



THE TRAILS OF LAKE HOVSGOL AND GOBI DESERT

MONGOLIAN NATIONAL PARKS SERIES

June 10 – 24 & Aug 24 – Sep 7, 2024

TRIP SUMMARY



Mongolia is a national park itself with a commitment to protect up to 30% of its territory. The country is an ideal destination for mountain trekking, horseback and camelback riding. “National Parks of Mongolia” is one of our series of “Active Quests,” which include trekking and riding in some of the most beautiful national parks in the country. Traveling in Mongolia on a trip that combines two or more of the currently existing 99 national parks will be an unforgettable travel experience. Our trip begins with a flight north to Lake Hovsgol, Mongolia’s “Mother Sea,” which contains 1% of the world’s fresh water. The lake is the headwaters to famous Lake Baikal, which is located not far in Siberia and is one of the oldest lakes in the world. Here, we will enjoy a two-day horseback riding tour, trekking through some of the most scenic places along the lakeshore. Later, we will drive south to the Gobi Desert, exploring the habitat areas of Argali wild sheep, gazelles, grey wolves, and snow leopards. We will also enjoy camel trekking at Khongoryn Els sand dunes in Gobi Gurvan Saikhan National Park, the largest in the park system.

ITINERARY

DAY 1, JUN 10/AUG 24: 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 a magnificent 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, JUN 11/AUG 25: ULAANBAATAR - DARKHAD VALLEY



After breakfast, fly north to Lake Hovsgol, known also as the "Dark Blue Pearl." This magnificent lake is one of the most scenic regions in the country, and is located at the foothills of the breathtaking Horidal Saridag Mountains to the west and Siberian larch forests to the east. Upon arrival, we will begin driving to Ulaan Uul county, located at Ulaan Uul Strictly Protected Area. This area is locally known as Darkhad valley, located in the very north of Mongolia almost 1000 km away from Ulaanbaatar.

Historically hard to access, this land is rich with coniferous taiga forests of Ulaan Taiga, high mountains of Horidal Saridag, and crisscrossed with hundreds of small streams, dozens of rivers and lakes.

Overnight in tents. (Tent Camp; B, L, D)

DAY 3, JUN 12/AUG 26: DARKHAD VALLEY



Spend this day hiking and horseback riding at Horidal Mountain. Enjoy a picnic lunch followed by an authentic traditional Mongolian dinner hosted by a local nomadic family.

Overnight in tents. (Tent Camp; B, L, D)

DAY 4, JUN 13/AUG 27: LAKE HOVSGOL

Today, we will drive through beautiful Hovsgol scenery to reach the Blue Pearl of Mongolia, Lake Hovsgol, an alpine lake containing 70% of Mongolia's freshwater resources. In the aftermath of the post 1990s democratic revolution in Mongolia, tourism has been developing here only along the southwestern shoreline.

Dinner and overnight in a local ger camp. (Ger Camp; B, L, D)

DAY 5, JUN 14/AUG 28: LAKE HOVSGOL



Enjoy a full day at the lake, visiting local herder families and hiking along the lakeshore. In the afternoon, enjoy kayaking in its crystal-clear water in one- and two-person kayaks.

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

DAY 6, JUN 15/AUG 29: MURUN - ULAANBAATAR



In the morning, we will drive to Murun and fly back to Ulaanbaatar for our next adventure. Lunch is independent. In the evening, enjoy dinner at a fine local restaurant.

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

DAY 7, JUN 16/AUG 30: ULAANBAATAR / IKH NART NATURE RESERVE



After breakfast, we will continue our journey to Ikh Nart Nature Reserve which was established in 1996, covering an area of about 66,000 hectares of grassland and steppe. It is home to a significant population of Mongolia Argali wild sheep. Since 2003, EarthWatch volunteers have helped Dr. Richard Reading and Ganchimeg Wingard in the study of ecology and biology of the park. These researchers are working to develop long-term conservation management plans for individual species as well as for Ikh Nart Park itself. Enjoy dinner and overnight at a local ger camp.

