



# Jiāngsū

POPULATION: 75.5 MILLION

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## Why Go?

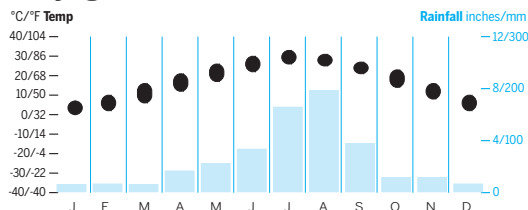
Bordering the East China Sea and dubbed the 'land of fish and rice' since antiquity, Jiāngsū (江苏) originally owed its wealth to the waterways of the Yangzi River (Cháng Jiāng) and the Grand Canal, and also through silk, as well as salt panned off its low-lying marshy coast.

Defended by a magnificent Ming city wall and situated on the south bank of the Yangzi River, Nánjīng is one of China's most pleasant provincial capitals, though the shadow of its military suffering hangs like a pall over its collective consciousness.

A fleeting train trip from Shànghǎi, Sūzhōu – famed for its liltng canal views and elaborate gardens – is an unbeatable base for exploring the water towns in the region. Dressed in old-world charm, Tónglǐ, Lùzhí and Mùdú are perfect for slow meanderings. These canal towns will force you to take an unhurried appreciation of a disappearing side of China.

## When to Go

### Nánjīng



**March** Wander around the region in comfort during spring.

**October** Mist-shrouded vistas of gardens and canals in autumn.

**December** Snow-covered views of the pretty canal towns of Sūzhōu in winter.



## Jiāngsū Highlights

- 1 Nánjīng is packed with key historical sights, including the sombre **Memorial Hall of the Nánjīng Massacre** (p209)
- 2 Pour over historical artefacts at the IM Pei–designed **Sūzhōu Museum** (p221)
- 3 The gorgeous **gardens of Sūzhōu** (p221) are too many to list, each one different
- 4 Sūzhōu's 'Venice of the East' moniker becomes clear along **Píngjiāng Lù** and **Shàngtáng Jiē** (p222)
- 5 Appreciate a traditional píngtán performance at the **Píngtán Teahouse** (p227)
- 6 If you only have time for one canal town, it has to be **Tónglǐ** (p228)
- 7 Four words: **Chinese Sex Culture Museum** (p229) – yes, you can giggle now
- 8 Complete the canal-town experience by visiting **Lùzhì** (p229) and **Mùdú** (p230)
- 9 Unheralded Yángzhōu is home to the gorgeous **Slender West Lake Park** (p231)

## History

Jiāngsū was a relative backwater until the Song dynasty (960–1279), when it emerged as an important commercial centre because of trading routes opened up by the Grand Canal. The province particularly flourished in the south, where the towns of Sūzhōu and Yángzhōu played an important role in silk production and began to develop a large mercantile class.

Prosperity continued through the Ming and Qing dynasties, and with the incursion of Westerners into China in the 1840s, southern Jiāngsū opened up to Western influence. During the Taiping Rebellion (1851–64), the Taiping established Nánjīng as their capital, calling it Tiānjīng (Heavenly Capital).

Jiāngsū was also to play a strong political role in the 20th century, when Nánjīng was established as the capital by the Nationalist Party until taken over by the communists in 1949, who moved the capital to Běijīng.

Today, because of its proximity to Shànghǎi, southern Jiāngsū benefits from a fast-growing economy and rapid development, although northern Jiāngsū still lags behind.

## Climate

Jiāngsū is hot and humid in summer (May to August), yet has temperatures requiring coats in winter (December to February, when visibility can drop to zero because of fog). Rain or drizzle can be prevalent in winter, adding a misty touch to the land. The natural colours can be brilliant in spring (March and April). Heavy rains fall in spring and summer; autumn (September to November) is the driest time of year, and the best time to visit.

### PRICE INDICATORS

The following price indicators are used in this chapter:

#### Sleeping

\$	less than Y200
\$\$	Y200 to Y800
\$\$\$	more than Y800

#### Eating

\$	less than Y20
\$\$	Y20 to Y50
\$\$\$	more than Y50

## Getting There & Around

Jiāngsū is well connected to all major cities in China. There are numerous flights daily from Nánjīng and Sūzhōu to points around the country, as well as frequent bus and train connections.

Jiāngsū has a comprehensive bus system that allows travellers to get to most destinations within the province without difficulty. Travelling by train is also largely straightforward.

## Nánjīng

南京

☑025 / POP 3.39 MILLION

Largely enclosed within a magnificent Ming-dynasty city wall, Nánjīng, Jiāngsū's capital, lies on the lower stretches of the Yangzi River. One of China's more pleasant and prosperous cities, the famous university town has wide, tree-lined boulevards, chic apartment blocks and mile-high office towers, set among a beautiful landscape of lakes, forested parks and rivers.

The city sports a long historical heritage and has twice served briefly as the nation's capital, first in the early years of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) and then as the capital of the Republic of China in the early years of the 20th century. Most of Nánjīng's major attractions are reminders of the city's former glory under the Ming dynasty.

Although many have been uprooted in recent years for road widening, the city's pleasant *wutong* trees afford glorious shade in the summer and lend the city a leafy complexion.

## History

During the Qin dynasty (221–207 BC), Nánjīng prospered as a major administrative centre. Nánjīng fell during the Sui dynasty (AD 589–618) and later enjoyed a period of prosperity under the long-lived Tang dynasty, before slipping into obscurity.

In 1356 a peasant rebellion led by Zhu Yuanzhang against the Mongol Yuan dynasty was successful but Nánjīng's glory as imperial capital was shortlived. In 1420 the third Ming emperor, Yongle, moved the capital back to Běijīng. From then on Nánjīng's fortunes variously rose and declined as a regional centre, but it wasn't until the 19th and 20th centuries that the city again entered the centre stage of Chinese history.

In the 19th century the Opium Wars brought the British to Nánjīng and it was here that the first of the 'unequal treaties' were signed, opening several Chinese ports to foreign trade, forcing China to pay a

huge war indemnity, and officially ceding the island of Hong Kong to Britain. Just a few years later Nánjīng became the Taiping capital during the Taiping Rebellion, which succeeded in taking over most of southern China.

In 1864 the combined forces of the Qing army, British army, and various European and US mercenaries surrounded the city. They laid siege for seven months, before finally capturing it and slaughtering the Taiping defenders.

During the 20th century Nánjīng was the capital of the Republic of China – the site of the worst war atrocity in Japan's assault on China – and the Kuomintang capital from the period of 1928–37, and again between 1945 and 1949, before the communists 'liberated' the city and made China their own.

## Sights

### Memorial Hall of the Nánjīng Massacre

MEMORIAL

(南京大屠杀纪念馆; Nánjīng Dātúshā Jìniànguǎn; 418 Shuiximen Dajie; admission free; ☎8.30am-4.30pm Tue-Sun; 📍Yunjin Lu) Hands down the best 'sight', if it can be called such, in Nánjīng. The unsettling exhibits at the Memorial Hall of the Nánjīng Massacre document the atrocities committed by Japanese soldiers against the civilian population during the occupation of Nánjīng in 1937 (see boxed text, p210). They include pictures of actual executions – many taken by Japanese army photographers – and a gruesome viewing hall built over a mass grave of massacre victims. Detailed captions are in English, Japanese and Chinese, but the photographs, skeletons and displays tell their own haunting stories without words. At times it feels a little overwhelming but visitors might begin to understand that the massacre is deeply linked to the identity of the city. Get there early to beat the surge of people.

It's in the city's southwestern suburbs; take bus Y4 from Zhōnghuá Gate or Nánjīng west train station (南京西站; Nánjīng Xīzhàn). Get off at subway line 2 Jīqingdǎjiē station (集庆门大街站).

### Zijīn Mountain Scenic Area

PARK

Dominating the eastern fringes of Nánjīng is Zijīn Mountain (紫金山; Zijīn Shān), or 'Purple-Gold Mountain', a heavily forested area of parks and the site of most of Nánjīng's historical attractions – Sun Yatsen Mausoleum, Míng Xiàolíng Tomb,

Línggǔ Temple Scenic Area and the Botanic Gardens (植物园; Zhíwù yuán). It's also one of the coolest places to escape from the steamy summers. There are discounts if tickets to various sights are purchased together.

Buses 9, Y2 or Y3 go from the city centre to the Sun Yatsen Mausoleum at the centre of the mountain. From here, tourist buses labelled Y2 and Y3 also run between all the sites on the mountain, Y1 per ride.

### Sun Yatsen Mausoleum

MEMORIAL

(中山陵; Zhōngshān Líng; admission Y80; ☎6.30am-6.30pm) Dr Sun is recognised by the communists and Kuomintang alike as the father of modern China. He died in Běijīng in 1925, leaving behind an unstable Chinese republic. He had wished to be buried in Nánjīng, no doubt with greater simplicity than the Ming-style tomb his successors built for him. Despite this, less than a year after his death, construction of this mausoleum began.

The tomb itself lies at the top of an enormous stone stairway – a breathless 392 steps. At the start of the path stands a dignified stone gateway built of Fújiàn marble, with a roof of blue-glazed tiles. The blue and white of the mausoleum symbolise the white sun on the blue background of the Kuomintang flag.

The crypt is at the top of the steps at the rear of the memorial chamber. A tablet hanging across the threshold is inscribed with the 'Three Principles of the People', as formulated by Dr Sun: nationalism, democracy and people's livelihood. Inside is a statue of Dr Sun seated. The walls are carved with the complete text of the Outline of Principles for the Establishment of the Nation put forward by the Nationalist government, and Dr Sun devotees are often seen copying these principles by hand. A prostrate marble statue of Dr Sun seals his copper coffin.

There's a free shuttle bus (it looks like a red steam train) that goes to the Línggǔ Temple Scenic Area.

### Míng Xiàolíng Tomb

TOMB

(明孝陵; admission Y70; ☎8am-5.30pm, to 6.30pm summer) On the southern slope of Zijīn Mountain is the 14th-century Míng Xiàolíng of Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang, the only Ming emperor to be buried outside of Běijīng.

The first section of the 618m avenue leading up to the mausoleum takes you along

## THE RAPE OF NÁNJĪNG

In 1937, with the Chinese army comparatively weak and underfunded and the Japanese army on the horizon, the invasion into, and occupation of, Nánjīng by Japan appeared imminent. As it packed up and fled, the Chinese government encouraged the people of Nánjīng to stay, saying, 'All those who have blood and breath in them must feel that they wish to be broken as jade rather than remain whole as tile.' To reinforce this statement, the gates to the city were locked, trapping over half a million citizens inside.

What followed in Nánjīng was six weeks of continuous, unfathomable victimisation of civilians to an extent unwitnessed in modern warfare. According to journalists and historians such as Iris Chang and Joshua Fogel, during Japan's occupation of Nánjīng between 200,000 and 300,000 Chinese civilians were killed, either in group massacres or individual murders. Within the first month, at least 20,000 women between the ages of 11 and 76 were brutally raped. Women who attempted to refuse or children who interfered were often bayoneted or shot.

The Japanese, however, underestimated the Chinese. Instead of breaking the people's will, the invasion fuelled a sense of identity and determination. Those who did not die – broken as jade – survived to fight back.

Iris Chang's highly acclaimed *The Rape of Nanjing* details the atrocities suffered by Chinese civilians under the occupation of the Japanese. The dark nature of the massacre seemed to have played heavily on Chang and she later committed suicide. But Chang wasn't the first suicide linked to massacre: Minnie Vautrin, an American missionary, killed herself after the massacre.

the 'spirit path', lined with stone statues of lions, camels, elephants and horses. There's also a mythical animal called a *xiè zhì* – which has a mane and a single horn on its head – and a *qilin*, which has a scaly body, a cow's tail, deer's hooves and one horn. These stone animals drive away evil spirits and guard the tomb.

As you enter the first courtyard, a paved pathway leads to a pavilion housing several stelae. The next gate leads to a large courtyard with the **Línghún Pagoda** (Línghún Tǎ), a mammoth rectangular stone structure. Look for the stalactites and stalagmites formed by years of water dripping down the walls. Walk through a long tunnel and up a wall, 350m in diameter, to get to a huge earth mound. Beneath this mound is the unexcavated tomb vault of Hongwu.

The area surrounding the tomb is the **Míng Xiàolǐng Scenic Area** (明孝陵风景区; Míng Xiàolǐng Fēngjǐngqū). A tree-lined pathway winds around pavilions and picnic grounds and ends at scenic **Zixiá Lake** (Zixiá Hú; admission ¥10), ideal for strolling.

**Línggǔ Temple Scenic Area** (灵谷寺风景区; Línggǔ Sì Fēngjǐng Qū; admission included with Sun Yatsen Mausoleum; ☀7am-6.30pm) The large Ming Línggǔ Temple complex has one of the most interesting

buildings in Nánjīng – the **Beamless Hall** (Wúliáng Diàn), built in 1381 entirely out of brick and stone and containing no beam supports. Buildings during the Ming dynasty were normally constructed of wood, but timber shortages meant that builders had to rely on brick. The structure has a vaulted ceiling and a large stone platform where Buddhist statues once sat. In the 1930s the hall was turned into a memorial to those who died resisting the Japanese. One of the inscriptions on the inside wall is the old Kuomintang national anthem.

A road runs on both sides of the hall and up two flights of steps to the graceful **Pine Wind Pavilion** (Sōngfēng Gé), originally dedicated to Guanyin as part of **Línggǔ Temple**. The temple itself (¥5 admission) and a memorial hall to Xuan Zang (the Buddhist monk who travelled to India and brought back the Buddhist scriptures) are close by; after you pass through the Beamless Hall, turn right and then follow the pathway. Inside the memorial hall is a golden scale model of a 13-storey wooden pagoda that contains part of Xuan Zang's skull, a sacrificial table and a portrait of the monk.

