

# MONGOLIA



Gandan Monastery, UlaanBaatar

**Mongolia** is about open spaces – the endless undulating grasslands and the scrubby vegetation of the desert steppe are a dramatic backdrop for the tiny round gers of the lone nomadic families who make this environment their home. About a third of Mongolians live a settled life in the capital, UlaanBaatar, but 40 percent still follow their herds to summer pastures, setting up their gers out on the steppe and moving on when the grass is gone. Horses outnumber people thirteen to one.

Mongolia's Buddhist heritage has been experiencing a revival since the early 90s, and monasteries are being rebuilt and repopulated. Politically, the country has transitioned to a democracy with a parliament called the State Great Khural. And dotting the steppe now are private citizens digging for gold in a modern gold rush that may change the face of Mongolia.



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