



Guìzhōu

POPULATION: 36.7 MILLION

Includes »

Guiyáng	611
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Best Places to Eat

- » Kǎilǐ Sour Fish Restaurant (p614)
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Best Places to Stay

- » Sheraton Hotel (p613)
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- » Beautiful Harbor Hotel (p626)

Why Go?

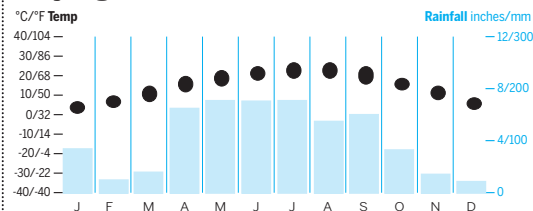
Poor old Guìzhōu (贵州), always the short-end-of-the-stick southwest China province. A much-quoted proverb has it as a place 'without three *lǐ* of flat land, three days of fine weather, or three cents to rub together'. Ouch.

Certainly, pockets of Guìzhōu are desperately poor and you'll see clouds more often than the sun. The upside is that there's plenty of elbow room out in the simply stunning countryside, a sublime mix of undulating hills and carpets of forest, riven with rivers tumbling into magnificent waterfalls and down into spooky-thrilling karst cave networks.

As big a draw as the landscapes is Guìzhōu's extraordinary human mosaic. Almost 35% of the province's population is made up of over 18 ethnic minorities. They all contribute to Guìzhōu's social butterfly calendar, which enjoys more folk festivals than any other province in China, and the welcome you'll get from the people more than makes up for the weather.

When to Go

Guiyáng



January Brave the chill for the wondrous sight of thousands of rare birds wintering at Cǎohǎi Lake.

June Hope for some summer sunshine as you village-hop around the southeast.

October & November See in the Miao New Year in Xijiāng with gallons of rice wine.



Guizhōu Highlights

- 1 Spend a week village-hopping around **Kǎilǐ** (p618)
- 2 Party with the locals at one of the thousand-odd **festivals** (p619) held in Guizhōu each year
- 3 Get way off the beaten track in the prehistoric fern forests around **Chishui** (p628)
- 4 Head underground at **Zhijin Cave**, the largest cavern in China (p623)
- 5 Soak yourself in the mists at the thundering **Huángguōshù Falls** (p623), China's largest waterfall
- 6 Escape the madding crowds and get up close with rare black cranes at remote **Cǎohǎi Lake** (p624)
- 7 Find fascinating CCP history and potent local firewater in **Zūnyi** (p624)

History

Chinese rulers set up an administration in this area as far back as the Han dynasty (206 BC–AD 220), but it was merely an attempt to maintain some measure of control over Guìzhōu's non-Han tribes.

It wasn't until the Sino-Japanese war, when the Kuomintang made Chóngqing their wartime capital, that the development of Guìzhōu began. Most of this activity ceased at the end of WWII and industrialisation of the area wasn't revived until the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) began construction of the railways. Despite an expanding mining industry, Guìzhōu's GDP per capita remains the lowest in all China.

Climate

Guìzhōu has a temperate climate with an annual average temperature of 15°C. The coldest months are January and February, when temperatures dip to around 1°C. It simply always feels damp, mists are heavy and the sun rarely shines.

Language

Mandarin Chinese is spoken by the Han majority, although with a distinctive local accent. Thai and Lao are spoken by some, and Miao-Yao (Hmong-mien) dialects by the Miao and Yao.

i Getting There & Away

AIR You can fly to more than 40 destinations within China from Guiyang's airport, including all major Chinese cities. International destinations include Hong Kong, Singapore and Macau.

BUS Guiyang and Chóngqing are linked by an expressway. Another expressway from Guiyang to Kùnmíng is nearing completion. Yúnnán is also accessible – less comfortably – by bus via Wèining in the west. Guǎngxī can be accessed through Cóngjiāng in the southeastern part of the province.

Within the province, many of the major sites are accessible via OK roads. However, secondary roads in the northeast, west and southeast are uniformly poor.

TRAIN Sleepers to Chéngdū in Sìchuan, Kùnmíng in Yúnnán and Guǐlín are popular options.

i Getting Around

Buses are by far the best bet for exploring Guìzhōu. New expressways have been built even in the more remote western areas of the province. However, roads between smaller cities and villages are still a work in progress – and there are many mountains and hills out there to wind around – so make sure you bring plenty of patience.

PRICE INDICATORS

The following price indicators are used in this chapter:

Sleeping

\$	less than Y160
\$\$	Y160 to Y400
\$\$\$	more than Y400

Eating

\$	less than Y50
\$\$	Y50 to Y100
\$\$\$	more than Y100

The train system links all major cities, but is generally slower and less convenient than buses.

CENTRAL GUIZHOU

The capital city Guiyang dominates the central portion of the province. You'll likely have to spend a day or two here as you make your way around Guìzhōu.

Guiyang

贵阳

☎0851 / POP 1.2 MILLION

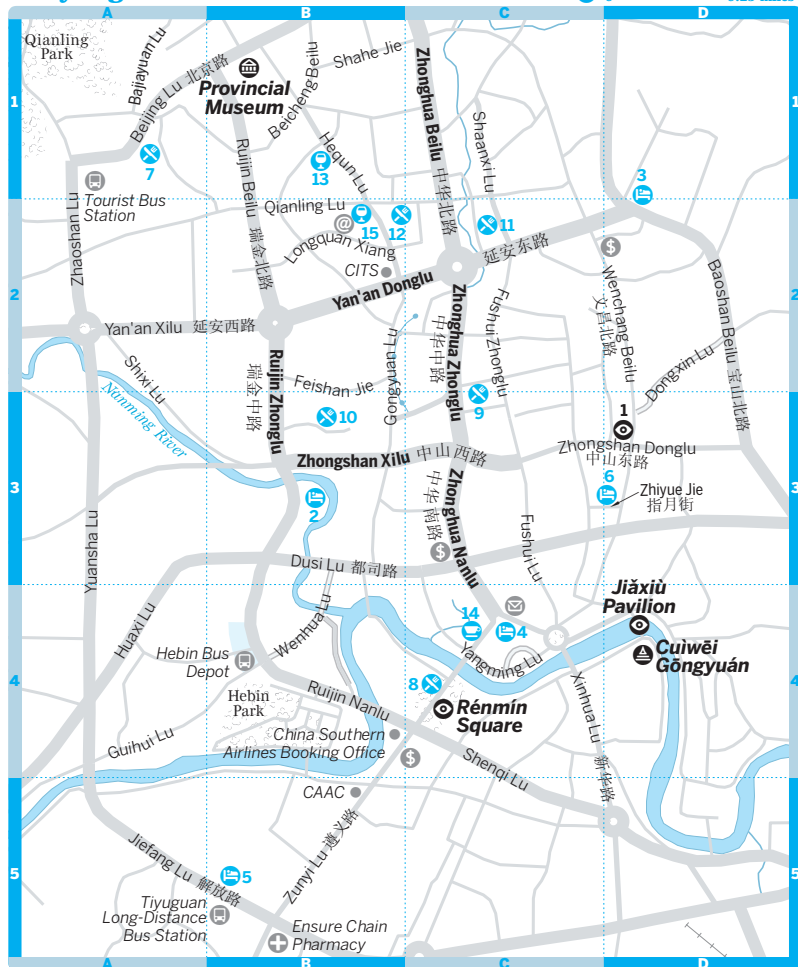
While it will never win any beauty contests, or prizes for its tourist sights, Guiyang (parts of it, anyway) is surprisingly modern and vibrant for the capital of China's poorest province. The riverside and Rénmín Sq provide enjoyable areas to wander, and there's fantastic street food, lively markets and disorienting, mazelike shopping areas. Most of the locals are chuffed to encounter foreigners and make them welcome.

i Sights

Hóngfú Temple

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(弘福寺; Hóngfú Sì; admission Y2; ☉7am–6pm) Located in **Qiánlíng Park** (黔灵公园; Qiánlíng Gōngyuán; admission Y5; ☉24hr) in the north of the city, Hóngfú Temple is perched near the top of 1300m Qiánlíng Shān and dates back to the 17th century. It's an easy 40-minute walk to the temple, or there's a **cable car** (up/down Y15/20; ☉9am–5pm). The monastery has a vegetarian restaurant in the rear courtyard. From the train station area, take bus 2.



FREE Provincial Museum

MUSEUM

(省博物馆; Shěng Bówùguǎn; Beijing Lu; ☉9am-5pm Tue-Sun) The exhibits at this low-tech museum are a truly bizarre mix, with the ground floor given over to a seemingly random collection of firearms. Head to the 2nd floor instead for the section on Guìzhōu's minorities, which features traditional clothing and musical instruments. There are some English captions.

Other Sights

HISTORIC SITES

Begin at **Rénmín Square** (人民广场; Rénmín Guǎngchǎng) and take a gander at one of the nation's largest Mao statues...

as he salutes Wal-Mart across the street (guess which site the locals are visiting more?).

Walk north across the river, turn right (east) onto Yangming Lu, cross a roundabout, descend to the river and follow it to the triple-roofed **Jiǎxiù Pavilion** (甲秀楼; Jiǎxiù Lóu; admission Y2; ☉8.30am-11pm), Guiyang's most famous landmark

Across the river is **Cuiwēi Gōngyuán** (翠微公园; admission Y2; ☉9am-11pm), an erstwhile Ming-dynasty temple which has picturesque pavilions and some pricey Miao souvenirs.

