



Qīnghǎi

POP 5.7 MILLION

Includes ➔

Xīníng	882
Around Xīníng	888
Tónggrén (Repkong) .	890
Guidé	891
Yùshù (Jyekundo) ..	893
Around Yùshù	894
Golmud	896

Best Monasteries & Temples

- ➔ Kumbum Monastery (p889)
- ➔ Yòuníng Monastery (p889)
- ➔ Lóngwù Sì (p890)
- ➔ Princess Wencheng Temple (p894)

Best Natural Sight

- ➔ Kanbula National Park (p889)
- ➔ Mt Amnye Machen (p892)
- ➔ Mèngdǎ Nature Reserve (p891)
- ➔ Zhǎlíng and Èlíng Lakes (p894)
- ➔ Nangchen County (p895)

Why Go?

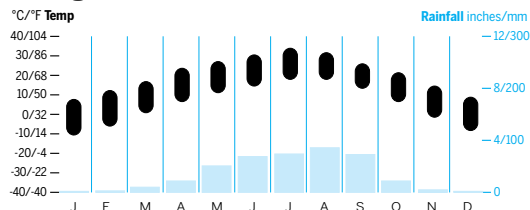
Big, bold and beautifully barren, Qīnghǎi (青海), larger than any country in the EU, occupies a vast swathe of the north-eastern chunk of the Tibetan Plateau. In fact, as far as Tibetans are concerned, this is Amdo, one of old Tibet's three traditional provinces. Much of what you'll experience here will feel more Tibetan than Chinese; there are monasteries galore, yaks by the hundred and nomads camped out across high-altitude grasslands.

Rough-and-ready, Qīnghǎi is classic off-the-beaten-track territory, often with a last-frontier feel to it. Travelling here can be both inconvenient and uncomfortable, though China's rapid development plans have begun to touch the province, with huge highways and new rail lines under construction.

Despite that, Qīnghǎi still delivers a heavy dose of solitude among middle-of-nowhere high-plateau vistas, Martian-like red mountains and encounters with remote communities of China's ethnic minorities.

When to Go

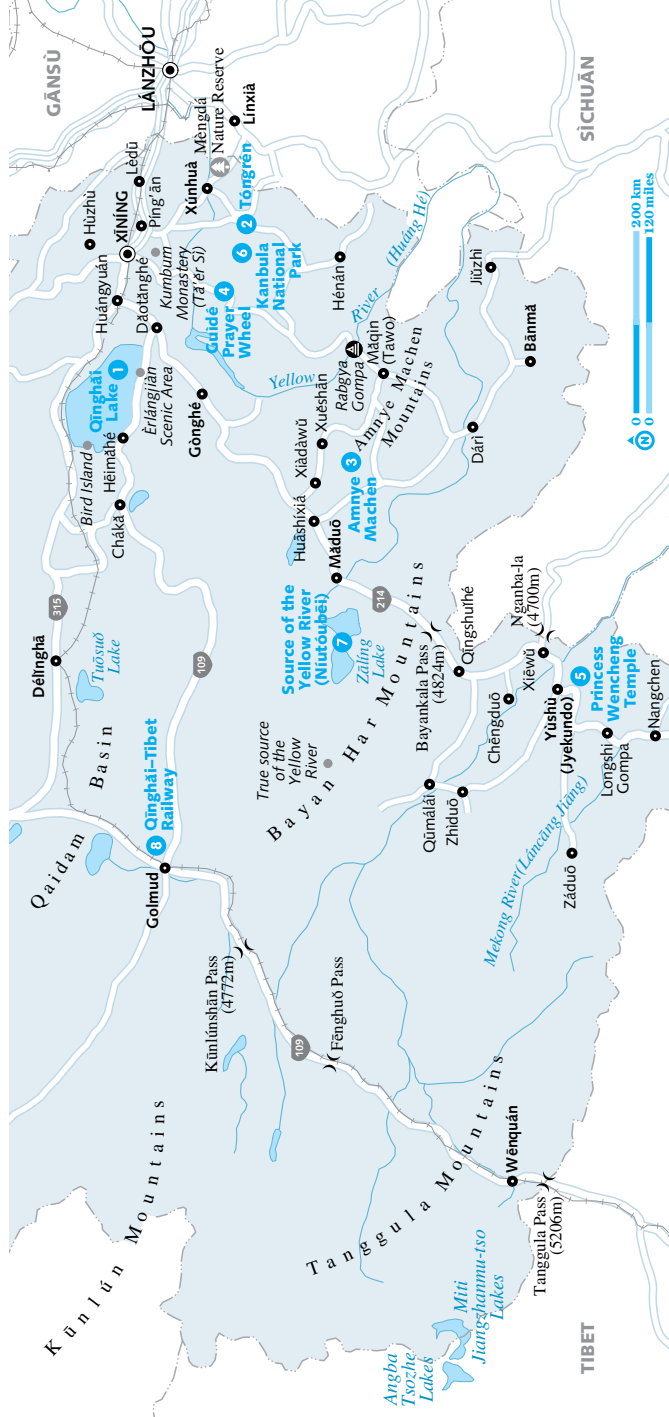
Xīníng



Jan & Feb Tibetan New Year (Losar), with lots of pilgrims and celebrations at monasteries.

Jul & Aug Grasslands at their greenest; landscape dotted with nomad tents.

Sep Safest and most comfortable time for hiking around Mt Amnye Machen.



Qinghai Highlights

- 1** Birdwatch on the shores of **Qinghai Lake** (p888), the largest in China
- 2** Buy a Tibetan *thangka* straight from the artist's easel in **Tongren** (p890)
- 3** Trek on **Mt Amnye Machen** (p892), eastern Tibet's most sacred mountain
- 4** Turn the world's largest prayer wheel near the walled Old Town of **Guidé** (p892)
- 5** Sidestep the web of prayer flags on a hike around the hills beside **Princess Wencheng Temple** (p894)
- 6** Hike among the Martian-like red mountains of **Kanbula National Park** (p889)
- 7** Venture across the Qinghai-Tibet plateau to the **source of the Yellow River** (p894)
- 8** Take one of the world's great train rides, the **Qinghai-Tibet Railway** (p888) to Lhasa, at Xining or Golmud