

Destinations in Central Mongolia



Khangai Mountain Range:

The Khangain Nuruu Mountain Range in central Mongolia is the second highest mountain range in Mongolia. The range extends for about 800 kilometers and its average altitude is 2500-3000 meters above sea level. Most of the ancient Mongolian states' histories connect to this area. Khangai mountains are well-watered, covered with abundant forests, lovely meadows and plenty of fresh streams. The Khangai zone is home to diverse species of flora and fauna including: elk, red deer, musk deer, wild boar, brown bear, wild sheep, ibex, wolf, fox and more. Horseback and fishing, bird watching and trekking in spectacular nature are all available here.

Karakorum:

Karakorum was established in 1220 and was the capital city of the Great Mongolian Empire. Chinggis Khaan and his descendant khaans Ugudei, Guyug and Munkh lived here ruling the empire. The city was destroyed by soldiers of Chinese Ming Dynasty in the 14th Century. The ruins of Karakorum have been protected since 1961 and was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1996. There are several interesting sites to visit in Karakorum including the Erdenezuu Monastery, the Great Khan's monument, the legendary Turtle of Karakorum and the Phallic Rock statue.



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Erdenezuu Monastery:

Erdenezuu is the first Buddhist monastery of Mongolia established in 1585 by Abtai Sain Khan on the ruins of Karakorum. The Erdenedzuu Monastery has a rectangular shaped perimeter wall of 420 meters. There are 108 beautiful stupas surrounding the monastery. The monastery has been protected since 1944 and has also been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1996. The museum of the monastery has unique exhibits such as the cast image, clothes and musical instruments that were created by Mongolian craftsmen in the 16-18th Centuries.



Elsen Tasarkhai Sand Dunes:

Elsen Tasarkhai is one of the most picturesque places of Mongolia and is part of the 80 km long Mongol Els Sand Dunes. This place is a wonderful combination of beautiful sand dunes, majestic granite mountains, green grass land, a clear fresh spring and a tiny lake. Indeed, here you can enjoy seeing the combination of Gobi and Khangai Natural Zones. Camel riding and trekking on steppe and sand dunes are available.



Erdene Khamba Monastery:

Beautiful Erdene Khamba Monastery is on magnificent Khugnu Khan Mountain to the east of Elsen Tasarkhai. The monastery was established by the first Mongolian Buddhist saint, Zanabazar and its construction work continued through the 1660s and early 1680s. Zanabazar dedicated this monastery to one of his teachers, Erdene-Tsorj and when Erdene-Tsorj became head of the monastery it became known as Erdene Khamba Khiid. The Monastery was largely demolished by late 1937. Restoration was began in the early 1990s. The Jamsran Temple, Bazarsad Shrines and the Five Kings Temple, on a high shelf of the mountain were reopened. This is a great place for meditation, hiking and taking pictures.



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Naiman Nuur “Eight Lakes”:

Khuisiin Naiman Nuur, known as “Eight Lakes”, with a 116 square km area, has been protected as a natural monument since 1992. The lakes of Naiman Nuur lie at an altitude of 2200 meters above sea level. Red deer, wild Argali sheep, Siberian ibex, musk deer, wild boar, duck and other birds have been sighted here. There are nine freshwater lakes, notably Shireet, Bugat, Khaliut, Khaya, Khuis, Shanaa, Duruu, Baga and Shanaga, last one being pretty small. These fresh water lakes are interconnected by ground water channels. The surrounding mountains have a forest belt some 300-400 meters wide while there are no trees at the tops. The reflections of larch forests and majestic mountains on the lake water are amazing. This is a wonderful place for relaxing, walking and bird watching in untouched and exotic nature.



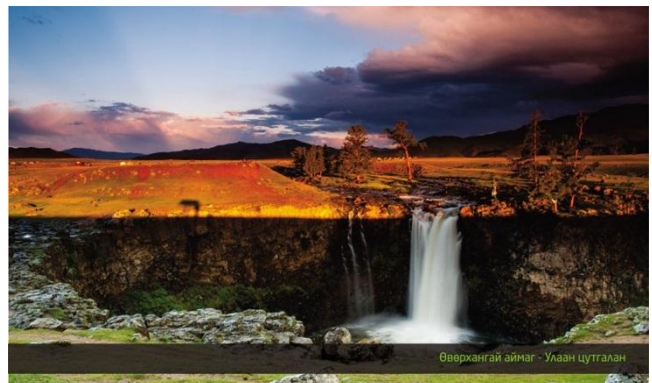
Khushuu Tsaidam - Turkic inscribed monument:

This is an ancient Turkish State King’s burial site with inscribed monuments of this Turkic State. One huge monument is 3.3m high and 1.3m wide and the inscription consists of 68 lines that was written in 732 A. D. by the grandson of Kulitegin and devoted to the Bilge King of Turkish origin and his old brother Kulitegin. It is noteworthy that the “Orkhon Inscription” has both a historical and scientific significance. It is the first time the Turkish people were referred to as Turks. There are more than 40 inscribed monuments of Turkic origin in Mongolia and more than 10 of these are in the Orkhon Valley. The monument was cited as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1996 and is found north of Karakorum.



Ulaan Tsutgalan Waterfall:

Ulaan Tsutgalan Waterfall on the Ulaan River flows through basalt rocks formed by a unique combination of volcanic eruptions and earthquakes around 20000 years ago. The Ulaan Tsutgalan Waterfall cascades from an impressive height of 20 meters with a width of 10 meters and extends for 100 meters from the Orkhon River. The waterfall is naturally most impressive after heavy rain but disappears in dry seasons.



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Tuvkhun Monastery:

Tuvkhun Monastery is located on the top of the 2312 meter high Undur Shireet Mountain overlooking the most beautiful scenery in the Khangai Mountains. The monastery was established by the first Mongolian Buddhist saint, Zanabazar, in 1654. Zanabazar lived, worked and meditated here for 30 years. He created his famous letter “Soyombo” here in 1686. There are 14 small temples, a hermit’s cave, several pilgrimage sites as well as Zanabazar’s boot imprint on a rock. This temple has enjoyed state protection since 1998 and was cited as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1996. Hiking up to the temple, visiting the monastery sites and views of the natural surroundings from the peak are amazing experiences.



Khorgo - Terkh National Park:

Khorgo – Terkh National Park has been protected since 1965 and covers an area of 773 square km. Khorgo Mountain was an active volcano just 8000 years ago and Khorgo is covered with basalt. Red deer, Siberian deer, wild boar, ruddy shell duck, great cormorant, reddish and black ducks are found in the park. During the summer great cormorants commonly nest at Terkhiin Tsagaan Lake. The lake is beautiful with crystal clear fresh water that supports pike & other fish. Torrents of lava issuing from the Khorgo Volcano dammed the Terkh River in the north and south forming the lake at an altitude of 2060 meters above sea level. Other exciting sites to visit in the park are Khorgo extinct volcano, the Yellow Dog’s Hell, the Ice Cave and Terkhiin Tsagaan Lake. Also enjoy swimming, bird watching, fishing and hiking by the lake shore.



Ugii Nuur Lake:

The lake covers 25 square km and is at an altitude of 1337 meters above sea level in Ugii Nuur Sum, Arkhangai Province. Ugii Lake is rich in perch and pike and renowned for its fishing. The annual catch from the lake of Ugii is 50 tons. The lake is also a wonderful place for watching Mongolian birdlife. Crane, duck and other species migrate to this area beginning in May. Swan, geese, white spoonbill, Dalmatian pelican and others have also been sighted. Bird watching and walking by the lake shore are also available.

