

# Ānhuī 安徽



If you only have time for one province, Ānhuī should top your list. It may be poor – supplying the lion's share of the country's *ayi* and *baomu* (domestic helpers) – but its landscape is dramatic and beautiful in equal measure, and Wǎnnán – as the southern part of Ānhuī is called – is home to the lovely Huīzhōu culture that melds over the border with northeastern Jiāngxī. With little of the manic development and breakneck urgency that grips the rest of China, the province is an alluring alternative to the mantle of noise and construction dust cloaking other provinces.

Cut by the Yangzi River (Cháng Jiāng), which occasionally floods the low plains, Ānhuī has conveniently managed to cram all its highlight sights into a small and easily navigable area in the deep provincial south. It is to this well-watered mountainous region, which contrasts spectacularly with the arid northern plains abutting Hénán and Shāndōng, that travellers naturally gravitate.

China's most famous peak – Huáng Shān – has yielded an almost equally high mountain of coffee-table books dedicated to its mist-wreathed panoramas. Famed for its other-worldly fogs and looming granite formations, Huáng Shān's natural beauty is complemented by the sacred mountain aura of nearby Buddhist Jiūhuá Shān, one of China's holiest places of pilgrimage.

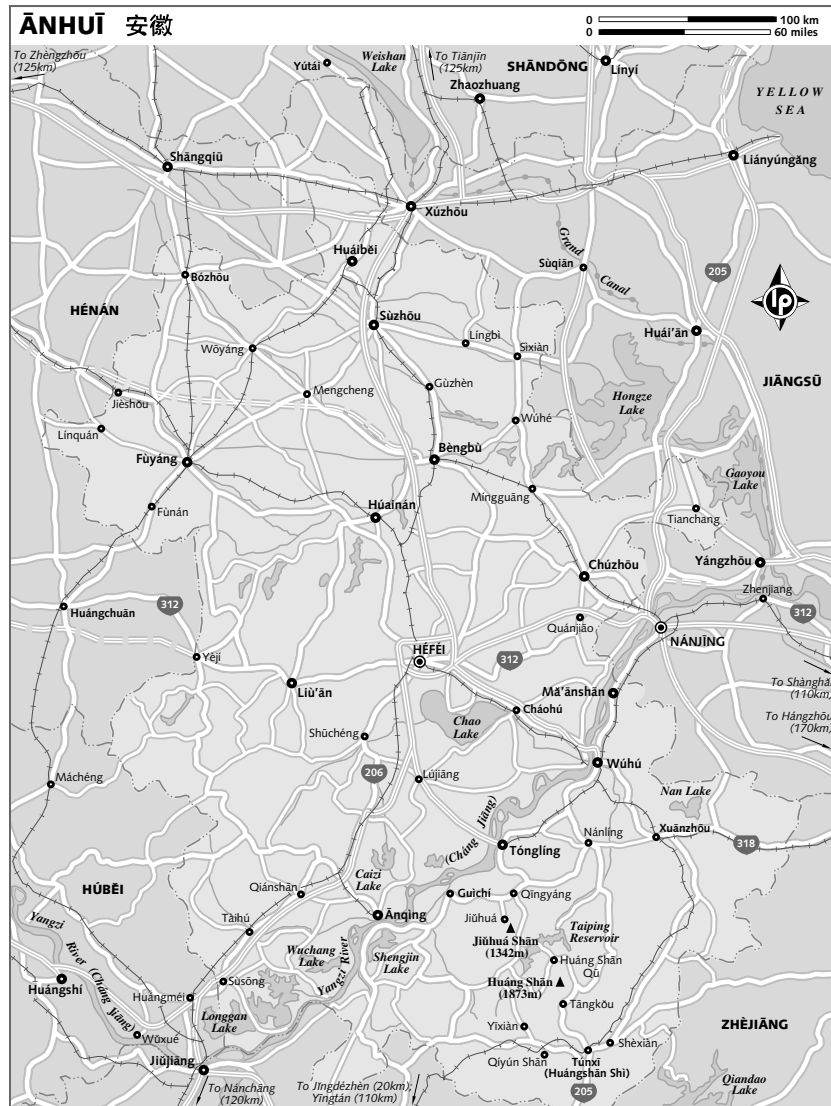
The gorgeous Huīzhōu villages and architecture of Yìxiàn and Shèxiàn fully round out the picture. Visitors basing themselves in Túnxī can use the town as a convenient launching pad for grasping the Taoist secrets of Qíyún Shān and uncovering the charms of Hóngcūn, Xīdì, Shèxiàn and other delightful villages that characterise the region.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Climb into a sea of clouds at **Huáng Shān** (p446), China's most beautiful mountain
- Village hop in **Yìxiàn** (p443) on the trail of some of China's most exquisite villages
- Explore the Huīzhōu architecture of **Shèxiàn** (p445) and the riverine charms of the nearby port village of **Yúliáng** (p445)
- Commune with the Buddhist mysteries of mountainous **Jiūhuá Shān** (p450)
- Ascend **Qíyún Shān** (p444) in pursuit of its Taoist mystique and fabulous views



■ POPULATION: 62.1 MILLION



## History

The provincial borders of Ānhuī were defined by the Qing government and, except for a few changes to the boundary with Jiāngsū, have remained unchanged. Northern Ānhuī forms part of the North China Plain, where the Han Chinese settled in large numbers during the Han dynasty. The Yangzi River cuts through

the southern quarter of Ānhuī, and the area south of the river was not settled until the 7th and 8th centuries.

## Climate

Ānhuī has a warm-temperate climate, with heavy rain in spring and summer that brings plenty of flooding. Winters are damp and

cold. When travelling through Ānhuī at any time of year, bring rain gear and a warm jacket for the mountain areas.

## Language

Ānhuī residents largely speak Mandarin. In the southern parts of the province some people speak the Hui dialect (Huí Yǔ), the language of China's Muslim Hui minority.

## Getting There & Away

The historical and tourist sights of Ānhuī are concentrated in the south, and are more accessible from Hángzhōu or Shànghǎi than from the provincial capital, Héfěi.

## Getting Around

Ānhuī's drawcard sights are easily reached from Túnxī in the south of the province, itself linked by road and rail to other parts of the province and by air to other cities in China.

## TÚNXÌ 屯溪

☎ 0559 / pop 1.5 million

The old trading town of Túnxī (Huángshān Shì) is roughly 70km southeast of Huángshān. The main springboard for Huángshān, Túnxī is also a handy base for exploration of the surrounding Huizhōu architecture (see the boxed text, p443) at Yìxiàn and Shèxiàn.

## Orientation & Information

Túnxī is located at the junction of the Xin'an River (Xin'an Jiāng) and Heng River (Héng Jiāng). The older (and most interesting) part of town is in the southwest, around Huangshan Lu and Xin'an Lu. The newer part of town is in the northeast, near the bus and train stations.

**Bank of China** (Zhōngguó Yínháng; cnr Xin'an Beilu & Huangshan Xilu; ☎ 8am-5.30pm) Changes travellers cheques and major currencies; 24-hour ATM takes international cards.

**CITS** (Zhōngguó Guójí Lǚxíngshì; ☎ 252 6184; 3rd fl, 6 Xizhen Jie) Arranges English-speaking guides for tours of Huángshān and the surrounding area.

**Dawei Internet Café** (Dàwèi Wǎngbā; per hr Y2; ☎ 8am-midnight). It's opposite the Bank of China along an alley south of Yuzhong Garden (昱中花园).

**Post office** (Yóujiú; cnr Changgan Lu & Qianyuan Nanlu).

**PSB** (Gōngānjú; ☎ 231 8768; 108 Changgan Lu;

☎ 8am-noon & 2.30-6pm) Located in the southeastern section of Túnxī. The Exit and Entry Administration Service Center here can arrange travel permits to Yìxiàn (Y50) on the spot.

## Sights & Activities

Running a block in from the river, **Lao Jie** (老街; Old St; ☎ 7.30am-10.30pm) is a souvenir street lined with wooden shops and Ming-style Huizhōu buildings that is open till late at night. On Lao Jie, the **Wancuilou Museum** (Wāncuīlóu Bówùguǎn; ☎ 252 2388; 143 Lao Jie; admission Y36; ☎ 8.30am-9.30pm) provides an in-depth introduction to Huizhōu architecture, furniture and antiques, elegantly ranging over four floors.

