

MONGOLIA

DETAILED ITINERARY

GRASSLANDS, NOMADS AND THE GOBI

May 29/24

Photo: © Fred Lokay



Grasslands extend to a horizon of cobalt-blue skies, pastel-hued rocks color the Gobi Desert and fast-flowing rivers cut deep canyons in arid steppes in this remote Asian nation landlocked between China and Russia. The people, descendants of Genghis Khan, are an eclectic mix of rugged nomads, Buddhist monks, farmers and merchants. For the truly adventurous, Mongolia holds the promise of an exotic culture rarely visited by travelers.

Starting in Ulaanbaatar, the tour uses the capital as a hub to visit the Gobi Desert, Lake Hovsgol and central Mongolia. In the Gobi, we visit the Flaming Cliffs, a world-class dinosaur site with remains so plentiful that dinosaur eggshells can still be found on the surface.

In Yol Valley National Park, we experience a unique environment that includes 200 species of birds and 600 species of vegetation.

FACTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- 17 land days • Maximum 16 travelers • Start & finish in Ulaanbaatar • All meals included • Includes 4 internal flights • Feel the competitive excitement of the Naadam Festival • Enjoy beautiful Lake Hovsgol and the stunning Mongolian landscape • Explore Flaming Cliffs dinosaur site • Visit Erdene Zuu Monastery • Enjoy meeting welcoming Mongolians • Kazakh Family Visit and Cooking Experience • View the world's tallest equestrian statue

DEPARTURE DATES & PRICE

Jul 01 - Jul 17, 2024 - **\$7595 USD**

Activity Level: 2

Comfort Level: Some rough/dusty roads and long drives. Flexibility is key due to changing internal airline schedules.

ACCOMMODATIONS: Comfortable hotel in Ulaanbaatar with private bathrooms. Seven nights accommodation in twin/single room gers (Mongolian circular tents) with private bathroom facilities. One night in wooden houses with private bathroom facilities.

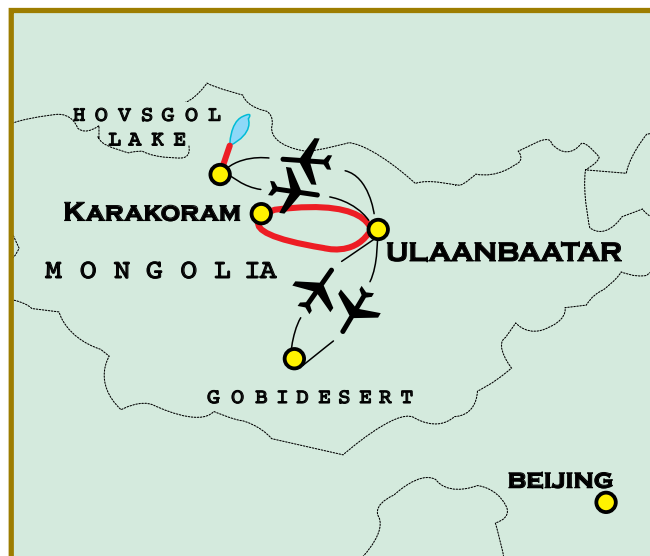
ELDERTREKS



SMALL GROUP
EXOTIC ADVENTURES
FOR TRAVELERS 50 PLUS

We stay on the beautiful shores of Lake Hovsgol. Surrounded by mountains and forests, it contains three percent of the Earth's fresh water. In central Mongolia we visit Gorkhi-Terelj and Bogd National Parks. In Karakoram we discover the ruins of the ancient capital of the Mongols, and in Ulaanbaatar we walk through former royal palaces and visit the national museum.

The highlight for many is the famous Naadam Festival. Full of ceremony, pomp and festive Mongolians, this event features the "Three Sports of Men" - archery, wrestling and horse racing. Our Mongolian odyssey concludes in Ulaanbaatar.



DAY 1 ARRIVE IN ULAANBAATAR

Arrive in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia and transfer to our centrally located hotel. We gather this evening for our orientation meeting and dinner.

