

A group of wild sheep and goats, likely Mongolian gazels or similar species, are gathered on a rocky, grassy hillside. The animals are brown and white, with some having prominent curved horns. They are looking in various directions, some towards the camera. The background is a clear, light sky.

IN SEARCH OF MONGOLIA'S RARE WILIFE

Sep 2 – 17, 2024

TRIP SUMMARY



Mongolia evokes images of immense grasslands, desert and mountain wilderness, limitless blue skies, and nomads roaming the ancient steppes on their sturdy horses. And many will have heard of the Silk Road and Genghis Khan, the world conqueror. But few realize that Mongolia is home to some of the rarest and most elusive wildlife species on Earth. These include Snow Leopard, big horn Argali sheep, Goitered and Mongolian Gazelles, the Asian Wild Horse (Takhi or Przewalski's Horse), the Mongolian Wild Ass (Hulan), the last wild Bactrian camels (Havtgai), and, rarest of all the endangered Gobi Bear (Mazalai).

On this exclusive journey we shall meet with members of a local start-up initiatives to protect endangered snow leopards as well a successful NGO running a National Park to re-introduce wild Takhi horses and we shall have a meeting with a monk, who has started a local NGO helping less fortunate ones in the city of Harhorin. Join this exclusive expedition through the mountains of the Gobi Desert and steppes of Central Mongolia to search together for these rare mammals as well as seldom-seen bird specialties of Inner Asia, such as the Mongolian Ground Jay, Altai Snowcock, and Pallas's Sandgrouse.

ITINERARY

DAY 1 – SEPT 2. ARRIVAL

Upon arrival at Chinggis Khaan International Airport in Ulaanbaatar, meet your guide and transfer to your hotel. After some rest, enjoy a brief city tour including a visit to the Zaisan Hill where you can get bird's eye view of the city. In the evening, enjoy a welcome dinner at one of the city's fine local restaurants. Overnight at hotel. (Hotel Bayangol or similar; D)

DAY 2 – SEPT 3. GUN GALUUT NATURE RESERVE



This morning, we will drive east of Ulaanbaatar, stopping along the way at the biggest equestrian statue in the world commemorating the world renowned Genghis Khan (known in his native Mongolia as Chinggis Khaan), who in his constitution (known as Yasa) devoted several chapters to protection of water sources and places of natural beauty. After a brief stop at the monument we'll continue on to Gun Galuut reserve, situated in a picturesque valley of the Kherlen River. We will spend the afternoon exploring the rich variety of habitats at this private reserve managed by the local community. Several wetland areas typically contain a variety of waterbirds, possibly, including the globally threatened White-naped Crane. We also have an excellent chance of observing the resident herd of Argali, the big horn sheep with the most impressive horns. We will drive back to Ulaanbaatar for overnight after dinner at the camp.

(Approx. 4 hours of driving; Blue Sky hotel; B, L, D)

DAY 3 – SEPT 4. IKH NART NATURE RESERVE

Drive to Ikh Nart Nature Reserve, one of 3 national parks in the country managed by an independent non-governmental organization. Established in 1996, Ikh Nart covers an area of about 66,000 hectares of grassland and steppe and is home to a significant population of Argali Sheep. Since 2003, Earthwatch volunteers have helped Dr. Richard Reading and Ganchimeg Wingard study the ecology and biology of the area's wildlife. These researchers are working to develop long-term conservation management plans for individual species as well as for Ikh Nart. Dinner and overnight at a local ger camp. (Local ger camp; B, L, D)



DAY 4 – SEPT 5 UMNUGOVI PROVINCE

Today we drive to South Gobi, the southernmost province in the country. Known as the coldest desert in the world, Gobi has about it the greatest air of mystery, perhaps because it lies between the Siberian wilderness to the north and the Tibetan Plateau to the south. In the adventure-filled days that follow, we will spend time in and around Gobi Gurvansaikh, the largest of Mongolia's National Parks comprising over 2.7 million hectares. The peaks of this spectacular high desert mountain range that form the core of the park will be constantly in view as we drive to our comfortable ger camp. En route we will watch for flocks of Pallas's Sandgrouse, herds of Goitered (Black-tailed) Gazelles and other desert wildlife.

