Gobi, Heartland & Altai including Eagle Festival
September 2018

WITH

PANORAMIC JOURNEYS
MONGOLIA

Mongolia: there simply is nowhere quite like it. The birth place of the great Khan is largely the same now as it was then and the country is wonderfully diverse in terms of landscape. The magisterial Western Altai gives way to the fertile central Heartland, whilst the exquisite forested North fades into the endless sea of green steppe to the East. The amazing arid southern Gobi is the fifth distinct eco-region. Still largely undiscovered there is seemingly endless uninhabited wilderness around every mountain and in every valley.

The people of Mongolia are wonderfully adapted to their climate. Temperatures can differ by as much as 80°C between summer and winter. The Mongolian ger is perfectly designed to withstand such extremes as well as being portable to fit the nomadic way of life almost half of the population lead. Such a demanding climate leads the people of Mongolia to exhibit magical hospitality; only here does a traveller receive an unreserved welcome at every turn. No description of Mongolia is complete without reference to the ingrained equine culture present throughout the nation. The almost spiritual relationship between man and horse is captivating to all who visit and it remains central to Mongolian identity.

PANORAMIC JOURNEYS MONGOLIA

Panoramic Journeys was conceived in Mongolia, a country which is synonymous with the panoramic view of rugged mountains, endless forests and vast open steppe. As a business we have grown up in Mongolia: it is our home and always will be. Our drivers and guides are old friends and they too care passionately about the experience we deliver in Mongolia. We work with them to constantly improve and expand what we can achieve as a community in Mongolia at the same time as protecting the places we know and love.
The Eagle Festival in Sagsai, in the Altai mountains, is the culmination of this unforgettable journey. Visit three remarkable regions of Mongolia; the vast Gobi desert, the rolling steppe of the central heart of Mongolia and the rugged mountains of Bayan Ulgii district in Western Mongolia. Spend time exploring gorges in the desert and riding camels alongside towering sand dunes; learn about centuries of nomadic culture as you visit herding families and ancient temples in central Mongolia, and witness the ancient practice of eagle hunting at the annual Eagle Festival in Sagsai.

This trip will introduce you to rich Mongolian culture and nomadic hospitality, as you stay alongside nomadic families in both central and western Mongolia. For photographers of all levels, it is a trip of a lifetime. The crisp air and light in September is incredible, and the vistas with snow capped mountains, the warm glow of the desert and golden steppe make perfect backdrops.
## Itinerary Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>1-Sep</td>
<td>Arrive Ulaanbaatar and transfer to hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>2-Sep</td>
<td>Ulaanbaatar city tour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>3-Sep</td>
<td>Fly to Dalanzadgad, South Gobi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tue</td>
<td>4-Sep</td>
<td>Visit Yolyn Am gorge and drive to Khongorin Els</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>5-Sep</td>
<td>Day at Khongorin Els, the 'Singing Dunes'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu</td>
<td>6-Sep</td>
<td>Visit a desert hermitage and hillside petroglyphs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>7-Sep</td>
<td>‘Flaming Cliffs’ of Bayanzag &amp; Ongiin monastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>8-Sep</td>
<td>Drive to Orkhon valley. Horse riding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>9-Sep</td>
<td>Kharkhorin &amp; Erdene Zuu monastery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>10-Sep</td>
<td>Visit Khogno Khan &amp; continue to Khustai family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tue</td>
<td>11-Sep</td>
<td>See Takhi horses at Khustai Nuruu National Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>12-Sep</td>
<td>Back to Ulaanbaatar. Afternoon at leisure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thu</td>
<td>13-Sep</td>
<td>Fly to Ulgii on to Sagsai in Western Mongolia</td>
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<td>Fri</td>
<td>14-Sep</td>
<td>Eagle Training with a hunter, Sagsai</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>15-Sep</td>
<td>Eagle Festival Sagsai with optional riding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>16-Sep</td>
<td>Eagle Festival Sagsai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>17-Sep</td>
<td>Fly to Ulaanbaatar. Enjoy a traditional concert</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tue</td>
<td>18-Sep</td>
<td>Visit Chinggis Monument &amp; Terelj National Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>19-Sep</td>
<td>Depart</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Start
01 Sep 2018

### Duration
19 Days

### Group Size
3 to 8

### Cost
$ pp
USD 6,595
**ARRIVE ULAANBAATAR**

Arrive in Ulaanbaatar, where you will be met and transferred to your hotel. At 2pm, if you are not too tired from your long flight, you may like to meet in reception for a walk across the Sukhbaatar Square to visit the excellent Museum of National History where you can gain an understanding of Mongolia’s remarkable past - a worthwhile introduction to your stay in Mongolia.

