

NATURAL HISTORY OF MONGOLIA

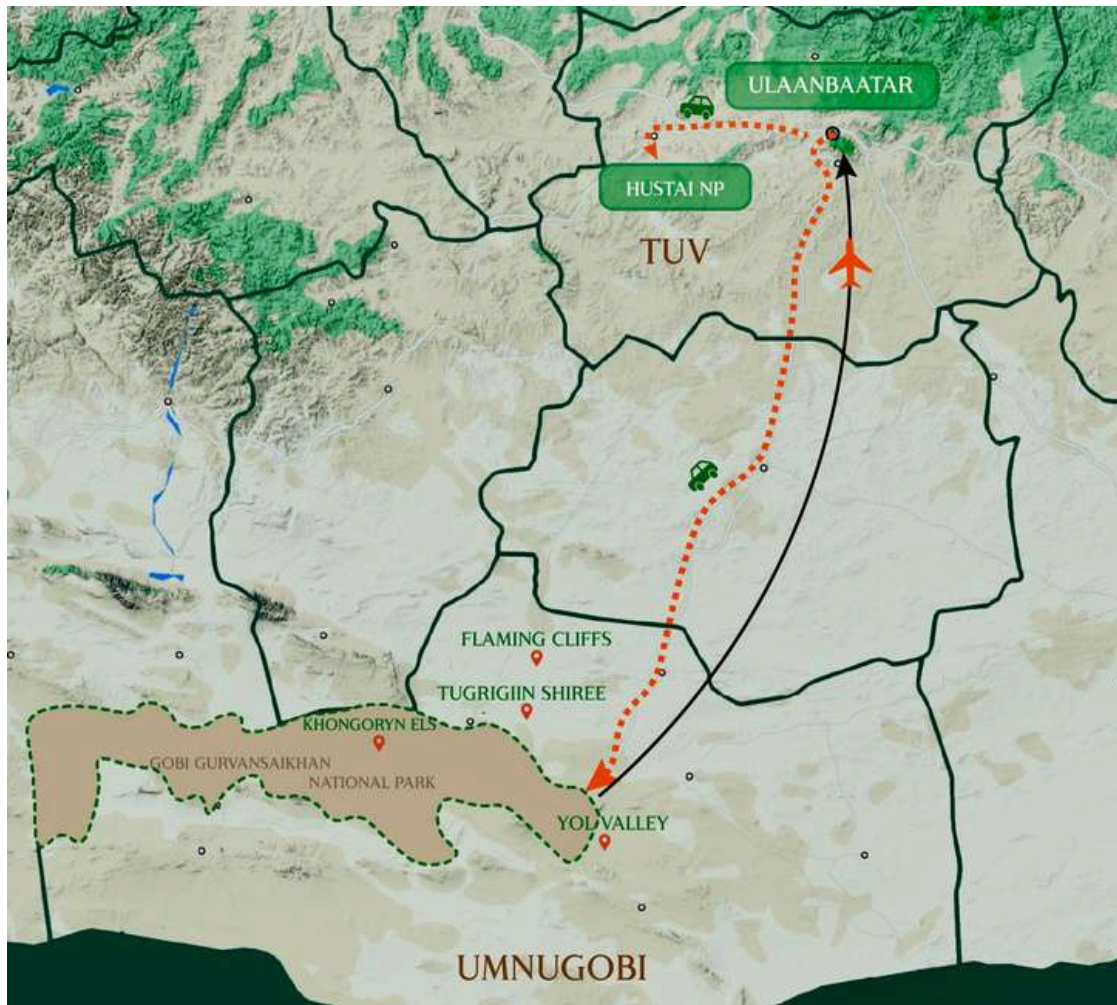
(Date: May 24-June 8, 2025)

TRIP SUMMARY

This expedition is arranged in the central and western remote part of the Gobi desert where some of the most significant dinosaur fossils have been discovered. Your trip begins in Ulaanbaatar, where you will visit several of the best-known museums and sites such as the Laboratory of the Mongolian Institute of Paleontology. We will then travel to the heart of the Gobi desert from where we will continue traveling overland to the central and western part of the Gobi Desert where some of the most scenic and obscure landscapes await us. This part of the Gobi belongs from the middle to the late Cretaceous period, about 90-60 million years ago, which was a key period for dinosaur evolution.

Alongside the exploration of world famous paleontology sites, there will be an opportunity to explore some of Gobi's best known birding sites, making this trip a rich combination of natural history and bird watching program in one of world's most fascinating desert ecosystems.

