

# ZENDMEN TRAVEL

Bespoke adventure tours and holidays



# MONGOLIA

ALWAYS MOVING

# MONGOLIA

## IN BRIEF

Mongolia holds some of the world's greatest untamed lands. These wild, beautiful habitats boast an impressive variety of wildlife and are rich in verdant forest, towering cliffs, rugged mountains, endless grasslands and the Gobi Desert. You can choose a range of exotic trips from treks in the magnificent Altai Mountains, visiting nomadic people while riding horses or camels. Those who love wildlife, please join our bird watching trips or observing the only species of true wild horses, Takhi, in the wilderness.

You will enjoy the world famous Naadam Festival with traditional endurance horse races, archery and wrestling tournaments and Eagle Hunting Festivals. Please join us to learn the rich history of the Mongol Empire and Chinggis Khaan, and other nomadic statehoods. We explore areas seldom visited by tourists such as remote parts of the Gobi Desert, Western and Northern Mongolia.

Choose from comfortable road journeys to those adventure seeking tours each designed to show you the country's finest wildlife and culture. Our tours are intricately planned and include programmes of lectures with special guest speakers.

Photo: Mongol Els, singing sand dunes in Gobi Altai province, Western Mongolia.  
Singing sand dunes emits humming sound when wind disturbs sand surface

# WHY CHOOSE ZENDMEN TRAVEL

Environmentally friendly operation, respect for the local people and culture, preservation of wildlife are high on our agenda. Thus, we support environmental conservation and campaigns against child exploitation.

Travelling with us means you are part of these initiatives and contribute to make a real difference. Most tours reach remote peripheral regions, where we bring economic benefits to rural communities. Also, we are one of the very first tour companies achieved Travelife Partner, sustainable tourism certification scheme by EU, and targeting Travelife Certificate in the short run.

Each tour can be tailor-made with specific local festivals, adjusted travel routes or tour extensions. Tours are designed and checked with careful consideration of safety. All these are possible with the help of our passionate and professional team who are both experienced and considerate in various aspects of tour arrangements such as boutique hotel, local family stay, healthy meal choices, comfortable transport, cultural and historic sightseeing, and all the pleasant surprises in Mongolia.

## Affiliation:



MONGOLIAN TOURISM CONSORTIUM



## NATURE

Western Mongolia has some of the most spectacular landscapes as the towering Altai mountain range meets the Gobi Desert. Such unique geography provides an isolated heaven to some of the world's most exotic wildlife which includes the majestic Snow leopards, Gobi bear, Ibex, and Saiga antelope – the only mammal that survived through the last ice age.

## FESTIVALS

Kazakh tribes who preserve their centuries-old cultures until present day. Well known for their eagle-hunting skills, the Kazakhs organise the annual Golden Eagle Festival every October where the nomadic herders present their prized eagles to compete in some exciting hunting games. It is one of the must-see festivals in the country.

**Photo:** Ordinary day of a nomadic family: an anxious toddler wish to help his grandmother's dairy making, Baga Turgen Mountains in western Mongolia

# DISCOVER WESTERN MONGOLIA AUTHENTICALLY

## MUST DO:

- Attend Golden Eagle Festival
- Go on wildlife safari and quest snow leopards
- Enjoy taking yourselves on cultural expeditions

## CULTURE

In the culture front, both **Khoomii** singing (or throat singing) and **bielgee** dance are on the Representative List of the Intangible Culture Heritage of Humanity of UNESCO.

**Khoomii** singing is believed to be originated from Western Mongolia. This unique melody mimics the roaring sound of the wind that blows between Mt Chandmani Khaikhan and Mt Bumbat Khaikhan, as well as the whistling sound of the weed- grass in the adjacent Lake Khar Us caused by this wind. Another belief is when strong wind blows over the surface of the Gobi sand dunes, it emits the humming sound that is similar to the overtone singing. It is no wonder that Mongolia's throat singing is a result of imitating nature's sounds in combination of human's vocal talents and evolution of folklore.

## ARCHAEOLOGY

Archaeological discoveries make Western Mongolia worth every visit. Pre-historic cave paintings of Tsenkher, petroglyph and burial mounds, all dating back 45,000 years, offer fantastic opportunity to learn and witness ancient beliefs and art.