Nearby is the colourful **Línggǔ Pagoda** (Línggǔ Tǎ). This nine-storey, 60m-high, octagonal pagoda was finished in 1933 under

the direction of a US architect to remember those who died during the Kuomintang revolution. Tour bus Y2 and Y3 runs to the Línggǔ Temple from Nánjīng train station. A free shuttle bus connects the area to the Sun Yatsen Mausoleum.

### Ming Palace Ruins PARK

(明故宫; Míng Gùgōng) **Wúcháoméng Park** (Wúcháoméng Gōngyuán; Zhongshan Donglu; admission free; ☉6.30am-9.30pm), in which the Ming Palace Ruins are scattered, is a peaceful but maudlin place. Built by Hongwu, the imperial palace is said to have been a magnificent structure after which the Imperial Palace in Běijīng was modelled. Anyone familiar with the layout of the Forbidden City will see similarities in the arrangement.

You can clamber into the ruined **Meridian Gate** (Wū Mén). It's not as magnificent as its namesake portal in the Forbidden City, but it, too, once had huge walls jutting out at right angles from the main structure, along with watchtowers. Today, the park is filled with locals practicing ballroom dancing (not quite what the emperor had in mind) to dance-music soundtracks.

You can reach the Ming Palace Ruins by catching bus Y1 from Nánjīng train station or bus 9 from Zhongyang Lu. Subway line 2 stops at Míng Gùgōng (明故宫站).

### Jímíng Temple TEMPLE

(鸡鸣寺; Jímíng Sì; admission Y5; ☉7.30am-5pm winter, to 5.30pm summer) Close to the Ming walls and Xuánwǔ Lake (Xuánwǔ Hú) is the Buddhist Jímíng Temple, which was first built in AD 527 during the Three Kingdoms period. It's been rebuilt many times since, but has retained the same name (which literally translates as 'rooster crowing') since 1387. This temple is the most active temple in Nánjīng and is packed with worshippers during the Lunar New Year. The seven-story tall Yaoshífótǎ Pagoda (药师佛塔) offers views over Xuánwǔ Lake. Walk up to the rear of the temple and out onto the **city wall** (admission Y15). Tufts of grass poke out from between the stones and you can embark on a lengthy and fabulous jaunt east along the overgrown ramparts; see the boxed text on p215. Bus Y1 and 304 can get you here.

### Fūzǐ Temple TEMPLE

(夫子庙; Fūzǐ Miào; Gongyuan Jie; admission Y30; ☉9am-10pm Mon-Thu & Sun, to 10.30pm Fri & Sat; 🚶Sanshan Jie) The Confucian Fūzǐ Temple, in the south of the city in a pedes-

trian zone, was a centre of Confucian study for more than 1500 years. This temple has been damaged and rebuilt repeatedly; what you see here today are newly restored, late-Qing-dynasty structures or wholly new buildings reconstructed in traditional style.

Across from the temple complex to the east is the **Imperial Examinations History Museum** (江南贡院历史陈列馆; Jiāngnán Gòngyuàn Lìshǐ Chénlìguǎn; 1 Jinling Lu; admission Y20; ☉8.30am-10pm). This is a recent reconstruction of the building where scholars once spent months – or years – in tiny cells studying Confucian classics in preparation for civil service examinations.

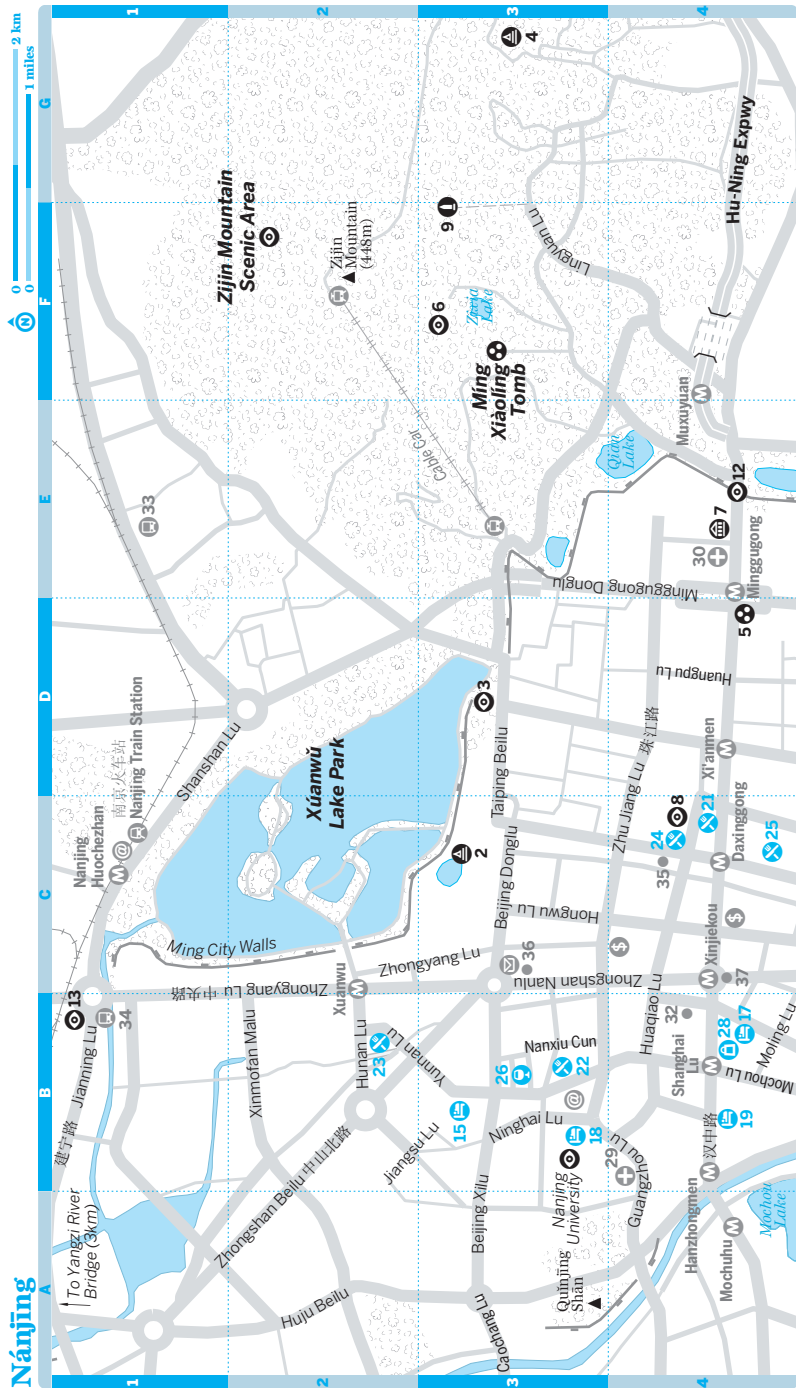
Today the area surrounding Fūzǐ Temple has become Nánjīng's main amusement quarter and is a particularly lively, crowded and fairly unattractive place. On weekends and public holidays, it seems like the whole of Nánjīng throngs here. It's littered with restaurants and rows upon rows of souvenir and fashion shops and even pet stores. The whole area is lit up at night, adding to the kitsch ambience. **Tour boats** (*yóuchuán*) leave from the dock across from the temple itself for 30-minute day (Y50 to Y60) and evening (Y60 to Y80) trips along the Qínhuái River (秦淮河; Qínhuái Hé).

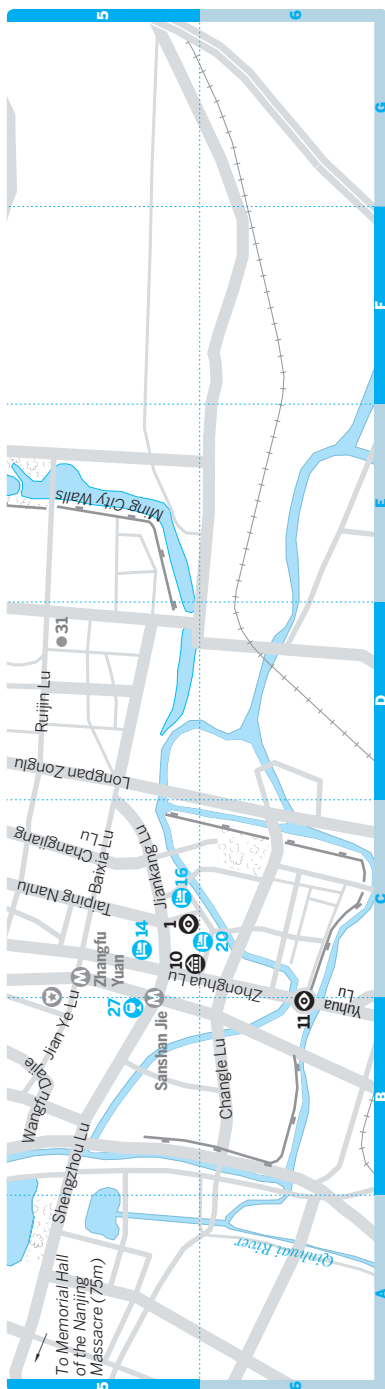
Catch bus 1 or Y2 from Xīnjiékǒu here.

### **FREE** Nánjīng Museum MUSEUM

(南京博物馆; Nánjīng Bówùguǎn; 321 Zhongshan Donglu; ☉9am-4.30pm; 🚶Mingyugong) Just east of Zhōngshān Gate, the Nánjīng Museum displays artefacts from Neolithic times right through to the communist period...when it's not under renovation. The main building was constructed in 1933 in the style of a Ming temple with yellow-glazed tiles, red-lacquered gates and columns. While this building is being tinkered with, a small collection has moved to the **Art Gallery** (艺术陈列馆; Yìshùchénlìguǎn) building next door.

The limited offerings include a haphazardly arranged collection of porcelain, textiles, bronze ware, earthen ware and folk art. Some of the 500-plus-year-old porcelain, with striking colours, looks startlingly contemporary, while a large wooden weaving machine boggles the imagination (how did they get up there to thread the looms?). Some displays are labelled in (bad) English. An example would be the 'keep quiet' notice translated as 'the subliminal of thought has started while the noisy has stopped'.





### Xuánwǔ Lake Park

PARK

(玄武湖公园; Xuánwǔhú Gōng Yuán; admission 1 Mar-1 May & 1 Sep-30 Nov Y30, 1 Dec-29 Feb & 1 Jun-31 Aug Y20; ☀7am-9pm) This verdant 530-hectare park, backing onto the Ming-dynasty city wall, has a connected network of five isles spread across its lake. Scattered on the isles are bonsai gardens, camphor and cherry-blossom trees, temples and bamboo forests. The entire lake circuit is 9.5km for those inclined to a long jaunt. For the lazy, take a languid boat ride (Y60 per hour) around the lake – just make sure your boat steers properly before taking off.

### Taiping Heavenly Kingdom History Museum

MUSEUM

(太平天国历史博物馆; Tàipíng Tiānguó Lìshǐ Bówùguǎn; 128 Zhonghua Lu; admission Y30; ☀8am-5pm; 🚏Sanshan Jie) Hong Xiuquan, the leader of the Taiping, had a palace built in Nánjīng, but the building was completely destroyed when Nánjīng was taken in 1864.

The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom History Museum (no English sign) was originally a garden complex, built in the Ming dynasty, which housed some of the Taiping officials before their downfall. There are displays of maps showing the progress of the Taiping army from Guǎngdōng, Hong Xiuquan's seals, Taiping coins, weapons and texts that describe the Taiping laws on agrarian reform, social law and cultural policy. Daily opera performances (Y70) are held in the evening.

Bus Y2 goes to the museum from the Ming Palace Ruins or Taiping Nanlu.

### Yangzi River Bridge

BRIDGE

(南京长江大桥; Nánjīng Chángjiāng Dàqiáo) Opened on 23 December 1968, the Yangzi River Bridge is one of the longest bridges in China – a double-decker with a 4500m-long road on top and a train line below. Wonderful socialist realist sculptures can be seen on the approaches. Odds are that you'll probably cross the bridge if you take a train from the north. Probably the easiest way to get up on the bridge is to go through the **Bridge Park** (Dàqiáo Gōngyuán; adult/child Y12/10; ☀7.30am-6.30pm). Catch bus 67 from Jiangsu Lu, northwest of the Drum Tower (鼓楼; Gǔlóu), to its terminus opposite the park.

### Presidential Palace

PALACE

(总统府; Zǒngtǒng Fǔ; 292 Changjiang Lu; admission Y40; ☀8am-5.30pm; 🚏Daxinggong) After the Taiping took over Nánjīng, they



## Nánjīng

## 📍 Top Sights

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Xúanwǔ Lake Park.....	C2
Zìjīn Mountain Scenic Area.....	F2

## 📍 Sights

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Imperial Examinations History Museum.....	(see 1)
<b>2</b> Jímíng Temple.....	C3
<b>3</b> Jiùhúashān Park.....	D3
<b>4</b> Línggǔ Temple.....	G3
<b>5</b> Míng Palace Ruins.....	D4
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<b>9</b> Sun Yatsen Mausoleum.....	F3
<b>10</b> Taiping Heavenly Kingdom History Museum.....	C5
<b>11</b> Zhōnghuá Gate.....	B6
<b>12</b> Zhōngshān Gate.....	E4
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<b>14</b> Jin's Inn (Fūzǐ Temple).....	C5
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<b>33</b> East Bus Station.....	E1
<b>34</b> Nánjīng Long-Distance Bus Station.....	B1
<b>35</b> Train Ticket Office.....	C4
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<b>37</b> Xīnjiēkǒu Roundabout.....	C4
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built the Mansion of the Heavenly King (Tiānwáng Fǔ) on the foundations of a former Ming-dynasty palace. This magnificent palace did not survive the fall of the Taiping, but there is a reconstruction and a classical Ming garden, now known as the Presidential Palace. Other buildings on the site were used briefly as presidential offices by Sun Yatsen's government in 1912 and by the Kuomintang from 1927 to 1949. Bus Y1 travels here.



## Festivals &amp; Events

The **Nánjīng International Plum Blossom Festival**, held yearly from the last Saturday of February to early March, takes place on Zìjīn Mountain near the Míng Xiàolíng Tomb when the mountain bursts with pink and white blossoms.

## 🛏 Sleeping

Most of Nánjīng's accommodation is mid-range to top end in price. All rooms have broadband internet, and most can help to book air and train tickets.

## Nánjīng Zhōngfáng Service Apartment

SERVICE APARTMENT \$\$

(南京中房酒店公寓; Nánjīng Zhōngfáng Jiǔdiàn Gōngyù; ☎6867 8188; www.njmyhome.com; 88 Wangfu Dajie; 王府大街88号; r Y328-368; ㊟@)

The spacious rooms at this central service apartment are great bang for buck – all come with a kitchenette, fridge and washing machine/dryer. Staff are really helpful. Only catch is that it's a little hard to find. Enter via 118 Moling Lu (秣陵路118号), turn right and head to the last building. The reception is on the 4th floor. Or ring ahead and get staff to meet you at the gate.

## MING CITY WALLS

Běijīng will be forever haunted by the communists' destruction of its awe-inspiring city walls. Xī'ān's mighty Tang-dynasty wall – which was far, far larger than its current wall – is a mere memory. Even Shànghǎi's modest city wall came down in 1912.

The same story is repeated across China, but Nánjīng's fabulous surviving city wall is a constant reminder of its former glories. The wall may be overgrown, but this neglect – in a land where historic authenticity has too often courted destruction – has helped ensure its very survival.

Perhaps the most impressive remnant of Nánjīng's Ming-dynasty golden years, the impressive, five-storey Ming bastion, measuring over 35km, is the longest city wall ever built in the world. About two-thirds of it still stands.

Built between 1366 and 1393, by more than one million labourers, the layout of the wall is irregular, an exception to the usual square format of these times; it zigzags around Nánjīng's hills and rivers, accommodating the local landscape. Averaging 12m high and 7m wide at the top, the fortification was built of bricks supplied from five Chinese provinces. Each brick had stamped on it the place it came from, the overseer's name and rank, the brick-maker's name and sometimes the date. This was to ensure that the bricks were well made; if they broke they had to be replaced. Many of these stamps remain intact.

Some of the original 13 Ming city gates remain, including the **Zhōngyāng Gate** (中央门; Zhōngyāng Mén) in the north, **Zhōnghuá Gate** (中华门; Zhōnghuá Mén; admission ¥20) in the south and **Zhōngshān Gate** (中山门; Zhōngshān Mén) in the east. The city gates were heavily fortified; built on the site of the old Tang-dynasty wall, Zhōnghuá Gate has four rows of gates, making it almost impregnable, and could house a garrison of 3000 soldiers in vaults in the front gate building. When walking through, observe the trough in either wall of the second gate, which held a vast stone gate that could be lowered into place. The gate is far more imposing than anything that has survived in Běijīng.

You can climb onto the masonry for exploration at several points. Long walks extend along the wall from Zhōngshān Gate in the east of the city and it's quite common to see locals walking their dogs or taking post-dinner walks along the weathered path; there is no charge for climbing the wall here.

One of the best places to access the gate is from the rear of Jímíng Temple. Walk to Jūhúashān Park off Taiping Beilu, looking out over huge **Xuánwú Lake Park** (玄武湖公园) and passing crumbling hillside pagodas.

### Sheraton Nánjīng Kingsley HOTEL \$\$\$

(南京金丝利喜来登酒店; Nánjīng Jīnshìlì Xīláidēng Jiǔdiàn; ☎8666 8888, 800 810 3088; www.sheraton.com/nanjing; 169 Hanzhong Lu; 汉中中路169号; d ¥1580-2080, discounts of almost 50%) The centrally located Sheraton is a dependably smart choice for business travellers, with four restaurants and two bars, indoor pool and tennis court.

### Nánshān Experts Building HOTEL \$\$

(南山专家楼; Nánshān Zhuānjiā Lóu; ☎8329 2888; 122 Ninghai Lu; 宁海路122号; s/d/tr ¥120/200/240; ☎@) Located on the lovely grounds of Nánjīng University, rooms have been tastefully redecorated with newish furniture. The campus setting is fantastic. Enter through the university's main gate, walk up the main lawn, turn left and take

the third turning on the left; it's up the hill on the left. If you get lost, just ask a student for directions.

### Jin's Inn HOTEL \$\$

(金一村; Jīnyī Cūn; ☎8375 5666; www.jin.sinn.com; 26 Yunnan Lu; 云南路26号; s/d/f ¥148/188/218; ☎) It's hard to miss this eye-popping orange-and-yellow hotel, where rooms are simple, clean and well-looked after. Free washing machine use and free internet for 30 minutes is available. The inn has stitched up the midrange market and there are 10 other branches around the city, including one just north of the Fūzǐ Temple area.

### Sunflower Youth Hostel HOTEL \$

(南京瞻园国际青年旅舍; Nánjīng Zhānyuán Guójī Qīngnián Lǚshè; ☎5226 6858; 80 Zhanyuan

Lu; 瞻园路80号; dm Y40, d Y130-150; ㊚㊚) You won't get any flowers on arrival and dorms are tight but the cosy singles and doubles have startling mosaic-tiled toilets and artwork doodled by former visitors on the yellow walls. Sadly, all the beds are thin foam on wood. The 4th-floor bar (table football, pool, movies, wi-fi) is great and it's open 24 hours. The pleasant staff are the best resource. Internet is Y5 per hour.

### Nánjīng Fúzǐmiào

#### International Youth Hostel

HOSTEL \$ (南京夫子庙国际青年旅舍; Nánjīng Fúzǐmiào Guójiè Qīngnián Lúguǎn; ☎8662 4133; 68 Pingjiangfu Lu; 平江府路68号; dm Y45-60, d & tw Y158-180; ㊚㊚) Highly popular with Chinese backpackers (so book ahead), this place by the river has friendly staff. Rooms are old but fine, although aim for one overlooking the water as the others are windowless. Offers bike rental, DVD burning and laundry, plus a small area for watching DVDs. Internet is Y5 per hour.



### Eating

The two main eating quarters in Nánjīng are at Fūzǐ Temple and Shīzǐqiáo (狮子桥) off Hunan Lu. Both are lively pedestrian areas that come alive at night, packed with people, snack stands and small restaurants. You'll also find a scattering of family-run restaurants in the small lanes around the Nánjīng University district. Shanghai Lu is home to a strip of restaurants popular with the university crowd. Near the Presidential Palace, **Nánjīng 1912** (corner Taiping Beilu and Changjiang Lu) is a compound of shiny neon-lit bars, clubs, coffee houses and upscale restaurants.

### Sichuān Jiǔjiā

SICHUANES, JIANGSU \$ (四川酒家; 171 Taiping Nanlu; meals from Y15; ☎10.30am-10.30pm) This is a terrific place to sample local dishes and rub shoulders with locals. Cheap, local dining is on the 1st floor: there's *yánshuǐ yā* (盐水鸭; Nánjīng pressed duck; Y10), *dāndànmiàn* (担担面; spicy noodles; Y3.50), *chā shāo* (叉烧; pork slices; Y10), *tèsè tāngpā* (煎饺; special soup dumplings; Y5) and *jiānjiǎo* (煎饺; fried dumplings; Y4.50), *Suāncàiyú* (酸菜鱼; fish-and-cabbage soup; Y28) and other Sichuān dishes are on the smarter, much pricier 2nd floor. There's no English sign, so look for the bright-red building and the sign with dancing chilli peppers. Order and pay at the counter, and watch the chefs bustle around the kitchen.

### A Simple Diet

(粗茶淡饭; Cūchá Dànfàn; 32 Shiziqiao; mains Y8-20; ☎11am-9pm) If stuffing your face with some of the best *xiǎolóng tāngbāo* (小笼汤包; *xiaolong* dumplings; Y14) in town constitutes a simple diet, it's time to cancel that gym membership. Dishes are displayed and prices are labelled. Get some Tsingtao (Y6) to wash it all down. Ahh, to hell with that diet.

### Great Nánjīng Eatery

JIANGSU \$\$ (南京大牌档; Nánjīng Dàpáidǎng; 2 Shiziqiao; dishes Y12-46; ☎11am-2pm & 5-11pm) This old-style teahouse is a popular place to try yummy local snacks, such as *yāxiě fēnsī tāng* (鸭血粉丝汤; duck-blood soup with rice noodles) or *dòufu nǎo* (豆腐脑; salty custardlike tofu). There's no English sign, so look for the two large stone lions out the front and the wooden bridge (!) just behind the huge red double doors.

### Yǒnghé Yuán

JIANGSU, SHANGHAINES \$ (永和园; 122 Gongyuan Jie; mains Y15; ☎8.30am-9pm) Not far from the decorative arch roughly halfway along Gongyuan Jie, this long-serving food court is low on decor but that doesn't stop the crowds from packing in. It serves a great range of tasty snacks, from *páigǔ miàn* (排骨面; spare ribs and noodles; Y15) and *xiānròu hùntun* (鲜肉馄饨; meat dumplings; Y5) to *wúxiāng dàn* (五香蛋; five-flavour eggs; Y1), *xiaolong* dumplings (Y14) and the local favourite *yāxiě fēnsī tāng* (Y8). Grab a tray, order your dishes, take them to the cashier and pay.

### Cosima Restaurant

PIZZA, TAPAS \$\$ (120 Shanghai Lu; pizza Y38-58, tapas Y6.50-48; ☎10am till late; ㊚) Part Spanish, part Italian, 100% atmosphere. There are only three tables in this tiny no-bookings restaurant so most punters end up ringing ahead to order their pizzas for takeaway. If you sit down, order some tapas and a bottle of Spanish red...you might soon forget you're in China, until someone on the next table jabs you in the ribs while lifting their pizza slice.

### Carrefour

SUPERMARKET \$ (Jiālèfú; 235 Zhongshan Donglu; ☎8am-10pm) Located underground, this French hypermarket stocks everything you would need and some things you don't (blueberry-flavoured chips).



## Drinking

Nánjīng's bar and club scene has exploded over the past few years, though it's still not as vibrant or imaginative as in Shànghǎi. There are bars and clubs in **Nánjīng 1912** (corner Taipei Beilu and Changjiang Lu).

### Behind the Wall

BAR

(答案; Dá'án; 150 Shanghai Lu; pint Y30; ☎) Very laid-back and comfortable with outside seating, convivial atmosphere and draught beer. A talented guitar duo performs most nights. The bar doubles as a Mexican restaurant and servings (from Y48) are huge. It's literally 'behind the wall'.

### Finnegans Wake

BAR

(cnr Shengzhou & Zhongshan Nan Lu; Guinness draft pint Y68; ☎10am-4am) Great, if pricey, food and drinks. Guinness on tap and an Irish bartender who also belts out the tunes. Quiet except for the weekends and Monday (half-price burgers). *Don't* try the chilli vodka unless you want to spend the night writhing on the ground.



## Shopping

The area surrounding **Fūzǐ Temple** is a pedestrian zone with souvenirs, clothing, shoes, antiques and even animals for sale. You'll find many major department stores around Hanzhong Lu and Zhongshan Lu. These are some of the more popular malls:

### Aqua City

MALL

(水游城; Shuǐ Yóu Chéng; 1 Jiankang Lu) No water in sight but Nánjīng's newest mall is packed with midrange name brands.

### Deji Plaza

MALL

(德基广场; Déjī Guǎngchǎng; 89 Hanzhong Lu) Top brands such as Louis Vuitton. Cinema on top floor.

### Foreign Languages Bookstore

BOOKSHOP

(外文书店; Wàiwén Shūdiàn; 218 Zhongshan Donglu; ☎9am-7pm)

### Popular Book Mall

BOOKSHOP

(大众书局; Dàzhòng Shūjú; Xīnjiekǒu; ☎9am-9pm) Has a range of English fiction on the 4th floor.



## Information

### Internet Access

**Internet cafe** (网吧; wǎngbā; per hr Y4; ☎24hr) In an alley between KFC and McDonald's at Nánjīng train station.

**Jīnsuǒ Internet Cafe** (金锁网络; Jīnsuǒ Wǎngluò; 85 Shanghai Lu; per hr Y3; ☎24hr)

## Internet resources

**Nanjing Expats** ([www.nanjingexpat.com](http://www.nanjingexpat.com)) Active forum, events and listings in Nánjīng. It also distributes a magazine around the city.

## Media

**Map** ([www.mapmagazine.com.cn](http://www.mapmagazine.com.cn)) Expat listings magazine.

**Nanjing Expats** ([www.nanjingexpat.com](http://www.nanjingexpat.com)) Another expat listings magazine available at restaurants and bars.

## Medical services

**Jiāngsū People's Hospital** (江苏省人民医院; Jiāngsū Shèng Rénmín Yīyuàn; ☎8371 8836; 300 Guangzhou Lu; ☎8am-noon & 2-5.30pm) Runs a clinic for expats and has English-speaking doctors available.

**Nánjīng International SOS Clinic** (南京国际 SOS 紧急救援诊所; Nánjīng Guójí SOS Jǐnjí Jiùyuán Zhěnsuǒ; ☎8480 2842, 24hr alarm centre 010 6462 9100) On the ground floor of the Grand Metropark Hotel. Staff on duty speak English.

## Money

An ATM taking international cards can be found in the Sheraton Nánjīng Kingsley. Most bank ATMs are open 24 hours and take international cards. Banks below change major currency and travellers cheques.