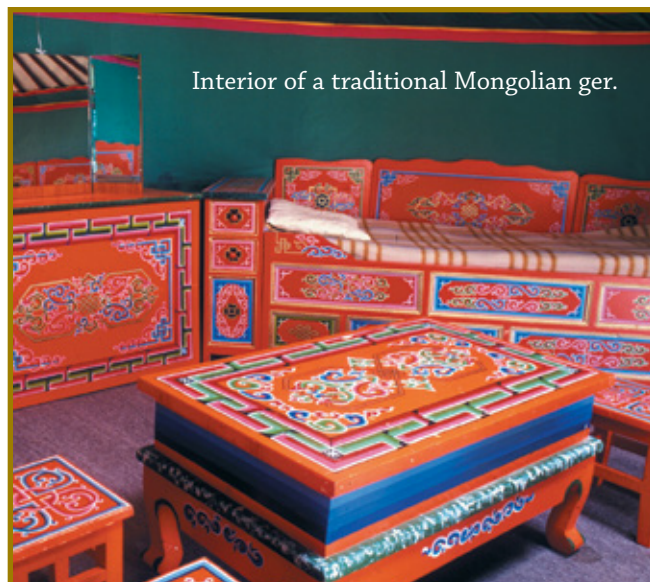
Overnight in Ulaanbaatar.



DAY 2 HOGNO HAN

In the morning, we visit Gandan Monastery before we depart for Hogno Han/Bayangobi. Here, we spend some time with a local nomadic family and explore the area and also have an opportunity for a horseback ride, hiking or just relaxing at the camp!

Dinner and overnight in our ger camp (a ger is a traditional Mongolian circular felt tent).



DAY 3 TO KARAKORAM - ANCIENT CAPITAL OF THE MONGOLS

In the morning, we drive to Karakoram, which served as the Mongolian capital for only 40 years (when Kublai Khan moved it to what is now Beijing). Most of the city was later destroyed by Manchurian





soldiers. On our way to Karakoram, we visit Erdene Zuu Monastery. The remnants of the city were reputedly used to build this monastery in the 16th century. We visit the newly opened museum in Karakorum showcasing recent archeological findings in the area and excellent displays on Mongolian empires.

Dinner and overnight in our ger camp in Bayangobi.

DAY 4 PRZEWALSKI WILD HORSES, RETURN TO ULAANBAATAR

Today we drive to the Hustain Nuruu (Pike Hustai) National Reserve to have a view of Przewalski wild horses, recently re-introduced back into Mongolia. The 90,000 hectare reserve was established in 1993 and the takhi (the Mongolian name of wild horses) were brought to Mongolia from zoo parks within Holland. Within the reserve there are a number of Turkish graves and stone statues. The Ongot archaeological complex is also nearby. Tour the visitor's center to learn about conservation projects and current developments. After lunch, we drive back to Ulaanbaatar.

Overnight in Ulaanbaatar.

DAY 5 KAZAKH FAMILY VISIT AND COOKING EXPERIENCE

Today, we will visit a Kazakh family in the Nalaikh district. During the socialist era of Mongolia in the 1970s and 80s, many Kazakh families moved to Nalaikh to work in the local coal mines, seeking better life opportunities. Approximately 3.5% of Mongolians are Kazakh people, many of whom fled political repression in Xinjiang and crossed the Altai Mountains to settle in western Mongolia. Today, they are part of the ethnically diverse modern Mongolia. We will visit a local family in their summer Kazakh ger and learn about the tradition of colorful and intricate embroidery in which the women are skilled in. We will also learn about the Kazakh men's pride in eagle hunting tools.

Kazakh men raise and train young eagles to hunt various prey such as hares and foxes. We spend this afternoon immersing ourselves in the unique traditions, culture, and food of the Mongolian Kazakh community.

Overnight in Ulaanbaatar.

DAY 6 TERELJ NATIONAL PARK, ULAANBAATAR

This morning we drive to Gorkhi-Terelj National Park, located about 50 miles northeast of the city. At an altitude of 5,250 feet, the area is cool with wonderful alpine scenery.

This afternoon we return to the city and visit the National History Museum.

Overnight in Ulaanbaatar.

DAY 7 FLY TO MURON, LAKE HOVSGOL

In the morning, we transfer to the airport in Ulaanbaatar for our short flight to Muron, the capital city of scenic Hovsgol aimag (province). We continue by road to Lake Hovsgol, one of Mongolia's most scenic attractions. Lake Hovsgol is a massive lake fed by the same water supply as its cousin, Lake Baikal. The Mongolians refer to the lake as "Mother", and not only is it home to many species of fish, but the lake itself holds approximately 3% of the world's fresh water. The lake is surrounded by dozens of mountains, thick pine forests and lush meadows with grazing yaks and horses.

In the evening, enjoy dinner and overnight in our ger camp.

DAY 8 LAKE HOVSGOL - HIKING, BOAT RIDE

Today, we can go for a day hike, or boat ride on beautiful Lake Hovsgol.

Dinner and overnight in our ger camp.

