

TREKKING IN ORKHON VALLEY

Tour theme: Trekking and Adventure

Duration: 14 days/ 13 nights

Region: Central part of Mongolia

Schedule 2020

TKE 1 : 1 june - 14 june

TKE 2 : 25 june - 8 july

TKE 3 : 13 july - 26 july

TKE 4 : 27 july - 9 aug

TKE 5 : 10 aug - 23 aug

Tour description:

Mongolia as you imagine it! That of the steppes, yurts, and nomads awaits you in this 14-day walking tour in the heart of authentic Mongolia. By foot, you will have plenty of time to enjoy its people, its nature, its culture, and its history. Minimizing transport pollution and cost, this trip is ideal for families.

From the start, we will start our journey to Mongolian wilderness to see legendary Przewalski wild-horses, then go to the pleasing sand dunes of Elsen Tasarkhai, isolated in the middle of the steppe.

Furthermore, we dive into the famous Orkhon Valley. Between yurts and herds, canyon and waterfalls, we will progress in discovering the heritage of this region considered as the real cradle of the Mongol people.

Then we will go on an adventure! During 4 days, we will go trekking in the magnificent natural site of the "Eight lakes". With loaded our stuff on horseback back, we will walk from north to south through this huge volcanic crater with many lakes in which you can swim.

In the evenings, we will have the privilege of being welcomed by nomadic families that populate the area. Despite their simple but harsh living conditions, our hosts will overflow with their hospitality.

To complete this typical Mongolian epic, we will not fail to immerse ourselves in the fascinating history of Chinggis Khaan's empire of the thirteenth by visiting Kharkhorin, the former imperial capital, and Erdene Zuu, one of the most beautiful monasteries of the country with its great history.

This program is designed in close collaboration with nomadic families, the income generated by our stay is distributed equitably to families, who will benefit from the additional income.

Day 1: Ulaanbaatar

We will welcome your arrival at the airport and transfer to the hotel. Time to rest in the 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, you will

enjoy the folk art concert featuring traditional Mongolian dance and khoomii /throat singing/, followed by dinner in the hotel.

Overnight in a hotel.

Day 2: Ulaanbaatar - Hustai National Park- Khugnu Khan

Early in the morning, we begin our adventure towards the vast central steppe of Mongolia. We drive to the west and discover our first images of Mongolia: vast open space where herds of livestock graze freely.

Soon we arrive at Hustai National Park. This park was created to protect the rare species of Mongolia and is renowned for its successful reintroduction of Przewalski's wild horse whose population today reaches about 450 individuals. We will do our first trekking in the park guided by the ranger of the park and try to see those wild horses from a close distance.

Then we continue our road to the west and reach Khugnu Khan Natural Reserve, which protects an ecosystem where the steppe meets a desert.

Here, we will meet our first nomad family. According to Mongolian tradition, we will be offered by *Suutei Tsai* - the traditional milk tea with salt, as well as *Aaruul* -dried curd. 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: 280km, trekking : 2 - 3 h, overnight in a nomad family

Day 3 : Khugnu Khan

This day is dedicated to discovering 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". A beautiful hiking day around strange rocky formations of Mount Khugnu Khan, more specifically ruins of the Uvgunt monastery which is located in the middle of the mountain. From the monastery, we will have a pleasant and beautiful view back to the valley.

Trekking: 4 - 6h, Overnight in nomad family

Day 4: Khugnu Khan - Gyatruun (in Orkhon Valley)

Today we will dive into 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 at the end of the valley. Surrounded by ancient dormant volcanoes, we came through vast grassy plains, dotted with basaltic rocks. The Orkhon river flows between Edelweiss floor and narrow canyon just next to us.

Then 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 at Batsukh's family who is a famous yak herder and an excellent wolf hunter.

Vehicle trip: 4 - 5 h, trekking: 2 - 3 h, overnight with nomad family in a yurt

Day 5 : Staying with nomad family

We spend the day with our nomadic friends, in order to capture and observe activities related to yak herding: take the herd to pasture, catch the yak pups then milk the "dri" (female yak), make dairy products. (cream, yogurt, butter, cheese, alcohol), etc.

