

Photo: Jan Wigsten



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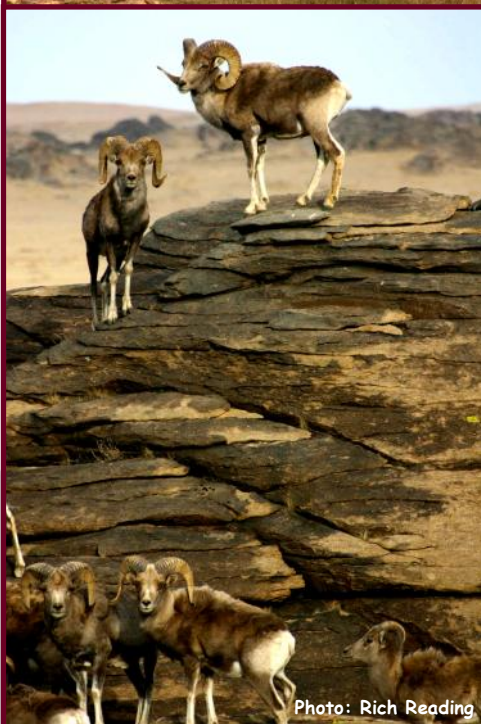


Photo: Rich Reading

## Ikh Nart Nature Reserve

### Argali Sheep of Dornogobi

*Ikh Nartiin Chuluu Nature Reserve is a community reserve where local people have partnered with the Denver Zoo Foundation, the Mongolian Academy of Sciences and Nomadic Journeys for research and the conservation of the Ikh Nartiin Chuluu Plateau. It is an upland with many rocky outcrops. Often hot and dry, it is an arid Gobi kind of area, only a 4 hours drive southeast from Ulaanbaatar. The unique wildlife feature of Ikh Nart is its approximately 600 argali sheep (*Ovis ammon*), the largest wild mountain sheep in the world. Although there is no guarantee, they are not that shy here. Also Mongolian gazelle (*Procapra gutturosa*) are frequent visitors and are relatively easy to come across and view. Ikh Nartiin Chuluu, the full name, means, in Mongolian, "Rocks with plenty of sunshine". The reserve also has a sizeable population of the world's biggest vulture, the black or cinereous vulture (*Aegypius monacha*), as well as some 200 Siberian ibex (*Capra sibirica*).*

### Brief Outline Itinerary

Nomadic Journeys operates a seasonal ger camp at Ikh Nart. You travel there southeasterly on the Trans-Mongolian railway line towards Beijing by a slow train from Ulaanbaatar. Disembark at Shivee Gobi, a small station following after Choir. Then drive 50 km. Red Rock Ger Camp is located on its own next to the reserve. Ikh Nartiin Chuluu Nature Reserve was established in 1996 as a wildlife reserve as it has intact populations of Gobi fauna. There are plenty of opportunities for wildlife walks and drives. There may be camels for rent. The return journey to Ulaanbaatar would be by night train.

#### Day 1: To Ikh Nart

Arrive at Dalanjargalan, Shiveegobi or Choir railway stations, 60km away from the Ikh Nart plateau. If you arrive from Ulaanbaatar arrival time to Shiveegobi is 16h20, a train platform seemingly in the middle of nowhere, but actually near the small town of Shivee Gobi, which serves a nearby open pit coal mine. Met by local driver or our camp vehicle and drive to Ikh Nart.

#### Day 2-3: Ikh Nart

For two days we will explore the Ikh Nart on foot, trekking through interesting rocky areas and hoping view different kinds of wildlife. There are Argali Sheep (*Ovis ammon*), which are the most likely to be seen, but there is also Siberian Ibex (*Capra sibirica*) and a variety of bird life. Three parallel research projects are being carried out on an on-going basis



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Photo: René Pop

Pallas Sandgrouse.

by Mongolian and foreign scientists. One study is mainly concerned with Argali Sheep and Siberian Ibex. A second is gathering data on small carnivores such as Corsac Fox (*Vulpes corsac*), Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), Badger (*Meles meles*) and Pallas' Cat (*Otocobolus manul*), along with Lynx (*Lynx lynx*) and Wolves (*Canis lupus*) when possible. Learning about prey species such as Gerbils, Jerboas and Hedgehogs is also part of this project. For avifauna there is a third on-going research study of cinereous vultures and Lesser Kestrels (*Falco naumanni*). Botanists are also regular visitors to the reserve. Herders come and go in the Ikh Nart area, as they rely on pastures and sufficient precipitation. Being Gobi herders, they migrate often to find food for their animals and are interesting, hospitable and hardy people.

#### Day 4: To Dalanjargalan

A.m. Our camp vehicle or local driver will transfer you 40km to Dalanjargalan village after an evening early dinner. In time for the night train departure to Ulaanbaatar. We may also suit transfers to the international trains to China departing Choir, 86km away.

#### Practicalities

**Transport:** This journey is supported by a local jeep or minibus to and from Ikh Nartiin Chuluu Nature Reserve. Drivers do not speak any English and you need to make advance booking with us, as also challenging to find the camp location even with a GPS. As is impossible to drive in a straight line between the rock formations on the Ikh Nart plateau. Just request any additional train tickets, hotels and Ulaanbaatar transfers from us, which are easily added to your bill. The domestic train is about USD 13 each way from Ulaanbaatar.

**Staff:** Red Rock Ger camp has an English speaker on staff.

**Meals:** The meals will be provided in the ger camp, or as picnics.

**Overnights:** The gers have 2 beds in each, and they are furnished with beds, stools and a table. Triples are possible as an additional bed may be added.

#### PRICE 2012 ex Shiveegobi :

Mondays 4d/3n: **USD 330 p.p.**

Thu/Sat 3d/2n: **USD 265 p.p.**

Single supplement: **USD 30 per night.**

Additional night: **USD 65 per night.**

Rent of riding camel: **USD 35 per day**

Transfer Supplement on another day or hour: **USD 60 per vehicle.**

**Includes:** All meals at camp. All overnights in double occupancy ger. Transfer to and out of camp on scheduled dates.

**Excludes:** Imported drinks.

**Children:** 1-4 years free. 5-12 years 50%.

#### Arrival transfer 15May-11Sep:

Mo/Th/Sa 16h00 from Shiveegobi railway platform

#### Departure transfer 19May-15Sep:

Mo/Th/Sa 20h00 from camp to Dalanjargalan connecting to local night train to Ulaanbaatar

**To/from China:** You may arrive or depart also off international trains to/from H $\ddot{o}$ h Hot or Beijing in China. The international trains will only stop at Choir, 86km from Red Rock Ger Camp. Transfer supplement apply. Enquire the international train schedules from us. We also provide train tickets from Mongolia to China and Russia.

Reservations:

