

LandScape
THE REGIONAL GUIDE AND MAP
OF
Mongolia

ROAD MAP

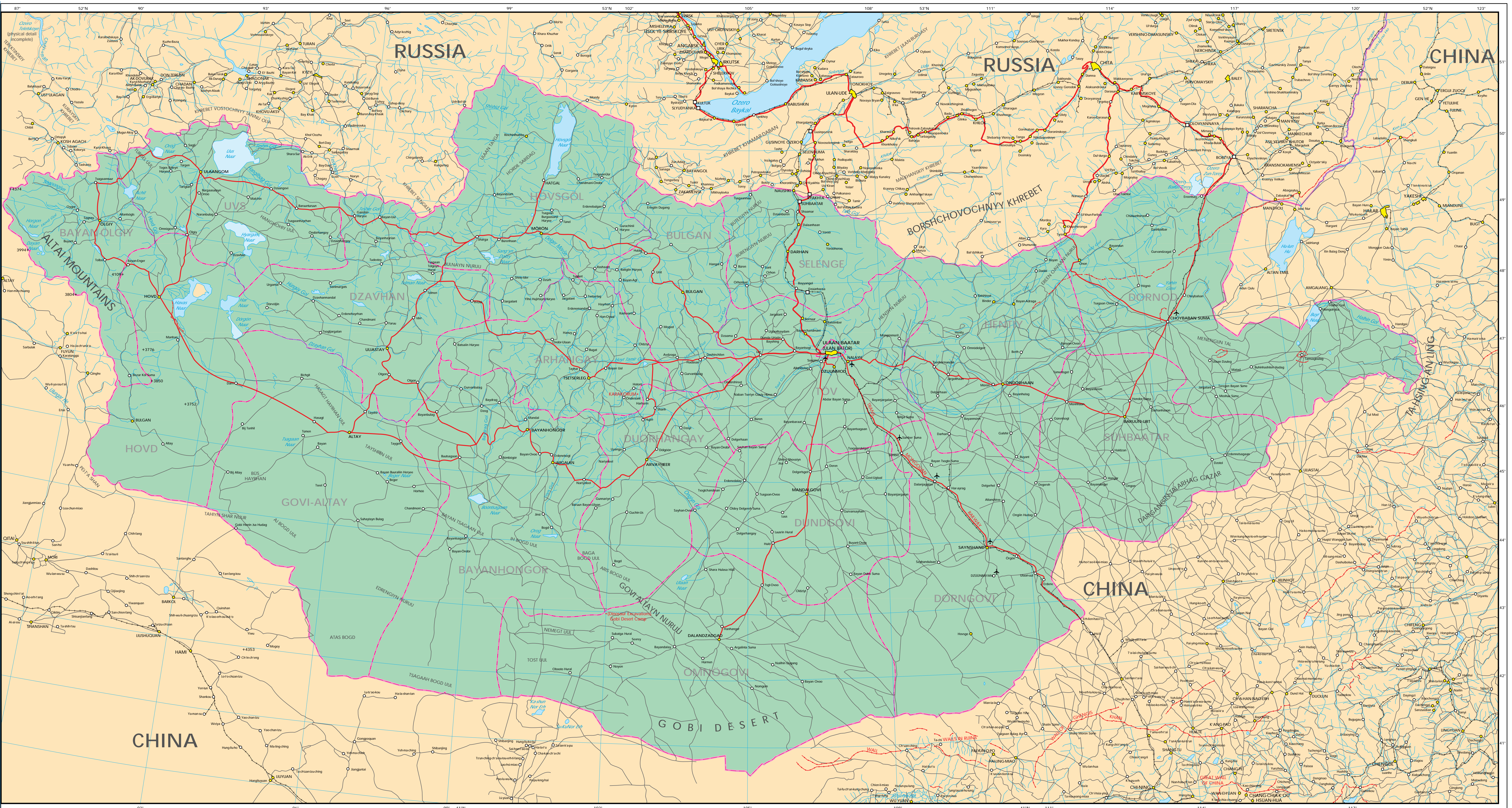
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Mongolia

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Publisher's enquires accepted.



LEGEND

- Government
- Embassy
- Education
- Transportation
- Hotels
- Sites of Interest
- Railway
- Water
- Other

UULAAN BAATOR (ULAN BATOR)

Population over 100,000
Population 30,000-100,000
Population 10,000-30,000
Population under 10,000

Railways
Motor Highways and Roads
Main Roads (probably fair-weather road or track)

MONGOLIA

1:3,000,000
Lambert Conformal Conic Projection

Other roads (probably poor quality road or track)

International Boundaries

Provincial Boundaries

Airports with hard surface of 900 metres

Heights in metres

Sites of Interest

Ancient Walls

Scale: 0 50 100 150 200 250 300 350 400 Kilometers / 0 50 100 150 200 250 Miles

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

The geographic area called Mongolia is comprised of an area of high slopes and desert sandwiched between China in the south and Russia in the north. The region is completely landlocked. Generally, it is a plateau between 900 and 1,500 metres high. However, in the west are the Altai Mountains, the highest peak in the country of Mongolia is Tavan Bogd Ulal at 4,374 metres.

