



## **The Secret of Gobi Desert & The Winding Steppes of Mongolia - 11 Days (#12344)**

**Note:** Price printed on this PDF is valid until **03-08-2024** and is subject to change without notice due to Partner changes and currency fluctuations

### **Trip Highlights**

Ulaanbaatar-Tsagaan Suvarga-Yolyn Am-Khongoryn Els-Bayanzag, Flaming cliff-Ongiin monastery-Karakorum-Hustai National Park-Genghis Khan Statue & Gorkhi-Terelj National Park-Ulaanbaatar

### **Detailed Itinerary**

#### **Day 01**

#### **Day 1. Arrival Ulaanbaatar**

Upon arrival at the airport, you will be welcomed by our team. We will take you to your comfortable and conveniently located hotel. Ulaanbaatar is a modern city that is rapidly growing, with a population of over 1.3 million people. Depending on what time you arrive, we can arrange for a tour of the city.



**11 Nights from AUD 4,821**

The city sightseeing tour includes a visit to the newly constructed Genghis Khan Museum, which happens to be the largest museum of the country. The museum houses a vast collection of over 8,300 artifacts that relate to the great Khans of the Mongol Empire and the history of Mongolia from the Xiongnu era to the end of the 20th century. A substantial portion of these collected artifacts is displayed in nine exhibition halls.

One of the must-visit attractions in the city is Bogd Khan's Winter and Summer Palace. It is a series of stunning traditional buildings where the eighth Living Buddha and the last king lived. The palace has now been transformed into a museum where visitors can see fascinating artefacts and costumes associated with the last king, as well as a collection of stuffed animals.

We will stop at the Gandantegchinlen Monastery.

It is the largest and most important monastery of Mongolia. We will scroll through the different monasteries and see the magnificent statue of Migjid Janraisig, an 82-foot-high statue gilded in gold and covered with silk cloths.

We'll finish the city trip with a view of Ulaanbaatar from Zaisan Hill. The city sightseeing tour takes about 4 – 5 hours.

Activities:

? Visit Genghis khan museum

? Visit Bogd Khan winter and summer palace

? Visit Gandan monastery

? Visit Zaisan hill

**Hotel:** 3 Star Hotel

**Meal:** Lunch & Dinner

### Day 02

### Day 2: Tsagaan Suvarga (450 km)

After breakfast, we will embark on a journey towards the Gobi Desert. The landscape will dramatically transform from lush green grassland to rugged terrain that is hostile to life. We will reach Tsagaan Suvarga in the afternoon. The cliff stands 30 meters tall and has a width of 100 meters. The wind has intricately sculpted this remarkable structure over thousands of years.

Tsagaan Suvarga appears to be the remains of an ancient town with crumbling buildings from afar. Ancient depictions of people hunting ibex with long bows and petroglyphs depicting wild animals and cattle are painted and carved into the rocks. The caves here also contain various Turkic inscriptions, seals and images.



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From the upper slopes of a mountain down into the steppe, a fissure runs east to west. Strong mud columns rise from the depths below while looking through the fissure. The yawning chasm resembles the gaping jaws of some fantastic creature. Some of the caves have several chambers, one of which is over 70 meters long.

Activities:

? Visit Tsagaan Suvarga cliffs

? Visit ancient petroglyph

**Hotel:** Tsagaan Suvarga Ger Camp

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

### Day 03

### Day 3: Yolyn Am (270 km)

Today we will be driving to the South Gobi province town Dalanzadgad. The Gobi Desert extends through Mongolia and China, measuring 1,610 kilometers from southwest to northeast and 800 kilometers from north to south. It covers an area of 1,295,000 km<sup>2</sup>, making it the world's fifth largest desert and Asia's largest although most of the Gobi is coated in bare rock rather than sand.

During the winter months, the Gobi is a cold desert with frost snow on its dunes. In addition to being far north, it is situated on a plateau between 910 and 1,520 meters above sea level, which leads to the cold temperatures. The Gobi receives around 194 millimetres of rain per year on average. In the winter, snow blown from the Siberian Steppes enters parts of the Gobi, providing additional moisture. The Gobi experiences temperature extremes ranging from  $-40^{\circ}\text{C}$  in the winter to  $+50^{\circ}\text{C}$  in the summer due to these winds.

We'll take a trip through the majestic Altai Mountain Range's breath-taking gorges. The Yolyn Am located in the Gobi Gurvansaikhan National Park, will be visited. Those green valleys were carved by ancient rivers.

Wild Argali sheep, Ibex, desert gazelles, and Golden Eagles are also possible sightings. We'll also pay a visit to the park's small museum, which houses a collection of dinosaur bones as well as local flora and fauna.

Activities:

? Visit small museum of the park

? Visit Yolyn am gorges

**Hotel:** Khan Bogd Ger Camp

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner



### Day 04

### Day 4: Khongoryn Els (180 km)

After a hearty breakfast, we'll travel 180 kilometers west to the Khongoryn Els. Mongolia's biggest sand dunes can be found here. The dunes, which can reach a height of 275 meters in some areas, extend for more than 100 kilometers from East to West. The sands have appealing curves that end in a sharp point, resulting in wave patterns on the sand. The impressive black rocky mass of Sevrey Mountain can be seen behind the sand dunes. The Gobi Desert is the world's coldest desert, with cold winds blowing almost the whole autumn, winter, and spring without any shelter uncovered in the plains, necessitating extreme survival methods of living. Gobi nomads are well-known in Mongolia for their dedication to hard work. Here, we'll meet two humped camel breeding families and learn about their sweet, modest, hard-working, but incredible way of life.

#### Activities:

- ? Visit Khongoryn Els sand dune
- ? Hike to the tallest dune
- ? Visit camel breeding family
- ? Possibility of camel riding at extra cost

**Hotel:** Gobi Anar Ger Camp

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

### Day 05

### Day 5: Bayanzag, Flaming cliff (150 km)

Today's drive will take us to Bayanzag, also known as the "Flaming Cliffs," the world-famous site where palaeontologist Roy Chapman Andrews discovered dinosaur bones and eggs. The local scenery is a lovely blend of rocks, red sand, and scrubs. Spend some time exploring the cliffs while you're here.

We'll spend some time walking around the cliffs here.

#### Activities:

- ? Visit Bayanzag cliffs where the dinosaur skeletons and egg were found.

**Hotel:** Gobi Tour Ger Camp

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner





### Day 06

### Day 6: Ongiin monastery (180 km)

Today you will travel to Ongi Monastery in the northwest. The ruins of two monasteries that face each other across the Ongi river in south-central Mongolia are known as Ongi.

The peace and beauty of the Delger Khangai Mountains will enchant you. On one side of the river, you'll visit the ruins of Ongi Monastery.

This vast series of rocky hills cut by the river can be explored on foot. The monastery's southern complex contains numerous administrative buildings as well as 11 temples. The northern complex, which was built in the 18th century, included 17 temples, including one of Mongolia's largest temples. There were four Buddhist universities situated on the grounds.

The monasteries were constructed in the 17th century and were demolished in 1937. They were among Mongolia's largest temples, housing over 1000 monks.

Today, a small monastery has been built between the ruins, and the remains of old monasteries are displayed in the Ger Museum.

Activities:

? Visit the ruins of Ongi monastery

**Hotel:** The Secret of Ongi Ger Camp

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

### Day 07

### Day 7: Karakorum, the former Mongolian capital (300 km)

Today we will be driving to Karakorum. Karakorum was the capital of Genghis Khan's Mongolian Empire in the thirteenth century. In 1220, Genghis Khan ordered the building of Karakorum on the ruins of Turug and Uigur cities in the Orkhon valley at the eastern end of the Khangai Mountains. During the reign of Ugedei Khan, it was completed 15 years later. The town was very multicultural and culturally accepting.

The silver tree, which was once part of Möngke Khan's palace, has become Karakorum's emblem. From 1220 to 1260, it was at its most prosperous. Karakorum existed as the great capital of the Euro-Asian Empire, with Mongolia at its heart, and as the epicenter of politics, trade, culture, faith, intellect, and diplomacy, as well as the most visible link in international relations.



**11 Nights from AUD 4,821**

Between 1260 and 1380, Karakorum lost its status as the capital of the Great Mongolian Empire and became Mongolia's capital. When Kublai Khan and his younger brother, Ariq Boke, assumed the throne of the Mongol Empire in 1260, they moved their capital to what is now Beijing. Karakorum was reduced to the administrative center of a Yuan Dynasty provincial backwater.

After 110 years after Kublai Khan transferred the Empire capital to China in 1260, the Mongolian Yuan Dynasty fell in 1368, and the center of Mongolian government was shifted to its homeland. It allowed Karakorum to regain its former glory.

The town was captured and destroyed by Ming troops under General Xu Da in 1388. Nothing remains of this legendary city today.

When Abtai Sain Khan and his brother, Lord Tumenkhen, went to the 3rd Dalai Lama in 1580 to express their desire to create a temple in Mongolia, he advised them to restore an old temple in Karakorum. The Main Zuu temple of Erdene Zuu monastery is a temple in Takhai ruins that was restored in 1588 at the Dalai Lama's suggestion.

Erdene Zuu Monastery is now all that is left of what was once a massive monastery with 100 temples and over 1.000 lamas. You'll walk around the grounds of Erdene Zuu Monastery, which is encircled by huge 400 m X 400 m walls. You will be guided around the 3 remaining temples: the Dalai Lama, Zuu of Buddha and Lavrin Temple.

