



CULTURAL EXPLORATIONS
THE EAGLE FESTIVAL OF ALTAY SOUM
Sep 6-19, 2025

TRIP SUMMARY



Our dear friend Dalaikhan, a native herdsman and skilled eagle hunter from Bayan-Ölgii province in Western Mongolia, has been welcoming guests to Altai Soum for over a decade. A father of five and grandfather of nine, Dalaikhan is the visionary behind this unique, community-driven celebration.

Since 2017, Dalaikhan has organized the local Eagle Festival in Altai Soum, bringing together regional eagle hunters to display their remarkable skills in a truly authentic, community-led event. Unlike the larger Golden Eagle Festival in Ulgii, this festival is run entirely by the eagle hunters themselves, ensuring that it stays true to its cultural roots and avoids external business or NGO involvement. This grassroots approach maintains the festival's focus on cultural preservation rather than commercialization.

If you're looking for an authentic, hands-on experience and a deeper connection with the local culture, this trip is perfect for you!

ITINERARY

DAY 1, SEP 6 ULAANBAATAR

Upon arrival at the airport, transfer to the centrally located hotel in downtown Ulaanbaatar. In the evening, we will provide your pre-trip briefing and then host a welcome dinner at a fine local restaurant. **(Hotel Shangri La or similar;D)**

DAY 2, SEP 7 ULAANBAATAR



We will spend this day exploring sights and sounds of Mongolia's capital. Begin this morning with a private blessing of a Buddhist monk at Gandan, the country's largest monastery. An imposing 90-foot-tall statue of Megjid Janraisag (Avalokitesvara in Sanskrit) stands in the largest temple in the monastery. This statue is considered the religious symbol of Mongolia's independence and democracy after the country's democratic transition in 1990. When a Mongolian student in the mid-1990s discovered fragments of the original statue (which was destroyed by Soviet authorities

in the 1930s) in St. Petersburg, a nationwide campaign began to collect money for rebuilding the Buddha. After years of hard work, this magnificent Buddha was resurrected and is now standing proud, making all Mongolian Buddhists happy. After lunch, we will visit the Zanabazar's Fine Arts Museum with its excellent collection of Mongolia's arts, including golden Buddha statues of 17th century and some of the best preserved tankas in the world.

In the evening, we will enjoy a wonderful performance of traditional Mongolian music and dance, featuring Khoomii or "throat" singing, followed by dinner at a fine local restaurant. **(Hotel Shangri La or similar; B, L,D)**

DAY 3, SEP 8 ULAANBAATAR / HOVSGOL LAKE



After breakfast, we will fly north to Lake Hovsgol, known also as the "Dark Blue Pearl". This magnificent lake is one of most scenic regions in the country, and located at the foothills of breathtaking Horidal Saridag Mountains to the west and the Siberia to the north. Lake Hovsgol contains 70% of all of Mongolia's potable water resources and there are no industries along the lakeshore. Entire lake falls under a National Park boundaries and Mongolia has a rare chance of preserving this ancient lake in its original form. Upon arrival, in Murun transfer to your ger camp, located on the shore of the Lake Hovsgol.



Gers are Mongolians' traditional tents, made of a circular latticed wood structure covered with layers of thick felt. Gers are heated by a wood burning stove and furnished with traditional painted furniture. Based on double occupancy, they provide an authentic and memorable taste of Mongolian culture and allow you to visit areas which otherwise lack traveler accommodations. (Ger camp; B, L, D)

DAY 4-5, SEP 9-10 TREKKING AND EXPLORING LAKE HOVSGOL



Spend these two days enjoying the beautiful Lake Hovsgol by having short treks and driving tours along the shore. There will also be opportunity to enjoy a boat tour at the lake.

Each night come back to the ger camp for dinner and overnight. (Ger Camp; B, L, D)

DAY 6, SEP 11 MURUN / ULAANBAATAR

Today we drive to Murun, provincial center of Hovsgol to fly back to Ulaanbaatar. In the evening, enjoy dinner at a fine local restaurant.

Overnight at hotel. (Hotel Shangri La or similar; D)

DAY 7, SEP 12 ULAANBAATAR / BAYAN ULGII

Today, we will fly to Ulgii, the capital of Bayan-Ulgii aimag, home to Kazakhs and many other ethnic groups of the western Mongolia. Though Kazakhs' pastoral-nomadic lifestyle is similar to that of the Mongolians, these nomads are predominantly Moslem. Explore the city and visit its' market with a chance to purchase renowned Kazakh hand made art crafts including felt rugs. Then, if time permits, visit a local museum, which displays excellent cultural and natural exhibits. In the evening retreat to Hovd River on the eastern part of the city. There is an excellent chance to do evening fishing for trout. Overnight in gers. (Rustic Ger Camp; B, L, D).