If you decide instead to rest this afternoon, meet in reception at 7pm where we will take you to dine in one of our favourite restaurants and run through the plan tomorrow and answer any questions.

**Travel Details** – 30-50 minutes, airport to hotel  
**Accommodation** – King/Twin room, Tuushin Hotel  
**Includes** – Dinner

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**ULAANBAATAR CITY TOUR**

This morning visit Gandantegchinlen Khiid, (Gandan for short) the largest and most important working monastery in Mongolia. The main attraction is the magnificent Migjid Janraisig Temple which houses a 25m high, 20 ton gilded statue. There are ceremonies every morning and 150 monks in residence.

From Gandan visit Naraan Tuul, the Central Market, or Black Market, 4km from the centre of town. It’s a great place to enjoy the hustle and bustle of Mongolian traders, pick up some riding boots and almost everything you might need for life on the steppe, from gers to items used by shamans to meat and even pets. Be very vigilant at all times, as pickpockets target tourists and leave all valuables in the hotel. If there is time take a stroll up to Zaisan memorial, which offers a spectacular panoramic view of the Mongolian capital.

**Travel Details** – no long drives today  
**Accommodation** – King/Twin room, Tuushin Hotel  
**Includes** – Breakfast, lunch, dinner
MONDAY 3RD SEPTEMBER 
DAY 3

ULAANBAATAR – DALANZADGAD

An early morning transfer to the airport for the short flight to the capital of South Gobi province, Dalanzadgad. Travel across the desert to your first ger camp. A relatively relaxed day today to ease you into the journey, you will visit some nearby nomadic families for your first experience of Mongolian hospitality. Return to camp to try your hand at archery, one of Mongolia’s national sports and perhaps learn to play traditional ankle bone games.

After dinner, you will have your first night sleeping in a "ger" (the traditional Mongolian felt tents), the design of which has changed little over the centuries.

Travel Details – 30-45 mins drive hotel to airport, 1.5hr flight to Dalanzadgad (Hunnu Air ULN-DLZ 06:30-07:50), drive 40km / 1 hour
Accommodation – Twin ger, Ger camp
Includes – Breakfast, lunch, dinner
Rise early to visit Yolyn Am also known as Lammergeyer Gorge. If you are lucky, you may see argali sheep and ibex picking their way across sheer cliffs and even a lammergeyer soaring above looking for carrion. With its high walls, it will feel cooler as you travel deeper into the canyon and as it narrows, you may see ice that hasn’t melted yet from the winter.

Continue from Yolyn Am through the mountains to the towering dunes of Khongor; also known as the Singing Dunes. It is a long drive today, but you’ll stop often, enjoying a picnic lunch and visiting nomads along the way. Despite first impressions, the Gobi is full of bird and wildlife, look out for flocks of grouse, herds of antelope, and all kinds of birds of prey. Arrive at your ger camp in the early evening and settle in, perhaps enjoy a sundowner looking out over the highest dunes in Mongolia.

**Travel Details** – 210km / 6 to 7 hours  
**Accommodation** – Twin ger, Ger camp  
**Includes** – Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Head out early in the morning, preferably at dawn if it is hot to head to the dunes to see them close up. For the energetic, scramble to the top of the dunes for an awe inspiring view across the desert before sliding back down to hear the ‘singing’ vibrating sound that they are famous for.

Visit a camel breeder’s family where you can enjoy traditional nomadic hospitality in their ger, learning more about the life of camel breeders and the camels themselves before heading off for a Bactrian camel trek across the desert landscape.

**Travel Details** – No long drives today  
**Accommodation** – Twin ger, Ger camp  
**Includes** – Breakfast, lunch, dinner
**GANDANCHOIMZADLIIN MONASTERY**

Today head across the vast desert plains to a new small monastery, Gandanchoimzadlin Khiid, in Baruun Saikhan mountain. The monastery was built by a local lama, Buyn, in dedication to his uncle who meditated and chanted in this secret, holy place during the Communist purges.

Approximately 40km south of the monastery, lies Khavtsgait mountain. A short scramble up rather steep scree slope will take you to a series of petroglyphs with a view across the desert where you will be able to see the small ravines left from the melt water streams that develop in the rains of the summer.

From Gandamchoimzadliin Khiid drive to a local ger camp, where you will stay overnight. Keep your eyes wide open and you may spot a number of birds of prey, variety of rodents or even a steppe fox.

**Travel Details** – 200km / 6-7 hours  
**Accommodation** – Twin ger, Ger camp  
**Includes** – Breakfast, lunch, dinner

**BAYANZAG "FLAMING CLIFFS" & ONGIIN KHIID**

This morning, an early start to head across the vast desert plains to Bayanzag - known as the 'Flaming Cliffs' - for a walk in this stunning location. This historical site is most famous for the discoveries of dinosaur bones, fossils and eggs. Fossils are still being discovered in this region, so keep your eyes peeled, especially where any sandstone has recently fallen away.

From Bayanzag, continue northwards into the central Mongolian Heartland. Tonight you will stay next to Ongiin Khiid (monastery). Take a look around the ruined monastery site including the small ger museum and the rebuilt temple.

There is a spring which is said to have healing properties. You might like to relax with a paddle in the wide river which runs through the complex or climb one of the surrounding hills to get a good view of the whole area.

**Travel Details** – 240km / 6 hours  
**Accommodation** – Twin ger, Ger camp  
**Includes** – Breakfast, lunch, dinner
SATURDAY 8TH SEPTEMBER
DAY 8

ORKHON VALLEY

Today travel north to the verdant Orkhon Valley to Ursa Major Geocamp with beautiful views of the Orkhon Valley.

Relax at the camp, take a walk or ride this afternoon in this lovely location.

No electricity or running water is available at the lodge to minimize its impact on the environment. Guests are provided with towels perfumed with essential oils twice a day for cleansing. A screen in each yurt provides a private space in which there is a small reserve of water for washing. The lodge also has a telescope for star gazing in the evenings.

Travel Details – 250km / 7 hours
Accommodation – Twin Ger, Ursa Major Geocamp
Includes – Breakfast, lunch, dinner

SUNDAY 9TH SEPTEMBER
DAY 9

KHARKHORIN & ERDENE ZUU KHIID

This morning drive to the old Mongolian capital city of Kharkhorin. Arrive at Erdene Zuu Monastery mid morning to hear the monks chanting in the beautifully decorated Tibetan Style temple. Visit the informative local museum and stop for a coffee (and WIFI) in the café. Visit the quirky and aptly named, ‘Fertility Stone’ and the Monument of the Three Empires, which looks out over the stunning Orkhon Valley and is a sacred high point where the skulls of beloved stallions are respectfully placed to be nearer Tengri - the sky God.

Travel Details – 100km / 1.5 hours
Accommodation – Twin Ger, Ger Camp or local hotel
Includes – Breakfast, lunch, dinner
**MONDAY 10TH SEPTEMBER**
**DAY 10**

**UVGUN KHIID & KHOGNO KHAAN**

Continue north eastwards, past an area of dunes known as Bayangobi (‘Rich Gobi’) to Khogno Khaan mountain to visit the small restored monastery complex of Uvgun Khiid. Enjoy a walk around the monastery, perhaps accompanied by the remarkable woman who runs the temple and who’s grandmother set up the rebuilding of the temple. The original temple, was destroyed during the Stalinist purges of the 1930s. Depending on fitness, there will be an option of taking an hours hike and scramble into the mountains to explore the ruins of the first Uvgun Monastery. The view from the top of the mountain across the plains is spectacular.

Tonight you will stay in our Panoramic Journeys gers next to our nomadic friends located close to Khustai National Park. The facilities are comfortable but basic. The gers are equipped with beds and washbasin, but washing facilities will be limited to a bowl of water and the family long drop toilet. The family will welcome you into their home and lives.

**Travel Details** – 200km / 3-4 hours  
**Accommodation** – Shared ger, PJ family stay  
**Includes** – Breakfast, lunch, dinner

**TUESDAY 11TH SEPTEMBER**
**DAY 11**

**KHUSTAI NURUU NATIONAL PARK**

Rise early to take a drive into Khustai Nuruu Nature Reserve to search for the wild Przewalski’s Horses. These Takhi horses were once native to Mongolia and almost became extinct earlier this century.

Through the efforts of several organisations, their successful reintroduction means these magnificent wild horses now roam the steppes once again. There is a (rather outdated) film at the Project Information Centre which will give you more of an understanding about these animals. You may also spot deer, ibex, marmots - and if you're lucky, a wolf!

Head back to spend some more time with your hosts and enjoy some down time. If you want to get stuck in to nomadic life, learn how to prepare traditional Mongolian food for tonight's dinner, help with the milking, fuel or water collection or herding the animals in for the night.

**Travel Details** – No long drives today  
**Accommodation** – Shared ger, PJ family stay  
**Includes** – Breakfast, lunch, dinner
ULANBAATAR

Say farewell to your hosts and continue back to Ulaanbaatar for lunch. This afternoon, time at leisure to either settle into your hotel and prepare for the next section of your journey, shop for souvenirs or explore UB on your own. Your guide will be on hand to take you to the State Department Store and our favourite fair trade artisan craft shop - Mary & Martha. You may also want to visit one of the numerous high quality cashmere shops. Alternatively if shopping is not for you, we can point you in the direction of the Zanabazar Fine Arts Museum, or Choijin Lama Temple Museum, alternatively one of Ulaanbaatar’s less visited quirky museums such as the Museum of Political Persecution, or the Intellectual Museum (puzzle) museum.

Meet back in reception to go for dinner in one of UB’s many international restaurants. The choice may surprise you – this year, UB got it’s first Peruvian restaurant!!

FLY TO ULGII, WESTERN MONGOLIA

Today you head off to the west! It is a 3 hour flight and you will need to put your clocks back an hour. Arrive in Ulgii where you’ll be taken for breakfast in one of Ulgii’s slightly kitsch restaurants, and if there’s time, have a look around the small museum and perhaps visit the local mosque.

A walk in the local market will give you a real flavour of the region and its people. Stock up on any snacks and drinks at the local supermarket before driving west to tonight’s rustic PJ camp in Sagsai, about an hour’s drive west of Ulgii. The facilities are comfortable but basic - the gers are equipped with beds and a stove, but washing facilities will be limited to a bowl of water and the toilet is a hole in the ground.

Travel Details – 120km / 2 hours
Accommodation – King/Twin room, Tuushin Hotel
Includes – Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Travel Details – 30-45 mins hotel to airport, 3 hour flight to Ulgii (Hunnu Air ULN-ULG 06:20-08:30),
Accommodation – Shared ger, Wilderness Camp
Includes – Breakfast, lunch, dinner
FRIDAY 14TH SEPTEMBER
DAY 14

EAGLE HANDLING AND TRAINING

Today will be spent with our Kazakh eagle hunting friends, learning about their way of life, their eagles and about hunting. The hunters will be making their final preparations for the festival tomorrow. Decide who you might like to back in the festivities of the next two days and begin to really immerse yourself in the ways of the west.

Perhaps this evening (or on one of the following days) you will enjoy a Kazakh dinner called 'Beshparmak' (meaning five fingers because one uses five fingers to eat it).

SATURDAY 15TH SEPTEMBER
DAY 15

SAGSAI EAGLE FESTIVAL DAY 1

Today marks the beginning of the well celebrated Eagle Festival of Sagsai, a two day festival which shows off the skills of eagle and hunter/trainer. If you have riding experience, let us know in advance if you would like to join some of the hunters as they ride, eagles in hand, to the festival site – an amazing and unforgettable experience!

