

Mongolia's Golden Eagle Festival

NOMADIC TRADITIONS AND THE GREAT GOBI DESERT



TRIP DATES

2024

September 27-October 8, 2024
October 2-13, 2024 Reverse Itinerary

2025

September 26-October 7, 2025
October 1-12, 2025 Reverse Itinerary

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Mongolia's Golden Eagle Festival

NOMADIC TRADITIONS AND THE GREAT GOBI DESERT

On this thrilling “back of beyond” journey, we witness the Golden Eagle Festival, the cultural event captured in the acclaimed film *The Eagle Huntress*. Heading out to far western Mongolia, we watch as Kazakh horsemen and horsewomen compete in hunting with their magnificent trained eagles, releasing them to swoop down from cliffsides. Festival activities also include archery and breathtaking kukbar horseback games played at a thundering gallop. Flying south to the remote Gobi Desert, Three Camel Lodge is our comfortable home as we hike to petroglyph sites, climb golden sand dunes, ride magnificent two-humped Bactrian camels, explore glacier-carved Yol Valley National Park in the foothills of the Altai Mountains, and sip sundowners below the brilliant Flaming Cliffs, where the first dinosaur eggs were unearthed.



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Itinerary

DAY 1

ULAANBAATAR / ZAISAN MEMORIAL

Arrive in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia's capital, where we are met and transferred to our comfortable, centrally located hotel. The contrast between ancient traditions and the dawning of a 21st century democracy is most visible in Ulaanbaatar, where "suburbs" of traditional gers (felt tents) coexist with blocks of Soviet-style apartments and the very modern city center with its shiny new high rises. This afternoon, we visit the Zaisan Memorial, a monument built during Mongolia's Soviet era to commemorate Soviet and Mongolian soldiers who fought in World War II. Set on one of the hills surrounding Ulaanbaatar, it offers panoramic views of the capital. We gather for our trip orientation and a Welcome Dinner this evening. Overnight at hotel...D

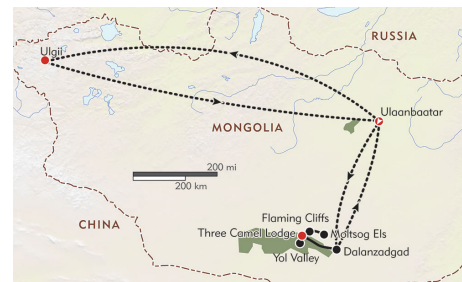
DAY 2

ULAANBAATAR / GANDAN MONASTERY / NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM / CHINGGIS KHAAN MUSEUM

Mongolia is well known for Genghis Khan and his armies, who conquered vast areas of the world and created the largest empire the world has ever known. Less known is that soon after the conquests, Mongolians, guided by Tibetan lamas, began an exploration of their inner world through Tibetan Buddhism. In 1576, in gratitude for his conversion, Altan Khan, the leader of Mongolia and a descendant of the legendary Genghis Khan, bestowed the title "Dalai Lama" upon his spiritual guru, Sonam Gyatso. This spiritual bond between Tibet and Mongolia continues into the present day, and some of the most extraordinary Tibetan Buddhist art in the world is in Mongolia.

Our day begins with a visit to Gandan Monastery, the seat of Buddhism in Mongolia, and one of the few monasteries that escaped the ravages of Stalin's purges of the 1930s. Established in 1835, Gandan is an impressive complex, with temples, courtyards, chanting halls, and maroon-robed monks (more than 100 monks are in residence today). One of the most magnificent sights is the seven-story-tall statue of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, who represents the compassion of all Buddhas, encrusted with more than 2,200 gems and gilded with gold leaf. Strolling through the monastery grounds, we should hear the low tones of the horns used to call the lamas to the temple and we can watch the monks at their daily rituals, including the reading of sutras (teachings of the Buddha). We also visit the reconstruction and renovation projects of the Chenrezi and Kalachakra Temples, as well as the magnificent statue of Migjid Janraisig ("the lord who looks in every direction"). This 82-foot high statue, gilded in pure gold and clothed with silk and precious stones, completely fills the biggest of Gandan's temples. On the temple's ground, we also see shamanistic sites, still visited today.

