

# MONGOLIAN DISCOVERER

(INCLUDING LOCAL NAADAM FESTIVAL)

*Discover a rich nomadic culture and stunning vistas*

14 DAYS STARTING ULAANBAATAR  
JULY 4 - JULY 17, 2018

*with Steve Mortimer*







# MONGOLIAN DISCOVERER

## Trip Outline

Mongolia is a vast land of stark natural beauty, where green steppe meets stunning blue sky. This remote land of almost unimaginable wilderness is populated by traditional nomads who to this day still roam the great steppe lands grazing their animals and living with their families in felt gers, the traditional houses of the Mongolian people.

Genghis Khan, the great Mongolian warrior and ruler created the largest empire in the world and under his successor Ogedei Khan, the capital of the empire Kharakorum was founded. Today Animist and Buddhist traditions mix and timeworn Buddhist monasteries and stupas dot the countryside from the rolling steppe grasslands to the sands of the Gobi Desert. Ulaanbaatar, the country's modern-day capital stands in stark contrast to ancient Kharakorum. It's a mix of some of the best Mongolian and Soviet era architecture with a touch of modern capitalism thrown in, while its inhabitants provide a cultural melting pot of tradition and cuisine.

This Byroads trip in Mongolia is our most adventurous trip yet and includes the more localised and authentic Naadam festival, which avoids the throng of visitors who come during the tourist orientated Naadam a few days later.

Starting in Ulaanbaatar we first head to the Hustai National Park to see Takhis, the unusual Asian wild horses before continuing west to discover the Erdene-Zuu monastery and the ancient capital at Kharakoram. Here we experience the nomadic culture at the wonderful local Naadam festival which includes wrestling, horse racing and archery tournaments, Mongolian style. You will also sample the traditional foods and beverages of Mongolia.

Further south we visit a local nomad family, enjoying a traditional Mongolian barbecue with them before continuing on to the Ogi Temple ruins and the Flaming Cliffs at Bayanzag. Finally we come to the great sand dunes of the South Gobi Desert where we can climb dunes, take a camel ride and visit a camel herder and his family. Before flying back to Ulaanbaatar we visit dramatic canyons in beautiful Yolyn Am (Eagle Valley) at the eastern end of the Altai Mountains.

## Tour Host – Steve Mortimer



Steve Mortimer heads up Byroads Travel and will be your host on this tour. Steve has nearly 30 years in the travel industry and has travelled to well over 100 countries. He has worked with a number of well-known Australian adventure travel companies. Most recently he has been involved in researching and developing holidays in several different regions of the world including Latin America and the Middle East where he lived for two years in Egypt.

Steve likes nothing better than getting out and about with like-minded travellers, sharing his knowledge and introducing participants to some of the world's most interesting places, peoples and cultures. This will be his third trip to Mongolia and he is excited to offer this unusual and exciting destination.

With our itinerary you can be confident you'll visit all the 'must see' attractions – and much more, however there are some days when you'll have time to wander and make some of your own discoveries. Throughout the tour local guides are employed to provide a wealth of background information and share their extensive local knowledge.



# ITINERARY STARTS IN ULAANBAATAR

**WED 4 JUL: ULAANBAATAR** – Upon arrival at Ulaanbaatar Airport you are met and transferred to your hotel. Today is simply an arrival day and we will plan to meet up in the evening for a briefing and dinner. Pre-tour accommodation is available if needed (see back page for details). (D)

**THU 5 JUL: ULAANBAATAR** – We start the day with a trip to Gandan Monastery, visit the National Museum of Mongolian History and later the Central Museum of Mongolian Dinosaurs. On our city tour we will visit the city's focal point; Chinggis Square – and take in panoramic views of the city from Zaisan Hill. In the early evening enjoy a concert of National Folklore. (BL)

**FRI 6 JUL: HUSTAI NATIONAL PARK** – West of Ulaanbaatar is the Hustai National Park known for its red deer and the Takhi or Asiatic Wildhorse. We also visit the Ungut stone complex with its many statues and tombs from the 6-8<sup>th</sup> centuries. There's time to hike and photograph wildlife and the beautiful landscape and tonight is our first night in a ger tourist camp. (BLD)

**SAT 7 JUL: ERDENEZUU & KHARKHORIN** – Today we drive to the town of Kharkhorin to explore the ruins of nearby Kharakorum, the 13<sup>th</sup> century Mongol capital. We visit Erdene Zu the oldest monastery with its 108 stupas built in 1586 and later visit the Karakorum museum. (BLD)

**SUN 8 JUL: LOCAL NAADAM FESTIVAL - KHARKHORIN** – Today is the inauguration ceremony of Naadam, opened by the governor of the town. There will be Mongolian wrestling, horse racing and archery tournaments. (BLD)

**MON 9 JUL: LOCAL NAADAM FESTIVAL & TUVHUN MONASTERY** – Naadam festival continues today. Take the opportunity to witness more of the games and to try the traditional foods and beverages of the Mongolian countryside. Later walk to the lovely Tuvhun Monastery. It was built in 1654 by Bogd Gegeen Zanabazar, creator of the Mongolian Soyombo script. (BLD)

**TUE 10 JUL: ORKHON WATERFALL & NOMADIC FAMILY VISIT** – We continue on to the Orkhon waterfall. Here scenery changes from wide open valleys to forested mountains. A highlight is a visit to a local nomadic family where you have an opportunity to experience their way of life, their culture and traditions. Lunch is a real authentic Mongolian barbecue, prepared in the traditional style with hot stones. Tonight our Ger Camp is located in the Orkhon Valley. (BLD)

**WED 11 JUL: ONGI TEMPLE RUINS** – After breakfast, we drive to the Ongi Temple ruins once home to over a thousand monks. This ruin of the Bari Yonzon Hamba Monastery lies on the bank of the Ongi river and Ongi Temple, once one of the biggest in Mongolia was largely destroyed during the Stalinist era of the 1930's. Later we visit the Buddhist Meditation Cave. (BLD)

**THU 12 JUL: BAYANZAG – LAND OF THE DINOSAURS** – It was at Bayanzag (Flaming Cliffs) the first nest of dinosaur eggs were discovered in 1922. Dinosaurs roamed this area 60 million years ago. Take a stroll where dinosaurs once roamed and visit Havtsgait Valley, site of ancient rock drawings left by early Gobi settlers. And at sunset, take photos of the flaming cliffs and view a documentary on this wonderful place. (BLD)

**FRI 13 & SAT 14 JUL: GOBI DESERT, DUNES & CAMEL RIDE** – Today we drive on dirt roads to the Khongor sand dunes which we climb for amazing panoramic views. These are Mongolia's largest sand dunes (up to 300m), The sand dunes change colour with each hour of the day, from yellow to silver to rose-colour. Next day we visit a camel herdsman and his family to experience their lifestyle, culture and traditions. Later you will take an hour camel ride and explore the Uujim valley. Our camel guide will lead you safely through the dunes. (BLD)

**SUN 15 JUL: YOLYN AM (EAGLE VALLEY)** – A 4 hour drive brings us to the picturesque Eagle Valley, surrounded by sheer rock walls that have formed impressive canyons. Enjoy an easy hike and photograph the beautiful landscape and wildlife. We visit the Gobi museum situated in the Gobi Gurvan Saikhan National Park that encompasses the "Three Beauties" peaks and are the most easterly points of the Altai Mountains. (BLD)

**MON 16 JUL: FLY BACK TO ULAANBAATAR** – Today we fly back to Ulaanbaatar where the remainder of the day is free to take in some further sightseeing or to perhaps buy some traditional souvenirs in the market. In the evening we will have a farewell dinner. (BLD)

**TUE 17 JUL: ULAANBAATAR** – Your Byroads tour of Mongolia ends today after breakfast. Taxis can be easily arranged at the hotel to the airport or we can arrange a transfer for you. Extra nights are also available (see back page for details). (B)





## Prices & Inclusions

### 14 Day Mongolian Discovery

**Price in US Dollars: USD 3475 (per person twin-share)**

**Single Supplement: USD625**

**Price includes:** Steve Mortimer as Tour Escort, local tour leader, local guides, arrival transfer, all transportation, 13 nights accommodation, most meals as indicated.

