



Níngxià

POP 6.4 MILLION

Includes ➔

Yinchuān	866
Hèlán Shān	870
Zhōngwèi	870
Gùyuan	872
Tóngxīn	874

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Xiānhè Lóu (p868)
- ➔ Xiǎochī Night Market (p874)
- ➔ Dà Mǎ Jiǎozǐ Guǎn (p868)
- ➔ Quánjùdé (p869)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Yinchuan Hotel (p868)
- ➔ Holiday Inn (p868)
- ➔ Zhōngwèi Dàijiǔdiàn (p871)

Why Go?

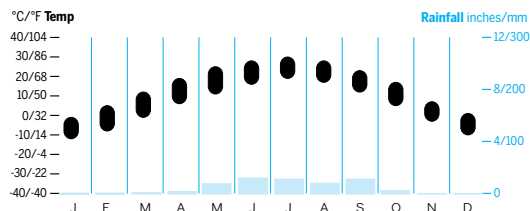
With its raw landscape of dusty plains and stark mountains, sliced in two by the Yellow River (Huáng Hé), there's a distinct *Grapes of Wrath* feel to Níngxià (宁夏). Outside the cities is a timeless landscape where farmers till the hard yellow earth just like their ancestors did.

Yet Níngxià was once the frontline between the empires of the Mongols and the Han Chinese and there's a host of historic sites here, ranging from little-seen Buddhist statues to the royal tombs of long-past dynasties, as well as ancient rock carvings that predate the emperors. And as the homeland of the Muslim Hui ethnic minority, Níngxià is culturally unique, too.

Then there's the chance to camp out under the desert sky, or float down the Yellow River on a traditional raft. But best of all, Níngxià sees few foreign visitors so it seems like you have the place all to yourself.

When to Go

Yínchuān



Jun Warm, dry nights will give you a thirst for some local nightlife and Níngxià wine.

Oct It's cooling down and time to play Lawrence of Arabia in the little-visited Tengger Desert.

Nov The Yellow River festival in Yínchuān features concerts and folk dancing.

Níngxià Highlights

- 1 Western Xia Tombs** (p867) Visiting these imperial tombs outside Yinchuan, a rare reminder of a long-vanished culture.
- 2 Xūmí Shān** (p873) Exploring these little-visited Buddhist grottoes with their hundreds of statues.
- 3 Gāo Temple** (p870) Being startled by the unsettling statuary in the riveting Arhat Hall.
- 4 Hèlán Shān Rock Carvings** (p870) Admiring unique rock carvings that date back thousands of years.
- 5 Tengger Desert** (p872) Hopping on a camel to trek into the dunes for an over-night stay.
- 6 Great Mosque** (p874) Getting way off the beaten track at this marvellous Ming-era complex in Tóngxīn.
- 7 Shāpōtǒu** (p871) Rafting down the Yellow River or sliding down the sand dunes at this desert playground.
- 8 Hǎibǎo Pagoda** (p866) Taking in the beautiful lines of this unusually styled Buddhist tower.