The Karakorum Archaeological Museum will be another stop on your itinerary. It's a tiny museum, but it's housed in a new, well-run structure with good lighting and simple English labels on display cases. The displays contain hundreds of artefacts from the 13th and 14th centuries that were discovered in the immediate region, as well as those from other provinces' archaeological sites, including prehistoric stone tools. Pottery, bronzes, coins, religious sculptures, and stone inscriptions are among the objects on display. A half-excavated kiln is also sunk into the museum floor. The scale model of ancient Karakorum, which attempts to reflect the city as it would have existed in the 1250s and is based on descriptions written by the French missionary William of Rubruck, is perhaps the most intriguing. A Turkic noble tomb with wall paintings and artefacts, including gold objects and jewels, is on display in another chamber. A short video of the actual burial site is available.

You can also visit the Turtle Rock and the Phallic Rock, as well as a small market that showcases local artists' work.

Activities:

? Visit Erdene Zuu monastery

? Visit Karakorum archaeological museum

**Hotel:** Munkhtenger Ger Camp

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner



### Day 08

#### Day 8: Hustai National Park (260 km)

Today we will drive to the Khustain Nuruu National Park, 130 kilometers west side of Ulaanbaatar. The Przewalski's Horse is a rare and endangered subspecies of wild horse found in Central Asia's steppes, also known as the Takhi horse. It has been reintroduced to its natural habitat in Mongolia, where it was once extinct in the wild. In 1993, Khustain Nuruu National Park was designated as a reserve, but in 1998, it was upgraded to a national park. In the park today, there are approximately 350 Takhi horses. There are 459 vascular plant species and 217 bird species in the park.

We will meet the park staff and be introduced to the project after arriving at the Khustain Nuruu National Park camp. We'll discover the park's natural wonders by jeep, foot, or horseback. Later in the afternoon we will drive back to Ulaanbaatar. The group will have a time to go shopping for souvenir or perhaps some Mongolian cashmere.

#### Activities:

- ? Visit Hustai National Park
- ? Spot the wild horses

**Hotel:** Ger Camp

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

### Day 09

#### Day 9: Genghis Khan Statue & Gorkhi-Terelj National Park (170 km)

We'll leave UB early in the morning to the direction of Terelj National Park, located 70 km from the capital and travel through a valley surrounded by forested hillsides and stunning granite cliffs. Wildflowers and plants blanket the valley, home to peacefully grazing herds of yaks, horses, goats, and sheep. The park with its granite rocks, pine trees and river is a picturesque area that is perfect for hiking, horse riding, swimming or just sitting back, relaxing and enjoying the view. We will visit several sightseeing places in the area.

The Genghis Khan Monument will be our first stop. The latter is a massive aluminum statue of Genghis Khan mounted on his horse. It is possible to ascend to the top of the monument, where you will be rewarded with a breathtaking view of the surrounding area. A small museum provides a thorough overview of the history of the Great Mongol Empire, including the succession lines of the great Khans and their invasions. We will visit Turtle Rock and the Aryaval monastery, a small meditation monastery at the foot of the mountain. There are good possibilities for hiking, climbing, and horseback riding.

#### Activities:

- ? Visit Genghis Khan statue
- ? Visit Aryaval monastery



? Visit Turtle rock

? Possibility of horseback riding

**Hotel:** Ger Camp

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

### Day 10

### Day 10: Drive back to Ulaanbaatar (360 km)

The time has come to leave and drive back to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia's capital. You can use your free afternoon to see as you fit. You could always go see lovely cultural show and admire the contortionists while watching colorful and rhythmic Mongolian dances.

Activities:

? Attend folklore show with throat singers

**Hotel:** 3 Star Hotel

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

### Day 11

### Day 11: Departure

Transfer to the airport.

**Meal:** Breakfast

## Inclusions

- Hotel in Ulaanbaatar
- City touring
- Local transportation
- Airport transfers
- Accommodation
- All meals except the first breakfast
- Tour guide
- National Park entrance fees/Museum and Monasteries entrance tickets





- Folklore show

## Exclusions

- Medical, trip insurance and evacuation costs
- Alcoholic and soft drinks
- Visa cost
- Items of personal nature

## Note

The tour is calculated with mid-range accommodation options. In Ulaanbaatar good 3 star hotel and in the countryside the best available accommodations.

The tour can be arranged at slightly lower prices when we opt for home stay and tented camping.

All prices are indicative and starting from prices. Final price will be available based on availability and dates of travel.

## Program Touring / Guide

Package program

## Departure Period

**08 Feb, 2024 to 31 Dec, 2024**

3 Star

AUD 4,821 P P twin share

ON REQUEST

