

Guìzhōu 贵州



Mention any of China's southwestern provinces and fellow travellers will pelt you with tips, advice or looks of envy. Tell them you're going to Guizhōu, however, and you'll most likely receive a blank look and the question, 'Why?'

Despite blockbuster development and government efforts to turn the province into a kind of southwestern transport hub, complete with new expressways and airports, Guizhōu can't shake its reputation as a backwater, and it remains one of the country's poorest provinces.

But there are several reasons why Guizhōu should make it into your itinerary. The countryside is a mix of dense forests and cascading waterfalls, terraced hills and karst cave networks. There's a lively mix of people: almost 35% of Guizhōu's population is made up of over 18 ethnic minorities, including the Miao and the Dong in the southeast and the Hui and the Yi in the west.

The Miao's traditional wooden homes dot the mountainous areas of the province, often perched at precarious angles overlooking sloping rivers. The Dong's wooden drum towers and intricate wind and rain bridges – constructed without a single nail or bolt – characterise the southeast region. Other minority groups include the Bouyi, Shui (Sui), Zhuang and Gejia. Together, they contribute to Guizhōu's lively social calendar, which enjoys more folk festivals than any other province in China.

And for intrepid travellers looking to get off the beaten track, more often than not you'll have it all to yourself. Though getting to Guǎngxī via Guizhōu's southeast villages is an increasingly popular trip, it's still possible to wander the rest of the province for days, and not see another foreigner.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Bob with black cranes on remote **Caohai Lake** (p679)
- Hop from village to village taking in the stunning scenery from **Kǎilì** (p683) into Guǎngxī
- Drop in on colourful Miao and Dong **festivals** and **country markets** (p682) in the villages around Kǎilì
- Explore the underground **Zhijin Cave** (p678), the largest cavern in China
- Get soaked behind the water curtain at **Huangguoshu Falls** (p678), China's premier cascade

■ POPULATION: 39.3 MILLION



History

Historically, no-one has wanted to have much to do with Guizhōu. Chinese rulers set up an administration in the area as far back as the Han dynasty (206 BC–AD 220), but it was merely in an attempt to maintain some measure of control over Guizhōu's non-Chinese tribes. Chinese settlement was confined to the northern and eastern parts of the province, and the western areas were not settled until the 16th century when rapid immigration forced the native minorities out of the most fertile areas.

It wasn't until the Sino-Japanese war, when the Kuomintang made Chóngqìng their wartime capital, that the development of Guizhōu began: roads to neighbouring provinces were

constructed, a rail link was built to Guǎngxī, and industries were established in Guiyǎng and Zūnyì. Most of this activity ceased with the end of the war and it wasn't until the communists began construction of the railways that industrialisation of the area was revived.

Nevertheless, Chinese statistics continue to paint a grim picture of underdevelopment and poverty for Guizhōu. GDP per capita in Shànghǎi is approximately 10 times higher than in Guizhōu. The government is attempting to change all of this, mostly by constructing roads in every possible place to enable fast travel to tourist sights and also by promoting minority cultures as a local attraction.



Climate

Guizhou has a temperate climate with an annual average temperature of 15°C. The coldest months are January and February when temperatures dip to around 1°C.

Language

Mandarin Chinese is spoken by the Han majority, Thai and Lao is spoken by some and Miao-Yao (Hmong-mien) dialects by the Miao and Yao.

Getting There & Away

You can fly to more than 40 destinations within China from Guiyang's airport, including all major Chinese cities. International destinations include Bangkok.

Guiyang and Chongqing are linked by an expressway. Yunnan is accessible by bus via Weining in the west or Xingyi in the south of the province. From Xingyi you can also cross into Guangxi, which can also be accessed through Congjiang in the southeastern part of the province.

There are daily train departures to all major cities in China; sleepers to Chengdu in Sichuan or Kunming in Yunnan are popular options. Trains to Guilin leave at awkward times and are painfully slow. If you're heading down this way, your best bet is to take a train to Lüzhou in Guangxi and change for a bus to Guilin there.

Getting Around

AIR

Guiyang has a small but modern airport and it is served by all of the major Chinese domestic airlines, but very few international airlines.

BUS

Buses are by far the best bet for exploring Guizhou. New expressways have been built even in the more remote western areas of the province, cutting travel times from nine or more hours to five to seven hour trips. However, roads between secondary cities and villages are still a work in progress so make sure you bring plenty of patience on your journey.

TRAIN

The train system links all major cities, but is generally slower and less convenient than the bus.

GUIYANG 贵阳

☎ 0851 / pop 1.7 million / elevation 1070m

Guiyang doesn't seem like much as you're rolling in on bus or train, but don't be discouraged. The riverside and Renmin Sq provide enjoyable areas to wander and relax, and elsewhere there's fantastic street food, lively markets and disorienting, maze-like shopping areas.

Orientation

Guiyang is somewhat sprawling but it remains a manageable size and is easy enough to get around on foot or by public bus. The main commercial district is found along Zhonghua Zhonglu and Zhonghua Nanlu. If you continue south you'll reach Zunyi Lu and Renmin Sq. To the east of here is Jiaxiu Pavilion, a symbol of the city that hovers over Nanming River.

MAPS

English city maps aren't available but the Chinese tourist maps at Xinhua Bookshop (below) are helpful for navigating bus routes.

Information

BOOKSHOPS

Foreign Languages Bookshop (Waiwen Shudian; Yan'an Donglu) Isn't particularly well stocked but does have a selection of maps.

Xinhua Bookshop (Xinhua Shudian; Yan'an Donglu) Marginally better.

INTERNET ACCESS 网吧

Internet café (wangba; Longquan Xiang; per hr Y2) Literally dozens of internet cafés line this lane off Hequan Lu.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Ensure Chain Pharmacy (Yishu Yaoye Liaosuo; cnr Zunyi Lu & Jiefang Lu; ☎ 24hr) Near the train station.

MONEY

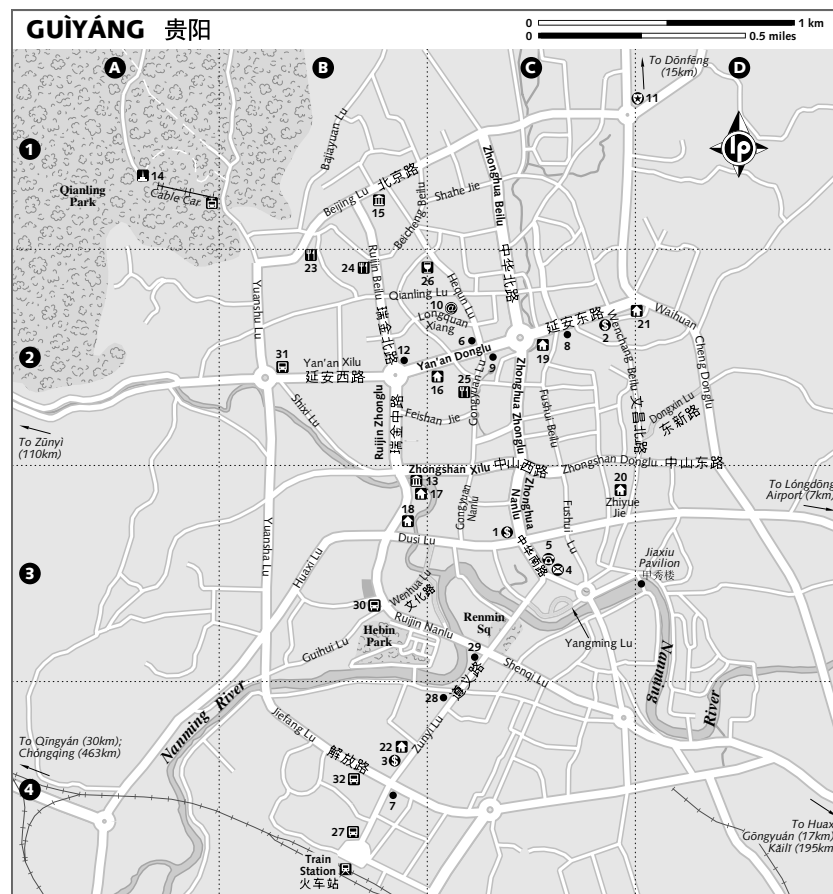
Bank of China (Zhongguo Yínháng; cnr Dusi Lu & Zhonghua Nanlu) Has an ATM, will exchange money and travellers cheques, and offers cash advances on credit cards. Other branches can be found on the corner of Wenchang Beilu and Yan'an Donglu, and on Zunyi Lu near the station.