**Bank of China** (中国银行; Zhōngguó Yínháng; 29 Hongwu Lu; ☎8am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 12.30pm Sat)

**Bank of China** (中国银行; Zhōngguó Yínháng; 148 Zhonghua Lu; ☎8am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 12.30pm Sat)

## Post

**China Post** (中国邮政; Zhōngguó Yóuzhèng; 2 Zhongshan Nanlu; ☎8am-6.30pm) Postal services and international phone calls.

## Public Security Bureau

(PSB; 公安局; Gōng'ānjú) On a small lane called Sanyuan Xiang down a nest of streets west off Zhongshan Nanlu.

## Travel Agencies

Most hotels have their own travel agencies and can book tickets for a service charge. They can also arrange tours around town and to neighbouring sights.

**China International Travel Service** (CITS; 中国国际旅行社; Zhōngguó Guójí Lǚxíngshè; ☎8342 1125; 202 Zhongshan Beilu; ☎9am-4pm) Across from the Nánjīng Hotel; arranges tours, and books air and train tickets.

## **i** Getting There & Away

### Air

Nánjīng has regular air connections to all major Chinese cities. The main office for the **Civil Aviation Administration of China** (CAAC; 中国民航; Zhōngguó Mínháng; ☎8449 9378; 50 Ruijin Lu) is near the terminus of bus 37, but you can also buy tickets at most top-end hotels.

**Dragonair** (港龙航空; Gǎnglóng Hángkōng; ☎8471 0181; Room 751-53, World Trade Centre, 2 Hanzhong Lu) has daily flights to Hong Kong.

### Boat

Several ferries depart daily from Yangzi port downriver (eastward) to Shànghǎi (about 10 hours) and upriver (westward) to Wūhàn (two days); a few boats also go to Chóngqīng (five days). The passenger dock is in the northwest of the city at **No 6 dock** (六号码头; Liù Hào Mǎtóu). Tickets can be booked at the dock in the terminal building.

### Bus

Of Nánjīng's numerous long-distance bus stations, **Nánjīng long-distance bus station** (南京门长途汽车站; Nánjīng Chángtú Qíchēzhàn; ☎8533 1288) is the largest, located southwest of the wide-bridged intersection with Zhongyang Lu. It is sometimes referred to as the Zhōngyángmén long distance station. Regular buses departing from here:

**Hángzhōu** Y100, four hours

**Héféi** Y45, 2½ hours

**Huángshān** (Túnxi) Y76, four hours

**Shànghǎi** Y95, four hours

**Sūzhōu** Y70, 2½ hours

Buses departing the **east bus station** (长途汽车东站; chángtú qíchē dōngzhàn):

**Sūzhōu** Y70, three hours

**Wúxi** Y17, 1½ hours

**Yángzhōu** Y34, 1½ hours

**Zhènjiāng** Y24, 1½ hours

From Nánjīng train station, take bus 13 north to Zhōngyángmén long-distance bus station. Bus 2 from Xīnjiékǒu goes to the east bus station. A taxi from town will cost Y20 to Y25 to either station.

### Train

Nánjīng is a major stop on the Běijīng–Shànghǎi train line, and **Nánjīng train station** (☎8582 2222) is mayhem. Heading eastward from Nánjīng, the line to Shànghǎi connects with Zhènjiāng, Wúxi and Sūzhōu. Some trains may terminate at Nánjīng west train station (南京西站; Nánjīng xīzhàn), so check when you buy your ticket.

More than 10 daily express D trains run between Nánjīng and Shànghǎi (Y80, 2½ hours), stopping at Sūzhōu (Y33, two hours). There are six D trains to Běijīng (Y274, 8½ hours). There are two D trains to Hángzhōu (Y114, five hours) that go via Shànghǎi. Regular trains also go to Huángshān City (Túnxi) in Ānhuī province (Y54 to Y159, seven hours).

A slow train to Guǎngzhōu (Y238 to Y658, 28 hours, three daily) goes via Shànghǎi.

Try to get tickets via your hotel or the **train ticket office** (火车票售票处; huǒchēpiào shòupiàochù; 2 Zhongshan Nanlu; ☎8.30am–5pm) on the 3rd floor of the post office, and the **train ticket office** (huǒchēpiào shòupiàochù; 35 Taiping Beilu) on Taiping Beilu.

## **i** Getting Around

### To/From the Airport

Nánjīng's Lùkǒu airport is approximately one hour south of the city. Buses (Y25) run to the airport every 30 minutes between 6am and 7.30pm from the **Zhongshan Nanlu bus station** (中山南路客运站; Zhōngshān Nánlù Kèyùnzhàn) next to the Sanshan Jie subway station (三山街). Most hotels have hourly shuttle buses to and from the airport. A taxi will cost around Y125.

### Public Transport

Nánjīng has an efficient **metro system** that cuts through the city centre. Line No 1 runs from Mǎigāoqiáo in the north to the Olympic Sports Stadium in the southwest between 6.41am and 10pm. Line No 2 opened mid-2010 and makes getting to some sights more convenient. It goes east from Jīngtiānlù to Yóufāngqiáo in the west. Tickets are Y2 to Y4.

You can get to Xīnjiékǒu, in the heart of town, by jumping on bus 13 from Nánjīng train station or from Zhōngyāng Gate. There are also tourist bus routes that visit many of the sights:

**Bus Y1** Goes from Nánjīng train station and Nánjīng long-distance bus station through the city to the Sun Yatsen Mausoleum.

**Bus Y2** Starts in the south at the Martyrs' Cemetery (烈士墓地; Lièshì Mùdì), passes Fūzǐ Temple and terminates halfway up Zījīn Mountain.

**Bus Y3** Passes by Nánjīng train station en route to the Míng Xiǎolíng Tomb and Línggǔ Temple.

**Bus 16** Links the Fūzǐ Temple area and Nánjīng west train station (南京西站; Nánjīng xīzhàn), passing by the Drum Tower (鼓楼; Gǔlóu).

Many local maps contain bus routes. Normal buses cost Y1 and tourist buses cost Y2.

### Taxi

Taxi fares start at Y9 and it's Y2.40 for each 3km thereafter. Trips to most destinations in the city are Y10 to Y14. Taxis are easy to flag down anywhere in the city.

## Around Nánjīng

On Qìxiá Mountain, 22km northeast of Nánjīng, **Qìxiá Temple** (栖霞寺; Qìxiá Sì; admission Y20; ☉7am-5.30pm) was founded by the Buddhist monk Ming Sengshao during the Southern Qi dynasty, and is still an active place of worship. It's long been one of China's most important monasteries, and even today is one of the largest Buddhist seminaries in the country. In mid-2010, relics believed to be part of the skull of Gautama Buddha were unveiled and interred here. There are two main temple halls: the Maitreya Hall, with a statue of the Maitreya Buddha sitting cross-legged at the entrance; and, behind this one, the Vairocana Hall, housing a 5m-tall statue of the Vairocana Buddha.

Behind Qìxiá Temple is the **Thousand Buddha Cliff** (Qiānfó Yá). Several small caves housing stone statues are carved into the hillside, the earliest of which dates as far back as the Qi dynasty (AD 479–502), although there are others from succeeding dynasties through to the Ming. There is also a small stone pagoda, **Shèli Pagoda** (舍利; Shèli Tǎ), which was built in AD 601, and rebuilt during the late Tang period. The upper part has engraved sutras and carvings of Buddha; around the base, each of the pagoda's eight sides depicts Sakyamuni.

The temple is built on a scenic area, and if you continue northwards there's a whole heap of areas behind the temple to stop and admire. The (sometimes steep) path meanders along an array of pavilions and rocky outcrops which you climb between. The entire area is rather serene and you could bring your lunch and spend the better part of your day here.

You can reach this temple from Nánjīng by a public bus (南上, Nán Shàng, Y2.50, one hour) that departs from a station beside the Nánjīng train station. When you get off the bus, you will be approached by motorcycle taxis that will offer to take you into the temple the 'back' way for Y10. Be warned, it's an arduous hike up and down a large hill to the temple if you take this option.

## Sūzhōu

## 苏州

☎0512 / POP 1.6 MILLION

Sūzhōu's fame was immortalised in the proverb 'In heaven there is paradise, on earth Sūzhōu and Hángzhōu' – a line still

very much plugged in the tourist campaigns. Sadly, this isn't nearly the case anymore. Communist rule has spawned some mightily unattractive cities and disfigured many more, and like all modern Chinese towns, Sūzhōu has had to contend with destruction of its heritage and its replacement with largely arbitrary chunks of modern architecture. But while you won't fall for its hackneyed 'Venice-of-the-East' chat-up line, Sūzhōu – described by Marco Polo as one of the most beautiful cities in China – still contains enough pockets of charm to warrant two to three days' exploration. It's not uncommon for visitors to end up staying for over a week, such is the charm of its canals and gardens.

Sūzhōu's gardens, a symphonic combination of rocks, water, trees and buildings, reflect the Chinese appreciation of balance and harmony. You could easily spend an enjoyable several days wandering through gardens, visiting some excellent museums, and exploring some of Sūzhōu's surviving canal scenes, pagodas and humpbacked bridges.

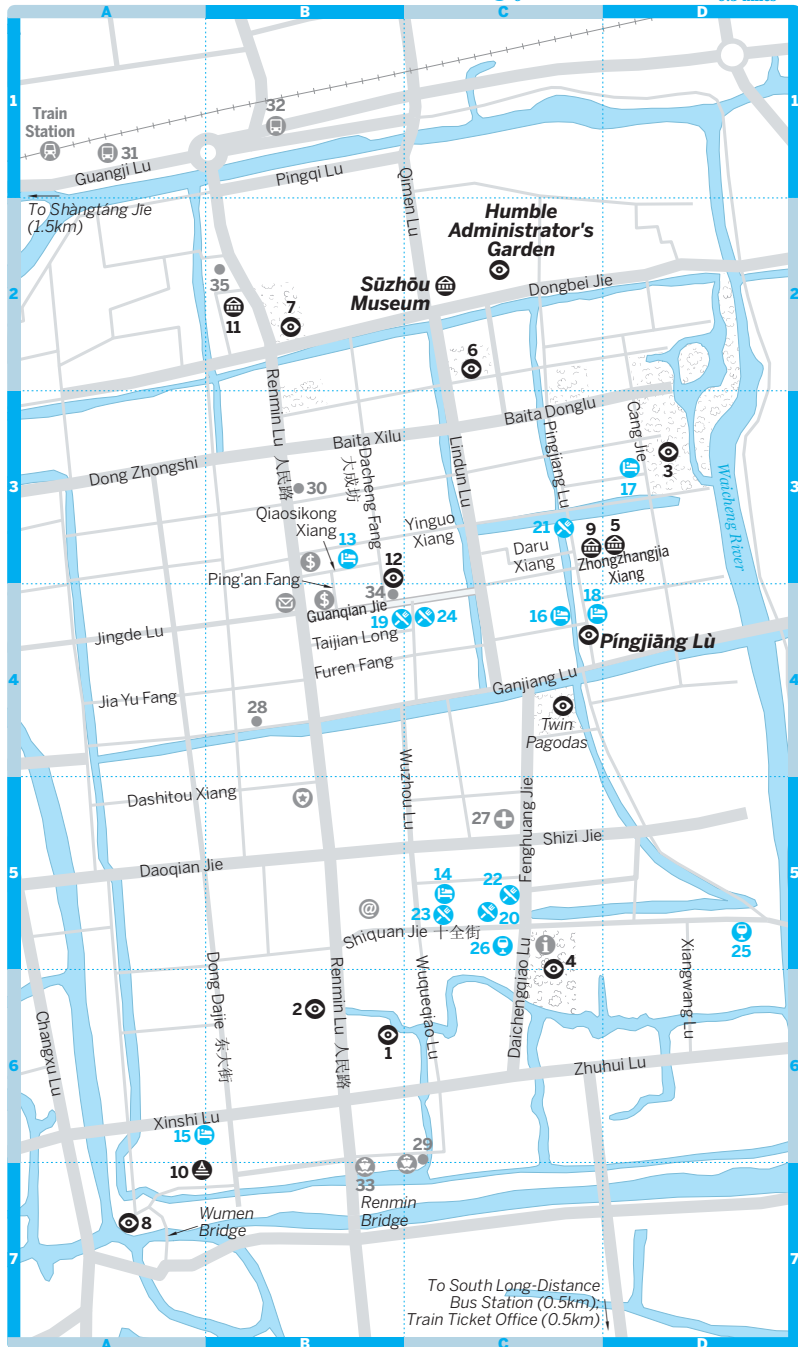
### History

Dating back some 2500 years, Sūzhōu is one of the oldest towns in the Yangzi Basin. With the completion of the Grand Canal during the Sui dynasty, Sūzhōu began to flourish as a centre of shipping and grain storage, bustling with merchants and artisans.

By the 14th century, Sūzhōu had become China's leading silk-producing city. Aristocrats, pleasure seekers, famous scholars, actors and painters arrived, constructing villas and garden retreats.

The town's winning image as a 'Garden City' or a 'Venice of the East' drew from its medieval blend of woodblock guilds and embroidery societies, whitewashed housing, cobbled streets, tree-lined avenues and canals. The local women were considered the most beautiful in China, largely thanks to the mellifluous local accent, and the city was home to a variety of rich merchants and bookish scholars...no doubt drawn by the beautiful women.

In 1860 Taiping troops took the town without a blow and in 1896 Sūzhōu was opened to foreign trade, with Japanese and other international concessions. Since 1949 much of the historic city, including its city walls, has vanished (yes, blame development and the Cultural Revolution).