In the evening we check into our ger camp, dinner, overnight. (Approx. 7 hours of driving; Ger Camp; B, L, D)

DAY 5 – SEPT 6. YOL VALLEY, FLAMING CLIFFS



In the morning, we will drive to Yol Valley within Gobi Gurvansaikh National Park. Gurvansaikh means "Three Beauties" describing the park's most prominent peaks, and Yol – refers to the Bearded Vulture or Lammergeier. In the desert's hierarchy of raptors and scavengers, the Lammergeier arrives last to the carcass to feast on the bones; to get at the marrow, these enormous yet surprisingly graceful birds carry the bones high in the air and drop them on the rocks below. The Yol is one of most beautiful valleys in the park, and exploring the gorge allows a rare chance of watching

wild Argali sheep grazing in the grassy saddles and Siberian Ibex clambering with uncanny skill along steep rocky ledges. Many interesting birds such as the butterfly-winged Wallcreeper and the exceedingly rare Koslov's Accentor also inhabit this magical spot. We will also visit a Natural History Museum located at the entrance to the park.



After having lunch and enjoying some free time we will drive in the afternoon to the Flaming Cliffs, a red sandstone escarpment stretching above the desert for 3 kilometers, where the first dinosaur eggs known to science were found by the Roy Chapman Andrews expedition in early 20th century. Since then, paleontological expeditions from many countries, including the U.S, Poland, Japan and Russia, have uncovered thousands of fossils of many species. Each year rain and wind

reveal yet more fossils and every summer new discoveries are made. Weather permitting, we'll enjoy an al fresco dinner as the setting sun enflames the cliffs. Returning to our ger camp after dark we will watch in our jeep lights for species of jerboas, distinctive Asian desert rodents similar to New World kangaroo rats (Approx. 4 hours of driving total; Ger Camp; B, L, D)

DAY 6 – SEPT 7. KHONGORYN ELS DUNES



After breakfast we'll set out on a drive to Khongoryn Els, the Gobi's largest sand dunes and among the most spectacular in the world. En route we'll explore the small mountain ranges of Bayan Dalai and Zoulen, stopping along the way for a picnic lunch. At nearby Tukhim an ancient dry lake-bed, we will look for a local population of Goitered Gazelle and Mongolian Wild Ass or Hulan. There are three species of wild ass in the world – the African Wild Ass, the Tibetan Kiang and the Asiatic Wild Ass or Onager, of which the

Khulan is a subspecies All of them are desert animals and all threatened with extinction. Today Mongolia holds one of the last remnants – about 20,000 animals – of this once abundant species.

After a picnic lunch, we'll drive to a local ger camp. A river that runs along the base of the dunes often attracts flocks of Pallas's Sandgrouse and other birds drawn to the scarce desert water source. In the beautiful light of late afternoon, we will enjoy "sundowners" in the dunes as their colors change. Overnight in gers. (Approx. 5 hours of driving; Ger Camp; B, L, D)

DAY 7 – SEPT 8. SEVREI MOUNTAIN RANGE

In the morning we'll drive along the foothills of the tallest dunes and enter the mountains of Sevrei, stopping along the way at Adag water hole for a chance to look out for migratory birds on their way to warmer lands and crossing an area of Saxaul (*Haloxylon ammodendron*), a small, salt-tolerant tree, whose stands constitute the closest thing to a forest in the deserts of Central Asia.



This plant community harbors numerous characteristic species including several bizarre looking parasitic plants that attach themselves to the roots of the Saxaul trees and several very localized birds such as the Saxaul Sparrow and Mongolian Ground Jay. Also this area is great for finding Great Gerbil, the largest of the world's gerbils. Overnight in tents. (We will have a ger set up for meals and get together events).

Approx. 3 hours driving; Tents; B, L, D)

DAY 8,9. SEPT 9-10. SEVREI MOUNTAIN RANGE

Stories of Snow Leopards living in the mountains of Sevrei are told by old and young in this area. There are many eyewitnesses who have seen them and survived dangerous encounters and there is no household that has not lost an animal or two to these big cats. Following a local herder we will be visiting one of only 2 water holes in the Sevrei Range, where all the creatures of these mountains come for water. With help of motion sensor cameras some amazing footages of Snow Leopards were taken at this spot. Our chances of seeing one of these elusive predators is extremely remote, but we will be searching in prime habitat and might get lucky.