POST & TELEPHONE

China Post (yóujú; 46 Zhonghua Nanlu) Offers a poste restante service. China Telecom is next door.

PUBLIC SECURITY BUREAU

PSB (Gōngānjú; ☎ 590 4509; Daying Lu; ☎ 8.30am-noon & 2.30-5pm Mon-Fri) The place to go to report lost or stolen items and for visa extensions.



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Tiyu Bus Station 体育馆长途客运站	32 B4

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Bus Stand 汽车站	27 B4
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TOURIST INFORMATION

China International Travel Service (CITS; Zhōngguó Guójiā Lǚxíngshè; ☎ 690 1660; www.guizhoutour.net; 7th fl, Longquan Bldg, 1 Hequn Lu; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri) The friendly English- and German-speaking staff are helpful and can provide information on local festivals.

Guizhōu Overseas Travel Company (GOTC; Guizhōu Hǎiwài Lǚyóu Gōngsī; ☎ 586 4898; 28 Yan'an Zhonglu; ☎ 9am-6pm) Offers similar services but is more interested in selling tours. Chinese-language tours to Qingyán cost ¥14; Huangguoshu Falls and the Longgong Caves is ¥240.

Tourist complaint line (☎ 681 8436)

Dangers & Annoyances

Guiyang has a reputation among Chinese as one of China's worst cities for theft. Be particularly careful in crowded areas such as the train station, night market and on local buses – the favoured haunts of pickpockets.

Sights

HONGFU TEMPLE 弘福寺

Qianling Park (Qiánlíng Gōng Yuán; ☎ 6.30am-9pm; admission ¥5) in the north of the city is worth a visit both for its forested walks and **Hongfu Temple** (Hóngfú Sì), a 17th-century Qing-dynasty temple perched near the top of 1300m Qiánlíng Shān. The monastery has a vegetarian restaurant in the rear courtyard. From the train station area take bus 2.

PROVINCIAL MUSEUM 省博物馆

The **Provincial Museum** (Shéng Bówùguǎn; Beijing Lu; admission ¥10; ☎ 9am-4.30pm) has a going-out-of

business vibe and criminally lethargic ticket sellers but it's still worth a stop, especially for travellers pushing off to explore Guizhōu's Miao and Dong villages. Exhibits showcase minority dress and customs from the Yelang kingdom, believed to have originated in the Warring States Period (475 BC–221 BC). Keep an eye out for displays concerning the 18th- and 19th-century Miao uprisings against rapid immigration of Han Chinese into Guizhōu.

GUIYANG ART MUSEUM 贵阳美术馆

Swing by this newly opened **museum** (Guiyang Měishùguǎn; Ruijin Zhonglu; admission ¥15; ☎ 10am-5pm) if you're in the neighbourhood. At the time of research it was showcasing a bizarre collection of male and female nudes by Russian painters of varying skills. However, staff say Chinese art is high on the agenda for future exhibitions. Entrance on Zhongshan Xilu.

Tours

Organised tours to Huangguoshu Falls and Longgong Caves leave daily from the train station or the main long-distance bus station. Many of the hotels also organise day tours, as does the CITS and GOTC (see left), although they are not as frequent off-season. Tours cost from ¥240 per person and include transport and admission fees, and sometimes lunch.

Festivals & Events

Guizhōu hosts hundreds of festivals every year. This might seem like an unfeasible

number of parties but the minority groups here, in particular the Miao and Dong, always seem to have something to celebrate. See the boxed text, p681.

Sleeping**BUDGET**

Yóudìan Bīnguǎn (Post Office Hotel; ☎ 558 5082; fax 558 5086; 166 Yan'an Donglu; 延安东路166号; 3-bed dm ¥25, d ¥168) It's got a great downtown location and some of the city's best food vendors right outside. Once renovations are done, this could be one of the better budget options in town.

Yidu Youth Hostel (Yídū Jiùdiàn; ☎ 864 9777; fax 863 1799; 9 Zhiyue Jie; 指月街9号; 3-/4-/6-bed dm ¥70/60/50, s/d from ¥398) It's a bit removed from the action, but otherwise this is a terrific new hostel with modern rooms and wood floors. If you want dorms call ahead and reserve. This is the first port of call for Chinese tour/school groups and even in the off-season they can be booked solid.

Jinlóng Dàjiùdiàn (☎ 528 2321; 61 Yan'an Donglu; 延安中路61号; s ¥109-139, d from ¥179) Smack in the thick of things, including near city tourist offices, the rooms here are worn-down budget basic but tended to with pride. All's kept humming by an energetic, unilingual staff. Occasional blackouts mean you may be checking in by candlelight.

MIDRANGE

Yùjūnyuán Bīnguǎn (☎ 597 0701; 71 Zunyi Lu; 遵义路71号; s/d from ¥158) A welcoming enough place where even the security guards give shy smiles and nods once they've gotten used to you. Staff do an admirable job of tending the rooms despite the obvious wear and tear. Closet-like bathrooms are made entirely of plastic.

Jinqiào Jiùdiàn (Golden Bridge Hotel; ☎ 582 9958; 2 Rui jin Zhonglu; 瑞金中路6号; d from ¥328) Tour groups and frazzled staff trample over ketchup- and mustard-coloured carpets. Red-nosed businessmen swarm in and out of 'superior' karaoke facilities 24 hours a day. It's a bit over the top but the weathered rooms are tidy and come with tiny balconies.

TOP END

Guiyang's top-end rooms all look like they've been decorated by exactly the same person. The two below stand out from the crowd.

Nénghuī Jiùdiàn (☎ 589 8888; fax 589 8622; 38 Ruijin Nanlu; 瑞金南路38号; d ¥520-696; ☎ ☎) Embroidered pillows and the odd splash of colour

give some character to the rooms though bathrooms are a disappointment. Facilities include gym and sauna. The fabulous breakfast buffet is free the first night, ¥25 afterwards.

Trade-Point Hotel (Bǎidūn Jiùdiàn; ☎ 582 7888; www.trade-pointhotel.com; 18 Yan'an Donglu; 延安东路18号; s/d ¥800/900 plus 15% service charge; ☎ ☎) Probably the slickest in town, this hotel has a central location, confident staff and a business centre to die for. If you need a splurge, do it here.

Eating

Some of the best food in Guiyang can be found at the night markets. At dusk stalls spring up near the train station, all stacked with a huge choice of veggies, tofu and meat. Point at what you like, grab a beer and watch it be cooked. If you're feeling adventurous, tuck into some steamed pig snout and trotters, a popular local choice. If not, try the local varieties of *shāgōu fēn*, a noodle and seafood, meat or vegetable combination put in a casserole pot and fired over a flame of rocket-launch proportions. The deep-fried skewered potatoes dusted in chilli powder are the best in the province.

Dongjia Family Restaurant (Dóngjiā Shífù; ☎ 650 7186; 42 Beijing Lu; dishes from ¥10; ☎ 9.30am-9pm) Specialising in minority cooking from all over Guizhōu, every Guiyang-er knows this place. There's no English menu but the book-sized menu is filled with luscious pictures, from the chillies of Miao cuisine to the pickled vegetables of the Dong.

Yawen Restaurant (☎ 528 8811; Gongyuan Lu; dishes ¥18-68; ☎ lunch noon-2pm, dinner 6-10pm) This is popular with locals for its Sichuan, Guizhōu and Cantonese dishes. The food can get expensive but is first-rate. Only downsides are a stark white dining room and overly giggly staff.

