

SNOW LEOPARDS OF MONGOLIA

Mid August, October and February 2024

TRIP SUMMARY

Of the estimated 5,000 left snow leopards left in the world today, scientists have recorded the largest numbers in China and Mongolia, of which the latter has the easiest access both politically and logistically. These big cats have been protected in Mongolia since 1972. There are now over 30 different mountainous locations where these beautiful yet elusive cats, with an estimated population ranging from 1,000-1,500 individuals. Many different species of mammals will be encountered during the trip such as the Argali sheep and wild goat, the Ibex. Estimated travel time is little over 2 weeks. During the trip, you will visit the high peaks of Altai Mountains which will offer unparalleled exploration of the most astonishing ecosystems of Mongolia. Participants can set up camera traps or simply follow the local park rangers and biologist and follow the footsteps of these elusive but magnificent cats.

ITINERARY

DAY 1. ARRIVAL IN 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.

We will then enjoy a welcome dinner at a fine local restaurant.

Overnight at hotel. (Hotel Bayangol or similar; B, L, D)

DAY 2. WESTERN MONGOLIA

Today, we will fly to the western most part of Mongolia. We will meet our local crew and after a quick stop at a local market, begin driving to the Altai mountains where our camp site is located.

Enjoy dinner and overnight in tents or gers. (Field camp; B, L, D)

DAY 3-14. ALTAI MOUNTAINS



In the morning, we will hear a brief introduction on the region's conservation projects for snow leopard and other rare species. We will set out each day to one of the frequently sited valleys in search of the elusive cat.

Packed lunch will be provided and we will enjoy dinner at the base camp by a warm fire site.

Overnight in tents or gers. (Tent camp; B, L, D)

DAY 15. WESTERN MONGOLIA / ULAANBAATAR

In the morning, transfer back to the local town for our return flight back to Ulaanbaatar and transfer to your hotel located in the downtown Ulaanbaatar.

The rest of the afternoon is free for resting at your hotel. Dinner is independent. (Hotel Bayangol or similar; B, L, D)

(Approximately 6 hours riding; Tent camp; B, L, D)

DAY 16. HUSTAI NATIONAL PARK



In the morning, drive to the Hustai National Park, to spot the takhi wild horses in their natural habitat with a chance to photograph them. After lunch, spend the afternoon exploring the park's various sites before returning back to Ulaanbaatar.

Enjoy dinner at a local restaurant. (Hotel Bayangol or similar; B, L, D)

DAY 17. ULAANBAATAR SIGHTSEEING



In the morning, we will begin the day with a 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. Also, 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. The afternoon is free for individual sightseeing or resting.

In the evening, enjoy a traditional Mongolian performance followed by a farewell dinner at a fine local restaurant. (Hotel Bayangol or similar; B, L, D)

DAY 18. 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.

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

- 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

- 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

- 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!