Guiyang

📍 Top Sights

Cuiwēi Gōngyuán.....	D4
Jiǎxiù Pavilion	D4
Provincial Museum.....	B1
Rénmín Square.....	C4

📍 Sights

1 Wénchāng Pavilion	D3
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📍 Sleeping

2 Jīnqiáo Fàndiàn.....	B3
3 Mayflower Hostel.....	D1
4 Sheraton Hotel.....	C4
5 Star Hotel.....	B5
6 Yidū Youth Hostel.....	D3

📍 Eating

7 Dongjia Family Restaurant	A1
8 Downtown Food Stalls	C4
9 Kaili Sour Fish Restaurant	C3
10 Night Market	B3
11 Night Market	C2
12 Sihéyuán.....	B2

📍 Drinking

13 Bars, Lounges & Clubs.....	B1
14 Highlands Coffee.....	C4
15 People's Commune.....	B2

Backtrack across the bridge and walk north along Wenchang Beilu to another Ming-dynasty speciality: **Wénchāng Pavilion** (文昌阁; Wénchāng Gé), restored along with the city walls. There are always plenty of locals lounging around, chatting and snacking here.

👉 Tours

Organised tours (in Chinese) to Huángguōshù Falls and Lónggōng Caves leave daily from a special tourist bus station (旅游客运站; *lǚyóu kèyùnzhàn*) opposite Qiánlíng Park. Many of the hotels also organise day tours. CITS runs one-day tours to the caves and waterfall for Y270 per person. There are fewer tours (if they run at all) in the off season.

🌟 Festivals & Events

There are at least 1000 minority festivals in Guizhōu each year (see the boxed text, p619). Check with CITS for details or do research ahead for dates, but even the locals don't know when they're happening till a month or so before.

🛏 Sleeping

Budding hoteliers should take note of the fact that Guiyang's accommodation options are sadly limited, with a plethora of bland low and midrange places and a complete lack of genuine hostels or guesthouses.

Sheraton Hotel

HOTEL \$\$\$

(喜来登贵航酒店; Xǐláidēng Guiháng Jiǔdiàn; ☎588 8888; www.sheraton.com/guiyang; Zunyi Lu; 遵义路; d Y1580, discounts of up to 50%; 📶📶📶) Sitting astride a downtown intersection like a colossus, the rooms here are Guiyang's top digs. Huge, comfy beds, as well as a spa, gym, pool and Western and Chinese restaurants.

Jīnqiáo Fàndiàn

HOTEL \$\$

(金桥酒店; Golden Bridge Hotel; ☎582 9958; 2 Ruijin Nanlu; 瑞金南路2号; s/d/tr Y358/398/428, discounts of 40-50%) The venerable Jīnqiáo is over 40 years old, a lifetime by Chinese hotel standards, and although it looks its age a bit, it still stands out from the midrange crowd, thanks to its distinctive wedding cake-style exterior (it's very neo-Stalinist) and its marble lobby. The spacious rooms are well kept, the staff helpful and discounts are often on offer.

Yidū Youth Hostel

HOTEL \$

(逸都酒店; Yidū Jiǔdiàn; ☎864 9777; fax 863 1799; 9 Zhiyue Jie; 指月街9号; 6-/10-bed dm Y50/40, s, d & tr Y368-428; 📶📶) Despite the name, this isn't a real hostel. Instead, it's a midrange hotel with some dorm rooms, and guess which guests are at the bottom of the pecking order? The unenthusiastic staff are one reason, along with the lack of atmosphere, that this place gets mixed reviews. But the dorms are modern and clean. The entrance is down an alley off Wenchang Nanlu.

Mayflower Hostel

HOTEL \$

(澎湖湾酒店; Péng hú wān Jiǔ diàn; ☎674 3007; 16th fl, Jiaxinhuating Bldg, 176 Baoshan Beilu; 宝山北路176号嘉信华庭大厦16层; s, d & tr Y120-160; 📶📶📶) Another one of Guiyang's ersatz hostels, the Mayflower is spread across a couple of floors of an office building. Not all of the rooms are in great condition, so check them first. The best have panoramic views of the city, a refreshing change from the often dire vistas offered by most Chinese hotels, and all come with some form of internet access, either ADSL or wi-fi.

Star Hotel

(兴瑜商务宾馆; Xīngyú Shāngwù Bīnguǎn; ☎595 2588; 192 Jiefang Lu; 解放路192号; s & d Y158; ㊟) Mahjong fans will like this place, as every room has a table to play at. Everyone else can marvel at finding a hotel with modern, clean and sizeable rooms so close to the bus and train stations.

**Eating**

Night markets (夜市; yèshì) aren't as ubiquitous as they once were in Guiyang, but there are still plenty of options for those who like to eat al fresco. Start snooping along Shaanxi Lu; if you don't find what you like, wander over to the Hequn Lu/Qianling Lu area. Still nothing? Try the one east of Ruijin Zhonglu along a tiny alley or the little stalls north of Rénmín Sq.

Do try the local versions of *shāguō fěn* (沙锅粉), a noodle and seafood, meat or vegetable combination placed in a casserole pot and fired over a flame of rocket-launch proportions. The deep-fried skewered potatoes dusted in chilli powder are the best in the province. You'll see vendors grilling thin rice pancakes – these are 'silk babies' (丝娃娃; sīwǎwǎ), to which pickled veggies, sliced radish/bamboo and spicy vinegar sauce are added.

Bear in mind that they eat a lot of dog in Guizhōu, so if you don't want to feast on man's best friend, learn how to say *wǒ bù chī gǒuròu* (I don't eat dog meat).

**Kaili Sour Fish Restaurant**

ETHNIC MINORITY \$

(老凯俚酸汤鱼; Lǎo Kǎilǐ Suāntāngyú; ☎584 3665; 55 Shengfu Lu; mains from Y38; ☎9.30am-midnight) Locals flock here because it specialises in the best *suāntāngyú* (酸汤鱼; sour fish soup) in town. A Miao delicacy that's Guizhōu's most famous dish, the fish are chopped up or dumped whole in a bubbling hotpot. You then add the veggies of your choice and away you go. Great stuff. There's no English menu, but the waitresses will help you out.

Sihéyuàn

GUIZHOU \$

(四合院; ☎682 5419; Qianling Xilu; mains from Y15; ☎9am-10pm) Every Guiyang local (and expat) knows this place – a boisterous, frenetic, labyrinthine spot with most typical local dishes you could imagine, all very tasty. It's tough to find – walk west along Qianling Xilu off Zhonghua Beilu and keep your eyes peeled for a Protestant church on

HOTEL \$

the right; the restaurant is down a small alley opposite. No English menu.

Dongjia Family Restaurant

ETHNIC MINORITY \$

(侗家食府; Dòngjiā Shífǔ; ☎650 7186; 42 Beijing Lu; mains from Y23; ☎9.30am-10pm) Specialising in minority cooking from all over Guizhōu, this is a friendly joint with fake trees in the dining area to give it that authentic country feel. For once, the pictures in the book-sized menu don't lie; the food here is very nicely presented and comes in ample servings.

**Drinking**

There are plenty of spots for coffee around town. Hequn Lu, north of Qianling Lu, has a smattering of bars, as does Qianling Donglu. The main drinking action, though, takes place in the city's numerous KTV (karaoke) clubs.

People's Commune

BAR

(人民公社文化主题酒吧; Rénmín Gōngshè Wénhuà Zhǔtí Jiǔbā; Zhujia Alley, Hequn Lu; beer from Y8; ☎7am-2am) A friendly CCP-themed, bamboo-built bar, with an outside terrace, pictures of Mao and Zhou Enlai on the walls and patriotic songs on the jukebox. Only beer is served here, in utilitarian tin cups, as cocktails are far too bourgeois. It's down an alley on the west side of Hequn Lu, just before the junction with Qianling Xilu. Look for the sign.

Highlands Coffee

CAFE

(高原咖啡; Gāoyuán Kǎféi; 1 Boai Lu Liu Dongjie; drinks from Y10; ☎10am-11pm Mon-Sat, 3-11pm Sun) Run by a friendly American (with an equally welcoming staff), this is where you go for your coffee or speciality tea fix. The smoothies are just as good. It's tucked off Zunyi Lu close to Wal-Mart.

**Information**

Bank of China (中国银行; Zhōngguó Yínháng; near cnr Dusi Lu & Zhonghua Nanlu) Has an ATM and offers all services you need. Other branches can be found on the corner of Wen-chang Beilu and Yan'an Donglu, and on Zunyi Lu near Rénmín Sq.

China International Travel Service (CITS; 中国国际旅行社; Zhōngguó Guójì Lǚxíngshè; ☎690 1706; www.gzcits.com; 7th fl, Longquan Bldg, 1 Hequn Lu; ☎9am-6pm Mon-Fri) The helpful English- and German-speaking staff can provide information on local festivals. Guide quality is hit-and-miss, reportedly.

China Post (邮局; Zhōngguó Yóuzhèng; 46 Zhonghua Nanlu) Offers a poste restante service. China Telecom is next door.

Ensure Chain Pharmacy (一树药业连锁; Yishù Yàoyè Liánsuǒ; cnr Zunyi Lu & Jiefang Lu; ☺24hr) Near the train station.

Internet cafe (网吧; wǎngbā; Longquan Xiang; per hr ¥3; ☺24hr) There's another internet cafe opposite this one. It's down an alley off Hequn Lu.

