

Mongol Horse Trail, Mongolia

The Mongol Horse Trail is a nomadic journey through wild terrain. Your luggage will be loaded onto yak (in fact a yak-cow crossbreed called a hainag) carts and a ger will be carried to house your mobile kitchen. The ride starts in the steppes and gradually the scenery changes to the forest steppe mosaic and southern taiga. Your journey will take you through mountains, steppes, forests and wooded meadows and you will camp alongside rivers.

Itinerary

Day One: Ulaanbaatar

You are met on arrival at Ulaanbaatar and transferred to your hotel. Meet your guide and rest of the group for ride briefing over dinner. If there are late flight arrivals, the briefing will take place in the morning over breakfast.

Please note that the itinerary may vary due to local conditions, but always with your best interests in mind. For operational reasons the trip may run in reverse.



Day Two: To the Steppes

In the morning you may visit the Gandan lamasery centre of the Buddhist revival in Mongolia. The Mongols follow the Tibetan version of Lamaism, the Dalai Lama being the theological leader. Later you depart for the steppes by vehicle, with a picnic lunch when you arrive at the first camp site. Meet your horses and the yak carts and pitch camp near to some

nomadic families. There should be time for a short introductory ride before dinner.



Days Three & Four: Steppe Ride

As you ride over the treeless steppes, across hilly terrain with occasional patches of birch forest, you may make contact with local herdsmen, often relatives and friends of your wranglers.



Forests will start to appear as you ride towards the Khentii wilderness area consisting of Khan Khentii Strictly Protected Area, which is the interior part of Gorkhi Terelj National Park. You will be riding in an area where the Siberian boreal forest meets the Central Asian desert and steppe.

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Day Five & Six: To Sharbulag Valley

Ride through the larch forests, up the slopes of the mountains to follow the ridges, whilst the yak carts follow the broad river valleys. At times it may be necessary to lead your horses down the steep mountain sides. Camp at the Sharbulag Valley for two nights.



Day Seven: To Tuul River

Cross a pass and ride into the upper parts of the Tuul River Valley, near to the main ridge of the Khentii Mountains. Again, from horseback, you will ride high up onto the ridges where the panoramic views are extraordinary. This is a partly forested area. The yak carts will make their way through the valley on a different route.



Days Eight & Nine: To Jalman Meadows

Ride towards Jalman Meadows where you will arrive at the semi-permanent ger camp. It is situated next to a beautiful wooded meadow on the upper parts of the Tuul River.

You will overnight at the ger camp for two nights and have a last day ride in the area. You may ride with different wranglers on this day.



Day Ten: To Ulaanbaatar

During the morning you return back to Ulaanbaatar to explore the capital city on your own. The local guide is available to direct you to where the points of interest are located. Lunch is to your own account today.

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In the evening you have a farewell dinner and attend a performance by the Tumen Ekh ensemble, featuring folk and traditional Mongolian music, song, dance and contortion.



Day Eleven: Departure

Commence your journey home or transfer onto your next destination.

Accommodation

When in Ulaanbaatar (on the first and last nights of the ride) you will stay centrally in a modern hotel of reasonable standard with ensuite bathrooms. This is usually the Bayangol Hotel (Chingis Khan Avenue 5. Tel: 976 11 312 255).



On the trail you will have two nights in a semi-permanent ger camp, Jalman Meadows.



For the remaining six nights you will stay in six-person teepees (two people sharing). You will be provided with a sleeping cot and blankets, but you will need to take your own sleeping bag.



If you feel the cold easily or your body is small, you should take some care in the selection of your sleeping bag. During cold spells early and late in the season, there is a very good chance of night temperatures below zero. Frost at these times is likely,

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and can sometimes happen even during the summer. A good four season sleeping bag is definitely necessary early and late in the season.

A loo tent will be erected. Washing facilities are limited and you are asked to bring only biodegradable toiletries. A shower tent may be available, and you should ask your crew.



The kitchen (and dining room) will be in a ger, the practical and typical Mongolian dwelling. (The word “yurt”, which is in fact a Turkish word, is used in many countries to describe the ger). Four people assemble a ger within half an hour and helping to erect it is all part of the experience of being in Mongolia. Once constructed, the wooden frame of the latticework and

roof poles, surrounded with layers of felt and canvas, keeps the ger warm inside, even during the harsh Mongolian winter. A stove is usually placed in the middle, particularly welcome early and late in the season.

The ger is for everyone to use. On cold or wet evenings you will eat in the ger and, although it may be crowded when the team also come to eat, you should stay on and use this opportunity to get to know the whole team and have fun practising your Mongolian.

