



Northern Mongolia

POP 466,300 / AREA 194,620 SQ KM

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Why Go?

Log cabins? Pine forests? Mountains? Whatever happened to the steppes and the herds of camels? If it weren't for the gers and motorbike riders in traditional Mongolian dress, you could confuse this lush and rugged land with Switzerland.

Selenge, Bulgan and Khövsgöl aimags actually have more in common with Siberia than the rest of Mongolia, with long, cold winters and wildflower-dotted summers. This is the adventure playground of Mongolia, with superb opportunities for horse riding, hiking, mountain biking, kayaking and boating along the glorious shores of Lake Khövsgöl.

The inhospitable border area between Russia and Mongolia is home to the Tsaatan reindeer herders doing their best to preserve their traditional lifestyle. And if you're interested in spiritual practices, shamanism is once again alive and well in northern Mongolia after decades of suppression under communism, as is Buddhism in the splendid Amarbasgalant monastery.

Best Off-the-Beaten-Track

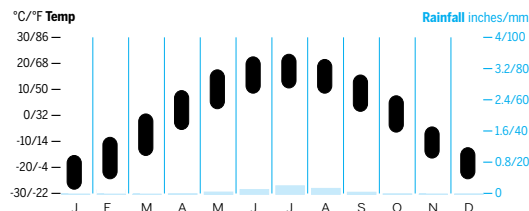
- ➔ Bow-making workshop (p133)
- ➔ Uushigiin Uver (p146)
- ➔ Bulnai Hot Springs (p154)
- ➔ Zuun Nuur (p158)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Windhorse Ger Camp (p152)
- ➔ Nature's Door (p153)
- ➔ Toilogt (p153)
- ➔ Ashihai (p152)

When to Go

Mörön



Jul Warm and dry, but also the tourist crunch. Catch naadam in Khatgal or Rentshinlhumbe.

Late Aug–Sep Trek in the taiga with fewer bugs, and see the leaves change colour.

Late Feb Skiing, skating and ice fishing at the Khatgal Ice Festival.

Northern Mongolia Highlights

- 1 Drop a fishing line into **Khövsgöl Nuur** (p147), and while away an afternoon by Mongolia's loveliest alpine lake.
- 2 Visit Tsaatan reindeer herders from the remote **Darkhad Depression** (p155).
- 3 Wander the grounds of **Amarbaysagalt Khiid** (p136), the architectural highlight of the country.
- 4 Visit the bow-and-arrow-making workshop in **Dulaankhaan** (p133), one of the last in Mongolia.
- 5 Journey to **Chandman-Öndör** (p154), a little-visited region of fish-filled streams, hot springs and sacred caves.
- 6 Study the curious deer-stone carvings at **Uushigin**
- 7 Enjoy the excellent dining in **Erdenet** (p138) or peer into the depths of the city's copper mine.
- 8 Uver (p146), one of the best examples of ancient rock art in Mongolia.