After lunch, we head to the National History Museum for an excellent overview of Mongolia's history and culture. Here we gain fascinating insights into Mongolian history as we explore the museum's displays of traditional implements of daily nomadic life including Stone and Bronze Age artifacts, the historic dress of Mongolia's minority tribes, sacred religious relics, and



TRIP DETAILS AT-A-GLANCE

- Length:** 12 days
Arrive: Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
Depart: Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
Lodging: 6 nights ger camps, 5 nights hotels
Meals: All meals included except 2 lunches and 2 dinners (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
Activity: Archaeology, Cultural Adventures
Trip Level: 1 2 ③ 4 5 6
Rugged road travel, walking and light hiking, cultural adventures

HIGHLIGHTS

- See eagle hunters and huntresses parading with their huge golden eagles, and watch the eagles hunt their prey
- Enjoy the stunning setting of the renowned Three Camel Lodge, with its well-appointed ger tents
- Sip sundowners and watch the magical sunset at the Gobi's Flaming Cliffs
- Walk in the Moltsog Els dunes, ride a two-humped Bactrian camel
- Watch a wild horseback game called kukbar
- Visit Gandan Monastery, seat of Buddhism in Mongolia

Itinerary (cont'd)



“The festival was fantastic. The locations of the eagle camp and Three Camel Lodge were beautiful. We were thrilled to experience the mini-Nadaam in the Gobi, and we really enjoyed the hike to see the petroglyphs in the Gobi.”

Becky H., Chandler, AZ



agricultural, fishing, and hunting equipment. Our last stop of the day is the Chinggis Khaan Museum, with its extensive collection of artifacts and interactive exhibits on Genghis Khan and the Mongol Empire. The remainder of the afternoon is free for individual exploration. Your Trip Leader can recommend the best places to find special local items including Mongolia's fine cashmeres. Overnight at hotel...BLD

DAY 3

GOBI / MOLTSOG ELS SAND DUNES / KHAVTSGAIT PETROGLYPHS

A morning flight of about 1.5 hours brings us to the Dalanzadgad Airport, which serves as the gateway to the epic Gobi Desert. A vast and diverse region, the Gobi is Mongolia's southernmost province and the site of some of the most important paleontological discoveries of the 20th century. For the next three days, we explore the stunning landscape of this desert, habitat for Bactrian camels, Argali mountain sheep, goitered gazelle, golden eagles, saker falcons, jerboas (similar to kangaroo rats), and many endemic reptiles. The Gobi is also home to some of the northern hemisphere's most rare and elusive animals, such as the dhole, snow leopard, wild camel, and Gobi bear. Upon arrival, we travel to the stunning Moltsoq Els, one of the few regions of the Gobi covered by sand dunes. We have a chance to climb the golden dunes and ride a magnificent two-humped Bactrian camel, a species native to Mongolia and China and much larger than their cousins, the dromedaries of Africa. We then continue to our award-winning accommodation, the Three Camel Lodge, built in the heart of the Gobi with a fantastic location near Gurvan Saikhan Gobi National Park. The lodge is well known for its environmentally sustainable design. The gers were built with local materials and blend with the Gobi's remarkable landscape. Each has a southward-facing door, a nomadic Mongolian tradition, providing an unobstructed view of the desert and the Gobi-Altai Mountains. This afternoon, we drive out to the Khavtsgait petroglyph site, where a short hike up a steep mountain trail brings us to some of the most precious petroglyphs in the Gobi—ancient and beautiful stone carvings from the Bronze Age, left as they were found, in the open air surrounded by a remarkable wilderness setting. Dinner and overnight at the Three Camel Lodge...BLD

Approximate Driving Time: 4.5 hours round-trip

Approximate Hiking/Walking Time: 1-1.5 hours, mountainside trail, steep in some places

Note: Regularly-scheduled domestic flights in Mongolia are known for change or cancellation, as adverse weather conditions, booking problems, and other factors beyond our control may result in changes to the program.