Since the plateau is high, landlocked and northerly, it results in a climate that is dry and cold. The average rainfall is below 38 cm per year (52 cm is considered adequate for farming without irrigation). Thus, successful agriculture can only be carried out with irrigation in those places where steady sources of water can be counted upon. The usual crops in these irrigated areas are wheat and oats. Temperature extremes also occur within the Gobi Desert, with summer daytime temperatures around 40°C and near 0°C at night. Winter temperatures can reach minus 50°C.

Due to the harsh environment, most of Mongolia is grassland. Forests cover about 10% of the land area and are primarily composed of larch. These forests are mostly in the northern portion of the country.

Historically, the people have had to adapt to a pastoral nomadic existence. The nature of their goods and livelihood were based on animal products—wool, hides, meat, cloth and leather. The people did not manufacture any products that required significant infrastructure or lengthy production. As nomadic people, they had to have personal goods that were highly portable and necessarily utilitarian. An environment devoid of trees for fuel makes manufacturing difficult and the existing fuel, dried animal dung, is hardly the fuel of heavy industry.

Prehistorically, Mongolia seems to have had human occupation as far back as 200,000 BC. As time and archaeological work progress, the prehistory of Mongolia will be filled in, but for now, we have to rely on the records of the Chinese who fought with tribes here during the 4th or 5th century BC. The Mongol history was written by their foes until the time of Genghis (Jenghis) Khan and always seems to describe the people as a warrior race against whom great

walls were built and fierce battles fought. One should remember that these are not wars of nations, but rather plundering raids by a variety of tribes who fought with one another as much as with the Chinese. The Chinese themselves were not a unified nation but rather a group of kingdoms. By 1000 AD, this area of the world was beginning to form nations from the tribes and small kingdoms that had existed before. All that was needed for significant social upheaval was a leader with a vision and strength of arms to carry out the vision. It took a rival tribal group, Ujigon, escaping the began a long campaign of revenge. It is implied that from time to time, Temujin was thwarted or abandoned by allies and made it a policy to trust only those who had proved their loyalty to him. In return for loyalty, men were given the opportunity to rise through the ranks and take positions of power and authority based on their military skill. Temujin was proclaimed Genghis (Jenghis) Khan in 1206, at the Mongolian capital Karakorum.

Europe has a parallel leader to Genghis (Jenghis) Khan, Charles the Great (Charlemagne) 771 to 814. Although his Frankish Empire did not compare in size to Genghis Khan's, its policies of literacy, administration, commerce and cultural exchange mean as well to the West as the Mongol leaders did to the East. In the past, as it is today, knowledge, information, intelligence or espionage—call it what you wish—and an educated elite are the keys to defeating your enemies. Thus, these two men set up the infrastructure for two of the world's great civilizations.

Having united the Mongolian tribes, Genghis Khan began campaigns to expand his territory. The Mongols created an empire that held sway over all of central Asia, northern Europe, northern India, China and border areas like northern Vietnam and Japan. The sons, grandsons and heirs to his skills as an administrator and military tactician ruled all or part of his territory until or beyond 1370, when they were driven out of Beijing. They finally were completely crushed in 1368, when they were driven out of Karakorum and defeated on the Kerulen.

Mongolia no longer plays a major role in world affairs but individual tribes have harassed the Chinese society right up to this century. After the Russian revolution, that the part of Mongolia officially called the Mongolian People's Republic broke away from China and allied itself with Russia. During the next 70 years, Mongolia followed the Russian form of communism. Those knowledgeable of Soviet history will have no trouble in following the modern history of Mongolia. The names are different but the policies are similar.

The capital of Mongolia is Ulaan Baator and has a population of about 600,000. The city is on the banks of the Tuul River at an elevation of 1,350 metres and at the foot of the Bogd Ula which rises about 900 metres over the city. The city was founded in 1649 as a religious centre and later prospered due to the sea route between China and Russia. Ulaan Baator is the centre of all the important facets of a modern nation. As an economic centre, it produces the traditional products of a pastoral agricultural society mentioned earlier. Its cultural significance is denoted by the university, library and religious structures.

It is the country's transportation hub thanks to the presence of the Trans-Mongolian Railway connecting with Russia and China.

