



# Inner Mongolia

POP 24.7 MILLION

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## Best Places to Eat

- Grandma (p880)
- Xiānbáichéng Gǔtāng Héle Miàn (p880)
- Nana's Cafe (p880)
- Jīnchuān Dòuhuāzhuāng (p885)

## Best Places to Sleep

- Inner Mongolia Hotel (p879)
- Alxa Guesthouse (p890)
- Shangri-La (p886)
- Shangri-La Hotel (p880)

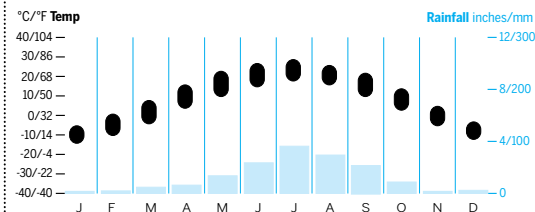
## Why Go?

Mongolia. The name alone stirs up visions of nomadic herders, thundering horses and, of course, the warrior-emperor Genghis Khan.

Travellers heading north of the Great Wall might half expect to see the Mongol hordes galloping through the vast grasslands. The reality is rather different: 21st-century Inner Mongolia (内蒙古; Nèi Měnggǔ) is a wholly different place from Mongolia itself. The more-visited south of the province is industrialised, prosperous and very much within the realm of China's modern economic miracle. Having said that, Inner Mongolia is more than nine times the size of England and the Mongolia of your dreams can be found off the tourist route, amid the shimmering sand dunes of the Badain Jaran Desert or the vast grasslands in the north. Some effort is required to reach these areas, but the spectacular scenery can make it an unforgettable journey.

## When to Go

### Hohhot



**May** Good weather and shoulder season equals good value.

**Jul** Hohhot and other regions host the annual Naadam festival.

**Aug & Sep** The best time to see the grasslands and ride Mongolia's famed horses.

## Inner Mongolia Highlights

- Hailā'ěr** (p884) Saddling up for a horse ride around the Hulunbèi'ěr grasslands.
- Hohhot** (p877) Exploring the colourful esoteric mysteries of Tibetan Buddhism at Dà Zhào, and being astonished by the tantric statues on display at beautiful Wütà Pagoda.
- Shàngdǔ** (p882) Wandering amid the ancient walls and contemplating the vanished wonders of Kublai Khan's pleasure dome.
- Ēnhé** (p886) Finding some peace and sampling the local milk and produce at this laid-back farming town.
- Badain Jaran Desert** (p889) Mounting a camel and setting off in search of the desert's massive dunes.
- Shì Wèi** (p887) Mingling with Chinese-speaking ethnic Russians at this unique village near the Russian border.
- Bayanhot** (p888) Discovering Alashan culture and west Inner Mongolia's heritage at the Alashan Museum.