Among Túnxī's heritage buildings, the **Chéngshì Sānzhái** (Dongli Xiang, off Baishu Lu; admission Y20; ☎ 8am-5.30pm) is a splendid example of historic Ming-dynasty Huizhōu residential architecture, designed with all its trademark ornamentation and emphasis on elegance.

## Sleeping & Eating

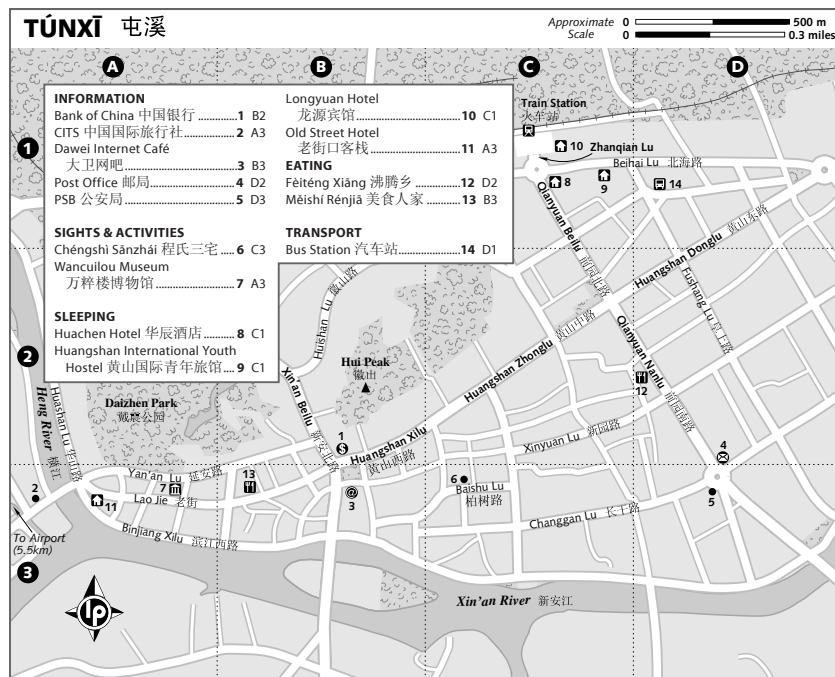
**Huangshan International Youth Hostel** (Huángshān Guójí Qīngnián Lǚguǎn; ☎ 211 4522; www.yhhuangshan.com; 58 Beihai Lu; 北海路58号; nonmember dm/s/tw Y35/120/120, member dm/s/tw Y30/100/100; ☎ ☎) Falling apart at the seams, this newish and popular hostel is well located east of the train station along Beihai Lu. Rooms are comfortable enough, but come without TV. There's an internet café (Y5), lobby café, English-speaking staff, washing machine (Y10 per load) and much Chinese graffiti all around.

**Longyuan Hotel** (Lóngyuán Bīnguǎn; ☎ 212 9777; fax 211 3550; 8-6 Zhanqian Lu; 站前路8-6号; d Y320; ☎) On the eastern flank of the train station concourse, this new, purpose-built seven-storey hotel (no English sign) has a sharp three-star finish and fresh rooms, with frequent discounts bringing double rooms down to around Y200.

**Huachen Hotel** (Huáchén Jiǔdiàn; ☎ 234 5188; fax 234 5098; 18 Qianyuan Beilu; 前园路18号; d Y360; ☎) The cylindrical steel tower facing you as you exit the train station, this three-star hotel has rooms on several floors that have recently enjoyed refurbishment and good discounts are in effect.

**Old Street Hotel** (Lǎojiēkǒu Kèzhàn; 253 4466; www.oldstreet-hotel.com.cn; 1 Laojiekou; 老街口1号; s/d/tr/ind breakfast Y480/580/680; ☎) At the western end of Lao Jie by Laoda Bridge, this stylish hotel gets guests in the right mood with its Huizhōu-effect interior, traditionally styled rooms (including wood covers for the air-con, lovely beds, wood-strip flooring and clean, bright showers) and views of the river.

**Měishì Rénjiā** (1 Lao Jie; dishes Y4-15; ☎ lunch & dinner) At the entrance to Lao Jie, this bustling restaurant – spread over two floors and hung



with traditional Chinese *mǎdēng* lanterns – seethes with satisfied customers. Peruse the counter for a range of dishes – *huntun* (won tons; dumpling soup), *jiǎozi* (dumplings), *bāozi* (steamed buns stuffed with meat or vegetables), noodles, claypot and more – on display, have them cooked fresh to order and sink a delicious glass of sweet *zímìlù* (紫米露; Y6), made from purple glutinous rice.

**Měishí Jiē** (美食街) – literally ‘Good Food St’ – can be found on Qianyuan Nanlu (前园路) near the junction with Xinyuan Lu (新园路). The street is home to a series of local restaurants specialising in Huizhōu-style cuisine. Try **Fèitóng Xiāng** (☎ 231 7777; 30 Qianyuan Nanlu; meals Y40-50), which serves a flavoursome *huángshān shuāngdōng* (黄山双冬; bamboo shoots, mushroom and slices of pork; Y26) and a very spicy and sour *xuécài dòufubāo* (雪菜豆腐煲; pickled cabbage and tofu pot; Y22).

## Getting There & Away

### AIR

There are flights from **Huangshan City Airport** (黄山市飞机场; Huángshānshì Fēijīchǎng) to Běijīng (Y760, daily, two hours), Guǎngzhōu

(Y580, daily, 1½ hours), Shànghǎi (Y290, daily, one hour) and less frequent flights to other cities.

You can buy air tickets at the **Civil Aviation Administration of China** (CAAC; 中国民航; Zhōngguó Mínháng; ☎ 254 1222; 23 Huashan Lu).

### BUS

The long-distance **bus station** (☎ 251 5955; Fushang Lu) is 400m east of the train station. Buses run from here to Yìxiàn (Y9, 1½ hours, every 25 minutes), Shèxiàn (Y4.5, 45 minutes, every 10 minutes), Wùyuan (Y30, three hours, twice daily), Qīngyáng (Y35, three hours, twice daily), Jiùhuá Shān (Y39, four hours, once daily), Héféi (Y78, six hours, every 35 minutes), Shànghǎi (Y98, six hours, once daily), and Wūhàn (Y170, 11 hours, twice daily).

### TRAIN

Trains from Běijīng (Y323 hard sleeper, 21 hours), Shànghǎi (Y169 hard sleeper, 11½ hours) and Nánjīng (Y54, seven hours) stop at Túnxī. Some trains heading south also stop here, such as to Xiàmén (Y217, 32 hours)

and Jīngdézhen (Y25, 3½ hours). For better connections to southern destinations, first go to Yíngtán (Y51, five hours) in Jiāngxī and change trains there.

## Getting Around

Taxis are Y5 at flagfall, with the 5km taxi ride to the airport costing about Y25. Competition among pedicab drivers is fierce, so they are the cheapest way of getting around, costing around Y4 for a trip to Lao Jie from the train station area.

## YÌXIÀN 黟县

Easily visited from Túnxī, Yìxiàn is principally famed for the two outstanding historic villages of Xidi and Hóngcūn, but other settlements are scattered within the region that warrant exploration. Note that foreign visitors to Xidi, Hóngcūn and other villages in Yìxiàn County require a visitor's permit (Y50), available from the PSB (Gōngānjú) in Tāngkǒu or Túnxī. Visitors are not officially allowed to overnight in Yìxiàn County.

## Historic Villages

### XIDI 西递

Dating to AD 1047, the village of **Xidi** (admission Y80) has for centuries been a stronghold of the Hu (胡) clan, descended from the eldest son of the last Tang emperor who fled here in the twilight years of the Tang dynasty. Typical of the elegant Huizhōu style (see the boxed text, below), Xidi's 124 surviving buildings reflect the wealth and prestige of the prosperous merchants who settled here.

Xidi has flirted gaily with its increasing popularity and, as a Unesco World Heritage

site, enjoys an increasingly lucrative tourist economy. But the village remains a picturesque tableau of slender lanes, cream-coloured walls topped with horse-head gables, roofs capped with dark tiles, and doorways ornately decorated with carved lintels. The village is a fully functioning community: pans of garlic dry in the sun, families sit within the cool interiors of mouldering home-steads while children's voices resound from the Mingjing School (明经学校; Míngjīng Xuéxiào).