DAY 9 LAKE HOVSGOL - HORSEBACK AND YAK CART RIDING (OPTIONAL)

Today, we can try horseback riding or yak cart riding! Also, for those intrepid swimmers you can go for a dip in the lake!

Dinner and overnight in our ger camp.

DAY 10 TO ULAANBAATAR - ZANABAZAR MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

In the morning, we return to the airport in Muron, where we catch our flight back to Ulaanbaatar. This afternoon in the city, we have the opportunity to visit the Zanabazar Museum of Fine Arts.

Dinner and overnight in Ulaanbaatar.

DAY 11 NAADAM FESTIVAL - COMPETITION & CEREMONY

Today, we enjoy the Naadam Festival. The Naadam Festival is the largest annual celebration in Mongolia and showcases Mongolia's finest in the three "manly sports" of horse racing, archery and wrestling. The festival begins with a fantastic, colorful ceremony outside the State Parliament House. Hundreds of soldiers in bright uniforms play music on brass instruments, and Mongolians dressed in Genghis-like warrior outfits parade around the square, before marching to the stadium. Throughout the day there are archery events, where the targets lie on the ground, horse races with as many as 1,000 horses, and wrestling bouts in which there are no time limits. Tonight we enjoy a Nadaam folk celebration dinner.

Overnight in Ulaanbaatar.

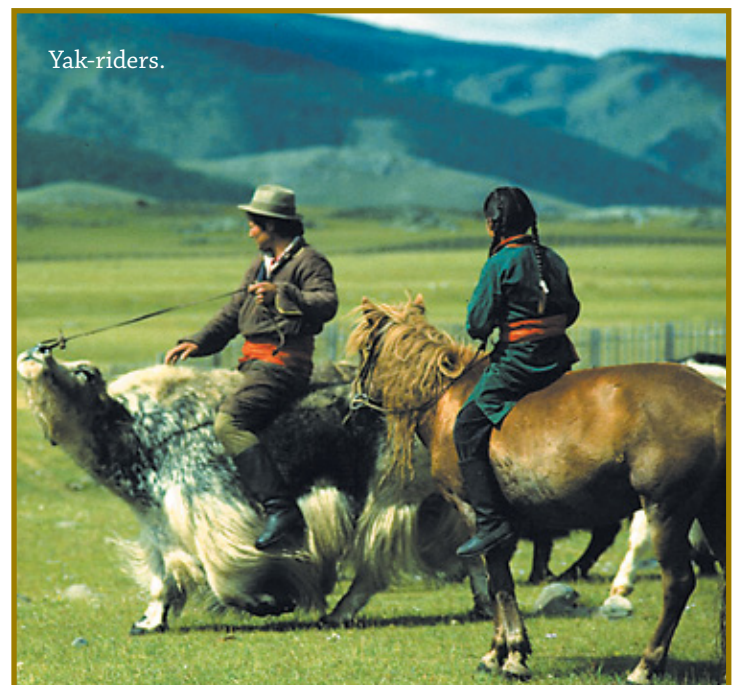
DAY 12 NAADAM FESTIVAL - CLOSING CEREMONY

Enjoy more of the festival and the Mongolian spectators who come from far and wide to watch the competitions. See how the wrestlers, riders and archers have progressed until one is proclaimed 'Champion'. We will visit an interesting Dinosaur Museum this afternoon and tonight we enjoy the closing ceremony and dinner.

Overnight in Ulaanbaatar.

DAY 13 FLY TO GOBI DESERT - YOL VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

Today, we fly south to the Gobi Desert. The Gobi Desert is a mysterious place that captivates the imagination. It is an extreme area with wide temperature swings, sparse vegetation and a small population of hearty nomads. It is also unique for its fauna and is home to the two-humped Bactrian camel and the world's only desert bear, the Gobi bear. Today, we drive to the Yol Am (Eagle's Mouth) Valley nestled between the beautiful peaks of



Yak-riders.

Flaming Cliffs — nature's miracle.



Gurvansaikhan (Three Beauties). We hike through the Shivertam Valley and Mukhar Shiver, also known as an ice valley for its dramatic and unusual scenery.

After a 2-hour hike, we have a picnic lunch at Yol Valley National Park. The park contains over 200 species of birds, including the Mongolian Desert finch and cinereous vulture, as well as 600 different types of vegetation and plants.

Dinner and overnight in our ger camp.

