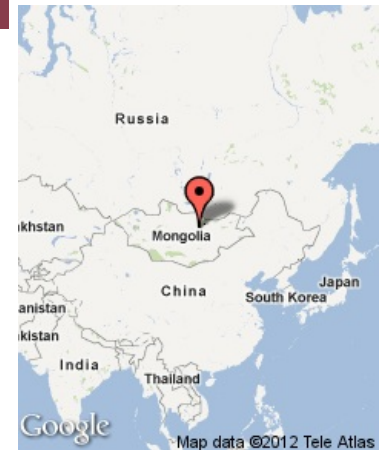


Adventure Tour in Mongolia



Highlights

The Mongolian steppes are as beautiful as they are barren, a remote and rugged region where ancient traditions live on to this day. This five-day tour takes you 'ger-to-ger' in timeless style - by horse, camel and ox cart!

From the mighty Altai Mountains to the sweeping sandscapes of the Gobi desert, Mongolia is a land of spectacular diversity! Marshes, salt lakes, forests and glaciers lie side by side with rolling pastures and wind-carved dunes, home to wild horses, Corsac foxes and the legendary Bactrian camel. One of the 20 largest countries in the world, Mongolia is also one of the most sparsely populated. Over a third of the country's three million inhabitants live in the capital Ulaanbaatar, while another third is engaged in nomadic or semi-nomadic pastoralism, a livelihood strategy unchanged in centuries. Thanks to its size and geographic isolation, Mongolia retains a truly unique cultural heritage, with indigenous forms of wrestling, horse-racing and throat-singing among the many ancient pastimes still practised today.

Less a holiday than a cultural odyssey, this six-day tour is an adventure like no other! Beginning in Ulaanbaatar, the Mongolian capital, you'll head out into the Khugnu-Tarni National Park and the desert beyond. Travelling first by jeep and later by camel, horse and ox cart, your route takes you via sacred sites and sand dunes to mountain monasteries and mammoth monuments! Each evening you'll stay with a local family in their traditional ger, offering a unique insight into the timeless traditions of this remote steppes region. As well as enjoying some authentic home cooking, you'll have the chance to participate in a range of household customs, be it worshipping at an ovoo (a stone, cloth and bone pyramid associated with Mongolia's ancient shamanic traditions) or visiting a nearby medicinal spring!

Is it for me?

Even by our own high standards, these Mongolia tours are that little bit special! This is a serious adventure, closer in kind to explorations of old than to the well-trodden trails of the modern traveller. There's an endless stream of unique experiences, from riding a camel to kipping in a ger, so these tours are best suited to adventurous types with wide-open minds (the kind of people who wouldn't say no to trying a horse steak, perhaps!?). You'll get most from this trip if you're not afraid to try new things and even look silly in the process - we find that's the best way to make friends! Put yourself out there and you'll be rewarded with sites and insights that most folk can only dream of!

Accommodation

On this tour you'll be staying with Mongolian families in traditional gers (sometimes known as yurts), circular felt-covered tents used by nomads throughout the steppes of Central Asia. These wood-framed dwellings are carefully designed to protect inhabitants from the elements; whatever the weather outside, the ger remains warm and cosy within! You'll have cushions and blankets galore, and some stops have hot showers and laundry facilities on site. All meals are taken with the host families, offering a unique introduction to traditional Mongolian food. Standard fare includes meaty dumplings, noodle soups, hearty stews and sweet boortsog (a popular biscuit). You'll also have the chance to sample (and possibly prepare) some airag, the national drink made from fermented mare's milk!

Itinerary

Day One - Traditional short folk songs: You will start your journey after departing from Mandalgovi (Dundgovi

Prices from

166 GBP (5 days) per person

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province's center) by jeep for 46 kilometers to Ms. Uuganbold's Ger. She will serve you a nomadic lunch and tea. Afterwards she will sing you Mongolian traditional songs and show you how to make traditional embroideries and sewing.

Overnight Ger (Munh-Od): Then the local driver takes you to your overnight family (13 km drive) where you will be greeted to welcoming tea and a nomadic dinner. During your stay with Mr. Munh-Od, you will have a chance to play National Game called "Shagai" which is a lot like marbles but played with the ankle bone of sheep.

Day Two - "Shagai" competition and melodies of the Horse Head Fiddle: After breakfast you will trek to next herder family with him for 2 kms. He will take your luggages by motobike.

Tea Ger (Munkhochir): Upon your arrival at Mr.Munkhochir's home you will have a nomadic lunch and tea while enjoying the horse fiddle melodies. You can enjoy the opportunity to try your hand with a rustic head fiddle and learn songs about the spirit of Mongolian horses. The afternoon will be filled with the lessons on "Shagai", a traditional game. You will play "Shagai" with his family and compete with them. Mr. Munkhochir will guide your journey for 8 kilometers to your overnight place by camel cart.

Overnight Ger (Gundsambuu): In the evening at your overnight place you can have a chance to play nomadic style volleyball and enjoy with children's singing.

Day Three - Learn the art of wood carvings: This morning you will wake up to a hot cup of milk tea and fried nomad bread (like small donuts). Before departure Mr. Gundsambuu will show you how to make Mongolian traditional wooden carvings. You will trek for 12 kilometers and reach tea ger, Mr. Tsogtsaikhan's ger.

Tea Ger (Mr. Tsogtsaikhan): You will be served a nomadic lunch and tea at Mr. Tsogtsaikhan's family. You have an opportunity to learn to assemble intellectual wooden games. Mr. Tsogtsaikhan will lead you to your next overnight Ger by horse or horse cart (11km).

Overnight Ger (Mr. Chimiddorj): Mr. Chimeddorj's Family will welcome you for dinner. Then you will have an overnight.

Day Four - Learn how to assemble a Mongolian ger and art of felt making: After having breakfast you will have a rare opportunity to take part in the art of making Mongolian felt. In the early afternoon you will begin your trek by foot around 13kms through some of the most amazing rock formations of lh Gazriin Chuluu like Tangad rock, Chinggis Khan Rock, Khur khartsag's memorial place and monument, Open air theatre etc and have the opportunity to take some incredible photos. You will have picnic lunch on the way. You will be surrounded by densely packed massive formations that averagely range 400 meters and higher!

Overnight Ger (Mr. Tsembeldorj): Upon your arriva,l Mr. Tsembeldorj's family will serve you a dinner and tea. He worked as a local National Park ranger for 37 years. After dinner you will learn the art of assembling a mongolian ger by a small maket with him.

Day Five - Departure: After your breakfast, you will have an opportunity to trek around and visit the surrounding caves as well as the monument of Mongolia's most famous long singer Mrs.Norovbanzad. On the way you will stop at the local "Ovoo" (stone mound of shamanistic culture, it believes that local deities listens to the people's wishes and fulfills them) and put small stones or go out for a short trek. Around 11 a.m. local driver will pick you up.

Details

Getting there

You will need to fly into Ulaanbaatar Airport and then get a bus to Mandalgov

Price includes

Food, accommodation, activities, some transfers.

Price details

Includes:

UB to Mandalgovi Bus Fee

Rural jeep to first ger and pickup

Booking & travel orientation w/ handbook

Available

Jun—Oct

Typical Duration

5 days

Comfort level

Down to earth (hostels, camping, huts)

Experience required

A reasonable interest is all that is needed