEANLAND

The 17-arch bridge at the Summer Palace (p118) in Běijīng



GLENN BEANLAND

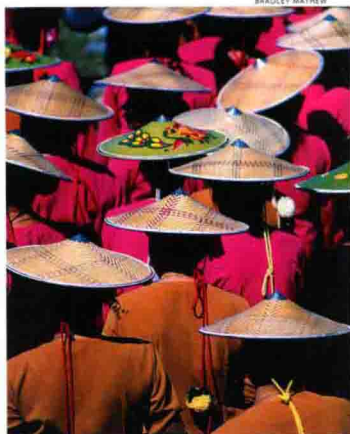
Admire the Bai architecture of **Xizhōu** (p665) or sample **Ruilí's** (p702) borderland feel. Voyage south to **Xishuāngbǎnnà** and trek from **Dàměnglóng to Bùlǎngshān** (p696), exploring Dai, Hani, Bulang and Lahu villages. Wander round **Lóngshèng** (p617) and **Sānjiāng** (p619), gateways to minority hamlets, before roaming into Guizhōu to discover **Xijiāng** (p639) and more minority settlements. Travel between **Shàntóu** (p577) and **CháoZhōu** (p579), and pass fortified Hakka villages chock-a-block with traditional houses and ancient temples. Delve into Tibetan culture in **Qinghǎi** (p875), **Sichuān** (p708), **Yúnnán** (p642) and, of course, **Tibet** (p855). For a Central Asian experience, visit **Kashgar** (p793) or **Inner Mongolia** (p841).



BRADLEY MATHEW

Bulang girls (p695) in the Xishuāngbǎnnà region

Dai women (p687) during a temple festival



BRADLEY MATHEW

The Lítáng Horse Festival (p746) in Sichuān



BILL WAXSON



LEE FOSTER

Hakka woman smoking a pipe on
Hong Kong Island, Hong Kong (p491)



KAREN SU

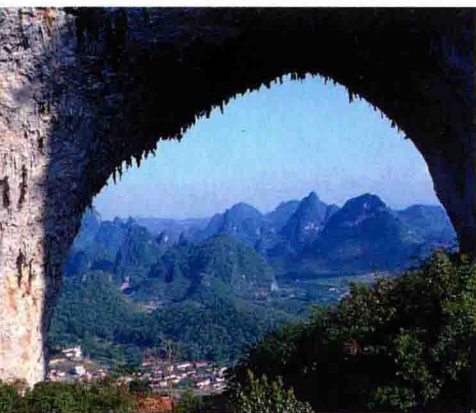
Bai woman (p660) carrying a basket on
her back, Dàlǐ, Yúnnán

Catch a concert by a traditional Naxi orchestra (p671) in Lijiāng, Yúnnán

WANG LIANG

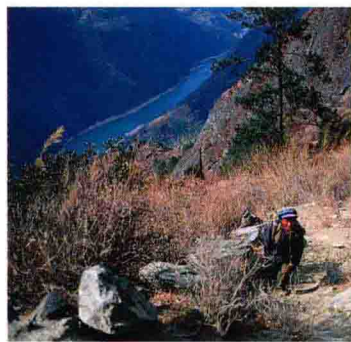


China abounds with scenic getaways and dramatic landscapes. Evade the Hong Kong crowds on **Lantau Island** (p509), size up the stupendous scenery of **Jiūzhàigōu** (p752), set foot on the **Sichuan–Tibet Hwy** (p735), hike through tranquil **Moon Canyon** (p828), or go to **Hainán** (p582) for its tropical white beaches. The views of Mt Everest from **Rongphu Monastery** (p872) are a million miles from Běijīng's traffic-clogged roads, as is the Changtang plateau at **Nam-tso Lake** (p867). Sleep in a Kazakh yurt at **Tiān Chí** (p784), get a taste of the Siberian taiga at **Kanas Lake** (p800) in Xinjiāng, or spend days hiking through Jílín's **Chángbái Shān** (p371).



MARTIN MIDOS

Be hypnotised by the beauty of Yuèliàng Shān (p616) outside Yángshuò, Guǎngxī

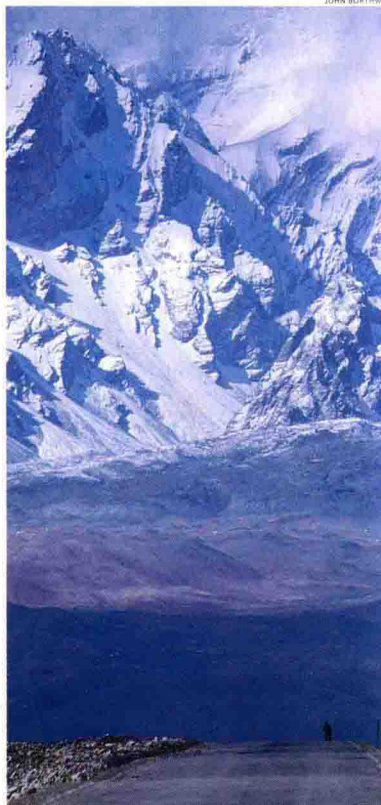


JULIET COOMBE

Trek alongside the Yangzi River in Tiger Leaping Gorge (p675)

Turn your departure from China into one great escape on the sheer Karakoram Highway (p795), Xinjiāng

JOHN BORTHWICK



Getting Started

From low-cost independent exploration to comfortable tours, China can offer a sometimes bewildering choice of travel options. As the land is so vast, visitors to China need to take a long and hard look at the map, and decide exactly what it is that they want their China experience to be. Going through the Itineraries chapter (p17) will provide you with options for your visit. The only part of China you will need to carefully plan is travel to Tibet, as bureaucratic obstacles, travel restrictions and health issues will require your consideration and attention.

WHEN TO GO

Travel to China is possible year-round, as long as you're prepared for what the season can throw at you. Spring (March to May) and autumn (September to early November) can be the best time to be on the road, as you avoid the blistering heat of summer (June to August) and stinging chill of winter (November to February/March). Autumn in Běijīng, for example, is particularly pleasant, as are early spring and autumn in Hong Kong. Summer is the busiest tourist season, and getting around and finding accommodation during the peak summer crush can be draining. North China is hot and largely dry in summer, especially in the baking northwest (but Běijīng is also uncomfortable). The Yangzi River (Cháng Jiāng) region is very hot and humid, and southern China, with a coastline harassed by typhoons, also swelters. Rainfall rarely falls in quantities that can disrupt travel plans. Winter is the low season (except for Hǎinán Dǎo) and can be the quietest time of year, and good hotel discounts can be found, but while Hong Kong in winter is comfortably nippy, north China is a frozen expanse, especially in the northeast, northwest and Inner Mongolia. Wintering in clement central and southern Yúnnán province is enjoyable, but the higher altitude north of the province is frigid. Winter is inadvisable for travel to high-altitude areas in China.

Major public holidays can make travel difficult. Manoeuvring around China with 1.3 billion others at the Chinese New Year (p894) can be a nightmare, but you also get to see China at its most colourful and entertaining. Hotel rooms become very expensive during the May Day holiday (now a week long from 1 May) and National Day on 1 October (likewise a week long), and train tickets can be difficult to procure.

DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT...

- Checking the visa situation (p903)
- Checking travel advisory bureaus
- Checking on your recommended vaccinations (pp26–7)
- A copy of your travel insurance policy details (p895)
- A smoke alarm – for peace of mind in budget hotels
- Good deodorant – hard to find
- Reading matter for those endless train trips
- A sense of adventure

See Climate Charts (p888) for more information.