DAY 8-9, SEP 13-14 THE GOLDEN EAGLE FESTIVAL

For two days, attend the magnificent Golden Eagle Festival. The festival begins with a parade of eagle hunters coming into the central field and showcasing their hunter eagles to the public. Eagle skills are then tested by releasing them from a cliff top to time how

fast they can land on their owners' arms when called. Attend competitions of a traditional tug of war game called kukbar, also witness tenge ilu and kyzguar which all involve horseback riding and have been brought back to life thanks to the Eagle festival.



One of the highlights of the festival will be the archery contest by ethnic Uriankhai people, who will compete by their skills by traditional Mongolian arrow and bow which have retained the same design and force since the 13th century. The eagle festival was established in 2000 and became one of truly authentic events of the western Mongolia with average of 70-80 competitors traveling to Bayan Ulgii from all local villages and being a very much anticipated holiday for all people of Bayan Ulgii.

In the evenings, enjoy a traditional Kazakh meal followed by beautiful Kazakh singers performing for us on the last evening. Overnight in gers. (Rustic ger camp; B, L, D)

DAY 10, SEP 15 VISITING KAZAKH FAMILIES / HIKING AND FISHING



Today, spend a full day at the host Kazakh family observing their daily rituals from milking their yaks to making traditional dishes. Colourful Kazakh gers in the picturesque summer camping landscape offer excellent photographing opportunity. Each ger is decorated with tapestries woven by Kazakh women and each tapestry is decorated with unique patterns designed by the family. Kazakh women are renowned for their handcraft and tapestry skills and Kazakh men train Golden Eagles for hunting, an age-old tradition that has survived amongst the Mongolian Kazakh population during the 20th century.

Learn about daily chores of Kazakh herders looking after their yaks and sheep. Spend this day for short hiking and also fishing at a local river for Mongolian graylings. Overnight in tents. (Tents with communal gers; B, L, D)

DAY 11, SEP 16 FLY BACK TO ULAANBAATAR

After breakfast, drive back to Ulgii for our return flight to Ulaanbaatar. Upon arrival, spend the rest of the afternoon for shopping and individual sightseeing. Enjoy dinner at a local restaurant. (Hotel Shangri La or similar; B, L, D)

DAY 12, SEP 17 ULAANBAATAR / GUN GALUUT

Today, will drive east a short distance to the Kherlen River near Gun Galuut, a nature reserve protecting the Argali wild sheep and a small population of White-Naped cranes. En-route, we will stop at the large Chinggis Khan Equestrian statue, the largest of its kind in the world.



In the afternoon, visit a traditional nomadic family for a private lunch. Passed down to generations, nomads in Mongolia have knowledge and experience that helps them to develop simple but practical lifestyle that survives harsh Mongolian winter. You will have an opportunity to learn about their age-old traditions and culture.

If you have brought your fishing gear, there will be opportunity to spend few hours trying for Mongolia's fresh water grayling. Overnight in a comfortable tent and enjoy dinner. (Approx. 2 hours driving, including stops along the way; **(Tent Camp; B, L, D)**)

DAY 13, SEP 18 LAST DAY IN ULAANBAATAR



In the morning, drive back to Ulaanbaatar in time for lunch. Spend the afternoon exploring the city for last minute sightseeing and shopping. Enjoy a farewell dinner in the evening at a fine local restaurant. **(Hotel Shangri La or similar; B, L, D)**

DAY 14, SEP 19 DEPARTURE

After breakfast, 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

Based on 2 participants:	\$4,950 per person , standard twin occupancy;
Based on 3-5 participants:	\$4,250 per person , standard twin occupancy;
Based on 6-9 participants:	\$3,650 per person , standard twin occupancy;
Based on 10+ participants:	\$3,200 per person , standard twin occupancy;
Domestic flights to Lake Hovsgol and Bayan-Ulgii:	\$440 per person
Optional single supplement:	\$480 per person

LAND PRICES INCLUDE:	LAND PRICES DO NOT INCLUDE:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cruiser jeeps seating 3 passengers each; • Accommodations in a standard room at hotels and 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 including for the Golden Eagle Festival; • Optional horse riding; • English speaking local guide throughout your stay; • A bottle of water per person per day and unlimited supply of boiled water. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic flights; • 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 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 countries 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!