New Zealand Western Restaurant (Niúxīlán Xīcāntīng; ☎ 651 2086; 157 Ruijin Beilu; lunch/dinner buffet ¥48/58; ☎ breakfast 6-9am, lunch noon-2.30pm, dinner 6-9.30pm) What this restaurant has to do with New Zealand is anyone's guess, but the lunch and dinner buffets are enormous.

Drinking

UBC Coffee (185 Ruijin Beilu; ☎ 9am-2am) There's an extensive coffee and tea menu with the ever popular *zhēnzhū nǎichá* (pearl milk tea). It's a relaxed, friendly place with slightly tacky décor and a grand piano.

At the time of research, about a dozen bars, lounges and clubs were getting ready to open on Hequn Lu, north of Qianling Lu. Check

TRADITIONAL GARMENTS

The variety of clothing among the minorities of Guizhōu provides travellers with a daily visual feast. Clothes are as much a social and ethnic denominator as pure decoration. They also show whether or not a woman is married and are a pointer to a woman's wealth and skills at weaving and embroidery.

Many women in remote areas still weave their own hemp and cotton cloth. Some families, especially in Dong areas, still ferment their own indigo paste as well, and you will also see this for sale in traditional markets. Many women will not attend festivals in the rain for fear that the dyes in their fabrics will run. Methods of producing indigo are greatly treasured and kept secret, but are increasingly threatened by the introduction of artificial chemical dyes.

Embroidery is central to minority costume and is a tradition passed down from mother to daughter. Designs include many important symbols and references to myths and history. Birds, fish and a variety of dragon motifs are popular. The highest quality work is often reserved for baby carriers, and many young girls work on these as they approach marrying age. Older women will often spend hundreds of hours embroidering their own funeral clothes.

Costumes move with the times. In larger towns, Miao women often substitute their embroidered smocks with a good woolly jumper (sweater) and their headdresses look suspiciously like mass-produced pink and yellow Chinese towels.

them out when you're in town to see if they've taken off or not.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Airline offices in Guiyang include the **Civil Aviation Administration of China** (CAAC; Zhongguó Mínháng; ☎ 597 7777; 264 Zunyi Lu; ⏰ 8.30am-9pm),

which has helpful English-speaking staff, and **China Southern Airlines** (☎ 582 8429; cnr Zunyi Lu & Ruijin Nanlu).

Destinations include Beijing (Y1860), Shànghǎi (Y1730), Guǎngzhōu (Y990), Guilin (Y710), Chéngdū (Y760), Xī'ān (Y900), Kūnmíng (Y570) and Chóngqīng (Y490). International destinations include Bangkok.

TRANSPORT

Guiyang Buses

Buses from Guiyang's Yan'an Xilu Bus Station include the following.

Destination	Price	Duration	Frequency	Departs
Ānshùn	Y25	1½hr	every 20min	7am-7pm
Chóngqīng	Y100	8hr	daily	1pm
Guǎngzhōu	Y230	17hr	2 daily	4.30pm & 6.30pm
Guilín	Y108	10hr	2 daily	noon & 8pm
Wēining	Y70	7hr	daily	9am
Zūnyì	Y25-45	2½hr	half-hourly	7.30am-7.20pm

Buses from the Hebin Bus Depot:

Destination	Price	Duration	Frequency	Departs
Ānshùn	Y25	1½hr	every 20min	7am-7pm
Huangguoshu Falls	Y30-40	2½hr	every 40min	7.10am-noon
Kǎilǐ	Y50	2½hr	every 40min	7am-6pm
Xīngyì	Y60	6½hr	hourly	9am-6pm
Zūnyì	Y25-45	2½hr	half-hourly	7am-7pm

Buses from the Tiyu bus station on Jiefang Lu:

Destination	Price	Duration	Frequency	Departs
Chóngqīng	Y80	9hr	daily	1.30pm
Kǎilǐ	Y50	2½hr	every 20-30min	7.30am-7.30pm
Léishān	Y40	3hr	daily	3pm

Guiyang Trains

Trains departing from Guiyang:

Destination	Price	Duration	Frequency	Departs
Běijīng	Y490	29hr	daily	7.50am
Chéngdū	Y222	19hr	daily	3.38pm
Chóngqīng	Y135	10hr	daily	7pm
Guǎngzhōu	Y301	24hr	daily	12.15pm
Guilín	Y200	17hr	2 daily	2.13am & 9.31am
Kǎilǐ	Y83	3hr	daily	8.10am
Kūnmíng	Y131	12hr	daily	7.30pm
Liùpánshuǐ	Y56-95	4hr	daily	10am
Shànghǎi	Y362	30hr	daily	11pm
Zūnyì	Y49	5hr	daily	5pm

BUS

There are three long-distance bus stations in Guiyang. The main long-distance bus station (chángtú qìchē zǒngzhàn) is on Yan'an Xilu, quite a trek from the train station. The Hebin Bus Depot (Hébin Qìchē Zhàn) is just south of main artery Dusi Lu. Another bus station, Tiyu Bus Station (Tiyú Guǎng Chángtú Yuǎnzhàn), is further south on busy Jiefang Lu. They all have similar destinations at similar times and prices. See the boxed text, below, for timetables.

TRAIN

Guiyang's gleaming train station has a modern, computerised ticket office, making it one of the more pleasant places in China to buy a train ticket. However, you'll probably find that it's easier (and quicker) to travel within Guizhou by bus. You can buy tickets four days in advance. Prices listed in the boxed text (p672) are for hard sleepers.

Getting Around

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Airport buses depart from the CAAC office every 30 minutes (Y10, 8.30am to 6.30pm). A taxi from the airport will cost around Y50.

BUS

Buses 1 and 2 do city tour loops from the train station, passing close to the main long-distance bus station. Bus 1 travels up Zhonghua Nanlu and heads westward along Beijing Lu. Buses cost Y1 and recorded announcements in Chinese and English let you know the name of the bus stops.

TAXI

Taxis charge a flat Y10 fare to anywhere in the city.

QINGYAN 青岩

This ancient Ming town is packed with sights and makes a wonderful day trip from Guiyang. The former military outpost was once a traffic hub between the southwest provinces, leaving the village with Taoist temples and Buddhist monasteries rubbing up against Christian churches and menacing watchtowers.

There's plenty to eat here and some of the most popular items are pig's feet, roasted sugar and tofu in every conceivable form, from baseball-sized spheres to oblong packages wrapped in leaves.

There's no entrance fee to the village, but most sights inside charge Y2 to Y10 to get in.

Be wary of groups of children pushing drawings or paper cranes in your hands. They're often trolling for money and have been known to stomp on visitors' feet or snatch money out of open wallets if they don't think you've been generous enough.

Getting There & Away

Only about 30km outside of Guiyang, it takes about an hour to get here by bus. Buses leave regularly from the Hebin Bus Depot for Huaxi (Y3), from which a minibus will take you the rest of the way to Qingyan (Y3). If you're dropped off in the new-town area (grey concrete buildings), just walk towards the walls with the large stone gate.