During our time in the mountains we shall have a chance to interact with members of the local community group who have come together in order to protect these elusive cats and start a local research and conservation fund. Overnight in tents at the same base camp. (Tents; B, L, D)

DAY 10. SEPT 11. CHONO HARAIKH

Today we get out of the mountains and camp to the west of Khongoryn Els dunes in a place called Chono Harhaikh. Spend the afternoon in the area looking for gazelle and other big mammals. Overnight in tents. (Tents; B, L, D)

DAY 10. SEPT 11. CHONO HARAIKH

Today we turn north, heading towards Bayan Mountains, we will inspect an unmatched concentration of exceptionally well-defined ancient rock carvings. The vast basin between the Nemegt and Bayan ranges are well known for an abundance of Mongolian Gazelle, as well as Goitered Gazelle. We will spend the night in the Bayan mountains, with excellent views of two of the highest mountain ranges in the Gobi – Ikh Bogd and Baga Bogd. (Approx. 5 hours of driving; Tents; B, L, D)

DAY 12. SEPT 13. OROG LAKE, BAYANKHONGOR



Today we cross dramatic mountain valleys of Ikh Bogd to Orog Lake, one of few perennial water bodies in the Gobi. Depending on water level, thousands of migratory birds stop to rest and feed here on their southward journeys in fall. We camp on the shores of lake Orog or Holbooljin, depending on where most number of birds are. Dinner and overnight in a local hotel. (Approx. 6 hours; Tents; B, L,

DAY 13. SEPT 14. KHARAKHORUM



After an early morning breakfast, we will begin our overland journey towards Kharakhorum (6-7 hours driving), stopping for a picnic lunch on the way. The construction of Kharakhorum city was completed during the reign of Ogedei Khan, Genghis Khan's third son who, in 1228, inherited the empire his father created. It is located within the beautiful valley of the Orkhon River, which bears hundreds of historically and archeologically significant sites going back 2000 years.

These burial sites, deer stones, and ruins of cities all pre-date the time of Genghis Khan. Unfortunately, Kharakhorum did not survive the perils of medieval struggles between different Mongolian clans or invasions from abroad. It was completely destroyed by the Ming Dynasty's army in the 14th century after the collapse of Mongolia's Yuan Dynasty in China. Its remains were used in the construction of Mongolia's first and largest Buddhist Monastery, Erdenezuu, which stands today.

DAY 14, SEPT 15 HUSTAI NATIONAL PARK



Early in the morning, we'll head east to Hustai National Park, one of three sites where the wild horses, known as the Takhi or Przewalski's Horse have been reintroduced during the last two decades. After the last individuals disappeared from the wild in Mongolia in the late 1960s, genetically pure animals were bred in captivity in European zoos and have been reintroduced into three distinctive habitats in Mongolia. We will be able to observe these handsome, completely wild horses in their natural steppe habitat. Together with the

Tarpan of the European steppe – which no longer exists in a pure state – the Takhi was a dominant grazer of the arid grasslands of the Eurasian continent. This is one of the few instances in which a large mammal, extirpated in the wild, has been successfully reintroduced within its former range. Overnight at local ger camp. (Approx. 6 hours of driving; Ger camp; B, L, D)

DAY 15. SEPT 16. ULAANBAATAR



In the morning engage in optional city touring, including stops at the Gandan Monastery, the country's National History Museum and downtown stores.

In the evening we'll enjoy a farewell dinner at one of the fine restaurants in downtown. (Hotel Bayangol or similar; B, L, D)

DAY 16. SEPT 17. ULAANBAATAR

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:	\$4,800 per person , standard twin occupancy;
Based on 3-5 participants:	\$4,650 per person , standard twin occupancy;
Based on 6-9 participants:	\$4,400 per person , standard twin occupancy;
Based on 10+ participants:	\$4,150 per person , standard twin occupancy;
Optional single supplement:	\$600 per person

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 and gers in the countryside based on double occupancy; • Sleeping bags, expedition style tents and mats; • Airport arrival & departure transfers; • All meals indicated as B, L or D; • All entrance fees as indicated in the itinerary; • English speaking guide throughout your stay; • Private tutoring for field bird watching techniques; • Bottled waters per person per day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International 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 |
|--|---|--|

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!