**Not Included:** Visa fees, travel insurance (compulsory), international flights, additional meals, drinks, departure transfer, optional tours, spending of a personal nature, laundry and tips.

**Transportation:** Mainly Mitsubishi Delica 4WD AC vehicles. Max 4 guests per vehicle. Flight South Gobi to Ulaanbaatar.

**Accommodation:** In Mongolia hotels are found mainly in Ulaanbaatar where we stay in a comfortable, modern hotel in the centre of the city. Out in the countryside accommodation for visitors is provided in Ger Tourist Camps. These Gers (traditional felt tents) are very comfortable and can accommodate between 2 and 4 people. Amenities although shared, are both clean and modern. Meals are taken in a common dining ger or in a restaurant located in the camp.



Premium Hotel, Ulaanbaatar



Munkhtenger Ger Tourist Camp



Secret of Ongdi Ger Tourist Camp



Typical Interior of a Mongolian Ger



Typical Ger Camp Restaurant



Mitsubishi Delica 4x4 - 4 Guests

**Food and drink:** Nearly all meals are included on this tour. It is how things are done in Mongolia, particularly at the Ger camps. You can be sure of variety with plenty of local food on offer. Bottled water, soft drinks and alcohol are available.

**Group size:** Maximum 16

**Additional Expenses:** Almost all of your meals are included so you need budget very little for food. You should budget for any personal shopping you may wish to do and for additional drinks. Please also allow extra funds to tip your local tour leader, driver, local guides and porters (full details will be provided in the pre-trip Field Guide).

**Bookings:** Travel on Q (Sydney) is the sole booking agent for this tour. Please register your interest ASAP in order to secure your place and note there are a limited number of single rooms and gers available, particularly in the Ger camps. A non-refundable deposit of AUD 750 per person is required, to secure your place, with final payment due 60 days prior to tour commencement.

**Travel on Q** (Carole Grassby and Tina Briggs)

Level 1/128 Crown Street

Darlinghurst Sydney NSW 2010

Tel: (02) 9357 6800 Email: [travel@travelongq.com.au](mailto:travel@travelongq.com.au)

Website: [www.travelongq.com.au](http://www.travelongq.com.au)

**Currency:** Due to the volatility of global currencies the tour price has been quoted in US Dollars (USD) however you will pay for your tour in Australian dollars based on the buying rate set by Westpac Banking Corporation on the due date of your final balance.

**Flights & Transfers:** Most flights to Ulaanbaatar go via Beijing including China Southern and Air China. There are regular flights and you can enjoy a stopover on route if you wish. There are other alternatives via Hong Kong and Seoul. An arrival transfer is included; however the departure transfer is not and can be arranged on request. Travel on Q will be able to assist you with your flights and advise you on your best options.

**Extra nights in Ulaanbaatar:** Extra nights can be booked pre and post tour but you must advise Travel on Q well in advance to ensure availability.

**Visas:** Australians and most other nationalities require a visa for Mongolia and this must be obtained prior to arrival. Travel on Q will be able to assist you.

**Documentation:** Upon receipt of your final payment, a comprehensive field guide will be mailed to you and you will be sent the relevant tour and accommodation vouchers prior to departure.

**What next?** Contact Travel on Q to discuss your travel plans and to make your booking. Further information is also available at [www.byroads.com.au](http://www.byroads.com.au).



[www.byroads.com.au](http://www.byroads.com.au)



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