Doorways – frequently capped with up-turned eaves and hung with overhead mirrors to ward off bad luck – are fashioned with ancient drum stones (*gǔshí*) and mirror stones (*jǐngshí*), leading to interiors decorated with elaborate wood carvings on panels, doors and ornamental brackets, all naturally illuminated from above by light wells (*tiānjǐng*). Wander round the maze of flagstone lanes, examining lintel carvings above doorways decorated with vases, urns, animals, flowers and ornamental motifs, and try to avoid tripping over hordes of high-school artists consigning scenes of stone bridges spanning small streams to canvas.

Xidi's magnificent three-tiered Ming dynasty decorative arch, the **Húwénguāng Páifāng**, at the entrance to the village is an ostentatious symbol of Xidi's former standing. Numerous other notable structures are open to inspection, including the **Diji Hall** (迪吉堂; Dìjī Táng) and the **Zhuimu Hall** (追慕堂; Zhuīmù Táng), both on Dalu Jie (大路街), and you can clamber up into the 2nd-floor gallery of the grand **Dàfúdi** (admission Y2) on Zhijie (直街).

## HUIZHOU STYLE

Huizhōu architecture is the most distinctive ingredient of the regional personality, representative of the merchant class that held sway in this region of southern Ānhuī (also called Wǎnnán; 皖南) and northeastern Jiāngxī during the Ming and Qing dynasties. Decorative archways (*páifāng* or *páilóu*) are ostentatious ornaments that doubled as imposing symbols of prestige and authority. The former merchant houses of Yìxiàn and Shèxiàn are the most typical examples of Huizhōu architecture; their walls topped on each flank by horse-head gables, originally designed to prevent fire from travelling along a line of houses, and later evolving into decorative motifs.

Strikingly capped with dark tiles, the white walls of Huizhōu houses are often punctured by high windows, designed to deter burglars. Exterior doorways, often overhung with decorative eaves and carved brick or stone lintels, are sometimes flanked by drum stones (*gǔshí*) or mirror stones (*jǐngshí*), lead onto interior courtyards delightfully illuminated by light wells (*tiānjǐng*), rectangular openings in the roof. Many Huizhōu houses are furnished with intricately carved wood panels and extend to two floors, the upper floor supported on wooden columns.

**HÓNGCŪN** 宏村

Dating to the southern Song dynasty, the delightful village and Unesco World Heritage site of **Hóngcūn** (admission ¥85), 11km northeast of Yìxiàn, has at its heart the crescent-shaped Moon Pond (月沼; Yuè Zhǎo) and is encapsulated by South Lake (南湖; Nán Hú), West Stream (西溪; Xī Xī) and Leigang Mountain (雷岗山; Léigǎng Shān). Famously conceived to resemble an ox, and home to members of the traditionally wealthy Wang (汪) clan, the village is a charming and unhurried portrait of bridges, lakeside views, narrow alleys and traditional halls. Alleyway channels flush water through the village from West Stream to Moon Pond and from there on to South Lake while signs guide visitors on a tour of the principle buildings.

The noble **Chengzhi Hall** (承志堂; Chéngzhì Táng) on Shangshuizhen Lu (上水圳路) dates to 1855 and has a dizzying total of 28 rooms, adorned with fabulous wood carvings, 2nd-floor balconies and light wells. Other notable buildings include the nearby **Deyi Hall** (德义堂; Deyì Táng; admission ¥2), the **Hall of the Peach Garden** (桃源居; Táoyuán Jū), with its elaborate carved wood panels, and the **South Lake Academy** (南湖书院; Nánhú Shūyuàn), which enjoys a delicious setting on tranquil South Lake.

Overlooking picturesque Moon Pond is a gathering of further halls, chief among which is the dignified **Lexu Hall** (乐叙堂; Lèxù Táng), a hoary and dilapidated Ming antique from the first years of the 15th century. Turn up bamboo carvings, trinkets and a large selection of tea at the market west of Moon Pond. The pleasant square by Hongji Bridge (宏际桥; Hóngjì Qiáo) on the West Stream is shaded by a vast, ancient Chinese Wingnut tree.

A further foray a kilometre beyond Hóngcūn reveals the village of **Lúcūn** (卢村; admission ¥26), famed for the extravagant carved woodwork of its **Mùdiào Lóu** (木雕楼).

**NÁNPIŦG** 南屏

With a history of over 1100 years, this intriguing and labyrinthine **village** (admission ¥30), 5km to the west of Yìxiàn town, is famed as the setting of Zhang Yimou's 1989 tragedy *Judou*. Numerous ancient ancestral halls, clan shrines and merchant residences survive within Nán-píng's mazelike alleys, including the **Chéngshì Zōngcí** (程氏宗祠) and the **Yèshì Zōngcí** (叶氏宗祠). The **Lǎo Yáng Jiā Rǎnfáng** (老杨家染坊)

residence that served as the principle household of dyer Gongli and her rapacious husband in *Judou* remains cluttered with props, and stills from the film hang from the walls. The entrance price includes the services of a Chinese guide, with limited English skills.

**GUĀNLŪ** 关麓

Around 8km west of Yìxiàn and further along the road beyond Nánping, this small **village's** (admission ¥25) drawcard sights are the fabulous households – **Bādàjiā** (八大家) – of eight wealthy brothers. Each Qing dynasty residence shares similar elegant Huizhōu features, with light wells, interior courtyards, halls, carved wood panels and small gardens. Each an independent entity, the households are interconnected by doors and linked together into a systemic whole. A distinctive aspect of the residences is their elegantly painted ceilings, the patterns and details of which survive. As with Nánping, a guide (with iffy English skills) is included in the price.

**GETTING THERE & AWAY**

Buses (¥9, 1½ hours, every 25 minutes) from the Túnxi long-distance bus station depart between 7am and 5pm for Yìxiàn town, 47km west of Túnxi. Yìxiàn serves as the transport hub for public transport to the surrounding villages. There are buses from Yìxiàn to Guānlù (between 7am and 7pm, ¥5). From the Yìxiàn bus station, minibuses depart when full to Xidi (¥2) and Hóngcūn (¥2), east of Yìxiàn, and they also run infrequently to Nánping (¥6). Taxis go to Xidi (¥10), Hóngcūn (¥20) and Guānlù (¥20) from Yìxiàn. Minibuses sporadically run through Xidi to Hóngcūn, otherwise return to Yìxiàn for connections to Hóngcūn, or take a taxi from Xidi to Hóngcūn. The last bus back to Túnxi from Yìxiàn leaves at 5pm. Booking a *miàndì* taxi to take you to all four villages from Yìxiàn can cost as little as ¥120 for the day, depending on your bargaining skills.

**QÍYŪN SHĀN** 齐云山

A 40-minute bus trip west of Túnxi brings you to the lush mountain panoramas of **Qíyún Shān** (admission ¥60). Long venerated by Taoists, the reddish sandstone rock provides a mountain home to the temples and the monks who tend to them, while mountain trails lead hikers through some stupendous scenery.

From the bus drop-off, it's a 10-minute walk along the river to the **Deng Feng Bridge**

(登封桥; Dēngfēng Qiáo). Cross the bridge – dwelling on the luxuriant river views – and turn right through the village at the foot of the mountain for a 40-minute clamber up stone steps to the ticket office. Or you can take a cable car (up Y26, down Y14) from the far side of the river up the mountain.

Beyond the ticket office, the **Zhenxian Cave** (真仙洞府; Zhēnxiān Dòngfǔ) houses a complex of Taoist shrines in grottoes and niches gouged from the sandstone cliffs. Seated within the smoky interior of the vast **Tàisù Gōng** (太素宫) further on is an effigy of Zhengwu Dadi, a Taoist deity. A further temple hall, the **Yùxū Gōng** (玉虚宫) is erected beneath the huge brow of a 200m-long sandstone cliff, enclosed around effigies of Zhengwu Dadi and Laotze.

**GETTING THERE & AWAY**

Take any Yìxiàn-bound bus from Túnxi long-distance bus station and ask the driver to stop at Qíyún Shān (¥6, 45 minutes). Returning to Túnxi, wait at the side of the road for buses coming from Yìxiàn, but note that the last bus from Yìxiàn to Túnxi departs at 5pm.

**SHÈXIÀN** 歙县

Historic seat of the Huizhōu region, Shèxiàn is 25km east of Túnxi and can be visited as a day trip from Túnxi. Formerly known as Huizhōu, the town was the grand centre of the Huizhōu culture, serving as its capital. Unlike Yìxiàn County, visitor permits are not required for visits to Shèxiàn.

