

FROM GOBI TO THE GOLDEN EAGLE FESTIVAL

(Sep 27 – Oct 09, 2024), 2024)



TRIP SUMMARY

Every year, over 100 hunter Kazakhs, who train Golden Eagles for hunting, gather around in a valley of Altai Mountains and celebrate the Golden Eagle Festival. There's no age and gender restriction and both men and women compete. Passed down to generations, the skill of hunting with eagles was only preserved among the Mongolian Kazakh community in Mongolia. Thanks to the festival in the past 15 years, this unique tradition is coming back. This trip is one of the best examples of sustainable tourism supporting the local community.



Our journey begins in the Gobi Desert, a diverse ecosystem of Mongolia where high mountains, dry basins and grasslands all co-exist together. Spend two full days at the Gobi's tallest sand dunes, the magnificent Hongoryn Els for various photo opportunities. Next, fly over the high mountains to the western most part of Mongolia, to participate in the annual Golden Eagle Festival. For two days, experienced hunters will compete with their eagles to test the eagles' agility and hunting skills. Enjoy spending a private time with hunters for a close up interaction with the hunters and their raptor birds.

ITINERARY

DAY 1, SEP 27: ULAANBAATAR



Upon arrival, meet your guide and transfer to your hotel. Built as a ger capital over 350 years ago, the modern day Ulaanbaatar is surrounded by white ger districts around it. After resting in your hotel room, we will enjoy a brief city tour including of Zaisan Hill where you can get a magnificent bird's eye view of the city.

In the evening, enjoy a traditional Mongolian performance featuring the "throat" or khoomii singing which also features dancer girls with colorful traditional Mongolian clothes. We will then enjoy a welcome dinner at a fine local restaurant. Overnight at hotel.

(Hotel Ulaanbaatar or similar; B, L, D)

DAY 2, SEP 28: ULAANBAATAR / GOBI DESERT

In the morning, meet your guide and begin driving south to the Gobi desert. On this journey, you will witness the northern Mongolian grassland ecosystem transforming to that of the Gobi ecosystem gradually. En route, stop at Mandalgovi town for a road lunch. We will continue driving and will arrive at our ger camp located at the heart of the Gobi in the evening. Check-in to your ger and enjoy dinner. Overnight in gers.

(Approx. 8 hours driving; B, L, D)

DAY 3, SEP 29: GOBI / KHONGORYN ELS DUNES



After breakfast, begin driving to the Khongoryn Els dunes, Gobi's largest of the dunes. Here, we will enjoy climbing the tallest dune and visiting a camel herder family to sample ride Bactrian camels. Overnight at a tourist class ger camp.

(Approx. 3 hours driving; Ger Camp; B, L, D)

DAY 4, SEP 30: KHONGORYN ELS DUNES

Spend one full day for various photography sessions including for the endemic Saxual tree forest, the incredible landscape and Mongolia's two humped camels and friendly Mongolian herders. Overnight in gers.

(Ger Camp; B, L, D)

DAY 5, OCT 1: HAVTSGAIT PETROGLYPHS / FLAMING CLIFFS



In the morning, drive to the Gobi Gurvansaikhan National Park and visit Havtsgait Petroglyphs site, where hundreds of pre-historic rock drawings are found on a mountain top. Next, drive to the ger camp and enjoy lunch.

In the late afternoon, drive to the Flaming Cliffs, a red cliff stretching about 3 km in wide, where hundreds of dinosaur fossils have been found. Paleontological expeditions from many countries, including from U.S, Poland, Japan and Russia have worked here in the last 80 years. Each year rain and wind reveals yet more fossils and every summer new discoveries are made. We will equip ourselves with brushes and small cleaning materials and look for rare fossils hidden in the cliffs. Enjoy a sunset dinner at this majestic place before returning back to our ger camp.

(Ger Camp; B, L, D)

DAY 6. OCT 2. GOBI DESERT / ULAANBAATAR



In the morning, begin driving back to Ulaanbaatar, enjoying a picnic lunch along the way. Upon arrival, transfer to your hotel. Remainder of the day is independent. Overnight in gers.

(Hotel Ulaanbaatar or similar; B, L, D)

DAY 7, OCT 3: ULAANBAATAR / ULGII / SHAR LAKE



Today, we will fly to Ulgii, the capital of Bayan-Ulgii aimag, home to Kazakhs and many other minority groups. Though Kazakhs' pastoralnomadic lifestyle is similar to that of the Mongolians, these nomads are predominantly Moslem. Explore the city and visit its' market with a chance to purchase renowned Kazakh hand made art crafts including a rug. Then, if time permits, visit a local museum, which displays excellent cultural and natural showcases.

In the afternoon, make a short drive towards crystal-clear Shar Lake, located north of Tolbo Lake, which mirrors the dramatic Khunguin Mountain peaks. This saltine lake attracts water birds such as swans and gulls and is home to over 8 types of fish. Spend the day trekking along the eastern shore of the lake and exploring the area.

In the evening retreat to Hovd River on the eastern part of the city. There is an excellent chance to do evening fishing for trout. Overnight in gers.

(Rustic Ger Camp; B, L, D).

DAY 8. OCT 4. PHOTO SESSION WITH EAGLE HUNTERS



Begin the day with a private photo session with few eagle hunters at our camp site. When time permits, there will also be an opportunity to ride horses along with an eagle hunter.

Then, drive southwest to visit traditional Kazakh families to observe how eagles are trained. While we are in Bayan-Ulgii, we will visit families, representatives of minority groups present in the area.

Kazakh women are renowned for their handcraft and tapestry and Kazakh men train Golden Eagles for hunting, an age-old tradition kept essentially in Mongolia. Eagles are caught from wild and used for hunting for over 10 years before they are released back into the wilderness. Kazakhs are happy to show you how eagles are trained and they offer you food and shelter, like any other nomadic families in the country. We will also visit Uriankhai family renowned for their archery skill which was an important part of Chinggis Khan's army. Visiting a Kazakh family is one of the highlights of our trip. Each ger is decorated with tapestries woven by Kazakh women and each tapestry is decorated with unique patterns designed by the family. Overnight in gers.

(Rustic Camp; B, L, D)

DAY 9 – 10, OCT 5 – 6: THE GOLDEN EAGLE FESTIVAL



For two days, attend the magnificent Golden Eagle Festival.

The festival begins with a march of eagle hunters coming into the central field and showcasing their hunter eagles to the public. Eagle skills are then tested by releasing them from a cliff top to time how fast she can land on their owners' arms when called. Attend also a traditional tug of war game called kukbar, which is competed on a horse back.

One of the highlights of the festival will be the archery contest by ethnic Uriankhai people, who will compete by their skills by traditional Mongolian arrow and bow which have retained the same design and force since the 13th century. In the evenings, enjoy a traditional Kazakh meals followed by a beautiful Kazakh singers performing for us on the last evening. Overnight in gers.

(Rustic ger camp; B, L, D)

DAY 11, OCT 7: ULGII / ULAANBAATAR



After breakfast, drive back to Ulgii for your return flight to Ulaanbaatar. Upon arrival, spend the rest of the afternoon for shopping and individual sightseeing. Enjoy dinner at a local restaurant.

(Hotel Ulaanbaatar or similar; B, L, D)

DAY 12, OCT 8: SIGHTSEEING IN ULAANBAATAR



Today, explore some of the city's best-known museums and historical sites. Begin with the visit to Gandan, Mongolia's largest Buddhist Monastery. Visit the temple of Megjid Janraisag, where a 60 feet tall Buddha stands. Reconstructed in early 90s, the statue stands as the symbol of Mongolia's revival of religious freedom after the communist regime that fell over. The temple itself used to be the largest building in Ulaanbaatar early 1900s. Also, visit the main temples where monks chant Buddha's sutra's on daily basis.

Then, visit the National History museum which showcases Mongolia's best collection of traditional tools, art crafts and other exhibits presenting different periods of Mongolia's history. Among the museum highlights is the collection of traditional costumes of different tribes, hall of the 13th century Mongolia and section which showcases a typical Mongolian ger and various nomadic tools. Also, visit the Zanabazar's Fine Arts museum with excellent collection of Mongolia's arts including golden Buddha statues of 17th century and some of the best preserved tankas in the world.

In the evening, enjoy a farewell dinner at one of the finest restaurants in town. Overnight at hotel.

(Hotel Ulaanbaatar or similar; B, L, D)

DAY 13, OCT 9: DEPARTURE

After breakfast transfer to the airport for your return flight home. (B)

B = Breakfast | L = Lunch | D = Dinner

Ger camp = The traditional portable, circular, wooden dwelling used by the nomadic peoples.

Field camp = A bit more sophisticated camping/glamping, more permanent in nature.

Tent camp = Expedition style, often moving regularly and smaller in size and scale.

MONGOLIA QUEST RESERVES THE RIGHT TO ALTER THE ABOVE ITINERARY IF DEEMED NECESSARY.

