

# Jílín

POP 27.46 MILLION

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## **Best Places to Eat**

- Quánzhōu Bànfàn Guăn (p180)
- → Sān Qiān Lǐ Cold Noodles (p181)
- Sānyú Zhúyuàn (p185)

# **Best Places to Sleep**

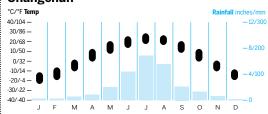
- → Days Hotel Landscape Resort (p179)
- → Lánjĭng Spa Holiday Inn (p179)
- Söngyuàn Hotel (p184)

# Why Go?

A flirty province, Jſlſn (吉林) teases with the ancient and the modern, the artificial and the supernatural. Travellers tired of great walls and imperial facades can explore Japanese-influenced architecture on the trail of the puppet emperor Puyi and the ruins of an ancient Korean kingdom. In fact, much of the far-eastern region comprises the little-known Korean Autonomous Prefecture, home to more than one million ethnic Koreans. Kimchi and cold noodles dominate the menu here and there's an easy acceptance of outsiders.

Although known for its motor cities and smokestack towns, Jílín is also a popular ski destination and boasts China's largest nature reserve. So go for the contrasts? No, go for the superlatives. Heaven Lake, a stunning, deep-blue volcanic crater lake within the country's largest reserve, is one of China's most mesmerising natural wonders. Yes, Jílín can be a little rough around the edges at times, but its rewards are pure polished jewels.

# When to Go Chángchūn



#### **Jun-Sep** Best months to visit Chángbái Shān.

#### Jul & Aug Countryside around the Korean Autonomous Prefecture at its most bucolic.

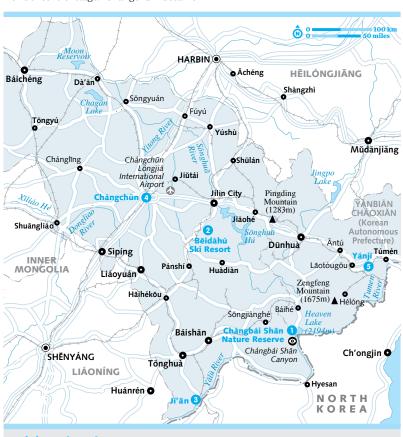
#### Nov-Mar Ski season at Běidàhú Ski Resort.

## History

Korean kings once ruled parts of Jílín, and the discovery of important relics from the ancient Koguryo kingdom (37 BC-AD 668) in the small southeastern city of Jí'ān has resulted in the area being designated a World Heritage Site by Unesco.

The Japanese occupation of Manchuria in the early 1930s pushed Jílín to the world's centre stage. Chángchūn became

the capital of what the Japanese called Manchukuo, with Puyi (the last emperor of the Qing dynasty) given the role of figure-head of the puppet government. In 1944 the Russians wrested control of Jílín from the Japanese and, after stripping the area of its industrial base, handed the region back to Chinese control. For the next several years Jílín would pay a heavy price as one of the front lines in the civil war between the



# Jílín Highlights

Chángbái Shān Nature Reserve (p177) Visiting China's largest nature reserve, with its waterfalls, birch forests and, most of all, the aptly named Heaven Lake.

2 Běidàhú Ski Resort (p183) Hitting the slopes at one of China's premier skiing spots.

## **3** Koguryo Kingdom

(p181) Exploring the mysterious remains of this ancient kingdom in Ji'an, just across the Yalù River from North Korea. Imperial Palace of the Manchu State (p183) Shadowing the trail of Puyi, the last emperor of China, at this palace in Chángchūn.

5 Yánjí (p180) Savouring China's ethnic Korean culture in the capital of the Korean Autonomous Prefecture.