

Fújiàn 福建



Directly facing the island of Taiwan across the Taiwan Strait, the southern province of Fújiàn – famed for its fiendish tangle of tricky dialects – is a lushly mountainous, coastal region of China. Well watered and lashed by epic summer typhoons that sweep along the fertile coastline, the province is also renowned for an outward-looking mentality that has prompted centuries of migration to Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines and Taiwan, and, in more recent years, a more covert movement to Europe and the US.

One of China's most prosperous provinces, Fújiàn's coastal ports have long traded far and wide, but farmland is scarce and the mountainous interior remained inaccessible until as late as the 1960s, when the communists finally drove roads through the dense jungle.

A popular route between Guǎngdōng, Zhèjiāng and Shànghǎi, Fújiàn offers one of the most diverse travel experiences in China. Rising like medieval forts, the astonishing Hakka *tǔlóu* (roundhouses) of Yǒngdīng County in Fújiàn's southwest present a totally unique dimension to the China experience.

One of China's most attractive harbour cities and a useful first port of call, Xiàmén is a mandatory highlight along the coast. The hypnotically slow tempo, gorgeous colonial architecture, clean air and meandering, hilly lanes of offshore Gǔlàng Yǔ make the island an ideal place to unwind. The enclave is only a stone's throw from the Taiwan-claimed island of Jīnmén (Kinmen), once the site of ferocious battles between mainland communists and the Nationalist Party.

The province's rugged mountainous dimension can be explored at Wǔyí Shān in the northwest, where excellent hiking opportunities await.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Overnight in a Hakka *tǔlóu* (roundhouse) in **Yǒngdīng County** (p339) and wake up to cock crows
- Spend the night on the tranquil and charming island of **Gǔlàng Yǔ** (p337) offshore from Xiàmén
- Poke around the ancient lanes of **Chóngwǔ** (p344) and clamber onto its well-preserved city wall
- Wander the backstreets temple-hunting in **Quánzhōu** (p341)
- Escape to the mountainous scenery of **Wǔyí Shān** (p346)



■ POPULATION: 35 MILLION



History

The coastal region of Fújiàn, known in English as Fukien or Hokkien, has been part of the Chinese empire since the Qin dynasty (221–207 BC), when it was known as Min.

Sea trade transformed the region from a frontier into one of the centres of the Chinese world. During the Song and Yuan dynasties the coastal city of Quánzhōu was one of the main ports of call on the maritime silk route, which transported not only silk but other textiles, precious stones, porcelain and a host of other valuables. The city was home to more than 100,000 Arab merchants, missionaries and travellers.

Despite a decline in the province's fortunes after the Ming dynasty restricted maritime

commerce in the 15th century, the resourcefulness of the Fújiàn people proved itself in the numbers heading for Taiwan, Singapore, the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia. Overseas links were forged that continue today, contributing much to the modern character of the province.

Climate

Fújiàn has a subtropical climate, with hot, humid summers and drizzly, cold winters. June through August brings soaring temperatures and humidity, with torrential rains and typhoons common. In the mountainous regions, winters can be fiercely cold. The best times to visit are spring (March to May) and autumn (September to October).

Language

Because of its isolated topography Fújiàn is one of the most linguistically diverse provinces in China. Locals speak variations of the Min dialect, which includes Taiwanese. Min is divided into various subgroups – you can expect to hear Southern Min (Minnán Huà) in Xiàmén and Quánzhōu, and Eastern Min (Dōng Mǐn) in Fúzhōu. Using Mandarin is generally not a problem, but expect a heavy southern Chinese accent.

Getting There & Away

Fújiàn is well connected to the neighbouring provinces of Guǎngdōng and Jiāngxī by train and coastal highway. Xiàmén and Fúzhōu have airline connections to most of the country, including Hong Kong, and Taipei and Kaohsiung in Taiwan. Wúyí Shān has flight connections to China's larger cities, including Běijīng, Shànghǎi and Hong Kong. The coastal freeway also goes all the way to Hong Kong from Xiàmén. Z-class express trains link Fúzhōu to Běijīng in a mere 19 hours.

Getting Around

Getting around Fújiàn's coastal areas is a breeze, thanks to the well-maintained coastal highway. For exploring the interior, trains are slow but more comfortable and safer than travelling by bus. Wúyí Shān is linked to Fúzhōu, Quánzhōu and Xiàmén by train. If the train is too slow, there are daily flights between Xiàmén, Fúzhōu and Wúyí Shān. See the Getting There & Away information in the relevant sections of this chapter for more details.

XIÀMÉN 厦 门

☎ 0592 / pop 592,400

Xiàmén, also known to the West as Amoy, ranks as the most attractive city in Fújiàn. Many of its old colonial buildings have been carefully restored and its clean, well-kept streets and lively waterfront district give it a captivating old-world charm rarely seen in Chinese cities.

To visit Xiàmén without staying on the tiny island of Gǔlàng Yǔ, once the old colonial roost of Europeans and Japanese, would be to totally miss the point. Gǔlàng Yǔ's breezy seaside gardens and delightful architecture are one of Fújiàn's highlights.

Xiàmén is unbearably hot and humid in the summer and slightly cooler in the winter. Spring and autumn are when temperatures

are at their best, though fickle weather means rain any time of year.

History

Xiàmén was founded around the mid-14th century in the early years of the Ming dynasty, when the city walls were built and the town was established as a major seaport and commercial centre.

In the 17th century it became a place of refuge for the Ming rulers fleeing the Manchu invaders. Xiàmén and nearby Jīnmén were bases for the Ming armies who, under the command of the pirate-general Koxinga, raised their anti-Manchu battle-cry, 'resist the Qing and restore the Ming'.

The Portuguese arrived in the 16th century, followed by the British in the 17th century, and later by the French and the Dutch, all attempting rather unsuccessfully to establish Xiàmén as a trade port.

The port was closed to foreigners in the 1750s and it was not until the Opium Wars that the tide turned. In August 1841 a British naval force of 38 ships carrying artillery and soldiers sailed into Xiàmén harbour, forcing the port to open. Xiàmén then became one of the first treaty ports.

Japanese and Western powers followed soon after, establishing consulates and making Gǔlàng Yǔ a foreign enclave. Xiàmén turned Japanese in 1938 and remained that way until 1945.

Orientation

The town of Xiàmén is on the island of the same name. It's connected to the mainland by a 5km-long causeway bearing a train line, road and footpath. The most absorbing part of Xiàmén is near the western (waterfront) district, directly opposite the small island of Gǔlàng Yǔ. This is the old area of town, known for its colonial architecture, parks and winding streets.

Information

Amoy Magic (www.amoymagic.com) One of the most comprehensive websites on Xiàmén.

Bank of China (Zhōngguó Yínháng; 6 Zhongshan Lu) Has a 24-hour ATM.

China International Travel Service (CITS; Zhōngguó Guójiā Lǚxíngshè; 335 Hexiang Xilu) There are several offices around town. This branch near Yundang Lake is recommended.

Hong Kong Bank (HSBC; Huìfēng Yínháng; nr Xiehe Lu & Hubin Xilu) Can change money; has a 24-hour ATM.



Life Line Medical Clinic (Mífú Zhénsuò; ☎ 532 3168; 123 Xidi Villa Hubin Beilu; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8am-noon Sat) A clinic for expats, with English-speaking doctors. Telephone-operated 24 hours.

Post & telephone office (zhōngguó yóuzhèng & zhōngguó diànxin; cnr Xinhua Lu & Zhongshan Lu)

Public Security Bureau (PSB; Gōng'ānjú; ☎ 226 2203; 45-47 Xinhua Lu) Opposite the main post and telephone office. The visa section (*chūyǐng guǎnlǐchù*; open 8.10am to 11.45am and 2.40pm to 5.15pm Monday to Saturday) is in the northeastern part of the building on Gongyuan Nanlu.

Yili Internet Cafe (Yìlì Wǎngbā; cnr Hexiang Donglu & Hubin Donglu; per hr Y3; ☎ 24hr)

Yuyue Internet Cafe (Yúyuè Wǎngbā; 113 Datong Lu; per hr Y4; ☎ 24hr) Gaming hall.

Sights & Activities

NANPUTUO TEMPLE 南普陀寺

On the southern outskirts of Xiàmén, this Buddhist **temple** (Nánputuó Sì; ☎ 208 6490; Siming Nanlu; admission Y3; ☎ 8am-5pm) was originally built over a millennium ago, but has been repeatedly destroyed and rebuilt. Its latest incarnation dates to the early 20th century, and today it's an active and busy temple

with chanting monks and worshippers lighting incense.

