

A large, rugged rock formation in the Gobi Desert, composed of stacked, rounded boulders. The foreground is a grassy plain with scattered smaller rocks. The sky is clear and blue.

**ACTIVE ADVENTURES:  
GOBI WITH A CAUSE**

**(July 18 – 30, August 12-24, 2024)**



## TRIP SUMMARY



In the modern world of computers, internet and space technologies, it is difficult to find a moment to look around us more carefully, to meet some ordinary people from different cultures and to remember why we are here and what are the basic human values that matter. This trip through some of rural Mongolia's Gobi desert and central steppes will help those who like the idea of traveling with a cause, learning about a place more than a regular visitor and what is more important offering his or her personal input. We will be able to help a local school in a remote village, help rebuilding of an ancient monastery, learn about a grassroots conservation movement, which is well known around the country and help biologists and rangers of a small park to conduct their daily duties. If you care about the world and endemic cultures, if you would like to learn about Mongolia not just through a tour bus window this is a trip just for you.

## ITINERARY

### DAY 1, JUL 18: ARRIVAL



Upon arrival, meet your guide and transfer to a centrally located hotel in downtown Ulaanbaatar. In the evening, enjoy welcome dinner in one of the fine restaurants of Ulaanbaatar.

Overnight at the hotel. (Hotel Blue Sky or similar; D)

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### DAY 2, JUL 19: ULAANBAATAR - DELGERKHANGAI SOUM



We will begin driving south the Gobi desert. After a picnic lunch along the way, we will arrive at Delgerkhangai soum late in the afternoon. Delgerkhangai is one of the most scenic county towns in the region. It is overlooked by the mighty Delgerkhangai Mountain, which is home to Gobi's elusive ibex or the mountain wild goat as well as numerous archeological findings. We will stay overnight in a tent camp not far from the town. Enjoy an expedition style dinner in the evening.

(Approx. 7 hours driving; Overnight in tents; B, L, D)

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### DAY 3, JUL 20: DELGERKHANGAI



After an early morning Gobi sunrise and breakfast, travel to the county soum and enjoy a tour of the local school complex which encompasses the elementary, middle and high school of the region. We will work to make one of the class rooms turn into a colourful English language learning cabinet for the school kids of all ages. Enjoy a same lunch offered to the dormetary students of the town. Return to the camp and enjoy dinner.

(Overnight in tents; B, L, D)



## DAY 4, JUL 21: DELGERKHANGAI

In the morning, we will learn how airag (mares milk drink) is made, from milking the mares to fermenting the milk. Later, we will help to collect local onion plant known as “khomuul” and learn how to salt it for winter consumption. In the afternoon, we will drive to the foothills of the mountain and enjoy hiking to the tallest of the peaks. Return to the base camp in time for dinner.

(Overnight in tents; B, L, D)

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## DAY 5, JUL 22: ONGI MONASTERY



Today, we will begin our short overland journey west to the Ongi Monastery. In the morning, we will reach the ruins of Ongi Monastery, located on the northern tip of the Gobi desert. Ongi Monastery, once called the “Pearl of the Gobi,” was on the crossroads of Central Asian Tea Road camel caravans. We will explore the monastery ruins and surrounding hills on foot and stay in a ger camp located on the Ongi riverbanks.

(Approx. 2 hours driving; Ger Camp; B, L, D)

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## DAY 6, JUL 23: ONGI MONASTERY



Starting from mid 90s of the last century lama Bat-erdene single handedly has been working to bring this once flourishing Buddhist center back to life. Over past 20 odd years he had taught basics of Buddhist teachings to over 30 local kids and many of them now study in India and elsewhere to be coming back to help out their teacher. Recently the founding lama of this monastery Barigri Damsagdorj has been reincarnated in the Gobi and once again there is hope that this place will

come back to life in the nearest future. Each year lama Bat-erdene identifies scope of work to be accomplished around the monastery grounds and struggles to raise funds and recruit physical help. Today we will have an opportunity to meet lama Baterdene and volunteer our help to the project of his choice.

Overnight at local ger camp. (Ger Camp, B, L, D)

## **DAY 7, JUL 24: SAIKHAN OVOO AND ONGI RIVER**



Ongi river is one of few which flows down to the Gobi desert. For millennia it was feeding the Ulaan Nuur lake encompassing an area of over 30 square km at some point. It is mentioned in historic books describing the Genghis Khaan conquests. However because of unrestricted mining activities in the country the only river feeding it was disrupted and in a matter of few years the lake dried up.

Today we will have chance to meet some of the local activists who have started the Ongi River movement back in 1999. Thanks to them some 36 mines were closed one year and the river Ongi came back after being disrupted for few years. The leader of the movement Mr. Munkhbayar Tsestgee had received Goldman prize for his role. Visit various projects run by the organization and meet herder members who are learning to grow vegetables and berries to supplement their income.

Dinner and overnight in the ger camp. (Ger Camp, B, L, D)

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## **DAY 8, JUL 25: ONGI MONASTERY - KHARAKHORUM**



After breakfast, drive to Kharakhorum, built by Genghis Khan's son, Ogodei, to serve as the capital of the Mongol Empire. Forty years after its construction, Kharakhorum was abandoned and the capital was moved to Khanbalik, what is now called Beijing. Few traces remain of this once-magnificent city, but nearby Erdene Zuu Monastery was reputedly built from Kharakhorum's ruins in the 16th century. Mongolia's largest monastery

and a place of Buddhist activity for centuries, Erdene Zuu's temples are richly decorated with spectacular Buddhist art. In the afternoon, begin the explorations of the Kharakhorum town. Begin with Erdenezuu Monastery, surrounded by 400 meters wall with 108 stupas. At its' height, the monastery housed over 60 temples and 5,000 monks. Discover the surrounding area including historical monuments located outside of its walls.

Overnight in gers. (Ger Camp; B, L, D)

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## **DAY 9, JUL 26: ARCHEOLOGICAL WALK / TONYUKUK MONUMENT**

In the morning, we will visit the former site of the Kharakhorum central buildings and help to clean the area. A joint German-Mongolian archeological expedition has been working in the area for the past few years. Later in the afternoon, we will travel to the Tonyukuk monument located in the north of the city, belonging to a 7th century Turkic state, who ruled in the area. Return to the camp for dinner and overnight.

(Ger Camp; B, L, D)

## DAY 10, JUL 27: HUSTAI NATIONAL PARK



(Moilt Ger Camp; B, L, D)

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In the morning, drive to the Hustai National Park, home to world's last remaining wild horses known as a takhi. The last wild horse was spotted in Mongolia in the 1960s and since then, the species was considered extinct. But in 1992, a Dutch non-profit organization brought in over one dozen of the horses from private captivity and since then, the population has grown to be over 250 this year. We will camp in the Tonyukuk monuments, center of the reserve, surrounded by wildlife. Enjoy a dinner and overnight in gers.

## DAY 11, JUL 28: HUSTAI NATIONAL PARK



We devote this day to work with local researchers and rangers to assist with their daily work. Each person will be assisted a job and spend the day under supervision of a local researcher or ranger. Lunch boxes will be packed and we reconvene for dinner and overnight.

(Moilt Ger Camp; B, L, D)

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## DAY 12, JUL 29: HUSTAI NATIONAL PARK - ULAANBAATAR



In the morning, we further explore the park and after lunch transfer back to Ulaanbaatar for individual exploration of the city. In the evening enjoy a cultural show followed by a farewell dinner in a fine local restaurant.

(Hotel Blue Sky or similar; B, L, D)

**DAY 13, JUL 30: DEPARTURE**

After breakfast, we will transfer to the airport for departure. (B)

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**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:	<b>\$3,800 per person</b> , twin occupancy;
Based on 3-5 participants:	<b>\$3,650 per person</b> , twin occupancy;
Based on 6-9 participants:	<b>\$3,420 per person</b> , twin occupancy;
Based on 10-12 participants:	<b>\$3,260 per person</b> , twin occupancy;
Optional single supplement:	<b>\$470 per person</b> ; (including a single tent)

LAND PRICES INCLUDE:	LAND PRICES DO NOT INCLUDE:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4x4 vehicles seating 3-5 passengers each;</li> <li>• Accommodations in a standard room at hotels based on double occupancy;</li> <li>• Airport arrival and departure transfers;</li> <li>• Sleeping bags, expedition style tents, and mats;</li> <li>• All meals indicated as B, L or D;</li> <li>• All entrance fees as indicated in the itinerary;</li> <li>• Optional horse riding;</li> <li>• Riding helmets;</li> <li>• Horse wranglers;</li> <li>• Field cook;</li> <li>• English speaking national guide throughout your stay;</li> <li>• A bottle of water per person per day and unlimited supply of boiled water.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International and domestic airfare;</li> <li>• Personal laundry;</li> <li>• Drinks not mentioned in the itinerary;</li> <li>• Travel insurance;</li> <li>• Medical evacuation costs;</li> <li>• Excess baggage charges;</li> <li>• Visa fees;</li> <li>• Gratuities;</li> <li>• Photography and video fees</li> <li>• Any other item not mentioned as included.</li> </ul>



## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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

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