## Sūzhōu

## 🕒 Top Sights

Humble Administrator's Garden.....	C2
Píngjiāng Lù.....	C4
Sūzhōu Museum.....	C2

## 🕒 Sights

1 Blue Wave Pavilion.....	B6
2 Confucian Temple.....	B6
3 Couple's Garden.....	D3
4 Garden of the Master of the Nets.....	C5
5 Kūnqū Opera Museum.....	D3
6 Lion's Grove Garden.....	C2
7 North Temple Pagoda.....	B2
8 Pán Gate.....	A7
9 Píngtán Museum.....	C3
10 Ruìguāng Pagoda.....	A7
11 Sūzhōu Silk Museum.....	B2
12 Temple of Mystery.....	B3

## 🏠 Sleeping

13 Hotel Soul.....	B3
14 Nánlín Hotel.....	C5
15 Pan Pacific Sūzhōu.....	A6
16 Píngjiāng Lodge.....	C4
17 Sūzhōu Joya Youth Hostel.....	D3
18 Sūzhōu Mingtown Youth Hostel.....	C4

## 🍴 Eating

19 Déyuè Lóu.....	B4
20 Píngtán Teahouse.....	C5
21 Píngvōn.....	C3
22 Xīshèngyuán.....	C5
23 Yàkèxī.....	C5
24 Zhūhóngxìng Miànguǎn.....	C4

## 🍷 Drinking

25 Bookworm.....	D5
26 Jane's Pub.....	C5

## Entertainment

Garden of the Master of the Nets.....	(see 4)
Kūnqū Opera Museum.....	(see 5)
Píngtán Museum.....	(see 9)

## Information

27 No 1 Hospital.....	C5
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## Transport

28 China Eastern Airlines.....	B4
29 Grand Canal Boat Ticket Office.....	C6
30 Liánhé Ticket Centre.....	B3
31 Local Buses.....	A1
32 North Long-Distance Bus Station.....	B1
33 Sūzhōu to Hángzhōu Boat Wharf.....	B7
34 Train Ticket Office (Guanqian Jie).....	B4
35 Yángyáng Bike Rental Shop.....	B2

## 👁 Sights &amp; Activities

Children under 1.2m get in for half-price to all gardens and into other sights for free. High-season prices listed are applicable from March to early May and September to October. Gardens and museums stop selling tickets 30 minutes before closing.

**FREE** **Sūzhōu Museum** MUSEUM  
(苏州博物馆; Sūzhōu Bówùguǎn; 204

Dongbei Jie; audioguide Y30; ☀9am-5pm) This IM Pei—designed museum is a soothing contrast of water, bamboo and straight lines in a stunning geometric interpretation of a Sūzhōu garden. Inside is a fascinating array of jade, ceramics, wooden carvings, textiles and other displays, all with good English captions. Look out for the Boxwood statue of Avalokitesvara (Guanyin), dating from the republican period. An in-depth look at the scholars and their lifestyle of the period is particular fascinating (containers for crickets? A mahogany birdcage with a dainty porcelain water cup? Did these guys actu-

ally do any study?). Draconian entry rules apply: flip-flops wearers get turned away. Come early as there are limited 'tickets' each day.

## Garden of the Master of the Nets

CLASSICAL GARDEN

(网师园; Wǎngshī Yuán; high/low season Y30/20; ☀7.30am-5pm) Off Shiquan Jie, this pocket-sized garden, the smallest in Sūzhōu, is considered one of the best preserved in the city. It was laid out in the 12th century, went to seed and was later restored in the 18th century as part of the home of a retired official turned fisherman (thus the name). The central section is the main garden. The western section is an inner garden where a courtyard contains the **Spring Rear Cottage** (Diànchūn Yì), the master's study.

The most striking feature of this garden is its use of space: the labyrinth of courtyards, with windows framing other parts of the garden, is ingeniously designed to give the illusion of a much larger area. Trivia



nuts: the **Peony Study** is used as the model for the Astor Court and Ming Garden in the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

There are two ways to the entry gate, with English signs and souvenir stalls marking the way: you can enter from the alley on Shiquan Jie or via Kuòjiatōu Xiàng (闊家头巷), an alley off Daichengqiao Lu. Music performances are held for tourists in the evening (see p226).

### Humble Administrator's Garden

CLASSICAL GARDEN

(拙政园; Zhuōzhèng Yuán; 178 Dongbei Jie; high/low season Y70/50, audioguide free; ☀7.30am-5.30pm) First built in 1509, this 5.2-hectare garden is clustered with water features, a museum, a teahouse and at least 10 pavilions such as 'the listening to the sound of rain' and 'the faraway looking' pavilions – hardly humble, we know. It is the largest of all the gardens and considered by many to be the most impressive. With its zigzagging bridges, pavilions, bamboo groves and fragrant lotus ponds, it should be an ideal place for a leisurely stroll...sadly you'll have to battle with crowds for right of way!

### Lion's Grove Garden

CLASSICAL GARDEN

(獅子林; Shīzi Lín; 23 Yuanlin Lu; high/low season Y30/20; ☀7.30am-5.30pm) Near the Humble Administrator's Garden is the Lion's Grove Garden, constructed in 1342 by the Buddhist monk Tianru to commemorate his master, who lived on Lion Cliff in Zhèjiāng's Tianm' Mountain. The garden is most notable for its legion of curiously shaped rocks, meant to resemble lions, protectors of the Buddhist faith. If the Humble Administrator's Garden was crowded, get ready to be pushed along by the tide of tourists here.

### Garden to Linger In

CLASSICAL GARDEN

(留园; Liú Yuán; 79 Liuyuan Lu; high/low season Y40/30; ☀7.30am-5pm) One of the largest gardens in Sūzhōu, this 3-hectare garden was originally built in the Ming dynasty by a doctor as a relaxing place for his recovering patients. It's easy to see why the patients took to the place: the winding corridors are inlaid with calligraphy from celebrated masters, their windows and doorways opening onto unusually shaped rockeries, ponds and dense clusters of bamboo. Stone tablets hang from the walls, inscribed by patients recording their impressions of the place. The teahouse is a fantastic place to recover from crowd overload. Order a cup

of *lóngjǐng* (龙井; Y15) and feel time slow down.

The garden is about 3km west of the city centre and can be reached on tourist bus Y1 from the train station or Renmin Lu.

### West Garden Temple

CLASSICAL GARDEN

(西园寺; Xīyuán Sì; Xiyuan Lu; admission Y25; ☀8am-5pm) This attractive temple was once part of the Garden to Linger In, but was given to a Buddhist temple in the early 17th century. The West Garden Temple, with its mustard-yellow walls and gracefully curved eaves, was burnt to the ground during the Taiping Rebellion and rebuilt in the late 19th century.

Greeting you upon entering the magnificent **Arhat Hall** (罗汉堂; Luóhàn Táng) within the temple is a stunning four-faced and thousand-armed statue of Guanyin, leading to mesmerising and slightly unnerving rows of 500 glittering *luóhàn* (Buddhists, especially a monk who has achieved enlightenment and passes to nirvana at death) – each one unique and near life-size. Kids might get scared.

There's a fantastic **vegetarian restaurant** serving noodles (Y7 to Y9).

### Old Streets

(Pingjiāng Lù & Shàngtáng Jie) OLD STREETS

While most of the canals in the city have been sealed and paved into roads, there are two outstanding areas which give visitors a clue to Suzhou's 'Venice of the East' moniker. On the eastern side of the city, **Pingjiāng Lù** (平江路) is undoubtedly the prettier and more popular of the two. This pedestrian road (watch out for electric bikes though!) is set alongside a canal. White-washed local houses and trendy cafes selling overpriced lattes sit comfortably side-by-side – locals wring their dirty mops into the canal and are completely oblivious to the hordes of tourist jostling to get their *National Geographic*-worthy snapshots. Had enough of makeover studios and Tsingtao-swilling tourists? Duck down some of the side streets that jut out from the main path for a glimpse at the slow-paced local life.

At the foot of Tiger Hill is the start of a grittier version of Pingjiāng Lù. **Shàngtáng Jie** (上塘街) eschews espresso and beer for tacky souvenir shops but keep on walking and the dross is soon replaced by grimy Ming- and Qing-dynasty houses and locals pottering about. Sure, it lacks the touristy sheen but there's just something about the dirty cobblestone paths that ap-

peals. You can get a ticket (¥45) to several tourist spots including old residences, but you can do without that. The walk will take you 2.5km down to Xizhōngshì at the edge of central Sūzhōu. Boat rides along the canal are ¥34 to ¥45, but why miss out on all the close action?

### Blue Wave Pavilion

CLASSICAL GARDEN

(沧浪亭; Cānglàng Tíng; Renmin Lu; high/low season ¥20/15; ☉7.30am-5pm) Overgrown and wild, the 1-hectare garden around the Blue Wave Pavilion is one of Sūzhōu's oldest. The buildings date from the 11th century, although they have been repeatedly rebuilt. The entrance sits across a bridge that straddles the small lake out the front. Originally the home of a prince, the property passed into the hands of the scholar Su Zimei, who named it after a poem by Qu Yuan (340–278 BC).

Lacking a northern wall, the garden creates the illusion of space by borrowing scenes from the outside. A double verandah out the front pavilion wends its way along a canal. From the outer path, you'll see green space inside and from the inner path you can see views of the water. Look out for a 'temple' whose dark walls are carved with the portraits of over 500 sages, and the 'pure fragrance house' has some impressive furniture made from the gnarled roots of banyan trees.

### FREE Confucian Temple

TEMPLE

(文庙; Wénmiào; 613 Renmin Lu; ☉8.30-11am & 12.30-4.30pm) The main building of this former Confucian Temple is currently under renovation and should look stunning when complete. Visitors are still able to enter the compound and should look out for some fabulous stelae carved during the Southern Song dynasty (1137–1279). One features a map of old Sūzhōu – it details the canal system (much of which is now paved over and blocked), old roads and the city walls dating to 1229. Surprisingly, the whole city grid is relatively unchanged from 800 years ago. There's also an astronomy stelae from 1190 – one of the oldest astronomy charts in the world.

### Sūzhōu Silk Museum

MUSEUM

(丝绸博物馆; Sūzhōu Sīchóu Bówùguǎn; 2001 Renmin Lu; admission ¥15; ☉9am-5pm) Sūzhōu was the place for silk production and weaving, and the Sūzhōu Silk Museum houses a number of fascinating exhibitions that detail the history of Sūzhōu's 4000-year-old

silk industry. Exhibits include a section on silk-weaving techniques and a room with live silk worms munching away on mulberry leaves and spinning cocoons. There are many functioning looms and its not uncommon to see staff at work on, say, a large brocade. Magnificent. Many of the captions are in English.

### North Temple Pagoda

PAGODA

(北寺塔; Běisī Tǎ; 1918 Renmin Lu; admission ¥25; ☉7.45am-5.30pm) The tallest pagoda south of the Yangzi, at nine storeys North Temple Pagoda dominates the northern end of Renmin Lu. Climb it for sweeping views of hazy modern-day Sūzhōu.

The temple complex goes back 1700 years and was originally a residence; the current reincarnation dates back to the 17th century. Off to the side is **Nánmù Guānyīn Hall** (Nánmù Guānyīn Diàn), which was rebuilt in the Ming dynasty with some features imported from elsewhere.

### Pán Gate

ANCIENT WALL

(盘门; Pán Mén; 1 Dong Dajie; admission Pán Gate only/with Ruiguāng Pagoda ¥25/31; ☉7.30am-6pm) Straddling the outer moat in the southwest corner of the city, this stretch of the city wall has Sūzhōu's only remaining original coiled gate, Pán Gate, which dates from 1355. This overgrown gate, actually really a wall, straddles the canal and it's the only remaining land-and-water gate in China. The double-walled water gate was used for controlling waterways and has many defensive positions at the top. From the atmospheric gate, you can spy the exquisite arched Wúmén Bridge (Wúmén Qiáo) to the east and there are great views of the moat and the crumbling **Ruiguāng Pagoda** (瑞光塔; Ruiguāng Tǎ), constructed in 1004. The pagoda can be climbed. The gate is also connected to 300m of the ancient city wall which visitors can walk along.

To get there, take tourist bus Y5 from the train station or Changxu Lu.

### Tiger Hill

HILL PARK

(虎丘山; Hǔqiū Shān; Huqiu Lu; admission high/low season ¥60/40; ☉7.30am-6pm, to 5pm winter) In the far northwest of town, Tiger Hill is popular with local tourists. The hill itself is artificial and is the final resting place of He Lu, founding father of Sūzhōu. He Lu died in the 6th century BC and myths have coalesced around him – he is said to have been buried with a collection of 3000 swords and to be guarded by a white tiger.

The most popular point (and a sort of beacon drawing the visitors) is the leaning **Cloud Rock Pagoda** (云岩塔; Yúnyán Tǎ) atop Tiger Hill. The octagonal seven-storey pagoda, also known as Hūiqū Pagoda, was built in the 10th century entirely of brick, an innovation in Chinese architecture at the time. The pagoda began tilting over 400 years ago, and today the highest point is displaced more than 2m from its original position. Comparisons by local guides to the Leaning Tower of Pisa are inevitable though the tower cannot be climbed.

Tourist buses Y1 and Y2 from the train station go to Tiger Hill.

### Couple's Garden

CLASSICAL GARDEN

(耦园; Ōu Yuán; high/low season Y20/15; ☀8am-4.30pm) The tranquil Couple's Garden is off the main tourist route and sees fewer visitors (a relative concept in China), though the gardens, pond and courtyards are quite lovely. Surrounding the garden on Píngjiāng Lù are some fine examples of traditional Sūzhōu architecture, bridges and canals. Short boat rides (Y10) launch from the private dock at the rear of the compound.

### FREE Kūnqū Opera Museum

MUSEUM

(戏曲博物馆; Xìqǔ Bówùguǎn; 14 Zhongzhangjia Xiang; ☀8.30am-4pm) Down a warren of narrow lanes, the small Kūnqū Opera Museum is dedicated to *kūnqū*, the opera style of the region. The beautiful old theatre houses a stage, old musical instruments, costumes and photos of famous performers. It also puts on occasional performances of *kūnqū*. and *shūoshū* (story-telling).