Entering the temple through **Heavenly King Hall** (Tiānwáng Diàn), you are met by the tub-bellied Milefo (Laughing Buddha), flanked by four heavenly kings. The classical Chinese inscription reads: 'When entering, regard Buddha and afterwards pay your respects to the four kings of heaven'. Behind Milefo stands Wei Tuo, protector of Buddhist monasteries.

In front of the courtyard is the twin-eaved **Big Treasure Hall** (Dàxióng Bǎodiàn), presided over by a trinity of Buddhas representing his past, present and future forms. Behind rises the eight-sided **Hall of Great Compassion** (Dàbēi Diàn), in which stands a golden 1000-armed statue of Guanyin, facing the four directions.

The temple has an excellent **vegetarian restaurant** (set meals Y30-80; ☎ 10.30am-4pm) in a shaded courtyard where you can dine in the company of resident monks. Round it all off with a hike up the steps behind the temple among the rocks and the shade of trees.

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Take bus 1 from the train station or bus 21 from Zhongshan Lu to reach the temple.

OTHER SIGHTS

Next to Nanputuo Temple, **Xiamen University** (Xiàmén Dàxué) was established with overseas Chinese funds. Its well-maintained grounds feature an attractive lake and are good for a pleasant, shady stroll. The campus entrance is next to the stop for bus 1.

Near the university is the **Huli Shan Fortress** (Húlishān Pàotái; admission Y25; ☎ 7.30am-5.30pm), a gigantic German gun artillery built in 1893. You can rent binoculars to peer over the water to the Taiwanese-occupied island of Jīnmén (金门), formerly known as Quemoy, claimed by both mainland China and Taiwan. Boats (Y106 to Y126) do circuits of Jīnmén from the **passenger ferry terminal** (客运码头; kèyùn mǎtóu; ☎ 298 5551) off Lujiang Lu.

Take a breezy walk along the 5.9km **Round Island Wooden Walkway** (环岛路木栈道; Huándǎolù Mùzhàndào) that wraps itself around the shore from the Hulishan Beach (Húlishān Hǎibīn Yùchǎng) all the way to Shitou Sq (石头广场; Shítou Guǎngchǎng).

Also near the university is the **Overseas Chinese Museum** (Huáqiáo Bówùguǎn; 73 Siming Nanlu; ☎ 9.30am-4.30pm Tue-Sun), a fascinating and ambitious celebration of China's communities abroad, with models, street scenes, photos and props.

Tours

CITS (p333) can arrange tours around Xiàmén and Gǔlàng Yǔ. Most hotels can also help with tours.

Festivals & Events

The **Xiamen International Marathon** is held in spring, and draws local and international participants. Runners race around the coastal ring road that circles the island.

Dragon boat races are held in Xiàmén every June and are quite a sight.

Sleeping

For ample, Gǔlàng Yǔ beats Xiàmén hands down as a more memorable and relaxing place to stay. In Xiàmén, hotels are clustered around the harbour and in the far-eastern section of town near the train station.

Lodging becomes expensive and hard to find around the first week of September, when a large investment fair takes place in the city.

BUDGET

Xiamen International Youth Hostel (Xiàmén Guóji Qīngnián Lǚshè; ☎ 208 2345; www.yhaxm.com; 41 Nanhua Lu; 南华路41号; 4-/6-bed dm Y55/50, s Y95-160, d Y160-240; ☎ ☑) With clean dorm rooms, doubles and showers, this bright, airy and very pleasant place is run by amiable staff. There's also bike rental, a kitchen, a ticket-booking office, internet access (Y2 per hour) and the small but cosy Anywhere Pub (Tsingtao Y10, local beer Y6; open until midnight).

Overseas Student Dormitory (Càiqīngjié Lóu; ☎ 218 0501; Xiamen University; s/d/tr/ste Y200/200/240/300; ☎) For plain and clean rooms with good views over the campus check out this modest guest house at Xiamen University. Sea views from the 9th floor and up. To reach the dormitory walk uphill for about 300m from the university's south gate, turn left at the China Construction Bank and look out for a cream-tiled 10-storey building.

Home Inn (Rújiā; ☎ 311 3333; www.homeinns.com; 86 Hubin Nanlu; 湖滨南路86号; d Y239; ☎ ☑) The standard, dependable Home Inn chain has tidy and comfortable rooms, although the location is a bit noisy and not exactly at the hub of things. A further branch was planned for a 2008 opening near the ferry terminal.

Super 8 Hotel (Xiàmén Shìdài Yǎjū Sùbà Jiǔdiàn; ☎ 812 0888; fax 812 0889; 29 Houjiangdai Lu; 后江埭路29号; d Y268; ☎ ☑) Clean and very affordable chain hotel with a quieter location than Home Inn. Free broadband.

MIDRANGE

Most accommodation in Xiàmén is mid-range, shading top end. Many hotels in this range are equipped with broadband internet for an extra Y30 a day if you have your own computer.

Lujiang Harbourview Hotel (Lùjiāng Bīnguān; ☎ 202 2922; fax 202 4644; 54 Lujiang Dao; 鹭江道54号; s Y600-710, sea-view d Y880; ☎ ☑) This 1940s-era four-star hotel has great panoramas from its more spacious sea-view rooms, some with balcony. Rooms are pleasant and recently restored, although bathrooms look a bit long in the tooth. The rooftop restaurant is excellent.

City Hotel Xiamen (Xiàmén Bīnguān; ☎ 205 3333; www.cityhotelm.com; 16 Huyuan Lu; 虎园路16号;

d Y1000-1380, ste Y1680; ☎ ☑) At the high end of midrange, this well-managed place has great rooms and a great hilly garden location. The superior rooms are higher up in the smart Xingzheng (No 5) Building; good discounts are on offer.

TOP END

There's a wide range of top-end accommodation in Xiàmén, but much of it is badly located in the eastern part of town. Most places offer 50% discounts. Add a 15% service charge to all prices.

Millennium Harbour View Hotel (Xiàmén Hǎijīng Qiānxī Dàjiǔdiàn; ☎ 202 3333; www.millenniumxiamen.com; 12-8 Zhenhai Lu; 镇海路12号之8; d Y1280-1880; ☎ ☎ ☑) This ex-Holiday Inn is a smart option with amiable and efficient staff, and Italian, Japanese and Chinese restaurants. Discounts chop off around 50%, bringing a deluxe sea-view room down to around Y695.

Marco Polo Hotel (Mǎgē Bōlú Dōngfāng Dàjiǔdiàn; ☎ 509 1888; www.marcopolohotels.com/xiamen; 8 Jianye Lu; 建业路8号; r US\$160-225, ste US\$295-980; ☎) Another one of the big box hotels, this four-star place pulls out all the stops to pamper travellers. Besides elegantly furnished rooms with large bathrooms, there's a nice-sized pool, a bar and several Chinese and Japanese restaurants.

Eating

Being a port city, Xiàmén is known for its fresh fish and seafood, especially oysters and shrimp. You'll find good places to eat around Zhongshan Lu near the harbour. Jukou Jie, near the intersection of Siming Beilu and Zhongshan Lu, has a bunch of Sichuan and Taiwanese restaurants. Nanputuo Temple (p334) has an excellent vegetarian restaurant.

Huang Zehe Peanut Soup Shop (Huángzéhé Huāshēng Tāngdiàn; 20 Zhongshan Lu; snacks Y1-6; ☎ 6.30am-10.30pm) Very popular restaurant with functional service and seating, famed for its delectably sweet *huāshēng tāng* (花生汤; peanut soup; Y2) and popular snacks including *zhūròu chuàn* (猪肉串; pork kebabs; Y3), *xiǎolóngbāo* (小笼包; Shanghai dumplings; Y3 for four) and *zhásuàn* (炸蒜; fried garlic; Y1).

Dǎfāng Sùcài guǎn (☎ 209 3236; 412-9 Siming Nanlu; meals Y8; ☎ 9am-9.30pm) This vegetarian restaurant near Nanputuo Temple is not

very salubrious downstairs but upstairs is more pleasant. Try the *tiěbǎn hēijiāo niúpái* (铁板黑椒牛排; vegetable 'beef' strips with pepper; Y5).

Food Hall, World Trade Centre (Xīnshìshàng Wénhuà Měishí Guǎngchǎng; Xiahe Lu; meals Y25; ☎ 9.50am-9.50pm) Head up to the 5th floor for this brash, bright and lively food hall crammed with Asian flavours from Hong Kong to Korea and beyond, and sit down with a clay pot (Y15), lamb kebabs (Y2.50) or whatever takes your fancy. Pay with charge cards (Y10 to Y200), available at the kiosk.

