



Shāndōng

POP 95.8 MILLION

Includes ➔

Jǐ'nán	203
Zhūjiáyù	207
Tà'ān	207
Tài Shān	211
Qūfù	214
Zōuchéng	219
Qīngdǎo	220
Láo Shān	229
Yántái	231
Pénglái	234

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Café Yum (p226)
- ➔ Yù Shū Fáng (p218)
- ➔ Seasons Míng hú (p205)
- ➔ China Community Art & Culture (p226)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Kǎiyuè Hostelling International (p225)
- ➔ Shangri-La Hotel (p225)
- ➔ Sea View Garden Hotel (p225)
- ➔ Hóngmén International Youth Hostel (p209)

Why Go?

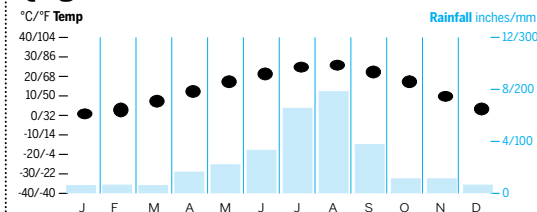
Steeped in natural and supernatural allure, the Shāndōng (山东) peninsula on China's northeastern coast is the stuff of legends. Its captivating landscape – a fertile flood plain fed by rivers and underground springs, capped by granite peaks and framed in wild coastline – can't help but inspire wonder.

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 Tài Shān, Shāndōng's highest peak, to proclaim a unified empire in 219 BC.

But Shāndōng is more than the sum of its historical parts. The energetic buzz in seaside Qīngdǎo ranks the city among the best places to live in Asia. This is Shāndōng's real draw: you can climb mountains, feast on fine seafood, quaff beer and still find 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 Tài Shān 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 Qīng 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 Yántái and Wēihǎi, all play a supporting role to Qīngdǎo, the province's headliner.

Getting There & Away

With South Korea and Japan just across the water, there are direct international flights through three airports – Jǐ'nán, Qīngdǎo and Yántái. Ferries (p234) also sail from Qīngdǎo to South Korea



Shāndōng Highlights

- 1 Tǎi Shān** (p211) Climbing the slopes of this sacred Taoist mountain, where stones speak the wisdom of millennia.
- 2 Qīngdǎo** (p220) Chilling by the sea with a pitcher (or bag) of China's most famous brew.
- 3 Qūfū** (p214) Perusing the ancient home town of Confucius.
- 4 Zhūjiāyù** (p207) Relaxing in this charming, rural village.
- 5 Láo Shān** (p229) Hiking in search of magical springs and Taoist secrets.
- 6 Yántái** (p231) Savouring the ocean breeze as you explore the history of this prosperous port city.
- 7 Pēnglái Pavilion** (p235) Discovering the legends of immortals, pirates and mirages.