**Shānxī**
POP 35.7 MILLION

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**Best Places to Eat**
- Fènglín Gé (p362)
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- Déjūyuán (p374)

**Best Places to Sleep**
- Jing’s Residence (p374)
- Harmony Guesthouse (p374)
- Garden Hotel (p362)
- Déjūyuán Guesthouse (p374)
- Hongqi Hotel (p362)

**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 Wūtái 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**

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**Rainfall inches/mm**
- 12/300
- 8/200
- 4/100
- 0

**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 Wūtái 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 Wǔtái 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 Líjiā 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 Shuănglín Temple
(p376) Admiring some of China’s most ancient in situ temple statuary.