DAY 4

GOBI SUNRISE / YOL VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

We wake early this morning to take in the sight of the sun rising over the vast Gobi landscape. After breakfast, we head to Yol Valley National Park, cradled in the foothills of the Altai Mountains. An ancient river carved this valley, and

we enjoy a hike through this habitat where lammergeiers, Altai snowcocks, ibex, yaks, and Argali mountain sheep live. Dinner and overnight at the Three Camel Lodge...BLD

Approximate Driving Time: 3 hours round-trip

Approximate Hiking Time: 2 hours, flat terrain, with some possible shallow stream crossings

DAY 5

BULGAN / FLAMING CLIFFS

After breakfast, we explore a village near our lodge, with the opportunity to visit a school and/or hospital. We then head to the legendary Flaming Cliffs, named for the orange glow of the rock at sunset. It was here in 1923 that Dr. Roy Chapman Andrews and his exploration team from the American Museum of Natural History found the first nest of dinosaur eggs the world had ever seen. Although not obvious to the untrained eye, the red sandstone of the Flaming Cliffs is rich in dinosaur fossils, and paleontological expeditions continue to make significant discoveries at this site. We can take a hike through this area, then experience an unforgettable sunset that paints the cliffs in soft colors. Return to the Three Camel Lodge for dinner and overnight...BLD

Approximate Driving Time: 2 hours



“This was a fantastic trip, and not one we could have managed on our own.”

John S., Laurel, MD



Itinerary (cont'd)

DAY 6

ULAANBAATAR

After breakfast, we head to the airport and fly back to Ulaanbaatar, where we check into our hotel. The remainder of the afternoon is free to relax, reorganize your gear, or enjoy exploring the lively and surprisingly cosmopolitan streets of Ulaanbaatar. Lunch and dinner are on your own. Overnight at hotel...B

DAY 7

DAY TRIP TO HUSTAIN NURUU NATIONAL PARK

In the early morning, we head out of the capital and into the open country to Hustain Nuruu National Park, home to the last remaining species of wild horse, the takhi—commonly known as Przewalski’s horse. Twenty-five years after becoming extinct in the wild, the takhi was reintroduced to the Mongolian steppe from zoo populations by the Foundation for the Preservation and Protection of the Przewalski’s Horse. Sixteen horses were flown from the Netherlands to Mongolia in 1994, and nearly 400 now roam re-introduction sites in Mongolia and China. We’ll learn about current conservation efforts and the status of the herds found within the reserve at the visitor’s center, before trying to spot these beautiful horses in their natural habitat. After lunch at the local camp, we’ll stop at the Ongot stone complex near the Tuul River Basin—the largest grave complex in central Asia. These mysterious stone figures depicting men date from the Turkic period (7th-9th centuries AD). They all face one direction and are behind one another, as if in a line. Some interpret

“The trip was amazing. I'm already thinking about my next one!”

Mary W., Crosby, TX



this configuration as depicting a nobleman or general, with his subjects or soldiers following behind. These stones are rare historical evidence of the culture that dominated the area at the time and are especially important to historians, as few written accounts have survived the burden of Mongolia's nomadic lifestyle and turbulent battling periods. We return to Ulaanbaatar in the evening and enjoy dinner at a local restaurant...BLD

DAY 8

ULGII / GER CAMP / VISIT WITH LOCAL FAMILY

An early morning flight of about 3.5 hours brings us to Ulgii, capital of Bayan-Ulgii Province in Mongolia's wild west, land of the Kazakhs. The Kazakh people of Mongolia are culturally distinct, speaking the Turkic language of their forebears and practicing the Muslim religion. Famed as the traditional nomadic herders of Central Asia, the Kazakh migrated here from western China in the 19th century. Their isolation in the remote Altai Mountains, one of Asia's longest mountain chains, has helped preserve their heritage. Like many mobile cultures, the textile crafts are particularly important in Kazakh culture, and Kazakh women are renowned for their skills in weaving, applique, and embroidery. When we visit Kazakh gers (larger and taller than Mongolian gers), we discover a dazzling array of fabric arts, with hand-woven felt carpets lining the floor and delicately embroidered tapestries on the walls. Each weaving's design is unique to a particular woman or a particular family.

After we arrive, we head to our ger camp on the steppes outside of Ulgii. Along the way, we visit the local history museum. This small but impressive museum houses some of the finest embroideries and artifacts of the region, including horse- and eagle-hunting accessories and the renowned Kazakh carpets, and also offers an excellent glimpse into Kazakh history. In the late afternoon, we are invited into the traditional ger of a Kazakh family, a wonderful chance to experience their hospitality and share tea amid many examples of traditional weaving, embroidery, and applique. We also learn how the family uses the yurt, with the right side traditionally belonging to women, while left is for men. Overnight in ger camp...BLD

