

TransMongolia

Itinerary

Day 1 - Ulaanbaatar

You are met on arrival at Ulaanbaatar and transferred to your hotel.

Please note that the itinerary may vary due to local conditions, but always with your best interests in mind.

After lunch visit Gandantegchinlin Monastery and the National Museum of Mongolian History.

Built in 1809, the Gandantegchinlin Monastery (formerly known as the Gandan Monastery) is a Tibetan-style Buddhist monastery located in Ulan Bator. Its name is of Tibetan origin and can be translated as "Great site full of Joy". Several hundred monks currently reside there. The National Museum of Mongolian History tells the story of the country, from prehistoric times to today.

Dinner downtown and overnight at the hotel.



Day 2 - to Karakorum

After breakfast you transfer to Khogno Khan Park, stopping for a picnic lunch on the way.

Located about 280 km from the capital, Khogno Khan Park has amazing rock formations; cliffs shaped by erosion overlooking vast semi-desert plains. Here you will discover the Ovgon Khiid Monastery, built during the 17th century. The park is also home to huge sand dunes offering a variety of stunning landscapes that earned the region its nickname of "Mini Gobi".

Meet the nomads who will be your guides for this part of the trip. Tonight you sleep in a guest ger close to the nomad family ger (up to 5 guests per ger).



Day 3 to 7 - along the Sacred Mountain

For the next five days, you ride between cliffs and dunes, along the Khogno Tarna Sacred Mountain, a region seldom visited by tourists.

Heading north, you keep the cliffs of the mysterious Khogno Tarna Mountain on your right. The Ovgon Khiid Buddhist monastery, located on this mountain has a tragic history; all the monks were killed and the temple destroyed by the troops of Galdan Boshigt Khan in 1640; the temple was rebuilt later, but destroyed once again during the communist regime in 1937. At the end of the communist period, in the mid-1990s, the temple was rebuilt again, and you will have the opportunity to visit it during your first day on horseback.

You may also enjoy a different riding experience with a camel ride in the dunes of Bayan Gobi.



These five days in the saddle are full of variety, as different ecosystems meet here: steppe, taiga, desert, rivers and the impressive granite formations of the mountains. You can find fauna and flora that are

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characteristic to these ecosystems, as well as wonderful landscapes.

After a short road transfer, depending on the local conditions, this part of the ride ends close to Ugii Lake, famous for its migratory birds.

Nights are spent in tents.



Day 8 - Ugii Lake to Arkhangai

After breakfast, you travel east by vehicle to the Arkhangai region. This is a wild region, with narrow valleys and dense forests. You stop for a picnic lunch on the way.

Cross the Khangai mountains and finally arrive at the gers of the nomads who will guide you during this part of the trail. They are also the breeders of the horses you will ride.

Tonight you sleep in a guest ger close to the nomad family ger (up to 5 guests per ger).



Day 9 to 17 - in Arkhangai (Central Mongolia)

During the next nine days you ride in the Arkhangai region, following a northwest direction to Lake Terkhiin Tsagaan Nuur (the 'White Lake), the Chuluut and Suman rivers canyons and Khorgo Volcano. You will cross many mountains and rivers over this week.

The trail starts along the banks of the Tamir river, which is very full during the spring and summer. The Tamir Valley is green and wooded, some of the poplars in the region are more than 300 years old.

You cross densely forested mountain ranges, virtually uninhabited and very different from the open steppes. The ride continues into more open spaces, offering many opportunities for nice canters, and where you will hopefully see gers and herds belonging to nomads.

You also ride along the Chuluut canyon, channelled out by the lava from Khorgo volcano. The basalt canyon is a hundred miles long and forms spectacular scenery.

Nights are spent in tents.



Day 18- to Karakorum

After breakfast, you travel by vehicle to Karakorum, the ancient capital of the Mongolian Empire, and visit Erdene Zuu Monastery.

Karakorum (Kharkhorin) is the ancient capital of the Mongol Empire, founded in 1235 by Ogödei, the son of Genghis Khan. In 1260, Kublai Khan transfers the capital to Beijing. Karakorum was destroyed in 1388 by troops of the Ming Dynasty. Of its former glory remain mere turtle statues guarding the entrances to the city walls.

In 1585, Erdene Zuu was built just outside the walls of the ruins of the ancient capital after the introduction of Buddhism in Mongolia as the state religion. Stones from the ruins of Karakorum were used in the construction. The monastery was damaged in the 1680s, but was rebuilt in the 18th century and in 1872. For centuries, Erdene Zuu was the most important religious shrine in Mongolia.

After the fall of communism in Mongolia in 1990, the monastery was given to lamas and Erdene Zuu became a place of worship once again. Today Erdene Zuu

remains an active Buddhist monastery, as well as a museum.



Dinner and night at a ger camp (2 to 4 guests per ger).

Day 19 - Karakorum to Ulaanbaatar

An early departure this morning as you start a long day on the road (6 - 7 hours) to return to Ulaanbaatar, with a picnic lunch enroute. If there is time, you have the rest of the afternoon free for some last minute shopping in Ulaanbaatar.

In the late afternoon, you attend a show with traditional dances, music and songs from Mongolia, including the amazing Khoomei.

The Khoomei is an overtone singing (throat singing) in which the singer produces two distinctively audible pitches at the same time, including a low pedal note, or drone, derived from the fundamental frequency of the vocal cord vibrations, and higher melodic notes that result when the singer's mouth acts as a filter, selecting one note at a time from among the drone's natural overtone series pitches.

Overnight in a hotel. Dinner is to your own account this evening.



Day 20 - Ulaanbaatar

Transfer to the airport after breakfast for your flight home.

Accommodation

When in Ulaanbaatar (first and last nights of the rides) you will stay centrally in a modern hotel of reasonable standard with ensuite bathrooms. This is usually the Dream Hotel (Khoroo 4, Ulaanbaatar 21646. Tel: +976 11 32 1253).



On the trail you will stay in two-person tents. Single tents are available at no extra cost. You will be provided with a sleeping mat.



You will need to bring 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, and can sometimes even occur during the summer months.



A loo screen and washing tent will be erected each evening, but washing facilities are limited and you are asked to bring only biodegradable toiletries.

The kitchen (and dining room) will be in a large tent.

Two nights will be spent in a 'guest ger' next to a nomad family's ger, and another night will be spent in a semi-permanent ger camp with shower facilities. On these nights single accommodation is not available and there could be up to five people sharing a ger.

