

Photo: Haroldo Castro

Yak Trek in the Khan Khentii

The best way to personally experience the pace and lifestyle of the local people is to travel the same way and use the same modes of transport as the Mongolian herdsman themselves. On this journey we trek for three full days into the Khan Khentii Strictly Protected Area and enjoy the beautiful wilderness of the Khentii Mountains. We will use yaks to pull the traditional wooden carts on which all our equipment will be loaded and transported. If you are an experienced rider, a horse may also be rented for you. No support vehicles will be required, nor are they practical in the roadless area where we are to trek. The yaks will determine the pace of our nomadic journey over easy terrain (max. 20 km per day). A cook who is adept at western and Mongolian cooking will be with us in the field. We will also carry a ger, the traditional felt tent, in which most rural Mongolians still live today. Essentially, this means we can use the services of the local people in the area where we are to travel. They are the experts and we will be able to get a first-hand experience of how to build a ger and move a camp in the traditional Mongolian way.



Photo: Jan Wigsten

DAY 1: To Upper Tuul River Valley

After breakfast we leave Ulaanbaatar for the Upper Tuul River Valley in the Khan Khentii Strictly Protected Area (some 110 km away); a three-hour drive by bus or car. After one hour we leave the tarmac road and carry on through a beautiful steppe valley, where there are many herding families with their gers and livestock. Crossing a ridge at Zamtiin pass we now drive mainly through forests until we reach the Upper Tuul River Valley. Here we meet the local herders, who will accompany us with their yak carts. We pitch camp next to the river.

DAY 2: To Baruun Bayan

Today we load all our luggage and provisions onto the yak carts and start our trek. Our first campsite will be in a steppe valley, surrounded by the Khentii hills, which are covered with larch and birch forests. Herdsmen keep their livestock in the southern areas of Khan Hentii, following a lifestyle that has been essentially unchanged since the time of Genghis Khan.

DAY 3: To Zaraa Tolgoi

Along the way we will split from the yak cart caravan and hike up into the mountains. We will enjoy stunning panoramic views from the ridges. Today we reach the northernmost point of our journey and set up camp at Zaraa Tolgoi (Hedgehog's head).

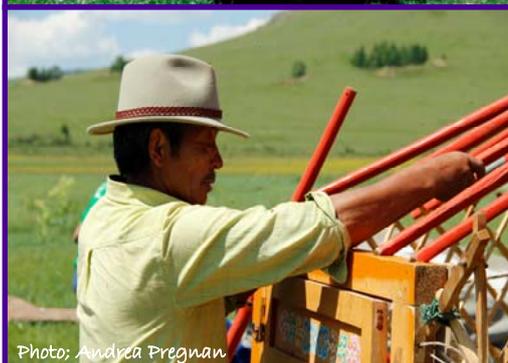


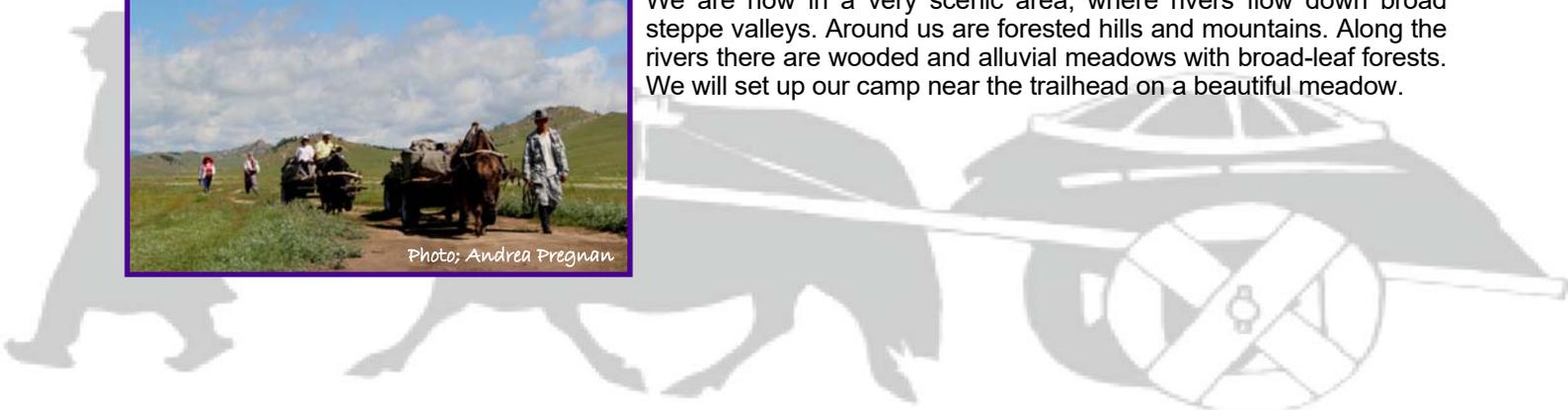
Photo: Andrea Pregonan

DAY 4: Upper Tuul River Valley

We are now in a very scenic area, where rivers flow down broad steppe valleys. Around us are forested hills and mountains. Along the rivers there are wooded and alluvial meadows with broad-leaf forests. We will set up our camp near the trailhead on a beautiful meadow.