### Píngtán Museum

MUSEUM

(评弹博物馆; Píngtán Bówùguǎn; 3 Zhongzhangjia Xiang; admission Y4; ☀8.30am-4pm) Up the same street, west of the Kūnqū Opera Museum, is the Píngtán Museum, which puts on wonderful performances of *píngtán*, a singing and storytelling art form sung in the Sūzhōu dialect. Shows are at 1.30pm daily.

### Temple of Mystery

TEMPLE

(玄妙观; Xuánmiào Guàn; Guanqian Jie; admission Y10, incl performance Y30; ☀7.30am-5.30pm) The Taoist Temple of Mystery stands in what was once Sūzhōu's old bazaar, a rowdy entertainment district with travelling showmen, acrobats and actors. The temple's present surroundings of Guanqian Jie are just as boisterous, but the cur-

rent showmen are more likely to sell you a fake designer watch than balance plates on their heads.

The temple was founded during the Jin dynasty in the 3rd century AD, and restored many times over its long history. The complex contains several elaborately decorated halls, including **Sānqīng Diàn** (Three Purities Hall), which is supported by 60 pillars and capped by a double roof with upturned eaves. The temple dates from 1181 and is the only surviving example of Song architecture in Sūzhōu. Your extra Y20 buys you a short music and cymbal performance.

### Tours

Evening boat tours wind their way around the outer canal leaving nightly from 7pm to 8.30pm (Y35, 80 minutes, half-hourly). The trips are good fun and a great way to experience old Sūzhōu. Remember to bring bug repellent as the mosquitos are tenacious. Tickets can be bought at the port near Rénmín Bridge, which shares the same quarters with the Grand Canal boat ticket office (划船售票处; Huáchuán Shòupíào chù).

### Festivals & Events

Every September Sūzhōu hosts the **Sūzhōu Silk Festival**. There are exhibitions devoted to silk history and production, and silk merchants get to show off their wares to crowds of thousands.

### Sleeping

Sūzhōu has little to offer in the way of cheap accommodation. Hotels, in general, are terribly overpriced for what you get. On a more positive note, it's often possible to bargain room prices down, so don't be immediately deterred by the posted rates.

### Sūzhōu Mingtown Youth Hostel

HOSTEL \$

(苏州浮生四季青年旅舍; Sūzhōu Míngtāng Qīngnián Lúshè; ☎6581 6869; 28 Pingjiang Lu; 平江路28号; 6-bed dm Y50, r Y140-180; ㊟㊟) Sūzhōu's most pleasant youth hostel by a long shot, this lovely place is located canal-side in a traditional part of town rich in old-world flavour (if you overlook the trendy cafes). No effort has been spared to create an elegant atmosphere, and even dorms come with dark wooden 'antique' furniture. The only thing that bugs us is hot water: it's only on in the mornings and after 7pm. There's free internet, free washing, and bike rental (Y10 for four hours); the inhouse Mingtown Cafe is next door.

**Pingjiang Lodge**

BOUTIQUE HOTEL \$\$\$

(苏州平江客栈; Sūzhōu Pingjiāng Kèzhàn; ☎6523 2888; www.pingjianglodge.com; 33 Niujia Xiang; 钮家巷33号; r Y988-2588, discounts of up to 50%; ㊟) Fab little hotel spread across two 400-year-old residences. There are well-kept gardens, quiet courtyards and rooms are splashed out in traditional furniture. Rooms at the pointy end are suites with split-level living spaces and beautiful bathrooms. Standard rooms are lovely too.

**Pan Pacific Sūzhōu**

HOTEL \$\$\$

(苏州吴宫泛太平洋酒店; Sūzhōu Wúgōng Fàntáipíngyáng Dàjiūdiàn; ☎6510 3388; www.panpacific.com/Suzhou; 259 Xinshi Lu; 新市路259号; d Y1268) While this former Sheraton hotel has been rebranded, its five-star luxury still makes the grade. We can't decide if the place looks like the Forbidden City or the US Embassy, but its pseudo-Ming-style rooms are luxurious and fitted with all the latest gadgets to make you happy. Porcelain vases and a small garden connected to each room are nice touches that you won't see elsewhere.

**Sūzhōu Joya Youth Hostel**

HOSTEL \$

(苏州小雅国际青年旅舍; Sūzhōu Xiǎoyǎ Guóji Qīngnián Lúshè; ☎6755 1752; www.joyahostel.com; 1/21 Daxinqiao Xiang; 大新桥巷1/21号; dm/d/tr Y60/120/180; ㊟) A good alternative if Mingtown is booked out. Joya is set off the main strip in a quiet lane in an 1883 residence, complete with floral lattice windows and many original wooden beams. Rooms are small, but have high ceilings and open out onto courtyards. Wi-fi, internet (Y3 per hour) and bike rental.

**Hotel Soul**

HOTEL \$\$\$

(苏哥李酒店; Sūgēlǐ Jiūdiàn; ☎6777 0777; www.hotelsoul.com.cn; 27-33 Qiaosikong Xiang; 乔司空巷27-33号, d & tw Y1080-1680; ㊟) This brand-spanking-new Philippe Starck-wannabe has a lot of sharp angles and neon blue lights but not much soul. It is, however, very good value. Rooms are huge with textured wallpaper, plush beds and tones that make you want to order a martini. Service staff are eager and attentive. There were buy one night, get one night free specials during the time of research.

**Nánlín Hotel**

HOTEL \$\$

(南林饭店; Nánlín Fàndiàn; ☎6519 6333; 20 Gunxiufang; 滚绣坊20号; d incl breakfast Y1380) Set in a large, tree-filled compound entered off Shiquan Jie and surrounded by gardens, the tasteful rooms in this modern hotel are

dressed in shades of mahogany and cream. Management is courteous and helpful. Discounts knocked rooms down to Y588 during time of research.

**Eating**

Plentiful restaurants can be found along Guanqian Jie, especially down the road from the Temple of Mystery. Shiquan Jie, between Daichengqiao Lu and Xiangwang Lu, is lined with bars, restaurants and bakeries.

Some local delicacies to try are *sōngshǔ guàiyú* (松鼠鳜鱼; sweet-and-sour mandarin fish), *xiāngyóu shàn hú* (香油鳝糊; stewed shredded eel) and *xīguā jī* (西瓜鸡; chicken placed in watermelon rind and steamed).

**Pingvon**

TEAHOUSE \$

(品芳; Pinfāng; 94 Pingjiang Lu; dishes from Y4; ㊟) A cute little teahouse perched beside one of Sūzhōu's most popular canalside streets. Pingvon serves up excellent dumplings and delicate little morsels in baskets and on small plates. Try the green tea Buddha biscuit and pan-fried dumplings.

**Xīshèngyuán**

DUMPLINGS \$

(熙盛源; 43 Fenghuang Jie; dumplings from Y6) Crowds pay and gather near the entrance to wait for the steaming fresh *xīaolóng bāo* (小龙包; soup dumplings; Y6) to come out of the kitchen. If you don't want to jostle, grab a seat and order several other great dishes including assorted *húntūn* (馄饨; dumplings; Y6 to Y10).

**Yàkèxī**

UIGHUR \$\$\$

(亚克西酒楼; Yàkèxī Jiǔlóu; 768 Shiquan Jie; mains Y40; ☺10am-2am) The Uighur kitsch atmosphere is entertaining and the Xīnjiāng staples – lamb kebabs (Y2.50), hot and spicy lamb soup (Y16) and *nang* bread (Y3) – all tasty. Round it off with a bottle of SinKiang beer (Y10) or a sour milk drink (Y8) and dream of Kashgar. No time to sit down? The lamb kebabs are grilled just outside.

**Zhūhóngxīng Miànguǎn**

NOODLES \$

(朱鸿兴; Tajian Long; mains Y20-30) Popular with locals, this eatery, with several branches across town, has a long history and wholesome, filling noodles – try the *xiānglà páigǔmiàn* (香辣排骨面; salty pork and noodles; Y15) or the scrummy *cōngyóu xiānggūmiàn* (葱油香菇面, onion oil and mushroom noodles, Y10). Note: there's no English menu.

**Déyuè Lóu**

CHINESE \$\$\$

(得月楼; ☎6523 8940; 43 Taijian Long; mains ¥30-120; ☺24hr; 📺) Across the way from Zhūhóngxìng Miànguǎn, this place has been around since the Míng dynasty, with a menu featuring over 300 items and an emphasis on freshwater fish. It's a popular stop for tour groups and for large wedding parties, and feels a little over the top at times.

**Drinking**

Bustling Shiquan Jie surges late into the night, but prices are dear. There are also stacks of trendy cafe-bars scattered along Pingjiang Lu.

**Bookworm**

CAFE-BAR

(老书虫; Lǎo Shūchóng; 77 Gunxiu Fang; ☺9am-1am) Beijing's Bookworm has wormed its way down to Sūzhōu, although the selection isn't as good as Beijing's. The service could be a little quicker but the food is crowd pleasers (lots of Western options) and the beer is cold and includes Tsingtao (¥15) and Erdinger (¥45), as well as coffee (from ¥10). There are occasional events and books you can borrow or buy. Just off Shiquan Jie.

**Jane's Pub**

PUB

(621 Shiquan Jie; ☺7pm-3am) With Guinness on tap (per pint ¥55), Chimay and Duvel for more discerning palates, obligatory foreign banknotes stapled to the bar, pool and the occasional live singer (from 9pm), Jane's musters enough appeal for those that like an old-fashioned rough and tumble bar.

**Entertainment****Kūnqǔ Opera Museum**

CHINESE OPERA

(昆曲博物馆; Kūnqǔ Bówùguǎn; 14 Zhong-zhangjia Xiang; tickets ¥20) Puts on occasional performances of *kūnqǔ*. At the time of publication, there were *shuoshū* (说书, storytelling, including tea ¥20) sessions.

**Garden of the Master of the Nets**

MUSIC

(网师园; Wǎngshī Yuán; tickets ¥100) From March to November, music performances are held nightly from 7.30pm to 9.30pm for tourist groups at this garden. Don't expect anything too authentic.

**Píngtán Museum**

TRADITIONAL SINGING

(评弹博物馆; Píngtán Bówùguǎn; 3 Zhong-zhangjia Xiang; tickets ¥4-5) Better shows than at 'Garden of the Master of the Nets' are performed here at 1.30pm daily. Tickets on sale at noon.

**Shopping**

Sūzhōu-style embroidery, calligraphy, paintings, sandalwood fans, writing brushes and silk underclothes are for sale nearly everywhere. For good-quality items at competitive rates, shop along Shiquan Jie, east off Renmin Lu, which is lined with shops and markets selling souvenirs. The northern part of Renmin Lu has a number of large silk stores (丝绸商店; Sīchóu Shāngdiàn).

**Xīnhuá Bookshop**

BOOKS

(新华书店; Xīnhuá Shūdiàn; 166 Guanqian Jie; ☺9am-9pm) Sells a variety of English- and Chinese-language maps. Stodgy English novels on the 4th floor.

**Information**

Major tourist hotels have foreign-exchange counters.

**Bank of China** (中国银行; Zhōngguó Yínháng; 1450 Renmin Lu) Changes travellers cheques and foreign cash. There are ATMs that take international cards at most larger branches of the Bank of China.

**China Post** (中国邮政; Zhōngguó Yóuzhèng; cnr Renmin Lu & Jingde Lu)

**Hóng Qīngtíng Internet Cafe** (红蜻蜓网吧; Hóng Qīngtíng Wǎngbā; 916 Shiquan Jie; per hr ¥2.50; ☺24hr)

**Industrial & Commercial Bank of China**

(工商银行; Gōngshāng Yínháng; 222 Guanqian Jie) 24-hour ATM.

**No 1 Hospital** (苏大附一院; Sūdà Fùyiyuàn; 96 Shizi Jie) There are numerous other hospitals in Sūzhōu.

**Public Security Bureau** (PSB; 公安局;

Gōng'ānjú; ☎6522 5661, ext 20593; 1109 Renmin Lu) Can help with emergencies and visa problems. The visa office is about 200m down a lane called Dashitou Xiang.

**Sūzhōu Tourism Information Center** (苏州旅游咨询中心; Sūzhōu Lǚyóu Zīxún Zhōngxīn;

☎6530 5887; www.classicsuzhou.com; 345 Shiquan Jie) Several branches in town including bus stations. Can help with booking accommodation and tours. Festival listings and general information on website.

**Getting There & Away****Air**

Sūzhōu does not have an airport, but **China Eastern Airlines** (东方航空公司; Dōngfāng Hángkōng Gōngsī; ☎6522 2788; 115 Ganjiang Lu) can help with booking flights out of Shànghǎi. Buses leave here frequently for Hóngqiáo Airport in Shànghǎi. Tickets are ¥50.

## PÍNGTÁN: TRADITIONAL STORYTELLING IN SŪZHŌU'S HEART

### SHAWN LOW

One of the great beauties of the job is stumbling upon a hidden gem when you least expect it. In this case, tiny words in Chinese which said 'tea' and 'pingtan' caught my eye. Curiosity followed by 'Oh, what the hell' led me into a tiny corridor and up a creaky staircase into a delightful **Pingtan Teahouse** (评弹茶馆; Píngtán Cháguǎn; 2nd fl, 626 Shiquan Jie).

The owner, Mei Mei, was quick to explain. Each night, a *pingtan* master takes the stage from 8pm to 10pm. Customers order tea (the speciality is Yunnan pu'er, unlimited serves from Y100) and pick songs (from Y45) for the master to play.

For the uninitiated (myself included), *pingtan* is a 400-year-old storytelling and singing art form, sung in the local dialect and often accompanied by traditional instruments. The stories tend to revolve around Chinese classics such as *The Three Kingdoms* (a warring period from AD 220 to 280). Done well, it's an enchanting blend of singing and strings that emotes the themes behind most of these tunes. Done poorly? Think wailing cats.

