



lonely planet



- HIGHLIGHTS
- ITINERARIES
- LOCAL EXPERTS
- + PULL-OUT MAP

Discover China

Experience the best of China

Discover China

Contents 

Throughout this book, we use these icons to highlight special recommendations:



The Best...

Lists for everything from bars to wildlife – to make sure you don't miss out



Don't Miss

A must-see – don't go home until you've been there

Local Knowledge

Local experts reveal their top picks and secret highlights



Detour

Special places a little off the beaten track



If you like...

Lesser-known alternatives to world-famous attractions

These icons help you quickly identify reviews in the text and on the map:



Sights



Eating



Drinking



Sleeping



Information

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Daniel McCrohan, Christopher Pitts**



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- Explore the Forbidden City
- Wander Around the Summer Palace
- Gallivanting Along the Great Wall
- Marvel at the Temple of Heaven
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This Is China

Antique here, up-to-the-minute there, familiar yet unrecognisable, outwardly urban but quintessentially rural, conservative yet path-breaking, space-age but old-fashioned, China is a mesmerising land of eye-opening contradictions.

China is modernising at a head-spinning pace. But the slick skyscrapers, Lamborghini showrooms and Maglev trains are just gift-wrap. Let's face it: the world's oldest continuous civilisation can pull an artefact or two out of its hat. Travel selectively around China and tap into a rich seam of antiquity: ponder the legends of the Forbidden City, rediscover your sense of wonder on the Great Wall or try to fathom the timeless expressions of the Terracotta Warriors. Submit to the charms of Píngyáo or glimpse Nirvana at the serene Mógāo Caves outside Dūnhuáng. Meander among the historic villages of Wùyúán or wake in an ancient Hakka roundhouse.

Out-of-this-world flavours also come as standard. China is fixated with food but you need to abandon your meagre local Chinatown menu for the lavish Middle Kingdom cookbook. Get to slippery grips with a Shànghǎi hairy crab, wolf down a Peking duck, experience the liquid fire of a Sīchuān hotpot and eat your way around China. Impress your friends as you *gānbēi* (down-in-one) the local firewater; alternatively chill out with a frozen daiquiri in a slick Běijīng bar. When all's said and done, you'll come back from China with highly stimulated taste buds and some seriously cherished culinary memories.

There's also some stupendous scenery out there. So get outside: island-hop in Hong Kong, squint up at the peaks of Wǔtái Shān and the Himalaya, or gaze over Hángzhōu's West Lake. Cycle between the fairy tale karst pinnacles of Yángshuò or swoon at Huángshān's mists. Become entranced by Dragon's Backbone Rice Terraces, size up the awesome sand dunes near Dūnhuáng or hike your way around Déhāng. And if your energy fails you, plonk down in a riverside cafe in Fènghuáng and stay put.

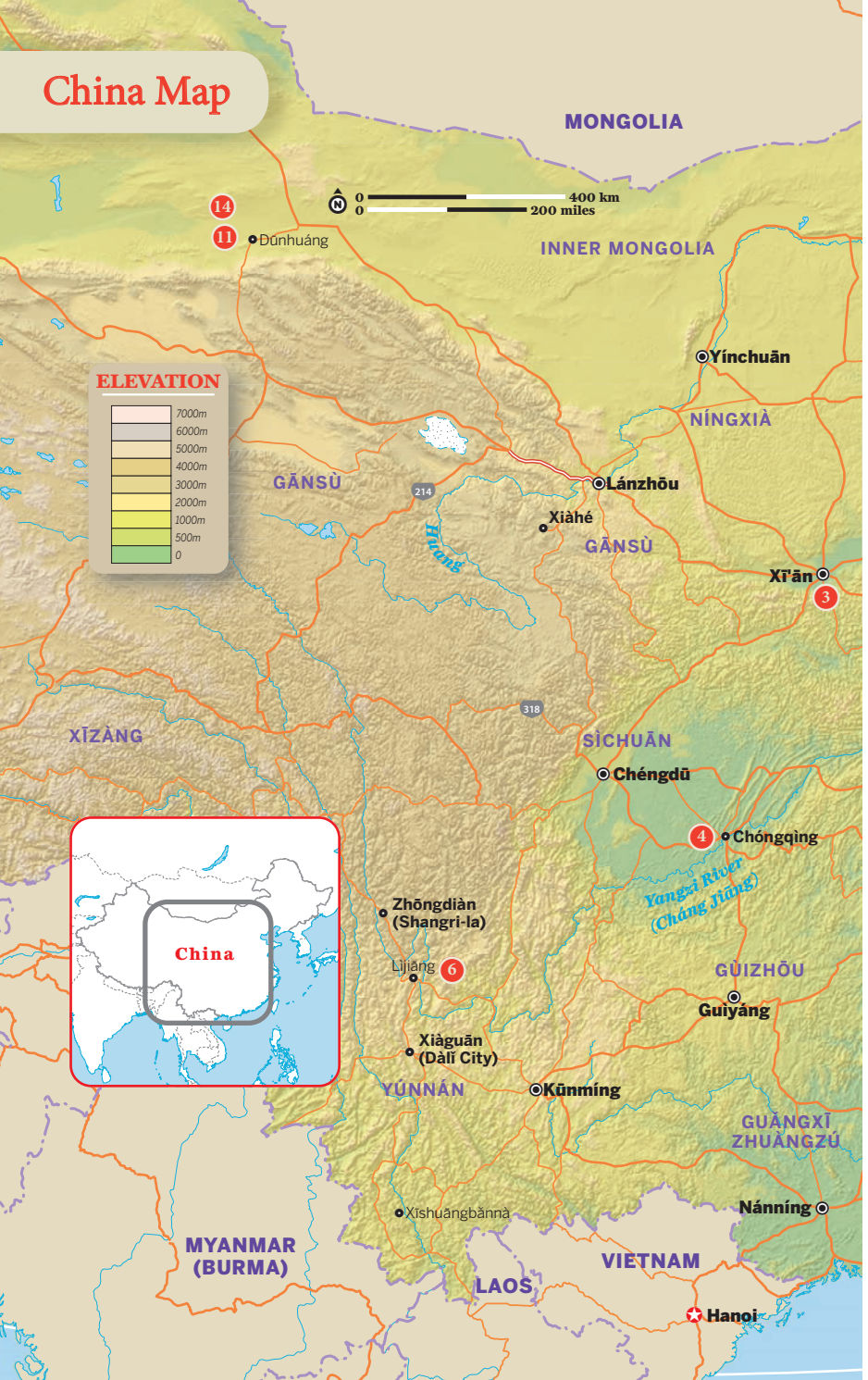
“
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opening con-
tradictions
”

Zhuang girl walking through terraced rice paddies,
Guǎngxī (p308)

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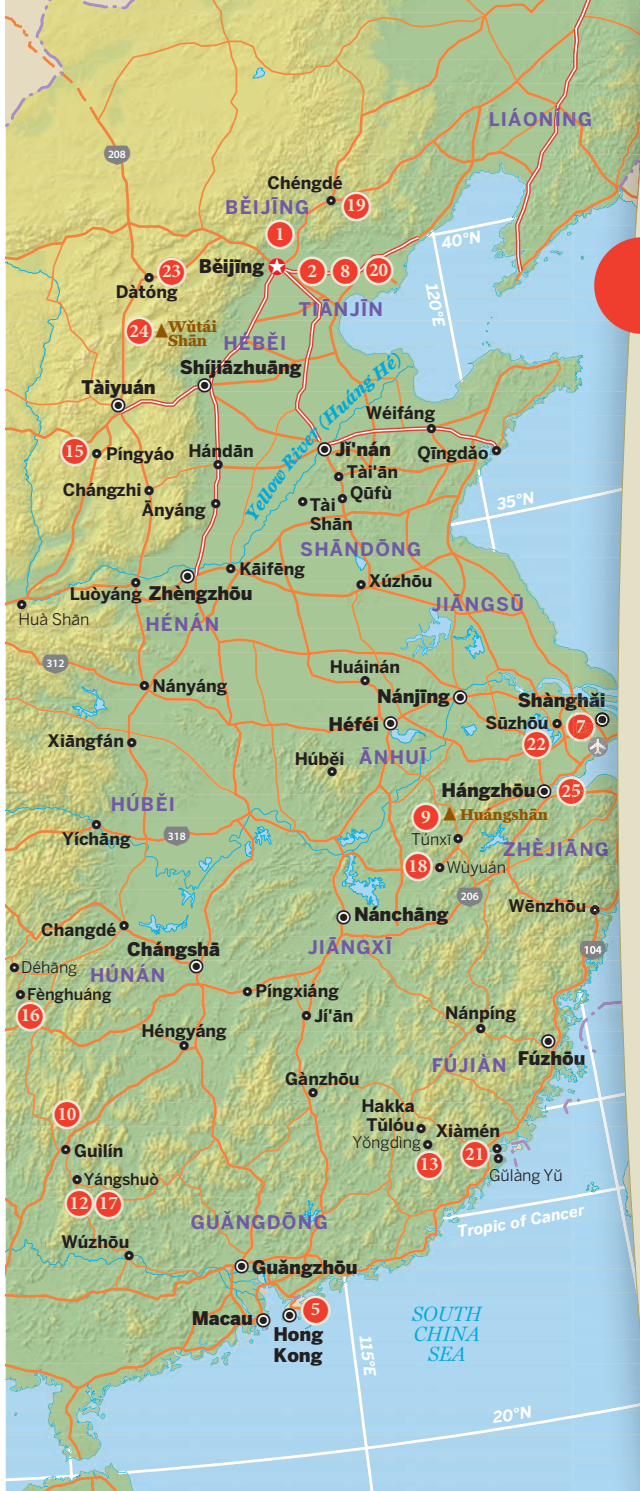


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