



# Xīnjiāng

POP 22.9 MILLION

## Includes ➔

Ürümqi .....	802
Turpan .....	808
Hami .....	811
Kuqa .....	812
Kashgar .....	814
Karakoram Highway .....	819
Yengisar .....	823
Hotan .....	824
Yarkand .....	827
Karghilik .....	827
Yining .....	830

## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Altun Orda (p817)
- ➔ Ōu'ěr Dáxíkè Night Market (p817)
- ➔ Miss Chen's Pizza House (p811)
- ➔ Marco's Dream Cafe (p826)
- ➔ Rendezvous (p805)

## Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Dap Hostel (p808)
- ➔ Zabab Guest House (p812)
- ➔ Doppa Youth Hostel (p831)
- ➔ Turpan Silk Road Lodge (p808)
- ➔ K2 Youth Hostel (p822)

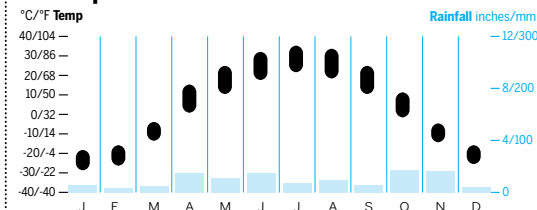
## Why Go?

China's largest province, Xīnjiāng (新疆) is the homeland of the Muslim Uighurs and a fast-changing region where ancient and modern grind up against each other in surprising ways. High-speed railways crisscross the Martian landscapes linking cities in hours rather than days, and the regional capital Ürümqi is a forest of high-rise apartments and glass skyscrapers; while in parts of the Silk Road oases of Kashgar, Hotan and Turpan, life goes as it has for centuries, based around the mosque, the tea house and the bazaar.

Despite the enormous military and police presence here due to several years of ethnic unrest, Xīnjiāng is increasingly attracting visitors for its extraordinary natural beauty and fascinating Central Asian history and culture. In short, a visit to Chinese Turkestan makes for an exploration of China's past and its unsettled multicultural present, or simply a journey into some of the most sublime landscapes on earth.

## When to Go

### Ürümqi



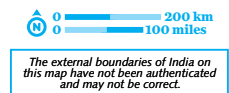
**Mar** Nauryz (New Year) festivals are held in Kazakh and Kyrgyz villages.

**May** Sunny days and cool breezes make this one of the best times to visit Xinjiang.

**Sep** Sublime autumnal colours at Kanas Lake and Hémù.

By the end of the 2nd century BC, the expanding Han dynasty had pushed its borders west into what is now Xinjiang. Military garrisons protected the fledgling trade routes, as silk flowed out of the empire in return for the strong Ferghana horses needed to fight nomadic incursions from the north. Chinese imperial rule waxed and waned over the centuries, shrinking after the collapse of the Han and reasserting itself during the

It was during Kharakhanid rule in the 10th to 12th centuries that Islam took hold in Xīnjiāng. In 1219, Ili (modern Yīníng), Hotan and Kashgar fell to the Mongols and their various successors controlled the whole of Central



- 1 **Karakoram Highway** (p819) Travelling one of the world's most extraordinary road journeys.
- 2 **Turpan** (p808) Exploring ancient ruins, mountain landscapes and Buddhist

**3 Sunday livestock market** (p814) Witnessing Central Asia at its most authentic in Kashgar.

**4 Sunday Market** (p825)

**5 Kanas Lake Nature Reserve** (p830) Heading into Xinjiang's remote north to see magnificent mountain scenery.