



The Trans-Mongolian Route

Includes

Kyakhta	255
Darkhan	256
Ulaanbaatar	257
Sainshand	278
Zamyn-Üüd	280
Dàtóng	280

Route Info

- ➔ Distance: 2217km
- ➔ Duration: Two days, six hours
- ➔ Time zones: Moscow +5

Best Places to Stay & Eat

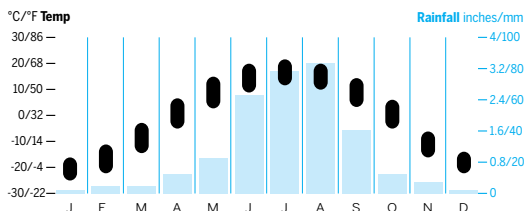
- ➔ LG Guesthouse (p268)
- ➔ Zaya's Hostel (p268)
- ➔ Hotel Örgöö (p267)
- ➔ Garden Hotel (p282)
- ➔ Namaste (p270)
- ➔ Mongolians (p269)

Why Go?

The Trans-Mongolian route is the most diverse leg of the cross-continental journey, cutting across three distinct cultures, landscapes and languages. It includes some of the most awe-inspiring sights of the long journey, not the least of which is the Gobi Desert, but also the vast Mongolian steppes and the stunning gorges outside Běijīng. The major jumping-off point is Ulaanbaatar, where many travellers head for the colourful Naadam Festival, but any time of year reveals a surprisingly fast-paced city with great cultural attractions and heady nightlife. For the full Mongolia experience, venture outside the capital, where nomads pitch their gers on the open prairie alongside their huge herds of livestock. Before leaving Russia, pause to explore Ulan-Ude, where you could take in the historic towns of Novoselenginsk and Kyakhta. The China leg is a relatively short hop but has its own unique character, highlighted by the beguiling Yungang Caves near Dàtóng.

When to Go

Ulaanbaatar



Mid-Jul Naadam grinds Ulaanbaatar to a halt to make way for wrestling, archery and horse racing.

Aug Prime time for lounging in Ulaanbaatar's open-air cafes, swapping travel stories.

Sep Autumn brings changing colours in forested areas and smaller tourist crowds.



Trans-Mongolian Route Highlights

- Enjoying a meal of boiled mutton and fermented mare's milk in a ger (yurt) on the vast **Mongolian steppes** (p277)
- Attending a mystical ceremony at the country's largest monastery, Ulaanbaatar's **Gandan Khiid** (p262)
- Absorbing some of the earth's energy at **Shambhala** (p279), near Khamaryn Khiid
- Spotting rare wild horses at **Khustain National Park** (p277)
- Staring in wonder at the 51,000 Buddhist statues inside the **Yungang Caves** (p283) near Dátóng
- Exploring the antiquated border town of **Kyakhta** (p255), once a thriving trading post on the ancient tea route
- Celebrating the mid-summer **Naadam** (p266) festival, featuring Mongolia's best wrestlers, archers and race horses