



Jílín

POP 27.1 MILLION

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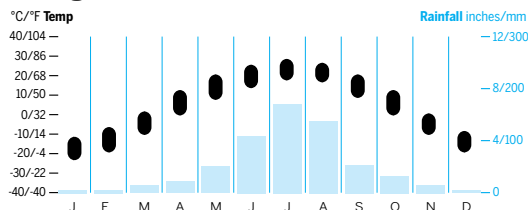
Why Go?

A flirty province, Jílín (吉林) teases with the ancient and the modern, the artificial and the supernatural. Travellers tired of great walls and imperial facades can explore Western-influenced palaces and the ruins of an ancient Korean kingdom. In fact much of the far-eastern region comprises the little-known Korean Autonomous Prefecture, home to more than one million ethnic Koreans. Kimchi and cold noodles dominate the menu here and there's an easy acceptance of outsiders.

Known for its motor cities and smokestack towns, Jílín is also a popular ski destination and boasts China's largest nature reserve. So go for the contrasts? No, go for the superlatives. Heaven Lake, a stunning, deep-blue volcanic crater lake within the country's largest reserve, is one of China's most mesmerising natural wonders. Jílín can be a little rough around the edges at times, but its rewards are pure polished jewels.

When to Go

Chángchūn



Jun–Sep Best months to visit Chángbái Shān.

Jul–Aug Country-side around the Korean Autonomous Prefecture at its most bucolic.

Nov–Mar Ski season at Běidàhú Ski Resort.

History

Korean kings once ruled parts of Jilin and the discovery of important relics from the ancient Koguryo kingdom (37 BC–AD 668) in the small southeastern city of Ji'an has resulted in the area being designated a World Heritage Site by Unesco.

The Japanese occupation of Manchuria in the early 1930s pushed Jilin to the world's centre stage. Chángchūn became the capital of what the Japanese called

Manchukuo, with Puyi (the last emperor of the Qing dynasty) given the role of figurehead of the puppet government. In 1944 the Russians wrested control of Jilin from the Japanese and, after stripping the area of its industrial base, handed the region back to Chinese control. For the next several years Jilin would pay a heavy price as one of the frontlines in the civil war between the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).



Jilin Highlights

- 1 Visit China's largest nature reserve, **Chángbái Shān** (p310), with its waterfalls, birch forests and aptly named **Heaven Lake** (p311)
- 2 Hit the slopes at the **Běidàhú Ski Resort** (p316),

one of China's premier skiing spots

- 3 Explore the mysterious remains of the ancient Koguryo kingdom in **Ji'an** (p314), just across the Yalu River from North Korea

- 4 Go on the trail of Puyi, the last emperor of China, at the Imperial Palace of Manchu State in **Chángchūn** (p316)

- 5 See China's ethnic Korean culture in **Yánji** (p313)