**Sights**

From the bus station, cross the bridge over the river and go through the modern gate tower and along to **Yáng hé Mén** (阳和门), a double-eaved gate tower constructed of wood (admission ¥10). Climb it to examine a Ming dynasty stone *xièzhī* (a legendary beast) and elevated views of the magnificent **Xuguo Archway** (许国石坊; Xǔguó Shífāng) below. Fabulously decorated, this is China's sole surviving four-sided decorative archway, with 12 lions (18 in total if you count the cubs) seated on pedestals around it and a profusion of bas-relief carvings of phoenixes, *qilin* (mythical animals), deer, eagles, dragons, leopards, sparrows and mythical creatures.

Continue in the same direction to reach the alleyway to the old residential area of **Doushan Jie** (斗山街古民居; admission ¥20, Chinese-

speaking guide free), a marvellous street of Huizhōu houses, with several courtyard residences open to visitors and decorated with exquisitely carved lintels, beautiful interiors and occasional pairs of leaping-on blocks for mounting horses. Look out for the *páifāng* (decorative archway) that has been filled in and incorporated into a wall. The **24 Filial Pictures** (二十四孝行图; Èrshísì Xiàoxíngtú) is a former residence now serving as a kindergarten.

**Getting There & Away**

Buses from Túnxi long-distance bus station run regularly to Shèxiàn (¥4.5, 45 minutes, every 10 minutes).

**AROUND SHÈXIÀN**

**Yúliáng** (渔梁; admission ¥30) is a historic riverine port village on the Lian River (Liàn Jiāng). Cobble Yuliang Jie (渔梁街) is a picturesque alley of buildings and former transfer stations for the wood, salt and tea that plied the Lian River and was shipped to north China; the **tea shop** at No 87 is an example. Note the firewalls separating the houses along the road. Pop into the **Yuanhetang Chinese Medicine Shop** at No 40 to admire the original flooring with the floral design and examine the traditional Huizhōu arrangement of the **Baweizu Museum** (巴慰祖纪念馆; Bāwèizǔ Jìniànguǎn), also on Yuliang Jie.

The **Lion Bridge** (狮子桥; Shǐzi Qiáo) dates to the Tang dynasty, a time when the 138m-long granite **Yuliang dam** (渔梁坝; Yúliáng Bà) across the river was first constructed. Boats can ferry you from the dam for short 15 minutes trips up river (¥15).

If you want to spend the night in Yúliáng, there are rooms with lovely views at the small **inn** (☎ 0559-653 8024; d with/without air-con ¥80/50; 📍) facing the entrance to Hundred Steps Ladder (百步阶梯), the alley leading down to the dam. To reach Yúliáng, take a pedicab (¥2) from Shèxiàn's bus station (by the bridge), or jump on bus 1 to Yúliáng (¥1), which runs from Shèxiàn train station.

About 5km west of Shèxiàn, seven decorative arches known as the **Tangyue Decorative Archways** (棠樾牌坊群; Tángyuè Páifāng Qún; admission ¥35) stand in a row in a field, erected by a wealthy local family who made their fortune in salt. Take a minibus back to Túnxi and ask the driver to drop you off at the Tángyuè Páifāng Qún, from where it is a further 2km walk to the archways.

## HUÁNG SHĀN 黄山

☎ 0559

When its archetypal granite peaks and twisted pines are wreathed in spectral folds of mist, Huáng Shān's idyllic views easily nudge it into the select company of China's top 10 sights. Legions of poets and painters have drawn inspiration from Huáng Shān's iconic beauty. Yesterday's artists seeking an escape from the hustle and bustle of the temporal world may have been replaced by crowds of tourists, who bring the hustle and bustle with them, but Huáng Shān still rewards visitors with moments of tranquillity, and the unearthly views can be simply breathtaking.

### Orientation

Buses from Túnxī (Huángshān Shì) drop you off in Tāngkǒu, the village bisected by a stream at the mountain's foot, or at the terminal near Huang Shan Gate (Huángshān Mén) in upper Tāngkǒu.

The road from Tāngkǒu continues beyond the hot springs area and ends halfway up the mountain at the Cloud Valley Temple Cable Car Station, 890m above sea level, where the eastern steps begin. Another cable car connects the area above the hot springs resort with Jade Screen Peak (Yùping Fēng), while a third cable car approaches Huáng Shān from the north.

Maps, raincoats, food, currency exchange, internet access and accommodation are available in Tāngkǒu, which serves as a base for climbers. Lodging is also available in the hot springs area (under redevelopment at the time of writing) and at several points on the mountain, including the summit.

### Information

Money can be changed at the **Bank of China** (中国银行; Zhōngguó Yínháng) east of the Tangkou Hotel in the south of Tāngkǒu or at the **Bank of China** (中国银行; Zhōngguó Yínháng; ☎ 9am-5pm) opposite the Beihai Hotel on the summit (the latter also has an ATM that accepts international cards). Alongside the Bank of China on the summit of Huáng Shān is a **police station** (派出所; pàichūsuǒ; ☎ 558 1388). At the time of writing, the **police station** (公安局; Gōngānjú; ☎ 556 2311) in Tāngkǒu was about to relocate to offices just east of the river. Travel permits to Yìxiàn can be arranged here.

Internet cafés can be found in Tāngkǒu, including the **Jiaqiaochong Internet Café** (甲壳虫

网吧; Jiǎqiàochóng Wǎngbā; per hr Y3; ☎ 24hr), with a blue sign on the east side of the river running through Tāngkǒu, and **Lingdian Internet Café** (零点网吧; Língdiǎn Wǎngbā; per hr Y3; ☎ 8am-midnight), over the bridge on the other side of the river. Several hotels on the mountain have pricier internet access areas for guests and nonguests, with hourly rates of around Y15.

Leave your bags while climbing the mountain either at your hotel in Tāngkǒu or with the English-speaking Mr Hu at **Mr Hu's Restaurant** (☎ 139 562 647 86; Y2). Mr Hu is a useful and ever-present source of local information on Tāngkǒu and Huángshān who can arrange bus tickets and runs a simple restaurant across the way from the Bank of China in Tāngkǒu. Across the other side of the river, Mr Cheng at **Mr Cheng's Restaurant** (☎ 130 855 926 03; Yanxi Dongjie) speaks English with an impressive accent and is similarly a useful source of information (and food).

### Routes to the Summit

Regardless of how you ascend Huáng Shān, you'll be stung by a dizzying entrance fee of Y200 (children under 1.1m half price); ticket prices continue to gallop way ahead of inflation. Pay at the eastern steps near the **Cloud Valley Temple Cable Car Station** (云谷索道站; Yúngǔsī Suǒdào) or at the **Ciguang Temple** (慈光阁; Ciguāng Gé), where the western steps begin. Minibuses run to both places from Tāngkǒu for Y10.

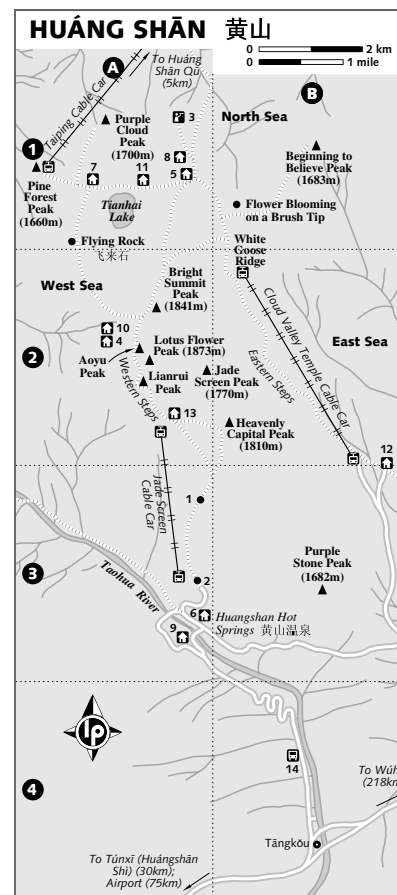
Three basic routes reach the summit: the short, hard way (eastern steps); the longer, harder way (western steps); and the very short, easy way (cable car). The eastern steps lead up from the Cloud Valley Temple Cable Car Station, and the western steps lead up from the parking lot near Ciguang Temple, about half an hour's walk above the hot springs.

Make sure to pack enough water, food and appropriate clothing before climbing; taking sunscreen is also recommended as the sun can get fierce on clear days from spring onwards. Bottled water and food prices increase the higher you go, so take provisions with you.

As mountain paths are easy to follow and English signs plentiful, guides are unnecessary. The truly indolent can bob up in a sedan chair, bounced along by two porters.

