



The Gobi

POPULATION: 313,400 / AREA: 612,000 SQ KM

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Best Places to Stay

- » Yolyn Am (p170)
- » Secret of Ongi Tourist Camp (p161)
- » Three Camel Lodge (p168)
- » Camping at Khongoryn Els (p170)

Best Places to See Wildlife

- » Ikh Nartiin Chuluu (p165)
- » Yolyn Am (p170)
- » Takhiin Tal (p179)

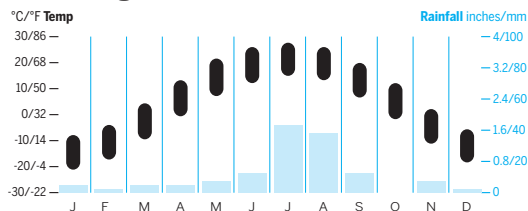
Why Go?

To be sure the Gobi is a bleak place; vast, harsh and silent, and there are many who will question your sanity if you choose to travel there. But it is the profound emptiness and terrible isolation that draws adventurers to its fold. In a world of smartphones, Facebook and 24/7 cable news, there are few places on the planet where it is still possible to fall completely off the radar like you do in the Gobi.

However, it is also a place of secrets. Ice-filled canyons, abandoned monasteries, salt flats, sand dunes, rust-coloured badlands, dinosaur fossils and legend conspire to fill the empty spaces. So get ready to scratch the sand from your scalp and shake the dust from your clothes, for somewhere in the desert there's a camel with your name on it, and an adventure is waiting to unfold.

When to Go

Dalanzadgad



March–May Windstorms increase and airborne sand can strip paint off cars.

June–September Most ger camps will now be in full swing for the tourist season.

December–February Bulgan celebrates Lunar New Year with flair despite bitter cold.

Gobi Highlights

- Take one step backwards and slide three steps backwards as you attempt to summit the dunes at **Khongoryn Els** (p170)
- Trek through the ice-filled canyon of **Yolyn Am** (p170), on the lookout for ibex
- Go fossil hunting at **Bayanzag** (p170), the 'flaming cliffs' that house rich deposits of dinosaur bones and fossilised eggs
- Shimmy up a granite face while rock climbing in the eerie **Ikh Gazryn Chuluu** (p161)
- Get within spitting distance of an unruly camel during a **camel trek**
- Make a pilgrimage to Shambhala at **Khamaryn Khiid** (p163)
- Learn a nomadic song from a **chance encounter with a herdsman**
- Soak away your ailments in the **Sharzajuu hot springs** (p175)

