

Nomadic Adventure between Desert and Steppes

Schedule 2020

GHE 1 : 2 may - 15 may

GHE 2 : 16 may - 29 may

GHE 3 : 6 june - 19 june

GHE 4 : 20 june - 3 july

GHE 5 : 4 july - 17 july

GHE 6 : 18 july - 31 july

GHE 7 : 1 aug - 14 aug

GHE 8 : 15 aug - 28 aug

GHE 9 : 29 aug - 11 sep

GHE 10 : 12 sep - 25 sep

Tour theme: Adventure and Cultural

Duration: 14 days / 13 nights

Region: Southern and Central part of Mongolia

Tour description:

This adventure trip of 14 days, allows us to discover two of the most beautiful regions of Mongolia from the Great Gobi to the Khangai mountain range on 4x4, provides a quintessential glimpse of life and landscape, experience the hospitality of nomads while exploring the country's extraordinary contrast.

The first part of our journey will take us into the mythical Gobi Desert, where we will be surprised by its natural diversities. Everyday, we will discover different unique landscapes such as exuberant rocky formations, sandstone cliffs towering above the sands of the Gobi. Then we will progress to the majestic sand dune Khongoriin Els, on camelback.

Arriving in the Orkhon Valley, we enter the true cradle of Mongolian people. The contrast with the Gobi is striking. We are now in the midst of verdant plains interspersed with rivers, yurts, and herds grazing in the wild. This is the perfect place to stay longer with nomads and discover some horse and yak herding activities such as dressing a semi-wild horse and milking a yak, testing some dairy products. We will also discover and make mongolian traditional foods by ourselves such as Buuz - a dumpling and Khorkhog- mongolian barbecue where we taste it alongside a camp-fire.

Day 1 : Ulaanbaatar

We will welcome your arrival at the airport and transfer to the hotel. Time to rest in a hotel. For lunch, we will taste the famous Mongolian barbecue in the traditional restaurant. Then, we will visit the religious center Gandan Monastery, National History Museum, the central square where we will discover the statue of Chinggis Khaan. At the end of the day, we will enjoy the folk art concert featuring traditional Mongolian dance and khoonii /throat singing/, followed by dinner at your hotel.

Overnight in a hotel.

Day 2 : Ulaanbaatar - Tsagaan Suvarga

Early in the morning, we begin our adventure towards the Gobi Desert. We drive to the south through vast steppes and discover our first images of Mongolia: vast open space where livestock graze freely. On the way, we will stop at an "Ovoo-cairn" to ask for protection from the spirits of nature.

Our destination for today is Tsagaan Suvarga cliffs. This place was covered, a few million years ago, by an ocean. Today, the remains of the marine world are still present. With a height of 30 m and a length of 400 m, this amazing limestone rock reveals many treasures such as ammonites or fossilized wood. The valley that constitutes the bottom of the cliff reminds us of the death valley in the United States, with its red soil and its different colored layers.

We will meet our first nomad family, the camel herder. According to Mongolian tradition, we will be offered by *Suutei Tsai* - the traditional milk tea, as well as *Aaruul* -dry Mongolian curd. Plus, we take advantage of this family exploring activities related to camel breeding such as camel milking and making dairy products. At the end of the day, we prepare our dinner together: *Buuz* - Mongolian dumpling. Everyone can get their hands busy - a real moment of cultural sharing!

Vehicle trip : 450 km, hiking : 1 – 2 h, Overnight with nomad family in a yurt

Day 3 : Tsagaan Suvarga – Yoliin Am

Today we will enter the Gobi-Gurvan Saikhan National Park - Gobi and Three Beauties referring to the 3 mountain ranges which cross the national park. It's the biggest park in the country, which has a remarkable fauna and flora: the saxaul bushes, the wild goats, the wild ass and even the wild camels. After lunch in Dalanzadgad, the center city of Umnugobi (Southern gobi) province, we hike along a stream joining the Gorge of Yolin Am (Vulture Valley). This place is known for its very special climate. Located in the middle of the Gobi desert where temperatures can reach +30 ° C and ye ice remains during summertime. It is an ideal place to observe the life of vultures and eagles. If we are lucky we can even see ibex at the top of the surrounding mountains.

Vehicle trip: 180km, hiking : 1 – 2 h, Overnight with nomad family in a yurt

Day 4 : Yoliin Am – Khongor Sand Dunes

Today we will discover the Khongor sand dune which is one of the largest and most spectacular sand dunes in Mongolia standing as high as 200 meters above the ground, 7-8 km wide and 180 km long. The dunes rise up between Sevrei mountain to the south, stream and oasis on the north side with lush green. Climbing to the sand dunes is exhausting but it has a breathtaking view at the top. It surprises climbers that the sand dunes make a singing sound while we climb.