Ajisen (Wèiqiān Lǎimiàn; ☎ 212 5600; International Bank Bldg, 8 Lujiang Lu; meals Y30) Just about to open at the time of writing, this high-profile nationwide Japanese noodle chain has addictively flavour-some dishes and a highly handy photo menu. Pay up front.

Shopping

Xiàmén has lots of hidden curio and food shops tucked away off the busy streets. There's a crowded *yèshì* (night market) on Ding'an Lu, between Zhongshan Lu and Zhenhai Lu.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Xiamen Airlines is the main airline under the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) banner in this part of China. There are innumerable ticket offices around town, many of which are in the larger hotels, such as the Millennium Harbour View Hotel (opposite).

CAAC has flights to Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Penang and Singapore. **Silk Air** (☎ 205 3280) flies to Singapore and has an office in the Millennium Harbour View Hotel. **All Nippon Airways** (☎ 573 2888) flies to Osaka, and has ticket agents at the Lujiang Harbourview Hotel. **Dragonair** (☎ 202 5433) is in the Marco Polo Hotel. **Thai Airways International** (☎ 226 1688) flies to Bangkok three times a week and has an office in the International Plaza.

Xiàmén airport has flights to all major domestic destinations around China, including Wǔyí Shān (Y590) four times a week.

BOAT

Fast boats (Y10, 20 minutes) leave for the harbour of the nearby coastal Fújiàn town of Zhāngzhōu (漳州) from the passenger ferry terminal. Boats run every 15 minutes between 7am and 5.45pm. Buses (Y12, one

hour) then run from Zhāngzhōu's harbour to Zhāngzhōu.

BUS

Deluxe and economy buses leave from the long-distance bus station and the ferry terminal. Destinations from the **long-distance bus station** (chángtú qīchēzhàn; ☎ 221 5238; Hubin Nanlu) include Fúzhōu (Y80, four hours, every 10 minutes), Quánzhōu (Y39, two hours, every 20 minutes), Lóngyán (Y54, three hours, regular), Yǒngdǐng (Y65, five hours, four per day), Wǔyí Shān (Y124 to Y202, nine hours) and Guilín (Y253, 8.50am). Other buses also run to Kūnmíng (Y474) and Guǎngzhōu (Y208).

TRAIN

From Xiàmén there are direct trains to destinations including Hángzhōu (Y238 to Y256, 26 hours), Nánjīng (Y270 to Y289), Shànghǎi (Y270 to Y290, 27 hours), Běijīng West (Y410 to Y438, 34 hours), Wǔyí Shān (Y145 to Y155, 13 hours) and Kūnmíng (Y458 to Y490). Book tickets at the train station or through CITS (p333), which charges a Y35 service fee.

Getting Around

Xiàmén airport is 15km from the waterfront district, about 8km from the eastern district. From the waterfront, taxis cost around Y35. Bus 27 travels to the airport from the ferry terminal. Bus 19 runs to the train station from the ferry terminal (Y1). Frequent minibuses also run between the train station and ferry terminal (Y1). Buses to Xiamen University go from the train station (bus 1) and from the ferry terminal (bus 2). Taxis start at Y7.

GǔLÀNG Yǔ 鼓浪屿

☎ 0592

Spectacularly lit up at night, the island of Gǔlàng Yǔ is a 10-minute boat trip from Xiàmén. It's a relaxing retreat of meandering lanes and shaded backstreets, set in an architectural twilight of colonial villas, crumbling remains and ancient banyan trees, and it's well worth spending a few days fathoming its charms. Hilly, higgledy-piggledy and covered in disintegrating historic relics, Gǔlàng Yǔ is a greater treat than Guǎngzhōu's Shamian Island.

The foreign community was well established on Gǔlàng Yǔ by the 1880s, with a daily English newspaper, churches, hospitals, post and telegraph offices, libraries, hotels and consulates. In 1903 the island was officially

designated an International Foreign Settlement, and a municipal council with a police force of Sikhs was established to govern it. Today, memories of the settlement linger in the charming colonial buildings that blanket the island and the sound of classical piano wafting from speakers (the island is nicknamed 'piano island' by the Chinese). Many of China's most celebrated musicians have come from Gǔlàng Yǔ, including the pianists Yu Feixing, Lin Junqing and Yin Chengzong.

The best way to enjoy the island is to wander along the streets, peeking into courtyards and down alleys to catch a glimpse of colonial mansions seasoned by local life. Most sights and hotels are just a short walk from the ferry terminal.

Information

Look out for the *Go into Gulangyu* map (走进鼓浪屿; Y10), a highly detailed and bilingual edition available from hawkers on the island. It doesn't have a scale, but covers all sights of interest.

A left-luggage booth can be found near the pier (Y2 to Y5).

Bank of China (Zhōngguó Yínháng; 2 Haitan Lu;

☎ 9am-7pm) Forex and 24-hour ATM.

Hospital (yīyuàn; 60 Fujian Lu) Has its own miniature ambulance for the small roads.

Post office (yóujú; 102 Longtou Lu)

Xiamen Gulangyu Visitor Center (Xiàmén Gǔlàng Yǔ Yóukè Zhōngxīn; Longtou Lu) Adjacent to McDonald's.

Sights

The most fascinating attractions on the island are the **old colonial residences** and **consulates**, tucked away in the maze of streets leading from the pier, particularly along Longtou Lu and the back lanes of Huayan Lu. Many of Gǔlàng Yǔ's buildings are deserted and tumble-down, with trees growing out of their sides, as residents cannot afford their upkeep. You can buy a through ticket to the island's main sights for Y80, but you can skip these without detracting too much from your experience.

Southeast of the pier you will see the two buildings of the former **British Consulate** (原英国领事馆) above you, while further along at 1 Lujiao Lu (鹿礁路) is the cream-coloured former Japanese **Bo'ai Hospital**, built in 1936. Up the hill on a different part of Lujiao Lu at No 26 stands the red-brick **former Japanese Consulate**, just before you reach the magnificent snow-white **Ecclesia Catholica** (Roman Catholic

Church; Tiānzhūtáng; 34 Lujiao Lu), dating from 1917. The white building next to the church is the **former Spanish Consulate**. Just past the church on the left is the **Huang Rongyuan Villa**, a marvellous pillared building, now the **Puppet Art Center** (adult/child Y60/30).

There is also some **art deco architecture**, indicating designers were clearly up with the times – for an example, take a look at the building at 28 Fujian Lu.

Other buildings worth looking at include the Protestant **Sanyi Church** (三一堂), a red-brick building with a classical portico and cruciform-shaped interior on the corner of Anhai Lu (安海路) and Yongchun Lu (永春路). Along Anhai Lu at No 36 is the **Fānpó Lóu** (番婆楼), now doubling as a cafe (open 10am to 6pm). Where Anhai Lu meets Bishan Lu (笔山路) is the former **Law Court** (1-3 Bishan Lu), now lived in by local residents. For a sign of how badly some buildings have been looked after, look out for the **old building** on Neicuo'ao Lu (内厝澳路) where old interior doors have been ripped out to make a garden fence!

Also well worth checking out is **Guāncāi Lóu** (观彩楼; 6 Bishan Lu), a residence built by a Dutchman in 1931. You can climb onto the roof up a ladder (be careful!) for spectacular views over the island. The house itself has a magnificently dilapidated interior with a wealth of original features and is – like so many other buildings here – crying out to be preserved. The building is next to the **Yizú Shānzhūāng** (亦是山庄; 9 Bishan Lu), a structure dating from the 1920s.

The highly distinctive **Bāguà Lóu** (八卦楼) at No 43 Guxin Lu (鼓新路) is now the **Organ Museum** (Fēngqín Bōwùguǎn; admission Y20, incl in through ticket for island; ☎ 8.40am-5.30pm), with a fantastic collection including a Norman & Beard organ from 1909.

Near the pier, the **Xiamen Underwater World** (Xiàmén Hǎidǐ Shìjiè; 2 Longtou Lu; adult/child Y70/30; ☎ 9.30am-4.30pm) is fronted by a bizarre Jules Verne-style writhing octopus.

Haoyue Garden (HàoYuè Yuán; admission Y15, incl in through ticket; ☎ 6am-7pm) is a rocky outcrop containing an imposing **statue of Koxinga** in full military dress looking out over the water to Taiwan. **Sunlight Rock** (Rìguāng Yán) is the island's highest point at 93m. On a clear day you can see the island of Jinnén. At the foot of Sunlight Rock is a large colonial building known as the **Koxinga Memorial Hall** (Zhèngchénggōng Jìniànguǎn; ☎ 8-11am & 2-5pm). Both

sights are in **Sunlight Rock Park** (Riguāng Yán Gōngyuán; admission Y60, incl in through ticket; ☎ 8am-7pm).

