

RANGERS CHOICE: RIDING AT THE ROOF OF LAKE HOVSGOL

Aug 1-14, 2024

TRIP SUMMARY



This special riding experience is an exclusively arranged horseback riding tour aimed at joining local Mongolian rangers to study the habitats of the endangered argali and ibex species at one of the most remote and beautiful mountains in Mongolia, known as Horidal Saridag.

Overlooking the western shore of the magnificent Lake Hovsgol, this majestic mountain range appears in the background of almost every tourist photo of the lake. Our expedition chief guide will be Mr. Tumursukh, the director of Horidal Saridag Strictly Protected Area; he will take us on exclusive horse trekking trails used only by local rangers or hunters.

There's hardly anyone who knows the lake area and its surrounding ecosystem better than Tumursukh, for he was born and grew up in the adjacent Darkhad Valley and has been a local ranger in the park for many years. Tumursukh is also a licensed wolf-hunter; in Mongolia, wolf hunting is still officially permitted in order to reduce the wolf population and thereby reduce predation of herders' livestock.

This never-before-granted access to the backdoors of the mountain will be an epic journey for those who like adventure and thrill, and a rare opportunity to contribute to the conservation efforts of these hard-working park rangers.

ITINERARY

DAY 1, AUG 1: ARRIVAL

Upon arrival at Chinggis Khan International Airport in Ulaanbaatar, meet your guide and transfer to your hotel. After resting in your hotel room, enjoy a brief city tour including a visit to Zaisan Hill where you can get bird's eye view of the city. This old Soviet period relic is a popular place for locals to hang out and offers great panoramic views of the entire 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, AUG 2: ULAANBAATAR / HATGAL VILLAGE / LAKE HOVSGOL



After breakfast, fly north to Lake Hovsgol, known also as the "Dark Blue Pearl." This magnificent lake is one of most scenic regions in Mongolia, with the foothills of the breathtaking Horidal Saridag Mountains to the west and the Siberian larch forests to the east. Upon arrival, we will begin driving to Hatgal, a village located on the southernmost point of Lake Hovsgol. We will stay in gers at the Ar Davhar eco-ger camp located on the lake. This ger camp was built intentionally to create a local sanctuary for the wildlife.

(Ger Camp; B, L, D)

DAY 3, AUG 3: HATGAL VILLAGE / ULKHUN PASS

Our epic journey begins. To save some time, we will drive about 40 km. in order to get close to our destination peaks. All our gear will be loaded in our vehicles and we will meet our horses at the campsite at Ulkhun Pass. Overnight in expedition style tents.

(Tent Camp; B, L, D)

DAY 4, AUG 4: ULKHUN PASS / HOH ASHID

The northern Taiga and the high mountains of Horidal Saridag are crisscrossed with hundreds of small streams and dozens of rivers and lakes. Today, we will be mostly trekking in the Valley of Arsain River, one of the major tributaries to Hovsgol's lake waters.

Overnight in tents. (Approx. 25 km. riding; Tent Camp; B, L, D)

DAY 5, AUG 5: HOH ASHID / ULAAN HAD RIVER



Today, we will be riding near the habitat of the ibex mountain wild sheep in the steeper rocky cliffs of the Horidal Saridag Mountain. We might be walking with our horses at certain high areas. It will get us closer to some of the highest points of the protected area.

Overnight in tents. (Approx. 25 km. riding; Tent Camp; B, L, D)

DAY 6, AUG 6: ULAAN HAD RIVER / IBEX CLIFFS



On this day, we will ride and hike along the ridges of one of the highest, but also one of the most beautiful, parts of the cliffs. This is also one of our officially designated wildlife-spotting days. These ridges hide the elusive populations of the wild mountain goats of the lake area, which at one point were considered close to extinction in the region. Even to the hardened rangers, the area offers breathtaking scenery of the surrounding mountains.

Overnight in tents. (Approx. 15 km. of trekking; Tent Camp; B, L, D)

DAY 7, AUG 7: IBEX CLIFFS / ARSAI RIVER BASIN



After an early morning breakfast, we will begin our journey to the headwaters of Arasai River, ideal habitat for Argali wild mountain sheep.

(Approx. 27 km. trekking; Tent Camp; B, L, D)

DAY 8, AUG 8: ARSAI RIVER BASIN

We will spend our second designated wildlife day to spot the Argali wild mountain sheep. This day offers a rare opportunity for rangers to spot and observe the population's condition, and to collect important scientific data.

(Approx. 25 km. riding; Tent Camp; B, L, D)

DAY 9, AUG 9: ARSAI RIVER / TOSHINT RIVER



Today, our journey will take us through remarkable scenery and geography that differ from our previous riding days. The mountain river Toshint divides Horidal Saridag Mountain, creating a unique land-shaft in the region.

Overnight in tents.

DAY 10, AUG 10: TOSHINT / MUNGASH VALLEY

We will spend today horse trekking in the southern valleys of the Horidal Mountain, exploring the different flora and fauna.

Overnight in tents. (Approx. 20 km. riding; Tent Camp; B, L, D)

DAY 11, AUG 11: MUNGASH / HOH TOLGOI / AR DAVHAR

We will conclude our riding journey by arriving at Hoh Tolgoi. In the afternoon, we will drive back to Ar Davhar eco-ger camp.

Overnight in gers. (Approx. 15 km. riding and 120 km. driving; Ger Camp; B, L, D)

DAY 12, AUG 12: LAKE HOVSGOL



We will spend one full day relaxing and trekking along the lakeshore on foot. In the afternoon, we will enjoy riding in a small boat to explore the surrounding lakeshore scenery from the lake. We will also have a group discussion with Tumursukh about what we saw and the significance of our journey to the conservation efforts of the park. We'll enjoy a hearty farewell dinner at the ger camp.

(Ger Camp; B, L, D)

DAY 13, AUG 13: MURUN / ULAANBAATAR



In the morning, we will transfer to the airport to fly back to Ulaanbaatar for our last day of explorations. Spend the remainder of the day there for last minute shopping and sightseeing. In the evening, we will enjoy a wonderful performance of traditional Mongolian music and dance, featuring Khoomii or "throat-singing", followed by a farewell dinner at a fine local restaurant.

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

DAY 14, JUN 24/SEP 7: 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:	\$3,880 per person , standard twin occupancy;
Based on 3-5 participants:	\$3,690 per person , standard twin occupancy;
Based on 6-9 participants:	\$3,450 per person , standard twin occupancy;
Based on 10+ participants:	\$3,270 per person , standard twin occupancy;
Domestic flight	\$230 per person
Optional single supplement:	\$410 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, gers 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; • Riding and pack horses; • English speaking national guide throughout your stay; • A bottle of water per person per day and unlimited supply of boiled waters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic flight; • 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

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|---|---|--|
| <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!