I lucked out. It seems that the teahouse is a favourite gathering spot for *pingtan* enthusiasts and local musicians. That night, while the tea flowed, different masters continually took to the stage and sang a large variety of songs until it was past 11pm. When they all left, drunk on tea and music, Mei Mei took it upon herself to give me a quick music lesson on the *gǔzhēng* (zither) and *pípá* (lute). I finally made it out past midnight with a three-note repertoire, and ancient tunes in my head that kept steady time with my heartbeat.

Mei Mei left me with this parting quote, 'I'm not doing this for the money...I really like folk music and pu'er tea. It seemed to make sense to put the two together. And I get to provide a place where *pingtan* enthusiasts can meet to keep the traditions alive.' Rock on...I mean, sing and strum on!

### Boat

You can get tickets for the Sūzhōu to Hángzhōu boat (Y80 to Y210, 11 hours, 5.30pm daily) at the **Liánhé Ticket Centre** (联合售票处; Liánhé Shòupiàochù; ☎6520 6681; 1606 Renmin Lu; ☀8am-5pm). Boats leave from the wharf at 306 Renmin Lu.

### Bus

Sūzhōu has three long-distance bus stations and the two listed are the most useful. Tickets for all buses can also be bought at the **Liánhé Ticket Centre** (Liánhé Shòupiàochù; 1606 Renmin Lu; ☀bus tickets 8.30-11.30am & 1-5pm).

The principal station is the **North long-distance bus station** (汽车北站; qìchē běizhàn; ☎6577 6577) at the northern end of Renmin Lu, next to the train station:

**Hángzhōu** Y69, two hours, regular services

**Nánjīng** Y70, 2½ hours, regular services

**Níngbō** Y119, four hours, seven daily

**Yángzhōu** Y71, three hours, regular services

Buses from the **South long-distance bus station** (汽车南站; qìchē nánzhàn; cnr Yingchun Lu & Nanhuan Donglu) has buses to:

**Hángzhōu** Y70, two hours, every 20 minutes

**Nánjīng** Y70, two hours, every 20 minutes

**Shànghǎi** Y33, 1½ hours, every 30 minutes

**Shèngzén** Y14.50, one hour, every 15 minutes

**Yángzhōu** Y71, two hours, hourly

### Train

Sūzhōu is on the Nánjīng–Shànghǎi express D line. Book train tickets on the 2nd floor of the **Liánhé Ticket Centre** (Liánhé Shòupiàochù; 1606 Renmin Lu; ☀train tickets 7.30-11am & noon-5pm). There's also a **ticket office** along Guanqian Jie across from the Temple of Mystery. Another **ticket office** can be found on the other side of the road from the South bus station.

**Běijīng** hard/soft sleeper Y158/256, 10 hours, one daily (1.10pm)

**Nánjīng** Y33, 2½ hours, frequent services

**Shànghǎi** Y31, 30 minutes, 20 daily

**Wúxī** Y12, 30 minutes, frequent services

## **i** Getting Around

### Bicycle

Riding a bike is the best way to see Sūzhōu, though nutty drivers and traffic can be nerve jangling, especially around the train station. Search out the quieter streets and travel along the canals to get the most of what this city has to offer.

The **Yángyáng Bike Rental Shop** (洋洋车行; Yángyáng Chēháng; 2061 Renmin Lu; ☎7am to 6pm), a short walk north of the Silk Museum, offers bike rentals (Y20 per day plus Y200 deposit). Check out the seat and brakes carefully before you pedal off.

### Public Transport

Sūzhōu has some convenient tourist buses that visit all sights and cost Y2. They all pass by the train station. Buses with a snowflake motif are air-conditioned.

**Bus Y5** Goes around the western and eastern sides of the city.

**Bus Y2** Travels from Tiger Hill, Pán Gate and along Shiquan Jie.

**Buses Y1 & Y4** run the length of Renmin Lu.

At the time of writing, Sūzhōu was constructing its first metro line. The first line is expected to be completed by the end of 2010.

### Taxi

There are plenty of taxis in Sūzhōu. Fares start at Y10 and drivers generally use their meters. A trip from Guanqian Jie to the train station should cost around Y15. Pedicabs hover around the tourist areas and can be persistent (Y5 for short rides is standard). There are also drivers who might offer you rides – avoid unless you know how much a taxi ride costs and get offered that.

## Around Sūzhōu

Sūzhōu's tourist brochures offer a mind-boggling array of sights around the town. Sadly, not all are great, and noteworthy ones are often overrun by tourists. Go early to avoid the crowds.

### TÓNGLǐ

📍0512

同里

The lovely canal town of Tónglǐ, only 18km southeast of Sūzhōu, has been around since at least the 9th century and is *the* sight to visit outside Sūzhōu. Rich in historic canal-side atmosphere and weather-beaten charm, many of Tónglǐ's buildings have kept their traditional facades, with stark whitewashed walls (faded white if you venture off the tourist trails), black-tiled roofs, cobblestone pathways and willow-shaded canal views adding to a picturesque allure.

You can reach Tónglǐ from either Sūzhōu or Shànghāi, but aim for a weekday visit.

### 👁 Sights

The **Old Town** (老城区; Lǎochéngqū; 📍6333 1140; admission Y80; ☎7.30am-5.30pm) of Tónglǐ is best explored the traditional way: aimlessly meandering the canals and alleys until you get lost. The whitewashed houses and laundry hanging out to dry are all so charming that it doesn't really matter where you go, as long as you can elude the crowds.

There are three old residences that you'll pass at some point (unless you're really lost), the best of which is **Gēnglè Táng** (耕乐堂), a sprawling Ming-dynasty estate with 52 halls spread out over five courtyards in the west of town. The buildings have been elaborately restored and redecorated with paintings, calligraphy and antique furniture to bring back the atmosphere of the original buildings.

In the north of town is the **Pearl Pagoda** (珍珠塔; Zhēnzhū Tǎ), which dates from the Qing dynasty but has recently been restored. Inside, you'll find a large residential compound decorated with Qing-era antiques, an ancestral hall, a garden and an opera stage. The place gets its name from a tiny pagoda draped in pearls.

In the east of the Old Town you'll find **Tuǐsī Garden** (退思园; Tuǐsī Yuán), a gorgeous 19th-century garden that delightfully translates as the 'Withdraw and Reflect Garden', so named because it was a Qing government official's retirement home. The Tower of Fanning Delight served as the living quarters, while the garden itself is a lovely portrait of pond water churning with outsized goldfish, rockeries and pavilions, caressed by traditional Chinese music. It's a lovely place to find a perch and drift into a reverie, unless you are outflanked by a marauding tour group.

Last but not least and definitely not for infant Tónglǐ-goers, you can't miss the **Chinese Sex Culture Museum** (中华性文化博物馆; Zhōnghuá Xìngwénhuà Bówùguǎn; admission Y20; ☎9am-5.30pm). If you thought Confucius was a prude, think again.

Slow-moving **six-person boats** (Y40/70 for 30/60 minutes) ply the waters of Tónglǐ's canal system. The boat trip on Tónglǐ Lake is free, though of no particular interest.

### 🍴 Sleeping & Eating

Guesthouses (客栈; kèzhàn) are plentiful, with basic rooms starting at about Y80. Restaurants are everywhere, but resist being steered towards the priciest dishes. Some local dishes to try include *méigāncàishāorou*

## FIVE THOUSAND YEARS OF EROTICA

Overall, there's not a whole lot distinguishing one canal town from another, and whichever one you choose to visit is ultimately a matter of either convenience or fate (or both). Tónglǐ, however, does have an X-rated trump card up its sleeve, it's the **Chinese Sex Culture Museum**. Unfortunately, the name deters most people from even considering a visit (visitors tentatively approach, see the sign, giggle, blush and turn around), though in reality it is not that racy.

Founded by sociology professors Liu Dalin and Hu Hongxia, the museum's aim is not so much to arouse, but rather to reintroduce an aspect of the country's culture that, ironically, has been forcefully repressed since China was 'liberated' in 1949. The pair have collected several thousand artefacts relating to sex, from the good (erotic landscape paintings, fans and teacups) to the bad (chastity belts and saddles with wooden dildos used to punish 'licentious' women and 'zoophilia' statues), and the humorous (satirical Buddhist statues) to the unusual (a pot-bellied immortal with a penis growing out of his head topped by a turtle). This is also one of the only places in the country where homosexuality is openly recognised as part of Chinese culture.

Though some of the exhibits seem a little forced (a stone pillar displayed represents a 'penis'? That's stretching it), and the one-too-many pictures of penis- and vagina-shaped rocks will elicit schoolboy giggles, it's worth a visit simply because there isn't anything like this anywhere else in China.

(梅干菜烧肉; stewed meat with dried vegetables), *yínyúchǎodàn* (银鱼炒蛋; silver fish omelette) and *zhuàngyuángtǐ* (状元蹄; stewed pig's leg). Annoyingly, food prices here are much dearer than Sūzhōu.

**Zhèngfú Cǎotáng** BOUTIQUE HOTEL \$\$\$  
(正福草堂; ☎6333 6358; www.zfct.net; 138 Mingqing Jie; 明清街138号; d Y380-1380; Ⓜ@) The best accommodation in town. There are 14 deluxe rooms, all tastefully furnished in Qing-style furniture and antiques. Rooms wouldn't be out of place in a *Wallpaper* spread, with hues of gold and brown, and ultramodern toilets. The larger, more expensive rooms have private spaces for musing.

### Tónglǐ International Youth Hostel

HOSTEL \$  
(同里国际青年旅舍; ☎6333 9311; 210 Xintian Jie; 新填街210号; dm Y40, r Y100-160; Ⓜ@Ⓣ) Rejoice! Tónglǐ finally has a youth hostel! The main location is hard to find (walk across the main bridge onto 中川北路, look on your right for a sign that says 根和民居 and walk inside the tiny alley), but it's a stunner. Rooms are decked out in the owner's antique Ming furniture, and the wooden pillars and stone courtyard ooze atmosphere. Dorms were being built at the time of research but will lack the antique charm of the regular rooms. The alternate location beside Taiping bridge only has tight dorm beds.

### Getting There & Away

From Sūzhōu, take a bus (¥8, 50 minutes, every 30 minutes) from the South long-distance bus station to Tónglǐ. Grab an electric cart (¥2) from beside the Tongli bus station to the Old Town, or you can walk it in about 15 minutes. Pedicabs might offer you rides into town to dodge the entry fee but you really need the ticket to see the sights in the town so avoid them.

Bus return to Sūzhōu every 30 minutes (last bus 7.25pm). The last bus to drop you at the South long-distance bus station departs at 4.30pm. Buses thereafter drop you off behind Sūzhōu's train station.

From Shànghǎi, sightseeing buses depart daily from the Shànghǎi Stadium at 8.30am (and depart from Tónglǐ at 4.30pm); the journey takes up to 1½ hours depending on traffic. Tickets are ¥130 and include admission to Tónglǐ and its sights, but the Chinese Sex Culture Museum. Ten daily buses (¥32) leave Tónglǐ bus station for Shànghǎi.

### LÙZHÍ

角直  
Only a 25km public bus trip southeast of Sūzhōu, this minute canal town has bundles of charm. The entrance ticket of ¥60 can be skipped if you just want to wander the streets, alleys and bridges – you only have to pay if you enter the top **tourist sights** (☉8am-5pm), such as the **Wànshèng Rice Warehouse** (万盛米行; Wànshèng Mǐháng) and the **Bǎoshèng Temple** (保圣寺; Bǎoshèng Sì), but these can be missed without detracting from the overall experience.



Lùzhí's bridges are delightful: the **Jinli Bridge** (进利桥; Jinli Qiáo) is a typically attractive humpbacked bridge and the **Xinglong Bridge** (兴隆桥; Xinglong Qiáo) dates to the 15th century. Taking a half-hour **boat ride** (Y40) is an excellent way to sample the canal views. Boats depart from several points, including the Yǒng'ān Bridge (永安桥; Yǒng'ān Qiáo).

The place is popular with local teenagers who come to get photos taken in period dresses so don't feel like you've stepped into a time warp when you encounter a lady, dressed in silk, plucking a *gǔzhēng* (zither) – look closely and you'll see sport shoes under the dress. At the time of research, a huge faux Ming-dynasty complex, the **Lùzhí Cultural Park** (甬直文化园), was due for completion. Expect a variety of tourist shops, landscaped gardens, ponds and pavilions upon completion in 2011.

There are very few places to spend the night in Lùzhí, but the town easily works as a day trip. **Lóngxīng Kèzhàn** (龙兴客栈; ☎6501 0749; 53 Zhongshi Jie; 中市街53号; d with shower Y80) is a quiet place with basic rooms, just by the canal. There are also various other guesthouses with similar rates.

To get to Lùzhí, take bus 518 from Sūzhōu's train station (Y4, one hour, first/last bus 6am/8pm) or from the bus stop on Pingqi Lu (平齐路) to the last stop. When you get off, take the first right along Dasheng Lu (达圣路) to the decorative arch; crossing the bridge takes you into the back of the old town, a five-minute walk. Hordes of pedicabs will descend upon you offering to take you to the main entrance. Pay no more than Y5.

The last bus back from Lùzhí is at 7.30pm. If you want to continue to Shànghǎi from Lùzhí, buses (Y18, two hours) from the Lùzhí bus station run from 6.20am to 5pm to the bus station at 806 North Zhongshan Rd in Shànghǎi (from where buses also regularly run to Lùzhí).

## MÙDÚ

木渎

Easily reached from the city centre, Mùdú adds a further dimension to the Sūzhōu experience. Originally dating to the Ming dynasty and once the haunt of wealthy officials, intellectuals and artists, the village of Mùdú has been swallowed up by Sūzhōu's growing urban sprawl. Mùdú even attracted the Qing Emperor Qianlong, who visited six times. While Mùdú is neither the largest nor the most appealing of Jiāngsū's canal

towns, it makes for a convenient half-day tour.