TRIP MAP



The Flaming Cliffs, also known as Bayanzag, are famed for their striking red sandstone formations, which glow magnificently under the sun's rays. This geological wonder is not only visually stunning but also a significant paleontological site, yielding some of the most remarkable dinosaur fossils ever discovered. Situated within the expansive and mysterious Gobi Desert, the Flaming Cliffs stand as a testament to the ancient history and natural splendor of Mongolia.

The Gobi Desert itself is a land of contrasts and extremes, offering a unique blend of rugged terrain, vast open spaces, and serene landscapes. It is a place where the silence of the desert is punctuated by the whispers of the wind, and the endless horizon invites visitors to embark on a journey of discovery. Rich in both natural beauty and cultural heritage, the Gobi Desert provides an unparalleled experience for those seeking adventure and tranquility.

ITINERARY

DAY 1. ARRIVAL IN ULAANBAATAR

Upon arrival at the airport, you will be welcomed by your Naturetrek guide and transferred to a centrally located hotel located near downtown Ulaanbaatar.

In the afternoon, we will visit Hunnu Mall, where a temporary field museum of Paleontology is in display. We will then pay a visit to the Paleontological laboratory of Mongolia. Here, we will have hands on experience about how the institution runs and carries out its research.

In the evening, enjoy a welcome dinner at a fine local restaurant. Ulaanbaatar offers a contrast between ancient traditions and the dawning of a 21st century democracy, which can be seen in the traditional gers and Buddhist monasteries coexisting with modern high-rises.

(Hotel Blue Sky or similar; D)



DAY 2. TO THE GOBI DESERT

After breakfast, begin driving south to the Gobi Desert, stopping for a lunch en route at the town of Mandalgobi. During our ride, you will observe the north central part of Mongolian ecosystem changing into that of the dry, semi-desert type of the Alsha Gobi Desert.

Transfer to your ger camp near the Gobi Gurvan Saikhan National Park.

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

DAY 3. KHONGORYN ELS DUNE

After breakfast, drive to the towering Hongoryn Els sand dunes, the largest of the dunes in the Gobi desert. This amazing landscape offers yet another of Gobi's diverse eco-systems.

The scenery of Khongoryn Els is brilliant with Rocky Mountains on the south, sand dunes in the center and a river oasis with extensive saxaul forest on the north. Our main target birds here is the scarce and localized Saxaul Sparrow, rather common Southern grey shrike, enigmatic Long-legged buzzard and Mongolian Ground Jay. This smart looking bird favors gravel plains with scattered vegetation and spends much of its time running across the open ground in search of invertebrates. There's a colony of Lesser Kestrels that usually encounters when the opportunity presents. Overnight at ger camp. **(Approx. 4 hours driving; Ger Camp; B, L, D)**



DAY 4-5. TUGRIGIIN SHIREE



In the morning, we will begin driving to the Tugregiin Shiree, which was discovered by Mongolian scientists and co-explored by Polish expeditions in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Tugregiin Shiree is perhaps most known for its famous "Fighting Dinosaurs" (a fossil of a Protoceratops and a Velociraptor locked in combat), which were discovered in the 1970s. We will explore this white sandstone escarpment and the nearby sand dune. (Approx.5 hours driving; Tent Camp; B, L, D)

DAY 6. GOBI GURVAN SAIKHAN MOUNTAIN NP

In the morning, we will begin driving to the Gobi urvan Saikhan Mountains where our next field tent camp is located. En route, we will stop to visit Havtsgait petroglyphs, where hundreds of ancient rock drawings are found on a mountain top.

In the afternoon, arrive at the camp and overnight in tents. (Tent camp; B, L, D)

DAYS 7-9 GOBI GURVANSAIKHAN MOUNTAIN

In the next two days, explore the magnificent Gobi Gurvan Saikhan National Park which lies on the northern edge of the Gobi desert. We will spend following two days in the middle of the habitat area of Snow leopards. With our local spotters' help and the opportunity presented, we might be able to spot the elusive cat in her natural habitat. Overnight in tents.

Noteworthy species that we may encounter here today include nesting Saker falcon, Chukar, Chinese Beautiful and Common Rosefinches and migrating Thickbilled warbler, Barred warbler, Common whitethroat, Isabelline Wheatear, Brown Shrike, Brown and Alpine Accentors, Blackfaced and Pallas's Reed Buntings.