LAND PRICES

Based on 2 participants:	\$3,860 per person , standard twin occupancy;
Based on 3-5 participants:	\$3,640 per person , standard twin occupancy;
Based on 6-9 participants:	\$3,400 per person , standard twin occupancy;
Based on 10 or more:	\$3,250 per person , standard twin occupancy;
UB-Ulgii round-trip airfare:	\$480 per person
Optional single supplement:	\$550 per person , (including a single tent)

LAND PRICES INCLUDE:	LAND PRICES DO NOT INCLUDE:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land transportation as indicated in the itinerary based on using Toyota Land Cruiser jeeps seating 3 passengers each; • Accommodations in a standard room at hotels, gers in the countryside based on a twin occupancy and expedition style camping in the countryside; • Airport arrival and departure transfers; • Sleeping bags; expedition style tents and mats; • All meals indicated as B, L or D; • All entrance fees as indicated in the itinerary; • English speaking national guide throughout your stay; • Bottled water per person per day and unlimited supply of boiled waters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic flights; • International and domestic airfare; • Personal laundry; • Drinks not mentioned in the itinerary; • Travel insurance; • Medical evacuation costs; • Excess baggage charges; • Visa fees; • Gratuities; • Photography and video fees • Any other item not mentioned as included.

HOW TO BOOK THIS TRIP

You may book any trip with us by filling out our Trip Application Form, which you can download using Adobe Acrobat Reader and can send to us as an electronic file via e-mail at

- Info@MongoliaQuest.com

All reservations are subject to deposit of \$400 per person. Deposits are refundable until 90 days prior to the start of the program less a \$250 administrative fee. Please arrange a wire transfer to Mongolia Quest bank account as per following instructions:

Beneficiary name: MONGOLIA QUEST LLC

Beneficiary's address:

Suite #00, Apt.26B, 1st Horoo, 13th Sud-district, Sukhbaatar District,
Ulaanbaatar 14230, Mongolia;

Tel: (976) 7000 9747

Email: info@MongoliaQuest.com

Beneficiary's account number: 3005111070

Beneficiary's bank name: Golomt bank

Beneficiary's bank address:

Monnis branch

3rd floor, Monnis tower, Chinggis avenue

Khoroo #1, Sukhbaatar district

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Beneficiary's bank swift code: GLMTMNUB

Once we receive your trip application form, we will send you information about how to wire your deposit to us, and a confirmation letter with information related with visa and international airfare reservations. You will also receive our pre-departure Travel Guide, which will include information on weather, suggested reading list, a list of items to pack, etc.

About 4 weeks prior to your arrival date, we will send you Final Departure Information which will include your final itinerary along with any other necessary updated information regarding the logistics of your trip.

PAYMENT AND CANCELLATION POLICY

As mentioned above, a deposit of \$400 per person is required to reserve space for the trip that you have chosen. Full payment is due 90 days prior to the start of the trip. In the case of a cancellation, please contact us in written form.

Notification of cancellation must be received in writing by Mongolia Quest. At the time, we receive your written cancellation, the following penalties will apply:

- **Up to 90 days** prior to departure: **\$250 per person** handling fee;
- **89-60 days** prior to departure: **20% of the trip cost** per person;
- **60-45 days** prior to departure: **50% of the trip cost** per person;
- **44-30 days** prior to departure: **75% of the trip cost**, per person;
- **29 days** prior to departure, or after the trip starts: **no-refund**.

Some airfares may be nonrefundable. Once an expedition has departed, there will be no refunds from MQ for any unused portions of the trip. The above policy also applies to all extensions and independent travel arrangements made in conjunction with this program.

Tier pricing

Our prices are based on tier pricing. At the time of booking, we will bill you for the amount based on the confirmed number of trip participants. In case the number of travelers increases at the last moment, we will reimburse the balance of your payment in accordance with the corresponding tier pricing, after you return home.

TRAVEL NOTES

How to get to Mongolia

The official Mongolian international civil flight carriers Mongolian Airlines or MIAT. Currently it serves flights between Beijing, Seoul, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Bangkok and Frankfurt. Other popular airlines include Asiana, Pusan and Turkish airlines. South Korea is the most common international gateway city to Ulaanbaatar. Mongolian Airlines and Turkish Airlines fly daily to/from Istanbul. If you are coming from Europe, you may also find Turkish Airlines a convenient connection. During the summer season, if no seats are available on any of these major carriers, there are ways to fly to Mongolia through local cities in China and Russia. Please contact us for more information. The seats are usually in high demand and booking needs to be done well in advance.

Visa Information

U.S, Canadian, Japanese, Australian and citizens of most European counties are allowed to enter Mongolia without a visa for up to 30 days. All other nationals are required to get a visa before entering Mongolia.