The Mongolian nation is at a modern crossroads. Its former relationship with Russia has collapsed due to recent events. Trade has to be paid for with hard cash rather than barter and has resulted in trade dropping by over 40%. There are indications that the society is trying to achieve ethnic purity. The two greatest protagonists, the Russians and the Chinese, have been harassed. Russians have been beaten up on the streets and the Chinese were largely expelled in the 1960s. The small Chinese population that remains, keeps a low profile while being quite successful as businessmen in the new economy.

As a traveller, heading into what appears to be a state in transition be aware of the ancient oriental curse—May you live in interesting times! Be careful travelling in the Far East, particularly in those nations that have been dominated by single party politics. These states often have had political police and are suspicious of foreigners. There are people who thoroughly enjoy Mongolia, because of the numerous challenges of travelling in a country so early in its

tourism industry. Others may find the adventure more arduous. Inform yourself before you travel here, get all the books you can and be prepared.

HUNTING DINOSAURS

Thousands, perhaps millions of children are captivated by the knowledge that 65 million years ago and beyond strange creatures roamed a very much different world. Windows to that world are few and far between but one of the best is found in southern Mongolia.

The window to the past was opened by the expeditions of Roy Chapman Andrews in 1922, 1923 and 1925 ending in 1928. During these years his team located and named *Protoceratops andrewsi*, *Oviraptor philoceratops* and the recently popular *Tyrannosaurus rex*. Other famous finds were some of the oldest mammal bones ever to be found at that time.

Politics and eventually war, including the Cold War, saw an end to most North American expeditions to the fossil beds of Mongolia. However, other expeditions were undertaken during the 1940s by the Soviet Union, the 1960s and 70s by the Polish, the 1980s by the Canadians and now in the 1990s by the Americans again. All these expeditions were supported by the Mongolian government of the day and it is scientists.

The area of significant interest is in southern Mongolia. Most North Americans know the area as the Flaming Cliffs. There are many sites in this region and they are hundreds of miles apart. The Flaming Cliffs is one of the areas in the east and is called Bayn Dzak. Other sites going westward are Togtugin Shireh, Khoctor, Tatal Gol, Ukhua Tolgod, Khulan, Uliun Ula, Bugin Tav and Kheerman Tav. Without a doubt more sites will be discovered here and to the south in northern China.

There are many books about hunting dinosaurs in Mongolia a recent good read is *Dinosaurs of the Flaming Cliffs* by Michael Novacek, 1996. A.W.

TRAVEL INSIDE MONGOLIA

Mongolia is a huge country, 1,560,000 sq. km. in area and paved roads are almost non-existent. Unfortunately, writing about travel within an third world country is problematic. I suggest that tourists use the internet, the local library and professional travel agencies to advise them of local conditions. A.W.

WARNING REGARDING ROADS

The lines purporting to show land communication routes within Mongolia MUST be regarded as unverified data. The map appears to indicate that Mongolia has a highly developed road network. In reality, almost all the roads shown are rutted tracks across the grassland, suitable for the occasional truck or 4x4 that dares to attempt to traverse the undulating terrain. Most of the lines that are parallel to other lines are 'new' tracks replacing 'old' tracks. Unfortunately, we have no way of knowing which are which, both show equally on aerial mapping. Without driving each track, it is impossible to determine its current status. Furthermore, as each track becomes more intensively used, it deteriorates through non-consistent maintenance and spawns a parallel track.

As Mongolia develops, a formal road network will come into existence. The only paved roads outside the urban areas are a 60 km stretch south of Ulaan Baator and the road north to Naushki on the Russian border. As one of the truly undeveloped nations, Mongolia remains a remote and largely inaccessible country. Regard these so-called roads with extreme caution. Washboards, collapsed bridges, severe potholes, mud baths, and unmarked dips and fords are common.

DISCLAIMER

This map of Mongolia was an experiment in mapping a country using Adobe Illustrator. Researching this map has presented many challenges. Weller Cartographic Services has been unable to determine a definite spelling for place names, so would appreciate assistance from travellers and scholars in replacing

errors with more commonly accepted spellings.

Similarly, road/track information is unreliable. Existing reference maps are contradictory and incomplete. Doors Hagan (near Altay) really exist without some sort of track to it? If so, where? Do the roads/tracks shown on this map really exist where our available research information indicates? Logic says no, but where do they go? More importantly, do they exist? Are they usable? We are not sure.

Please regard this map as a provisional map. It is better than anything else that is available, but we are very conscious of the weaknesses inherent in this map and respectfully request your patience and cooperation in providing details of information that will make this a much better map in its following editions. Corrections and suggested improvements can be sent to the cartographer, Angus Weller at weller@axion.net or a net search for Angus R. Weller, map maker.com or travelmedia.com or the address in the copyright notice.

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