



Húběi

POP 57.9 MILLION

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Best Places to Eat

- Xiǎo Bèiké (p445)
- Bàyú Rénjiā (p448)
- Piān Qiáo Wǎn (p452)

Best Places to Sleep

- Wūhàn Bingo International Youth Hostel (p443)
- Tomolo (p445)
- Taichi Hotel (p450)

Why Go?

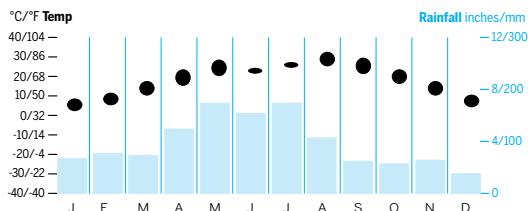
Like much of central China, Húběi (湖北) is better known for its industrial belt rather than the searing beauty of its lush and fertile landscape of mountain parks and plains sluiced by rivers, lakes and sacred Taoist sites.

The Three Gorges snakes across the border, carrying gobsmacked visitors into its belly, while the mountainous west rises to the sacred peaks of Wūdāng Shān, the kind of kung-fu film setting where courtyards of taichi masters cling to mountaintops and adhere to Taoist virtues. And hikers will find Shénnóngjià National Park in its sparse, water-coloured natural state.

Húběi's central location ensured it played a key role in Chinese history – there's evidence around Jīngzhōu of the great Chu kingdom that ruled here more than 2000 years ago. China's modern history echoes through the cultural sites of Wūhàn, one of China's most dynamic cities, where the hum of commerce spills over into jumping nightlife.

When to Go

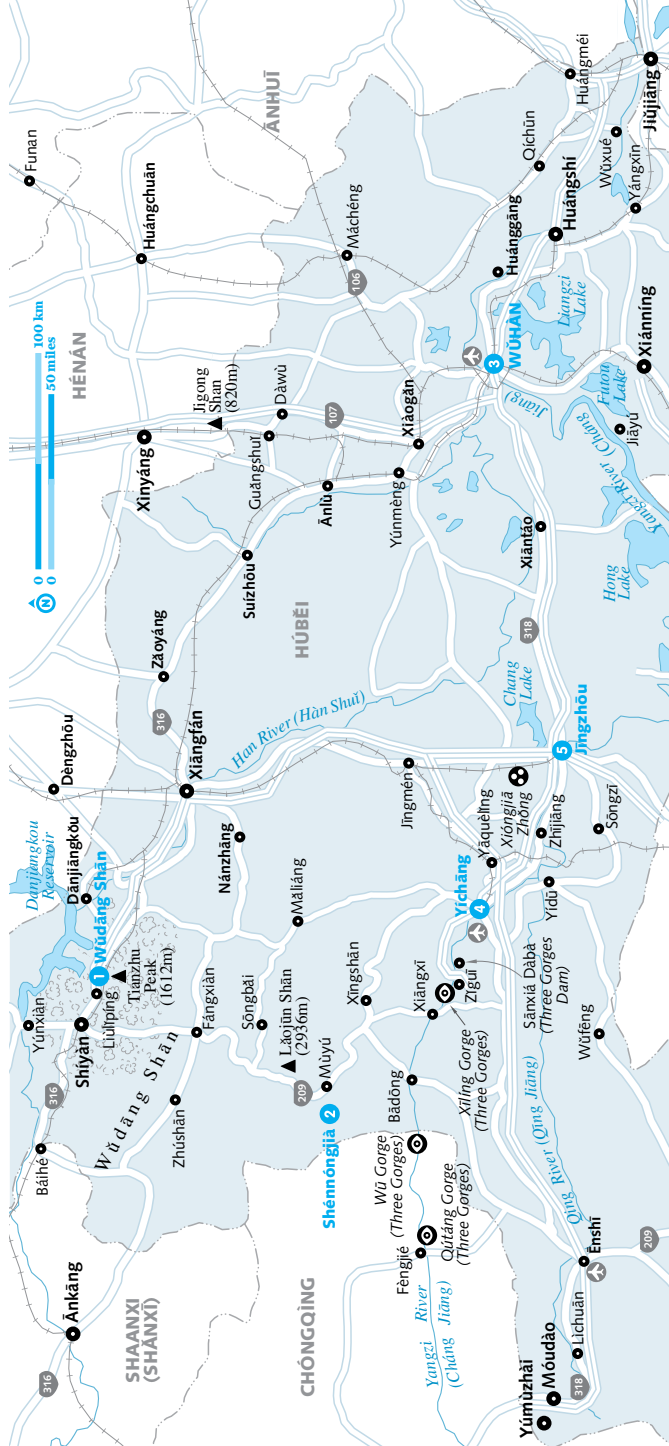
Wūhàn



Mar & Apr Rhododendrons are in bloom and the Three Gorges cruises are warm and breezy.

Sep–Nov The end of the crippling summer turns the riverside concession of Wūhàn into an outdoor party.

Nov–Mar Winter time slows down in Wūdāng Shān. Hold that taichi pose.



Hubei Highlights

- 1 Wudang Shan** (p449) Learning taichi on the majestic cloud-covered mountain where it was invented, then wandering off-path to quiet temples hanging over yonder.
- 2 Shennongjia** (p451) Spotting the famed 'wild man' as you hike in the wilds of northeast Hubei and camping under the stars on elevated grassy knolls.
- 3 Wuhān** (p442) Doing the cultural dance around Wuhān's fine museums and temples before shuffling to the dance floors of the riverfront concession.
- 4 Yichāng** (p452) Tackling the Three Gorges the Hubei way, from this humble river city, rather than the better known Chongqing.
- 5 Jingzhou** (p447) Cycling around the historic gates, city walls and ruined temples of ancient Jingzhou.