### EASTERN STEPS

A medium-fast climb of the 7.5km eastern steps from **Cloud Valley Temple** to **White Goose**



**Ridge** (白鹅峰; Báí Fēng; 1770m) can be done in under two and a half hours. The route is pleasant, but lacks the awesome geological scenery of the western steps (which you can save for your descent).

In spring, azaleas add gorgeous splashes of colour to the greens of the bamboo and pines and wooded slopes of the mountain. Other flowering trees include the Japanese Weigela (*Weigela japonica*), blooming in May and June.

Much of the climb is comfortably shaded and although it can be tiring, it's a doddle compared to the western steps. Slow-moving porters use the eastern steps for ferrying up their massive, swaying loads of food, drink and building materials so considerable traffic

### INFORMATION

Bank of China 中国银行 .....(see 5)  
Police Station/PSB 公安局 .....(see 5)

### SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Banshan Temple 半山寺 ..... 1 A3  
Ciguang Temple 慈光阁 ..... 2 A3  
Refreshing Terrace 清凉台 ..... 3 A1

### SLEEPING

Baiyun Hotel 白云楼宾馆 ..... 4 A2  
Beihai Hotel 北海宾馆 ..... 5 A1  
Huangshan Hotel 黄山宾馆 ..... 6 A3  
Huangshan Paiyunlou Hotel 排云楼宾馆 ..... 7 A1  
Huángshān Gōngshāngsuǒ 黄山工商所 .....(see 5)  
Shilin Hotel 狮林饭店 ..... 8 A1  
Taoyuan Hotel 桃源宾馆 ..... 9 A3  
Tianhai Hotel 天海山庄 ..... 10 A2  
Xihai Hotel 西海宾馆 ..... 11 A1  
Xihai Shānzhuāng 西海山庄 .....(see 11)  
Yungu Hotel 云谷山庄 ..... 12 B2  
Yupinglou Hotel 玉屏楼宾馆 ..... 13 A2

### TRANSPORT

Nanmen Long-Distance Bus Station 长途汽车站 ..... 14 B4

plies the route. While clambering up, note the more ancient flight of steps that makes an occasional appearance alongside the newer set.

Purists can extend the eastern steps climb by several hours by starting at Huang Shan Gate, where a stepped path crosses the road at several points before linking with the main eastern steps trail.

If you have time, the recommended route is a 10-hour circuit hike ascending the eastern steps and coming down via the western steps. Don't underestimate the hardship involved; the steep gradients and granite steps can wreak havoc on your knees, both going up and down.

### WESTERN STEPS

The 15km western steps route has some stellar scenery, but it's twice as long and strenuous as the eastern steps, and much easier to enjoy if you're clambering down rather than gasping your way up.

The western steps descent begins at the **Flying Rock** (Fēilái Shí), a boulder perched on an outcrop half an hour from Beihai Hotel, and goes over **Bright Summit Peak** (Guāngmíng Dīng).

South of **Aoyu Peak** (鳌鱼峰; Áoyú Fēng; 1780m) en route to Lotus Flower Peak, the descent funnels you through a **Gleam of Sky** (一线天; Yìxiàn Tiān), a remarkably narrow chasm – a vertical split in the granite – pinching

a huge rock suspended above the heads of climbers. Further on, **Lotus Flower Peak** (蓮花峰; Liánhuā Fēng; 1873m) marks the highest point, but is occasionally sealed off, preventing ascents. **Lianrui Peak** (蓮蕊峰; Liánruǐ Fēng; 1776m) is decorated with rocks whimsically named after animals, but save some kilojoules of energy for the much-coveted and staggering climb – 1321 steps in all – up **Heavenly Capital Peak** (天都峰; Tiāndū Fēng; 1810m) and the stunning views that unfold below. As elsewhere on the mountain, young lovers bring padlocks engraved with their names up here and lash them for eternity to the chain railings. Successful ascents can be commemorated with a gold medal engraved with your name (Y10). Access to Heavenly Capital Peak (and other peaks) is sometimes restricted for maintenance and repair, but the peak was open at the time of writing. The route down the far side of Heavenly Capital Peak descends along a narrow staircase carved with occasionally treacherous steps, so descend slowly.

Further below, the steps lead to the **Ban-shan Temple** (Bànshān Sì) and below that the Ciguang Temple, where you can pick up a minibus back to Tāngkǒu (Y10) or continue walking to the hot springs area.

Huáng Shān is not one of China's sacred mountains, so little religious activity is evident. The Ciguang Temple at the bottom of the western steps is one of the few temples on the mountain whose temple halls survive, although they have been converted to more secular uses. The first hall now serves as the **Mt Huangshan Visitors Centre** (internet access per hour Y15) where you can pore over a diorama of the mountain range.

#### CABLE CAR

Minibuses (Y10) ferry visitors from Tāngkǒu to the **Cloud Valley Temple Cable Car** (Yúngǔ Sī Suǒdào; adult/child peak Y65/35, off-peak Y55/30; ☎ 6.30am-4.30pm). Either arrive very early or late (if you're staying overnight) as queues of more than one hour are the norm. In the peak season (officially 1 March to 30 November), people can wait up to three hours for a ride – you may as well walk.

Minibuses (Y10) also run from Tāngkǒu to the Ciguang Temple, which is linked by the **Jade Screen Cable Car** (Yùpíng Suǒdào; adult/child peak Y65/35, off-peak Y55/30; ☎ 6.30am-5.30pm) to the area just below the Yupinglou Hotel.

Accessing Huáng Shān from the north via the **Taiping Cable Car** (Tàipíng Suǒdào; adult/child peak Y65/35, off-peak Y55/30; ☎ 6.30am-4.30pm Fri & Sat, 7.30am-4.30pm Sun-Thu) is also an option. Minibuses (Y15, 30 minutes) run from Huáng Shān Qū (an additional access point to Huáng Shān) to the cable-car station.

#### On the Summit

The North Sea (北海; Běihǎi) sunrise is a highlight for those spending the night on the summit. **Refreshing Terrace** (Qīngliáng Tái) is located five minutes from Beihai Hotel and attracts sunrise crowds (hotels supply thick padded jackets for the occasion). Lucky visitors are rewarded with the luminous spectacle of *yúnhái* (literally 'sea of clouds'): idyllic pools of mist that settle over the mountain, filling its chasms and valleys with fog and turning its peaks into islands that poke from the clouds.

The staggering and otherworldly views from the summit reach out over huge valleys of granite and enormous formations of rock, topped by gravity-defying slivers of stone and the gnarled forms of ubiquitous Huangshan pine trees (*Pinus taiwanensis*). Many rocks have been christened with fanciful names by the Chinese, alluding to figures from religion and myth. **Beginning to Believe Peak** (始信峰; Shìxìn Fēng; 1683m), with its jaw-dropping views, is a major bottleneck for photographers. En route to the North Sea, pause at the **Flower Blooming on a Brush Tip** (夢筆生花; Mèngbǐ Shēnghuā; 1640m), a granite formation topped by a pine tree.

The wind regularly whips up at the **West Sea** (西海; Xīhǎi), where breathtaking views stretch out along a huge gorge and the chains of the observation area are left garlanded with clumps of padlocks by romantic couples.

Clamber up to **Purple Cloud Peak** (丹霞峰; Dānxiá Fēng) for a long survey over the landscape and try to catch the sun as it descends in the west.

#### Sleeping & Eating

Huáng Shān has five locations where hotels and restaurants can be found. Prices and bed availability vary according to season, and it is a good idea to book ahead.

#### TĀNGKǒU 汤口

Affordable hotels can be found in Tāngkǒu, a pleasant enough town situated on either side of

a small river spanned by several bridges, with a good range of restaurants. Family-run hotel owners may approach you to stay in cheap local rooms, garnering you the best prices.

**Tāngkǒu Hotel** (汤口宾馆; Tāngkǒu Bīnguǎn; ☎ 556 2400; fax 556 2687; d/tr Y100/120) On the cusp of reopening after renovation at the time of writing, this attractive hotel is set back from the road, and has clean and well-looked-after rooms.

**Dàzhōng Hotel** (大众宾馆; Dàzhōng Fāndiàn; d/tr Y100/120; ☎ 556 2453; ☎) A typical example of the simple hotels along the road running through Tāngkǒu, this place has cheap and serviceable rooms, with air-con, TV and phone.

