



# Shāndōng

POP 95.8 MILLION

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## Best Historical Sights

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## Best Places for a Dip

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- ➔ Nos 2 and 3 Bathing Beaches, Qīngdǎo (p173)
- ➔ No 1 Beach, Yántái (p182)

## Why Go?

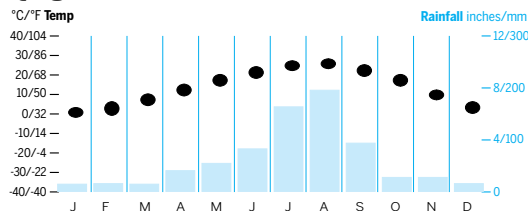
Steeped in natural and supernatural allure, the Shāndōng (山东) peninsula on China's northeastern coast is the stuff of legends. Its captivating landscape – a fertile flood plain fed by rivers and underground springs, capped by granite peaks and framed in wild coastline – can't help but inspire wonder.

A lumpy-headed boy named Confucius was born here and grew up to develop a philosophy of virtue and ethics that would reach far beyond his lectures under an apricot tree. Three centuries later China's first emperor Qin Shi Huang would climb Tàishān, Shāndōng's highest peak, to proclaim a unified empire in 219 BC.

But this place is more than its past. The energetic seaside city of Qīngdǎo ranks among the best places to live in Asia. This is Shāndōng's real draw: you can climb mountains, explore the legacies of kingdoms of old, and still have time to hit the beach.

## When to Go

### Qīngdǎo



**Jun–Aug** Cool sea breezes and the beer festival make summer the time to explore Qīngdǎo.

**Sep & Oct** Sacred Tàishān is gloriously shrouded in mist for just part (not all) of the day.

**Dec & Jan** Dress warmly and ascend Shāndōng's frosted peaks in the dry winter.

## History

Shāndōng's tumultuous history is tied to the capricious temperament of the Yellow River, which crosses the peninsula before emptying into the Bo Sea. The 'Mother River' nurtured civilisation but when unhinged left death, disease and rebellion in its wake. After a long period of floods followed by economic depression and unrest, the river again devastated the Shāndōng plain in 1898.

Europeans had also arrived. After two German missionaries died in a peasant uprising in western Shāndōng in 1897, Germany readily seized Qīngdǎo, Britain forced a lease of Wēihǎi, and soon six other nations scrambled for concessions. These acts coupled with widespread famine emboldened a band of superstitious nationalists, and in the closing years of the 19th century, the Boxers rose out of Shāndōng, armed with magical spells and broadswords to lead a rebellion against the eight-nation alliance of Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the UK and the USA. After foreign powers violently

seized Běijīng in 1900, the Empress Cixi effectively surrendered and Boxer and other resistance leaders were executed. The Qing dynasty would soon collapse.

It was not until Japan's surrender in WWII that Shāndōng emerged from decades of war and recovered its cities. In 1955, engineers began an ambitious 50-year flood-control program, and 1959 marked Shāndōng's last catastrophic flood, though now China's economic boom threatens to suck the Yellow River dry.

Today Jǐ'nán, the provincial capital, and the prospering coastal cities of Yāntái and Wēihǎi, all play a supporting role to Qīngdǎo, the province's headliner.

## Language

Standard Mandarin is the primary language spoken in Shāndōng, but regional varieties of northern Mandarin often pop up in casual conversation. The characteristic drawls of the three most common dialects,



## Shāndōng Highlights

- 1 Climb the slopes of **Tài Shān** (p157), where stones speak the wisdom of millennia.
- 2 Chill in **Qīngdǎo** (p170) with a pitcher (or bag) of China's most famous beer.
- 3 Visit ancient **Qūfū**, (p164) hometown of the sage Confucius.
- 4 Be charmed by village life in venerable **Zhūjiāyù** (p156).
- 5 Hike **Láo Shān** (p179), with its magical springs.
- 6 Savour the ocean breezes in the port city of **Yāntái** (p180).
- 7 Discover the legends of immortals and pirates at **Pénglái Pavilion** (p181).