Yingxióng Hill (Yīngxióng Shān) is near the memorial hall and has an **open-air aviary** (admission Y15) on the top with chattering egrets and parrots.

The waterfront **Shuzhuang Garden** (Shūzhuāng Huāyuán; admission Y30, incl in through ticket) on the southern end of the island is a lovely place to linger for a few hours. It has a small *pénzāi* (bonsai) garden and some delicate-looking pavilions. The garden was built by a Taiwanese businessman who moved here with his family during the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95).

Sleeping

Gulang Yu International Youth Hostel (Gùlàng Yǔ Guójī Qīngnián Lǚguǎn; ☎ 206 6066; www.yhagly.com; 18 Lujiao Lu; 鹿礁路18号; 6-bed dm Y50, s/d Y120/180; 📺) In a lovely old brick villa, this place has character. Rooms are large, with high, beamed ceilings and tiled floors, and there's a relaxing garden courtyard. Hot water can be hit or miss (there's only one shower with hot water) and during winter the place is damp and chilly. Cute little TV room; internet access (Y5 per hour).

Naya Café (Nàya; ☎ 206 3588; www.naya-hotel.com; 12 Lujiao Lu, B Bldg; 鹿礁路12号B座; dm Y50, s & d Y140, ocean/forest r Y220/280; 📺) Taking up residence in the former German Consulate Building a short walk south along Lujiao Lu from the pier, rooms at this lovely place are very pleasant indeed. The pretty building is blue with white shutters, with attractive outside seating.

Qindao Hotel (Qīndǎo Jiǔdiàn; ☎ 206 6668; 8 Lujiao Lu; 鹿礁路8号; s/d/tr Y280/370/420) There's little character here, but rooms are OK and it's a well-situated backup near the pier if everything else is booked out. Discounts during slack season.

Eating

Gulang Yu is a great place for fish and seafood, especially at the restaurants in the centre of town. You'll find a collection of small eateries in the streets around the ferry terminal, and off Longtou Lu there are many small restaurants and stalls.

Babycat Café (☎ 206 4119; 8 Longtou Lu; ☎ 10.30am-11pm) Trendy cafe with large range of coffees, Amoy handmade pie, free internet and wi-fi; plus cappuccino (Y22), Tsingtao (Y15) and smoothies (from Y18). Further branch at 143 Longtou Lu.

Zhang Sanfeng Milktea Cafe (Zhāng Sānfēng Nǎichápu; 166 Longtou Lu; ☎ 9am-10pm) Pleasant little cafe on the main square. Milk tea is Y15, Tsingtao Y15.

Getting There & Around

Ferries for the five-minute trip to Gulang Yu leave from the ferry terminal just west of Xiàmen's Lujiang Harbourview Hotel. Outbound, it's a free ride on the bottom deck and Y1 for the upper deck. Xiàmen-bound it's Y8 (free between 10pm and midnight). Boats run between 5.30am and midnight. Waterborne circuits of the island can be done by boat (Y15), with hourly departures from the passenger ferry terminal off Lujiang Lu between 7.45am and 8.45pm. Round-island buggies take 30 minutes for a circuit.

YǒNGDÌNG COUNTY 永定县

☎ 0597 / pop 40,200

Yǒngdìng County is a stunning rural area of rolling farmlands and hills in southwestern Fújiàn. Heartland of the Hakka (*kèjiā*; 客家) people, it's renowned for its remarkable *tūlóu* (roundhouses). These vast, packed-earth edifices resembling fortresses are scattered throughout the surrounding countryside. Today over 30,000 survive, many still inhabited and open to visitors. The *tūlóu* can also be found in neighbouring areas of Guǎngdōng and Jiāngxī, so you potentially have a vast area to traipse if the *tūlóu* vibe grabs you.

The Hakka have inhabited Yǒngdìng and its neighbouring villages for hundreds of years. During the Jin dynasty (AD 265-314) the Hakka peoples of northwest China began a gradual migration south to escape persecution and famine. They eventually settled in Jiāngxī, Fújiàn and Guǎngdōng, where they began to build *tūlóu* to protect themselves from bandits and wild animals.

These early structures were large enough to house entire clans. The buildings were communal, with interior buildings enclosed by enormous peripheral structures that could accommodate hundreds of people. Nestled in the mud walls were bedrooms, wells, cooking areas and storehouses, circling a central courtyard. The walls are made of rammed earth and glutinous rice, reinforced with strips of bamboo and wood chips. The *tūlóu* are surprisingly comfortable to live in, being 'dōngnuǎn, xià liáng' (冬暖夏凉), or 'warm in winter and cool in summer'.

Liùlián, Húkēng & Around

One of the most convenient areas to stay in is the small village of Liùlián (六联) – also called the Tǔlóu Mínsú Wénhuàcūn (土楼民俗文化村) – which you can reach by bus from Lóngyán or Yǒngding. Consisting of little more than a small bus station, some hotels and restaurants, it's a handy base for exploring the surrounding countryside and is within walking distance of Zhènchéng Lóu, the most famous and impressive tǔlóu in the area. It is also possible to base yourself in the larger nearby small town of Húkēng (湖坑), which has more facilities but is not particularly attractive.

SIGHTS

Zhènchéng Lóu 振成楼

A short walk from Liùlián, Zhènchéng Lóu (admission ¥50) is a grandiose structure built in 1912, with two concentric circles and a total of 222 rooms. In the centre of the tǔlóu is a large ancestral hall for special ceremonies and greeting guests.

Near Zhènchéng Lóu and included in the ticket price, you will also see the much older, square Kuījù Lóu (奎聚楼), which dates back to 1834. Also worth visiting is the late-19th-century and (comparatively) pea-sized Rúshēng Lóu (如升楼), the smallest of the roundhouses with only one ring and 16 rooms. Your ticket will also get you into the five-storey-high Fúyù Lóu (福裕楼), which boasts some wonderfully carved wooden beams and pillars.

Tiánluókēng 田螺坑

Perhaps the most photogenic cluster of tǔlóu in the area, the five noble buildings at Tiánluókēng (admission ¥20) consist of three types of tǔlóu: circular, square and oval. At the heart of the cluster (tǔlóu clusters are called tǔlóu qún; 土楼群) is the square Bùyún Lóu (步云楼); first built in the 17th century, it burnt down in 1936 and was rebuilt in the 1950s. The oval-shaped building is Wénchāng Lóu (文昌楼). You can spend the night in one of the tǔlóu, for example in the Ruiyún Lóu (瑞云楼), where simple fan rooms/beds are available for ¥60/30.

You can reach Tiánluókēng by hiring a driver from Liùlián, Húkēng or Yǒngding, or taking a bus from Nánjīng Xiàn (南靖县), where buses leave the bus station for Tiánluókēng at 7am and 2pm every day.

Yùchāng Lóu 裕昌楼

Also in the general direction of Tiánluókēng and originally built between 1308 and 1338, the vast five-floor Yùchāng Lóu (admission ¥5) has an observation tower (to check for marauding bandits) and 270 rooms. Notice how the pillars bend at an angle on the 3rd floor and at an opposite angle on the 5th floor! The nearby village of Tǎxià (塔下) is also worth exploring – it's a delightful settlement alongside a river, with several tǔlóu, including the Shùnqīng Lóu, where you can spend the night in a modern tǔlóu room (¥100).

Chéngqǐ Lóu 承启楼

In the village of Gāobēi (高北) and built in 1709, this granddaddy tǔlóu (admission ¥30) has 400 rooms and once had 1000 inhabitants. It's built with elaborate concentric rings within the outside walls, and circular passageways between them and a central shrine – like a village within a village; it's simply astonishing. There are several other tǔlóu in the vicinity, including the deserted and rickety Wùyún Lóu (五云楼).

Huánjí Lóu 环极楼

In the direction of Píng hé (平和), four-storey-high Huánjí Lóu (admission ¥15) is a huge circular affair with inner concentric passages, tiled interior passages, a courtyard and halls. The doughnut-shaped tǔlóu still delightfully buzzes with family life and also sports a huíyīnbì (回音壁) – a wall that echoes and resonates to sharp sounds. Note how the kitchens – as in all tǔlóu – are downstairs.

Yǎnxiāng Lóu 衍香楼

In the same direction as Huánjí Lóu and rising up next to a river, Yǎnxiāng Lóu (admission ¥20) is an impressive four-storey tǔlóu with an ancestral hall standing in the middle of the courtyard. To the rear is Liběn Lóu, a derelict tǔlóu with crumbling walls that was burnt down during civil war and stands without its roof. Also not far from Yǎnxiāng Lóu is the huge rectangular and semidecrepit Qīngyáng Lóu (庆洋楼), built between 1796 and 1820.

