



Understand Mongolia

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Mongolia's economy is heating up and the country is developing at breakneck speed. The Wolf Economy has arrived.

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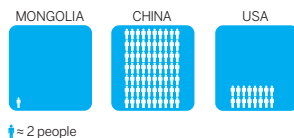
The wide open landscapes, spectacular wildlife and untouched nature are the top reasons to visit Mongolia.

TRANS-MONGOLIAN RAILWAY.....242

Don a tracksuit, crack open a copy of *War and Peace* and get set to ride the Mongolian rails.



population per sq km



Mongolia Today

Fast Facts

- » Population: 3,086,000 (2010)
- » GDP: US\$3100 per capita, ranking Mongolia 135 out of 182 listed countries
- » Literacy rate: 98%
- » Voter turnout: often over 80%
- » Number of livestock: 44 million
- » Horse-to-human ratio: 13 to 1

Mongolia may be just a little fish in the big pond of globalisation but its importance on the world stage has only just started to grow. Pundits have dubbed the country 'Mingolia', a nod to its enormous mineral wealth. Indeed, the country is rich in copper, gold, coal and other minerals and the government is being wooed by international firms hoping to grab a piece of the pie. Mongolians are stepping cautiously ahead, wary of the fact that other natural resource rich countries have been over-exploited and ruined by corruption and mismanagement. All the talk now is what path the government will take – rapid development and a reduction of poverty, or corruption and a greater split between the rich and poor.

The Great Leap Forward

The hot topic of conversation in Mongolia these days centres on Oyu Tolgoi, a massive copper and gold deposit in the Gobi. The US\$5 billion mine under construction is expected to be operational by 2013. Within 10 years, this solitary mine could account for a third of Mongolia's GDP.

China is a ready market for Mongolia's raw materials and the government is rapidly trying to build up its infrastructure to deliver the goods. New rail and road links to China are being planned, and in a bid to diversify its markets, Mongolia is also planning a 1000km railway from Ömnögovi all the way to Russia (via Choibalsan).

Mongolia's political leaders seem keenly aware of the need to invest their newfound wealth back into the country. Plans have been laid to build a copper smelter, oil refinery and coal washing plant.

Investment is also being made in education. A sparkling new university and IT complex is planned for the city of Nalaikh. For now, however,

Top Books

When Things Get Dark to End, by Matthew Davis
Dateline Mongolia, by Michael Kohn
Wild East, by Jill Lawless
Hearing Birds Fly, by Louisa Waugh
The Secret History of the Mongol Queens, by Jack Weatherford

Dos

- » Do accept a snuff bottle with your right hand (as if you were shaking hands). If you don't take the snuff, at least sniff the top part of the bottle. But don't grab the bottle from the top.
- » Do keep ger visits to less than two hours to avoid interrupting the family's work.
- » If you have stepped on anyone, or kicked their feet, immediately shake their hand.