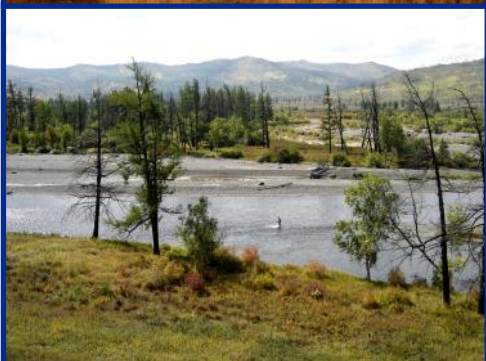


Photos: Jan Wigsten



Photo: Haroldo Castro



Eastern Great Landscapes

Most of Mongolia is off the beaten track. Great Landscapes Escape will in addition bring you in the opposite direction to where most travelers go, into East Gobi, the Eastern Steppes, the largest remaining wild grasslands in the world. And on to the forests and meadows of the Onon River, a tributary of the Amur River, which together are Eurasia's longest free flowing river. Here you will travel through the heartland of Genghis Khan's homeland. Where the great khan was born and raised. Perhaps even where he was buried in secret.

Brief Outline Itinerary

We will start out this dramatic journey on board a local train which bring us into East Gobi (Dornogobi) where we will stay at one of Nomadic Journeys low impact ger camps. Thereafter our support vehicles will pick us up with a local crew of a private chef, and head to eastern Mongolia and the biggest remaining grasslands of the world.

We will overnight in two Ger-scape camps; one on the Eastern Steppes and the other next to the Onon River, in partly forested area. We will drive back to Ulaanbaatar via Öglögchiin Herem, where an American-Mongolian expedition searched for the grave of Genghis Khan, albeit without any tangible results. You might find it. It is a forested area next to Khan Khentii wilderness.

Day 1: To Ulaanbaatar

Arrive Ulaanbaatar. If you arrive by air or train, you will be provided transfer to the hotel. In the evening there is a trip briefing followed by dinner. Hotel overnight.

Day 2. Train to East Gobi

A full day of train ride to East Gobi (Dornogobi) province. We will travel the Transmongolian Railway line in the direction of China. The gradual transformation between treeless steppes grasslands (prairies) and the drier Gobi is apparent as we approach Choir. We will disembark at Shiveegobi, at a mere platform in the middle of the Gobi steppes and transferred by vehicle the last 60km to the vicinity of the Red Rock Valley of Ikh Nart upland. Overnight at the small Red Rock Ger Camp for two overnights.



Photo: Jan Wigsten

Day 3: Ikh Nart Nature Reserve

Full day for exploration of this dramatic and rocky Gobi landscape. Easy to get lost here. Using the rocks shelters are some 6-700 Argali Sheep (*Ovis ammon*), world's largest wild sheep, as well as some 150 Siberian Ibex (*Capra sibirica*). Also wolves and lynx use the rocks as a hide out. Our day in the Gobi is dedicated to wildlife observation. The Argali Research Center of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences is conducting wildlife research here since 1997, why much is known by the Ikh Nart ecosystem. Although not be taken for granted, Argali and Ibex is usually seen here. At other times there might also be Asiatic Other game such as Asiatic Wild Ass (*Hemionus hemionus* or Khulan in Mongolian) and Mongolian Gazelles (*Procapra gutturosa*)

Ikh Nart also has numerous big bird nest's on cliffs and small trees, which usually are Cinereous Vultures (*Aegypius monachus*), the largest vulture of Eurasia. Its size is at par of the Andean Condor. One 4wd jeep will arrive from Ulaanbaatar tonight.

Day 4-5: To Eastern Steppes

Today we will pack our jeep, and drive first north until the Herlen River, making use of the few tarmac roads there is in Mongolia. Overnight at Gun Galuut Nature Reserve where our 4wd support vehicle with additional crew will join. A late afternoon at the small lakes and marshlands will probably reveal the rare White-naped Cranes and Swan Geese as a first feel for what birding will be like further east. Next day we will continue

our slow drive east on the tarmac road into Hentii province passing its small capital Öndörhaan.

