



Ulaanbaatar

Улаанбаатар

011, 021, 051, 7035 / POP 1,287,100 / AREA 1368 SQ KM

Includes ➔

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Millie's Café (p80)
- ➔ Namaste (p81)
- ➔ Mongolians (p82)
- ➔ Rosewood Kitchen + Enoteca (p79)

Best Places to Stay

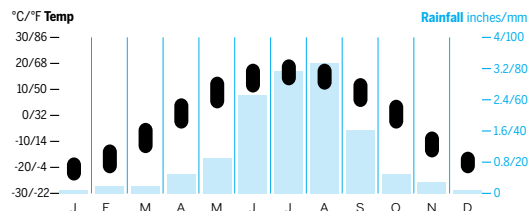
- ➔ Lotus Guesthouse (p73)
- ➔ Zaya's Hostel (p75)
- ➔ Hotel Örgöö (p74)
- ➔ Best Western Tuushin Hotel (p75)

Why Go?

If Mongolia's yin is its pristine countryside, then Ulaanbaatar (UB) conforms nicely to its yang. An enormous city of pulsating commerce, wild traffic, sinful nightlife and bohemian counter-culture, the Mongolian capital elicits as much shock as it does excitement. The contrasts within the city can be exasperating too: Armani-suited businessmen rub shoulders with mohawked punks and *del*-clad nomads fresh off the steppes. One minute you're dodging the path of a Hummer H2 and the next you're mystified by groaning Buddhist monks at Gandan Khiid. It's a wild place that bursts into life after slumbering through a long winter. This chaotic capital is not the easiest city to navigate, but with a little patience, travellers can take care of all their logistical needs, watch traditional theatre, sample international cuisine and party till three in the morning. This ever-changing city may be the biggest surprise of your Mongolian adventure.

When to Go

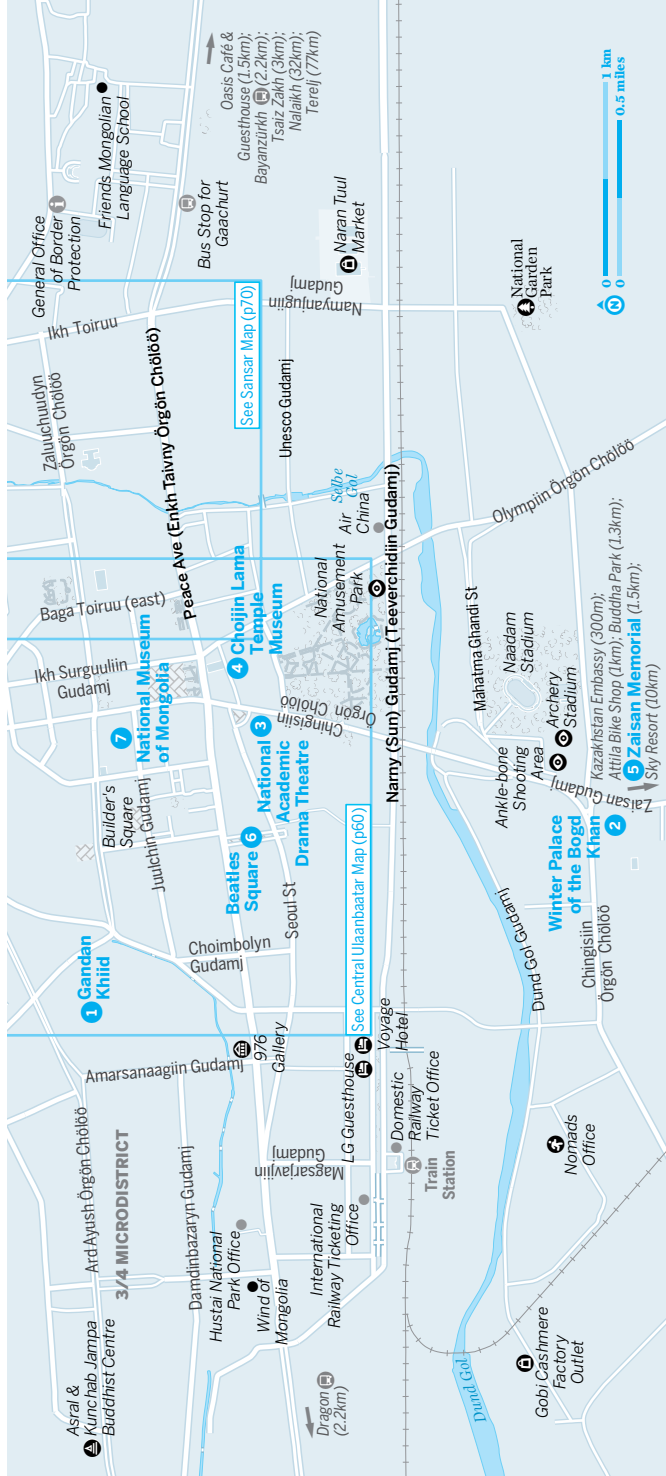
Ulaanbaatar



Early Jun Get giddy on Children's Day and then run the Mongolia Marathon.

Mid-Jul The city comes to a halt for Naadam and its wrestling, archery and horse racing.

Aug Lounge at street cafes and swill beer during the last throes of summer.



Ulaanbaatar Highlights

- 1 Walk the prayer circuit around **Gandan Khaid** (p67), the country's largest monastery.
- 2 Wonder at the eccentric collection of curios and fashionable youth, skaters and travellers.
- 3 Take in a performance of traditional dance and music at the **National Academic Drama Theatre** (p84).
- 4 Step back in time with a tour of the **Choijin Lama Temple Museum** (p65), an ancient relic surrounded by modern downtown.
- 5 Amble up the steps at **Zaisan Memorial** (p70) for sweeping views of the city.
- 6 Chill out on **Beattles Square** (p67), the summertime haunt of
- 7 Weave through Mongolia's ancient past at the **National Museum of Mongolia** (p59).