



Day Trips from Shànghǎi

Hángzhōu p179

Hángzhōu's gorgeous and placid West Lake sits comfortably among China's top sights.

Sūzhōu p188

China's best-known water town, Sūzhōu is a rewarding bundle of classical gardens, canals, bridges, silk, temples and fab museums.

Tónglǐ p195

One of Jiāngsū's best-looking water towns, with a racy museum dedicated to China's erotic culture.

Zhūjiājiao p197

Quaint canal-side town within Shànghǎi municipality, dotted with temples, ancient bridges and pinched lanes.

Zhōuzhuāng p198

Lovely traditional architecture, charming back alleys and bridges make this small Jiāngsū town an eye-catching diversion.

Shěshān p199

Divine views and an imposing hilltop Catholic church, accessible on the metro from Shànghǎi city centre.

Hángzhōu

Explore

One of China's most enduringly popular holiday spots, Hángzhōu (杭州) has dreamy West Lake panoramas and fabulously green hills that can easily tempt you into long sojourns. Eulogised by poets and applauded by emperors, the lake has intoxicated the Chinese imagination for aeons. Kept spotlessly clean by armies of street sweepers and litter collectors, its scenic vistas draw you into a classical Chinese watercolour of willow-lined banks, mist-covered hills and the occasional *shíkùmén* (stone-gate house) and old *hìlòng* (residential lane).

Wonderful as it is, Hángzhōu's charms are by no means limited to West Lake scenery – delve further into the city to climb ancient pagodas and discover blissfully quiet temples. Away from the tourist drawcards exists a charismatic and buzzing city in its own right, with wide pedestrian walkways to wander, an unpretentious and exciting food scene, upbeat nightlife and increasingly cosmopolitan population.

The Best...

- ◆ **Sight** West Lake (p179)
- ◆ **Place to Eat** Green Tea Restaurant (p185)
- ◆ **Place to Drink** JZ Club (p186)

Top Tip

The hills south of West Lake are a prime spot for walkers, cyclists and green-tea connoisseurs.

Getting There & Away

Train The easiest way to travel from Shànghǎi Hóngqiáo Train Station is on the regular high-speed G and D class trains to Hángzhōu East Train Station (55 minutes).

Bus Frequent departures from Shànghǎi's South Station to Hángzhōu's various bus stations (2½ hours). Buses from Shànghǎi's Hóngqiáo airport (two hours) run every 30 minutes between 10am and 9pm. Regular buses also run from Shànghǎi's Pǔdōng International Airport (three hours).

Getting Around

Metro line 1 Runs from the southeast of town, through the Main Train Station, along the east side of West Lake and on to the East Train Station, the Main Bus Station and the northeast of town (first/last train 6.06am/11.32pm).

Metro line 2 Runs south from Chaoyang to Qianjiang Rd.

Need to Know

- ◆ **Area Code** 0571
- ◆ **Location** 170km from Shànghǎi
- ◆ **Tourist office** (杭州旅游咨询服务中心, Hángzhōu Lǚyóu Zixún Fúwù Zhōngxīn; 0571 8797 8123; Léifēng Pagoda, Nanshan Lu; 雷峰塔南山路; ☎8am-5pm)



SIGHTS

Many of Hángzhōu's sights are set around the West Lake or to the east of it. The best way to fit as many as possible in is by bike, as traffic around the lake can be agonizingly slow. Many venues offer discounted rates for children and the elderly.

WEST LAKE

LAKE

(西湖, Xīhú) The very definition of classical beauty in China, West Lake is utterly mesmerising: pagoda-topped hills rise over willow-lined waters as boats drift slowly through a vignette of leisurely charm. Walkways, perfectly positioned benches, parks and gardens around the banks of the lake offer a thousand and one vantage points for visitors to admire the faultless scenery.

Originally a lagoon adjoining the Qián-táng River, the lake didn't come into being until the 8th century, when the governor of Hángzhōu had the marshy expanse dredged. As time passed, the lake's splendour was gradually cultivated: gardens were planted, pagodas built, and causeways and islands were constructed from dredged silt.

Celebrated poet Su Dongpo himself had a hand in the lake's development, constructing the **Sū Causeway** (苏堤, Sūdī) during his tenure as local governor in the 11th century. It wasn't an original idea – the poet-governor Bai Juyi had already constructed the **Bái Causeway** (白堤, Báidī) some 200 years earlier. Lined by willow, plum and peach trees, today the traffic-free causeways