If we choose to follow the Herlen River on the south side we will come in the classic large grasslands of the Eastern Steppes, until Sukhbaatar province. We then continue into Dornod province, as it names indicates, Mongolia's easternmost province. The herding communities becomes scarcer and more isolated, and the grasses becomes higher in all places beyond the roads and the riparian zones. We will probably see some stray or small herds of Mongolian Gazelles as well as stray foxes of various kinds. We will finally drive through Toson Hulstai Nature Reserve, until we reach our selected spot for one of our Gerscape camps, and overnight here for two overnights.

Day 6: Eastern Steppes

Full day for hikes and exploration drives in the heartland for thousands of Mongolian Gazelles on the Eastern Steppes. The immense Gazelle herds are there but elusive at times. They do not migrate in patterns like the big ungulate herds in East Africa. Rather at random follow precipitation which provides for good grazing. Often none are seen, but herds of 10 thousands are however some times seen. Rarely as much as 80 thousand. A mega herd of 250 thousand has been seen recently.

There are also small lakes with possible sightings of White-naped Cranes and the even more rare Siberian Crane. Morning and late afternoons to chill out at our tiny camp and hike in these great landscapes. It'll be a thousands stars hotel tonight.

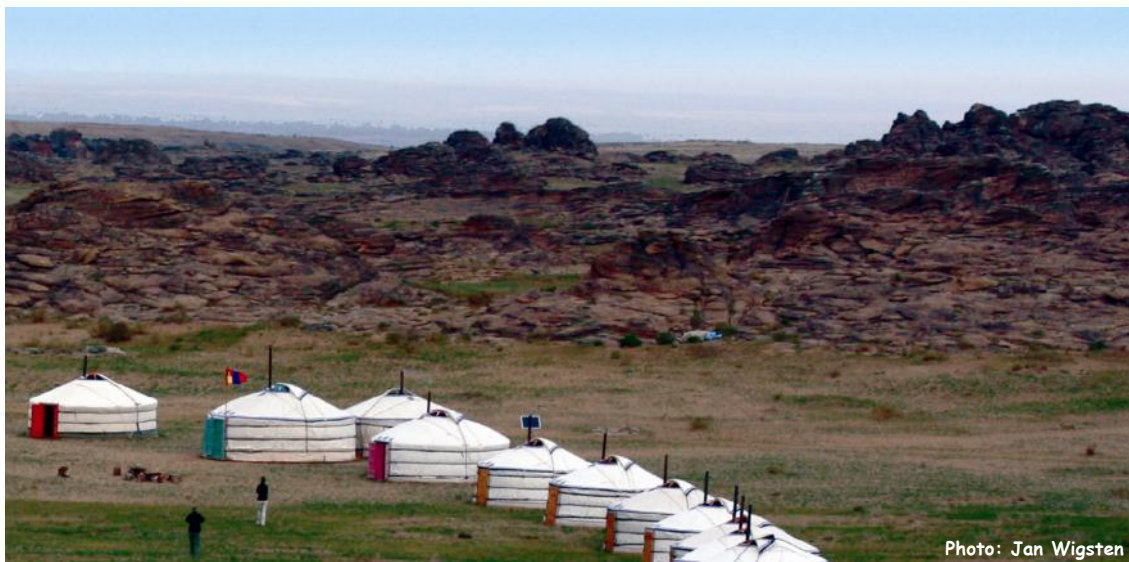


Photo: Jan Wigsten



Day 7: To Onon River

We will continue our drive north until the Onon River, a tributary of the mighty Amur River. We will make our way back into Hentii province and drive north through Norovlin community. After having been on rather undulating and flat grasslands for the past few days, we will notice small ridges of mountains of birch forests, which indicates the start of Siberia and what locally is called the Hangai region (opposite to Gobi) which consists of mosaic forests of larch and birch. The Onon River (with the Amur) is the longest free flowing river in Eurasia. Our next private gerscape camp is in the vicinity of Ölziyt Hairhan, some dramatic landscapes of rocks, near the riverside.

