



MONGOLIA

Big Skies, Serene Steppes

August 7-18, 2022
12 Days / 10 Nights



WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL
OF GREATER HOUSTON
Global Perspectives, Local Conversations

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ITINERARY

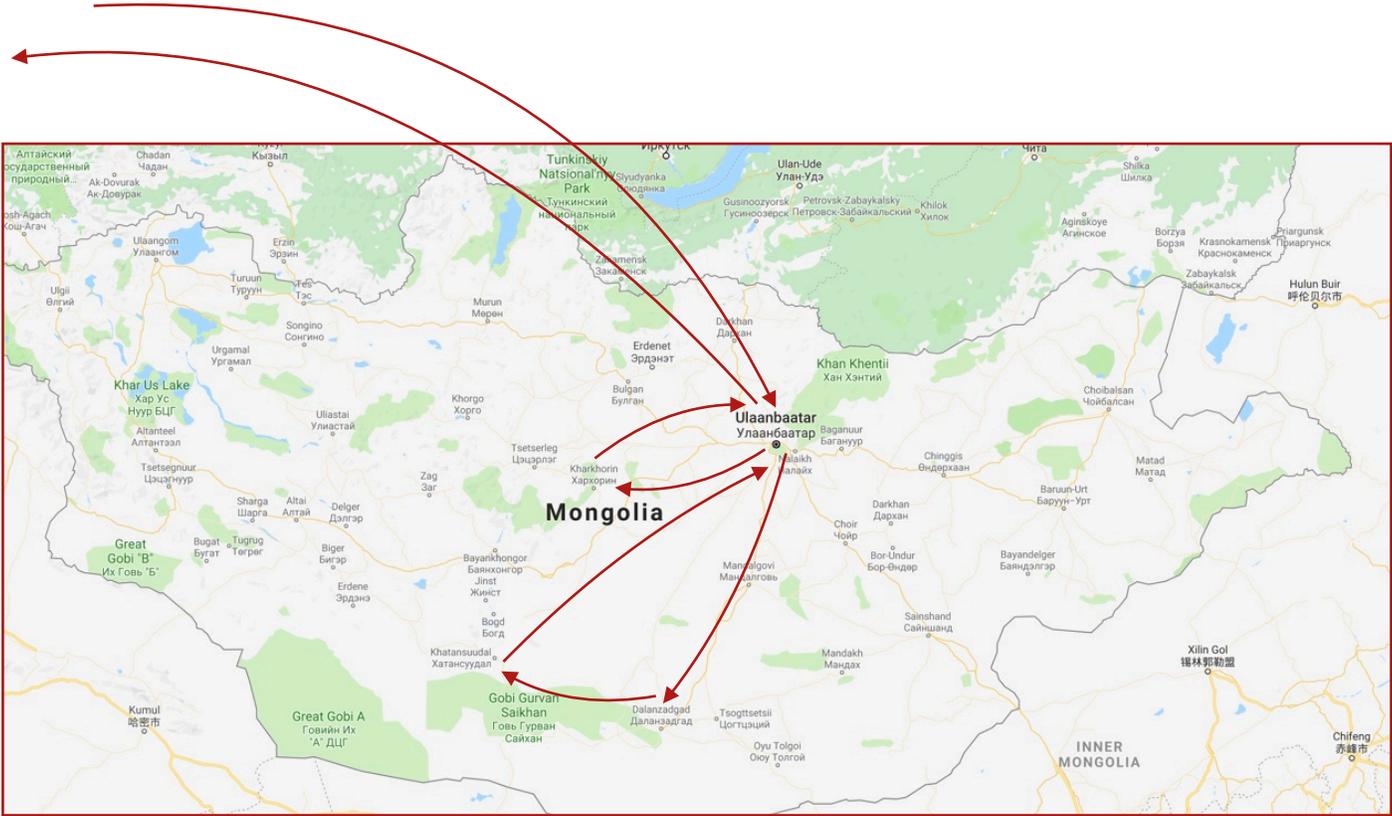
DAY 1	Leave USA for Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
DAY 2	In transit. Arrival early next morning / Ulaanbaatar
DAY 3	Arrival early morning - PM sightseeing / Ulaanbaatar
DAY 4	Bayangobi - Uvgun Monastery / Bayangobi
DAY 5	Kharkhorin - Erdenezuu / Bayangobi
DAY 6	Khustai National Park / Ulaanbaatar
DAY 7	Fly to Dalanzadgad - Khongoryn dunes / Gobi Erdene
DAY 8	Flaming Cliffs / Gobi Naran
DAY 9	Yol Valley - Gobi Gurvan Saikhan NP / Gobi Naran
DAY 10	Fly to Ulaanbaatar - Terelj NP - Local Naadam Fest. / Terelj
DAY 11	Drive to UB - Folk music and dance show / Ulaanbaatar
DAY 12	Departure

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MAP TRAJECTORY





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HIGHLIGHTS

Steppes, sheep, horses.

Smiling people.

Chinggis Khan.

Nomadic life, first hand.

Staying in ger camps.

Airag- fermented mare's milk.

Origins of Mongolian and Turkic empires.

Karakorum - capital of Chinggis's successors.

Przewalski's horse.

Gobi Desert.

Where dinosaurs were.

Lecture by a local Paleontologist.

Khongoryn Sand Dunes.

Mongolian Throat Singing.

**Local Naadam Festival: Mongolian wrestling, archery, horse
races.**

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INCLUDED

**10 nights' accommodation with daily breakfast.
4 nights at hotel in Ulaanbaatar / 6 nights at ger camps.***

Lunches and dinners as indicated in the itinerary.

English speaking professional tour guide.

Transportation by 4x4 vehicles.

Arrival and departure transfers - only for suggested flight arrival & departures.

Two small bottles of water per person per day on the vehicles everyday.

All entry fees to places mentioned in the itinerary.

Two domestic flights in Mongolia.

Porterage at hotels.

All tips Included.

* Note: A number of the ger camps have private facilities in the ger (yurt - Mongolian nomadic tent); but some may have shared shower/toilet areas, separate for men & women.

NOT INCLUDED

International airfare.

Visa fees if applicable.

Drinks with included meals, except tea or coffee for breakfast.

Personal expenditures like phone calls, laundry, medical expenses.

Travel insurance



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SUGGESTED FLIGHTS

Suggested flights are on Turkish Airlines via Istanbul:

7 Aug Houston to Istanbul
TK 34 dep: 8:50 pm / arr: 4:45 pm on 8 Aug

8 Aug Istanbul to Ulaanbaatar
TK 236 dep: 6:25 pm / arr: 7:20 am on 9 Aug

18 Aug Ulaanbaatar to Istanbul
TK 237 dep: 8:50 am / arr: 12:30 pm

18 Aug Istanbul to Houston
TK 33 dep: 2:10 pm / arr: 7:10 pm

Economy class: \$2571

Business class: \$6970

Fares are per person; including taxes, surcharges and fees as of April 11, 2022. Fares can change based on availability.



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PROGRAM DETAILS

DAY 1

Sun, August 7 - Leave USA

We will leave USA for Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

DAY 2

Mon, August 8 - In Transit to Ulanbaatar

In transit to Ulaanbaatar. We will arrive early next morning.
Overnight in Ulaanbaatar upon arrival Meals: -

Ulaanbaatar is the capital and largest city of Mongolia. Its population is over 1.3 million, almost half of the country's total population. Located in north central Mongolia, the municipality lies at an elevation of about 1,300 meters (4,300 ft) in a valley on the Tuul River. It is the country's cultural, industrial and financial heart, the centre of Mongolia's road network.

The city was founded in 1639 as a nomadic Buddhist monastic centre. It settled permanently at its present location, the junction of the Tuul and Selbe rivers, in 1778. Prior to that occasion it changed location twenty-eight times, each new location being chosen ceremonially. In the twentieth century, Ulaanbaatar grew into a major manufacturing center.



DAY 3

Tue, August 9 - Ulanbaatar

We will arrive very early in the morning. First we will check into our hotel and spend the first half of the day resting.

In the afternoon we start our tour in Ulaanbaatar city with a visit to Sukhbaatar Square surrounded by the Parliament House, National Opera Theater, Cultural Palace and House of City Council. We will also visit the National History Museum, famous for its excellent exhibitions beginning with Stone and Bronze Age, Turkic and Mongol Empires, rise of Buddhism all the way to the communist regime.

Then we visit Zaisan hill which provides wide open view of Ulaanbaatar city. It is the memorial to Russian soldiers who fought during the World War II.

We will also tour a cashmere factory to learn how the cashmere is processed.

Overnight in Ulaanbaatar

Meals: B-L-D



DAY 4

Wed, August 10 - Bayangobi - Ruins of Uvgun Monastery

After early morning breakfast, we start our drive to Bayangobi. It is a unique place with many different forms of natural landscape; combination of Gobi sand dunes, forests and rocky mountains. We will have an opportunity of a short hike in the small sand dunes.

Lunch will be in the ger camp.

In the afternoon we will visit Erdene Khambyn Khuree which is 20 kms drive from the camp.

We have wonderful opportunities to visit a family of horse breeders and experience making of airag, the Mongolian traditional drink made by mare's milk. For those who can, horse riding opportunities on true Mongolian wooden saddles.

Overnight in the ger camp

Meals: B-L-D

Erdene Khambyn Khuree: The monastery is located in the majestic looking Khugnu Khaan mountain.

Enlightened Bogd Gegeen Zanabazar, a religious leader, philosopher, artist and sculptor founded these Uvgun and Zaluu temples for his religious teacher. The soldiers of Oirad nobleman Galdan boshigt destroyed the monasteries and assassinated the monks in 1688.

DAY 5

Thu, August 11 - Kharkhorin - Erdene Zuu Monastery

After breakfast at the camp, we start driving to the Shankh Monastery, the oldest monastery in Mongolia, founded in 1647 by Zanabazar, a revered sculptor, politician, religious teacher, diplomat and living Buddha, who became Mongolia's first Bogd Khaan. Known as the West Monastery, it was one of the foremost seats of Buddhist teaching and practice in the country for almost three centuries.

Shankh Monastery consisted of several schools specialized in Tantric rituals, philosophy and astrology. In 1937, the monastery was closed, its temples burned and monks were executed or sent to labor camps in Siberia.

In the afternoon we explore the ancient capital Kharkhorin. We will also tour Erdenezuu monastery and Kharkhorin museum. If time permits, short visit to the local market.

Overnight in the ger camp

Meals: B-L-D

Karakorum-Kharkhorin was the capital of the Mongol Empire between 1235 and 1260, and of the Northern Yuan in the 14–15th centuries. Its ruins lie in the northwestern corner of the Övörkhangaï Province of Mongolia, near today's town of Kharkhorin, and adjacent to the Erdene Zuu Monastery.



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DAY 6

Fri, August 12 - Khustai National Park – Ulaanbaatar

After an early morning breakfast, we start our drive to the Khustai National Park. On the way we explore forest steppe and steppe landscape with cool temperatures and many wild birds and flowers.

We will have lunch in our camp. After lunch, the National Park: the park lies in the foothills of southern Khentii mountain range and it is the place where we can see wild horses called Takhi known as Przewalski's horse to the world.

After our National Park visit, we will drive to Ulaanbaatar.

Overnight in Ulaanbaatar

Meals: B-L-D

Przewalski's horse, also called the Mongolian wild horse or Dzungarian horse, is a rare and endangered horse native to the steppes of central Asia. At one time extinct in the wild, it has been reintroduced to its native habitat in Mongolia at the Khustai Nuruu National Park. Currently, the number of Takhi has already reached more than 170. Przewalski's horse has long been considered the only 'true' wild horse extant in the world today, never having been domesticated. However, a 2018 DNA study suggested that modern Przewalski's horses may have descended from the domesticated horses of the Botai culture in today's Kazakhstan.

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DAY 7

Sat, August 13 - Khongoryn Sand dunes

We will catch an early morning flight to Dalanzadgad, center of South Gobi province. Upon arrival, we start driving to the sand dunes. The ride is through amazing desert scenery with plain, stony and sandy landscape; arid land vegetation, countless interesting rock structures and herds of speedy wild antelopes across the land. We will reach the dunes in the afternoon.