DAY 9

GOLDEN EAGLE FESTIVAL / OPENING CEREMONY / HUNTING COMPETITION

The magnificent opening ceremony of the Golden Eagle Festival takes place this morning. We'll be front and center as Kazakh men parade on horseback dressed in their traditional hunting finery, accompanied by their magnificent golden eagles—it's an unforgettable spectacle! A golden eagle is one of the world's largest birds of prey and can swoop on quarry as large as a wolf, reaching speeds of 120 mph in its initial strike—and we'll have the privilege of



Itinerary (cont'd)

witnessing this up close during the competition. Golden eagles are extremely important in the Kazakh nomad culture. The tradition of falconry goes back thousands of years for Kazakhs, with young eagles, usually female birds, raised and trained to pursue foxes and rabbits, the source of the prized fur on the Kazakh's famous hats. The bond between man and eagle lasts for life. The Golden Eagle Festival began in 2000 with full support of the Kazakh community and has contributed to the survival of this ancient Kazakh practice. After dinner, we head back to Ulgii to attend a special performance of traditional Kazakh dance and song arranged for Golden Eagle Festival participants, many of whom have traveled as far as 140 miles on horseback to arrive here. Overnight in ger camp...BLD



DAY 10 GOLDEN EAGLE FESTIVAL / KUKBAR COMPETITION / AWARDS CEREMONY

Prepare for some exciting action today! The golden eagles are in full hunting mode as they fly down from cliffs to attack decoys dragged along on horseback as the Kazakh men gallop across the steppes. As the points for the competitions are being tallied, the Kazakhs then compete in their thundering game of kukbar, a wild equestrian game that tests each participant's courage, skills, and strength. After a rousing awards ceremony, we enjoy our own celebration dinner at camp. Overnight in ger camp...BLD

DAY 11 ULAANBAATAR

After breakfast, we head to the Ulgii airport and fly back to Ulaanbaatar, where we check into our hotel. Lunch is on your own. In the late afternoon we visit Chojjin Temple. Located amidst the modern high rises, this architectural gem was originally built by the order of the last king of Mongolia. The Chojjin Lama Temple museum houses various Buddhist artifacts dating back to 1800–1900 including a number of masterpieces of the famous Mongolian sculptor Zanabazar, some fine thangkas, and the best collection of tsum masks for religious ceremonies in the country. In the evening, we gather for a festive Farewell Dinner. Overnight at hotel...BD



DAY 12 DEPART

Transfer to the airport for departure on homeward-bound flights...B

Reverse Itinerary (October Departures)

DAY 1

ULAANBAATAR

Arrive in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia's capital, and overnight at hotel...D

DAY 2

ULAANBAATAR / GANDAN MONASTERY / NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM / CHINGGIS KHAAN MUSEUM

Enjoy a full day of sightseeing in Ulaanbaatar. Overnight at hotel...BLD

DAY 3

ULGII / GER CAMP / VISIT WITH LOCAL FAMILY

Fly to Ulgii, capital of Bayan-Ulgii Province in Mongolia's wild west, land of the Kazakhs. We head to our ger camp on the steppes outside of Ulgii, and later in the afternoon visit the traditional ger of a Kazakh family. Overnight in ger camp...BLD

DAYS 4-5

GOLDEN EAGLE FESTIVAL / OPENING CEREMONY / HUNTING COMPETITION

We attend the magnificent Golden Eagle Festival these two days. Overnights in ger camp...BLD each day

DAYS 6-7

ULAANBAATAR / DAY TRIP TO HUSTAIN NURUU NATIONAL PARK

Fly back to Ulaanbaatar. The next day, we head to Hustain Nuruu National Park, home to the last remaining species of wild horse, the takhi—commonly known as Przewalski's horse. Overnights at hotel...B (Day 6); BLD (Day 7)

DAY 8

GOBI / MOLTSOG ELS SAND DUNES / KHAVTSGAIT PETROGLYPHS

Fly to the Dalanzadgad Airport, the gateway to the epic Gobi Desert, and continue to the Three Camel Lodge. Overnight at the Three Camel Lodge...BLD

DAY 9

GOBI SUNRISE / YOL VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

We head to Yol Valley National Park, cradled in the foothills of the Altai Mountains, and enjoy a hike through this habitat where lammergeiers, Altai snowcocks, ibex, yaks, and Argali mountain sheep live. Return to Three Camel Lodge for dinner and overnight...BLD

DAY 10

BULGAN / FLAMING CLIFFS

Explore the legendary Flaming Cliffs, named for the orange glow of the rock at sunset. Return to the Three Camel Lodge for dinner and overnight...BLD

DAY 11

ULAANBAATAR

Fly back to Ulaanbaatar. In the late afternoon we visit Choijin Temple. Overnight at hotel...BD

DAY 12

DEPART

Transfer to the airport for departure on homeward-bound flights...B

Note: Regularly-scheduled domestic flights in Mongolia are known for change or cancellation, as adverse weather conditions, booking problems, and other factors beyond our control may result in changes to the program.