Other Tǔlóu

Other famous tǔlóu include the magnificent cluster at Hékēng (河坑; admission ¥20), a vast constellation of buildings. In the village of Gāobēi (高陂村), Yíjīng Lóu (遗经楼)

is a massive, crumbling structure, with 281 rooms, two schools and 51 halls, and was built in 1851.

Sleeping

Tǔlóu Rénjiā (土楼人家; ☎ 553 2764; d Y80; ♿) Just up from the small bus station in Liùlián, Tǔlóu Rénjiā has decent rooms and can arrange drivers for tours of the region's *tǔlóu*. There's a variety of rooms, with hot water, air-con and shower, a downstairs restaurant and a sole computer terminal for internet access.

It is possible to find a room in a *tǔlóu* as so many families have now moved out. Residents may approach you first, eagerly offering their homes as lodging. Make sure to look over the room before you agree to a price. Don't expect accommodation to be anything but basic – you'll get a bed, a thermos of hot water and not much else. You will also find that the toilets are on the outside, and the huge gates to the *tǔlóu* shut around 8pm, so...plan ahead.

Tǔlóu Rénjiā can arrange for you to overnight in Huánxīng Lóu (环兴楼), across the road in Liùlián. First built in 1550, it was torched by Taiping rebels in 1853 but rain fortunately doused the conflagration. The *tǔlóu* was again badly damaged in 1929 during the civil war and part of one wall is missing. It is, however, habitable and rooms (hard bed, fan, no toilet) cost around Y15. Spending the night in a *tǔlóu* will reward you with unforgettable memories of a vanishing dimension of life in China. It's a good idea to bring a flashlight (torch) and bug repellent. Some families also include meals in the room price, or can cook one up for you.

There are many hotels in Yǒngdìng, such as the **Dongfu Hotel** (Dongfu Binguan; ☎ 583 0668), and there are plenty of hotels in Húkēng as well, but neither town is particularly attractive.

Getting There & Away

Buses run to Yǒngdìng via Liùlián and Húkēng from the long-distance bus station in Xiàmén (Y65, five hours, four per day from 5.30am to 12.30pm); in the other direction, there is a bus at 7.20am and 12.20pm. Alternatively, first catch a bus from Xiàmén to Lóngyán (Y54, three hours, regular) and then switch to a minibus (Y21, two hours) to Liùlián or Húkēng, or a bus to Yǒngdìng. The bus for Liùlián from the bus station in Lóngyán is the *tǔlóu zhuānxiàn* (土楼专线), which passes

the town of Húkēng (where you can also stay) and will drop you off at Liùlián. The bus also passes through other villages and *tǔlóu* areas such as Fùshì (抚市), Chéndōng (陈东), Dàxī (大溪) and Qīlǐng (歧岭). There are two fast trains daily from Xiàmén to Yǒngdìng (Y30, three hours). Yǒngdìng can also be accessed by bus from Guǎngdōng, Xiàmén or Lóngyán (Y15, one hour, regular). Regular buses run between Húkēng and Yǒngdìng (Y14) between 7.30am and 4.10pm.

Lóngyán has regular buses to Fúzhōu, Quánzhōu, Xiàmén and other destinations.

Getting Around

Hiring a driver to take you around the countryside on a *tǔlóu* tour is the most convenient approach. You'll find taxi drivers in Yǒngdìng, Húkēng or Liùlián who will offer their services for around Y400 a day, setting off early in the morning and returning in the late afternoon.

QUÁNZHŌU 泉州

☎ 0595 / pop 184,800

Quánzhōu was once a great trading port and an important stop on the maritime silk route. Back in the 13th century, Marco Polo informed his readers that '...it is one of the two ports in the world with the biggest flow of merchandise'. The city reached its zenith as an international port during the Song and Yuan dynasties, drawing merchants from all over the world to its shores. By the Qing, however, it was starting to decline and droves of residents began fleeing to Southeast Asia to escape the constant political turmoil.

Today, Quánzhōu is much smaller than Fúzhōu and Xiàmén, and has a small-town feel. Evidence of its Muslim population can still be detected among the city's residents and buildings. It still has a few products of note, including the creamy-white *déhuà* (or 'blanc-de-Chine' as it is known in the West) porcelain figures, and locally crafted puppets.

Orientation

The centre of town lies between Zhongshan Nanlu, Zhongshan Zhonglu and Wenling Nanlu. This is where you'll find most of the tourist sights, the bank and the post office. The oldest part of town is to the west, where there are many narrow alleys and lanes to explore that still retain their traditional charm. The Pu River lies to the southwest of the city.

Information

You'll find internet cafes near the PSB on Dong Jie and in the small lanes behind Guandi Temple. Most places charge Y2 to Y3 an hour.

Bank of China (Zhōngguó Yínháng; 9-13 Jiuyi Jie; ☎ 9am-5pm) This branch also exchanges travellers cheques; 24-hour ATM.

Chichi Internet Cafe (Chíchí Wǎngbā; Xianhou Lu; per hr Y2; ☎ 24hr)

Feiteng Xiuxian Internet Cafe (Fěiténg Xiūxián Wǎngbā; Xi Jie; per hr Y3; ☎ 24hr)

Post & telephone office (yóudiànjú; Dong Jie)

Public Security Bureau (PSB; Gōng'ānjú; ☎ 2218 0323; 62 Dong Jie; ☎ visa section 8-11.30am & 2.30-5.30pm)

Quanzhou Xiehe Hospital (Quánzhōu Xiéhe Yīyuàn; Tian'an Nanlu) In the southern part of town.

Yueguang Internet Cafe (Yuèguāng Wǎngbā; Tumen Jie; per hr Y3; ☎ 24hr)

Sights

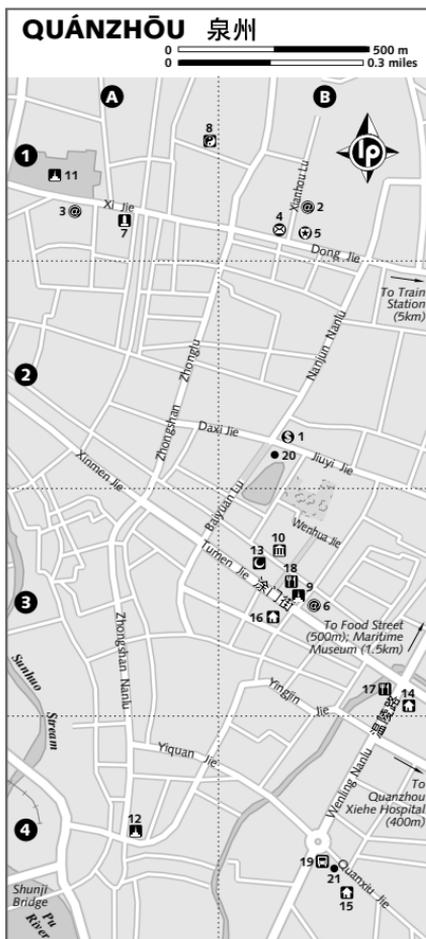
Kaiyuan Temple (Kāiyuán Sì; 176 Xi Jie; admission Y10; ☎ 7.30am-7pm) in the northwest of the city is one of the oldest temples in Quánzhōu, dating back to AD 686. Surrounded by trees, the temple is famed for its pair of rust-coloured five-storey stone pagodas, stained with age and carved with figures, which date from the 13th century.

Behind the eastern pagoda is a **museum** containing the enormous hull of a Song dynasty seagoing junk, which was excavated near Quánzhōu in 1974. The temple's **Great Treasure Hall** (Dàxióng Bǎodiàn) and the hall behind are decorated with marvellous overhead beams and brackets. A ride to the temple by minivan taxi from the long-distance bus station will cost Y6, or take bus 2 (Y2) from Wenling Nanlu.

The nearby **Chengxin Pagoda** (Chéngxīn Tǎ) originally marked the centre of town; it's only around 8m high, tucked away down an alley called Jingting Xiang (井亭巷). The local **City God Temple** (Chénghuáng Miào) is now the No 6 Middle School.

The stone **Qingjing Mosque** (Qīngjīng Sì; 113 Tumen Jie; admission Y3; ☎ 8am-5.30pm) is one of China's only surviving mosques from the Song dynasty, built by Arabs in 1009 and restored in 1309. Only a few sections of the original building survive, largely in ruins.

The lovely **Jinxizhuang Puppet Museum** (Mù'ou Bówùguǎn; ☎ 2216 3286; 24 Tongzheng Xiang; admission free; ☎ 9am-9pm) has displays of puppet heads, intricate 30-string marionettes and



comical hand puppets. Captions (in English and Chinese) give the history of this unique art form.

The smoky and fabulously carved **Guandi Temple** (Guāndì Miào; Tumen Jie) is not far from the mosque. It's dedicated to Guān Yǔ, a Three Kingdoms hero and the God of War, and inside the temple are statues of the god and panels along the walls that detail his life.

The **Mazu Temple** (Tiānhòu Gōng; admission Y5), on the southern end of Zhongshan Nanlu, is dedicated to Mazu, Goddess of the Sea, who watches over fishermen. Around the third month of the lunar year, the temple is packed with worshippers celebrating Mazu's birthday (18 April in 2009).

INFORMATION

Bank of China 中国银行	1	B2
Chichi Internet Cafe 池池网吧	2	B1
Feiteng Xiuxian Internet Cafe 飞腾休闲网吧	3	A1
Post & Telephone Office 中国邮政、中国电信	4	B1
PSB 公安局	5	B1
Yueguang Internet Cafe 月光网吧	6	B3

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Chengxin Pagoda 城心塔	7	A1
City God Temple 城隍庙	8	A1
Guandi Temple 关帝庙	9	B3
Jinxiuzhuang Puppet Museum 木偶博物馆	10	B3
Kaiyuan Temple 开元寺	11	A1
Mazu Temple 天后宫	12	A4
Qingjing Mosque 清净寺	13	B3

SLEEPING

Bàoqí Zhāodàisuǒ 宝琦招待所	14	B3
Jinzhou Hotel 金洲大酒店	15	B4
Quanzhou Hotel 泉州酒店	16	B3

EATING

Ānjìkèwáng 安记客王	17	B3
Gúcuò Cháféng 古厝茶坊	18	B3

TRANSPORT

Long-Distance Bus Station 泉州汽车站	19	B4
Train-Ticket Booth 火车票售票亭	20	B2
Train-Ticket Office 火车票售票处	21	B4

The **Maritime Museum** (Quánzhōu Hǎiwài Jiāotōngshì Bówùguǎn; Donghu Lu; admission Y10; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm Tue-Sun) on the northeast side of town explains Quánzhōu's trading history and the development of Chinese shipbuilding. There are wonderfully detailed models of Chinese ships, from junks to pleasure boats, and an intriguing collection of stone carvings, with inscriptions in ancient Syriac.

Sleeping

Bàoqí Zhāodàisuǒ (☎ 2228 2903; 198 Wenling Nanlu; 温陵南路198号; s/d without toilet Y30/40, tr per bed Y15, d with toilet Y70; 🚻) It looks scuzzy on the outside maybe, but rooms are fine and cheap. There's no English spoken here and no English sign, but it's next to the flyover.

Jin Zhou Hotel (Jīnzhōu Dàjiǔdiàn; ☎ 2258 6788; fax 2258 1011; Quanxiu Jie; 泉秀路; s & d Y300; 🚻) Reasonably smart three-star place perfectly poised for the long-distance bus station. Bathrooms are Lilliputian, but rooms are otherwise decent, the lobby is smart, breakfast is included and discounts of over 50% make this place worthwhile.

Quanzhou Hotel (Quánzhōu Jiǔdiàn; ☎ 2218 2268; www.quanzhouhotel.com; 22 Zhuangfu Xiang; 庄府巷22号; d Y550-782; 🚻) Calling itself five-star is going overboard, but this is a pleasant if showy hotel with a variety of rooms in different buildings, including lovely doubles in the more expensive new wing.

Eating

Quánzhōu won't be one of your culinary highlights in China. You can find the usual noodle and rice dishes served in the back lanes around Kaiyuan Temple and also along the food street close to Wenling Nanlu.

Gúcuò Cháféng (Houcheng Xiang; teas Y8-70; ☎ 9am-1am) This lovely teahouse in the alley behind the Guandi Temple has a refreshing old-time courtyard ambience, hung with red lanterns, paved with flagstones and laid out with traditional wooden halls and bamboo chairs.

Ānjìkèwáng (☎ 2228 0333; Wenling Nanlu; meals Y30; ☎ 11am-9pm) Excellent restaurant for traditional Hakka dishes, including the lovely *kèjiā jiānniàng dòufu* (客家煎酿豆腐; soft cubes of tofu impregnated with crumbs of pork; Y18) and the delectable *tiěpén jiāngcōng niúròu* (铁盆姜葱牛肉; Y28), a sizzling iron plate of beef strips tossed with ginger, onions and shallots.

Getting There & Around

The **long-distance bus station** (kèyùn xīnzhàn; cnr Wenling Nanlu & Quanxiu Jie) is in the southern corner of town, and serves destinations as far away as Guǎngzhōu (Y300, nine hours, four per day) and Shènzhen (Y230, eight hours, 9.30pm). Regular deluxe buses go to Xiámén (Y28 to Y39, two hours), Fúzhōu (Y60 to Y69, 3½ hours) and Lóngyán (Y97).

The train station is in the northeast of town. For Wūyí Shān (Y149 hard sleeper, 11½ hours) there is an early morning train from Quánzhōu, but no overnight trains. In town, train tickets can be bought at the **booth** (☎ 228 8696) at the local bus station next to the Copper Buddha Temple (Tóngfó Sì), across from the Bank of China; or from the **ticket office** (675 Quanxiu Jie; ☎ 7am-6pm) just east of the long-distance bus station.

Quánzhōu's most useful bus is bus 2 (Y1), which goes from the bus station to Kaiyuan Temple. Buses 19 and 23 run from the train station to the centre of town. Taxi flag fall is Y6, then Y1.60 per kilometre.

AROUND QUÁNZHŌU

Chóngwǔ 崇武

About 50km east of Quánzhōu is the ancient 'stone city' of Chóngwǔ, with one of the best-preserved city walls in China. The granite walls date back to 1387, stretch over 2.5km long and average 7m in height. Scattered around the walls are 1304 battlements and four gates into the city.

The town wall was built by the Ming government as a frontline defence against marauding Japanese pirates, and it must be said that it has survived the last 600 years remarkably well.

Motorbikes (Y5) will take you from the bus drop-off to an official-looking entrance where you have to pay Y25 admission, but if you backtrack along the way you came you can enter one of the city gates for free. Meander around perusing the old halls and courtyard residences – but perhaps the wall has fostered a siege mentality as the locals are not very friendly.

Frequent minibuses depart Quánzhōu's long-distance bus station (Y10, 1½ hours), taking you on a long zigzagging ride through the countryside and past amazing arrays of stone statues (the area is famed for its stone-carving workshop) before finally ending up in Chóngwǔ.

Zhānglǐ 漳里

Around 20km from Quánzhōu, Zhānglǐ is a venerable village famed for its old ancestral red-walled and red-tiled residences (the colour comes from the local soil) belonging to the Cai clan. Most buildings date to the reign of Emperor Tongzhi, creating a snapshot of Qing dynasty Fújiàn, with carved pillars and wall bases.

To reach Zhānglǐ, jump on a bus (Y5) from the local bus station on Wenquan Lu (温泉路) in Quánzhōu to Shuítóu (水头) and get off at Guānqiáo (官桥), where you can hop on the back of a motorbike to Zhānglǐ (Y7).

FÚZHŌU 福州

☎ 0591 / pop 6.6 million

Fúzhōu, capital of Fújiàn, is a prosperous modern city that attracts a significant amount of Taiwanese investment, reflected in innumerable shopping centres and expensive restaurants. Unless you're on business or en route to Wǔyí Shān, the city can be safely skirted.

Orientation

Fúzhōu's city centre sprawls northwards from the Mǐn River (Mǐn Jiāng). The train station is in the city's northeast; travellers arriving by bus will be dropped off either at the north long-distance bus station, near the train station, or at the south long-distance bus station.

Information

Bank of China (Zhōngguó Yínháng; 136 Wusi Lu;

☎ 8am–6pm) The main branch changes travellers cheques and cash, and has an ATM that handles foreign cards.

China Travel Service (CTS; Zhōngguó Lǚxíngshè;

☎ 8753 6250; 128 Wusi Lu) Airline tickets, tours to Wǔyí Shān, but no train tickets.

Fujian Provincial Hospital (Fújiàn Shēnglǐ Yīyuàn; 134 Dong Jie) Conveniently in the city centre.

Post & telephone office (yóujú; 101 Gutian Lu;

☎ 7.30am–7.30pm)

Public Security Bureau (PSB; Gōng'ānjú; 107 Beihuan Zhonglu) Opposite the Sports Centre in the northern part of town.