Photo: Andrea Pregonan





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DAY 5: To Ulaanbaatar

After breakfast we drive back to Ulaanbaatar (3½ hrs). In the afternoon there is free time to explore the city. Distances are short and nearly all points of interest can be reached by foot.

Practicalities:

Transport: Apart from the short drive to the starting point of our trek and back to the city we will not rely on any motor vehicle support. Instead we utilize traditional wooden carts, that Mongolian families occasionally still use, when moving from one pasture to another (Although increasingly small trucks are being used). Animals prevalent in the region pull these carts. Here we will use yaks (or rather yak-cow cross breeds called hainag) and/or horses. The services of local herdsman will be employed by the expedition, and they will provide us with their animals.

Accommodation: Very spacious Scandinavian style Tepees, with foldable bed-cots and full bedding. There is no need to bring a sleeping bag. We trek in style!

Staff: An English speaking Mongolian guide will accompany the group at all times. There will also be a cook (and an assistant depending on the number of travelers). In addition, the services of several local herdsman will be employed along with their animals.

Meals: Our cook will prepare all the meals. We pride ourselves in having cooks adept at both western and Mongolian cooking on our trips. There are always vegetables available, and we have no problem accommodating vegetarians on this trip. For breakfast we can usually buy fresh yogurt from local herdsman.

Riding horses: This trek doubles very well as horse riding trip. There will be an opportunity for experienced riders at the time of booking to order a saddled riding horse, with a horse-man to follow. Mongolian horses are peculiar and horsemanship is somewhat different among the Mongols as compared to back home. We suggest you bring your own riding helmet with you, since none are available in Mongolia.

Trip Extension: Naadam Instead of returning to Ulaanbaatar you may also choose to transfer to our nearby Jalman Meadows Ger Camp, 8km further up the Tuul River Valley, and extend your stay in the forest steppe zone. Please ask us for additional hotel reservations as needed in Ulaanbaatar. You have the choice to continue and explore other parts of Mongolia or stay another day or two in Ulaanbaatar.

Please make sure to arrive in Ulaanbaatar the day prior to departure, as there will be a get together evening dinner and trip briefing that same evening.

PRICE ex Ulaanbaatar:

USD 950 per person (min 2 members)

Single tent supplement (4n):

USD 160 per person

Rent of riding horse: **USD 140 per horse**

Private trip supplement:

USD 300 per trip for 2/4persons
for 5/up **no supplement charge**

Danshig Naadam Extension: This For YAK08 it is possible to book an extension to visit the newly re-established Danshig Naadam festival, held on August 6th 2017 near Ulaanbaatar. Please enquire!

Includes: Guide and all meals outside Ulaanbaatar. Camping equipment and all local transport.

Excludes: Imported drinks. Rent of riding horse. Transfers and accommodation in Ulaanbaatar. Air or train tickets in and out of Mongolia. Visa fee.

DATES start in Ulaanbaatar 2017:

YAK01: 21-25May (Su/Th)
YAK02: 31May-04Jun (We/Su)
YAK03: 10-14Jun (Sa/We)
YAK04: 20-24Jun (Tu/Sa)
YAK05: 30Jun-04Jul (Fr/Tu)
YAK06: 12-16Jul (We/Su)
YAK07: 17-21Jul (Mo/Fr)
YAK08: 27-31Jul (Th/Mo)
YAK09: 07-11Aug (Mo/Fr) Danshig AVL
YAK10: 17-21Aug (Th/Mo)
YAK11: 27-31Aug (Su/Th)
YAK12: 06-10Sep (We/Su)

Additional: We can reserve hotels and transfers in Ulaanbaatar for you. Please make sure to arrive in Ulaanbaatar the day prior to departure. There will be a get together evening dinner that same evening.

Private departures: On request, and if available, the Yak Trek may operate on any day, at an additional cost of USD 300 per trip for 2/4 persons as a private departure. For 5 or more persons no supplement charge will be added.

When booking this tour as a private trip, other language guides (French, German, Italian, Korean, etc.) are available upon request. Please enquire! Before or after the season, we can swap the tepee for a ger, equipped with a wood burning stove in order to provide warmth on cold nights.

Family Treks: If you are a family with kids, book early, we are happy to set aside any date as a specific family departure.