Trip Cost, Payment & Insurance

TRIP COST

Prices are per person, valid through 2024

\$8495 (10-14 members)

\$8995 (5-9 members)

Single supplement: \$2050

Internal airfare: \$1435 (subject to change)

2025 Trip Costs: Please call for details

Special Note: Due to a limited number of gers at the Golden Eagle Festival, only two singles can be accommodated on this adventure.

To offer the lowest possible cost, our trips are priced according to the number of participants on the trip. All costs are per person, based on double occupancy. If you wish to have a single room, you must pay the single supplement fee. Please note that Wilderness Travel staff, or guests of Wilderness Travel such as travel writers, photographers, or leaders-in-training, are not included in the tier pricing count.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATE

Because the prices published for our program are set so far in advance of the trip dates, we are occasionally faced with exceptional cost increases and/or currency fluctuations that affect the actual cost of running the trip. In most years, no price changes are necessary. However, we do reserve the right to raise or lower the trip price if there is a significant change in costs or exchange rates. If this is the case, your final invoice will reflect the difference in trip cost.

TRIP COST INCLUDES

- Expert leadership of a Wilderness Travel Trip Leader
- Accommodations in gers, the Three Camel Lodge, and a comfortable hotel in Ulaanbaatar
- All meals included except 2 lunches and 2 dinners as indicated in the Detailed Itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- Sightseeing as noted in the itinerary, including entrance fees for museums and sites
- Land transportation and airport transfers

TRIP COST DOES NOT INCLUDE

International airfare, any meals not specified after each itinerary day, optional gratuities to leaders or staff, additional hotel nights that may be necessitated by airline schedule changes or other factors; pre-trip expenses of medical immunizations (if any), travel insurance, or passports and visas; and other expenses of a personal nature (alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.).

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

At time of reservation: \$600

90 days prior to departure: Balance

CANCELLATION AND TRANSFER FEE SCHEDULE

Up to 91 days prior to departure: No charge!

61-90 days prior to departure: 25% of trip cost

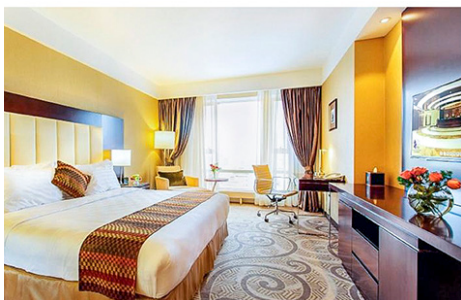
46-60 days prior to departure: 50% of trip cost

45 days or less: 100% of trip cost

MANDATORY EMERGENCY EVACUATION INSURANCE

Please note: Insurance for emergency evacuation is required for this trip. Call for more details.

Accommodations



BEST WESTERN PREMIER TUUSHIN HOTEL

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Days 1 to 2 (2 nights)

Days 6 to 7 (2 nights)

Day 11 (1 night)

You can expect traditional Mongolian friendliness and hospitality at this large modern hotel, set in the heart of Ulaanbaatar. It's close to all the major sites of the city and an ideal place to relax during your time in Mongolia's capital city. Guest rooms are spacious, and there's a great view from the bar on the top floor. Facilities include three restaurants, a fitness center, sauna, and spa, where you can treat yourself to a relaxing massage.



THREE CAMEL LODGE

The Gobi Desert, Mongolia

Days 3 to 5 (3 nights)

This premier expedition camp of 40 gers, set in a peaceful hillside spot in the Gobi Desert, offers great comfort and is strategically close to several of the desert's "must-see" attractions. Modeled on the traditional felt tents of Mongolian nomads, the gers provide an authentic and memorable taste of Mongolian culture. Made of a latticed wood structure covered with layers of felt and canvas, they are furnished with beautifully painted wood-framed double beds and heated by a wood stove, and offer private bathrooms. There is a restaurant, bar, lounge area, and spa, as well as additional Western-style shower facilities located in a nearby central building that features a beautiful blend of Mongolian artifacts and traditional design. Hint: Don't sleep in too late—you'll miss a spectacular sunrise!