We will do camel riding in this pleasing landscape mixed with dunes and lush green plains. We can also take a walk to the top of the dune to enjoy a remarkable panorama with sunset. The highest peak of the sand dune is called Duut Mankhan - Singing Dunes, due to the sound produced by its movement. It is considered as one of 3 singing sand dunes in the world.

Vehicle trip :180 km , hiking : 1 – 2 h, Camel riding : 1 – 2 h, Overnight in a tourist camp,

Day 5 : Khongor Sand Dunes - Uush Shakhlag

Today we begin our great ascent to the Khangai region. First, we cross a vast dry step, where the view is lost on the horizon. The spectacular crossing of Arts Bogd mountain range by a narrow pass, where we will discover petroglyphs dated back to the Bronze age following up with the discovery of Uush cliffs which has an impressive color of red and orange. At the top, we will have a magnificent panorama view where red-colored Uush cliffs contrast with the surrounding valleys and mountains in the background. Also, feel free to wander Mongolian naturally formed pyramids. Plus, arriving in our next nomad family, the camel herder.

Vehicle trip : 160 km, hiking : 1 – 2 h, Overnight with nomad family in a yurt

Day 6 : Uush Shakhlaga - Khujirt

Here we are in the province of Uvur Khangai (Southern Khangai) which is known for its natural diversity. Leaving the Great Gobi behind, we run through our last kilometers before the Khangai massif. For the Mongols, Khangai refers to a mountainous region with abundant resources, where animals graze freely, sheltered from the wind. This day will be intended to familiarize with the equestrian culture of Mongolia, the country of the horse. We will first discover in the steppe of Arvaikheer the monument created to honor of legendary race horses. Here, herders and trainers of racing horses, come to find and ask for protection. In Mongolia, winning in the horse racing competition is a great honor, and everyone who hopes to win comes here to pray. Lunch in Arvaikheer, capital of the province of Uvur Khangai (Southern Khangai). Then we will meet the family of Lkhavгаа, a horse herder, who lives in southern slope of the Khangai range.

Vehicle trip: 220 km (70 km paved road, 150 km off road), walking: 1 - 2 h, overnight in with nomad family in a yurt

Day 7 : Khujirt - Orkhon valley

After breakfast, we dive into the famous Orkhon Valley, the true cradle of the Mongolian people, registered as a World Heritage by UNESCO. The diversity of landscapes makes this region a painting of a thousand colors. This valley is rich with its archaeological sites.

We cross the valley from East to West to reach the encampment of the next nomadic family, located about fifty kilometers at the bottom of the valley. Surrounded by ancient dormant volcanoes, we cross vast grassy plains, dotted with basaltic rocks. The Orkhon river flows between Edelweiss floor and narrow canyon just next to us. We will discover the Orkhon waterfall. This waterfall is about 20m high and appeared 20,000 years ago by the consequences of repeated earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

Our slow driving on the bumpy road gives us plenty of time to observe the different scenes of the nomadic life. Tonight we will arrive Batsukh's family who is a famous yak herder and an excellent wolf hunter.

Vehicle trip : 3 - 4 h, walking : 1 – 2 h, Overnight with nomad family in yurt

Day 8: Staying with nomad

We spend the day with this family to capture and observe their customs and traditions. Those who wish can take part in the different daily tasks of herding.

In this free time, enjoy being cut off from the world and your daily life, to live the moment in contemplation.

This wonderful natural setting is ideal for outdoor activities (hiking, horseback riding, fishing). Those who wish, It will be possible to do horseback riding through this peaceful valley.

Overnight with nomad family in a yurt

Day 9 : Orkhon valley - Tuvkhun Monastery

A cultural day awaits us today. After thanking our nomad friends, we will head to Tuvkhen Monastery that was founded in 1648 built by Zanabazar, who is the first Buddhist spiritual leader of Mongolia. Tuvkhun Monastery is located on the top of Shireet Ulaan sacred mountain. We can either go hiking or horseback riding through the forest to the top of the mountain. When we arrive at the bottom of the rock formations, we will see the monastery that is perfectly integrated in its natural environment. Immediately, we will feel calm and the serenity emerging from this sacred place. In the afternoon, we will be greeted by another nomad family, who lives near the monastery in an isolated mountain gorge. In the afternoon, we will be welcomed by another nomad family, yak herder.
Vehicle trip: 80 km for off road / 3 - 4 h, Hiking : 2 - 3 h, overnight with nomad family in a yurt