## RECOMMENDED:

- Explore historic sites
- Enjoy horseback riding
- Be a part of nomadic communities whilst travelling
- Go on cycling
- Attend Yak festival

Photo: The Lake Terkhiin Tsagaan in Central Mongolia: a view from a ger camp which offers a comfortable stay with modern facilities and full board.

# EXPLORE CENTRAL MONGOLIA CONFORTABLY

## HISTORY & CULTURE

The area is known as the epicentre of the Mongol Empire; The legendary Silk Road carried abundance of culture and artefacts to the region including Karakorum city. Nowadays, Mongolia's first Buddhist monastery (since 1586) still performs its everyday ritual. UNESCO's world heritage site of Orkhon valley preserve valuable archaeological findings uncovering mythical past of ancient nomadic empires. Yak herding nomads here produce renowned dairy, double cream, sweet curd and Mongolian cheese. Area is ideal place for those who love horses: either horse trekking or traditional Mongolian endurance horse racing or enjoying fermented mare's milk -**airag**.

## LANDSCAPE

Dominated by Khangai mountain range (altitude 4,021m), the area is source for Mongolia's greatest rivers. Holy Mt Olgontenger is worshipped by Mongols as the first land emerged out of the sea. Summer of Central Mongolia offers Eden-green valleys, where neon-blue ribbon of rivers meander and caramel soft scent of flowers diffuses in the air. Some areas are covered full of Edelweiss flowers where you cannot find a place to walk without stepping one. The sky above the meadow is feast for the eyes. It stretched as far as eye could see in the dome of cocktail-blue, punched with fluffy clouds.



## CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Travelling to Northern Mongolia allows you to meet shamans, reindeer people in forest taiga and serene mountains. The area is best known for its crystal blue Lake Khovsgol, fresh water rivers and rocky mountains. Pre-historic and cultural artefacts and heritages include Uushigiin Ulaan deer stone monument and Amarbayasgalant Buddhist monastery, dedicated to Mongolia's holy saint Zanabazar.

## TRAVEL EXPERIENCE

Making a visit to this serene and remote place may liberate you from nisvanis and offer inner peace and mindfulness. Simple and minimalist lifestyle may remind us about our temporal visit on the planet. Pleasant surprises, hospitable Mongolians may bring spice and fondness into our trips. The area attracts those who have adventure spirits for kayaking, fly fishing, trekking, horseback riding, cycling and jeep tour. Northern Mongolia is the last inhabitant for the largest fresh water fish of Taimen in the world.

Photo: Serene beauty of Khoridol Saridag (3093 m) mountains in Khuvsgul province, Northern Mongolia

# QUEST NORTHERN MONGOLIA ACTIVELY

## RECOMMENDED:

- Go on horseback riding
- Enjoy trekking
- Visit Reindeer tribe
- Join in jeep tours
- Be a part of Ice Festival





# WHAT IS OUR DAY OF A COMFORTABLE TOUR LIKE?

Our tours are designed to travel with as much as comfort possible for the route with limited driving hours. There are up to three people in 4x4 drive jeeps. Travelling in Mongolia often involves long distance driving.

We usually set off around 9 am after having leisurely breakfast and travel until the next lunch stop at 1pm with en-route intermissions at planned visit sites. For a group trek (up to 12 people), tour crew with a kitchen van travel ahead to make sure to set up camp site and prepare meals before travellers arrive. Camping toilets with a doomed tent and seats are set up for ladies and gentlemen separately. In remote mountain regions, a bowl of warm water for washing and hot drinks are provided early in the morning.

If the day's driving takes longer or little beyond the average distance, we bring lunch boxes for en-route stops in beautiful scenery. Dinner is an important meal of the day in Mongolia, where we get together briefly for 15-20 minutes afterwards to discuss the day's highlights and things we could possibly consider to make the journey enjoyable experiences for a every single member of the tour family.

**Ger** camps provide comfortable single or double bed as per guest requested. We will sleep on a comfortable mattress in a duvet with bed lining with an extra woollen blanket on top. Unless you requested a single supplement, there will be double in a **ger**. We use mainly en-suite **ger** which is equipped with a private bathroom. There will also be a traditional fire stove in the **ger** which is used to warm the **ger** up in the evening and early in the morning. If it is too cold, a **ger** attendant will light a fire in the middle of the night if you request before going to bed.

At night, Mongolia usually offers a pitch dark sky with thousands of stars. If you are a star gazer, this is the best time to spend your time outside. Mornings can get chilly even in summer, as there is relatively high temperature fluctuation between day and night.





Camel caravanning in western Mongolia



Deer stone witnessing artefacts from Bronze age (7000BC-3000BC)



Reindeer women collecting her reindeer



Trekking in Altai Tavan Bogd



Golden eagle hunting



Kazakh Children with a surprise visitor



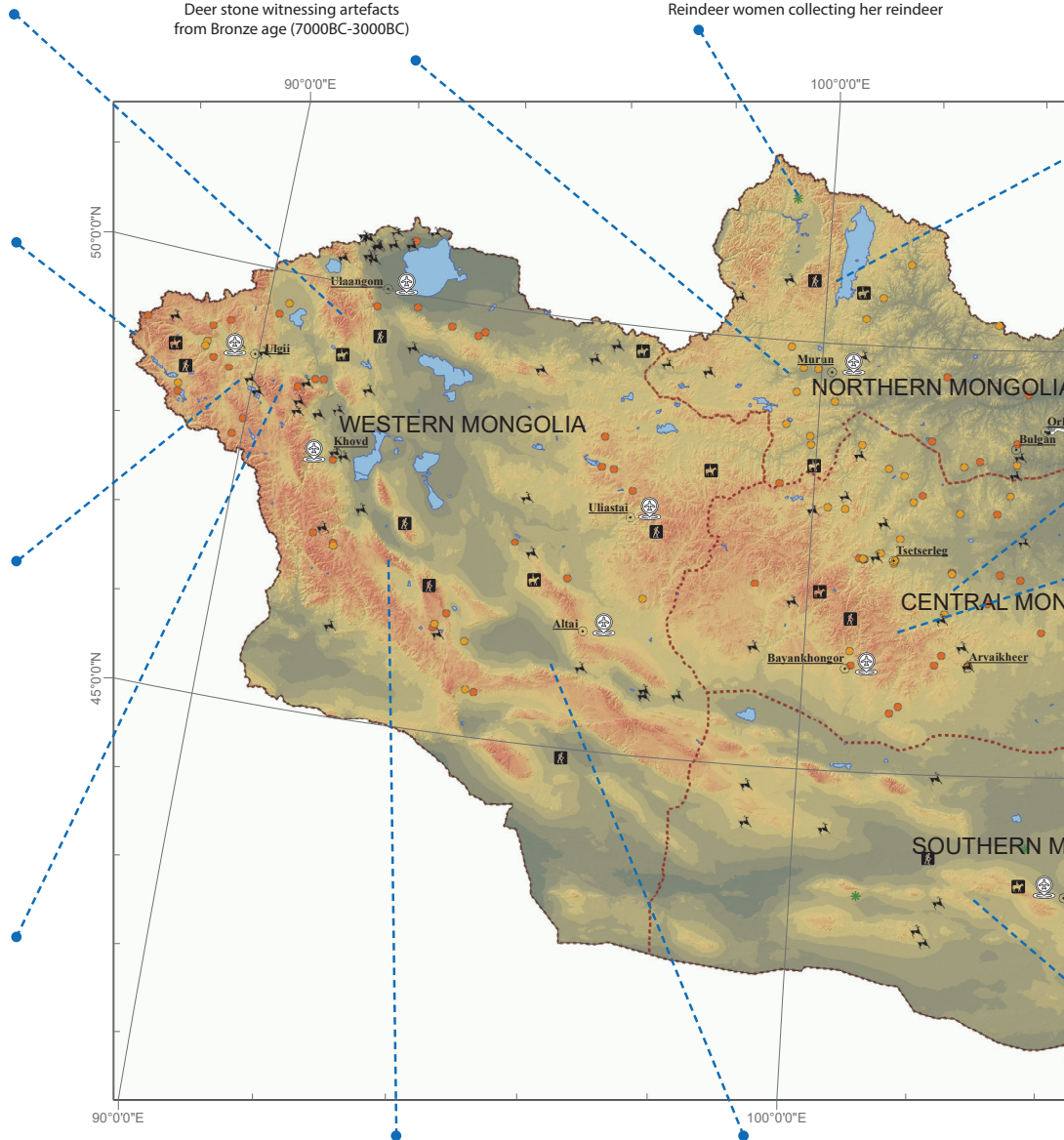
Mongolian breakfast



Snow leopard, one of 500-1000 snow leopards left in Mongolia



Saiga antelope, survived through the last ice age

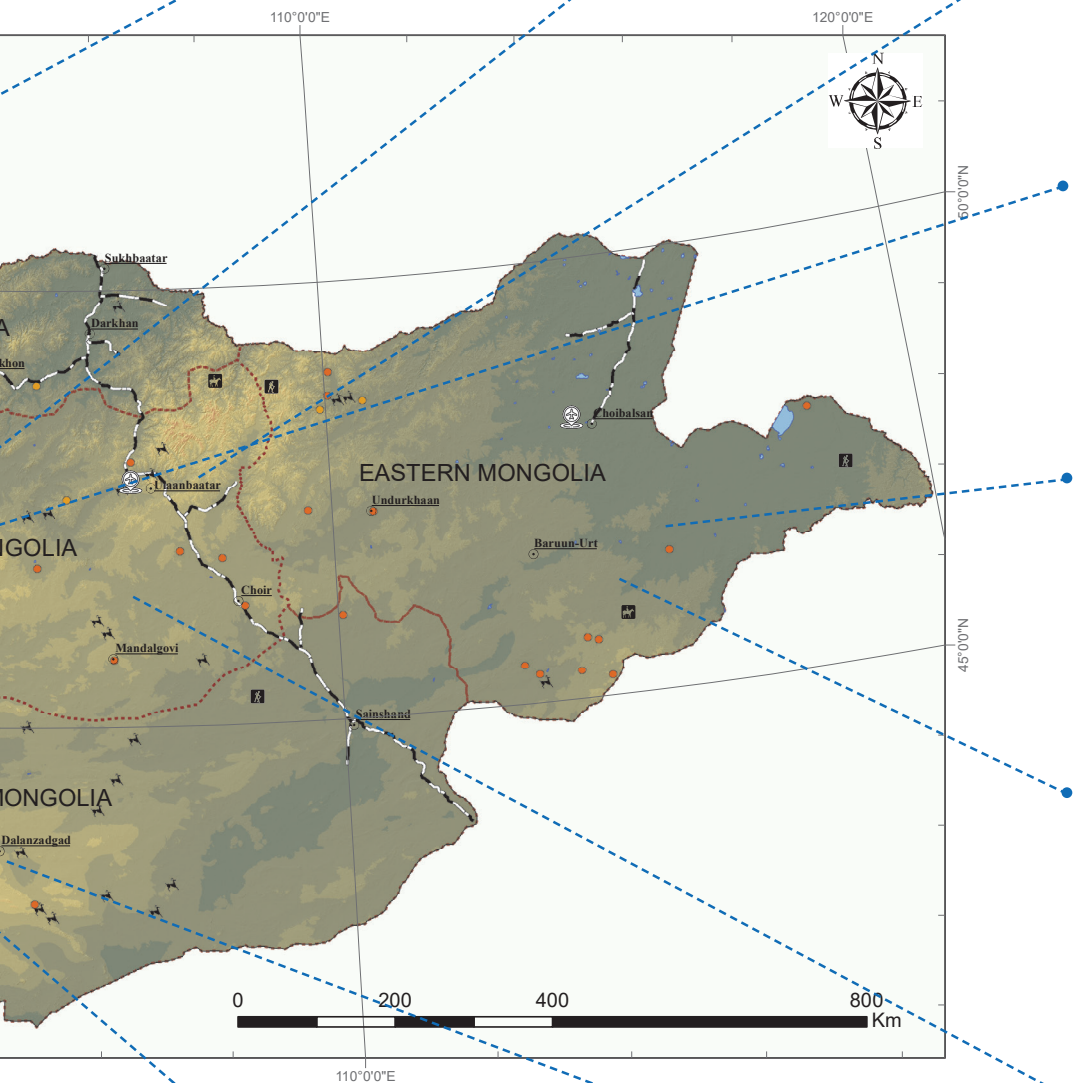



## LEGEND


- ⊙ Aimag (province) centre
- \* Scenic land mark

- Horse trekking
- Trekking
- Rock drawing
- Airport

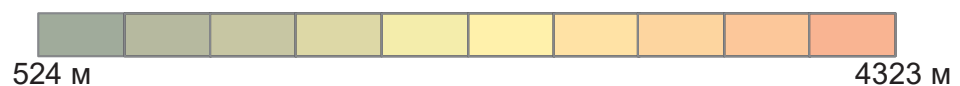
- Deer stone
- Balbal
- Railway



 Regional border

 Lakes

Altitude in meters



# NOMADIC EXPERIENCE

A nomadic homestay offers a genuine glimpse into Mongolia's traditional herding lifestyle, with families hosting guests in gers across the country. Located in scenic areas, often near nature reserves, these stays allow visitors to feel at home with a welcoming herder family who hosts guests in a cozy, warm ger (Mongolian yurt) equipped with comfortable beds.

Guests are welcomed with seasonal Mongolian meals and have the opportunity to participate in the family's daily life, gaining insight into the nomadic way of living and animal herding. Partnerships between local tour companies and host families promote responsible tourism, fostering empowerment and bringing sustainable benefits to these rural communities.

- Private ger stay
- Variations in bedding and facilities, offering either basic or more comfortable options
- Operated by hospitable nomadic families, offering a peaceful retreat from busy tourist areas

## Activities to enjoy:

Guests can often explore nearby landscapes that may include protected areas home to rare wildlife, including the iconic Takhi, or Przewalski horse, along with elk, roe deer, and marmots. Hiking and wildlife spotting in the vast, unspoiled surroundings offer a deeper appreciation of Mongolia's natural beauty and the nomadic way of life.



Host family



Mr Ganchuluun herding his sheep and goats



Rupert is collecting



Traditional knucklebone game- favourite game of Mongolian kids



"We had an amazing time at the Boutique Ger. The family were incredibly gentle, kind and welcomed us to become part of the family. We felt privileged to have been able to share a tiny part of their everyday life with them. Having children that were similar ages to those of the family meant that we made great friends instantly. It didn't matter that we couldn't speak the language. Being able to communicate through the universal language of food and smiles seemed enough for us all. Thank you for showing us traditional Mongolia. It was the most beautiful, tranquil and authentic experience that we will never forget."

Helen Jones and Leigh Jones Family, UK, 2018



*Rupert is fell in love with gentle  
horse -Khongor*

# MORE WAYS TO TRAVEL



## WINTER FESTIVALS MONGOLIA

Winter festivals of Mongolia are truly magnificent travel experience for this winter: Ice Festival, Golden Eagle Festival, and Thousand Camel Festival. Horse sledging on the frozen Lake of **Khovsgol**, ice sculptures created by mother nature, tranquil setting of snow-covered wilderness setting will definitely take your breath away. Golden Eagle Festival offers tournaments testing agility and speed of hunter Eagles.



## NAADAM FESTIVAL AND KHUVSGUL LAKE TOUR

Enjoy Naadam Festival in Khatgal village at the shore of Khuvsgul lake. This is a great opportunity to witness Mongolia's enduring long-distance horse race, traditional wrestling, archery, and knuckle-bone shooting tournaments. The trip is even fantastic to be organised near the breathtaking freshwater Khuvsgul lake in Northern Mongolia. Khuvsgul lake is the deepest in Central Asia. Spend your holiday trekking in the mountains, cycling through Alpine meadows and shoreline of the lake.



## GOLDEN EAGLE PHOTO SAFARI

Hunting with eagles is very much an ancient tradition of the Central Asian nomads that is still kept alive in Altai Mountains in Western Mongolia today. Throughout the journey you will come across prehistoric rock engravings and the ancient Turkish stone men '**balbal**' which witness the passing of Mongolia's rich history.



## THE GOBI DESERT TOUR

Join us for a journey through the Gobi Desert's ancient mountains, green glens and sand dunes, against a backdrop of blue sky by day and a star-filled sky by night. Marco Polo paid a visit to the Gobi, and more recently Roy Chapman Andrews discovered the first-known dinosaur's egg-nest at Flaming Cliffs.

# WITH ZENDMEN TRAVEL



## TREKKING IN ALTAI MOUNTAINS

Your journey starts from Ulgii, the provincial capital, and make way towards the base of Altai Tavan Bogd mountains. Sleeping under the Milky Way, singing and drinking with the nomads, hiking in the mountain range and horse riding across stunning landscapes are just some of the amazing activities to whet your adventure appetite. The trip will end off with a cultural visit where you get to interact up-close and personal with the eagle-hunter and his family.



## UNCHARTERED MONGOLIA

Flanked by the scenic **Khangai Mountains**, **Zavkhan** offers some of the most varied landscapes in Mongolia. You will experience vast desert land, serene lakes and incredible sand dunes all within close proximity of each other. The sharp contrast in terrain makes travelling in this area unforgettable.