**Yuanye Hotel** (原野大酒店; Yuányě Dàjiǔdiàn; ☎ 556 3223; fax 556 3533; Yanxi Jie; d Y280, tr Y150-300; ☎) Located overlooking the river on Yanxi Jie, this hotel has clean, bright and frequently discounted rooms. The cheaper triples come with shower and toilet, but no air-con. With no English sign, it's on the right as you head down Yanxi Jie towards the Bank of China. Note that there's no lift.

Restaurants are scattered along Yanxi Jie alongside the river, with several specialising in local Huizhōu dishes.

**Huizhōu Měishí** (徽州美食; ☎ 338 8276; Yanxi Jie; meals Y30) Located on the west bank of the river, this small and friendly family-run restaurant has no English sign, but it's a good spot to sample local Huizhōu-style cooking, from stewed stone frog (*hóngshāo shíjī*; 红烧石鸡; Y60) to filling Anhui-style fried noodles (*huìshì chǎomiàn*; 徽式炒面; Y15) and fried meat slices in Anhui style (*huìshì huīguōròu*; 徽式回锅肉; Y28).

#### HOT SPRINGS AREA 温泉区

Undergoing massive redevelopment at the time of writing that may spoil its charms, the hot springs area, 4km further uphill, is a more expensive alternative to staying in Tāngkǒu.

**Huangshan Hotel** (Huángshān Bīnguǎn; ☎ 558 5808; fax 558 5818; d Y340-420) This place was undergoing redevelopment at the time of writing so prices could well have changed by the time you read this.

**Taoyuan Hotel** (Tāoyuán Bīnguǎn; Peach Blossom Hotel; ☎ 556 2666; fax 556 2666; d Y486-580) This is a pleasant hotel in the hot springs area, with clean, modern rooms, some with views; still open at the time of writing, despite all the construction.

#### CLOUD VALLEY TEMPLE CABLE CAR STATION 云谷索道站

**Yungu Hotel** (Yúngǔ Shānzhuāng; ☎ 558 6444; s & d Y580) With a lovely setting looking out onto bamboo and forest, this traditionally styled hotel has fine, clean rooms with 20% discounts frequently given. Walk down from the car park in front of the cable-car station.

#### SUMMIT AREA 山顶

Ideally, Huáng Shān visits include nights on the summit. Note that room prices can rise on Saturdays and Sundays and are astronomical during the week-long 1 May and 1 October holiday periods.

**Huángshān Gōngshāngsuǒ** (☎ 139 562 681 68; dm off-peak Y80-120, peak Y120-150, tent Y120) Tucked away behind the Bank of China opposite the Beihai Hotel, this cheap and well-positioned spot has rows of dorm rooms rising up the hill (no English sign). Dorms are simple and vary in price and quality, so size them up before deciding. Tents (*zhàngpeng*; 帐篷) are available for camping at selected points on the summit.

**Beihai Hotel** (Běihǎi Bīnguǎn; ☎ 558 2555; fax 558 1996; 6-bed dm Y100, tr Y300, s & d Y1280) The four-star Beihai comes with professional service, money exchange, a mobile-phone charging point, café selling hot dogs, a small and unexciting bar and 20% discounts during the week. Larger doubles with bathroom have older fittings than the smaller, better fitted-out doubles (same price). Simple dorms are in the block down the side by the Friendship Store; triples are grotty, but cheap (with common shower/toilet).

**Xihai Hotel** (Xīhǎi Bīnguǎn; ☎ 558 8888; www.xihaiho.tel.cn; dm/d/st Y160/1080/3800) Warm jackets are supplied in rooms for sunrise-watchers, bathrooms are clean, all rooms come with heating and 24-hour hot water, but take a look at the doubles first as some face inwards. Breakfast (Y40), lunch (Y80) and dinner (Y80) buffets are served at the restaurant. The concrete building opposite is **Xihǎi Shānzhuāng** (☎ 558 8888; d Y1080), with a further selection of doubles with slightly faded shower rooms.

**Shilin Hotel** (Shílín Fāndiàn; ☎ 558 4040; www.shilin.com; dm/s/d/st Y200/1080/1280/4880; ☎) The foyer is rather dark, and cheaper rooms are devoid of views, but the pricier doubles are bright and clean. Nine-bed dorms are also well-kept with bunk beds and shared toilet and shower; the block up the steps from the hotel has good

views. The hotel has an internet café (open 24 hours) and a supermarket downstairs.

**Huangshan Paiyunlou Hotel** (Páiyúnlóu Bīnguǎn; ☎ 558 1558; dm/d/tr Y260/980/1280) Three-star comfort and lovely views can be found at this hotel up from Tiānhǎi Hú (Tianhai Lake), with clean, heated doubles (some with bath, others with shower); rooms on higher floors have superior views. The six-bed dorms are clean and equipped with showers.

The Xihai and Beihai Hotels have bars and restaurants serving international and Chinese food, but it can be difficult to get service outside meal times. The restaurant at the Beihai Hotel is bright and brash but serves a good, spicy and tender *yúxiāng qiézi* (fish-flavour aubergine; 鱼香茄子; Y50) and flavoursome *ròumò dòufu* (tofu and minced meat; 肉末豆腐; Y40). Toast your heady ascent to the summit with a Yúnhǎi (Sea of Clouds; 云海) or a Yíngkèsōng (Welcoming Guest Pine; 迎客松) beer.

#### WESTERN STEPS 西线台阶

**Baiyun Hotel** (Báiyún Bīnguǎn; ☎ 556 1708; fax 556 1602; dm/d/tr Y260/1080/1380) Dorms here come with TV and shower, but are a bit old and worn; doubles (with bath) pass muster. No English sign, but the hotel is well sign-posted.

**Tianhai Hotel** (Tiānhǎi Shānzhuāng; ☎ 558 2626; dm/d Y260/1180) Just before the Baiyun Hotel, this hotel has very clean four-bed dorms with pine bunk beds, kettle, heater, shower and TV.

**Yupinglou Hotel** (Yùpínglóu Bīnguǎn; ☎ 558 2288; fax 558 2258; dm/d/tr/q Y260/1280/1380/1040; 🍷) Further down the mountain, this four-star hotel is perched on a spectacular 1660m-high lookout just above the Welcoming Guest Pine. Aim for the doubles with the good views at the back as some rooms have small windows with no views. Eight- and six-person dorms all come with shower. A restaurant is attached and there is an internet café (per hour Y15).

#### Getting There & Away

Buses from Túnxī (aka Huángshān Shi) take around 70 minutes to reach Huáng Shān Gate from the train station entrance (Y10, departs when full) between 6.30am and 8pm. Minibuses back to Túnxī from Tāngkǒu are plentiful, and can flagged down on the road to Túnxī (Y13).

Tāngkǒu has a number of long-distance bus stations, but the most useful for trav-

ellers is the **Nanmen long-distance bus station** (Nánmén Chángtú qìchē zhàn; ☎ 557 2602), south of the main Huáng Shān Gate. Buses run to Héféi (Y64, six hours, regular), Jiùhuá Shān (Y36, three hours, 6.10am), Yixiān (Y13, one hour, twice daily), Nánjīng (Y76, six hours, three daily), Hángzhōu (Y59 to Y80, four hours, five daily) and Wūhàn (Y154 to Y179, nine hours, twice daily). Many buses depart early in the morning.

#### Getting Around

Minibuses are the easiest and cheapest way to get around Huáng Shān, though they usually don't budge until enough people are on board. In the morning they ferry people to the eastern and western steps (Y10). You can usually find minibuses on Tāngkǒu's streets or on the highway across the bridge. Likewise, minibuses wait at the bottom of mountain routes in the afternoon. Taxis swarm everywhere in Tāngkǒu but require bargaining as they frequently overcharge; a taxi to the Cloud Valley Temple should cost around Y10 per person.

### JIÙHUÁ SHĀN 九华山

☎ 0566

One of China's four sacred Buddhist mountains, the 99 peaks of Jiùhuá Shān form the precipitous domain of the Bodhisattva Dizang (Ksitigarbha), Lord of the Underworld. A significant place of pilgrimage for believers to bless the souls of the recently deceased to ensure them a passage to Buddhist heaven, Jiùhuá Shān was identified in the 8th century as a worshipping place for Dizang by the Korean Buddhist disciple Kim Kiao Kak (Jin Qiáojié). Exuding a palpable air of Buddhist mystery and devotion, Jiùhuá Shān receives throngs of pilgrims for annual festivities held on the anniversary of Kim's death, which falls on the 30th day of the seventh lunar month. The population of monasteries and nunneries has fallen since its Tang dynasty tally of 150, but they can still be found at almost every turn.