Mùdú is free if you merely want to soak up the atmosphere – the entrance fee is for the top sights. Sadly, as most of the buildings along the canal are now modern structures, it's actually worth shelling out the admission fees.

## 📍 Sights

Near the entrance to the **Old Town** (老城区; Lǎochéngqū; ☎6636 8225; admission Y60; ☉8am-4.30pm) is the dignified **Bǎngyǎn Mansion** (榜眼府第; Bǎngyǎn Fǔdì) of the 19th-century writer and politician Feng Guifen. It has a rich collection of antique furniture and intricate carvings of stone, wood and brick – it often does part-time duties as a movie set. The surrounding garden is pretty but fairly typical – lotus ponds, arched bridges, bamboo – and can't compare to the more ornate gardens of Sūzhōu.

By far the most interesting place in Mùdú is the **Hóngyīn Mountain Villa** (虹饮山房; Hóngyīn Shānfáng), with its elaborate opera stage, exhibits and even an imperial pier where Emperor Qianlong docked his boat. The stage in the centre hall is impressive; honoured guests were seated in front and the galleries along the sides of the hall were for women. The emperor was a frequent visitor and you can see his uncomfortable-looking imperial chair, which faces the stage. Said chair is over 1000 years old, worn smooth in spots where hands have touched it. Operas are still performed here during the day. Surrounding the stage are some carefully arranged gardens, criss-crossed with dainty arched bridges and walkways. The old residence halls have been wonderfully preserved and have some interesting exhibits, including displays of dusty hats and gowns worn by imperial officers. Look out for the display on the Manchu-Han imperial feast: 111 faux-plastic dishes (we counted!) are on display. There's everything from abalone to fish, whole suckling pig and dainty bread buns made to look like rabbits!

In the middle of Shantang Jie is the **Ancient Pine Garden** (古松园; Gǔsōngyuán), known for its intricately carved beams. Look out for wooden impressions of officials, hats, phoenixes, flowers and stuff most people can't identify.

In the northwest corner of the Old Town is the **Yan Family Garden** (严家花园; Yánjiā Huāyuán), which dates back to the

Ming dynasty and was once the home of a former magistrate. The garden, with its rockeries and a meandering lake, is separated into five sections and divided by walls, with each section meant to invoke a season. Flowers, plants and rocks are arranged to create a 'mood'. If you come during the weekend, the only mood the crowds might invoke is exasperation – it's more inspiring to come on a weekday, when you can enjoy the surroundings in peace.

The most pleasurable way to experience Mùdú is by **boat**. You'll find a collection of traditional skiffs docked outside the Bǎngyǎn Mansion. A ride in one of these will take you along the narrow canals, shaded by ancient bridges and battered stone walls. Boat rides are Y10 per person (Y30 per boat minimum charge).

### **i** Getting There & Away

From Sūzhōu, tourist bus Y4 runs from the train station to Mùdú (Y3). Get off at Mùdú Yánjiā Huàyuán Zhàn (木渎严家花园站), across from a small road (明清街; Míngqīng Jiē) leading to the main entrance. You'll see a big sign and a parking lot full of tour buses. The ride takes about 45 minutes.

From Shànghǎi, deluxe buses (Y120, two hours) run from the Shànghǎi Sightseeing Bus Centre directly to Mùdú every other Saturday at 8.30am, returning from Mùdú at 3.30pm; the ticket price includes entrance to Mùdú's sights. Alternatively, take a bus or train to Sūzhōu and switch to tourist bus 4 at the train station.

## TĪANPÍNGSHĀN & LÌNGYÁNGSHĀN

天平山、灵岩山

These two mountains (OK, so they're really large hills) are along the same bus route to Mùdú and can be combined in one long day trip. Scenic **Tiānpíngshān** (Lingtian Lu; admission Y18; ☀7.30am-5pm) is a low, forested hill about 13km west of Sūzhōu. It's a wonderful place for hiking or just meandering along one of its many wooded trails. It's also famous for its medicinal spring waters.

Eleven kilometres southwest of Sūzhōu is **Língyángshān** (Lingtian Lu; admission Y20; ☀8am-4.30pm winter, to 5pm summer), or 'Cliff of the Spirits', once the site of a palace where Emperor Qianlong stayed during his inspection tours of the Yangzi River valley. Now the mountain is home to an active Buddhist monastery. It's a gorgeous place and the climb to the peak is exhausting in a really good way. On the way up, take the path on the left for an exciting clamber over rough-hewn stone and paths. The summit

offers panoramic views of the area: you'll note the alarming encroachment of industry onto green spaces.

Tourist bus 4 goes to Língyángshān and Tiānpíngshān from Sūzhōu's train station.

## Yángzhōu

扬州

☑0514 / POP 0.55 MILLION

Yángzhōu, a modern city near the junction of the Grand Canal and the Yangzi River, was once an economic and cultural centre of southern China. The city prospered on the salt trade, attracting merchants and artisans who established residences and gardens. Today, the central portion of the city is a fairly sedate area with pockets of old buildings. The main drawcard here is the large and delightful Slender West Lake Park. Yángzhōu can be visited on a day or overnight trip from Nánjīng.

### **i** Sights & Activities

Yángzhōu's sights are concentrated around the Grand Canal in the north and north-west parts of the city, where you'll find Slender West Lake Park and Dàmíng Temple. The main shopping area radiates out from Wénchāng Gé (文昌阁), an old bell tower in the centre of town.

A combined ticket to the city sights includes Slender West Lake Park, a canal boat ride, Dàmíng Temple, Hé, Gè and Potted Plant gardens and is Y180.

### Slender West Lake Park

GARDEN

(瘦西湖公园; Shòuxīhú Gōngyuán; 28 Da Hongqiao Lu; admission Y90; ☀6.30am-5pm) Stretching noodle-like northwards from Da Hongqiao Lu towards Dàmíng Temple, this park is decorated with pretty willow- and peach-tree-lined banks dotted with pavilions and gardens. It was a favourite vacationing spot of Emperor Qianlong in the 18th century and it's not hard to imagine why as it's particular moving and moody on a misty day, yet cheerful and colourful in good light.

A highlight is the exquisite triple-arched **Five Pavilion Bridge** (五亭桥; Wǔtíng Qiáo), built in 1757. Another interesting structure is the **24 Bridge** (二十四桥; Èrshísì Qiáo), its back arched high enough to almost form a complete circle, allowing boats easy passage.

The combined ticket to Slender West Lake Park includes a **river cruise** along the Grand Canal (which looks like one huge

## THE GRAND CANAL

The world's longest canal, the Grand Canal (大运河; Dà yùn hé) once meandered for almost 1800km from Běijīng to Hángzhōu, and is a striking example of China's engineering prowess. Sections of the canal have been silted up for centuries and today perhaps half of it remains seasonally navigable.

The Grand Canal's construction spanned many centuries. The first 85km were completed in 495 BC, but the mammoth task of linking the Yellow River (Huáng Hé) and the Yangzi River (Cháng Jiāng) was undertaken between AD 605–609 by a massive conscripted labour force during Sui times. It was developed again during the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368). The canal enabled the government to capitalise on the growing wealth of the Yellow River basin and to ship supplies from south to north.

The Jiāngnán section of the canal (Hángzhōu, Sūzhōu, Wúxī and Chángzhōu) is a skein of canals, rivers and branching lakes. Passenger vessels run between Sūzhōu and Hángzhōu (see p227).

There are boat rides along certain sections of the canal in Sūzhōu (p224) and Yángzhōu – with all the surrounding modernity though the grandness of the project seems to have all but faded.

drain) on the eastern length of the city. Board on the docks in the northeastern point of the city along Tàizhōulù (泰州路). The trip takes you under several bridges and past condominiums and city life. Boy, things sure have changed since the old days.

### Gè Garden

GARDEN

(个园; Gè Yuán; 10 Yanfu Donglu; admission Y45; ☉7.15am–5.45pm) With its crooked pathways, dense bamboo groves and humpback bridges, this garden, east of the city centre, is typically southern-styled. Built in 1883, it was once the home of the painter Shi Tao and was later acquired by an affluent salt merchant. The traditional residences at the rear are well restored and offer a glimpse into Yangzhou's former affluence. Bus Y1 and Y2 pass the garden.

The entrance to the main south gate of Gè Garden sits on a particularly atmospheric old street. **Dōngguān Jiē** (东关街) is a restored strip of grey brick houses dating back to the Yuan dynasty. These days, it's packed with stores selling souvenirs, peanut candy and snacks. You can venture into the side alleys to get a glimpse of local life. The large city gate marking the start of the street used to be where traders would enter the city when they disembarked from the Yangzhou section of the Grand Canal.

### Hé Garden

GARDEN

(何园; Hé Yuán; 77 Xuningmen Jie; admission Y45; ☉7.30am–6pm) This tiny garden in the south of the city was built by a Qing-dynasty salt merchant. It boasts more buildings than actual garden, with airy pavilions and halls

surrounded by tree-lined pathways, bamboo and convoluted rockery. The central portion is home to a Frankenstein 'West meets East' building, an architectural style popular in the late Qing period.

## Sleeping

Yángzhōu is tragically lacking in anything more than midrange Chinese-style hotels. Your best bet are midrange chain hotels.

### Yuqinting Boutique Hotel

HOTEL \$\$

(玉蜻蜓雅致酒店; Yùqīngtīng Yǎzhījūdiàn; ☎8736 0000; 42 Wenhe Beilu; 汶河北路52号; d & tw Y480–680; 📍) More tacky, less boutique Yuqinting offers large rooms (Y399 discounted) with flat-screen TVs and smart modern bathrooms. The cheaper unrenovated rooms (Y259 discounted) are ordinary and some are windowless. The hotel still has the old 'Lantian Hotel' sign and the unmissable lobby is decked out in gaudily coloured lights and faux Louis XIV furnishings.

### Bǎihui International Youth Hostel

HOSTEL \$

(百汇国际青年旅舍; Bǎihui Guóji Qīngnián Lǚshè; ☎130 5633 8583; 148 Daxue Beilu; 大学北路148号; 4-bed dm Y35–50, s Y80–128, d 80–138; 📍) Quite hard to spot as it's tucked away down an alley, this place has decent (if old) rooms and friendly staff. It also has a pool table and a kitchen, and there's free internet and wi-fi. Lots of eating options nearby and it's walking distance to Slender West Lake Park.

**Motel 168**

HOTEL \$\$

(莫泰连锁旅店; Mòtài Liánsuǒ Lǚdiàn; ☎8793 9555; www.motel168.com; 52 Wenhe Beilu; 汶河北路52号; d Y208-228; ☎) Pretty much offering the same kind of rooms as the other budget chain Home Inn (and in virtually the same spot), but right on Wenhe Beilu. No-frills convenience.

**Eating**

Along Da Hongqiao Lu, leading to the entrance to Slender West Lake Park, are a string of small restaurants selling fried rice and other dishes. Wenhe Beilu in the heart of the city is also plastered with food shops of all sorts.

**Chóngqing Tiāncì**

CHONGQING &amp; SICHUAN \$\$

(重庆天赐; ☎8723 3198; 154 Siwangting Lu; dishes Y8-38; ☎10am-9pm) This busy restaurant serves up a range of Chongqing and Sichuan dishes. Particularly popular are the fish dishes such as the stingingly spicy water-cooked fish (水煮鱼; *shuǐzhǔyú*). After you decide how heavy the fish should be, staff will take you round the back, where a lady picks out a live one, weighs it and thumps it on the head. Thankfully, there's ice-cold Tsingtao (Y8). Picture menu.

**Fùchūn Cháshè**

TEAHOUSE \$\$

(富春茶社; ☎723 3326; 35 Desheng Qiao; mains Y10-30; ☎8am-9pm) One of Yangzhou's most famous and crowded teahouses, this place is on a lane just off Guoqing Lu, in an older section of town. Try an assorted plate of its famous dumplings for Y30.

**Information**

**Bank of China** (中国银行; Zhōngguó Yínháng; 279 Wenchang Zhonglu) Will change travellers cheques and cash. There's an ATM.

**China Post** (中国邮政; Zhōngguó Yóuzhèng; 162 Wenchang Zhonglu) In the city centre.

**Fēishí Internet Cafe** (飞时网吧; Fēishí Wǎngbà; Daxue Beilu; per hr Y2; ☎24hr) Just north of the Bǎihui International Youth Hostel.

**Public Security Bureau** (PSB; 公安局; Gōng'ānjú; 1 Huaihai Lu) Can help with visa extensions.

**Getting There & Away**

From the **Yangzhou long-distance bus station** (扬州汽车站; Yángzhōu Qìchēzhàn; Jiangang Zhong Lu; ☎8796 3658) in the west of town, there are buses to the following destinations:

**Shànghǎi** Y101, 4½ hours, two to four daily

**Sūzhōu** Y78, three hours, regular services

**Nánjīng** Y34, two hours, regular services

The **train station** (扬州火车站; Yángzhōu Huǒchēzhàn; Wenchang Xilu) is west of town. There are trains to Guǎngzhōu (Y219 to Y600, 26 hours, 4.14pm) that pass through Nánjīng and Huángshān. Trains to Shànghǎi (Y97, 5½ hours, 12.16pm) pass through Nánjīng, Zhènjiāng, Wúxī and Sūzhōu. There's a direct train to Běijīng (Y272 to Y429, 14 hrs, 8.30pm).

**Getting Around**

Bus 20 (Y1) runs to the long-distance bus station along Siwangting Lu. The tourist buses Y1 and Y2 start from the long-distance bus station and do loops around the city, hitting many of the sights. Taxis are cheap and start at Y7.

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