DAY 14 KHONGORYN ELS - SINGING SAND DUNES

Today we drive to Khongor Sand Dunes (130 miles). Khongoryn Els is the largest accumulation of sand in the Gobi Gurvan Saikhan National Park. The dunes rise abruptly from the plain. The dunes can reach an imposing 2500 feet in height, 5-7 miles wide and stretch for over 100 miles along the Gobi Altai Mountain range. These high dunes are called “singing sands” by locals as it makes various sounds when the wind is blowing. We have free time to explore the dunes on foot or just enjoy the magic of the dunes. We will also visit a camel breeding family and have the opportunity for a short camel ride.

Dinner and overnight in our wooden house.

DAY 15 FLAMING CLIFFS - CEMETERY OF DINOSAURS

In the morning, we continue on to see the “Flaming Cliffs”. The true name of this site is Bayanzag, first excavated in 1922, the area is world renowned as a “Cemetery of Dinosaurs”. The land itself is a rugged desert of colorful rocks, red sands and hearty endemic vegetation.

Dinner and overnight in our ger camp.

DAY 16 RETURN TO ULAANBAATAR, BOGD KHAN PALACE

In the morning, we drive to the airport at Dalanzadgad, where we catch our flight back to Ulaanbaatar. In the afternoon, we visit the Bogd Khan Palace, with its bizarre collection of artifacts, including a royal ger made out of snow leopard skins! Tonight we enjoy our Farewell Dinner.

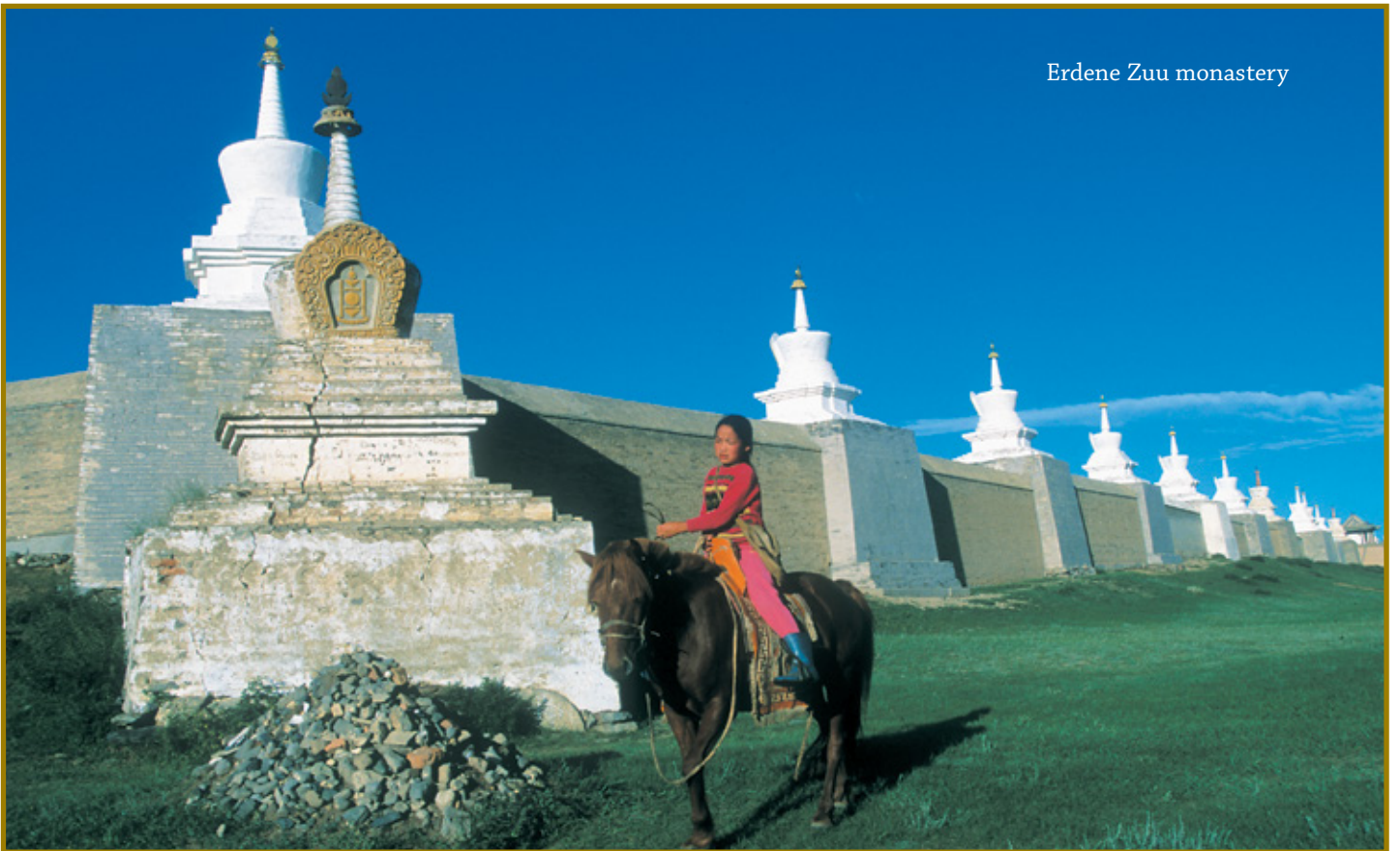
Overnight in Ulaanbaatar.

