

A photograph of two young riders on horseback, competing in a Naadam festival. They are wearing protective gear, including helmets and vests, and are riding brown horses across a green field. The rider in the foreground is wearing a red helmet and a black vest with the number 064. The rider behind is wearing a black helmet and a black vest with the number 064. The background shows rolling green hills under a clear blue sky.

# THE NAADAM FESTIVAL OF MONGOLIA

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July 6 – 16, 2026

## TRIP SUMMARY



Naadam means games. Naadam originally was a way to train men to the military skill: every soldier had to be able to ride fast, shoot arrows and wrestle with enemies during combat. In Mongolia, with its scarce population and nomadic ways, where individual herders live far apart from each other it was important to come together from time to time for training. That is why the Naadam often referred to as 3 manly sports: horse racing, archery and wrestling. As time passed it became a way to celebrate important events and not necessarily the same men were participating in all three sports. July 11 and 12th commemorate regaining of Mongolian independence in 1921.

During Naadam even a city dweller puts on his best traditional costume and joins everyone else to celebrate these games. In these games the fame and honor are more important than the prizes. There is no betting involved in any of the sports. Join us to witness this colorful festival where best of the athletes and archers, fastest of horses from around the country come together and compete for three days for the honor of being named the best of the best.

## ITINERARY

### DAY 1, JUL 6: ARRIVAL



Upon arrival at the Chinggis Khan International Airport in Ulaanbaatar, meet your guide and transfer to your hotel. In the afternoon, we will make a short city tour including a stop at the towering Zaisan Hill, where you can get a bird's eye view of the entire city, huddled in between the valley of Tuul River and Bogd Khan Mountain. This scenic mountain is believed to be the first national park in the world. The Mongolian State Library keeps copies of letters exchanged between the governor of Ulaanbaatar and Qing Emperor from 1778, mentioning local celebrations arranged for the occasion of making the Bogd Khan Mountain an official protected site.

In the evening, we will commence our trip with a briefing by our expedition leader, followed by a welcome dinner at a fine local restaurant.

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

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### DAY 2, JUL 7: HUSTAI NATIONAL PARK



Begin the day with a visit to Gandan Monastery, the seat of Buddhism in Mongolia. Here, you will learn about Mongolia's Buddhist heritage. Next, drive to the Hustain Nuruu National Park to explore world's only true wild horse, takhi. After lunch, there will be an opportunity to ride Mongolian horses for a short distance.

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

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### DAY 3, JUL 8: LAKE HOVSGOL



In the morning, we will transfer to the airport for our morning flight to the Lake Hovsgol. Upon arrival, meet your guide and transfer to the lake.

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

## DAY 4, JUL 9: HORSEBACK RIDING AT LAKE HOVSGOL



After breakfast, enjoy a full day of horseback riding along the lakeshore. We will start riding south and return to the camp from its northern direction by making a large loop. There will be plenty of opportunities to stop and explore the local flora and fauna along the route.

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

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## DAY 5, JUL 10: LAKE HOVSGOL - ULAANBAATAR

In the morning, we will begin our journey driving back to Ulaanbaatar. Stop for a picnic lunch along the road. Transfer to your hotel. Dinner is independent. (Hotel Bayangol or similar; B, L)

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## DAY 6, JUL 11-12: NAADAM FESTIVAL IN ULAANBAATAR



Enjoy two full days in the city, attending the Naadam festival games, consisting of wrestling, archery and horse racing. The festival is also an occasion for family reunions and big feasts.

Three manly sports are believed to exist pre Chinggis Khaan himself and served as a way to train for military campaigns. Nowadays the rchery competitions exist a for both men

and women and usually take place just outside the main stadium in Ulaanbaatar. Unlike our warlike ancestors modern archers compete on moderate distances between 70-100 meters.

Wrestling is big in Mongolia and while for newcomers it might seem unfair – there are no age or weight restrictions and often one can see big guys wrestling small athletes – it is an ages old tradition where in a battle field one can not choose his opponent and has to fight anyone.

Horseracing takes place outside of the city and divided into 6 horse age groups, starting from 2 year olds. Usually the jockeys are young children aged between 6-12 years. And the race is more about endurance than speed, as even the two year old horses need to race for 12 km and adult horses racing for over 30 km at once. You will be able to attend all three competitions and various events of sport and culture arranged during this centuries old celebrations. Overnight in hotel. (Hotel Bayangol or similar; B, L, D)

## DAY 7, JUL 13: ULAANBAATAR – GOBI DESERT



After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your departure south to the Gobi desert. Upon arrival, our local driver will meet us and transfer to a tourist class ger camp in the central Gobi desert. In the afternoon, drive to the Yol Valley located in the Gobi Gurvan Saikhan National Park. Yol Valley is named after the prey birds “Yol” or lamaseries that dwell in the higher cliffs of the valley. It contains ice that persists as late as July and is home to many of Gobi’s wildlife including Ibex, “Argali;” or mountain wild sheep, and snowleopard. Stroll through the valley and enjoy a picnic lunch. Return to the ger camp in the evening. **Overnight in gers. (Ger Camp; B, L, D)**

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## DAY 8, JUL 14: HAVTSGAIT PETROGLYPHS – FLAMING CLIFFS



In the morning, explore the Havtsgait Petroglyphs, an amazing collection of early Bronze Age rock carvings located on the top of a mountain. Next, transfer to our ger camp near the Gobi Gurvansaikhan National Park. In the evening, we will drive to the Flaming Cliffs, red sandstone bluffs stretching about 3 km in wide, where hundreds of dinosaur fossils have been found. Paleontological expeditions from many countries,

including from U.S, Poland, Japan and Russia have worked here in the last 80 summer new discoveries are made. Return to ger camp in the evening. **Overnight in gers. (Approx. 4 hours driving; Ger Camp; B, L, D)**

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## DAY 9, JUL 15: ULAANBAATAR

In the morning, we will transfer to the airport for our return flight back to Ulaanbaatar for our last day of exploration. Spend the remainder of the day for last minute shopping and sightseeing. In the evening, enjoy a cultural performance featuring the khoonii or “throat” singing followed by a hearty farewell dinner at a fine local restaurant. **(Hotel Bayangol or similar; B, L, D)**

**DAY 10, JUL 16: DEPARTURE**

After breakfast transfer to the airport for your return flight home. (B)

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**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 2-5 participants:	<b>\$3,940 per person</b> , standard twin occupancy;
Based on 6-9 participants:	<b>\$3,280 per person</b> , standard twin occupancy;
Based on 10+ participants:	<b>\$2,945 per person</b> , standard twin occupancy;
Domestic flight	<b>\$480 per person</b>
Optional single supplement:	<b>\$650 per person</b>

LAND PRICES INCLUDE:	LAND PRICES DO NOT INCLUDE:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land transportation as indicated in the itinerary based on using Toyota Land Cruiser jeeps seating 3 passengers each;</li> <li>• Accommodations in a standard room at hotels, gers in the countryside based on a twin occupancy and expedition style camping in the countryside;</li> <li>• Airport arrival and departure transfers;</li> <li>• Sleeping bags; expedition style tents and mats;</li> <li>• All meals indicated as B, L or D;</li> <li>• All entrance fees as indicated in the itinerary;</li> <li>• English speaking national guide throughout your stay;</li> <li>• Bottled water per person per day and unlimited supply of boiled waters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic flights;</li> <li>• International airfare;</li> <li>• Personal laundry;</li> <li>• Drinks not mentioned in the itinerary;</li> <li>• Travel insurance;</li> <li>• Medical evacuation costs;</li> <li>• Excess baggage charges;</li> <li>• Visa fees;</li> <li>• Gratuities;</li> <li>• Photography and video fees</li> <li>• Any other item not mentioned as included.</li> </ul>

## 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](mailto: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 Sub-district, Sukhbaatar District,  
Ulaanbaatar 14230, Mongolia;

**Tel:** (976) 7000 9747

**Email:** [info@MongoliaQuest.com](mailto: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"> <li>• Czech Republic</li> <li>• Republic of Austria</li> <li>• Kingdom of Belgium</li> <li>• Hungary</li> <li>• Hellenic Republic</li> <li>• Kingdom of Denmark</li> <li>• Kingdom of Spain</li> <li>• Italian Republic</li> <li>• Republic of Latvia</li> <li>• Republic of Lithuania</li> <li>• Swiss Confederation</li> <li>• Republic of Bulgaria</li> <li>• Republic of Ireland</li> <li>• Republic of Philippines</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principality of Liechtenstein</li> <li>• Grand Duchy of Luxembourg</li> <li>• Republic of Malta</li> <li>• Kingdom of the Netherlands</li> <li>• Republic of Poland</li> <li>• Portuguese Republic</li> <li>• Slovak Republic</li> <li>• Republic of Slovenia</li> <li>• Republic of Finland</li> <li>• Republic of Croatia</li> <li>• Canada</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kingdom of Sweden</li> <li>• French Republic</li> <li>• Republic of Estonia</li> <li>• Kingdom of Norway</li> <li>• Republic of Iceland</li> <li>• Republic of Cyprus</li> <li>• Romania</li> <li>• Principality of Monaco</li> <li>• United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland</li> <li>• Commonwealth of Australia</li> <li>• New Zealand</li> </ul> |
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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 Mongolia is 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!**