Day 10: Tuvkhun Monastery - Tsenkher Hot Spring

Spectacular crossing of the Khangai mountain range to the north. Then we enter the territory of Arkhangai province (North Khangai) whose beauty is often praised in Mongol songs and poems. We discover the Tsenkher hot spring which emerges from the ground at 86.5 ° C. Located in a beautiful setting, these springs supply outdoor pools where we can enjoy a hot spa. Containing hydrogen sulphate, this water is renowned for its healing ability that assists in treating articular diseases and nervous system diseases. .
Vehicle trip: 4 - 6 h, hiking : 1-2 h; Overnight in a yurt camp

Day 11 : Tsenkher – Kharkhorin

Today, we reach Kharkhorin, founded in 1220. Kharkhorin was first capital of Mongol Empire and prosperous center on the Silk Road in the 13th century. It played an important role in the world economic, political and cultural life. Adjacent to the ancient capital, there is a monastery “Erdenezuu” which was built in the 16th century. Stones from the ruins of the ancient capital were used in its construction. During the socialist period in Mongolia, most of the monasteries were destroyed. Despite these facts, the Erdenezuu monastery’s some of the important temples rescued. At the current time, it operates as a museum that makes most Mongolians appreciation.

Vehicle trip: 3 - 4 h, walk : 1-2 h; Overnight with nomad family in a yurt

Day 12 : Kharkhorin - Khugnu Khan

We will meet an interesting site on our route. This is the Khugnu Khan Nature Reserve, where the beauty of Mongolian nature makes sense. Indeed, there is an interesting coexistence of the green steppe and the great sand dune "Elsen Tasarkhai".

We go there and do a short hike among the unusual rocky forms of Mount Khugnu Khan, allowing you to discover the ruins of Erdenekhamba monastery.

Vehicle trip: 3 - 4 h, walk : 1-2 h; Overnight with nomad family in a yurt

Day 13 : Khugnu Khan - Ulaanbaatar

We take our final step in the heart of the Mongolian steppes, contemplating one last time its landscapes before reaching the busy capital where we arrive in the afternoon.

Afternoon free (souvenirs, visits, walks in the city, ...) and the possibility to visit the cashmere factories. Farewell dinner.

Overnight in a hotel

Day 14 : Return

Early morning transfer to Chinggis Khaan International airport.

Tour pricing:

Price In USD – Valid Till: Oct 2020

Group size	May and Oct	June and Sep	July and Aug
2 pax	1840\$/per	1935\$/pers	2040\$/pers
3 pax	1600\$/per	1645\$/pers	1715\$/pers
4 - 7 pax	1440\$/per	1485\$/pers	1530\$/pers
8 - 12 pax	1325\$/per	1370\$/pers	1415\$/pers

The price includes:

- Airport / hotel / airport transfers
- Accommodation: 2 nights in hotel, 2 nights in a tourist camp, 9 nights with nomad family
- All transportation 4x4/ Fuel / Drivers
- English speaking tour guide
- Full board for 13 days
- Entrance fees to the parks and museums as mentioned
- Folk art concert
- Camel riding

It does not include:

- Air ticket for international flights
- Visa fees
- Travel insurance (assistance, repatriation)
- Extra meals (excluding 3 meals a day) and personal drinks
- Tips

Highlights:

- Exploring capital city by visiting Gandan monastery, National History Museum, and central square
- Folk art concert
- Discovery of Ovoo custom
- Exploration of Gobi desert : beautiful Tsagaan Suvraga cliffs, Gobi Gurvan Saikhan National Park, Vulture Valley, Khongoriin Els sand dunes, and Uush cliffs
- Camel riding
- Climbing to the sand dunes
- Staying with yak and horse herders family, exploring activities related with livestock

- Trying and making Mongolian traditional meals and drinks such as buuz (dumpling) and milk tea with little bit of salt
- Hiking to the mountains
- Giving tribute to famous mongolian horse monument
- Discovery of Orkhon Valley, true cradle of Mongolians
- Walking to the Ulaantsutgalan waterfall
- Hiking to the Tuvkhen monastery
- Enjoying in Tsenkher hot spring
- Discovery history by visiting Kharkhorin museum
- Visiting Erdenezuu monastery
- Exploration of Khugnu Khan Nature Reserve

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(NP – 09/01/2020)