



Photos: Haroldo Castro



Mongol Horse Trails yak carts supported

This horseback journey offers close encounters with Mongolian horsemen, nomadic people who have thus far been able to withstand modern pressures and lifestyles. There is no other nation in the world that depends on horses to such an extent. Mongolian horsemanship is famous and in many ways different than anywhere else. The herders keep their horses in a semi-wild condition, allowing them to live freely in harem groups. During the harsh winter with extreme subzero temperatures, the horses fend for themselves and protect their foals against predators such as wolves. Fences or stables are virtually unknown.

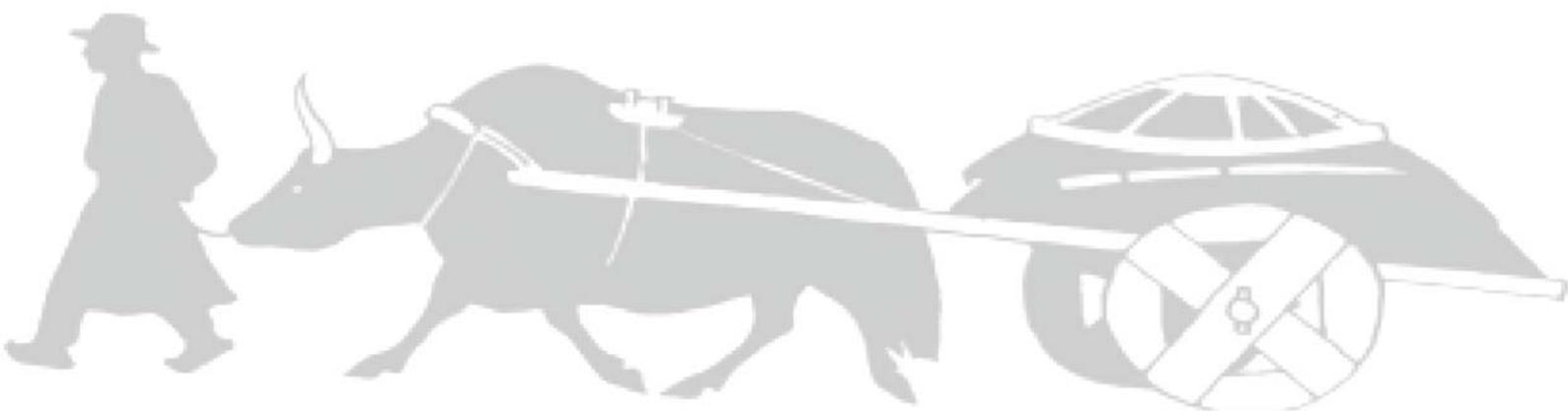
On this trip we will explore two very different environments on horseback: First, we ride across the vast treeless steppe, summer pastureland of Mongolian herders. Gradually we will come through the very scenic forest steppe and up into the southern taiga zone of the Khan Khentii Strictly Protected Area. You will experience steppes, wooded meadows, forests and mountains and enjoy camping along winding rivers. We will undertake this horse ride as a "Nomadic Journey", e.g. without vehicle support, in wild terrain. All our luggage will be loaded onto yak carts; even a ger (Mongolian yurt) will be carried to serve as our mobile restaurant.

Day 1: Ulaanbaatar

Upon your arrival in Ulaanbaatar you will be transferred to your hotel. There will be a tour briefing and dinner.

Day 2: To the Steppes

In the morning we visit the Gandan Lamasery, the center for the Buddhist revival in Mongolia, possibly in time to see the prayers. Mongolians follow Lamaism (Tibetan Buddhism), with the Dalai Lama being the supreme theocratic leader. We then drive out of the city, and gradually the wide open Mongolian landscape unfolds before our eyes. We have a picnic lunch on arrival, pitching camp near some nomadic families. Here we will meet the local herders with the yak carts and our horses. We will get to know the horses and go an short trial ride.





Day 3-4: Steppe ride

All our provisions, camping equipment and luggage will be loaded onto yak carts. Even a ger (yurt) will be brought, and we will learn how to set it up. We ride across open steppe, but also cover hilly terrain with occasional patches of birch forest. Throughout the ride we will have the chance to meet with local herdsmen, often relatives and friends of our local horsetrail guides. On the second day, forests will suddenly start to appear and we are now riding towards the Khentii wilderness area, which includes the Khan Khentii Strictly Protected Area and Gorkhi Terej National Park. In Mongolia the Siberian boreal forest meets the Central Asian desert and steppe and will be riding through the transitional zone between grasslands and northern Larch forests.

Day 5-6: To Sharbulag Valley

The horses will enable us to ride through the Larch forests, up the slopes of the mountains and to follow ridges that offer views of superb scenery, whilst the yak carts will follow along the broad river valleys. We will arrive and pitch camp at Sharbulag Valley. We will spend two nights here, which will allow for some flexibility in the middle of our ride.

Day 7: To Tuul River

Today we cross a pass and ride into the upper part of the Tuul River Valley. We are now near the main ridge of the Khentii Mountains. The horses will allow us to go up onto the ridges where the panoramic views across this forested mountain area are extraordinary. Our yak carts caravan will make its way in through the valleys on another route.

Day 8-9: To Jalman Meadows

We ride towards Jalman Meadows, famous for its wildflowers, and reach our semi-permanent ger camp, which is situated next to a beautiful wooded meadow on the upper parts of the Tuul River. Here we say good bye to the herders and their yak carts caravan. We will stay at Jalman Meadows Ger Camp for two nights, having a superb last day ride in the surrounding area.

Day 10: To Ulaanbaatar

We are picked up by a driver and return to Ulaanbaatar. Check into your hotel. See the capital city on your own. Distances are short and nearly all points of interest may be reached on foot. Your guide is standing by to assist you in your shopping or sightseeing activities. We will have a farewell dinner in local restaurant as well as entertainment.

Day 11: Departure

Transfer out back home or on to your next destination.



Photos: Mark Portman



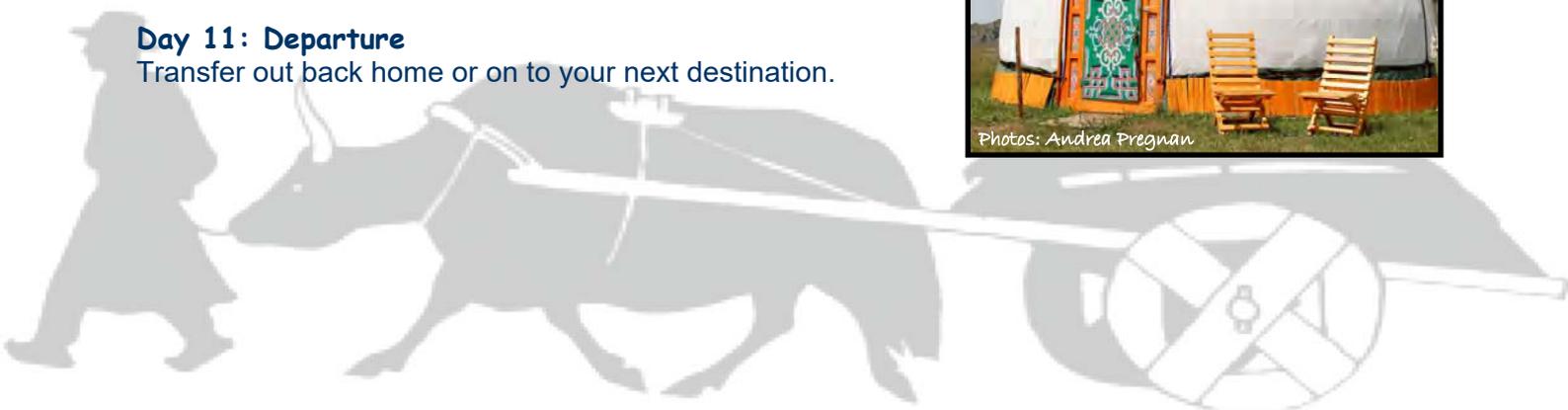
Photos: Andrea Pregnan



Photos: Maria Nordvall



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Practicalities

Transport: Apart from the short drive to the starting point of our horse riding adventure and back to the city we will not rely on any motor vehicle support. Instead we utilize traditional wooden carts, that Mongolian families still frequently 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 crossbreeds called hainag. The services of local herdsman will be employed by the expedition, and they will provide us with their animals.

Accommodation: During the horse ride we will stay in spacious tentpits. We take along a Mongolian ger to serve as our restaurant, as well as showers and compost toilets housed in traditional Mongolian marquee style tents. For two nights we stay at Nomadic Journeys own low-impact ger camp at Jalman Meadows. Two nights in Ulaanbaatar at a centrally located hotel. All accommodation in double occupancy. Single room/tent/ger is available at the additional supplement cost USD 400.

Staff: A Mongolian English speaking guide will accompany the group at all times. A cook will follow with the yak cart caravan until Jalman Meadows. In addition, the services of several local herdsman will be employed along with their animals. The horsemen follow a traditional lifestyle in the areas where we will be riding. If the group consists of four riders or more, we will also have a Mongolian doctor accompanying us as part of the crew.

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. Fresh yogurt we can usually buy from local herdsman.

Minimum riding ability: You should be a competent rider, fit and capable of riding at all paces confidently. We will cover varying terrain, and will be in the saddle for several hours on most days.

Includes: English speaking guide, breakfast every day in Ulaanbaatar, welcome and farewell dinner. All meals outside Ulaanbaatar. All overnights in hotels (2n.) in shared double, gers (2n.) and tents (6n.), camping equipment and all local transport. Local medevac coverage.

Excludes: Drinks, laundry, lunch in Ulaanbaatar. Air or train tickets in and out of Mongolia. Bring your own sleeping bag, riding helmet and short chaps.

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

Naadam Games: There is a Naadam Games Festival extension option possible for MHT02. There will be horseraces with almost 1000 race horses on the plains outside the city. As well as wrestling and archery. The cost is additional USD 720 per person. The itinerary may be sent to you.

PRICE 2017 ex Ulaanbaatar:

USD 2200 per person (2/10 members)

Single room/tent/ger supplement: **USD 400**

There are other language guides such as French, German, Italian, Korean etc. available at additional cost, which need to be booked and confirmed ahead of time. Please enquire.

DATES ex Ulaanbaatar: 2017

MHT01: 15-25Jun (Th/Su)

MHT02: 30Jun-10Jul (Fr/Mo) Naadam opt

MHT03: 22Jul-01Aug (Sa/Tu)

MHT04: 18-28Aug (Fr/Mo)

MHT05: 31Aug-10Sep (Th/Su)