There is an oasis called Khongor river with stunning greenery in the summer. Here we have an opportunity to ride two humped Bactrian camels named by locals “Living Dinosaurs” and “Prince of Gobi” and have the opportunity to see camel breeder’s every day life.

Overnight in the ger camp

Meals: B-L-D

Khongoryn Els dunes stretch for an extraordinary 180 kms, sometimes as wide as 20km. The dunes lie on the northern part of beautifully formed mountain range Servei and Zuulun. The sound of masses of wind-blown sand can be heard from the long distance. And after this melodic sound, sand dunes are called as “Singing Dunes” or “Sand that sings”.



DAY 8

Sun, August 14 - Bayanzag - Flaming Cliffs

During the breakfast at our camp, we have a short lecture by a local paleontologist about the significance of this location. Through the journey we witness the dramatic changes of steppe landscape to the arid desert including camel herds and herding families.

We will have a picnic lunch in Gobi. In the afternoon we arrive at the red rock formation, Bayanzag, also known as Flaming Cliffs named by Roy Andrew Chapman, an American explorer who visited Mongolia in 1920s. The striking red Bayanzag cliffs, which were formed 60-70 million years ago, have dinosaur fossils, eggs and bones all over the place and neighbored by bushy saxaul tree forests. We will trek around this area and drive to our ger camp for overnight.

Overnight in the ger camp

Meals: B-L-D

The Gobi Desert is a large desert or brushland region in Asia. It covers parts of Northern and Northeastern China and of Southern Mongolia. The desert basins of the Gobi are bounded by the Altai Mountains and the grasslands and steppes of Mongolia on the north, by the Taklamakan Desert to the west, by the Hexi Corridor and Tibetan Plateau to the southwest and by the North China Plain to the southeast. The Gobi is notable in history as part of the great Mongol Empire and as the location of several important cities along the Silk Road.



DAY 9

Mon, August 15 - Yol Valley - Gobi Gurvan Saikhan National Park

After breakfast we drive to the majestic Gobi Gurvan Saikhan National Park where we will enjoy incredible “Yol Valley”.

The valley is the unusual narrow canyon of a river that flows through the Zuun Saikhan Mountain. The sheer rock walls stand 200m high and the canyon has stunning green meadows with thick glacier layer that is deeply set between the walls. During the summer rainfall water runs from the top of the walls forming waterfalls. We can trek along the canyon and may have an opportunity to glimpse rarely found wild sheep Argali, mountain goat Ibex and Yol bearded vulture.

Overnight in the ger camp

Meals: B-L-D



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DAY 10

Tue, August 16 - South Gobi – Ulaanbaatar - Terelj

After breakfast we transfer to airport to catch our flight to Ulaanbaatar. Upon arrival, we will drive to Terelj National Park, located in the Khentii Mountain range.

This park is the popular getaway destination because of its gigantic granite rock formations, a famous “Crawling Turtle Rock”, alpine forests and flower scenery. After lunch we will enjoy a local Naadam festival which includes Mongolian traditional wrestling, horse racing, archery and cultural performances.

Overnight in the ger camp

Meals: B-L-D

Naadam is the most widely watched festival among Mongols, and is believed to have existed for centuries in one fashion or another. It has its origin in the activities, such as military parades and sporting competitions such as archery, horse riding and wrestling, that followed the celebration of various occasions, including weddings or spiritual gatherings. It later served as a way to train soldiers for battle, and was also connected to Mongols' nomadic lifestyle.



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DAY 11

Wed, August 17 - Ulaanbaatar

In the morning we will drive back to Ulaanbaatar, on the way visiting Chinggis Khaan monument. We will have afternoon at leisure.

Before dinner, we will witness a fascinating performance of traditional folk songs, throat singing, and beautiful melody of horse-headed fiddle, ethnic dances and more.

Farewell dinner will be at a local restaurant.

Overnight in Ulaanbaatar

Meals: B-L-D

DAY 12

Thu, August 18 - Departure

Our adventure in Mongolia is now complete and we will be transferred to the Chinggis Khaan International Airport for our departure flight.

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