



## Winter in Hustain Nuruu - Takhi re-introduction

*Hustai National Park is the site of a unique re-introduction scheme of Przewalskii's horse (*Equus przewalskii*), by Mongolian's called Takhi. It became extinct in the wild and has since 1992 been successfully re-introduced to Hustai from zoos around the world. It has been an international effort monitored to The Foundation for the Przewalskii Horse of the Netherlands and MACNE (Mongolian Association for Conservation of Nature and the Environment). The national park is rolling steppe mountains with rather large patches of birch and aspen forests. There are also visible remains of Neolithic graves. In addition Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus*) and Wolf (*Canis lupus*) have increased quite a bit during the last few years, as well as Mongolian gazelle. Species that are in Hustai but usually not seen are Lynx, Argali Sheep and Roe Deer.*



Photo: Felix Oppenheim

### Brief Outline Itinerary

Hustai National Park is located around Hustai (Birch) Mountain, north of the Tuul River some 2-3 hours drive west of Ulaanbaatar. You will be transferred by vehicle and when in Hustai there will be some shorter hikes supported by pack-horses. There is not much snowfall in Mongolia with 274 sunny days in a year. However, the snow that do fall tend to become repositioned by the wind forces and lie in droves at the wrong places. Why our route may be adjusted accordingly.

#### Day 1: To Hustai National Park

A.m. Pick up at your hotel in Ulaanbaatar and drive southwesterly along the Tuul River and its riverine forest meadows. At Altanbulag village a statue of a Takhi have been raised in honor of the re-introduction of Takhi and the creation of Hustai National Park. Two thirds of the national park is located on Altanbulag's territory. Drive out on the Altanbulag steppes and meet nomadic families in their winter pastures.

The Dutch project has also assisted in setting up a cheese factory here that is part of a community project to enhance the local economy. It sells high quality "Dutch Gouda cheese". We will continue, crossing the Tuul River and drive into Hustai National Park through the Tariat Valley. We will make our way to the Hustai Ger Camp, operated by MACNE, on the northern borderline of the Hustai. On the way will perhaps already view free roaming herds of Takhi. If not we will make a game drive with a high probability of seeing any of the free roaming herds of the Takhi. Overnight in gers prepared for winter.





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## Day 2: Hustai National Park

Today (snow conditions permitting) we will make a trek through the varied habitats of Hustai National Park. Starting out from the ger camp we will hike the ridges with views over the distant Moltsoog Sands as well as the partly forested Hustai Mountains. We will trek up a gully and get to incredible look out points, while having a reasonable chance to see Red Deer. We will reach the de-relict camp at Molt, which consists of simple houses. Stay in the area until late afternoon possibly for wildlife viewing. Picked up by vehicle and drive back to Hustai Ger Camp.

## Day 3: To Ulaanbaatar via Tuul River Valley

Drive to Ongut graves in the Tuul River Valley and perhaps see gazelle on the way. We will eventually reach the remarkable Neolithic graves of Ongut, of the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Usually there is herdsman in this area, with their livestock. If you are here in the middle of the winter and snow conditions make jeep tracks impassable the program needs to be modified accordingly. Usually however, there is little snow in Mongolia. There are usually alternative snow free routes on the mountain ridges. Return drive to Ulaanbaatar.



Photo: Haroldo Castro

### The Takhi

The national symbol of Mongolia, the Przewalski horse or Takhi, has returned to its country of origin. A truly wild horse has recovered from a captive existence abroad to now roam free in the wild forests and steppes of the Hustai National Park. Today after intense breeding programmes and research spanning over three decades, Przewalski horses prosper in Hustai National Park. They display their natural group-behaviour, stand the harsh winters, protect their young from wolves and produce offspring.

## Practicalities:

**Transport:** This journey is supported by a jeep or minibus to and from Hustai National Park, as well as packhorse to carry some of the necessities of the trek.

**Staff:** Mongolian English speaking local guide will accompany at all times.

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

**Overnights:** The gers have 2-4 beds in each, and they are furnished with beds, stools and a table. WC and showers are in communal shower blocks.

### PRICE ex Ulaanbaatar

USD 480 per person (2/6 members)

*Group discounts available on request*

**Includes:** Leadership, all meals outside Ulaanbaatar. Two overnights. All local transport and transfers to/from Ulaanbaatar.

**Excludes:** Imported drinks, and laundry. Single supplement USD 60. For convenience, Nomadic Journeys may add hotel accommodation and transfer in Ulaanbaatar at current rates.

**DATES ex Ulaanbaatar** Daily year round.



Reservations: