



Photo: Jan Wisgten

The Gobi Steppes

- Arburd Sands -

Surprisingly close to the Mongolian capital Ulaanbaatar one finds the northernmost reaches of the Gobi steppe; treeless grasslands stretching to the horizon and beyond. We will explore Arburd Sands, an area where the steppe, dotted with nomads' camps, slowly gives way to sand, culminating in a 20 km long sand dune. Close-by, Zorgol Hairkhan Uul, a gigantic rock formation rising almost vertically out of the plains, is habitat to Argali Sheep (*Ovis ammon*) and sometimes Siberian Ibex (*Capra sibirica*). It is a place of great natural beauty, fraught with history and legends. The Mongolian nomadic steppe culture is still intact here. All of the herdsmen lead a traditional way of life, raising herds of horses, cows, sheep, goats and camels. Nomadic Journeys has a low-impact, fully collapsible ger (yurt) camp here, owned and operated by a local family. They are famous horse trainers who regularly participate in the annual Naadam Games and also operate our Gobi Steppe Ride and Steppe Nomads Ride. Their herd of horses is large and offers an ample selection for both the amateur and the competent rider. There are no other ger camps anywhere nearby, as few tourists actually come here.



Photo: Ana Nordenstahl



Photo: Jan Wisgten

This self-guided journey is geared towards travelers who prefer to be as independent as possible, while allowing to reach their destination at the lowest possible cost. You share the transport to the camp and back with other travelers, as well as staff and provisions. At the camp you plan your daily activities with our English speaking camp manager. There are fine hikes in the surrounding area and optional activities as described below.

Activities

Dayhikes: From the camp you may walk or hike out into the sand dunes, that extend for about 20km. Wolves use the dunes as a hideout and their pugmarks can usually be identified. You may order a picnic lunch from camp and make day hikes in any direction. The surrounding steppe area is also fascinating to venture into, since it is dotted with numerous herdsmen's gers and herds of livestock



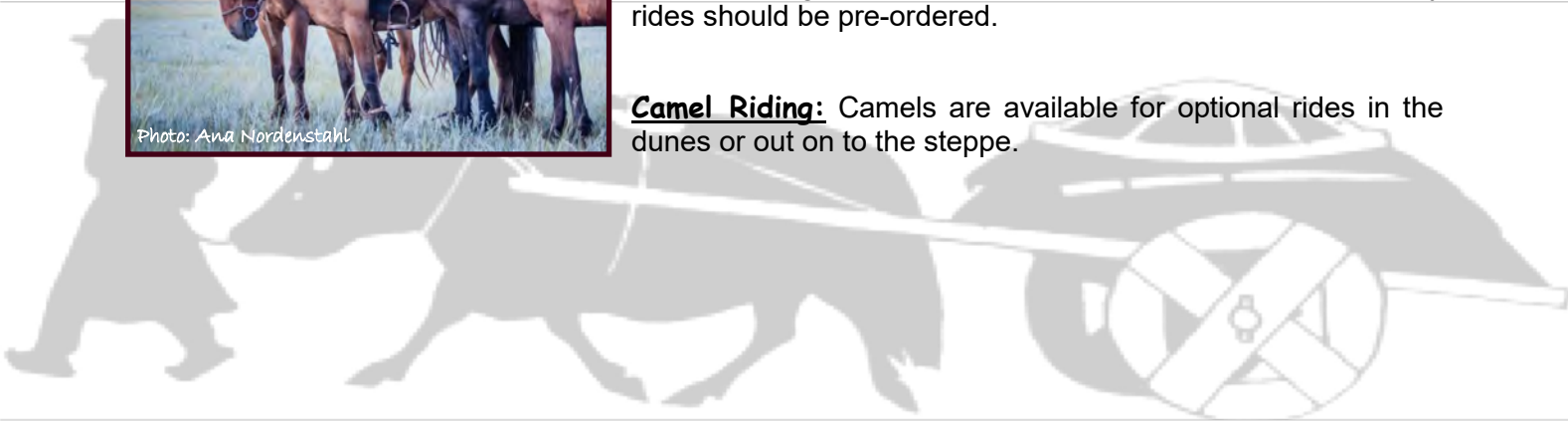
Photo: Ana Nordenstahl

Horse riding: Riding is exceptionally good here, since our hosts belong to one of the most famous families of horse trainers in Mongolia. Rides for just an hour, half day or full day are organized with local horsemen at additional cost. Picnic lunch can be provided from the camp. Serious riders are best advised to bring their own hard hat and short chaps. Full day rides should be pre-ordered.



Photo: Ana Nordenstahl

Camel Riding: Camels are available for optional rides in the dunes or out on to the steppe.





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Photo: Haroldo Castro



Additional trips: Should you be interested in a more in-depth trip in this interesting and little-visited area, please consult the Gobi Steppe Ride, which also includes a stay at Arburd Sands. However, these trips also involve camping. Please ask for details on these trips.

Low Impact Ger Camp

Nomadic Journeys is committed to the principles of Sustainable Tourism. We bring additional jobs to the area, that are based on traditional livelihoods. These involve provision of camel carts, riding camels, pack horses, riding horses and labor. The camp purchases milk and yoghurt from the nearby herders. There is a maximum capacity for 28 guests in double occupancy gers. Vehicles are parked a short walk away from the gers. The entire camp is fully collapsible and does not have shower or WC blocks. The toilets are long drop style allowing for natural decomposition. Showers are housed in a small gers, water is heated on a wood burning stove. All trash is separated. The camp can be relocated leaving no more impact on the area than a herding family would. Arburd Sands Ger Camp is indeed a fully collapsible hotel.

Practicalities

Transfers: Operates daily as shared transfer on fixed times. Departs 09:00 from UB and returns 14:00 from camp. You may - at a supplement cost - order a private transfer at any time suitable to you. The drive over the treeless steppes from Ulaanbaatar to Arburd Sands with a 4WD vehicle takes about two hours.

PRICE 2017 ex Ulaanbaatar:

3d/2n: **USD 290 per person**

4d/3n: **USD 415 per person**

5d/4n: **USD 540 per person**

Single Supplement: **USD 40 per night**

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

Private transfer supplement:
USD 80 per vehicle

Includes: All meals outside Ulaanbaatar. All overnights in double occupancy gers. Transfer to and from camp at scheduled times.

Excludes: Imported drinks. Laundry. Arrival and departure transfers and hotel nights in Ulaanbaatar. Visa fee.

Children: 0-2 years free. 3-12 years 50%.

Transfer schedule: Daily approx mid May to end of September.

from UB: **09:00**

from camp: **14:00**

Reservations:

