



The Gobi

POP 310,300 / AREA 612,000 SQ KM

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Best for Staying with Herdsmen

- ➔ Khongoryn Els (p195)
- ➔ Bayanzag (p197)
- ➔ Yolyn Am (p193)

Best Off-the-Beaten-Track

- ➔ Khermen Tsav (p201)
- ➔ Bayangiin Nuruu (p201)
- ➔ Road to Biger (p204)
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- ➔ Khavtsgait Petroglyphs (p194)

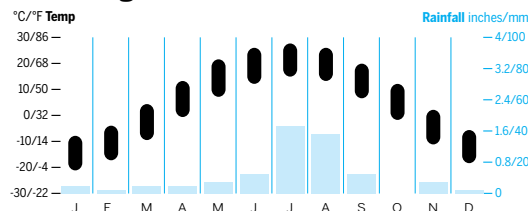
Why Go?

The Gobi is a bleak place; vast, harsh and silent, and there are many who will question your sanity if you choose to travel here. But it is the profound emptiness and terrible isolation that draws adventurers to its fold. In a world of smartphones, social media 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 can do in the Gobi.

This is, nevertheless, one of Mongolia's top-draw regions. Colossal sand dunes, ice-filled canyons, dinosaur fossils and the promise of camel treks ensure that almost every tour company in the country runs trips out here. And a recent explosion of Gobi ger (traditional yurt) camps means you'll never have to rough it if you don't want to, although staying with a camel herdsman in a simple guest ger is half the fun.

When to Go

Dalanzadgad



Mar Bulgan celebrates its camel festival; usually on 6 and 7 March. Bring your woolies, though.

Apr–May Wind-storms increase and airborne sand can get vicious.

Jun–Sep Most ger camps will now be in full swing for the tourist season.

The Gobi Highlights

- Take one step forward and slide three steps back on the awesome sand dunes of **Khongoryn Els** (p195).
- Go fossil hunting at **Bayanzag** (p197), the beautiful 'flaming cliffs', rich in dinosaur bones and fossil eggs.
- Look out for ibexes as you trek through the ice-filled canyon of **Yolyn Am** (p193), with vultures soaring above.
- Camp by the river before picking your way through the monastery ruins of **Ongin Khuid** (p185).
- Shimmy up a granite face or just clamber over boulders in the eerie, moonscape-like **Ikh Gazryn Chuluu** (p186).
- Search for the **Khavtsgait Petroglyphs** (p194); remote, prehistoric rock carvings that overlook the desert.
- Get truly off the beaten track and venture south to **Khermen Tsav** (p201), a canyon some insist is more spectacular than Bayanzag.