THE LIST OF THE COUNTRIES TO BE EXEMPTED FROM VISA REQUIREMENTS TO VISIT MONGOLIA UP TO 30 DAYS IN THE YEARS OF 2023-2025

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Czech Republic • Republic of Austria • Kingdom of Belgium • Hungary • Hellenic Republic • Kingdom of Denmark • Kingdom of Spain • Italian Republic • Republic of Latvia • Republic of Lithuania • Swiss Confederation • Republic of Bulgaria • Republic of Ireland • Republic of Philippines | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principality of Liechtenstein • Grand Duchy of Luxembourg • Republic of Malta • Kingdom of the Netherlands • Republic of Poland • Portuguese Republic • Slovak Republic • Republic of Slovenia • Republic of Finland • Republic of Croatia • Canada | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kingdom of Sweden • French Republic • Republic of Estonia • Kingdom of Norway • Republic of Iceland • Republic of Cyprus • Romania • Principality of Monaco • United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland • Commonwealth of Australia • New Zealand |
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Weather

Mongolia enjoys over 280 sunny days a year. However, because Mongolia has a continental weather pattern, weather can fluctuate drastically during any given day. We recommend packing warm clothes even if you are coming during the hottest months. Our pre-departure information will provide details regarding the weather along with a suggested packing list. Layering is the best plan to be ready for a wide array of Mongolian weather patterns.

Accommodation



Newly renovated Soviet era hotels are located at some of the best locations in downtown Ulaanbaatar. They offer comfortable rooms and friendly services. There are also newer hotels like Kempinski Khan Palace, Ramada Ulaanbaatar and Best Western Inn. The countryside accommodations are arranged in “ger camps,” which provide authentic nomadic felt tents with centralized bathroom and toilet facilities located nearby. They offer clean, comfortable beds and plentiful meals.

Safety

Mongolia is devoid of any political, religious and ethnic sectarian conflicts and is considered one of the safest countries in the world for international travelers. However, like in any other country, crimes do happen, so a good sense of caution and respect shown to the locals can help to avoid unnecessary confrontations. Mongolians are generally hospitable people who love to interact with foreigners.

Food



Mongolia’s capital, Ulaanbaatar, hosts an excellent collection of fine restaurants of international cuisine. In the countryside, tour establishments offer hearty meals with a balance of meat and vegetables. Meat in Mongolians excellent in that the whole country is essentially “free-range” terrain. Even your strictest dietary restrictions can now be met with proper information in advance and preparation by us.

Information about Currency and Payment Methods

Mongolia's national currency is called tugrik and the exchange rate is about 3,400 tugrik to a US dollar. Major currencies can be exchanged at the hotels and pawnshops, and ATM machines are widely available throughout Ulaanbaatar and provincial centers. However, Australian dollars can usually only be exchanged at banks. Traveler's checks can be cashed at banks and major credit cards are accepted at most places in the capital, but only Mongolian cash is accepted in the countryside. We recommend that you travel with Mongolian national currency equal to at least \$200 when touring in the countryside.

Souvenirs

Like any other places, Mongolia offers great souvenirs ranging from camel wool sweaters to cashmere scarves and traditional wooden puzzle games. Mongolian vodkas can be an excellent gift. At several stores, you can also find a range of traditional Mongolian musical instruments such as the famed Morin Khuur or "horse headed fiddle." Bargaining is not very customary; most items are sold for the price on their labels. If you plan to shop for souvenirs, we recommend purchasing locally as many items as possible since your purchases will be a direct contribution to the local community.

Travel Insurance

With Mongolia stretching over 1.5 million square kilometers and its population concentrated in the cities, we will be traveling through some remote areas away from good roads and medical facilities. We strongly recommend that you consider getting standard emergency medical evacuation insurance as a means to protect yourself from unexpected accidents that can happen during any trip. Nothing is better than traveling with peace of mind knowing that you have prepared for the trip as much as possible in advance.

Traveling with Mongolia Quest

Because it is still a developing country, traveling in Mongolia requires a sense of humor and patience. New roads and bridges are being built every year, but the paved road system is still limited in the countryside. You may experience flight delays and find road conditions bumpy and dusty. But the experience of traveling in Mongolia will far exceed some personal compromises in comfort. We like to say that the best part of traveling in Mongolia is spontaneous events and interactions, which lead to unexpected interactions, discoveries, and experiences that will make your trip unique and memorable. At Mongolia Quest, we ensure the integrity of your overall itinerary but at the same time, will go out of our way to make necessary changes in order to enrich your travel experience with us.

ENJOY YOUR TRIP!