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

Overnight with nomad family in a yurt

Day 6 : Gyatruun Hot Spring

Today we will hike into the heart of the forest that dominates the southern part of the valley. Following a narrow track winding through the larch forests, our short climb will take us to the Gyatruun hot spring. There are 2 springs side by side, one hot and the other cold, known for their many healing virtues. We will relax and enjoy the hot spring in beautiful surroundings.

Trekking: 6 -8 h, *Overnight with nomad family in a yurt*

Day 7 - 10 : Khuisiin Naiman Nuur

We will go trekking for the next 4 days by exploring the splendid natural site of the "eight lakes". The area of Naiman Nuur (eight lakes) located at 2,200m above sea level is the product of volcanic eruptions. This old crater contains not 8 but 9 alpine lakes with limpid blue water, which reflects the image of the high forested mountains that surround them.

The region has a few thousand species of plants and flowers, of which 20% are used for their medicinal properties.

It is in this unspoiled setting that we will walk at our pace, from lakes to lakes, with accompanying our pack horses. The bravest can swim while others may prefer to try fishing. From yurts to yurts, every night a new family opens their doors for authentic Mongolian nights.

Walk: 4 - 6 h per day, 1-3rd Overnight with nomad family in a yurt , 4th night in yurt camp

Day 11 : Gyatruun

A short morning walk will take us back to the camp of our host Batsukh. We will spend the afternoon freely with our friends. It is possible to stay at the camp to relax during games of volleyball and petanque with the family or go fishing in the Orkhon river.

Trekking : 3 - 4 h, *Overnight with nomad family in a yurt*

Day 12 : Gyatruun - Tuvkhen - Kharkhorin

Today, we will discover 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 do horseback riding through the forest to the monastery. 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. Then we reach Kharkhorin, the ancient capital of the Mongol Empire. 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 important temples rescued. At the current time, it operates as a museum that makes most Mongolians appreciation.

Vehicle trip: 160km, trekking : 3 - 4 h, overnight in a guesthouse

Day 13: Kharkhorin - 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.

Vehicle trip: 4-6h, overnight in a hotel

Day 14: Back

After breakfast at the hotel, a driver awaits you to transfer to the airport and it will be the end of our services.

Tour pricing:

Valid Till: Sep 2020

Group size	June & Sep (USD)	July & Aug (USD)
2 pax	1670\$	1771\$
3 pax	1380\$	1450\$
4 pax	1265\$	1315\$
5 - 8 pax	1210\$	1242\$

The price includes :

- Airport / hotel / airport transfers
- Accommodation: 2 nights in a hotel in cities, 1 night in a tourist camp, 9 nights a nomad family
- All transportation 4x4/ Driver / Fuel
- English speaking tour guide
- Local guides for the daily trekkings
- Porter horses for 4 days
- Full board for 13 days
- Entrance fees to the parks and museums as mentioned
- Folk art concert

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:

- Discovery of the capital city by visiting religious center, national history museum and central square
- Mongolian folk art concert
- Discovery of Przewalski wild horse in Hustai National Park
- Walking through the sand dunes and visiting Uvgun temple in Khugnu Khan Nature Reserve

- Staying with nomas families, discovery of nomad life-style, tasting traditional and typical mongolian meals such as barbeque and buuz (dumpling), making dairy products
- Discovery of Orkhon Valley, true cradle of Mongolian people (Uurtiin tokhoi canyon and Ulaantsutgalan waterfall)
- Discovery of yak herding activities
- Enjoying and relaxing in Gyatruun hot spring
- Trekking to the khuisiin naiman nuur lakes for 4 days
- Hiking to the Tuvkhen monastery on the top of the mountain
- Discovery of history by visiting Kharkhorin museum
- Visiting to Erdenezuu monastery
- Visiting the biggest cashmere shop in the world

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(NP – 09/01/2020)