Public Security Bureau (PSB; 公安局; Gōng'ānjú; ☎590 4509; Daying Lu; ☺8.30am-noon & 2.30-5pm Mon-Fri) The staff don't see many foreigners here, but they seem pleasant enough.

i Getting There & Away

Air

Airline offices in Guiyang include the **Civil Aviation Administration of China** (CAAC; 中国民航; Zhōngguó Mínháng; 264 Zunyi Lu; ☺8.30am-8.30pm) and **China Southern Airlines** (中国南方航空公司售票区; Zhōngguó Nánfāng Hángkōng Gōngsī Shòupiàiqū; cnr Zunyi Lu & Ruijin Nanlu).

Destinations include Běijīng (Y1560), Shànghǎi (Y1280), Guǎngzhōu (Y600), Guilín (Y630), Chéngdū (Y500), Xī'an (Y840), Kūnmíng (Y440) and Chóngqīng (Y590). International destinations include Singapore, Hong Kong and Macau.

Bus

At the time of writing, a brand-new **main long-distance bus station** (贵阳客运站; Guiyáng Kèchēzhàn) had just opened way out in the western suburbs on Jinyang Nanlu. It's a long haul from downtown. Take bus 208 from the Hébin bus depot; a taxi will cost ¥30 to ¥35.

Ānshùn ¥35, 1½ hours, every 30 minutes (7.30am to 7pm)

Chóngqīng ¥110, five to six hours, every 40 minutes (7am to 7.30pm)

Guilín, ¥260, 10 to 11 hours, two daily (8pm and 9pm)

Huángguǒshù, ¥50, 2½ hours, eight daily (8am to 3pm)

Wēining, ¥90, six hours, two daily (9am and noon)

Zūnyì, ¥65, 2½ hours, every 30 minutes (7.30am to 7.20pm)

Another bus station, **Tiyùguǎn long-distance bus station** (体育馆长途车站; Tiyùguǎn Chángtú Kèyùnzhàn), is close to the train station on Jiefang Lu. Buses go to the following places:

Ānshùn ¥36, 1½ hours, every 15 minutes (7am to 10pm)

Kǎilǐ ¥60, 2½ hours, every 20 to 30 minutes (7.30am to 7.30pm)

The **Hébin Bus Depot** (河滨汽车站; Hébin Qìchē Zhàn) west of Rénmín Sq has buses to closer suburban destinations.

Train

Guiyang's gleaming train station has been upgraded, but it's easier (and quicker) to travel within Guizhōu by bus. You can buy train tickets four days in advance.

The following prices are for hard sleepers:

Chéngdū ¥135 to ¥232, 12 to 23 hours, seven daily (12.38am, 4.03pm, 4.30pm, 4.50pm, 6.03pm, 6.10pm and 11.16pm)

Chóngqīng ¥127, nine to 12 hours, 11 daily (12.38am to 11.16pm)

Guǎngzhōu (K66, fastest train) ¥335, 20 hours, one daily (3.22pm)

Guilín ¥191, 12 hours, one daily (10.27pm)

Kǎilǐ ¥14 to ¥29, two to three hours, regular services (24 hours)

Kūnmíng ¥157, 11 to 14 hours, 12 daily (24 hours)

Zūnyì ¥12 to ¥24, three to six hours, several daily (24 hours)

i Getting Around

To/From the Airport

Airport buses depart from the CAAC office every 30 minutes (¥10, 8.30am to 7pm). A taxi from the airport will cost around ¥60.

Bus

Buses 1 and 2 (Y1) do city tour loops from the train station, passing close to the main long-distance bus station. Bus 1 travels up Zhonghua Nanlu and heads westward along Beijing Lu.

Taxi

Taxi flagfall is ¥10; late at night it increases to ¥12.

Qīngyán

青岩

With its winding, stone-flagged streets and restored city walls, **Qīngyán** (admission ¥30) makes a pleasant contrast to modern Guiyang. A former Ming-era military outpost dating back to 1378, Qīngyán was once a traffic hub between the southwest provinces, leaving the village with Taoist temples and Buddhist monasteries rubbing up against Christian churches and menacing watchtowers.

Some of the places of worship are still active; make sure to visit the tranquil **Yíngx-iáng Temple** (迎祥寺; Yíngxiáng Sì), on a

side street populated by fortune tellers, and to compare the current, minimalist Catholic church with the now disused but much more impressive 19th-century original.

Qīngyán is about 30km south of Guǐyáng and makes an easy day trip. Take bus 207 from the Hébin Bus Depot to Huāxī (Y2, 45 minutes, every 20 minutes from 6.30am), and get off at the last stop. Then take the 210 (Y2, 20 minutes), which will drop you outside the north gate and the ticket office.

Zhènshān & Tiānhétán

镇山、天河潭

West of Qīngyán and around 25km southwest of Guǐyáng, Zhènshān is a Bouyi village dating from the Ming dynasty, overlooking a picturesque reservoir. It's a lovely setting with fine architecture and sees far fewer tourists than Qīngyán. To get there, take bus 211 (Y2, 50 minutes, every 20 minutes from 6.30am) from the Hébin Bus Depot and get off at Shíbǎn (石板); from there, it's a short hop on a minibus or even a motorcycle.

Just half a dozen or so kilometres beyond Zhènshān, bus 211 (Y70) continues to Tiānhétán, a worthy park if you haven't yet had enough of caves in Guìzhōu. The entrance fee includes boat rides to the caves. There are also some nice canals leading through Bouyi farming areas.

EASTERN GUIZHOU

More than a baker's dozen minority groups live in the gorgeous misty hills and river valleys east of Kǎilǐ; this area is truly a rare window on atypical life in China. Sure, some villages have been discovered big time and you'll hear incessant moaning about it from some travellers (as if they weren't tourists, too), but there are still endless places to lose yourself here. Booming country markets and festivals are held almost weekly.

China's largest Miao village, Xijīāng, and the remote Dong village of Zhàoxīng, in the southeast, are particularly popular. If you have time, consider visiting them as part of the back-door route into Guǎngxī. Outside Kǎilǐ there are no places to change money, so bring plenty of renminbi with you.

Kǎilǐ

凯里

☎0855 / POP 153,000

About 195km almost directly east of Guǐyáng, Kǎilǐ is a compact, friendly town and really nothing more than a base for visiting minority villages or planning a back-door trip into Guǎngxī.

👁 Sights & Activities

If you have time, visit **Dàgé Park** (大阁公园; Dàgé Gōngyuán; Big Pagoda Park) or **Jinquánhú Park** (金泉湖公园; Jīquánhú Gōngyuán; Big Pagoda Park), which has a

TRADITIONAL GARMENTS

The variety of clothing among the minorities of Guìzhōu provides travellers with a daily visual feast. Clothes are as much a social and ethnic denominator as pure decoration. They also indicate whether or not a woman is married, and are a pointer to a woman's wealth and skills at weaving and embroidery.

Many women in remote areas still weave their own hemp and cotton cloth. Some families, especially in Dong areas, still ferment their own indigo paste as well, and you will also see this for sale in traditional markets. Many women will not attend festivals in the rain for fear that the dyes in their fabrics will run. Methods of producing indigo are greatly treasured and kept secret, but are increasingly threatened by the introduction of artificial chemical dyes.

Embroidery is central to minority costume and is a tradition passed down from mother to daughter. Designs include many important symbols and references to myths and history. Birds, fish and a variety of dragon motifs are popular. The highest quality work is often reserved for baby carriers, and many young girls work on these as they approach marrying age. Older women will often spend hundreds of hours embroidering their own funeral clothes.

Costumes move with the times. In larger towns, Miao women often substitute their embroidered smocks with a good woolly jumper (sweater) and their headdresses look suspiciously like mass-produced pink and yellow Chinese towels.

Dong-minority drum tower (dating from – whoa! – two decades ago). Also check out the **Minorities Museum** (贵州民族博物馆; Guizhōu Mǐnzú Bówùguǎn; Ningbo Lu; admission free; ☎9am-5pm) in the south of town, which, though it seems old, was recently relocated here and has some displays of minority clothing and artefacts.

Wu Min, also known as Louisa, a local Miao woman, runs **treks** to remote Miao and Dong villages that come highly recommended. She can also organise homestays, as well as arrange for visitors to study the Miao and Dong languages and learn local dances. She speaks good English. Contact her via email at wuminlouisa@gmail.com.

🌟 Festivals & Events

Markets and festivals are one of Guizhōu's major attractions, and the profusion of them around Kǎilì makes this sleepy town the best place to base yourself for exploring them. For more festival details, see the boxed text, p619.

🏠 Sleeping

Guótài Dàjiūdiàn HOTEL \$\$\$
(国泰大酒店; ☎826 9818; fax 826 9818; 6 Beijing Donglu; 北京东路6号; s & d Y258-288, discounts of up to 33%; 🍷🍷) Smiling staff, a central location and good discounts make this a great midrange option. You can find places with more stars but they aren't usually worth the extra money.

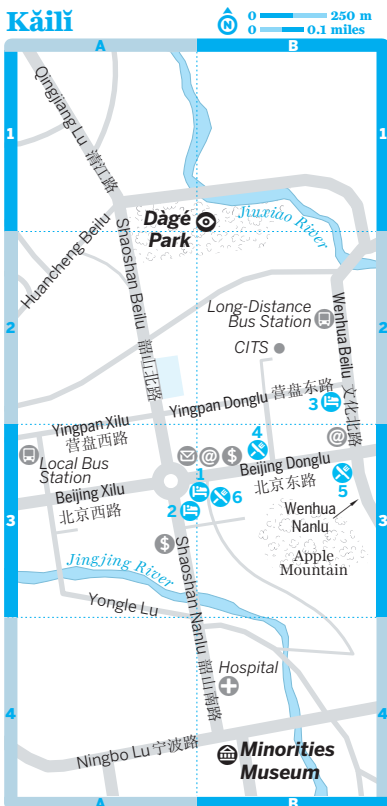
Petroleum Hotel HOTEL \$
(石油宾馆; Shíyóu Bīnguǎn; ☎823 4331; 44 Yingpan Donglu; 营盘东路44号; dm/s/d/tr Y40/80/100/120, discounts of 20-30%) This is a budget favourite despite the beaten-down rooms and very basic facilities. Off-season you might have the place to yourself; in summer you may need to call ahead (particularly during festivals).

New Century Hotel HOTEL \$\$\$
(新世纪大酒店; Xīnshìjì Dàjiūdiàn; ☎826 0333; 1 Shaoshan Nanlu; 韶山南路1号; s Y238-288, d Y318, discounts of up to 33%; 🍷🍷) Decent-sized rooms and generous discounts are available at this new-ish place slap in the middle of town. Avoid the noisy rooms at the front.

🍴 Eating

Kǎilì has some fantastic snack stalls lining its streets. Savoury crepes, potato patties, barbecues, tofu grills, noodles, hotpot, *shuǐjiǎo* (boiled dumplings) and wonton

Kǎilì



Kǎilì

📍 Top Sights

- Dàgé Park B1
- Minorities Museum B4

🏠 Sleeping

- 1 Guótài Dàjiūdiàn B3
- 2 New Century Hotel A3
- 3 Petroleum Hotel B2

🍴 Eating

- 4 Happy B3
- 5 Lǐxiǎng Miànshídiàn B3
- 6 Night Market B3

soup overflow at extremely reasonable prices. Make tracks for the **night market** (夜市; *yèshì*) just off Beijing Donglu, very close to the Guótài Dàjiūdiàn, which is always packed with locals and stays open till the wee hours.

Also check out the little alcove located east of the Ludujia Ri Hotel on Beijing Donglu, where a selection of cafes and restaurants serve up Chinese and Western-style food with varying degrees of success.

Lǐxiǎng Miànshídiàn (理想面食店; Wenhua Nanlu; dishes from ¥5; ☎7.30am-7.30pm; 🍜) This modest eatery serves simple dishes such as wonton soup and noodles, and is handy for a morning meal pre-village-hopping. It's been busily run in a friendly fashion forever.

Happy (欢乐面吧; Huānlè Miànbā; 46 Beijing Donglu; dishes from ¥8; ☎11am-11.30pm; ☎🍜) Cheap coffee (from ¥10) and noodle and rice dishes served in an atmosphere that more or less corresponds with its name.

i Information

Bank of China (中国银行; Zhōngguó Yínháng; Shaoshan Nanlu) This main branch has all services and an ATM. A second branch on Beijing Donglu will also change cash. Many other ATMs around town accept foreign cards.

China International Travel Service (CITS; 中国国际旅行社; Zhōngguó Guójì Lǚxíngshè; ☎822 2506; 53 Yingpan Donglu; ☎9am-5.30pm) Tucked just behind Yingpan Donglu, this is the place to come for the most up-to-date information on minority villages, festivals, markets and organised tours. All the staff here are helpful, and there are English, French and Japanese speakers amongst them.

China Post (邮局; Zhōngguó Yóuzhèng; cnr Shaoshan Beilu & Beijing Donglu) You can make international phone calls on the 2nd floor.

Internet cafe (网吧; wǎngbā; cnr Wenhua Beilu & Beijing Donglu; per hr ¥2; ☎24hr) On the 2nd floor, with 400 computers and comfy chairs. There's another internet cafe on Beijing Donglu, almost opposite the Guotài Dàjiǔdiàn.

Public Security Bureau (PSB; 公安局; Gōng'ānjú; ☎853 6113; Beijing Donglu; ☎8.30-11.30am & 2.30-5.30pm Mon-Fri) Deals with all passport and visa enquiries.

i Getting There & Away

Bus

Kǎilǐ is served by five bus stations. The **long-distance bus station** (长途客运站) on Wenhua Beilu has departures to most destinations.

Cóngjiāng ¥87, eight hours, six daily (7am to 2.30pm)

Guiyáng ¥60, 2½ hours, every 20 minutes (7am to 8.30pm)

Jīnpíng (锦屏; for Lónglǐ) ¥75, five hours, 10 daily (6.20am to 2.50pm)

Léishān ¥13.50, one hour, every 25 minutes (7am to 7pm)

Lípíng ¥95, seven hours, eight daily (7am to 3.30pm)

Róngjiāng ¥65, 4½ hours, every 40 minutes (6.40am to 4.40pm)

Xījiāng ¥24, 80 minutes, five daily (9am, 10.30am, 12.30pm, 2.30pm and 4.30pm)

If you can't find what you are looking for, try the **local bus station** (客运站) on Yingpan Lu, where several buses a day run to most surrounding villages, including Lángdé (¥10), Chóng'an (¥11, one hour), Mǎjiāng (¥10) and Huángpíng (¥13, 30 minutes).

For Shíqiáo (¥16, 90 minutes, several from 7am to 7pm), head to the **small local bus station** (往石桥的公交车), south of the long-distance bus station on Wenhua Nanlu. Yet another local station along the road to Tǎijiāng on the east side of town has departures to points east, such as Nánhuá.

Still another – whew! – is located north of the first-mentioned local bus station along Huancheng Beilu. This **local bus station** (往麻塘、舟溪的公交车) has departures for points north such as Mátáng (but also, inexplicably, south, such as Zhōuxī).

Train

Kǎilǐ's train station is a couple of kilometres north of town but departures are infrequent and the train service slow, apart from the trains to Guiyáng, which leave round the clock (¥14 to ¥29, two to three hours).

For longer distances, it's worth stopping in Guiyáng to secure a reservation.

i Getting Around

Bus fares cost ¥1 in Kǎilǐ and almost all of the buses departing from the train station follow the same route: up Qingjiang Lu, past the long-distance bus station, along Beijing Donglu and down Shaoshan Nanlu to the Minorities Museum. For the train station, take bus 2.

Taxi flagfall is ¥6.

Around Kǎilǐ

If you're village-hopping into Guǎngxī, which is lovely wherever you go, plan on spending about a week. Note that some of these villages are starting to charge entrance fees, so don't be surprised if you're hit up for a ticket.

An extraordinary number of markets are held in the villages surrounding Kǎilǐ. Xiānhuā has a huge market every six to seven days. Zhōuxī, Léishān and Tǎijiāng hold markets every six days. Check with the CITS in Kǎilǐ for the latest information.

XĪJIĀNG

西江

Ensnocced snugly in the Léigōng Hills, **Xījiāng** (admission ¥60) is thought to be the largest Miao village and is well known for its embroidery and silver ornaments (the Miao believe that silver can dispel evil spirits). It's one of those treasures – paddies, mists, wooden houses, water buffalo, the works.

Unsurprisingly, it is now a firm fixture on the tourist trail. There's now a performance square, English signposts, numerous souvenir shops and even an ATM that takes foreign cards. But old men still squat on the streets smoking pipes, the women do their washing in the river, and the pace of life remains that of a traditional village. The people are overwhelmingly friendly too; solo travellers can expect to be roped into any impromptu parties going on.

When the sun is shining, Xījiāng is simply idyllic. Head away from the village on the paths that weave their way through the rice paddies, side-stepping the farmers and water buffalo, and recharge your soul in the surrounding hills. There's a three-day trek from here to **Páiyáng** (排羊), a Miao village north of Xījiāng. This trail winds its way through some remote minority villages and lush scenery. You will probably find accommodation with locals en route, but you shouldn't expect it so come prepared to sleep under the stars.

Many families offer rooms with dinner for ¥50; they'll find you, or simply ask. Otherwise, try the **Ukea Inn** (有家客栈; Yōujiā Kèzhàn; ☎137 6551 9880; d ¥80) on the main street, which has sparkly clean rooms with sit-down toilets.

From Kǎilǐ there are five buses a day to Xījiāng (¥24, 80 minutes). Returning to Kǎilǐ, buses leave at 8am, 9.30am, 11am, 1.30pm and 3.30pm. Alternatively, if you're heading south and east towards Guǎngxī, there are 12 buses a day to Léishān (¥10, 1½ hours, 6.30am to 5.40pm), from where you can head south towards Róngjiāng (榕江).

LÁNGDÉ

郎德

Superb extant Miao architecture and cobble-paved paths naturally draw loads of tour

CELEBRATING WITH LOCALS, GUIZHOU-STYLE

Minority celebrations are lively events that can last for days at a time, and often include singing, dancing, horse racing and buffalo fighting.

One of the biggest is the **Lúshēng Festival**, held in either spring or autumn, depending on the village. The *lúshēng* is a reed instrument used by the Miao people. Other important festivals include the **Dragon Boat Festival**, **Hill-leaping Festival** and **Sharing the Sister's Meal Festival** (equivalent to Valentine's Day in the West). The **Miao New Year** is celebrated on the first four days of the 10th lunar month in Kǎilǐ, Guàndīng, Zhōuxī and other Miao areas. The **Fertility Festival** is celebrated only every 13 years (the next one's due in 2016).

All minority festivals follow the lunar calendar and so dates vary from year to year. They will also vary from village to village and shaman to shaman. CITS in Kǎilǐ can provide you with a list of local festivals.

buses for elaborate singing, dancing and reed flute performances in this village. But the commercialisation can't overcome the wondrousness of the locals. There's a terrific 15km trail along the Bālā River that will take you through several Miao villages.

About 20km outside Kǎilǐ, buses pass by **Lángdé** (¥10) on the way to Léishān. The village is 2km from the main road. Getting away, get out on the street and flag down a bus back to Kǎilǐ.

LÉISHĀN

雷山

This village is usually used as a transit point, but you can also head to **Léigōng Shān** (雷公山; Leigong Mountain; admission ¥30), at 2178m, which offers some interesting hiking. A newer road from here also leads to Lèlǐ (乐里), towards Róngjiāng. From Kǎilǐ, there are numerous buses to Léishān.

SHÍQIÁO

石桥

Shíqiáo means 'stone bridge' and you'll know why when you spy the lovely ones in this beautiful Miao town southwest of Kǎilǐ. The town was famed for its handmade paper, which, though not so apparent today,

can still be seen. Even if you're not into paper, it's a great place to visit.

Shíqiáo buses (Y16, two hours) depart from a local bus station on Wenhua Nanlu in Kǎilǐ, south of the long-distance bus station.

MÁTÁNG

麻塘

This village around 30km from Kǎilǐ is home to the Gejia. Officially classified as a subgroup of the Miao minority, the Gejia have different customs, dress and language, and are renowned batik artisans; their traditional dress often features batik and embroidery. Mátáng has been dolled up for tourism – the inevitable performance square has materialised – and the women hawkers here are rather more persistent than in other villages.

The village is 2km from the main road and buses regularly run past the drop-off point in the direction of Chóng'ān (Y6) and Kǎilǐ (Y8). Just stand on the side of the road and flag down anything that comes your way.

LÓNGĹ

隆里

Stranded in splendid isolation amidst fields and rice paddies near the border with Húnán, **Lónglǐ** (admission Y15) is a real oddity. For a start, it isn't a minority village. Instead, this former garrison town is populated by the descendants of Han soldiers sent to protect the empire from the pesky Miao. One of the province's 'eco-museums' (read, real-live village), it's fascinating for its extant architecture. Wander the narrow cobblestone streets and gander at the mostly wooden houses, some lovely courtyards, pavilions, temples and the town walls. The surrounding area looks prime for bike exploration, too.

Just outside the old town, **Lónglǐ Gùchéng Jiǔdiàn** (隆里古城酒店; ☎08555 718 0018; r with/without bathroom Y60/40) is the only current accommodation choice and offers basic rooms with Chinese-style toilets.

Coming from Kǎilǐ is a bit tricky since there's no direct bus. First you have to take a bus to Jǐnpíng (锦屏; Y75, five hours, 10 buses daily, 6.20am to 2.50pm), then switch to another bus (Y13, 90 minutes, half-hourly or so from 7am to around 2pm).

BĀSHĀ

岜沙

Wander up the hill from Cóngjiāng (从江) and you'd swear Bāshā is a movie set depicting the Tang or Song eras – its men still

wear period clothes, have daggers on their belts and shave their heads, leaving only a stylish topknot. When not farming, they can be found hunting with antique rifles. Meanwhile, the women parade in full Miao rig with their hair twisted into a curl on the top of their heads.

Quite why Bāshā is stuck in a timewarp is a mystery, as it's only 7.5km from very modern Cóngjiāng. Not even the locals can explain why they've retained their ancient customs so well. Nor is Bāshā undiscovered. A collection of six hamlets that sprawls across a beautiful valley, Chinese-English signs point the way to the various places of interest. It's best seen during a festival, even if that means more visitors, because most of the year the men are out in the fields during the day. But at any time, the surrounding countryside is superb.

Some rudimentary inns in the village offer beds for Y20. You might also be able to arrange a hunting trip with the men. Otherwise, you can stay in Cóngjiāng. The **Xīngyuè Bīnguǎn** (星月宾馆; ☎0855-641 8598; Jiangdong Lu; 江东路; d Y128; 🍽️🍷) has clean, spacious rooms and is just to the left of the bus station.

There's no bus to Bāshā and it's a very steep walk up to the village. Taxis in Cóngjiāng will try and sting you for Y40 for a one-way journey, but you should pay Y50 for a round-trip. It's best to get the driver to wait for you, as not much transportation hangs around the village.

ZHÀOXĪNG

肇兴

Perhaps the quintessential Dong village, packed with traditional wooden structures, several wind and rain bridges and five remarkable drum towers, Zhàoxīng is no longer the little-known paradise it once was. Its sheer uniqueness makes for a powerful draw, and the locals are certainly not complaining about the increase in visitors.

But the essential, amazing nature of Zhàoxīng hasn't changed. Yes, the restaurants on the main street have English menus, which is just as well as they eat rat (老鼠肉; *lǎoshǔ ròu*) in these parts, and there are now any number of quasi-inns and guesthouses offering rooms from Y50. But Zhàoxīng remains a working farming village, where most people still speak only their native Dong language and are extremely welcoming. The tour groups might swoop in on hit-and-run missions, but

Zhàoxīng remains a very easy place to while away a few days.

Nearby too, are Dong villages that are still tourist-free. Hike west out of Zhàoxīng from the bus station for an hour, up a steep hill and past some splendid rice terraces, and you're in equally friendly Jítāng (基塘), which has its own drum tower. Head the other way out of Zhàoxīng through the fields and two hours later you reach Táng'ān (堂安), a village so essentially Dong it's been named a living museum.

The **Wangjiang Lou Hostel** (望江楼客栈; Wàngjiānglóu Kèzhàn; ☎613 0269; d/tr Y50/60; ⓂⓂ) isn't a hostel, but is a family-run place by the river with nice wooden rooms with hot showers and sit-down toilets. The most modern digs in the village can be found at the **Zhàoxīng Bīnguǎn** (肇兴宾馆; ☎613 0899; s & d Y168-228; Ⓜ), where rooms are spotless, with tiny gleaming bathrooms. It's a tour group haunt, so it's often booked out.

At the time of writing, the village was in the throes of major construction work, while the building of a nearby, long-delayed, new highway (which will cut journey times from Kǎilǐ in half) was in full swing. When it is all finished, sometime in 2011, expect there to be an admission fee to Zhàoxīng.

Until the new expressway opens, getting here from Kǎilǐ is a slog. First, you have to travel to Cóngjiāng (Y87, eight hours, six buses daily from 7am to 2.30pm) and then change for a bus to Zhàoxīng (Y18, 2½ hours, 7.30am and 1pm). From Lípíng (黎平) there are five buses a day (Y18, 3½ hours, 8.20am to 2.50pm).

Heading out of Zhàoxīng, there are two morning buses (Y18, 7.30am and midday) to Cóngjiāng and two buses a day to Sānjiāng (三江) in Guǎngxī (Y35, four hours, 8.30am and 11.30am). From there you can catch an onward bus to Guǐlín. There are at least five buses daily to Lípíng.

WESTERN GUÌZHŌU

Birds, caves and waterfalls are the main attractions of this region. Outside Ānshùn, the thundering Huángguōshù Falls is Guìzhōu's premier tourist attraction, while Zhǐjīn Cave is one of the largest in the world. Way out west, the town of Weíning has one of China's top birdwatching locations in Cǎohǎi Lake, and also offers a backdoor route into Yúnnán.

Ānshùn

☎0853 / POP 449,000

Once a centre for tea and opium trading, Ānshùn remains the commercial hub of western Guìzhōu and is now most famous as a producer of batik, kitchen knives and the lethal Ānjiū brand of alcohol.

An undistinguished, grubby city, most travellers come here for the easy access to Huángguōshù Falls or to head to Zhǐjīn Cave.

👁 Sights

FREE Fúwén Miào

CONFUCIAN TEMPLE

(府文庙; admission Y10; ☉8.30am-6pm)

Check out this dilapidated but charming Confucian temple with some stunningly intricate carvings, in the north of town.

FREE Dōnglín Temple

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(东林寺; Dōnglín Sì; ☉7.30am-6pm)

The resident Buddhist monks welcome visitors warmly to this temple, built in AD 1405 (during the Ming dynasty) and restored in 1668.

FREE Lóngwáng Miào

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(龙王庙; ☉7.30am-5.30pm)

Another working Buddhist temple. It's just off Zhonghua Beilu.

🛏 Sleeping

Sān Xīng Dàjiùdiàn

HOTEL \$\$

(三星大酒店; ☎329 4100; 18 Huangguoshu Dajie; 黄果树大街18号; s & d Y348-388, discounts of 60%; Ⓜ) Fraying at the edges, but with big, clean rooms set around an atrium as a reminder of its glory days, the Sān Xīng is very handy for the bus and train stations. It's a decent deal in a city with few budget options.

Xìxiùshān Bīnguǎn

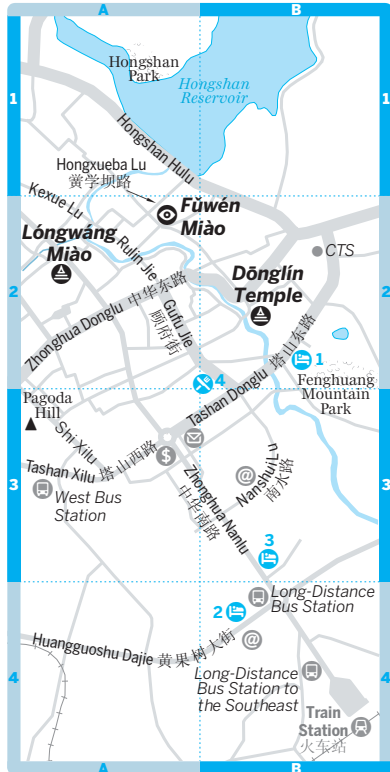
HOTEL \$\$

(西秀山宾馆; ☎333 7888; fax 333 7668; 63 Zhonghua Nanlu; 中华南路63号; s/d Y288/588, discounts of 50%; ⓂⓂ) A tour group favourite, this cavernous place has two large wings so they can normally find a spare room. The wood-panelled best ones are very comfortable, with nice bathrooms.

Fènghuángshān Dàjiùdiàn

HOTEL \$\$

(凤凰山大酒店; Golden Phoenix Mountain Hotel; ☎322 5724; 58 Tashan Donglu; 塔山东路58号; d Y228-528, discounts of up to 40%; ⓂⓂ) The bathrooms can be iffy here, and the rooms are overstocked with furniture, but the staff are pleasant enough. Look for a building that


Top Sights

Dōnglín Temple.....	B2
Fūwén Miào.....	A2
Lóngwáng Miào.....	A2

Sleeping

1 Fenghuángshān Dàjiūdiàn	B2
2 Sān Xīng Dàjiūdiàn	B4
3 Xixiùshān Bīngguǎn	B3

Eating

4 Night Market	B2
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services and has an ATM. There are many other ATMs around town.

China Post (邮局; Zhōngguó Yóuzhèng; cnr Zhonghua Nanlu & Tashan Donglu) Look for it tucked next to the China Telecom building.

China Travel Service (CTS; 中国旅行社; Zhōngguó Lǚxíngshè; ☎322 4537; Tashan Donglu; ☎9am-6pm Mon-Fri) Look for a blue sign with white Chinese characters.

Internet cafe (网吧; wǎngbā; Huangguoshu Dajie; per hr ¥2.50; ☎24hr) Opposite the Sān Xīng Dàjiūdiàn. There's another one on Nanshui Lu off Zhonghua Nanlu.

Getting There & Around

The **north bus station** (安顺客车北站) has buses to Zhijin town (for Zhijin Cave); go to the **west bus station** (客运西站) for Lónggōng Caves.

The **long-distance bus station** (长途客运站) on the corner of Huangguoshu Dajie and Zhonghua Nanlu has a handful of useful destinations:

Guiyang ¥35 to ¥36, two hours, every 20 minutes (6am to 9pm)

Huāngguōshù ¥13, one hour, every 20 minutes (7.30am to 7pm)

Kūnmíng ¥120, 15 to 17 hours, three daily (9am, 10.40am and 4pm)

Another **long-distance bus station** (往中国东南的高快汽车站) in front of the train station has buses for provinces in the southeast of China.

It is still very hard to get sleeper reservations for trains from here; pick them up in Guiyang instead. To Shuǐchéng (also known as Liúpánshuǐ, for Wéining) there is a daily train at 10.43am (¥12, four hours).

Minibus 1 zips around town from the train station and up Tashan Donglu. Bus 2 travels between the train station and the north bus station. Buses cost ¥1. Taxi flagfall is ¥6.

looks like a bank, with two lions standing guard outside. Big discounts are normally available.

Eating

Local speciality *qiáoliángfěn* (乔凉粉) is a spicy dish made from buckwheat noodles and preserved bean curd. A good on-the-run snack is *chōngchōng gāo* (冲冲糕), a cake made from steamed sticky rice with sesame and walnut seeds and sliced wax gourd.

By far the best place to eat is the **night market** (夜市; yèshì) on Gufu Jie. It's the most happening spot in Ānshùn, with the locals crowding out the many food tents and stalls that set up here. There's fantastic barbecued fish, as well as Uighur kebabs and endless noodle dishes.

Information

Bank of China (中国银行; Zhōngguó Yínháng; cnr Tashan Xilu & Zhonghua Nanlu) Offers all

Around Ānshùn

LÓNGGŌNG CAVES

龙宫洞

The vast **Lónggōng** (Lónggōng Dòng; Dragon Palace; admission ¥120; ☎8.30am-5.30pm) cave network snakes through 20 hills. While some travellers enjoy drifting through the caves on rowboats with their subdued guides, others find the whole experience – coloured lights, cheesy music, tour groups – kitschy.

Lónggōng is 23km south of Ānshùn and an easy day trip. Local buses (¥8, 40 minutes) depart every hour from Ānshùn's west bus station from 8am. Returning, buses leave hourly until about 5pm.

ZHĪJĪN CAVE

织金洞

As the largest cave in China, and one of the biggest in the entire world at 10km long and up to 150m high, **Zhījīn Cave** (Zhījīn Dòng; admission ¥135; ☎8.30am-5.30pm) gets tourist accolades. *Lord of the Rings* has been used to describe the abstract landscape of spectacular shapes and spirals, often cathedral-like, reaching from the floor to the ceiling.

Tickets to the cave, which is 15km outside Zhījīn and 125km north of Ānshùn, include a compulsory 2½-hour Chinese-only tour (minimum 10 people). The tour covers some 6km of the cave, up steep, slippery steps at times, and there are English captions at the main points along the way. Solo travellers visiting outside of peak summer months or Chinese holidays should be prepared for what can be a tedious wait for enough people to roll up to form a group.

A long day trip from Ānshùn is just possible, but you need to be on the 7.25am bus to Zhījīn (¥30, 3½ hours), which leaves from Ānshùn's north bus station. Once there, hop a taxi (¥4) to the local bus station on Yuping Jie and catch one of the minibuses that leave regularly for the cave entrance (¥7, 50 minutes). Returning from the caves, buses leave regularly. The last bus back to Ānshùn heads out of Zhījīn at 5.30pm.

HUÁNGGUŌSHÙ FALLS

黄果树大瀑布

Disgorging from endless buses, a friendly invasion of frenetic tourists from all over China come to see the 77.8m-tall, 81m-wide **Huángguōshù Falls** (Huángguōshù Dàpùbù; Yellow Fruit Tree Falls; admission Mar-Oct ¥180, Nov-Feb ¥160; ☎8.30am-5.30pm), making this Guizhōu's number-one tourist attraction. From May to October especially, these falls really rock the local landscape with their

cacophony, while mist-prism rainbows dance about **Rhinoceros Pool** below.

The cascades are actually part of a 450-sq-km cave and karst complex discovered when engineers explored the area in the 1980s to gauge the region's hydroelectric potential. There are paths around the falls through very pleasant scenery that take a few hours to cover.

Here's the beef: in the last four years the admission price has doubled. Not only that, but there's a compulsory ¥50 fee for a bus ride from the ticket office to the actual park entrance. Compared to the far cheaper, less-visited and almost as spectacular Shízhàngdòng Waterfall in northern Guizhōu, it smacks of serious price-gouging.

You can do Huángguōshù Falls in a day trip from Guiyáng at a push, while it's an easy one from Ānshùn. There are accommodation options everywhere in Huángguōshù village, but hotels are horribly overpriced. Expect little from **Huángguōshù Gōngshāng Zhāodàisùo** (黄果树工商招待所; ☎359 2583; d/tr ¥288/328), but with a discount it'll be your 'best' bet.

From Ānshùn, buses run every 20 minutes from the long-distance bus station at the corner of Zhonghua Nanlu and Huangguoshu Dajie. There are eight buses a day from Guiyáng to Huángguōshù (¥50, 2½ hours, every 40 minutes from 8am) from the long-distance bus station on Jinyang Nanlu. The last bus heads back to Guiyáng at 4pm.

Wēining

威宁

☎0857 / POP 57,000

A dusty, scrappy place with a manic energy epitomised by the orange motorised rickshaws that career around town, Wēining is one of the top spots in the world for that most sedate of hobbies, birdwatching. The jewel-like Cǎohǎi Lake sits close to downtown and draws twitchers to observe wintering migratory birds, especially the rare black-necked crane. Wēining is also home to a large population of Hui (Muslim), Miao and Yi; a big market held every three or four days sees the town thronged with people from the surrounding minority villages.

👁 Sights & Activities

Cǎohǎi Lake

LAKE

(草海湖; Cǎohǎi Hú; Grass Sea Lake) Cǎohǎi Lake has a fragile history, having been drained during both the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution in hopes

of producing farmland. It didn't work and the lake was refilled in 1980. Government tinkering with water levels in ensuing years impacted the local environment and villagers' livelihoods; officials have since enlisted locals to help with the lake's protection in an effort to remedy both problems. The 20-sq-km freshwater wetland has been a national nature reserve since 1992, but many environmental problems remain.

Black-necked cranes are the main attraction, but among the other 180 or so protected bird species are black and white storks, golden and imperial eagles, white-tailed sea eagles, Eurasian cranes and white spoonbills. The prime time to see them is from November to March.

There are lovely trails around much of the lake, but the best way to get close-up to the birds is to cruise around the lake on a punt. Buy tickets at the **ticket office** (per boat 1/2/3hr ¥120/240/360; ☎8.30am-5.30pm) at the end of the path leading to the lake, rather than from the touts lurking nearby.

To get to the lake it's a 45-minute walk southwest of downtown Wēining or a five-minute taxi ride (¥5).

Sleeping & Eating

Hēijīnghè Bīnguǎn

HOTEL \$\$
(黑颈鹤宾馆; ☎623 6888; Jianshe Donglu; s & d ¥188-308, discounts of 30%; ☎☎) Cramped rooms and cold in the winter, this is the self-proclaimed top choice in town. Don't expect too much. To get here, turn right out of the bus station; it's a block ahead on the left, set back from the road.

Cǎohǎi Jiàrì Jiǔdiàn

HOTEL \$\$
(草海假日酒店; ☎623 1881; Caohai Lu; 草海路; s, d & tr per person ¥358-388, discounts of 50-60%; ☎) Right by the lake, rooms here are big and comfortably furnished, and service has improved markedly. It's still not worth the price, but discounts make things more tolerable.

They eat a lot of noodles in Wēining; you will too. There are hole-in-the-wall places all over town.

Information

There's no place to change money in Wēining. An ATM on Jianshe Donglu, near the Hēijīnghè Bīnguǎn, should take foreign cards, but don't count on it. Opposite the bus station, above the China Mobile shop, there's a rough and ready **internet cafe** (per hr ¥2; ☎24hr).

Getting There & Away

Wēining is a seven-hour bus ride from Guiyáng (¥90, 9am and noon). You can also get here from Ānshùn. First take a bus to Shuǐchéng (水城; ¥55, 3½ hours, every 50 minutes from 8.30am to 5.30pm), then transfer to a Wēining-bound bus (¥30, two hours, hourly from 7.50am).

Leaving Wēining, you can backtrack to Guiyáng (¥90, 9am, midday, 6pm) or take a bus south to Xuānwēi in Yúnnán (¥50, five hours, seven daily from 7.30am to 3.30pm). From Wēining, there is also a daily sleeper bus to Kūnmíng (¥108, 11 hours, 5pm).

Alternatively, take a bus to Zhāotōng (¥30, three hours, 8am, 1pm, 3.30pm), from where you can hop over to Xīchāng in southern Sīchuān and connect with the Kūnmíng-Chéngdū train line.

NORTHERN GUIZHOU

This is where things get a bit wild. Few foreigners venture north of Guiyáng; those that do will find that already incomprehensible accents get broader, roads more rugged and that a stray *lǎowài* (foreigner) can stop the traffic. Way up on the Sīchuān border, Chìshuǐ and its surrounding valleys, waterfalls and national parks are virgin territory for travellers, and utterly gorgeous. Further south, historic Zūnyì was the setting for a key moment in the rise of Mao Zedong and will delight CCP buffs. Combining both offers a little-travelled route into southern Sīchuān.

Zūnyì

遵义

☎0852 / POP 555,000

Get your delightfully earnest CCP history here, the location of the Zūnyì Conference, a meeting that shaped the nation's future in no small terms. Other than that, Zūnyì prefecture is the home of Maotai, the fiery clear liquor that's the closest thing to China's national drink, so this is the best spot to pick some up.

Sight

Communist History Sites

HISTORIC SITES

Zūnyì's CCP sights have had some serious facelifts – as has the neighbourhood surrounding them, with much being knocked down to 'recreate' what it looked like in the 1930s (they must have had lots of clothes shops back then).

There are a dozen or so spots to see, but only a few are truly worthwhile. Admission is free to all of them, but you'll need to show

your passport to get a ticket from the office by the Zūnyì Conference Site.

The **Zūnyì Conference Site** (遵义会议会址; Zūnyì Huìyì Huìzhǐ; ☎825 6866; Ziyin Lu; ☀8.30am-5.30pm Mar-Oct, 8.30am-5pm Nov-Feb) is hands down the most-visited attraction and by far the most comprehensive. Set in a colonial-style house, there are rooms filled with CCP memorabilia, lots of photo exhibits (check out the floppy hair Mao was modelling back in the early 1930s), details about the Long March and the Conference, as well as the meeting rooms and living quarters of the bigwigs. Sadly, the only English captions are 'Don't Touch' and 'Please Keep Off the Grass'.

The **Red Army General Political Department** (红军总政治部旧址; Hóngjūn Zōngzhèngzhībù Jiùzhǐ), in a lane off Ziyin Lu, is close by in a courtyard residence, which shares the grounds with an attractive, disused **Catholic church** (天主教堂) left behind by French missionaries.

Opposite is the **Residence of Bo Gu** (博古旧居; Bógǔ Jiùjū), the general leader of the CCP Central Committee at the time of the Zunyi Conference. Nearby, the **State Bank of the Red Army** (红军银行; Hóngjūn Yínháng), which was closed for repairs at the time of writing, has some terrific money displays and decent English captions.

Temples

BUDDHIST TEMPLES

Zūnyì has two active Buddhist temples. Built in the 1920s, the very well maintained **Xiāngshān Temple** (湘山寺; Xiāngshān Sì) is situated on a small hill in a lively part of town. **Báiyún Temple** (白云寺; Báiyún Sì) is more rundown but still quite charming.

Sleeping

Beautiful Harbor Hotel

HOTEL \$\$

(京腾丽湾酒店; Jīngténg Lìwān Jiǔdiàn; ☎864 9898; fax 865 4188; Beijing Lu; 北京路; s & d Y468-618, discounts of 50-60%; ☎☎) A fine place to drop anchor, there are more expensive hotels in Zūnyì but none better. Modern, sensibly designed rooms, helpful staff, generous discounts, and it's only a few minutes' walk from the train and bus stations.

Jīnlóng Jiǔdiàn

HOTEL \$\$

(金龙酒店; ☎823 1671; 45 Zhonghua Nanlu; 中华南路45号; s Y188, d Y208-328, discounts of 60%; ☎) Located on busy Zhonghua Nanlu,

Zūnyì

Top Sights

Red Army General Political Department.....	B1
Residence of Bo Gu.....	B1
State Bank of the Red Army.....	B1
Zūnyì Conference Site.....	B1

Sights

1 Báiyún Temple.....	D1
2 Catholic Church.....	B1
3 Xiāngshān Temple.....	C2

Sleeping

4 Jīnlóng Jiǔdiàn.....	C2
5 Xiāngshān Bīnguǎn.....	B2

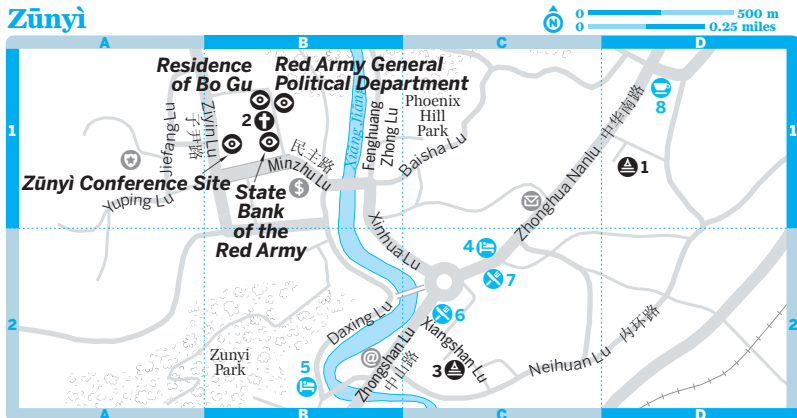
Eating

6 Grill Stalls.....	C2
7 Grill Stalls.....	C2

Drinking

8 Coffee Houses & Cafes.....	D1
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Zūnyì



THE ZŪNYÌ CONFERENCE

On 16 October 1934, hemmed in the Jiāngxī soviet by Kuomintang forces, the communists set out on a Herculean, one-year, 9500km Long March from one end of China to the other. By mid-December they had reached Guìzhōu and marched on Zūnyì. Taking the town by surprise, the communists were able to take a breather.

From 15 to 18 January 1935, in the now-famous Zūnyì Conference, top leaders reviewed their Soviet-influenced strategies that had cost them their Jiāngxī base and many troops. Mao, until this time largely overshadowed by his contemporaries, was highly critical of the communists' strategy thus far, and the resolutions of the conference largely reflected his views. He was elected a full member of the ruling Standing Committee of the Politburo and Chief Assistant to Zhou Enlai in military planning, a pivotal factor in his rise to power.

and more or less equidistant between the sights and the train and bus stations, the Jinlong has rooms ranging from the poky and modest to the spacious and attractive. Discounts make the best ones a steal.

Xiāngshān Bīnguǎn

(香山宾馆; ☎823 4444; Daxing Lu; 大兴路; s & d Y198-278; ㊦㊧) Right on the river, a good place to escape the hustle of downtown Zūnyì. The rooms are a little dull, but clean and decent-sized. The staff are keen to help.



Eating

Street food is your best bet and there are some great hotpot, noodle and grill stalls to be found come dinnertime. Some of the best places are the lively Xiāngshān Lu or the alleys running southeast off Zhonghua Nanlu. Closer to the conference site, little Laosha Xiāng and its environs has everything from barbecued mutton to Sichuān and Guǎngdōng food in cubbyhole eateries.

Dòuhuā miàn (豆花面; 'bean flower noodles') is the local snack. Soft tofu and noodles in a clear broth are served next to a dipping bowl with oil, soy sauce, vinegar, mint and preserved meat. You lift out some noodles, then dip and slurp.



Drinking

Zūnyì nightlife is generally shut up inside the giant KTV bars lining Zhonghua Beilu. There are a few bars on Aomen Lu, north of Zhonghua Beilu, close to the intersection with Shanghai Lu, as well as some pricey coffee places (咖啡馆; Kāfēi Guǎn) on Zhonghua Nanlu.



Information

Bank of China (中国银行; Zhōngguó Yínháng; Minzhu Lu) Zūnyì's main branch with a 24-hour ATM and currency and traveller cheque exchange. There are many other branches around town, including one on Dalian Lu around the corner from the Beautiful Harbour Hotel.

Bèidǒuxīng internet cafe (北斗星网吧; Bèidǒuxīng wǎngbā; Zhongshan Lu; per hr Y3; ☎24hr) Just opposite Neihuan Lu on the 2nd floor (look for the Pepsi sign). There's another decent one on the corner of Beijing Lu and Wenhua Lu, close to the bus and train station.

China Post (邮局; Zhōngguó Yóuzhèng; Zhonghua Nanlu; ☎8am-8pm) You can make long-distance calls here, too.

Public Security Bureau (PSB; 公安局; Gōng'ānjú; Jinian Sq; ☎8.30-11.30am & 2.30-5.30pm) Offers visa extensions.



Getting There & Around

Bus

Zūnyì has two bus stations. The main one is on Beijing Lu and is where Gūiyáng buses arrive and depart. There are also buses here to Ānshùn and Chóngqing.

Buses for Chìshuǐ leave from the newer **Máocǎopù Qìchēzhàn** (茅草铺汽车站) on Shenzhen Lu (there's a statue of Mao to wave you off). A taxi there from the main bus station is Y6.

Ānshùn Y92, 5½ hours, four daily (9am, 11am, 1.30pm and 3.30pm)

Chìshuǐ Y105, seven hours, six daily (7.20am, 8.30am, 9.20am, 10.30am, 1.20pm and 3.30pm)

Chóngqing Y118, three hours, every 50 minutes (7am to 7pm)

Gūiyáng Y65, 2½ hours, every 20 minutes (7am to 7pm)

Useful local buses are 9 and 14, which run from the train station towards Minzhu Lu and the Bank of China. Taxi flagfall is Y5.

Train

There are numerous trains to Gūiyáng (Y14 to Y24, three to five hours), but you're better off catching the bus. Other destinations:

Chéngdū hard sleeper Y157, nine to 14 hours, two daily (2.41am and 8.57pm)

Chóngqing hard sleeper Y98, six to 10 hours, 10 daily

Chìshuǐ

赤水

☎0852 / POP 50,000

Sitting right on the border with Sichuān, Chìshuǐ was once a node for the transport of salt. Now, it's the gateway to some of the least-seen natural delights in the southwest. Just outside town are deep gorges and valleys flanked by towering cliffs hewn out of red sandstone, a profusion of waterfalls, as well as bamboo and fern forests that date back to the Jurassic Era.

While the locals are extremely friendly, there's nothing of intrinsic interest in Chìshuǐ itself, but it's the logical base for exploring the surrounding sights. The town sits on the east bank of the Chìshuǐ River (Chìshuǐ Hé). Cross the town's main bridge (Chìshuǐ Dàqiáo) to the other side and you're in Jiǔzhī (九支) in Sichuān.

Note that it's not possible to change money in either Chìshuǐ or Jiǔzhī, so bring cash with you. There is a 24-hour ATM on the corner of Renmin Xilu, close to the bus station, that takes foreign cards, but don't rely on it.

🏠 Sleeping

You can find basic rooms for Y50 in places opposite the bus station on Renmin Xilu.

Chìshuǐ Kǎiyuè Bīnguǎn HOTEL \$\$

(赤水凯悦宾馆; ☎288 9888; West Inner Huanlu; 西内环路; s & d Y188-296, discounts of 60%; 🍷🍷) A newish place with the best budget rooms in town. The rooms are big and clean and come with ADSL connections. Not all have sit-down toilets, so check them first.

Chìshuǐ Yuán Bīnguǎn HOTEL \$\$

(赤水源宾馆; ☎288 7798; 18 Renmin Beilu; 人民北路18号; s & d Y300-588; discounts of 30-50%; 🍷🍷) This hotel is the town stalwart and remains a favourite with tour groups. The rooms are large and perfectly fine, if a little old-fashioned. The bathrooms are considerably plainer. Expect discounts, if it's not booked out.

Zhōngyuè Dàjiǔdiàn HOTEL \$\$

(中悦大酒店; ☎282 3888; 22 Nanzheng Jie; 南正街22号; s & d Y478-548, discounts of 30%; 🍷🍷) The posh option. Comfortable rooms, proper showers and helpful staff,

although they seem a little alarmed by foreigners, and discounts even in summer.

🍴 Eating

For food, head to the main drag of Renmin Xilu, where hole-in-the-wall eateries serve up noodle and rice dishes, different varieties of dumplings and the ever-present pig's feet, as well as various other animal organs. There are also streetfood stalls and supermarkets close to the bus station here. On Renmin Beilu, there are a few hotpot places.

📍 Getting There & Away

Chìshuǐ has two bus stations. The **Qìchē Kèyùn-zhàn** (汽车客运站) on Renmin Xilu handles most local destinations:

Chéngdū Y112, five hours, three daily (7.50am, 9.40am and 2.45pm)

Chóngqing (Y102, 4½ hours, seven daily (6am to 5pm)

Shìzhàngòng Y10, six daily (6.50am to 4.20pm)

Sìdònggōu Y5.50, every 20 minutes (from 6.30am)

Zūnyì Y105, eight hours, six daily (6.10am to 3.40pm)

For Guiyáng (Y160, eight hours, 6.55am and 8.50am) and Jīnshāgōu (Y11.50, 1½ hours, 9.30am and 3.55pm), you need the **Lǚyóu Chēzhàn** (旅游车站) on Nan Jiao Lu by the river, a Y4 cab ride from Renmin Xilu. There are also two buses a day to Zūnyì (Y105, eight hours, 6.35am and 10.10am) from here.

Taxi flagfall is Y3.

Around Chìshuǐ

It's hard to imagine a more dramatic landscape. The locals claim that there are 4000 waterfalls in the area, and some are spectacular, but everywhere you look they're gushing into the rivers that run red because of the colour of the earth (Chìshuǐ means 'red water') and which cut through valleys and gorges covered in lush foliage. If that wasn't enough, there are huge forests of bamboo and alsophila plants, giant ferns that date back 200 million years and which were once the food of dinosaurs.

Given the spread-out nature of the sights, it's worth considering hiring a taxi or minibus to tour them all. Expect to pay Y200 to Y400 per day, depending on your bargaining skills.

SHÍZHÀNGDÒNG WATERFALL

十丈洞瀑布

Only a metre or so shorter than the much better-known, and visited, Huángguōshù Falls, the 76m-high **Shízhàngdòng Waterfall** (Shízhàngdòng Pǔbù; admission Y40; ☀8am-4pm) explodes in a sea of spray as it crashes down. You can be 100m away and still get drenched if the wind is right.

About 40km from Chìshuǐ, six buses a day (Y10, one hour) run here from the bus station on Renmin Xilu starting at 6.50am. The bus will drop you in Shízhàngdòng village, from where it's a short walk to the ticket office. From there, it's a 30- to 40-minute walk up a road to the turn-off to the waterfall, or you can ride there on a buggy (Y20 return). There is another, more pleasant walk on the other side of the river to the falls. Doing the complete circuit takes three to four hours.

SÌDÒNGGŌU

四洞沟

This **valley** (admission Y30; ☀8am-7pm) close to Chìshuǐ is forested with ancient ferns, as well as being dotted with waterfalls. Paths follow both sides of a river, with minifalls gushing down over them, and take you past four 'proper' waterfalls. The biggest and most impressive is the last one, the 60m-high **White Loong Pond Waterfall**. The cool thing here is that you can get really close to the falls, including being able to walk behind one. It takes about three hours to do the circuit, although there are plenty of trails leading off the main paths that will provide fun and games for intrepid hikers.

Sìdònggōu is the most touristy of Chìshuǐ's sights, but still not overly crowded, even in summer. Minibuses run here

from the bus station on Chìshuǐ's Renmin Xilu (Y5.50, 30 minutes) and return when they have at least seven people on board.

JĪNSHĀGŌU NATURE RESERVE

金沙沟自然保护区

By far the least-visited of the sights in the area, this reserve (Jīnshāgōu Zìrán Bǎohùqū) was established to protect the al-sophila ferns that grow in abundance here. It's also the site of a bamboo forest, known as the **Bamboo Sea** (竹海; zhúhǎi; admission Y25; ☀8am-5pm), where you can trek through the trees in almost total isolation. The paths get very slippery when wet and there are lots of mosquitoes, so come armed with repellent.

To get here, catch the buses heading to Jīnshāgōu village from Chìshuǐ's Lǚyóu Chēzhàn (Y11.50, one hour). From there, you'll have to negotiate with the locals for a motorbike or minibus ride to the park entrance, which is another 20 minutes away. Expect to pay between Y30 and Y40 each way. Make sure to arrange a pick-up for your return; very little transport hangs around the park.

RED ROCK GORGE

红石野谷

Dotted with small waterfalls that make for a vivid contrast with the red sandstone cliffs of the **gorge** (Hóngshí Yěgǔ; admission Y30; ☀8am-5pm), this is one of the more popular sights with local tourists. There are some good photo opportunities here, particularly if the sun is shining, when the red earth really stands out.

Minibuses run here from the bus station on Chìshuǐ's Renmin Xilu (Y6, 40 minutes, five daily from 8am to 4.30pm).

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