Sights & Activities

The principal attraction of the **Jade Hill Scenic Area** (Yú Shān Fēngjǐngqū), a rocky hill in the centre of Fúzhōu that rises above a snow-white **statue of Mao Zedong** (Máo Zhǔxí Xiàng), is the seven-storey **White Pagoda** (Bái Tǎ), built in AD 904. Near the pagoda is a small exhibit hall showcasing two silk-wrapped mummies from the Song dynasty. At the foot of Jade Hill are the wretched remains of Fúzhōu's **Ming dynasty city wall** (Míngdài Gǔchéngqiáng Yíjì); originally boasting seven gates, the wall was pulled down for road widening.

West of Jade Hill is the granite **Black Pagoda** (Wū Tǎ), which stands on the southern slope of Black Hill (Wū Shān) and dates from the late 8th century. It contains some fierce-looking statues of guardian deities.

South of the Mǐn River across Jiefang Bridge is the former **foreign concession area**, Fúzhōu's most attractive district, with streets shaded by trees (eg Maiyuan Lu) and mouldering concession architecture. Hunt down the lovely old building with shutters at the **Fuzhou Foreign Languages School** (Wàiguóyǔ Xuéxiào; 39 Gongyuan Lu).

With a large artificial lake, **West Lake Park** (Xīhú Gōngyuán; admission Y15; ☎ 6am–10pm) in the northwest of Fúzhōu is a popular hang-out for locals on the weekends. Despite its tacky exterior, the **Fujian Provincial Museum** (Fújiàn Shēng Bówùguǎn; admission Y20; ☎ 9am–4pm) in the park has good exhibits, including a fascinating

3445-year-old 'boat coffin' unearthed from a cliff in Wúyí Shān.

Sleeping

Fúzhōu accommodation falls mainly in the midrange and top-end categories. Many hotels offer discounts, making them affordable even for those on tight budgets. Wusi Lu and Dongda Lu are the best places to look for places to stay. Most hotels are equipped with broadband internet, though you might pay up to Y30 a day for access.

Budget hotels are scarce but you can try the cheapie guest houses such as the **Jinshān Dǎfāndiàn** (☎ 8310 0366; 472 Hualin Lu; 华林路472号; s/d Y48/76; 🚻) near the train station in the north of town.

Small Xierdun Hotel (Xiǎo Xī'ěrdùn Kuàijíé Jiūdiàn; ☎ 6215 8888; Qunzhong Lu; 群众路; s Y89, d Y99-119; 🚻) The name of this hotel with rooms over two floors actually translates as 'Little Hilton': it's certainly little but definitely not a Hilton, although the smallish rooms are good value and neat with a measure of style. Cheaper rooms come without window. Very little English spoken.

Jinhui Hotel (Jīnhuī Dàjiūdiàn; ☎ 8759 9999; fax 8757 5988; 492 Hualin Lu; 华林路492号; d Y395-520; 🚻) Spiffing lobby, fine rooms and good discounts that take prices down to around Y188. Immediately south of the train station.

Yushan Hotel (Yúshān Bīngquǎn; ☎ 8335 1668; www.yushan-hotel.com; 10 Yushan Lu; 于山路10号; s Y538, d Y398-498; 🚻) Surrounded by trees next to the White Pagoda in the grassy parklike grounds of Jade Hill, the Yushan offers fresh and peaceful rooms, reduced by around 40%.

Shangri-La Hotel (Xiānggélǎlǎ Dàjiūdiàn; ☎ 8798 8888; www.shangri-la.com; 9 Xinquan Nanlu; 新权南路9号; d Y1250; 🍷 🍷 🍷) Fantastic and classy tower right at the heart of town overlooking Wuyi Sq, bringing the chain's high standards of hospitality and service to Fúzhōu.

Eating

Fúzhōu is not strong on recommended restaurants, and never has been. For cheap noodles and dumplings in a lively nocturnal environment, locals head south to Taijiang Lu, a boisterous, pedestrianised *shípin bùyíngjiē* (food street) lined with Míng dynasty-style wooden buildings and lanterns. Take bus 51 from Wusi Lu to get there. Dong Jie is a good place to hunt for restaurants. Look out for street vendors of the delicious *màiyá táng*

(麦芽糖; chewy sweet; Y1), rolled into spools from which vendors snip off strips.

Getting There & Away

AIR

The **CAAC** (Zhōngguó Mínháng; ☎ 8334 5988; 185 Wuyi Zhonglu) has daily flights to major destinations such as Běijīng (Y1550, 2½ hours), Guǎngzhōu (Y830, one hour), Shànghǎi (Y780, 70 minutes), Hong Kong (Y1810, 80 minutes), Wúyí Shān (Y490, 30 minutes) and Xiàmén (Y250). Airport buses (Y20) leave from the Apollo Hotel (Ābōlú Dàjiūdiàn) on Wuyi Zhonglu every 25 minutes between 5.30am and 7.30pm. The 50km trip takes about an hour.

BUS

The **north long-distance bus station** (qīchē bēizhàn; ☎ 8759 7034; 317 Hualin Lu) has services to Quánzhōu (Y70, two hours, every 20 minutes), Xiàmén (Y95 to Y110, three hours, every 15 minutes), Wēnzhōu (Y146, four hours, seven per day), Lóngyán (every hour) and Shànghǎi (Y390, 18 hours, four per day). For buses to Guǎngzhōu (Y290 to Y350) and Hong Kong (Y350), go to the **south long-distance bus station** (chángtú qīchē nánzhàn; cnr Guohuo Xilu & Wuyi Zhonglu). Night buses leave the north bus station for Wúyí Shān (Y86 to Y90, eight hours).

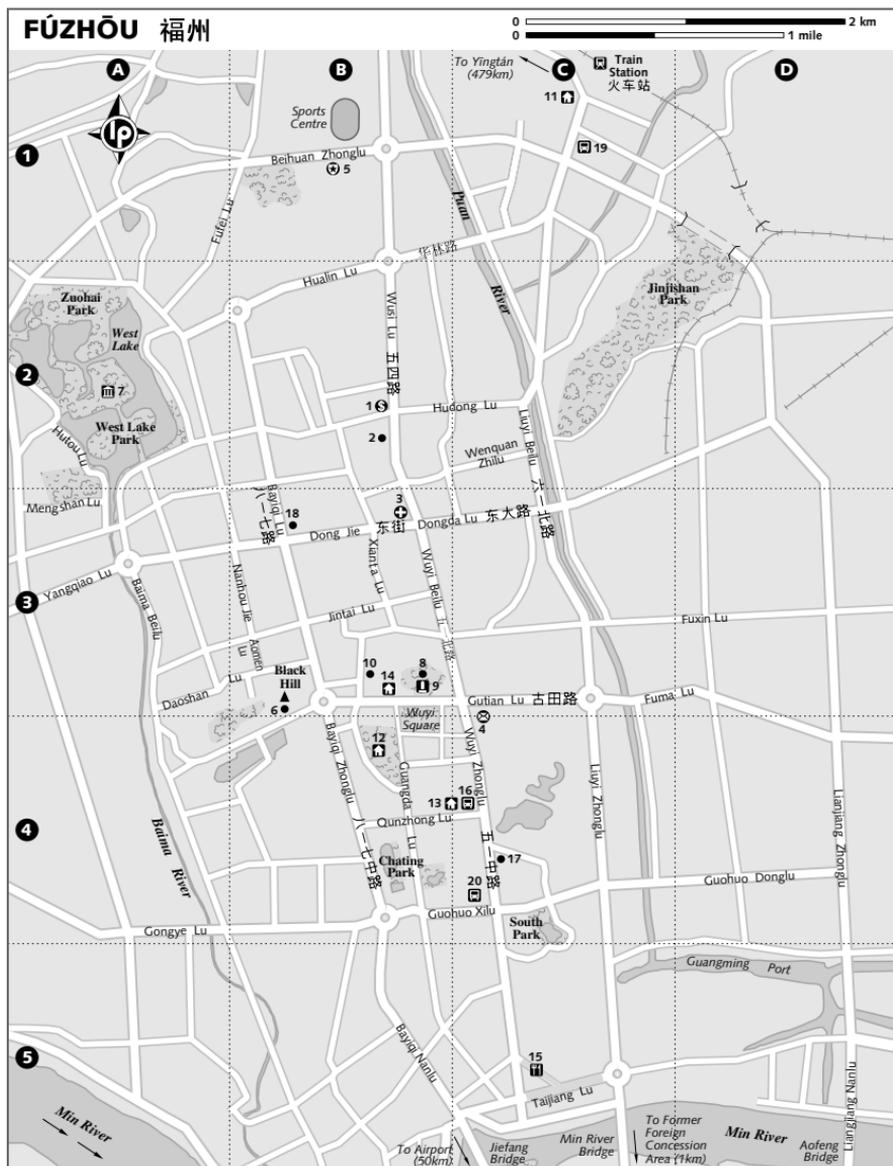
TRAIN

The train line from Fúzhōu heads northwest and joins the main Shànghǎi-Guǎngzhōu line at the Yīngtán junction in Jiāngxī. There are also trains from Fúzhōu to Wúyí Shān (Y47 to Y72, 5½ hours). There are no trains to Xiàmén.