MONGOLIAN GER CAMPS

Mongolia

Days 7 to 9 (3 nights)

Gers are the traditional yurt-like tents used by Mongolian nomads for centuries, and these simple fixed camps are specially built and operated for visitors. They come equipped with beds and linens (and may also have a small table and stools), and are heated by a wood or coal stove. Meals are served in a central lodge or tent. Most of the camps have centrally located shared bathrooms. Please be prepared for limited shower use, as shower water is often solar heated and may not be available daily. Gers provide an authentic and memorable taste of Mongolian culture and allow us to visit areas that otherwise lack traveler accommodations. Most visitors find their stays at ger camps to be among their most enjoyable experiences in Mongolia.

These are our signature accommodations for this trip. Although it is highly unlikely, we may make substitutions when necessary. To see more photos and descriptions, please visit our *Mongolia's Golden Eagle Festival* webpage and click on the "Accommodations" tab.

Trip Leader

Wilderness Travel Trip Leaders have a passion and a joy for creating an unforgettable journey. We are extremely proud of them and the incredible travel experiences they make possible. For more information, including client comments about them and which specific trips they will be leading, please visit our webpage and click on “Trip Leaders”: www.wildernesstravel.com/trip/mongolia-golden-eagle-festival-tour/



AZAA CHOIJOO

Azaa Chojoo was born and raised amid the rolling hills and grasslands of Mongolia’s eastern steppes, and has been a professional Trip Leader since 1998. Fluent in English, Russian, and Kalkh Mongol, Azaa is a graduate of the Institute of Foreign Languages in Ulaanbaatar. During the school year, she teaches Russian and English at a Middle School in “UB,” and describes her homeland as “one of the few countries with an untouched nature—a land with no fences, free and unchanged in millennia, with a magnificent culture where you are welcomed at every door.” Although she loves all of Mongolia, she has a particular fondness for the Gobi, with its vast open spaces, stillness, and variety of landscapes. A delightful leader with boundless energy and an incredible command of her country’s history, Azaa loves sharing Mongolia’s natural beauty and fascinating culture, especially facilitating visits with local families. “At first people seem shy and not so talkative. But after a few questions they become more open. I want my trip members to intercommunicate with nomadic families and experience their life.” When not leading trips, Azaa lives in Ulaanbaatar with her husband and two children, and visits her parents at their ger in the countryside.



AMARBUYAN YURA

As one of our seasoned trip leaders, no other guide can match Amarbuyan Yura’s ability to ride horses and camels! Known as Amraa, his friendly, helpful, and hardworking attitude toward life fully reflects his guiding skills. A true scholar at heart, he delights in learning about Mongolian history and sharing its rich tales with those around him. Amraa loves the sport of bodybuilding and enjoys taking part in the annual Ulaanbaatar City Bodybuilding championships (he won second place in the championships!). He spent several years in the US and is well versed in English.

Arrival & Departure

Upon confirming your trip reservation, we will send you a Welcome Packet that includes a list of documents (passport, visas, etc.) required for your trip. Please feel free to call if you would like this information before making your air arrangements.

ARRIVAL & MEETING PLACE

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Suggested Airport: Chinggis Khaan International Airport (UBN)

Suggested Date & Time: Day 1, by 3:00 pm

Meeting Place: A complimentary transfer is provided from Chinggis Khaan International Airport to the Best Western Premier Tuushin Hotel for all trip members arriving on Day 1. A Wilderness Travel representative will meet you outside the customs area and will be holding a Wilderness Travel sign and/or a sign with your name on it.

An orientation meeting and Welcome Dinner will take place on the evening of Day 1 at the hotel. Please note hotel check-in begins at 2:00 pm.

DEPARTURE

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Suggested Airport: Chinggis Khaan International Airport (UBN)

Suggested Date & Time: Day 12, anytime

A complimentary transfer will be provided from the Best Western Premier Tuushin Hotel to the airport. Please note the hotel check-out is by 12:00 pm.

If you have booked extra services for early arrival or late departure, an Extra Services Confirmation will be sent with your Final Documents approximately three weeks prior to departure.

INTERNATIONAL AIR TRAVEL

You are responsible for making your own arrangements for flights to and from Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. Most trip members fly to Ulaanbaatar via Seoul or Beijing.

