

Mongolia in Motion

AFTER A 25-YEAR SOCIALIST HANGOVER, THE COUNTRY'S INTRIGUING CAPITAL CITY IS FINALLY WAKING UP.

UPDATE

In Ulaanbaatar, elaborate temples now live cheek by jowl with rising skyscrapers, thanks to an influx of investment from the financial sector. The new **Shangri-La Hotel** (shangri-la.com; doubles from \$260) is raising the luxury quotient with 290 contemporary rooms, some facing Bogd Khan, one of the four Sacred Mountains; a sleek restaurant serving northern Chinese cuisine (clay-pot stews, Peking duck); and a 21st-floor private club. Nearby is Great Chinggis Khan Square, a plaza lined with fashionable hangouts.

A highlight: the lounge **iLoft Function House** (iconcept.mn), where DJs flow in from Seoul spin K-pop remixes. (The city has a surprising obsession with all things Korean.) There are two ways to arrive: by plane—Korean Air and Turkish Airlines now offer service, and a second international airport debuts in 2017—or with **Golden Eagle Luxury Trains** (goldeneagleluxurytrains.com; 15 days from \$15,895 per person). This hotel on rails has butler service and L'Occitane-stocked cabins and follows a route from Moscow that includes visits to Lake Baikal, the deepest on earth, and the 16th-century Kremlin Fortress, in Kazan, Russia. — DANIEL SCHEFFLER



Ulaanbaatar's Great Chinggis Khan Square, near Parliament.

SPIRITED AWAY

Sample the small-batch booze movement taking hold in the Last Frontier.

Independent distilleries have been setting up shop in Alaska for a while now—but a 2014 law finally gave them the green light to open tasting rooms. Now you can visit **Port Chilkoot Distillery** (portchilkootdistillery.com), housed in a 1902 army bakery on the outskirts of Glacier Bay National Park, in Haines, and try their award-winning 50 Fathoms gin. Or stop in at the converted airport hangar in Sterling, on the Kenai Peninsula, where **High Mark Distillery** (highmarkdistillery.com) serves its applejack, which is made from a secret Irish family recipe. And cozy up in the cabin-like drinking lair at **Anchorage Distillery** (anchoragedistillery.com) with its full-bodied Glacier Melt vodka. — NATE STOREY



SET SAIL

Kicking off this summer on select northern European sailings, **Ventures by Seabourn** are kayak and Zodiac excursions that leave directly from the foldout marina on the 458-passenger **Seabourn Quest**. The program, which will soon expand to Antarctic and Amazon River itineraries, includes activities like rides along the fjords and past icebergs. And because there's no need to disembark, guests get extra time to sleep in. seabourn.com.