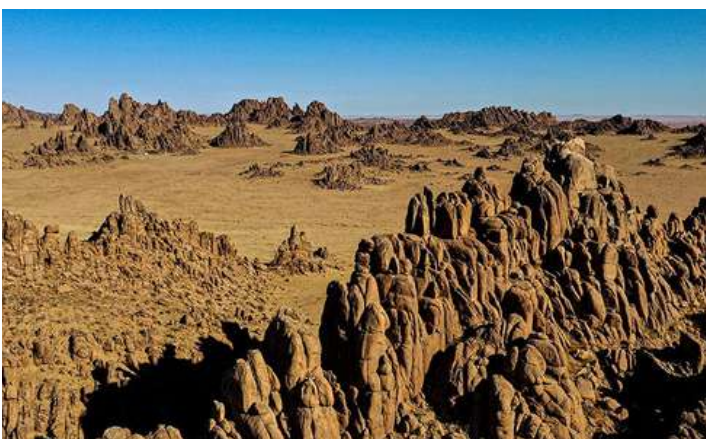
(Approx. 6 hours driving; Local Ger Camp, B, L, D)

DAY 8, JUN 17/AUG 31: IKH NART NATURE RESERVE

Enjoy a full day of exploration of the park and its surrounding areas. Projects taking place in the park are administered by a number of organizations including the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, the Denver Zoological Foundation, and the University of Vermont. This park has become an incubator for young researchers not only from Mongolia but from all over the world.

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

DAY 9, JUN 18/SEP 1: IKH GAZRIIN CHULUU



Today we continue our journey deeper into the Gobi desert and head towards Ikh Gazriin Chuluu nature preserve. Despite the fact that it received its status only a few years ago, it is known as one of the most beautiful natural settings in Mongolia with granite rock formations which are unmatched.

Stay in local ger camp. (Approx. 6 hours driving; Local Ger Camp)

DAY 10, JUN 19/SEP 2: TSAGAAN SUVRAGA, SOUTHERN GOBI DESERT

Today, we drive through some different parts of the Gobi terrain, stopping for a picnic lunch at Tsagaan Suvraga locality – white sandstone cliffs, from where a fantastic view opens over the desert floor. Colors of the rocks range from white and yellow to pink and deep red.

Continue onto the South Gobi, stopping at the provincial center of Dalanzadgad for refueling.

Overnight in a ger camp. (Approx. 6 hours driving; Local Ger Camp)

DAY 11, JUN 20/SEP 3: YOL VALLEY, AYALDAI VALLEY



In the morning, enter Mongolia's largest national park Gobi Gurvan Saikhan, stretching over 2.7 million hectares. It is home to the elusive snow leopard, ibex mountain goat, Gobi bear (Mazalai), Havtgai wild camel, goitered gazelle, Argali sheep, the Bearded Vulture, and Mongolian Jay. We will explore one of the most famous gorges in the park, Yol Valley, named after the rare Lammergeyer or Bearded Vulture, who are known for their ability to break big bones to get marrow. After a picnic lunch, we will continue onto the Khongoryn Els sand dunes, which stretch over 100 miles from east to west. We'll stay overnight in a tent camp at the secluded Ayaldai Valley; we will enjoy dinner with camel wranglers this evening.

(Tent Camp; B, L, D)

DAY 12, JUN 21/SEP 4: KHONGORYN ELS DUNES



After breakfast, we will begin our camel trekking journey across the vast Khongoryn Els sand dunes. In the late afternoon, we will enjoy climbing the tallest of the dunes.

Overnight in gers. (Approx. 4 hours camel trekking; Ger Camp; L, D)

DAY 13, JUN 22/SEP 5: HAVTSGAIT PETROGLYPHS, FLAMING CLIFFS



After another magnificent sunrise, we will drive to the valley of Dalanzadgad, literally meaning “70 springs.” According to locals, at some point there were 70 springs in the valley, and this is how the city received its name. En route, we will stop and explore Havtsgait Petroglyphs, an amazing collection of early Bronze Age rock carvings located on the top of a mountain range in Baruun Saikhan. Next, we will transfer to a ger camp for lunch. In the late afternoon, we will drive to the legendary

Flaming Cliffs, red sandstone bluffs stretching over 3 km in width, where hundreds of dinosaur fossils have been discovered. Paleontological expeditions from many countries, including from the U.S, Poland, Japan and Russia, have worked here for past 90 years. Each year, rain and wind reveal yet more fossils, and every summer, more specimens are collected. Return to ger camp in the evening.

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

DAY 14, JUN 23/SEP 6: 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 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 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:	\$3,950 per person , standard twin occupancy;
Based on 3-5 participants:	\$3,780 per person , standard twin occupancy;
Based on 6-9 participants:	\$3,530 per person , standard twin occupancy;
Based on 10+ participants:	\$3,350 per person , standard twin occupancy;
Domestic flight	\$340 per person
Optional single supplement:	\$510 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 a twin occupancy and expedition style camping in the countryside; • 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; • English speaking national guide throughout your stay; • Bottled 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

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