



Shānxī

POP 35.7 MILLION

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Best Places to Eat

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Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Jing's Residence (p374)
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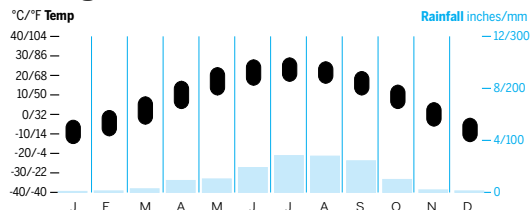
Why Go?

Waist-deep in handsome history, Shānxī (山西) is home to an impressive roll-call of must-see, ancient sights. Most travellers start with the walled city of Píngyáo. Basing yourself here and jumping to the town's surrounding sights is practically all you need: you'll encounter time-worn temples, traditional Qing dynasty courtyard architecture, some of the warmest people in the Middle Kingdom and the opportunity for a day trip to the dizzying mountain cliffs and gorges of Mián Shān.

Travellers shouldn't overlook Dàtóng, a forward-thinking city with a brand-new city wall and a great-looking old town, but it's the astonishing cave sculptures at Yúngāng outside town that give expression to the province's other great source of magic: a rich vein of Buddhist heritage, which splendidly litters the rolling mountain vastness of Wútái Shān with temples. Add the still-inhabited cave dwellings of Lǐjiā Shān and vestiges of the Great Wall, and you could find yourself staying longer than planned.

When to Go

Dàtóng



May Cooler than the sapping summer months and not as blustery as early spring.

Late May–early Sep Good time for trips to cooler, mountainous Wútái Shān.

Late Sep Enjoy the comfortable start of the lovely Shānxī autumn.

Shānxī Highlights

- 1 Pingyáo** (p371)
Wandering the cobblestone ancient streets of this time-warped, walled town.
- 2 Yúngāng Caves** (p363)
Discovering the grandeur of these magnificent Buddhist statues.
- 3 Dàtóng** (p360)
Checking out the lavish restoration of the city wall and the old town.
- 4 Wútái Shān** (p365)
Hanging up your traveller's hat in this scenic and mountainous monastic enclave.
- 5 Guōyù** (p378)
Journeying to this still-inhabited historical walled village in Shānxī's remote southeast.
- 6 Lǐjiā Shān** (p377)
Experiencing 'old' China with an overnight stay at the Ming-dynasty cave village.
- 7 Mián Shān** (p375)
Hiking among the sublime and vertigo-inducing scenery on this magnificent mountain.
- 8 Shuānglín Temple** (p376)
Admiring some of China's most ancient in situ temple statuary.

