



Mongolia: From Sunrise to Sunset

Mongolian National Park series



Eastern steppes, Photo by Badral Yondon

Trip dates: August 14 - 28, 2020

Trip summary

Join us on an epic journey through the far east and western part of Mongolia together with local experts, visiting some of the most obscure—and most scenic—sites not visited by regular travelers. Meet Kazakh hunters with their trained Golden Eagles, as well as look for herds of the largest population of hooved mammals outside of Africa. Close to a million Mongolian white-tailed gazelles roam in the eastern steppes who have no apparent migratory patterns and are true nomadic animals similar to the people sharing the same land. Not many adventurers know that Mongolia's vast grasslands are seven times the size of Serengeti and the human population density in this region is the lowest in the country. The trip is perfect for adventurers with cameras who love natural landscapes as well as local culture and cuisine.

Tour Map



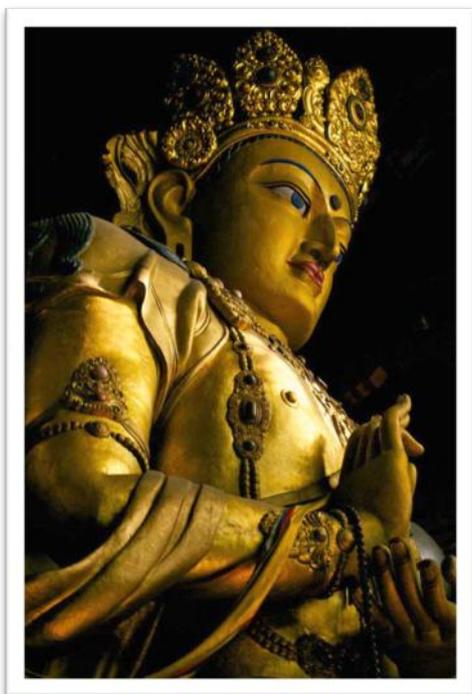
DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 Arrival

Upon arrival at the airport, transfer to a centrally located hotel in downtown Ulaanbaatar. In the evening, we will provide your pre-trip briefing and host a welcome dinner at a fine local restaurant. (Hotel Blue Sky or similar; D)

Day 2 Ulaanbaatar

Spend this day exploring sights and sounds of Mongolia's capital. Begin this morning with a private blessing with a Buddhist monk at Gandan, the country's largest monastery. An imposing 90-foot-tall statue of Megjid Janraisag (*Avalokites-vara* in Sanskrit) stands in the largest temple in the monastery. This statue is considered the religious symbol of Mongolia's independence and democracy after the country's democratic transition in 1990. When a Mongolian student in the mid - 1990s discovered fragments of the original statue (which was destroyed by Soviet authorities in the 1930s) in St. Petersburg, a nationwide campaign began to collect money for rebuilding the Buddha. After years of hard work, this magnificent Buddha was resurrected and is now standing proud, as a symbol of Mongolian Buddhism.



*Statue of Avalokitesvara at Gandan Monastery
Photo by Mongolia Quest*

Next, visit the National History Museum located in downtown Ulaanbaatar. This museum offers an excellent introduction to Mongolia's history from pre-historic times through the 13th century Mongolian Empire, and on to the democratic movement of the early 1990s, which overthrew the Communist regime.

After lunch, visit the Zanabazar's Fine Arts Museum with its excellent collection of Mongolia's arts, including golden Buddha statues of the 17th century and some of the best preserved tankas in the world.

In the evening, enjoy a wonderful performance of traditional Mongolian music and dance, featuring Khoomii or “throat” singing, followed by dinner at a fine local restaurant. (Hotel Blue Sky or similar; B, L, D)

Day 3 Dornod Choibalsan

In the morning, transfer to the airport for your domestic flight to the eastern steppe capital of Choibalsan. Eastern Mongolia is now home to world’s last remaining wilderness steppe ecosystem and such animals as the Mongolian white-tailed gazelle and a host of rare birds are found in the area. Upon arrival, begin driving eastward to Lake Buir via the famous Menengiin Steppe (approx. 350 km). Overnight in tents. (Approx. 3-4 hours driving; Tent camp; L, D)

Day 4 Buir Lake

In the morning, continue driving towards Buir Lake. We will stop at a border checkpoint to get our pass to travel in the special border zone of Mongolia and Russian. Eastern steppes are known for their lush grasslands throughout the region and probably this is why biggest concentration of the Mongolian gazelle one can see here. Enter one of the biggest stretches of unfenced land in the country known as the famous steppes of Minen stretching for about 100 km west of Buir lake. Enjoy a pack lunch along the way.