There are many online consolidators for booking travel, but for more personal help arranging air transport, you can contact Exito Travel at 1-800-655-4053 in the US or 1-800-670-2605 in Canada. They are very adept at putting flight itineraries together, to even the most far-flung places. More information can be found on Exito's website at www.exitotravel.com.

Depending on your routing, it will be necessary to depart from the US one or possibly two days prior to Day 1 of the trip itinerary. Please note: If you fly on Korean Airlines from Seoul to Ulaanbaatar, you will most likely arrive late in the evening. We strongly recommend an extra hotel overnight in Ulaanbaatar if you choose this routing, so you do not miss the welcome orientation and meeting on Day 1.

Please do not purchase your tickets until you are confirmed on the trip. Once your tickets have been purchased, please send us a copy of your airline schedule so we can arrange your airport transfers accordingly. It is your responsibility to ensure your flight times coordinate with the arrival and departure logistics for this trip.

EXTRA NIGHTS IN SEOUL OR BEIJING

Incheon Airport Transit Hotel at the Seoul Airport

If you have a long connection in Seoul, we suggest the Incheon Airport Transit Hotel (also known as the Air Garden Hotel), located on the 4th floor of the Incheon International Airport Terminal. You can book via their website: www.airgardenhotel.com.

CITIC Hotel at Beijing Airport

If your schedule requires extra nights in Beijing, we suggest the CITIC Hotel Beijing Airport, located just minutes from the airport. A complimentary shuttle between the hotel and the airport departs approximately every 30 minutes. You can book via their website: www.citichotelbeijing.com.

The name on your airline ticket must match the name on your passport exactly, and your passport must be valid for at least six months after your date of return to the US.

Trip Details

WHAT THE TRIP IS LIKE

The trip is Level 3, Moderate. Although there is only minimal hiking, this trip involves rugged travel conditions in remote locations, simple accommodations in gers (yurts), and rough roads. In Ulaanbaatar, our overnights are in a well-located hotel with modern amenities. Roads outside Ulaanbaatar are unpaved and often very bumpy and dusty. In most cases, travel on these roads will be done in Russian four-wheel drive vans, which are not up to western SUV standards, but are reasonably comfortable.

Our ger camps at the Golden Eagle Festival are simple two-person gers with beds, sheets and blankets, and small stoves for heat. Toilet and shower facilities are separate from the gers and shared by all participants. The shower water is solar heated and may not be available daily. Please be prepared for limited shower use.

In the Gobi, we stay at the Three Camel Lodge, with its setting in the stunning landscape of the Gobi's Gurvan Saikhan National Park. Gers at this lodge have private bathrooms and the main lodge building has a central fireplace and large wooden porch for enjoying the serenity of the Mongolian outback.

A Special Note on Travel to Mongolia

Mongolia is an exciting destination, and while tourism is growing rapidly, the infrastructure remains limited. The country is modernizing quickly from its Soviet-era standards, but they are not yet up to the level of many countries (particularly felt by travelers on the bumpy roads!). Essential requirements for travel in Mongolia are flexibility, a sense of humor, curiosity, enthusiasm about new peoples and places, and an openness to the unexpected.

WEATHER

Mongolia has a relatively cool climate with short, mild summers and long, severe winters from October to April. October will be cool and the occasional or rare snow storm is possible, especially in Ulaanbaatar and Ulgii. Weather patterns at this time can be unpredictable. Come prepared

for at least some rain, wind, and some very cold nights and mornings. A dusting of snow is not uncommon here at this northern latitude.

BEING A CONSIDERATE TRAVELER

Please show respect for the cultures we are visiting by observing local customs concerning appropriate dress, particularly in sacred places. Your Trip Leader is always available to answer any questions that you may have regarding this. If it is necessary to use a cell phone during the trip, please do so privately. Smoking is rarely an issue these days, but if you do smoke, please do so only away from the group.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT TRIP

Adventure travel often involves exotic destinations, unusual levels of physical exertion, or activities you may not have participated in previously. We work hard to help you choose the right trip for you, paying attention to your individual interests, abilities, and needs. If you have questions about the level of comfort or any of the activities described in this itinerary, please call Wilderness Travel at 1-800-368-2794 and ask for the Asia Manager or email us at asia@wildernesstravel.com.