DAY 17 DEPARTURE

The tour concludes in Ulaanbaatar with a transfer to the airport for your departure flight.

Bogd Khan Palace Museum in Ulaanbaatar.







Tsam dancing

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. HOW BIG ARE THE GROUPS?

Each group is limited to 16 participants. Small groups are an important ingredient in adventure travel. They allow for more interaction and more personalized service throughout the itinerary.

2. WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?

All accommodations throughout; all meals, starting with dinner on day 1 and finishing with breakfast on departure day (i.e. the last day of the ElderTreks tour); bottled drinking water throughout the trip; all internal transportation; airport transfers on day 1 and departure day (i.e. the last day of the ElderTreks tour); all day trips and entrance fees as outlined in the itinerary; tips for hotels (porterage), national guide, bus driver, restaurants and spot guides; services of a trip leader.

3. WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?

International flights, tips to ElderTreks tour leader, alcoholic drinks, visas and travel insurance.

4. ARE THESE “EDUCATIONAL” TOURS?

Yes, in the broadest sense of the word, “educational”. We visit museums, National Parks and Reserves and have talks and discussions on many aspects of history, culture and nature. But this is only a portion of the educational experience. We believe that it is equally educational to meet local people on a non-commercial basis, visit their homes (gers) and even try to learn a few words of Mongolian.

5. HOW DO WE TRAVEL DURING THE TOUR?

All local transportation is included in the land price of the trip. We use buses, 4-wheel drive vehicles and we have the opportunity to ride horses and camels. Includes 4 domestic flights.

6. WHAT ARE OUR ACCOMMODATIONS LIKE?

We always stay in good accommodations — a combination of ger camps and hotels. The ger is a round felt structure with comfortable raised beds on wooden floors. Private facilities at the ger camps.

7. WHAT ABOUT THE WEATHER?

Our summer departures have been timed to coincide with the pleasant temperatures in Mongolia. You can expect daytime highs of 80°F (26°C) with night-time lows of 40°F (4°C). The country receives very little rain throughout the year and the humidity is low as well, making for comfortable travel.

8. WHEN IS PAYMENT DUE?

A non-refundable deposit of \$500 USD (plus insurance if you require it) is due at time of booking and will reserve your place on the tour. Payment of the full land cost is due 120 days before departure. Cancellation charges are applicable and are outlined in the “Terms and Conditions” section of our brochure.

9. IS MEDICAL INSURANCE REQUIRED?

Insurance coverage is not included in the cost of your trip. Please note that medical insurance is not required for this adventure but is recommended. ElderTreks offers comprehensive travel insurance and we are happy to provide you with a quote if you call our office. If you are purchasing insurance elsewhere, please ensure you provide the details to ElderTreks as soon as possible.

**Please note those travelers with pre-existing medical conditions must take out travel insurance at the time of deposit*

10. WHAT SHOULD I TAKE ON THE TOUR?

There is a detailed “What to Take” list in our Trip Kit, which we will send to you after receiving your booking deposit for the trip.

11. WHAT MEALS ARE INCLUDED?

All meals during the itinerary are included, starting with dinner on day 1, and finishing with breakfast on departure day. We eat a variety of local foods prepared in a wide range of settings. In many cases, we simply order a number of dishes and share, allowing you to sample new foods and decide what you enjoy best. In Ulaanbaatar, we eat in local establishments and at our hotel. Rest assured, though, we will make every effort to ensure that you are well fed with quality food.

12. CAN YOU ARRANGE MY FLIGHTS?

We would be happy to take care of your air arrangements. ElderTreks offers personalized flight itineraries — not group flights. Stop over en route, come in a few days early, or extend your stay. Call us for a customized itinerary.

13. WHAT IF I WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION?

If you have any further questions about the trip, please do not hesitate to contact our office for additional information. A Trip Kit containing further details on the destination will be sent to you once you have booked on the tour.





Naadam Festival



Naadam Festival





Naadam Festival