#### Orientation

Six hundred metres above sea level, Jiùhuájīe village is about halfway up the mountain (or, as locals say, at roughly navel height in a giant Buddha's potbelly). Disembark at the main ticket office, purchase your ticket for the **mountain** (1 Mar-30 Nov Y140, 1 Dec-29 Feb Y110)

and proceed to the other side of the terminal for buses on to Jiùhuájīe village (included in ticket price; every 20 minutes). The bus terminates at the bus station just before the gate (Dàmén) leading to the village, from where the narrow main street heads south up past hotels and restaurants. Chinese-language maps that outline the mountain paths are available.

#### Information

**Bank of China** (中国银行; Zhōngguó Yínháng; 65 Huachen Lu) Changes travellers cheques and does foreign exchange; west of main square.

**China Post** (邮局; Yóujú; 58 Huacheng Lu) Off the main square.

**China Travel Service** (CTS; 中国旅行社; Zhōngguó Lǚxíngshè; ☎ 501 1588; 3rd fl, 135 Baima Xincun) Located on the far side of a school field.

**Huayang Internet Café** (华湧网吧; Huáyǒng Wǎngbā; per hr Y3; ☎ 8am-midnight) It's east of the pond on Baima Xincun.

**Jiuhuanan Red Cross Hospital** (九华山红十字医院; Jiùhuáshān Hóngshízi Yiyuàn; ☎ 501 1330) West of the pond on Baima Xincun.

**Public Security Bureau** (PSB; 公安局; Gōngānjú; ☎ 501 1381; 21 Furong Lu)

#### Sights & Activities

Worshippers hold sticks of incense to their foreheads and face the four directions at the enticingly esoteric yellow **Zhiyuan Temple** (祇园寺; Zhīyuán Sì; admission Y5; ☎ 6.30am-8.30pm) on Furong Lu (芙蓉路) in Jiùhuájīe, where the colossal twin-eaved **Great Treasure Hall** (Dàxióngbǎo Diàn) rises magnificently beyond the Hall of Heavenly Kings. Up the ancient, misshapen steps overlooking the turtle-filled Fangsheng Pond (Fāngshēng Chí) off the main square, the ancient and venerable **Huacheng Temple** (化成寺; Huàchéng Sì; admission Y8) is replete with pilgrims and foggy with incense smoke.

Hiking up the ridge behind Zhiyuan Temple leads you to the **Bǎisui Gōng** (百岁宫; admission Y8; ☎ 5am-6pm), an active temple built in 1630 to consecrate the Buddhist monk Wu Xia, whose shrunken, embalmed body is coated in gold and sits shrivelled within an ornate glass cabinet in front of a row of pink lotus candles. The **Five Hundred Luohan Hall** (Wǔbǎi Luóhàn Táng) contains an astonishing gathering of 500 gilded *luohan*, with a four-sided 1000-arm effigy of Guanyin at their centre.

If you don't feel like hiking or facing the monkeys that approach climbers and scavenge for scraps on the way up, take the 'Funicular of Baisuigong' **cable car** (fast up/down Y55/40, ordinary up/down Y40/35; ☎ 7am-5.30pm) to the ridge.

From the top, walk south along the ridge past the Dongya Temple (Dōngyá Chánsì) to the **Huixiang Pavilion** (Huìxiāng Gé), above which towers the recently constructed, seven-storey 10,000 Buddha Pagoda (Wǎnfó Tǎ), fashioned entirely from bronze; avoid climbing during lightning storms unless you want to light up like a signal flare. A western path leads to town, while the eastern one dips into a pleasant valley and continues past the **Phoenix Pine** (Fēnghuáng Sōng) and the cable-car station (up/down Y55/50) to **Tiantai Zheng Peak** (天台正顶; Tiāntái Zhèng Dǐng). The two-hour walk to the summit is tough going, passing small temples and nunneries. Close to the peak pay your respects at the **Tiānrán Guānyīn**, a rock sculpted by the elements and robed in red that miraculously resembles the Buddhist Goddess of Compassion (Guanyin).

Within **Tiantai Temple** (Tiāntái Sì) on Tiantai Zheng Peak (the highest peak is actually Shiwang Peak, 1342m, to the south), a statue of the Dizang Buddha is seated within the **Dizang Hall** (Dizàng Diàn), while from the magnificent **10,000 Buddha Hall** (Wǎnfó Lóu) above, a huge enthroned statue of the Dizang Buddha gazes at the breathless masses appearing at his feet. Note the beams above your head that glitter with rows of thousands of Buddhas.

A massive 99m-tall bronze statue of the Bodhisattva Dizang and a vast temple complex is planned for construction near Dajue Qiao off Jiuhuang Gonglu in the south of Jiùhuá Shān.

#### Sleeping & Eating

**Nanyuan Hotel** (南苑旅馆; Nányuàn Lǚguǎn; ☎ 501 1122; 26 Furong Lu; 芙蓉路26号; economy bed Y20, d/tr Y100/120; 🍷) This friendly and family-run two-storey hotel has bright and clean rooms in a tranquil and relaxed location opposite the Tonghui Nunnery (Tōnghuī Ān). Economy rooms sleep five, have common showers and no air-con. Meals are also served. It's up a small trail at the south end of Furong Lu (the main street), beyond the PSB.

**Baisuigong Xiayuan Hotel** (百岁宫下院; Bǎisui gōng Xiàyuàn; ☎ 501 3118; dm/d/tr Y20/380/480;

☹) The 10-person dorms are a tad grubby but cheap (common shower) and the hotel is pleasantly arranged around an old temple with a Jade Buddha Hall below and a 1000-arm Guanyin statue in the hall above. Discounts for double are rooms frequently available. It's opposite Zhiyuan Temple, off Furong Lu (芙蓉路).

**Ju Long Hotel** (聚龙大酒店; Jùlóng Dàjiùdiàn; ☎ 501 1368; d Y580-680; ☹) Large and rather sprawling three-star hotel just beyond the main gate to the village off Furong Lu and facing the Zhiyuan Temple. Comfy rooms come with clean and well-fitted-out shower rooms, but aim for the east-facing rooms with a view.

Jiùhuájìè village has plenty of restaurants around the main square and along Furong Lu and Huacheng Lu, which serve variously priced local dishes.

## Getting There & Away

Buses from the Jiùhuáshān Xīnqūzhàn (新区站) – the bus terminus and main Jiùhuá Shān ticket office 20 minutes by bus north of Jiùhuájìè village – run to Huángshān (Y40, three hours, twice daily), Qīngyáng (Y5, 30 minutes, every 15 minutes), Tónglíng (Y15, 1½ hours, twice daily), Héféi (Y55, four hours, 18 per day), Wúhàn (Y115, eight hours, once daily) and Shànghǎi (Y100, eight hours, once daily). One bus a day runs to Jiùhuá Shān from Tàngkǒu (Y36, three hours, 6.10am). The nearby town of Qīngyáng, from where there are buses to Túnxī (Y35, three hours), Yìxiàn (Y28, four hours), Hángzhōu (Y60, five hours), Héféi (Y45, 3½ hours) and Shànghǎi (Y70, seven hours), has regular buses (Y5, 30 minutes, every 15 minutes) to Jiùhuá Shān.

## Getting Around

Buses (free with entrance ticket, otherwise Y5; 15 minutes) depart every 10 minutes or so from the bus station north of the main gate and drive along Furong Lu, over Furong Bridge (Fúróng Qiáo) and up the road (Dengta Xincun) to the Phoenix Pine (Fèng-huáng Sōng) and the cable-car station.

## HÉFÉI 合肥

☎ 0551 / pop 1.4 million

The provincial capital, Héféi is a pleasant and friendly city with lively markets, attractive lakes and parks but few scenic attractions.

## Orientation

Shengli Lu leads down to Nanfei River then meets up with Shouchun Lu. Changjiang Zhonglu is the main commercial street and cuts east–west through the city. Between Suzhou Lu and Huangcheng Lu, Huaihe Lu has been pedestrianised.

## Information

**Bank of China** (Zhōngguó Yínháng; 155 Changjiang Zhonglu) Changes travellers cheques and major currency. There's an ATM that takes international cards.

**China International Travel Service** (CITS; Zhōngguó Guójí Lǚxíngshè; ☎ 281 1909; 8 Meishan Lu; ☎ 8am–5pm) Situated next to Anhui Hotel.