In the late afternoon, arrive at Buir Lake and overnight in tents on the bank of Khalkhiin River, one of eastern Mongolia’s largest rivers. Overnight in tents.

(Approx. 4-5 hours driving; Tent camp; B, L, D).

Day 5 Ikh

Burkhand / Khalkh gol

We will pack in the morning and continue driving



southeast, passing by the Ikh Burkhand,

Ikh Burkhand Photo by Badral Yondon

considered as one of the largest Buddhist heritage sites in the country. A large figure of Buddha has been made on a hillside facing towards the sky, the only Buddhist architecture of its kind in the country. We'll continue driving south until we arrive at our next camp site on the beautiful valley of the Khalkh River, near Sumber village. Overnight in tents. (Approx. 7 hours driving; Tent camp; B, L, D)

Day 6 Matad

Our journey will continue today on the eye-stretching eastern Mongolian steppe; here, there will be opportunities to spot herds of the famous Mongolian gazelles. We will make frequent stops to inspect local flora and fauna and at a military outpost on the Mongolian-Chinese border for travel permission. In the afternoon, arrive at the group of lakes known as Tashkhai Lakes, some of which appear or dry out, depending on the year's rainfall.

Continue onto Matad and overnight in tents at one of the lakes. (Approx. 6 hours driving; Tent Camp; B, L, D)



Mongolia Gazelle Photo by Badral Yondon

Day 7 Choibalsan

We will turn westward towards Choibalsan where on the outskirts we will spend our last evening in tents. Time permitting, visit Toson Hulstai Park. Administered by The Nature Conservancy, this is a kidney-shaped chunk of the Eastern Steppe that sprawls across two of Mongolia's eastern provinces and five different counties, or soums. Altogether, Toson Hulstai covers nearly 1.2 million acres – an area larger than the state of Rhode Island. Great migratory herds of Mongolian gazelle roam here with grey wolves, Siberian marmots, eastern moose, red deer, roe deer, corsac foxes, Pallas' cats, and Daurian hedgehogs, alongside six of the world's 13 crane species, and nesting populations of golden eagle, steppe eagle, saker falcon, Amur falcon, red-footed falcon, lesser kestrel,

and black vulture. Overnight in tents with a farewell dinner for this phase of our trip, arranged by our chef. (Approx. 6 hours driving; Tent Camp; B, L, D)

Day 8 Ulaanbaatar

Fly back to Ulaanbaatar. Rest during the remainder of the day. Enjoy dinner at one of the centrally located restaurants. (Hotel Ulaanbaatar or similar; B, L, D)

Day 9 Hovd province / Mt. Tsambagarav

Today, fly west to the Hovd, one of the western provinces of Mongolia which is home to the largest number of ethnic groups within Mongolia. We will have entered the western-most lands of the Mongolia proper and plan to reach the breathtaking Tsambagarav Mountain tonight, one of Mongolia's landmark peaks. The Altai mountain ecoregion is located in the territories of Russia, Mongolia, Kazakhstan and China. It encompasses mountain pristine forest ecosystems, surrounded by steppes in the north and east, and by deserts and semi-deserts in the south and west. The region includes the Altai and Sayan mountain systems and vast intermountain depressions. This region is one of the world centers of plant diversity. Its green valley is a popular summer campground for local nomads whom we will meet and with whom we will spend the night, hearing their singing and centuries-old stories. Overnight in tents.

