



Gobi Grasslands Ride camel carts supported

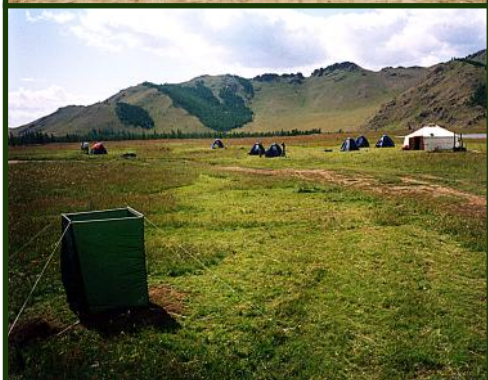
A horseback journey across the Mongolian steppe is an experience available nowhere else on Earth. Steppe habitats once made up 25 percent of the global land area. Today the Pampas, the puszta, the Prairies and the Ukraine have largely been developed for agricultural output. Only the Mongolian steppes have survived. The high elevation of Mongolia creates unusually clear air - all the year round. It is an overwhelming visual experience of emptiness and vastness to ride across the completely silent treeless steppes, empty of any fences, stretching away to the distant horizon; no trace of human activity except for the pastoralists - themselves and their herds.



Photo: Haroldo Castro

Brief Outline Itinerary

The bus will take us out of Ulaanbaatar to the south 120-150 km over the treeless steppes until we find a family of famous horsebreeders and their gers. We will select some good riding horses among the hundreds available, saddle up, and ride until the steppes start to give way to the Gobi sands. Our gear will be loaded upon traditional wooden carts, the same as used by the locals. Bactrian Camels will pull the carts.



Day 1 Ulaanbaatar

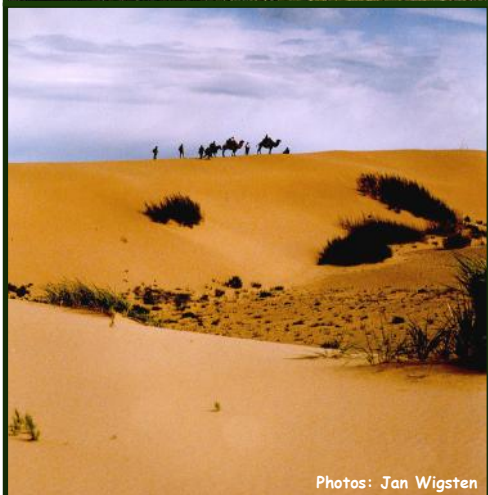
Arrive in the Mongolian capital and transfer to the hotel. Tour briefing after dinner.

Day 2 To Arburd Sands

A.m. Drive south across the grasslands to Arburd Sands. Overnight in gers.

Day 3 Arburd Sands

The ride today is a short one, but it cuts through the Arburd Sands, a giant 20km long sand dune, which is a hideout for numerous wolves. We will be riding right through, seeing Sahara-like landscapes. We will again stay at Arburd Sands Ger Camp.



Photos: Jan Wigsten

Day 4 To Ikh Zorgol Hairhan Uul

The Gobi steppe area in this area is quite variable since we ride through the transition zone of the Gobi, meaning you will see true steppe, semi-arid steppe, sand dunes and also giant rock formations. Today we will ride for 25 - 30 km across a populated area of the steppe and for the full day we can see the Zörgol Hairhan giant rock formations in the distance. They are several hundred meters high, and are a dramatic feature rising out of the middle of the steppe.



Day 5 Ikh Zorgol Hairhan Uul

We will spend two nights camping in this dramatic landscape, and make a day trip around the area. Here is a second opportunity to possibly view the elusive Argali Sheep, the largest wild mountain sheep in the world.

Day 6 Baga Zorgol Hairhan Uul

Continue riding east, passing a small Gobi lake, with perhaps some interesting birds. The distance is 25 km to the smaller – but still impressive – Baga Zorgol Hairhan Mountains and rock formations. The lakes act as “islands” for waterfowl flying across a “sea of grass”. Baga Zorgol Hairhan have Siberian Ibex, so it is worthwhile to scan the ridges for this elusive mountain goat.

Day 7 Bogd Uul National Park

Drive back for half a day to Ulaanbaatar. At lunchtime we will break our journey near Zuunmod, and enter Bogd Khan Mountain, a forested mountain area due south of Ulaanbaatar. Here are the Manzhir monastery ruins and a good chance of seeing Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus*). The drive from Manzhir to Ulaanbaatar is thereafter only one hour. Check into the hotel.

Day 8 Departure

Transfer to the airport, railway station, or your next Mongolian destination. We can recommend a stay at Jalman Meadows Ger Camp in the Khan Khentii Protected Area, which provides for a sharp contrast to the Gobi Steppes experience.

Practicalities

Nomadic Journeys have introduced a concept of practical and desirable ways of travel in Mongolia, which is a synergy of Western and Mongolian ideas brought about after many years of travel experience all across Mongolia. We emphasize the quality of human contacts and encounters with local people and respect for horse and local equestrian traditions, from which many lessons can be learnt. To travel with Nomadic Journeys means living a shared adventure with the horses and camel carts in the great outdoors, choosing the life of the nomad.

Transport: Mongolian families frequently move from one pasture to another using traditional wooden carts. These are pulled

by the types of animals available in the region. Here we will use camels and/or horses.

Staff: A Mongolian-English speaking Mongol guide will accompany the group at all times. A cook will follow with an assistant. In addition, the services of the local herdsmen will be hired along with their animals. When six riders or more, we also have a Mongolian doctor as part of crew.

Meals: The meals will be prepared by our cook. We pride ourselves in having cooks adept at western, vegetarian and Mongolian cooking on our trips. For breakfast we can usually buy fresh yogurt from the herdsmen in the local area.

Minimum riding ability: Competent rider. Fit and capable of riding at all paces confidently. Varying terrain, in the saddle for several hours on most days.

PRICE ex Ulaanbaatar:

USD 1400 per person (2/10 members)

Single room/tent/ger supplement:
USD 30 per night.

Additional night in Ulaanbaatar:
USD 108 per room.

Private trip supplement: **USD 300 per person**

Includes: Leadership, breakfast every day, and all meals outside Ulaanbaatar. All overnights in hotels in shared double (2n), ger camps (2n) and tents (3n). Camping equipment and all local transport. Local medevac coverage.

Excludes: Drinks and laundry. Lunch and dinner in Ulaanbaatar. Air or train tickets in and out of Mongolia. Visa fee. Bring your own sleeping bag.

DATES ex Ulaanbaatar: 2011

GGR01: 03-10Jul (Su-Su) Naadam ext
GGR02: 27Aug-03Sep (Sa-Sa)

Reversal of trip: Trips may be done in the reverse for operational reasons.

Naadam: There is a Naadam Festival extension possibility following GGR01 for Ulaanbaatar Naadam Games July 10th-12th. It is USD 520 per person supplement price in shared double.