**First People's Hospital** (Shìyī Yīyuàn; ☎ 265 2893; 322 Huaihe Lu)

**Post office** (Yóujú; Changjiang Zhonglu) Next to the City Department Store.

**Public Security Bureau** (PSB; Gōngānjú) Located on the northwest corner of the intersection of Shouchun Lu and Liu'an Lu.

**Renzhe Internet Café** (Rénzhè Wǎngluò Zhōngxīn; per hr Y2; ☎ 8am–midnight) It's off Huaihe Lu, about 80m west of Motel 168.

## Sights

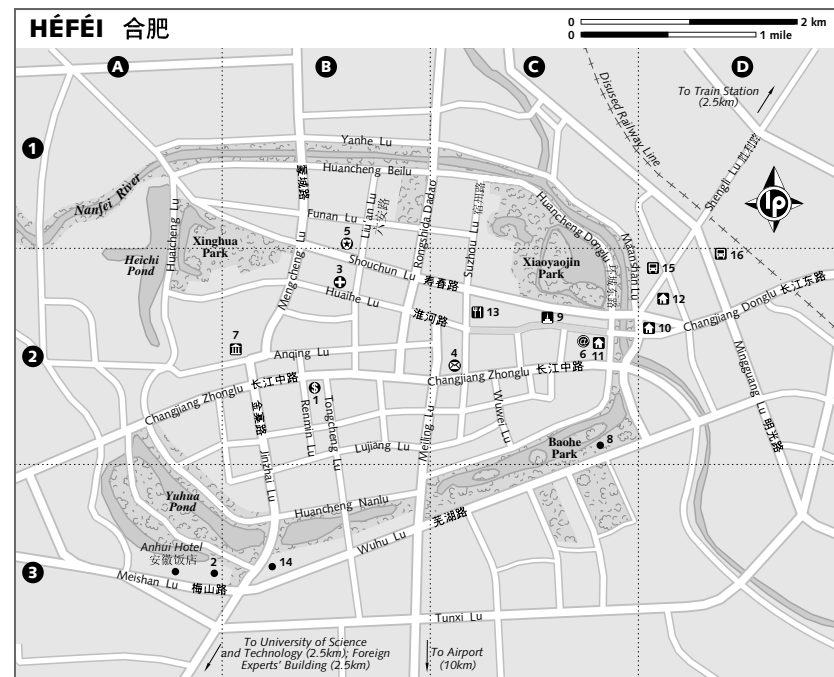
**Small Mingjiao Temple** (Míngjiào Sì; Huaihe Lu; admission Y5; ☎ 7am–6pm) sits 5m above ground on the pedestrianised section of Huaihe Lu. Among Héféi's green spaces, **Xiaoyaolin Park** (Xiāoyáolín Gōngyuán; Shouchun Lu; admission Y5; ☎ 6am–7pm) and **Baohé Park** (Bāohé Gōngyuán), which contains the splendid **Lord Bao's Tomb** (Bǎo Gōng Mǔyuán; 58 Wuhu Lu; admission Y15; ☎ 8am–6pm), are the most pleasant.

Closed for refurbishment at the time of writing, the **Anhui Provincial Museum** (Ānhuī Shěng Bówùguǎn; 268 Anqing Lu; admission Y10; ☎ 8.30–11.30am & 2.30–5pm Tue–Sun) contains displays of bronzes, Han dynasty tomb rubbings and some fine examples of the wooden architectural style found around Huáng Shān.

## Sleeping & Eating

**Foreign Experts' Building** (Fānjiānlóu; Zhuānjiālóu; ☎ 360 2881; 96 Jinchai Lu; 金寨路96路; s Y150, d Y180–240) Comfortable and clean rooms are available in the parklike campus setting of the University of Science and Technology, south of the centre. Reception is in the large building on the north side of the pond.

**Motel 168** (Mòtài Liǎnsuǒ Lǚdiàn; ☎ 216 1111; www.motel168.com; 1 Huaihe Lu; 淮河路1号; s Y168, d Y198–238; ☹) About to open at the time of writing,



### INFORMATION

Bank of China  
中国银行 ..... 1 B2  
CITS 中国国际旅行社 ..... 2 A3  
First Peoples Hospital  
市一医院 ..... 3 B2  
Post Office 邮局 ..... 4 C2  
PSB 公安局 ..... 5 B1  
Renzhe Internet Café  
仁者网络中心 ..... 6 C2

### SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Anhui Provincial Museum  
安徽省博物馆 ..... 7 B2  
Lord Bao's Tomb 包公墓园 ..... 8 C2  
Mingjiao Temple 明教寺 ..... 9 C2  
**SLEEPING** ☹  
Holiday Inn 古井假日酒店 ..... 10 D2  
Motel 168 莫泰连锁旅店 ..... 11 C2  
Xinya Hotel 新亚大酒店 ..... 12 D2

### EATING

Bajiangjun Hotpot 巴将军火锅 ..... 13 C2

### TRANSPORT

China Eastern Airlines  
东方航空售票处 ..... 14 B3  
Héféi Long-Distance Bus Station  
省客运站 ..... 15 D2  
Long-Distance Bus Station  
合肥汽车站 ..... 16 D2

this reliable, modern budget/midrange chain hotel was due to offer cheap, clean doubles in a five-floor branch overlooking the bridge on Huangcheng Donglu.

**Xinya Hotel** (Xīnyà Dàjiùdiàn; ☎ 220 3088; www.xinya hotel.cn; 18 Shengli Lu; 胜利路18号; d/stc incl breakfast Y298/418; ☹) Good discounts bring the comfortable rooms at this business hotel well within range of most budgets. Well located for the bus and train stations, rooms here are spacious and clean and shower rooms come equipped with phones and hairdryers. It has a no-smoking floor.

**Holiday Inn** (Héféi Gǔjīng Jiàrlì Jiùdiàn; ☎ 220 6666; www.holiday-inn.com; 1104 Changjiang Donglu; 长江东路1104号; d Y760) This five-star hotel has a

well-polished feel and although rooms are a bit tired looking, facilities are good, with swimming pool, health club, wi-fi in public areas, nonsmoking rooms, rooms for people with disabilities, a bar on the 4th floor with live music and a good range of restaurants. Substantial discounts are often available.

**Bajiangjun Hotpot** (Bājiāngjūn Huǒguō; ☎ 261 3777; 118 Suzhou Lu) Popular and centrally located, steaming hotpot restaurant.

## Getting There & Away

### AIR

Daily flights go to Běijīng (Y900, one hour and 40 minutes), Shànghǎi (Y440, one hour and five minutes), Guǎngzhōu (Y1040, 1½



hours), Hángzhōu (Y460, 50 minutes) and Xī'ān (Y920, one hour and 40 minutes). Less-frequent services go to Chéngdū (Y1100, 2½ hours), Xiàmén (Y790, 1½ hours) and Kūnmíng (Y1520, three hours).

Bookings can be made at **China Eastern Airlines** (Dōngfāng Hángkōng Shòupiàochù; ☎ 282 2357; 246 Jīnzhài Lu), or through CITS and at the train-ticket booking office.

### BUS

Several long-distance bus stations are located north of the Changjiang Donglu and Mingguang Lu intersection in the city's east, which is a bit confusing. Buses leave from the **Héféi long-distance bus station** (Héféi qìchē zhàn; 168 Mingguang Lu) for Hángzhōu (Y150, eight hours), Wúhàn (Y140, 10 hours) and Túnxī (Y28, seven hours). Buses from the **long-distance bus station** (☎ 429 6413; 35 Shengli Lu) across

from the Xinya Hotel on Shengli Lu run to Nánjīng (Y40, 2½ hours, every 40 minutes), Shànghǎi (Y110 to Y140, six hours, six daily), Hángzhōu (Y105 to Y143, 5½ hours, seven daily), Wúhàn (Y90 to Y120, eight hours, five daily), Chángshā (Y218, 12 hours, once daily) and Qīngdǎo (Y160, 12 hours, once daily).

### TRAIN

The train station is 4km northeast of the city centre. Trains go to Shànghǎi (Y198, 8½ hours), Běijīng (Y263, 12 hours), Nánjīng (Y49, five hours) and Tiānjīn (Y200, 10 hours). The train to Túnxī (Y96, seven hours) is more comfortable than the bus.

### Getting Around

Taxis are cheap, starting at Y5. Taking a taxi (Y20, 30 minutes) is the best way to the airport, 11km south of the city centre.