



## Mongolia Traveler

### Group departure dates:

June 15-28, July 16-29, Aug 1-14, Aug 9-22, August 13-26, Sept 18-Oct 1

**Day 1:** Arrive in Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia (called “UB” by locals and visitors alike). After immigration and customs, you will be met by your guide and driver and transferred to your hotel. Referred to as “The City of Contrasts”, where modern constructions stand beside traditional dwellings and ancient monasteries, UB is a rapidly growing and developing city with a population of nearly a million people. Conveniently located in downtown UB, your hotel is within walking distance from Sukhbaatar Square, museums, theaters, and shops. Depending on an arrival time, you may enjoy a short city orientation tour before dinner. Overnight in hotel.

**Day 2:** In the morning, catch your flight for the Gobi, this arid semi-desert land with sparse vegetation, where gazelles roam and eagles soar the skies. Once the bottom of a sea, the Gobi offers spectacular views, colors and shapes. Upon arrival, you’ll be met by Boojum driver/vehicle. Drive south towards the Yolyn Am canyon. Famed for its rich bird habitat, Yolyn Am (Vulture Mouth) was originally established as a bird preserve and later for its stunning beauty and great hiking Yolyn Am became one of the major destinations in Gobi. Explore the area on foot. Overnight in gers.

**Day 3:** Continue your Gobi exploration with Bayan Zag and Khongoryn Els sand dunes. Visit Bayan Zag, renowned as “The Flaming Cliffs” by American explorers for its dramatic shapes and colors (especially at sunset). Presenting the first dinosaur eggs ever to be found in the history of world paleontology, Bayan Zag still offers numerous fossils yet to be found. Packed lunch at the site. Drive towards Khongoryn Els. Stretched along the narrow rift valley of the Gobi Altai Mountain range, the 200km of Khongoryn Els dunes offer great dune climbing and “surfing” opportunities with spectacular views of the desert land within these rocky mountains. Overnight in gers.

**Day 4:** Enjoy the day in and around Khongoryn Els. Optional camel riding. Overnight in gers.

**Day 5:** Head north to reach Ongiin Khiid. In the early evening you will reach the ruins of this once active Buddhist monastery. Hidden within the rolling hills of this desert land, these dramatic ruins offer visitors a story of the sad events of the 1930’s when political purges rolled through Mongolia. Overnight in gers.

**Day 6:** Continue north to Kharkhorin, capital of the 13th century Mongolian Empire. Originally established in 8th century and named “Khar Khorum” (The Black Fortress), it was a military training and weapons production unit. Chinggis Khaan seized the city and made it a capital for its strategically important location from which to launch military campaigns and boost trade. Erdene Zuu monastery was constructed on the site using the ruins of the ancient capital some 300 years ago. This monastery was the seat of Buddhism in Mongolia until it was largely destroyed during the Soviet purges. Now there is a museum and restored, active temple functioning at the site. Overnight in gers.

**Day 7:** Drive further northwest to reach Tsenkher hot springs. Situated in a mountain meadow, this resort offers great opportunities for nature lovers to hike and horse ride. Take a hot soak and relax after a day of activities. Overnight in gers.



**Day 8:** Head northwest towards Khorgo a dormant volcano and Terkhiin Tsagaan Lake. As you hike up the volcano, the dramatic scenery of the beautiful alpine lake to the west and volcanic lava flows to the east will open in front of you. Explore the area on foot. Stay overnight at the beautiful spot at the shore of the lake. Overnight in gers.

**Day 9:** Drive to Jargalant hot springs, a perfect stop over for travelers heading north to Khovsgol Lake. Enjoy the hot spa. Overnight in gers.

**Day 10:** Drive to Khatgal, the gateway to the Khovsgol National Park and the southernmost settlement on the shore of the Khovsgol Lake. Stop en-route in the Valley of Kings for the display of the ancient burial grounds of the Turkik nobles and a view of the carved “Deer Stones”. Overnight in gers.

**Day 11:** Enjoy the view of the beautiful lake Khovsgol, a crystal clear water lake that stretches over 100 miles. Explore the area on foot. A short optional kayak outing is available. Overnight in gers.

**Day 12:** Catch your flight back to UB. In the evening, watch “Tumen Ekh” folk theater perform throat singing, traditional dance, contortion and more. Overnight at hotel.

**Day 13:** Full day of sightseeing and shopping in UB. Visit Gandan monastery, a major Buddhist monastery. The winter palace of the Bogd Khaan displays interesting exhibits of the lifestyle of Mongolian nobles. Overnight in hotel.

**Day 14:** Transfer to the airport for your international departure.

**What’s Included:** Meals beginning and ending in UB (dinner on arrival day through breakfast on departure day), all transportation upon arrival in UB, hotel in UB and ger accommodations, guide/translator, vehicle/driver and park/entry fees.

**What’s Not Included:** Roundtrip international airfare to/from UB, airport taxes, evacuation coverage, gratuities, excess baggage fees and items of personal nature.

**Note:** Depending on the domestic flight schedule for next summer, there will be some minor changes in the itinerary. We reserve the right to surcharge clients when internal flights increase by more than 5% from the cost of the air ticket at the time the trip deposit was paid. Air ticket prices and flight schedules are often hard to determine until just a month or two before travel and price and schedule changes are capricious.

*Driving hours and distance in the countryside will vary depending on road and weather conditions. Often time roads are very dusty, bumpy and very challenging.*