



Qīnghǎi

POP 5.6 MILLION

Includes ➔

Xīníng	893
Hùzhù Běishān Forest National Park	901
Tónggrén	901
Guidé	903
Yùshù	904
Princess Wencheng Temple	905
Nangchen	906
Golmud	907
Mǎduō	908

Best Monasteries & Temples

- ➔ Kumbum Monastery (p900)
- ➔ Yòuníng Monastery (p898)
- ➔ Lóngwù Sì (p902)
- ➔ Princess Wencheng Temple (p905)

Best Natural Sights

- ➔ Nangchen County (p906)
- ➔ Qīnghǎi Lake & Chákǎ Salt Lake (p899)
- ➔ Kanbula National Park (p901)
- ➔ Mt Amnye Machen (p907)
- ➔ Zhǎlíng & Èlíng Lakes (p908)

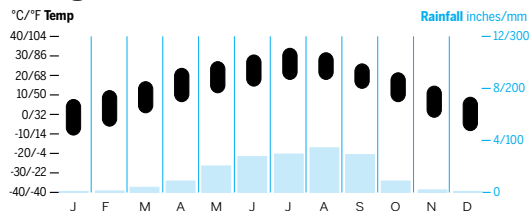
Why Go?

Big, bold and beautifully barren, Qīnghǎi (青海), larger than any country in the EU, occupies a vast swath of the north-eastern chunk of the Tibetan Plateau. 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 thousands and nomads camped out across high-altitude grasslands.

Rough-and-ready Qīnghǎi, which means 'Blue Sea' in Chinese, is classic off-the-beaten-track territory, often with a last frontier feel to it. Travelling here can be a little inconvenient, 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, mouth-watering cuisine 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.

Qīnghǎi Highlights

- 1 Qinghǎi Lake** (p899)
Cycling along the shores of the largest lake in China.
- 2 Kanbula National Park** (p901)
Scrambling across Martian-like red mountains.
- 3 Qinghǎi–Tibet Railway** (p899)
Taking the iconic train ride to Lhasa from Golmud.
- 4 Mt Amnye Machen** (p907)
Trekking on eastern Tibet's most sacred mountain.

- 5 Tōnggrén** (p902)
Buying a Tibetan *thangka* (scroll painting) straight from the artist's easel.
- 6 Princess Wencheng Temple** (p905)
Walking

- 8 Source of the Yellow River** (p908)
Venturing across the Qīnghǎi–Tibet plateau to the source of China's most important river.
- 7 Guidé** (p903)
Turning the world's largest prayer wheel near the walled Old Town.