The direct high-speed Z60 overnight express to Běijīng (soft sleeper Y705, 4.02pm) takes a mere 19 hours! There are also direct trains from Fúzhōu to Shànghǎi (Y242, 18½ hours). It's fairly easy to buy tickets at the train station, from a spot about 100m to the left of the main station building, when you are facing it. Many hotels will book train tickets for a service fee, and there's also a **train-ticket booking office** (📞 8am-5pm) in the entrance of the Lida building (Lidà Dàshà).

Getting Around

Taxi flag fall is Y10. There's a good bus network, and bus maps are available at the train



station or from hotels. Bus 51 travels from the train station along Wusi Lu, and bus 1 goes to West Lake Park from Baiyiqi Lu.

WǔYÍ SHĀN 武夷山

☎ 0599 / pop 22,700

Wǔyí Shān, in the far northwest corner of Fújiàn, has some of the most spectacular,

unspoilt scenery in the province. With its rivers, waterfalls, mountains and protected forests, it's a terrific place for hiking and exploring. Try to come midweek or off season (November, March and April) and you might have the area to yourself.

The scenic area lies on the west bank of Chongyang Stream (Chóngyáng Xī), and some

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accommodation is located along its shore. Most of the hotels are concentrated in the *dù jià qū* (resort district) on the east side of the river. The main settlement is Wǔyí Shān city, about 10km to the northeast, with the train station and airport roughly halfway between.

Information

Maps of the Wǔyí Shān area are available in bookshops and hotels in the resort district. There are some grubby internet cafes in the back alleys south of Wangfeng Lu (望峰路), charging Y2 to Y4 an hour.

Bank of China (中国银行; Zhōngguó Yínháng; Wujin Lu; ☎ 9am-5pm) In Wǔyí Shān city, this branch will change travellers cheques and has an ATM.

China International Travel Service (CITS; 中国国际旅行社; Zhōngguó Guójí Lǚxíngshè; ☎ 525 0380; 35 Guanjin Lu; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Sat) The staff are helpful, and can arrange train tickets and tours.

Sights & Activities

The main entrance to Wuyi Shan Scenic Area is at **Wǔyí Gōng** (武夷宫; ☎ 525 2702; basic/3-day access Y64/130; ☎ 6am-8pm), about 200m south of the Wuyi Mountain Villa, near the confluence of the Chongyang Stream and Nine Twists River.

Trails within the scenic area connect all the major sites. A couple of good walks are the 530m **Great King Peak** (大王峰; Dàwáng Fēng), accessed through the main entrance, and the 410m **Heavenly Tour Peak** (天游峰; Tiānyóu Fēng), where an entrance is reached by road up the Nine Twists River. It's a moderate two-hour walk to Great King Peak among bamboo groves and steep-cut rock walls. The trail can be slippery and wet, so bring suitable shoes.

The walk to Heavenly Tour Peak is more scenic, with better views of the river and mountain peaks. The path is also better main-

tained and less slippery, but it's also the most popular with tour groups.

At the northern end of the scenic area, the **Water Curtain Cave** (水帘洞; Shuǐlián Dòng; admission Y22) is a cleft in the rock about one-third of the way up a 100m cliff face. In winter and autumn, water plunges over the top of the cliff, creating a curtain of spray.

One of the highlights for visitors is floating down the **Nine Twists River** (九曲溪; Jiǔqū Xī) on **bamboo rafts** (zhúpái; Y100; ☎ 7am-5pm) fitted with rattan chairs. Departing from Xīng Cūn (星村), a short bus ride west of the resort area, the trip down the river takes over an hour. The boat ride takes you through some magnificent gorge scenery, with sheer rock cliffs and lush green vegetation.

One of the mysteries of Wǔyí Shān is the cavities carved out of the rock faces at great heights, which once held boat-shaped coffins. Scientists have dated some of these artefacts back 4000 years. If you're taking a raft down the river, it's possible to see some remnants of these coffins on the west cliff face of the fourth meander or 'twist', also known as **Small Storing Place Peak** (小藏山峰; Xiǎozàngshān Fēng).

The lovely ancient village of **Xiàméi** (下梅; admission Y46), dating to the Northern Song, boasts some spectacular historic Qing dynasty architecture from its heyday as a wealthy tea-trading centre. To reach Xiàméi, hop on a minibus (Y4) from Wǔyí Shān city for the 12km journey. Minibuses also run to Xiàméi (Y3) from the Wuyi Shan Scenic Area.

Sleeping

Most of the accommodation in Wǔyí Shān is midrange in price, and room rates rise and fall according to demand and season. Hotels

are mostly concentrated on the east side of the river, though there are a few hotels on the quieter west side. Discounts are often available midweek.

International Trade Hotel (国贸大酒店; Guómào Dàjiùdiàn; ☎ 525 2521; fax 525 2521; Wangfeng Lu; 望峰路; d Y240-580) On the eastern side of the resort area, this well-managed hotel gives good discounts midweek for its serviceable, though uninspired, guest rooms.

Wuyishan Tea Hotel (武夷茶苑大酒店; Wǔyí Cháyuàn Dàjiùdiàn; ☎ 525 6777; d Y480-780) This hotel won't win any accolades for design but it's a good pick for its recently renovated rooms, friendly staff and central location. Try to stay on the upper floors to avoid the ear-splitting wails of karaoke at night.

Bàodǎo Dàjiùdiàn (宝岛大酒店; ☎ 523 4567; fax 525 5555; Wangfeng Lu; 望峰路; s/d Y780/880) Situated next to the Bank of China, this centrally located hotel has a curiously furnished lobby decorated with chunky tree-trunk furniture. Rooms are respectable and good-sized with clean bathrooms. It's a popular place for the tour groups so you may need to book ahead.

Wuyi Mountain Villa (武夷山庄; Wǔyí Shānzhūāng; ☎ 525 1888; fax 525 2567; d Y888-988, ste Y1388-2888; 🚗) This is the most upmarket hotel in Wǔyí Shān and its secluded location on the west side of the river at the foot of Great King Peak makes it (almost) worth the price. Buildings are chalet-style and surrounded by peaceful gardens, a swimming pool and a waterfall. Stand-offish service is the only drawback to staying here.

Eating

Frogs, mushrooms and bamboo shoots are the specialities of Wǔyí Shān's cuisine. One of

the best places to try these items is the **Bamboo Palace Restaurant** (大堂竹楼; Dàtáng Zhúlóu; meals Y20-40; ☎ 11am-2pm & 5-9pm), where you can eat on a patio overlooking the river. The food is excellent and the service good. It's a good idea to bring mosquito repellent, unless you want to be dessert.

Getting There & Away

Wǔyí Shān has air links to Běijīng (Y1350, two hours), Shànghǎi (Y660, one hour), Fúzhōu (Y490, 35 minutes), Xiàmén (Y590, 50 minutes), Guǎngzhōu (Y890, 1½ hours) and Hong Kong (Y1300, two hours).

From the **long-distance bus station** (☎ 531 1445) in Wuyi Shan city, buses run to Xiàmén (Y159), Fúzhōu (Y90), Shàowǔ (Y15, 1½ hours), Nánpíng (Y37, three hours) and Shàngráo (Y26, two hours). The other long-distance bus station is in the northwest part of Wǔyí Shān city.

Direct trains go to Wǔyí Shān from Quánzhōu (Y149, 11 hours) and Xiàmén (Y149, 14 hours).

Getting Around

The most useful bus is bus 6, which runs between the airport, resort area and train station. Minivans or a public bus (Y2) shuttle between Wǔyí Shān city and the resort district, and there are minibuses between Wǔyí Shān city and Xīngcūn. The resort area is small enough to walk everywhere, so ignore those pesky trishaw drivers who insist everything is 'too far'.

Expect to pay about Y10 for a motorised trishaw from the resort district to most of the scenic area entrances. A ride from the train station or airport to the resort district will cost Y10 to Y20 – but haggle.

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