ZÜNYI 遵义

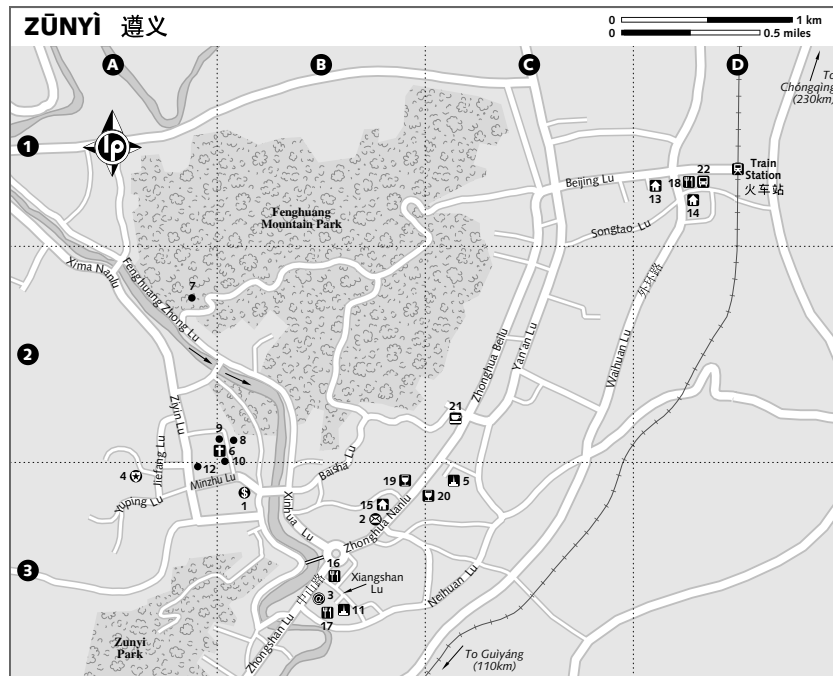
☎ 0852 / pop 484,980

If you're a modern-Chinese-history buff, this is the place for you. It was the location of the Zūnyì Conference, and the sights here will get you up close with Chinese Communist Party (CCP) history. If the CCP's 20th-century shenanigans aren't your thing, skip Zūnyì; it's neither picturesque nor particularly friendly.

History

On 16 October 1934, hemmed into the Jiāngxī soviet by Kuomintang forces, the communists set out on a Herculean, one-year, 9500km Long March from one end of China to the other. By mid-December they had reached Guizhou and marched on Zūnyì. Taking the town by surprise, the communists were able to stock up on supplies and take a breather.

From 15 to 18 January 1935, the top-level communist leaders took stock of the situation in the now-famous Zūnyì Conference. At the meeting the leaders reviewed their soviet-influenced strategies that had cost them their Jiāngxī base and caused them large military losses. Mao, who until this time had largely been overshadowed by his contemporaries, was highly critical of the communists' strategy thus far and the resolutions of the conference largely reflected his views. He was elected a full member of the ruling Standing Committee of the Politburo and Chief Assistant to Zhou Enlai in military planning. It would be another 10 years before Mao became the unrivalled leader of the Communist Party, but this event was a pivotal factor in his rise to power.



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Baiyun Temple 白云寺.....	5 C3				
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Information

Bank of China (Zhōngguó Yínháng; Minzhu Lu) Has an ATM, can change cash and travellers cheques, and offers cash advances on credit cards.

China Post (Zhonghua Nanlu; ☎ 8am-8pm) Massive main post office. You can make long-distance calls here too.

Internet café (wǎngbā; Zhongshan Lu; per hr ¥2; ☎ 24hr) Look for a blue sign. The café is up a flight of dank stairs on the 2nd floor.

Public Security Bureau (PSB; Gōngānjú; Jinián Sq; ☎ 8.30-11.30am & 2.30-5.30pm) Offers visa extensions.

Sights

COMMUNIST HISTORY SITES

The **Zūnyì Conference Site** (Zūnyì Huìyì Huìzhì; Ziyin Lu; admission ¥40; ☎ 8.30am-5pm) is hands down the most-visited communist-history attraction. Set in a colonial-style house, there are rooms filled with CCP memorabilia, as well as the meeting rooms and living quarters of the bigwigs. Outside, speakers blare revolutionary songs at raucous volumes for your listening pleasure.

Your ticket includes admission to umpteen related sites located nearby. The **Red Army**

General Political Department (Hóngjūn Zōngzhèngzhībù; lane off Ziyin Lu) has some of the more interesting photos and maps relating to the Long March and Zūnyì Conference. Exhibition halls share the grounds with a Catholic Church left behind by French missionaries.

Opposite is the **Residence of Bo Gu** (Bógǔ Jiújū), the general leader of the CCP Central Committee at the time of the Zūnyì Conference. Nearby, the **State Bank of the Red Army** (Huìyì Qǐjiān) has some terrific money displays and decent English captions.

TEMPLES

Zūnyì has two active Buddhist temples. Built in the 1920s, **Xiangshan Temple** (Xiāngshān Sì) is situated on a small hill in a lively part of town. **Baiyun Temple** (Báiyún Sì) is more rundown but still quite charming.

Sleeping

There's some reasonable accommodation to be found in Zūnyì.

Zǎjì Bīnguǎn (☎ 822 3350; 89 Zhonghua Nanlu; 中华南路89号; d ¥158-208) Disco or sleeping establishment? With the lobby's slick black stairs and multicoloured disco lighting, it is hard to tell what's supposed to be going on here. But whatever the case downstairs, upstairs rooms are generally terrific. Just look at several of them before paying anything. Two rooms may be identically priced with one sporting grubby bathrooms and potholed mattresses while another is gleaming and newly outfitted with extras such as comfy love seats.

Shishān Dàjiùdiàn (☎ 882 2978; fax 882 5861; 108 Beijing Lu; 北京路108号; d with bathroom from ¥168) Pleasant staff, retro-uniformed bellboys and weathered halls give this hotel a comfortable, old-fashioned feel. Rooms are well kept but decorated a toe-curling shade of lemon yellow.

Xībú Dàjiùdiàn (☎ 319 1788; fax 319 1868; Waihuan Lu; 外环路; 汽车客运站旁; s/d ¥110/188) Right around the corner from the bus station, most rooms here are basic affairs with cramped bathrooms and Chinese toilets. If you don't like what you see, ask for something on the 9th floor. Everything from rooms to halls are in better condition here.

Eating

Street food is your best bet in this town and there are some great hotpot, noodle and grill stalls to be found come dinner time. Some of the best places to look are the lively Xiangshan Lu or the alleys running southeast off Zhonghua Nanlu. Plentiful stands are also found around the main bus and train station.

Also be sure to check out the hotpot restaurants south of Xiangshan Temple.

Drinking

Zūnyì nightlife is generally shut up inside the giant KTV bars lining Zhonghua Beilu. So, if it's something other than karaoke you're looking for, you'll have to get out and hustle a bit. Clubs, pubs and discos open and close so fast even locals have trouble keeping track. Your best bet is to check out the cafés and tiny bars around **7:30 Bar** along Zhonghua Nanlu and see where the crowds are heading.

If searching out the new and the happening isn't your thing, **Dīngbùlā** (Zhonghua Nanlu) is a modern Taiwanese teahouse nearby that also serves beer and bar snacks, and attracts a young student crowd.

Getting There & Around BUS

Useful local buses are buses 9 and 14 which run from the train station towards Minzhu Lu and the Bank of China.

For most destinations beyond Guizhōu you will have to head to Guiyáng and transfer.

ZŪNYÌ BUS TIMETABLES

Destination	Price	Duration	Frequency	Departs
Ānshùn	¥50	5½hr	3 daily	9am, 11am & 3pm
Chóngqǐng	¥64	7½hr	daily	5pm
Guǎngzhōu	¥244	20hr	2 daily	1pm & 4pm
Guìyáng	¥20-40	2½hr	half-hourly	7am-7pm
Huángguōshù	¥60	6½hr	2 daily	9am & 12.30pm

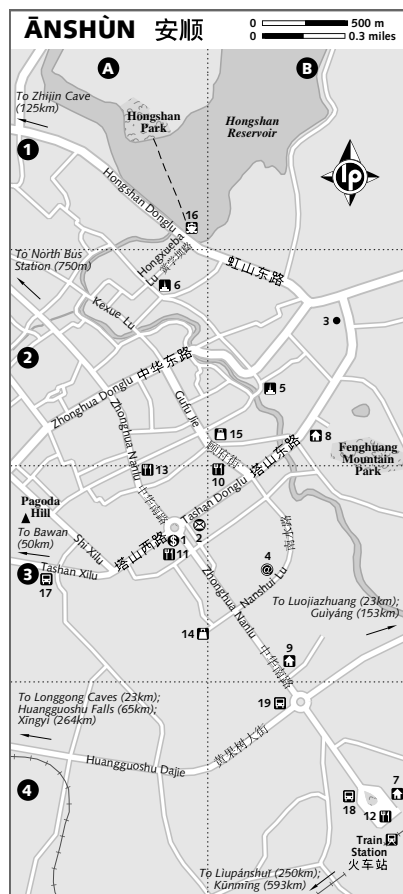
TRAIN

There are regular trains for Guiyáng (Y15 to Y26, three to five hours) but you're better off catching the bus. Other destinations include Chóngqìng (Y30 to Y44, six to nine hours, several per day) and Chéngdū (Y190, 15 hours, 7.37am, 2.40pm, 4.48pm and 6.31pm).

ĀNSHÙN 安顺

☎ 0853 / pop 217,000

Once a centre for tea and opium trading, Ānshùn remains the commercial hub of western Guizhōu. Today, it's most famous as a producer of batiks, kitchen knives and the lethal Ānjiǔ brand of alcohol. The nearby aviation factory is also well known, and recently diversified production from fighter planes to hatchbacks.



Most travellers come here for the easy access to Huangguoshu Falls and Longgong Caves.

Orientation

The long-distance bus and train stations are around 3km and 4km south of downtown, respectively. The main commercial and shopping area is found on Zhonghua Beilu and Zhonghua Nanlu.

Information

Bank of China (Zhōngguó Yínháng; cnr Tashan Xilu & Zhonghua Nanlu) Changes cash and travellers cheques, and offers cash advance on credit cards. ATM also.

China Post (Yóujú; cnr Zhonghua Nanlu & Tashan Nanlu) Look for it tucked next to the China Telecom building.

China Travel Service (CTS; Zhōngguó Lǚxíngshè; ☎ 323 4662, 323 4661; Tashan Donglu; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri) No English signs outside. Look for a blue sign with yellow Chinese characters.

Internet café (wǎngbā; Nanshui Lu; per hr Y2) East off Zhongnan Beilu.

Sights

Ānshùn doesn't have much in the way of sights, but there's interesting street life on

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weekends. Villagers come to sell their wares and **Gufu Jie**, a street of trendy clothing stores and bakeries, gets so packed it's hard to move.

For reprieve from the maddening crowds, check out the dilapidated but charming **Wén Miào** (admission Y5; ☎ 8am-5pm), a Confucian temple in the north of town. Weekends see the grounds scattered with locals who come here to drink tea, read and chat among the stunningly intricate carvings.

Southeast of here, **Donglin Temple** was built in AD 1405 (during the Ming dynasty) and re-stored in 1668. The resident Buddhist monks welcome visitors warmly.

Sleeping

Ānjū Bīnguǎn (☎ 220 1359; 火车站出站口对面; d Y100) Rooms are clean but ultra basic in this festively painted pink hotel. Closet-sized bathrooms have sinks and shower heads stacked over squat toilets. Contortions for bathing required.

Fēnghuángshān Dàjiǔdiàn (Golden Phoenix Mountain Hotel; ☎ 322 5663; 58 Tashan Donglu; 塔山东路58号; d Y218) With mounted, throne-like toilets and some serious red upholstery, rooms here certainly stand out. Pleasant staff make up for grotty bathrooms and the odd wall stain of perplexing origin. No English sign outside. Enter through the building done up like a Greek bank.

Xìxiùshān Bīnguǎn (☎ 221 1888; fax 221 1801; 63 Nanhua Lu; 南华路63号; s/d Y288/328) Conveniently located near bus and train stations, this hotel

has grounds in tip-top shape and is a favourite with tour groups. Reservations are a must even if arriving in the dead of winter.

Eating

Ānshùn is not bursting with culinary delights. Some buildings along Zhonghua Nanlu north of Tashan Donglu house restaurants on their 2nd floors but they seem all but deserted even at peak meal times.

Otherwise, there's an evening food market down an alley off Zhonghua Nanlu, just south of the Bank of China, and there are some great bakeries on Gufu Jie. A row of forgettable noodle stalls are located near the train station.

Be warned: dog is eaten in these parts – lots of dog. You'll see the skinned animals propped up outside restaurants as enticement.

Shopping

If you're looking for a Chinese market with everything from household wares to food to clothing, check out the market at the end of the long lane off Zhonghua Nanlu. For slicker stores, like Western-style clothing shops, check out Gufu Jie north of Tashan Donglu.

Getting There & Around

BUS

Minibus 1 is the most useful, zipping around town from the train station and up Tashan Donglu. Bus 2 travels between the train station and the north bus station. Buses costs Y1.

BUS TIMETABLES

Buses from Ānshùn Long-Distance Bus Station:

Destination	Price	Duration	Frequency	Departs
Guiyáng	Y15	2hr	every 20min	6.50am-7.10pm
Huángguōshù	Y10	1hr	every 20min	7.30am-5pm
Kūnmíng	Y126	17hr	daily	1pm
Xíngyì	Y51	5hr	hourly	7am-3.30pm

Buses from Ānshùn Long-Distance Bus Station to the Southeast:

Destination	Price	Duration	Frequency	Departs
Fóshān	Y220	18hr	daily	noon
Fúzhōu	Y320	32hr	daily	noon
Guǎngzhōu	Y220	18hr	daily	noon
Shēnzhēn	Y220	18hr	daily	noon
Xiàmén	Y300	28hr	daily	noon

There are several bus stations in Ānshùn that are useful to travellers. The north bus station has buses to Zhijīn town (for Zhijīn Cave) and the local bus station, located in the west of the city, is useful for travelling to Longgong Caves.

The long-distance station on the corner of Huangguoshu Dajie and Zhonghua Nanlu has a handful of handy destinations, and the long-distance bus station in front of the train station has buses for provinces in the southeastern part of China.

TRAIN

From Ānshùn, trains leave daily for Kūnmíng (Y130, 11 hours, 8.44am and 6.27pm) but it is virtually impossible to get sleeper reservations and you might well decide to head back to Guiyáng. To Chóngqīng two trains leave daily (Y68, 12 hours, 9.38pm and 11.42pm).

To Liùpánshuǐ (for Wēining) there are two trains daily at 10.52am and 11.34am (Y22, four hours). Four trains leave daily for Guiyáng (Y7 to Y12, two hours), although the bus is more convenient.

AROUND ĀNSHÙN Longgong Caves 龙宫洞

The vast **Lónggōng** (Lónggōng Dòng; Dragon Palace; admission Y120; 8.30am-5.30pm) cave network snakes through 20 hills, but only a fraction is currently open to tourists. The recorded music and coloured spotlights can feel a bit over the top at times but most travellers enjoy drifting through the caves on rowboats with the low-key guides.

Guanyin Cave is a second, less impressive site about 4km before the main entrance.

Lónggōng is 23km south of Ānshùn and an easy day trip that can be combined with a visit to Huángguōshù.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Local buses depart every hour from Ānshùn's west bus station (Y10, 30 minutes). Returning, buses leave hourly until about 5pm.

Minibuses run between Lónggōng and Huángguōshù (Y20, one hour).

Zhijīn Cave 织金洞

As the largest cave in China, and one of the biggest in the entire world, a trip to **Zhijīn Cave** (Zhijīn Dòng; admission Y120; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm) is definitely worth the effort to come see for

yourself. Located at the edge of a small village some 15km outside Zhijīn, the cave is around 10km long and up to 150m high.

Calcium deposits create an abstract landscape of spectacular shapes and spirals, often reaching from the floor to the ceiling. As you move from the tiny passageways to cathedral-like main halls, it's hard not to be impressed.

Tickets to the site are steep but include a compulsory tour. Tours depart with a minimum of 10 people. Solo travellers visiting outside of peak summer months or Chinese holidays should be prepared for what can be a very, very long wait. While the tour itself is in Chinese only, you'll be glad to have someone around who knows the way back out of the maze of trails. Tours last from two to three hours.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

A trip to the cave can be made as a day trip from Ānshùn – just. Buses depart from Ānshùn's north bus station (Y18, three hours, every 25 minutes) for Zhijīn town. Once there, hop on a motorised rickshaw over to the town's second bus station and catch one of the local buses that leave regularly for the cave (Y3, one hour).

Returning from the caves, buses leave regularly. The last bus back to Ānshùn heads out of Zhijīn at 5.30pm.

Huangguoshu Falls 黄果树大瀑布

When these falls get going during the May to October rainy season, you can hear the thundering from kilometres away. Rainbows sprout from the **Rhinoceros Pool** below, while mist from the cascading waters carries all the way up to Huangguoshu Village nearby.

All this nabs busloads of tourists from all over China, eager to see the 81m-wide and 74m-tall **Huangguoshu Falls** (Huángguōshù Dà Pùbù; Yellow Fruit Tree Falls; admission Y90; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm), making it Guizhōu's No 1 tourist attraction.

The cascades are actually part of a 450-sq-km cave and karst complex discovered when Chinese explored the area in the 1980s to gauge the region's hydroelectrical potential.

Entrance to the falls is just before Huangguoshu Village.

SLEEPING & EATING

You can do the falls in a day trip from Guiyáng at a push and it's an easy day trip

from Ānshùn. There are accommodation options everywhere in Huangguoshu Village but hotels are overpriced, grim and with a musty smell pervading most rooms.

Huángguōshù Gōngsāng Zhāodàisuǒ (黄果树贡桑招待所; ☎ 359 2583; d/tr Y180/220) This police-run guesthouse is a little further up the road from Huángguōshù Bīnguān; it has OK rooms. If they come with a discount then this is your best bet.

Huángguōshù Bīnguān (黄果树宾馆; ☎ 359 2110; d/Y380-480) Halfway between the bus stand and Huángguōshù Village, this hotel has been redecorated but you still don't get much for your money. Rooms are somewhat musty and come with tiptoe views of the falls.

Along the main road in town are several restaurants with verandas at the back where you can eat and enjoy a great view of the falls.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

From Ānshùn, buses run every 20 minutes from the long-distance bus station (Y10, one hour, 7.30am to 5pm). Buses from Ānshùn to Xīngyì also pass by Huángguōshù, leaving you about a 15-minute walk from the highway to the village.

Buses leave Guiyáng for Huángguōshù every 40 minutes from the long-distance bus station (Y30 to Y40, 2½ hours, 7.10am to noon).

Heading out of Huángguōshù, buses for Ānshùn and Guiyáng run regularly between 7am and 7pm. Buses for Xīngyì leave in the morning.

Minibuses run the route between Longgong Caves and Ānshùn (Y20 per person).

WESTERN GUIZHOU

Adventurers have always been drawn to Guizhōu's wild west by its removed location, rough travel on rubble roads and remote natural sights. But these days, infrastructure money is leaving its mark. Western Guizhōu is being developed as a kind of transportation hub, so you may find yourself sailing along smooth new expressways or flying into Xīngyì's brand spanking new airport.

Improved transportation means tour groups, both Chinese and foreign, are increasingly making the trek to Wēining's Nature Reserve at Caohai Lake or Xīngyì's Mǎlínghé Xiágǔ. But restless travellers shouldn't despair:

English around these parts is still nonexistent and independent travellers remain of novelty for most people in the region.

WĒINÍNG 威宁

☎ 0857

Wherever you've come from in China, you probably haven't seen a town like this. Men crack whips and scream as they race by on donkey-pulled chariots. Uighur music blasts out of Muslim kebab stands. Doors on the town's disintegrating taxi fleet flap open like bird wings whenever drivers take a corner.

And that's just at one intersection.

There's not much to do in Wēining, but it oozes character. There's a modern mosque serving the Hui minority in the northern part of town and a quiet market street in the old, eastern part of town. A larger market is held every three to four days.

The jewel-like **Caohai Lake** (草海湖; Cǎohǎi Hú; Grass Sea Lake) is the area's main draw and one of China's premier sites for seeing wintering migratory birds, especially the rare black-necked crane.

Sights & Activities

CAOHAI LAKE

The lake has a fragile history, having been drained during both the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution in hopes of producing farmland. It didn't work and the lake was refilled in 1980. Government tinkering with water levels in ensuing years impacted the local environment and villagers' livelihoods. The government has since enlisted locals in the lake's protection in an effort to remedy both problems. The 20-sq-km freshwater wetland has been a national nature reserve since 1992.

To get to the lake it's a 45-minute walk southwest of downtown Wēining or a five-minute taxi ride (Y3 to Y5).

Boaters and touts will mob you at the lakeside offering you a punt around the lake, a highlight for some travellers. The official price is Y60 per hour per boat though you'll have to bargain hard to get them down from starting prices of Y100 or more per person.

If you opt for a solo roam along the lakeside trails instead, be warned as the touts have a James Bond-like ability to show up wherever you are in Wēining to continue the haggle: your hotel in the morning, the kebab stand in the evening, the bus station as you're trying to leave town.

Sleeping & Eating

Cǎohǎi Bīnguǎn (草海宾馆; ☎ 622 1511; s/d/tr Y85/50/60) Right by the lake, rooms here are generally huge and comfortably furnished but can be damp and borderline glacial at night. The reception desk isn't always staffed so either make a lot of noise or be very patient when you arrive. The hotel's not easy to find so a taxi from the bus station is your best bet (Y3 to Y5).

Hēijīnghè Bīnguǎn (黑颈鹤宾馆; ☎ 622 9306; s/d with bathroom Y88/128) Despite damp, cold rooms and wall stains, this is the best accommodation in town. Central heating sputters to life with varying degrees of success between 9pm and 10pm. To get here, turn right out of the bus station and cross the intersection. Walk for about half a block and you'll see the hotel on your left.

Cǎohǎi Cāntīng (草海餐厅; dishes from Y5) About 200m east of Cǎohǎi Bīnguǎn, this is a cheap and friendly restaurant. There are a number of other good places to eat along this road.

South of Xinhua Bookshop on the main street are several point-and-choose restaurants, and you'll find a couple of Muslim restaurants near the mosque that serve tasty beef noodles.

Getting There & Away

The easiest way to reach Wēining is by bus from Guiyáng (Y70, seven hours, 9am daily).

Leaving Wēining you can backtrack to Guiyáng (8.30am daily) or take a bus south to Xiānwēi in Yúnnán (Y25, eight hours, 7.30am and 9am). If you catch the 7.30am bus to Xiānwēi you'll arrive just in time to catch the last bus to Kūnmíng (Y40, eight hours) at 3.30pm, although it's a lot of travelling to do in one day. From Wēining, there is also a sleeper bus to Kūnmíng (Y90, 16 hours, 5.30pm).

Alternatively, take the morning bus to Zhāotōng (Y20, three hours; 7.20am and 8am), from where you can hop over to Xíchàng in southern Sichuān and connect with the Kūnmíng–Chéngdū train line.

XINGYI 兴义

☎ 0859

Even with a new regional airport, construction sites galore and several new expressways, Xingyi is still pretty unexciting. By 6pm people drain from town, and roaming the streets of

this oversized concrete city is frankly a bit of a downer. But if you find yourself here on the way to Guiyáng, Nánning or Kūnmíng, the surrounding countryside is definitely worth a visit if only for the beautiful karst scenery.

The main attraction in the area is the 15km-long **Maling Gorge** (马岭河峡谷; Mǎlínghé Xiágǔ; admission Y30). You can spend the better part of a day following the winding path into the lush gorge, across bridges and up to and behind high, cascading waterfalls. Bring waterproof gear, sturdy shoes and a torch (flashlight) to light your way through some of the caves. Minibuses to the gorge run every 20 minutes from Xingyi's east bus station (Y2, 7am to 7pm) or you can grab a taxi (Y20).