(Tent Camp; B, L, D)



Mt. Tsambagarav, Photo by Badral Yondon

Day 10 Tsengel Khairhan Mountain

Today, we will drive into the ethnic Kazakhs' land of Bayan Olgii, stopping for lunch at the city of Olgii. In the afternoon we head towards magnificent Tsengel Khairkhan mountain – a popular summer camp for local kazakh nomads. We will visit an eagle hunter family and learn how eagles are trained for hunting. (Tent Camp; B, L, D)

Day 11 Dayan and Hurgan Lakes

Today, drive to Syrgal and the valleys of the Dayan and Hurgan Lakes, some of western Mongolia's most secluded and beautifully preserved waters. Near the Mongolia-China border, a dramatic valley includes three lakes crisscrossed by small streams, creating unforgettable scenery and myriad wildlife viewing opportunities. Overnight in tents. (Tent Camp; B, L, D)

Day 12 Dayan Hurgan Lakes

We will spend one full day at our leisure exploring the local sights, sounds, and scenery. Visit some ancient Turkik stones and petroglyphs of life-size horses dating



back to the 6-7th century AD. Overnight in tents. (Tent Camp; B, L, D)

Tolbo lake, Photo by Badral Yondon

Day 13 Ulgii

Drive back to the town of Ulgii for our final night in western Mongolia. We will visit a local mosque and town market. Overnight in a local hotel. (Local Hotel; B, L, D)

Day 14 Ulgii / Ulaanbaatar

In the morning, transfer to the airport for our flight (3 hours) back to Ulaanbaatar. In the evening, enjoy a farewell dinner at a fine local restaurant. (Hotel Blue Sky or similar; B, L, D)



Day 15 Departure

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for departure.

B = Breakfast

L = Lunch

D = Dinner

Mongolia Quest reserves the right to alter the above itinerary if deemed necessary by travel complications, weather, health issues or other unforeseen events

Land price:

Based on 2 participants:	\$3,250 per person, twin occupancy;
Based on 3-5 participants:	\$2,970 per person, twin occupancy;
Based on 6-9 participants:	\$2,830 per person, twin occupancy;
Based on 10 or more participants:	\$2,790 per person, twin occupancy;
Domestic flight:	\$530 per person;
Optional single supplement	\$480 per person.

Land prices include:

- Cruiser jeeps seating 3 passengers each;
- Round-trip airfares for UB-Dornod and UB-Ulgii, economy class;
- Accommodations in a standard room at hotels and tents in the countryside; based on double occupancy;
- 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;
- Camel and horse riding;
- Guest lecturer's participation;
- English speaking national guide throughout your stay;
- A bottle of water per person per day and unlimited supply of boiled water.



Land prices do not include:

International and domestic airfare to Ulaanbaatar, our departure point; personal laundry and drinks not mentioned in the itinerary; travel insurance; medical evacuation costs; excess baggage charges; visa fees; gratuities; photography and video fees and 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 #504, Dalai Tower UNESCO Str 31,
Sukhbaatar District - 1 Ulaanbaatar,
Mongolia
Mongoliaquest
(976) 7000 9747
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 carrier is Mongolian Airlines or MIAT. Currently it serves flights between Beijing, Seoul, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Singapore, Berlin and Moscow. Beijing is the most common international gateway city to Ulaanbaatar. Mongolian Airlines and Air China fly daily between the two cities. Seoul, Korea is the second most popular gateway city; is served by both Mongolian Airlines and Korean



Air. If you are coming from Europe, you may also consider Russian Aeroflot in addition to MIAT. Turkish Airlines has recently started offering flights between Istanbul and Ulaanbaatar. A private airline “Hunnu” offers direct flights between Bangkok-Ulaanbaatar and Paris-Ulaanbaatar. 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.

Also, a major branch of the Trans-Siberian Railway goes through Mongolia from Moscow stopping in Irkutsk and Ulan-Ude, before stopping in Ulaanbaatar and continuing to Chinese Erlain and Beijing. The seats are usually in high demand and booking needs to be done well in advance.

Visa Information

U.S, Canadian, and Japanese citizens 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. If your visa-application requires it, we will send you an invitation letter upon request.

The following link has a list of Mongolian embassies, consulates and diplomatic missions abroad:

<http://consul.mn/05dtg.php>

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.

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 Mongolia is 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.

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 Kempinsky 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.

Information about Currency and Payment Methods

Mongolia's national currency is called tugrik and the exchange rate is about 2,000 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 travelling 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.

THANK YOU!