## QUEST REINDEER TRIBE

Tsaatan refers reindeer herding Dukha people in unforgiving northern frontier of Mongolia. They practice Shamanism and live in a tepee a year round. Nowadays, there are two tribes in eastern and western taiga. Once declining reindeer herd is growing steadily. Hunting and reindeer stocking is basis of their unique nomadic culture. Join our photo safari tour to this remote region.



## NOMADIC ODYSSEY TOUR

Traverse Mongolia from crystal clear Lake **Khovsgol** to the Gobi Desert via **Kharkhorin**. The trip also takes you to the Mongolia's best historic and cultural treasures including the **Orkhon Valley**, the UNESCO's World Heritage site. You will explore the remains of **Kharkhorin**, the capital city of the Mongol Empire.



# WANDERLUST **SOUTHERN MONGOLIA** RESPONSIBLY

## MUST:

- Go on camel trekking
- Be a bird watcher
- Witness dinosaur fossil sites
- Visit Thousand Camel Festival

Photo: Breathtaking views of Khongor singing sand dunes in Umnugovi region, Southern Mongolia.  
One of the largest sand dunes in the country , reaching over 1600 m above sea level.



## NATURE

Mongolia is famous for the Gobi Desert and its excellent paleontological findings worldwide. Gobi refers an arid land with sparse vegetation in Mongolian while desert is synonym to barren land. One third of Mongolia's vast territory may be classed as **gobi**, of which some stretches to north western Mongolia. Southern Mongolia is mostly dominated by arid **gobi** and steppes. Annual precipitation sometimes as low as 50 mm.

## WILDLIFE

Despite its harsh and alien outlook, the Gobi supports abundant wildlife, nutrient vegetation and home to exotic animals. Two humped Bactrian camel could best represent the area and majority of this furry giant domestic animal inhabit in the **gobi** region.

## CUISINE & CULTURE

Silk road, Tea road would not be possible without legendary camel caravans. At present, Mongolian provinces with camels celebrate annual Camel festival including camel race, camel polo and camel caravanning tournaments. Camel drink is well known for its medicinal quality. Oscar nominee documentary, "Tear of the Whipping camel" tells the customs, ritual and the way of life in the Gobi without exaggeration.

## ART

Vastness of Mongolia's steppe may be associated with the origin of its long song and horse headed fiddle. Mongolia's traditional wedding ceremony begins with series of long songs and traditional praises. Recent success of Mongolians at BBC Cardiff Singer of the World, biannual opera singers' contest in the UK, could possibly be rooted Mongolia's traditional and throat singing. In 2017, two Mongolian singers were shortlisted the final 20 of whom Ariunbaatar Ganbaatar became a joint winner of the Song Prize via singing 'The Steppes of Mongolia' by composer Sharav.

# TRAVEL

## EASTERN MONGOLIA

### LEISURELY

#### MUST TRY:

- Bird watching
- Self-drive jeep tour
- Horse Festival



Photo: Herders sharing funny stories on the pasture in Eastern Mongolia, an ideal pasture for herding horses. In winter, temperatures often drop below -40C at night which challenges shelterless sturdy Mongol horse on the vast steppe land.



## HISTORY

The founder of the Mongol Empire, Chinggis Khan, was born and brought up in the region and united all Mongol tribes under his leadership to lead to form the largest known land empire in history. Holy Mt Burkhan Khaldun is worshipped by all Mongols.

## LANDSCAPE & WILDLIFE

Eastern Mongolia is one of the last steppes of Central Asia where thousands of steppe gazelle roam. Siberian great taiga stretches to **Khentii** Mountain range which meets eastern Mongolian steppes to the south. Some of Mongolia's best race horses and grand wrestling champions are from the region. Undulating hills, rolling steppes where foals grow to catch up their elders' phase to the nearest water sources for watering (at least 20-30 km) while building up their stamina at young age. Thus, **Galshar** horse breed became a much valued for Mongolia's endurance horse race.

## PEOPLE & CULTURE

Inhabited by various ethnic Mongols, among them **Dariganga** people are renowned for their silversmithing. Nowadays, brilliant silver bowls, horse saddles, jewellery are well sought after items across Mongolia. Eastern frontier of this vast country is trimmed by **Khalkh** river, a name for Mongolia's dominant ethnic group too. In the region, **Ikh Burkhan**, the largest on ground Buddhist statue erected in the XIX century.