(Tent camp; B, L, D)



DAY 10. YOL VALLEY / FLAMING CLIFFS



After breakfast, make a short ride to Yolyn-Am Valley in Zuun Saikhan Mountain Range. While exploring the valleys, slopes and ridges, we will be on the lookout for a wide range of mountain species, including the impressive **Bearded Vulture (Lammergeier)**, a couple of pairs of which nest in the canyons here. Another major target is the localised **Altai Snowcock**, which often give their characteristic whistling calls in the early morning just after dawn. Other exciting birds to look for here include **Chukar Partridge**, **Himalayan Griffon**, the impressive **Cinereous Vulture**, **Booted** and magnificent **Golden Eagles**, **Water Pipit**, **Black Redstart**, **Alpine**, **Brown** and the breeding nearly endemic **Kozlov's Accentors**, **Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch**, **Twite**, **Godlewski's Bunting**, **Pallas's Reed Bunting**, **Common Rock Thrush**, and with a bit of luck, **Grey-necked bunting** and rare **Red-mantled Rosefinch** and **Spotted Great Rosefinch**.

Flocks of **White-winged Snowfinches** are regularly seen and can be very confident while feeding along the trail. At this time of year, we may see migrating raptors such as **Oriental Honey Buzzard**, **Amur Falcon** and **Steppe Eagle**, while mammals could include the regal **Siberian Ibex**, the strange and extremely impressive **Argali** (a type of wild sheep), three species of rodents including **Pallas's** and **Alpine Pikas**, and **Midday Gerbils** that scurry in and out of the stunted alpine vegetation.



On the second day we will search for the species we missed previous day and explore the rocky slope, small canyons near the camp.

In the afternoon, we will travel to the legendary to the **Flaming Cliffs**, red sandstone formations that stretching over 3 kilometers in width, where hundreds of dinosaur fossils have been discovered over the course of the last century. Paleontological expeditions from many countries, including from the U.S, Poland, Japan and Russia have worked here during last 90 years.

Each year, rain and wind reveal yet more fossils and every summer, exceptional new discoveries are made. We will explore the cliffs in the footsteps of legendary American explorer Roy Chapmen Andrews who discovered the first dinosaur eggs here, that the world had ever seen. On the way, we will see Henderson's ground jay, oriental and greater sand plovers and Goitered gazelles. Here we can approach many exciting species, providing a great opportunity to take photos. Some species such as Pallas's Sandgrouse congregate in big numbers. The scenery en route, driving across the plains of Gobi is simply spectacular! En route, in addition to numerous Horned larks, subspecies brandti, and occasional Great sand plover we should find endangered and much desired Oriental Plover (surely one of the most elegant species of its family). Enjoy a sun-down and return back to the ger camp for dinner. **(Ger camp; B, L, D)**

DAY 11 GOBI DESERT / ULAANBAATAR / HUSTAI NATIONAL PARK

After breakfast, transfer to Dalanzadgad and fly back to Ulaanbaatar. Upon arrival, drive to the Hustai Nuruu National Park. Overnight in gers. (Ger camp; B, L)

DAY 12 HUSTAI NATIONAL PARK

We will spend this morning photographing various mammals of the park, led by the park's senior rangers. We will also look for the elusive Manuul Pallas Cat. Overnight in gers. (Ger camp; B, L, D)



DAY 13 HUSTAI NURUU / BAYAN LAKE



After breakfast, drive to Bulgan province and visit Bayan Lake, a wetland that attracts rich amount of species such as White Naped Crane, Asian dowitcher, Relict Gull, Eurasian Spoonbills, Pied Avocet and Black-winged Stilt. Overnight in tents. **(Approx.5 hours driving; Tent Camp; B, L, D)**

DAY 14 BACK TO UB

After breakfast, drive back to UB and spend the afternoon for last minute sightseeing or shopping. In the evening, enjoy a cultural performance featuring the khoomii or “throat” singing followed by a farewell dinner at a fine local restaurant. **(Hotel Blue Sky or similar; B, L, D)**

DAY 14 DEPARTURE

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

Ulaanbaatar (5 star) hotel based:

Based on 4-5 participants:

\$5,560 per person, standard twin occupancy;

Based on 6-9 participants:

\$5,210 per person, standard twin occupancy;

Based on 10 and more participants:

\$4,850 per person, standard twin occupancy;

Round-trip Gobi-UB airfare:

\$350

Optional single supplement:

\$680 (including a single tent)

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; • Guest lecturer's Mongolia land expenses and participation; • 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"> • 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 #1205, Dalai Tower, 1st Horoo, 13th Sud-district, Sukhbaatar District,
Ulaanbaatar 14210, 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!