Water levels permitting, it's also possible to do some rafting, although not in low season. Keep in mind that even when water levels are high, these aren't rapids and this is a slow descent. Speak to your accommodation providers or contact the **CITS** (☎ 690 1660; www.guizhoutour.net) in Guiyáng to arrange rafting trips.

Sleeping & Eating

Shuǐwù Bīnguǎn (税务宾馆; ☎ 322 3927; Dongfeng Lu; dm Y15, d with bathroom Y98) South of the east bus station, this hotel is convenient if you happen to arrive in town late at night. There's a travel agency in front of the building that can be helpful in arranging guides or trips.

Pánjiāng Bīnguǎn (盘江宾馆; ☎ 322 3456, ext 8118; 4 Panjiang Xilu; dm Y48, dm/s/d/tr with bathroom Y50/280/380/380) This is the official tourist hotel, and is often full with groups. Don't even think of coming here without a reservation. Overworked staff have been known to shoo away visitors before they even reach the reception desk.

Aviation Hotel (Hángkōng Jiǔdiàn; 航空酒店; ☎ 312 6666; fax 312 6668; Ruijin Nanlu; 瑞金南路; d Y680; ☎) A huge hotel with fawning, five-star service but only so-so facilities. The bathrooms' intergalactic shower fixtures should come with an operations manual.

There's a serious lack of restaurants in Xingyi; try your luck with some of the point-and-choose places near the east bus station.

Getting There & Away

There are two bus stations in Xingyi. Buses to Guiyáng (Y93 to Y100, six to eight hours) leave every 40 minutes from the east bus station, stopping at Huangguoshu Falls (Y50) and Ānshùn (Y55) on the way.

From the west bus station there is a sleeper bus that leaves daily at 8pm for Kūnmíng (Y73, nine hours). There are also regular minibuses that go to Luópíng (Y20, two hours, every 30 minutes until 6pm), from where you can change for a bus to take you to Kūnmíng (Y35 to Y43, four hours, half-hourly until 5pm).

EASTERN GUIZHOU

Over 13 different minorities live in the forested hillsides and river valleys of this region, and it's worth making time in your trip to visit the extraordinary villages and surrounding countryside. Though some villages have started to be (overly) spruced up for tourism, many are still relatively untouched by China's modernising mania.

Booming country markets and festivals are held almost weekly, giving travellers a window into a completely unique way of life. China's largest Miao village, Xījiāng, with a colourful weekly market, and the remote Dong village of Zhàoxīng, in the southeast, are particularly recommended. If you have time, consider visiting them as part of the back-door route into Guǎngxī.

Outside Kǎilǐ there are no places to change money, so bring plenty of Renminbi with you.

Kǎilǐ 凯里

☎ 0855 / pop 153,000

About 195km almost directly east of Guiyáng, Kǎilǐ is a compact, friendly town and a fantastic base for visiting minority villages or planning the back-door trip into Guǎngxī.

FESTIVALS & MARKETS

Minority celebrations are lively events that can last for days at a time and often include singing, dancing, horse racing and buffalo fighting.

One of the biggest is the Lusheng Festival, held in either spring or autumn, depending on the village. The *lusheng* is a reed instrument used by the Miao people. Other important festivals include the Dragon Boat Festival, Hill-leaping Festival and the Sharing the Sister's Meal Festival (equivalent to Valentine's Day in the West). The Miao New Year is celebrated on the first four days of the 10th lunar month in Kǎilǐ, Guǎng, Zhōuxī and other Miao areas. The Fertility Festival is only celebrated every 13 years.

All minority festivals follow the lunar calendar and so dates vary from year to year. They will also vary from village to village and shaman to shaman. The terrific CITS in Kǎilǐ (above) will provide you with a list of local festivals and markets. The CITS in Guiyáng (p670) is also helpful and has English- and German-speaking staff.

Information

Bank of China (Zhōngguó Yínháng; Shaoshan Nanlu) Changes cash and travellers cheques, and offers cash advance on credit cards. There is also an ATM here. A second branch on Beijing Donglu will also change cash.

China Post (yóuyù; cnr Shaoshan Beilu & Beijing Donglu) You can make international phone calls on the 2nd floor.

CITS (Zhōngguó Guójí Lǚxíngshè; ☎ 822 2506; 53 Yingshan Donglu; ☎ 9am-5.30pm) If only every CITS in China was like this one! Staff here are universally helpful and there are fluent English, French and Japanese speakers. The place for information on minority villages, festivals, markets and organised tours.

Internet café (wǎngbā; Shaoshan Nanlu; per hr Y2, deposit Y10; ☎ 24hr) Near the Kailai Hotel, with over 100 computers. If locals playing video games are camped out at all of them, try the internet café on Beijing Lu. Look for the 7Up sign. Computers are downstairs.

Public Security Bureau (PSB; Gōngānjú; ☎ 853 6113; 26 Yongle Lu; ☎ 8.30-11.30am & 2.30-5.30pm Mon-Fri) Deals with all passport and visa inquiries.

Sights & Activities

There's not much to see or do in Kǎilǐ other than a visit to **Dage Park** (Big Pagoda Park) or **Jinquanhu Park**, which has a Dong-minority drum tower built in 1985. Also check out the **Minorities Museum** which should be reopened by the time you read this. At the time of research it was being moved from its former home above a furniture store into an enormous building that formerly housed the Wanbo bus station.

MARKETS

A huge number of markets are held in the villages surrounding Kǎilǐ. Xiānhuā has a huge market every six to seven days. Zhōuxī, Léishān and Táijiāng hold markets every six



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Night Market 夜市	14 A3
Noodle Stall 面条店	15 B3
Noodle Stall 面条店	16 B3
Restaurants 饭店	17 B3
TRANSPORT	
Buses to Guǎngdōng & Train Station	
到火车站的中巴	18 A3
Local Bus Station 汽车站	19 A3
Long-Distance Bus Station 长途汽车站	20 B3

Guótài Dàjiùdiàn (☎ 826 9888; fax 826 9818; 6 Beijing Donglu; 北京东路6; d Y258-288) Good discounts make these tidy, centrally located rooms great value. Probably the top midrange option in town, despite disappointing bathrooms and underwhelming service.

Kǎilǐ Jiùdiàn (☎ 827 7888; fax 827 7666; 21 Shaoshan Nanlu; 韶山南路21号; s/d Y388/328) It's got spick and span rooms and staff who act like they've been waiting all year for your arrival. Cooks haven't quite mastered the supply and demand side of the free breakfast buffet and food runs out quickly. Replacement dishes can engender a mini stampede of sorts, so be prepared.

Eating

Kǎilǐ has some fantastic snack stalls lining its streets. Savoury crepes, potato patties, barbecues, tofu grills, noodles, hotpot, *shuǐjiǎo* (boiled dumplings) and wonton soup overflow for extremely reasonable prices. Check out the night market or the corner of Yingpan Donglu and Wenhua Beilu.

Also check out the little alcove located east of the Ludujia Ri Hotel on Beijing Donglu, where cafés and restaurants with names such as Bobo and Happy serve up Chinese and

Western-style food with varying degrees of success.

Lixiāngmiàn Shídiàn (Wenhua Nanlu; dishes from Y5; ☎ 7.30am-7.30pm) This modest eatery serves simple dishes such as wonton soup and noodles and is run by a very friendly family. Don't be surprised if they plop down at your table to ask you about your day. English menu available.

Getting There & Away

BUS

Kǎilǐ is served by two bus stations: the long-distance bus station on Wenhua Beilu has departures to most destinations, but if you can't find what you're looking for try the local bus station on Yingpan Xilu.

Destinations from the local bus station cover most surrounding villages, including Lángdè (Y9 to Y10), Chóng'ān (Y11, one hour), Mǎjiāng (Y8 to Y10) and Huángpíng (Y13, 30 minutes). Check times when you arrive.

TRAIN

Kǎilǐ's train station is a couple of kilometres north of town but departures are infrequent and the train service slow; you're better off getting the bus. Trains leave round the clock for Guíyáng (Y16 to Y25), the majority between noon and midnight. These take three to five hours.

For longer distances, it's worth stopping in Guíyáng to secure a reservation. Six trains a day pass through Kǎilǐ on their way to Chóngqìng; three a day pass through on their way to Kūnmíng (1.51pm, 8.37pm and 8.50pm). You can't get a sleeper reservation in Kǎilǐ so you'll have to pray for intervention from a higher power (the conductor guard). The same advice is valid for east-bound services to Běijīng and Shànghǎi.

BUS TIMETABLES

Buses from the Kǎilǐ long-distance bus station:

Destination	Price	Duration	Frequency	Departs
Cóngjiāng	Y61	8hr	5 daily	7am-2pm
Guíyáng	Y45-51	2½hr	half-hourly	6am-7.15pm
Léishān	Y11	1hr	half-hourly	7am-7.30pm
Róngjiāng	Y45	6hr	every 40min	6.40am-4.40pm
Xíjiāng	Y10-15	1½hr	2 daily	noon & 2pm

days. Dates and suggestions are available from the fabulous Kǎilǐ CITS (see p681).

Festivals & Events

Markets and festivals are one of Guizhōu's major attractions, and the profusion of them around Kǎilǐ make this sleepy town the best place to base yourself for exploring them. For more details, see the boxed text, p681.

Sleeping

Shíyóu Bīnguǎn (☎ 823 4331; 44 Yingpan Donglu; 营盘东路44号; dm/s/d/tr Y26/80/120/120) This is a budget favourite despite the doorless shared bathrooms and some very draughty rooms. Consider reserving ahead, as dorms and singles fill up fast.

Getting Around

Bus fares cost Y0.5 in Kǎilǐ and almost all of the buses departing from the train station follow the same route: up Qingjiang Lu, past the long-distance bus station, along Beijing Donglu and down Shaoshan Nanlu to the Minorities Museum. For the train station take bus 2.

Taxis charge a flat rate of Y5 for anywhere in the city and Y10 to the train station.

AROUND KǎILǐ

It's easy to spend several weeks village-hopping around Guizhōu's southeast. Base yourself at any of the following villages and go explore. If you are planning to village hop into Guǎngxī, plan on spending about a week. Make sure your itinerary is flexible, however, as bus schedules can be irregular in these parts.

Xíjiāng 西江

Hidden in the folds of the Leigong Hills, Xíjiāng is thought to be the largest Miao village and is well known for its embroidery and silver ornaments (the Miao believe that silver can dispel evil spirits). Set in a natural basin, it's bordered by paddy fields, with wooden houses rising up the hillside.

Dawn hikes through the paddies are spectacular and for those of you looking for more than an afternoon stroll, there's a three-day trek from here to Páiyáng (排羊), a Miao village north of Xíjiāng. This trail winds its way through some remote minority villages and lush scenery.

You will probably find accommodation with locals en route but you shouldn't expect it so come prepared with sleeping bags, food and camping equipment.

Many families offer rooms with dinner for around Y40. Just go up the main street and ask around.

If everyone's full, try the **Yóudiàn Zhāodàisuǒ** (邮电招待所; ☎ 334 8688; dm Y15) near the bus drop-off. Guests say the kindness of the *fūwùyuan* (floor attendants) more than make up for the grubby facilities.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

From Kǎilǐ there are two buses a day to Xijiāng (Y10 to Y15, 1½ hours) at noon and 2pm. Returning to Kǎilǐ there are three to four morning buses a day. Alternatively, catch a bus to Léishān (Y8, 1½ hours, last bus 5pm) and from there head south towards Róngjiāng.

Lángdé 郎德

The terrific Miao architecture and cobbled pathways have turned this village into the first port of call for tour buses. Elaborate singing, dancing and reed flute performances are usually staged, after which the hard sell of local clothes and jewellery begins. But don't let the commercialisation put you off. The locals are friendly and there's a terrific 15km trail along the Bala River that will take you through several Miao villages.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

About 20km outside Kǎilǐ, buses pass by here on the way to Léishān (Y7 to Y8). The village is 2km from the main road. Getting away, get out on the street and flag down a bus back to Kǎilǐ.

Mátáng 麻塘

This village, 30km from Kǎilǐ, is home to the Gejia, a group that has been identified by the government as belonging to the Miao minority. The Gejia, who have different customs, dress and language, aren't particularly happy about this classification; nor for that matter are the Miao. The Gejia are renowned batik artisans and their traditional dress often features batik and embroidery. Their hats (which look a bit like heavily starched napkins) are also made out of batik. The village is incredibly friendly but be prepared for the army of women selling handicrafts who will pounce on you as soon as you arrive.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

The village is 2km from the main road and buses regularly run past the drop-off point in the direction of Chóng'ān (Y5) and Kǎilǐ (Y7). Just stand on the side of the road and flag down anything that comes your way.

Bāshā 芭沙

This fascinating Miao village up the hill from Cóngjiāng is famous for its men who still wear period clothes, carry swords and wear their long hair rolled up into topknots. Even young boys wear the topknot and carry daggers. Though most say these traditions date from the Ming dynasty, others believe they may date back to the Tang or Song era.

Neither Han culture nor modern technology has made serious inroads here (yet) and nobody, even the villagers themselves, seems sure why their ancient customs stay so well preserved.

The tricky part of a visit here is actually seeing the men, as during the day the majority are out hunting or farming. Try to time your visit with a festival for the chance to see the entire village.

Bāshā is increasingly showing up on travellers' itineraries as they village hop into Guǎngxī and the inhabitants are starting to respond. Chinese-English signs now point the way to various corners of this sprawling settlement and bilingual plaques explain the use of certain buildings.

There an irregularly collected Y15 entrance fee to Bāshā but if no-one's tracked you down for it by the time you're ready to leave, don't worry about it – it just means the Miao here have decided to give you a *laissez-passer*.

There are plenty of hotels and restaurants in Cóngjiāng if you want to spend the night.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Bāshā is about 10km up the hill from Cóngjiāng. You can walk or take a taxi (around Y15), rickshaw or motorcycle (Y3 to Y5). Arrange a pick up for coming back or plan to walk back down to Cóngjiāng. Not much transportation hangs around the village.

Zhàoxīng 肇兴

This gorgeous Dong village is packed with traditional wooden structures, several wind and rain bridges and five remarkable drum towers. It's a lively place, with 700 households, and most villagers continue to wear traditional clothing and speak only their native Dong language.

Zhàoxīng is drawing an increasing number of foreign visitors and several guesthouses and eateries (some with English menus) have sprung up on the main street.

Be sure to check on the meat of the day, as rat meat (*lāoshǔ ròu*) is common in this area. If you plan to do some day walks, it might be a good idea to bring some snacks along.

Wood Guesthouse (侗家木楼旅馆; Dōngjiā Mùlóu Lúguǎn; rY30; ☎) has very basic wood rooms with hot showers down in the lobby. The most modern digs in the city can be found at **Zhàoxīng Bīnguǎn** (肇兴宾馆; d from Y120; ☎). They're spotless, with tiny gleaming bathrooms.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

From Kǎilǐ you have to travel first to Cóngjiāng (Y61, eight hours) and change there for a bus to Zhàoxīng (Y15). Direct buses running

from Cóngjiāng aren't frequent however, so consider getting on a Liping-bound bus and changing halfway (the bus driver will tell you) for a Diping bus.

Alternatively, if you're looking to stretch your legs, take a Luòxiāng-bound bus from Cóngjiāng (Y15, two hours), and from Luòxiāng it's a lovely 1½-hour walk along a dirt road to Zhàoxīng, passing through a number of smaller villages en route.

From Zhàoxīng there is at least one Lípíng-Sānjiāng bus passing through each way. The trip to Sānjiāng, in Guǎngxī, takes about five hours. From there you can catch an onward bus to Guilin (see p664).

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