# ANNUAL NAADAM FESTIVAL

Well, **Naadam** literally means playing game. Each administrative region in Mongolia celebrates **Naadam** Festival after or before the State **Naadam** Festival (11-13 July).

Upon Mongolia's revival of independence in 1921, **Naadam** Festival became the celebration of independence. There are 512-1024 **wrestlers** in the wrestling tournament while 6 different age categories of **horse races** take place.

**Archery** tournaments consist of three styles including **Buryad**, **Uriankhai** and **Khalkh** named after by three ethnic groups respectively. Each archery tournament has differing styles of shooting, distances and accessories. Also there is knuckle bone shooting tournament takes place in which competitors shoot animal knuckle bone to hit a target whilst seated.

**Naadam** Festival commences with a colourful opening ceremony with staged performances and parade. The opening ceremony of the **Naadam** Festival is the grandeur in its sheer size and could be most attractive for international visitors. If you are unwilling to join a large crowd, district and provincial **Naadam** offer very personal experiences of meeting local wrestlers, jokey children and archery athletes.

Enjoy your **Naadam** in Mongolia.





# ARCHERY



# HORSE RACING



# WRESTLING



Photo: Horse festival tournaments: catching horse with a lasso. It requires speed, precision and regular practice.

# EXOTIC WINTER FESTIVALS IN MONGOLIA



## WINTER IN MONGOLIA

Mongolia is known for its bitterly cold winter. Yet, it is bearable when humidity is low. Crisp fresh air and crunchy sound from walking on the snow, twinkling bright stars in the peach dark skies could best describe Mongolia's winter.

## FESTIVALS

Before the end of winter Mongolians celebrate Lunar New Year and Winter Festivals. Winter adventures include **dog sleighing** with Siberian Huskies, **trekking with fury two humped Bactrian camels** after Camel Festival in the Gobi Desert or attending Ice festival on the fresh water lake **Khovsgol**. In recent years, Golden Eagle Festival near Ulaanbaatar, the capital city of Mongolia adds colour and diversity of Mongolia's winter festivals. **Cross country skiing and ice-skating** on the frozen rivers and lakes may be ultimate challenge for adventure seekers. Visitors could combine all of these festivals and adventures on a same trip. Story telling is long associated with long winter nights. Mongolia's famous **Jangar**, **Geser** are heroic epic poems inherited through oral history. Cosy warm setting in a **ger** while cow dung fires stocked in a stove make nomadic way of living in rural Mongolia even romantic in the winter.

The towering peaks of the Altai mountain range have, for centuries, mesmerised locals and visitors alike. Located in the Bayan-Olgii, the westernmost province of Mongolia, this magnificent mountain range is home to unique species of alpine animals such as Argali sheep, ibex, red deer, moose, snow leopard and golden eagle. Bordering with China and Russia, Bayan-Olgii is inhabited largely by Muslim and Kazakh communities, and houses Mongolia's highest peak, the Khuiten Peak, which stands at 4,374 m above sea-level.

Summer makes a wonderful visit to experience one of the most dramatic natural landscapes Mongolia can offer. Besides the snow-capped peaks, travellers are also greeted by glaciers, deep lush valleys carpeted with myriad of flowers, alpine lakes and hospitable eagle-hunters. Horse riding is perhaps one of the best forms of transportation to get around the region. Riding through the rugged and yet untouched terrains makes one feel like Aragorn in The Lord of the Rings.

Your journey starts from Olgii, the provincial capital, and make way towards the base of Tavan Bogd mountain range. Sleeping under the Milky Way, singing and drinking with the nomads, hiking in the mountain range and horse riding across stunning landscapes are just some of the amazing activities to whet your adventure appetite. The trip will end off with a cultural visit where you get to interact up-close and personal with the eagle-hunter and his family.



# TREKKING IN ALTAI TAVAN BOGD



## HIGHLIGHTS


Trekking in Altai Tavan Bogd National Park  
Experience the nomadic lifestyle  
Visit the Golden Eagle Hunter family  
Carefully designed itinerary  
Responsible tour operation to the places you visit  
Rock art/Petroglyphs and UNESCO World  
Heritage Site  
Potanin Glacier Base Camp and Malchin Peak


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