Day 8-9: Onon River

Ölziyt Hairhan name indicates it is a sacred place, which has indeed been confirmed as recent years shamans have re-started ceremonies here. We will hike in the this dramatic area.

Local herders are both Halh and Buryats and nearby Dadal community is almost all are Buryats. The Buryats are also Mongols, however, they lead a more settled lifestyle in log cabins. They are keepers of cows and horses, rather than sheeps and goats. We will spend two full days here. Either fishing for Grayling, Amur Pike and Lenok. Local fishing permit need be purchased at additional cost. Or hike in the vicinity or drive to visit Dadal village, where WWF work for the conservation of the Onon river is centered and where there are claims Genghis Khan was born.

Day 10: To Öglögchiin Wall

Full day drive upstream (west) through Bayan-Adraga and Binder until the Almsgivers Wall (Öglögchiin Herem) bordering the large Khen Khentii Special Protected Area, a forested wilderness three times the size of Yellowstone. Meet local people on the way. Arrive our small secluded camp of Buryat log houses and gers where we will stay for two nights.

Day 11: Öglögchiin Wall

We are now in Batshireet community, not far from (walks distance) Öglögchiin Wall) which is an archaeological wall more than 2m wide and a height of 3m high as its highest. It skirts through the forests for more than 3km near Daichin Mountain. Both Americans and Japanese joint Mongolian expeditions searched for the grave of Genghis Khan around here, but the searches were halted due to Mongolian considerations. On a hike in the forest's we might see it.

Day 12: To Ulaanbaatar

Full day drive to Ulaanbaatar. Hotel.

Day 13: Fly Out

End of services after breakfast. If you leave Mongolia today, transfer to the airport or railway station is included.

Optional Jalman Meadows:

Before reaching Ulaanbaatar you may add days to the trip turning north through Hadan Hoshuu to the Upper Tuul River and Jalman Meadows.



Recommended stay is at least 2-3 overnights. Enjoy the dramatic scenery of the Upper Tuul River Valley with its surroundings mountains and meadows in the riparian zones. There is a library and fully collapsible streamside ger sauna here. As well as riding horses for rent. If the water flow is sufficient an optional float by catarafts down the river. Enjoy the library stocked with Mongolica books.



Photo: Mark Johnstad

Practicalities

Trip length: You may request us to add a day at Ikh Nart, Gun Galuut, Eastern Steppes as well as including Jalman Meadows. Please, request supplement price for this.

Lodging: We will overnight in ger camps for the entire trip, you sleep in a real bed with linen, pillows and blankets for the duration of the trip. In two locations you will stay in our fully mobile midway camps (gerscapes) which are three ger frames, fully outfitted with beds, stove, tables etc in great landscapes. These gerscape camps are for your private and exclusive use. Two locations has our own low impact small ger camps (Jalman Meadows and Ikh Nart). Two locations are at fixed camp lodge consisting of both gers for guest's and Buryat style log cabins.

Transport: The trip is vehicle supported by one landcruiser jeep as well as a 4wd minivan for provisions and support equipment and provisions.

Staff: A Mongolian English-speaking (or another language) local guide will accompany you at all times. Plus two drivers and a private chef from Ikh Nart until Jalman Meadows.



Photo: Jan Wigsten

PRICES ex Ulaanbaatar:

USD 2750 per person. (2/4 members)

Including: Local English speaking guide, all meals outside Ulaanbaatar, all overnights in ger camps in double occupancy. All surface transport and entrance fees.

Excluding: Imported drinks. Air or train tickets. Transfers and hotel overnights in Ulaanbaatar.

DATES ex Ulaanbaatar:

Daily mid May to mid October.

Reservations: