



# Guìzhōu

POP 34.7 MILLION

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## Best Historic Towns & Villages

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## Why Go?

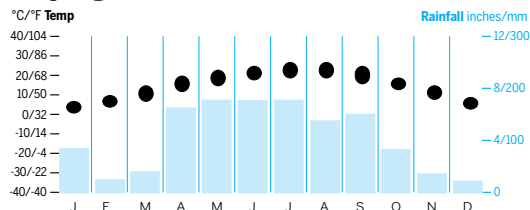
Little-visited Guìzhōu (贵州) has always been the least fashionable southwest China province. A much-quoted proverb describes it as a place 'without three *lǐ* of flat land, three days of fine weather, or three cents to rub together'. Ouch!

Certainly, pockets of Guìzhōu are desperately poor and not for nothing do expats refer to it as 'Greyzhōu'. The upside is that there's plenty of elbow room out in the simply stunning countryside, a sublime mix of undulating hills and carpets of forest, riven with rivers tumbling into magnificent waterfalls and down into spooky-thrilling karst cave networks.

As big a draw as the landscapes is Guìzhōu's extraordinary human mosaic. Around 37% of the province's population consists of more than 18 ethnic minorities. They all contribute to Guìzhōu's social-butterfly calendar, which enjoys more folk festivals than any other province in China, and those parties more than make up for the weather.

## When to Go

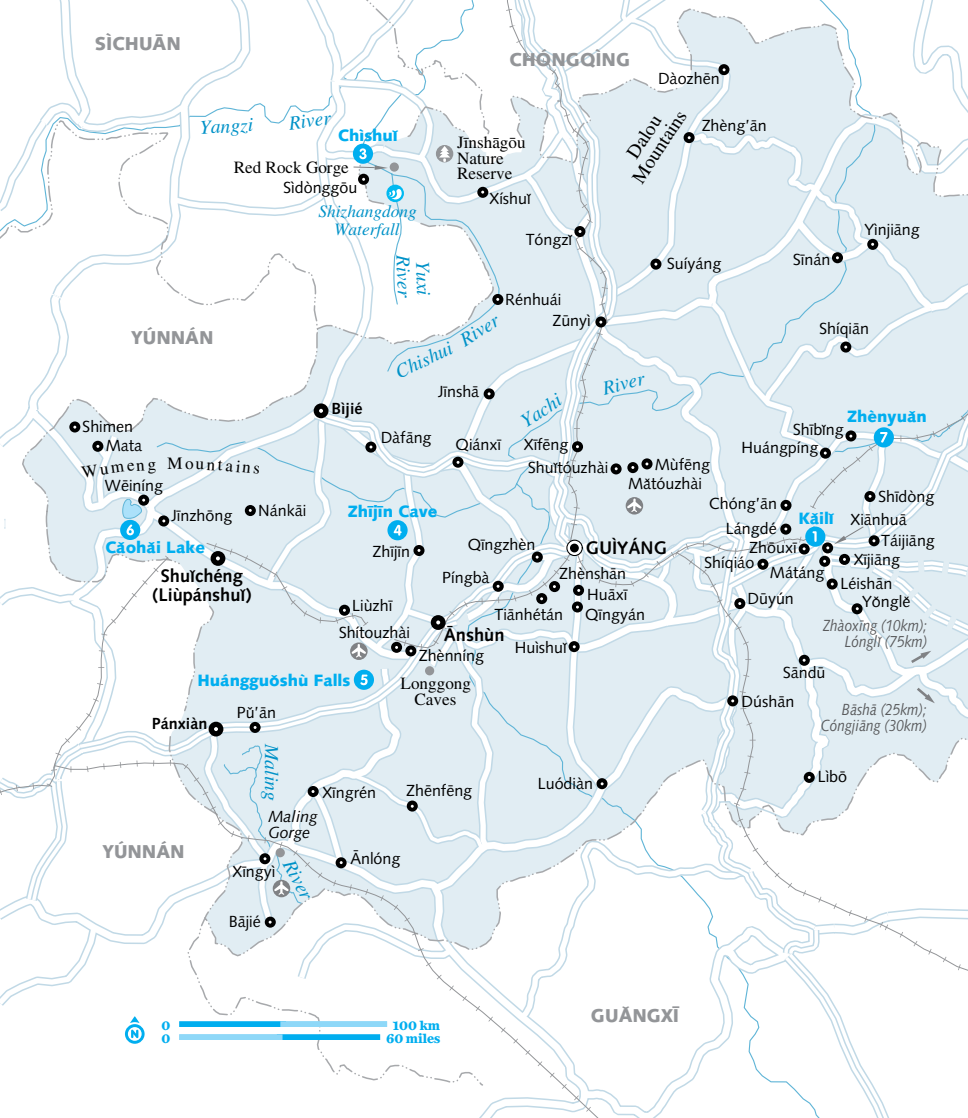
### Guiyang



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

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

**Oct & Nov** See in the Miao New Year in Xījiāng with gallons of rice wine.



## Guizhōu Highlights

- 1 Spend a week village-hopping around **Kàilǐ** (p636)
- 2 Party with the locals at one of the thousand-odd **festivals** held in Guizhōu each year (p636)
- 3 Get off the beaten track in the prehistoric fern forests around **Chishuǐ** (p649)
- 4 Head underground at **Zhījīn Cave** (p118), the largest cavern in China
- 5 Soak yourself in the mists at the thundering **Huángguōshù Falls** (p646), China's largest waterfall
- 6 Escape the madding crowds and get up close with rare black cranes at remote **Cǎohǎi Lake** (p648)
- 7 Amble in low gear around the charming old town of **Zhènyuǎn** (p641), on either bank of the Wúyáng River