



# Shaanxi

POP 37.4 MILLION

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## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Sānjiēmèi Jiǎozǐ (p387)
- ➔ Hǎiróng Guōtiēdiàn (p387)
- ➔ Muslim Family Restaurant (p387)

## Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Hàn Táng House (p386)
- ➔ Hàn Táng Inn (p385)
- ➔ Huá Shān Guesthouse (p396)

## Why Go?

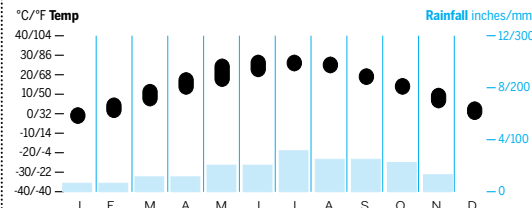
Shaanxi (陕西; Shǎnxī) is where it began for China. As the heartland of the Qin dynasty (秦朝), whose warrior emperor united much of China for the first time, Shaanxi was the cradle of Chinese civilisation and the fountainhead of Han culture. Xī'ān marked the beginning and end of the Silk Road and was a buzzing capital long before anyone knew of Běijīng and its Forbidden City.

Shaanxi's archaeological sites make it an essential destination. Around Xī'ān there's an excavated Neolithic village and royal graves, including the tomb of Qin Shi Huang and his Army of Terracotta Warriors, one of the world's foremost heritage sites. Shaanxi also serves up some of the most wholesome and appetising food in the land, especially in Xī'ān's Muslim Quarter.

Xī'ān is an emergent travellers' hub, with hotels, restaurants, museums, ancient pagodas, and a marvellous city wall and Muslim Quarter. Rural areas have fascinating villages barely touched by modernity and mountains that were once home to hermits and sages.

## When to Go

### Xī'ān



**Apr & May** Spring breezes and it's the ideal time to climb Huá Shān.

**Sep & Oct** The rain's stopped and it's still warm, so hit Xī'ān's sights.

**Dec** Avoid the crowds and maybe get the Terracotta Warriors all to yourself.

## Shaanxi Highlights

**1 Army of Terracotta Warriors** (p391) Seeing what guardians an emperor enlists to protect him in the afterlife.

**2 Big Goose Pagoda** (p383) Admiring Xi'an's classically styled Tang dynasty Buddhist pagoda, the centrepiece for a stunning sound and light show.

**3 Huà Shān** (p394) Watching the sun rise over the Qínlíng Mountains from atop Taoism's sacred and dramatic western peak.

**4 Háchéng** (p397) Exploring this old town with its quaint quarter of buildings dating from the Yuan, Ming and Qing eras.

**5 Tomb of Emperor Jingdi** (p394) Taking a different look at China's past by gazing down at enthralling excavations.

**6 Muslim Quarter** (p382) Getting lost wandering the backstreets of this ancient Xi'an quarter.

**7 Xi'an City Walls** (p381) Hopping on a bike and riding atop these glorious walls that form a 14km loop of the old city.