Dressed in full regalia and mounted on groomed and decorated horses, the eagle hunters compete for various awards including 'Best Eagle at Hunting Prey'. Other 'manly' sporting activities you'll watch include horse racing, camel racing, and the highly entertaining 'Bushkashi' - goat skin tug-o-war on horseback (be ready to dive out of the way!). After the festivities head back to your ger alongside the eagle hunter family, and hopefully on one of the nights enjoy a traditional performance from local musicians.

Travel Details  – No long drives today
Accommodation  – Shared ger, Wilderness Camp
Includes – Breakfast, lunch, dinner
SAGSAI EAGLE FESTIVAL DAY 2

Drive to the site for today’s events, which, altogether, play a major role in preserving traditional Kazakh culture. Being a proficient eagle hunter takes years to achieve – by apprenticing with a master hunter. The ultimate goal is the ability to catch foxes for their pelts which protect against the bitter winters. It takes a very strong, fit and well cared for bird to catch a wild animal of this size.

Many hunters followed in their father’s footsteps and were taken to the mountains at a young age to begin training. Alongside the eagle hunters, there are opportunities to purchase local handicrafts, Kazakh tents and other traditional and locally made items.

Travel Details – No long drives today
**Accommodation** – Shared ger, Wilderness Camp
**Includes** – Breakfast, lunch, dinner

ULGII – ULAANBAATAR – CONCERT

Depart Ulgii for Ulaanbaatar. You will have a packed lunch for the flight, which stops to refuel part way. Back in UB, meet again in the hotel reception at 4.30pm to go to a concert of traditional Mongolian music and dance including throat singing, followed by dinner.

Travel Details – 3 hours flight to Ulaanbaatar (Hunnu Air ULG-ULN 0900/1350), 30-45 mins airport to hotel
**Accommodation** – King/Twin room, Tuushin Hotel
**Includes** – Breakfast, lunch, dinner
CHINGGIS MONUMENT

Today, head east out of the city to visit the giant Chinggis Khan Equestrian Monument at Tsonjin Boldog. At the base of the statue, you can try on traditional Mongolian costumes, tour the numerous portraits of the Khan lineage and climb to the horse’s head for a panoramic view over the surrounding landscape towards Chinggis' birth place.

Terelj National Park lies to the west and north of the monument. It has been rather spoilt by uncontrolled building, but looking past the rows of ger camps, the natural landscapes are still spectacular and with the pine and larch forests, at the very southern edge of the Siberian Taiga forest, the park is different from the steppe and desert landscapes you have seen throughout the trip. Head into the park for a walk amongst the weird and wonderful rock formations to a small monastery.

Back in Ulaanbaatar, enjoy a farewell dinner at another of our favourite restaurants in the city.

Travel Details – 180km / 3-4 hours, full day trip out
Accommodation – King/Twin room, Tuushin Hotel
Includes – Breakfast, lunch, dinner

DEPART ULAANBAATAR

Be met by your guide and driver in the hotel reception for transfer to the airport approximately 3 to 3.5hrs before your international flight home.

Travel Details – 45 mins hotel – airport
Accommodation – Check out is at 10am
Includes – Breakfast
ULAANBAATAR

Ulaanbaatar, meaning 'Red Hero', is the capital city of Mongolia. Situated on the Tuul River, it is a mixture of traditional and modern. The ornate flowing eaves of the monastery temples stand beside communist planned courtyards and modern skyscrapers. UB, as the capital is affectionately known, also has some excellent museums, galleries, theatres, bars and restaurants.

Gandantegchilen Khiid (Gandan for short) is the largest and most important monastery in Mongolia. The monastery's main attraction is the magnificent white Migjid Janraisig Temple which houses a 25m high, 20 ton guilded statue. It is a working monastery with ceremonies every morning and 150 monks in residence.

Impressive and expansive, Chinggis Khaan Square in the heart of the city, has recently been renamed to honour the nations creator. Originally this square was named 'Sükhaatar' after the hero of the revolution "Damdin Sükhaatar", who declared Mongolia’s final independence from the Chinese. His statue takes centre stage in front of the Parliament building and looking south towards Peace Avenue.
ULAANBAATAR

The **National History Museum**, renovated in 1998, is a comprehensive and well-laid out showcase of key points in Mongolia's history. Journey through key facts and artefacts from the Bronze age, the Mongol Empire of Genghis Khaan, to the communist Russian years and the democratic revolution of the early 1990s. Learn about nomadic pastoralism of the steppes and the different ethnic groups of Mongolia.

**Naraan Tuul**, or the Black Market, as it is commonly known (although not illegal) - is a giant flea market 4km from the centre of town. It's a great place to enjoy the hustle and bustle of Mongolian traders, pick up some riding boots or material for getting a *deel* tailor-made.

**Cashmere:** Mongolia produces about 3,000 tons of cashmere per year, about 21% of the world market. Many quality cashmere products can be found at low prices. The Gobi company has a store on Peace Avenue and also a factory shop on the outskirts of town. Other central shops include Elite, Goyo - and the State Department Store has a range of cashmere labels all under one roof.
The Gobi Desert, one of the world's great deserts, covers much of the southern part of Mongolia. Unlike the Sahara there are few sand dunes in the Gobi; you'll find large barren expenses of gravel plains and rocky outcrops. The climate here is extreme. Temperatures reach +40°C in summer, and -40°C in winter. Precipitation averages less than 100 mm per year, while some areas only get rain once every two or three years. Dalanzadgad is the capital of Omnogov (South Gobi) this town is a speck of a civilisation in the desert, sitting in the shadow of Gurvan Saikhan Nuruu National Park. Most Gobi trips will fly in to the Gurvan Saikhan Airport here.
GOBI DESERT - SOUTH GOBI

Yolyn Am, means "Lammergeyer's mouth" after the huge raptors that inhabit this deep ravine in the Gurvan Saikhan Mountains. Even in the heat of the summer months, one can find ice in shaded corners of this valley. The rare and shy snow leopard still prowls these mountains, though you are more likely to see ibex tiptoeing their way across the sheer rock faces above. Meanwhile, hordes of Pallas's Pikas scamper around at ground level.
**KHONGORYN ELS**

Khongoryn Els are some of the largest sand dunes in Mongolia, 100 kilometres long and up to 300 metres high. Also known as the Duut Mankhan (Singing Dunes – from the sound they make when the sand is moved by the wind or as it collapses in small avalanches), the largest dunes are at the north-western corner of the range. A climb to the top gives amazing views across the surrounding desert. This area is inhabited by traditional camel herders and is a great place to learn about desert culture and ride the magnificent Bactrian camel.
“FLAMING CLIFFS” OF BAYANZAG

Bayanzag is one of the most famous palaeontological sites in the world. Roy Chapman Andrews' team discovered the world's first nest of dinosaur eggs here in 1922 and unearthed over 100 dinosaurs. Chapman Andrews nicknamed the area "The Flaming Cliffs" after the red sandstone buttes and cliffs that glow at sunset - accentuating the surreally beautiful and dramatic features of the valley of the dinosaurs.
ONGIIN KHIID

The ruined monastery of Ongiin Khiid lies in two halves on the banks of the Ongiin river. It was destroyed by the communist purges of the 1930s and is being restored by a number of monks. It is an amazing site and stretches across the valley in the mountainous area around the river.
Kharkhorin, formerly known as Karakorum, was once the capital of the Mongol empire in the 13th century. Artisans from all across the empire were brought here to embellish the city. After the move to Beijing, and the fall of the empire, Karakorum was abandoned and then destroyed by vengeful Manchurian soldiers in 1388. The remains of Kharkhorin were used to help build Erdene Zuu (Hundred Treasures), the first Buddhist monastery, in the 16th century. 108 stupas are spaced evenly along the walls which enclose an area of 1,600 square metres and several temples which escaped the communist purges of the 1930's.

Kharkhorin's museum is small, but highly impressive – probably the country's best museum outside Ulaanbaatar. Everything is beautifully designed and well displayed. The exhibits include dozens of artefacts dating from the 13th and 14th centuries which were recovered from the immediate area, plus others that were found from archaeological sites in other parts of the aimag, including prehistoric stone tools. You'll see pottery, bronzes, coins, religious statues and stone inscriptions. There's also a half-excavated kiln sunk into the museum floor. Perhaps most interesting is the scale model of ancient Karakorum, which aims to represent the city as it may have looked in the 1250s, and is based on descriptions written by the missionary William of Rubruck.
ORKHON VALLEY CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

This UNESCO World Heritage site covers 121,967 hectares encompassing an extensive area of pastureland on both banks of the Orkhon River and includes numerous archaeological remains dating back to the 6th century and Kharkhorin, the 13th century capital of Chinggis Khan’s Empire. For centuries, it was home to major political, trade, cultural and religious activities of successive nomadic empires and served as a crossroads for civilisations, linking east and west across the vast Eurasian lands. The remains in the site reflect the importance of the valley in the history of central Asia.
The red rocky mountain of Khogno Khaan (1967m) rising from the steppe is part of a 46,500 hectare natural reserve. Nestled in the foothills is the small monastery complex of Uvgun Khiid - the current monastery down on the valley floor was reopened in 1992, 70 years after the purges which had destroyed the previous buildings.

The ruins of the older Uvgun monastery, destroyed by the western Oirat Mongols in the 17th century, are hidden in one of its valleys in the southern slope. The buildings are located in a serene bowl shaped valley and a walk up the steep valley sides offers grand views across the plains.
Established in 1993, Khustai National Park is most famous for being home to Mongolia's wild horse - the takhi, or Przewalski’s, once extinct in Mongolia but reintroduced by a pioneering scheme that now sees the number of wild horses in their 100s.

Just 100 km from Ulaanbaatar, the park is also home to a diverse array of animals including; Red deer, Mongolian gazelle, Wild boar, Wild sheep, Ibex, Mongolian marmots, Grey wolves, Lynx, Pallas’ cat, Red fox, Corsac fox and Eurasian badger, Golden Eagles and Black Storks.
The capital of the westernmost aimag, Ulgii is a predominantly Kazakh city that happens to be in Mongolia. Kazakh influence is widespread - from street signs, religion, clothes and food, and gives the town its special atmosphere. Kazakh culture is quite different from Mongolian. They generally adhere rather loosely to Sunni Islam, but religion is not a major force as they are nomads. Kazakh gers are taller, wider and more richly decorated than the Mongolian version.

The province of Bayan-Ulgii is rich in archaeological remains, as a reminder of the Bronze Ages and the time of the Huns and Turkic invasions.
EAGLE FESTIVAL

The Eagle Festival showcases the art of hunting with eagles practiced by the Kazakh inhabitants of this village in Western Mongolia. Dark, rocky mountainous terrain forms the backdrop to the festivities which incorporate an opening ceremony, parade, cultural exhibitions, demonstrations and handcrafts in the centre of town followed by sporting activities and competitions out towards the mountains. Sagsai is the smaller of the two festivals which are held during September and October months.
EAGLE HUNTING

Hunting with eagles is a traditional form of falconry found throughout the Eurasian steppe and is practiced by Kazakh and Kyrgyz people. These Turkic people are most famously known for their skilful training with golden eagles, but they have also been known to train goshawks and falcons as well. Dark, rocky mountainous terrain forms the perfect landscape for camouflaged prey, primarily the Corsac and Red Fox and various breeds of hare. Hunting mainly takes place in the winter when the prey can be spotted easier against the snow and pelts are thick for supplying winter clothing for the Kazakh’s.
This 40 metre tall statue stands on top of the Chinggis Khaan Statue Complex, a visitor centre and museum on the bank of the Tuul River where, according to legend, Great Khan found a gold whip. The statue symbolically points east, towards his birthplace. Visitors are able to walk through the chest and neck of the horse to get a panoramic view of the river.
The Gorkhi-Terelj National Park covers an area of 2,864 square kilometres. The Gorkhi Mountains are covered with thick forests rich in wildlife and there are fascinating rock formations from the Mesozoic era. The sparkling waters of mountain rivers - frozen solid over winter months - are the reason why the locals call this place “the museum of natural wealth".
Accommodation in Mongolia
TUUSHIN HOTEL, ULAANBAATAR

This good value 4-star hotel, is situated in a great location, right in the centre of the capital, just off the Chinggis Khaan Square. All rooms have an en-suite bathroom and wifi is available throughout the hotel. The breakfasts are good and varied and there are plenty of restaurants nearby if you are having a day at leisure in the city. The hotel’s restaurants serve both local and international food. There is also an on site day spa and 24hr fitness centre.

For families, the hotel offers a good value, family suite with 2 bedrooms.
GER CAMPS

A ger camp is a ‘countryside hotel’ with each single, couple or family in their own comfortable, stove lit, traditional ger. Ger camps have fixed western style bathroom facilities, and hot showers are available at certain times of the day. There will normally be a restaurant in a separate building and most ger camps can cater for a range of diets. Facilities between camps vary widely and in recent years some ger camps have upgraded with ‘ensuite’ gers whilst others have gone for eco hot steamed towels instead of showers. We try to choose smaller, more personal camps but this will depend on where you are in the country and the time of year you travel.
PJ GER FAMILY STAYS

Through our PJ ger family stays, we work with host families who act as caretakers of our PJ guest gers, meaning that you can stay alongside nomads, giving the opportunity for cultural exchange, whilst having your own space in a private ger with a comfortable bed. You will still experience the nomadic life, sharing meals with the family, and can join in with as much or as little as you like, helping with daily tasks such as milking, collecting fuel and water to heat for a hot shower. Try your hand at fermenting mare’s milk into airag or cooking traditional treats. Or simply relax in a beautiful spot.

Facilities are basic, with a long drop or sit-on eco toilet housed in a tent or outhouse and a camping hand-pump shower tent as well as bowls of hot water for washing.
Many people want to travel responsibly and sustainably. By making this journey, you are supporting responsible, sustainable tourism in action! Through our PJ ger family stays, we have provided a regular source of income to families in central and eastern Mongolia over the last 9 years. By paying families to be caretakers of our PJ guest gers, travellers can stay alongside nomads, giving the opportunity for cultural exchange, whilst giving both parties their own space! PJ gives families guidance on how to host foreign travellers and support with putting in any extra infrastructure, such as creating a long drop toilet. With support and guidance from PJ, the families learn how to manage the homestay as a supplemental income to their herding. When they are ready to ‘go it alone’ PJ helps them with marketing, online & social media promotion, as well as introductions to other local tour operators. We hope that this can be a small help to families who wish to maintain their way of life as nomads, as opposed to being forced to move to the city to find work, as might be the case after a particularly harsh winter.

We intend to set up more PJ gers in carefully selected locations throughout the country. Our involvement and commitment to the countries we visit is personal and long term and we go out of our way to try and make a positive contribution, investing time and energy in making a small but significant difference to individuals and communities that we have a long term relationship with.
EAGLE FESTIVAL PJ CAMP

When attending the exciting eagle festivals in western Mongolia, you may be staying in a ‘private PJ camp’ which has been set up specifically for our guests, away from other visitors and with basic facilities. These will at least include traditional Kazakh-style dining tent, shower tent with (limited) hot water for washing and toilet tent housing the camp’s long drop toilet. The location may vary, depending on suitability on specific dates and will be conveniently situated close to the festival site.
GOBI, HEARTLAND AND ALTAI

PRICE INCLUDES:
Accommodation (based on 2 sharing twin rooms/gers) · See single supplement below · Domestic flights (as specified) · Meals as per itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner) · Water in vehicles · Activities as per itinerary · English speaking guide/s · Surface transportation (vehicle and driver) · Park & museum entrance fees · Festival fees · Airport transfers

PRICE EXCLUDES:
Travel Insurance · Passport · Visas & vaccination charges · Private excursions · Bar bills · Laundry · Telephone calls & items of a personal nature · International flights or trains

*Small group supplement applies for less than stated group size
Deposit $1,000 pp plus any extras · Single Supplement: $500 (not available at homestays).
Full payment is due if departure is in less than 90 days