REFERENCES

We'd be happy to put you in touch with a past client that has traveled with us on this or a similar trip.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

At www.wildernesstravel.com, you can book your trip online or find out about added departures, last-minute deals, and one-time Limited Edition adventures that aren't listed in our catalog. You can also access our complete library of detailed itineraries filled with enticing photos and videos, read bios of our Trip Leaders, find descriptions of trip accommodations, and check real-time availability of any trips that interest you.

Average Daily Max/Min °F	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Ulaanbaatar	-2/-26	9/-20	25/-8	45/18	55/28	70/45	72/52	70/46	57/36	43/18	21/-4	3/-18
Gobi Desert	17/-4	24/0	41/14	55/32	68/48	77/50	80/53	75/53	68/44	53/32	35/14	23/-4

Toucan Club Rewards & Discounts

We are very proud to have one of the highest rates of repeat travelers in the business, and have established the Wilderness Travel Toucan Club to reward you for your loyalty. For more information, please visit the Toucan Club page of our website at www.wildernesstravel.com/toucan.

Here's how it works:

YOUR FIRST TRIP

As a first-time traveler, you receive a lightweight Wilderness Travel T-shirt and set of durable WT Luggage Tags. On subsequent trips, we're happy to send you a new WT T-shirt and set of Luggage Tags by request.

YOUR SECOND TRIP

A top quality Wilderness Travel insulated stainless steel water bottle by CamelBak and a cozy Wilderness Travel fleece vest by Patagonia (\$130 value).

YOUR THIRD TRIP

A versatile Wilderness Travel R-1 pullover by Patagonia (\$140 value).

YOUR FOURTH TRIP

Discounts on the cost of your trip begin! You receive a 4% discount on the tour cost.

FIVE AND MORE TRIPS

You receive a 5% discount on the base trip cost. On your sixth trip, you receive a 6% discount, and so on up to your 10th trip. The maximum discount is 10%, with a ceiling of \$500.

Note: Due to special pricing considerations, Toucan Club discounts do not apply to our Private Journeys or Special Events. However, your participation on these trips does count toward your Toucan discount on future departures of Wilderness Travel's regular adventures.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

Toucan Club travel discounts cannot be used in conjunction with any other discount, unless otherwise specified. Discounts are deducted from the base trip cost and shown on the final invoice. The base trip cost is the main land/tier cost and does not include single supplement fees, extensions, internal airfare, or other additional charges. Bonus gifts (T-shirts, luggage tags, vests, water bottles, and pullovers) will be mailed approximately three weeks prior to trip departure. Terms and conditions of Toucan Club bonuses are subject to change or cancellation at the discretion of Wilderness Travel, Inc.



MEN'S T-SHIRT



WOMEN'S T-SHIRT



PATAGONIA SYNCHILLA FLEECE VEST PLUS INSULATED CAMELBAK WATER BOTTLE



PATAGONIA R1 PULLOVER



WILDERNESS TRAVEL HAS BEEN AWARDED:

Best Travel Specialists in the World: *Conde Nast Traveler*, 2024, 4-time winner

World's Best Tour Operators: *Travel + Leisure*, 11-time winner

Best Wildlife, Hiking & Walking Trips: *AFAR Magazine*, 3 years in a row

Best Adventure Travel Companies: *USA Today*

Trip of the Year: *Outside Magazine*, 9-time winner

50 Tours of a Lifetime: *National Geographic Traveler*, 9 years in a row

Best Adventure Travel Companies: *National Geographic Adventure*, 3-time winner

Please be advised that California has established a Travel Consumer Restitution Fund under the California Seller of Travel Law that took effect January 1, 1996. This fund is designed to protect consumers from unscrupulous practices by discount airfare ticket sellers or air charter operators. Unfortunately, this law does not cover non-California residents and, even in the case of California residents, it does not cover any foreign travel where the foreign "providers of transportation or travel services" are not in compliance with the Sellers of Travel Law (compliance being defined as registered as a Seller of Travel in California and a participant in the Travel Consumer Restitution Fund). Thus none of Wilderness Travel's tours qualify and we are required by law to advise each client that they are not covered by the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires sellers of travel to maintain a trust account or bond. This business has a trust account. California Seller of Travel #100769640

While as accurate as possible at the time of printing, this itinerary should be considered an approximate indication of the schedule and scope of activities and trip routing, rather than an inflexible schedule of events; it is subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control. This trip is subject to the Limitation of Liability and all the terms and conditions as detailed in the General Information section of the Wilderness Travel Catalog.

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