



## The Big Loop of Mongolia - 19 Days (#12351)

**Note:** Price printed on this PDF is valid until **29-07-2024** and is subject to change without notice due to Partner changes and currency fluctuations

### Trip Highlights

Ulaanbaatar - Baga Gazriin Chuluu - Yolyn Am - Khongoryn Els - Bayanzag - Ongiin & Khoshuu monastery - Karakorum - Orkhon valley - Tovkhon - Terkhiin Tsagaan Nuur - Grassland - Khovsgol Lake - Uran Togoo National Park - Amarbaysgalant Monastery

### 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 will arrange a city tour.

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.

Further 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: Baga Gazriin Chuluu

The first stop will be 250 kilometers south in the lovely region of Baga Gazriin Chuluu. It's a big granite formation smack dab in the center of Mongolia's sandy plain.

The remains of a small monastery known as Delgeriin Choir Monastery can be found on an open plain. You will be entering à Ger for the first time, and you will be greeted by a massive 12-walled structure. Monks use the ger, which is richly decorated and carved, to chant during the colder seasons when the stone monastery becomes too cold to be inside.

You can drive and hike around the area in the late afternoon. You'll walk between massive endlessly piled granite rocky hills that appear to be placed and see the picturesque ruins of a small monastery hidden in a peaceful little protected valley. In the rocks of Baga Gazriin Chuluu, there is a small spring known for its eye-healing properties. Try dripping some magic water into your eyes to cure your eyes like the locals do.

Activities:

? Visit Choir monastery



? Visit the impressive rock formation of Baga Gazar

? Visit ruined monastery of one monk

**Hotel:** Ger Camp

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

## Day 03

### Day 3: Tsagaan Suvarga (270 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.

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:** Ger Camp

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

## Day 04

### Day 4: Yolyn Am

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:** Ger Camp

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

### Day 05

### Day 5: Khongoryn Els

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:** Ger Camp

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner





## Day 06

### Day 6: 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:** Ger Camp

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

## Day 07

### Day 7: Ongiin & Khoshuu monastery

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:** Ger Camp

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner



**Day 08****Day 8: Karakorum**

Today we will be driving to Karakorum (also called Kharkhorin). 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.

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:** Ger Camp

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

### Day 09

### Day 9: Orkhon Valley & Waterfall

Today we will be driving westwards into the Orkhon Valley, where the Orkhon River flows, after breakfast at the ger camp.

UNESCO has designated the valley as a world cultural heritage site because of ancient artifacts dating back to the early 6th century and even earlier. Moreover, the great Mongol empire expanded its capital Karakorum here from the 12th to 13th centuries. Furthermore, the pasture nomadic lifestyle has persisted, preserving both the historic and nomadic perspectives on life.

During the Quaternary period, a volcano erupted near the mouth of the Tsagaan Azarga, also known as the White Stallion River, and the lava flowed down the Orkhon valley, creating a 10-meter-thick layer of basaltic rocks. The Orkhon River cut through the basaltic layer twice, resulting in the formation of the canyon.

Activities:

? Visit Orkhon valley

? Visit Orkhon waterfall

? Visit horse and yak breeding nomad family

? Possibility of horseback riding

**Hotel:** Ger Camp

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

### Day 10

### Day 10: Tovkhon monastery and Tsenher Hot Spring



Tövkhön Monastery was established during the 1650's by Zanabazar, one of Mongolia's most respected religious leaders. The monastery's wooden buildings are integrated with a natural system of caves perched near a hilltop, from which you have beautiful views of the Orkhon Valley and the surrounding pine forests. On the top of the cliff, a pile of stones to worship a god of this mountain forms a hill. It is called Ovoo.

After visiting the monastery, we will be driving westward in the direction of The Khangai Mountains. They are 2500-3000 meters above sea level and are largely made up of Palaeozoic period granite, intrusive chert, and sandstone. The Khangai Mountains stretch for about 800 kilometers from Zavkhan province to Tuv province. They act as the world's water system's continental divide. In the evening we will reach Tsenkher hot spring resort. This resort has a large open-air pool at its customer's disposal. The hot water of the pool flows continuously in from the hot water spring. In the spring, the temperature of the water is over 80 ° C. A complex pipeline system regulates the water temperature. Some will spend hours sitting in the pool talking to their friends while staring at the stars or scanning the nightly nature around them.

Activities:

- ? Hike 14 km to Tövkhön Monastery. It takes about 3-4 hours
- ? Relax at hot spring spa (bring swimming suits)

**Hotel:** Ger Camp

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

### Day 11

### Day 11: Khorgo - Terkhiin Tsagaan Nuur National Park (220 km)

We'll arrive in Tsetserleg town in the morning and visit a local museum about Mongolian tradition and Buddhism in the early 1800s.

The museum was once a well-known Buddhist temple that was demolished by the Mongolian government under Soviet control. After visiting the museum, we'll continue driving to Terkhiin Tsagaan Lake.

It is one of the country's most beautiful lakes. The lake was formed by lava flows from a millennia-old volcanic eruption and is surrounded by extinct and craterous volcanoes. The landscape is coated with black volcanic rocks as a result of the volcano eruptions. The lake is about 15 kilometers long and reaches a maximum depth of 20 meters. Hills with steppe and woodland steppe vegetation characterize the landscape immediately surrounding the lake.

Activities:

- ? Visit Zayiin Gegeen Monastery
- ? Visit Terkhiin Tsagaan Nuur Lake

**Hotel:** Ger Camp

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner





## Day 12

### Day 12: Khorgo - Terkhiin Tsagaan Nuur National Park

The Terkhiin Tsagaan Lake is a perfect place to unwind today. We will go on an excursion to the top of the Khorgo Uul Volcano in the morning. Khorgo Peak, a volcanic field, is about 4 kilometers from the lake. The volcano crater is 200 meters wide and 100 meters deep, and it is surrounded by trees at the back and around the opening. There are numerous basaltic "Gers" formed during the cooling of lava to the south of Khorgo Mountain; some of them have gates and upper holes and exceed 1.7 m in height.

We will also visit the Single Man cave, which is small on the outside but rather large on the inside. Afternoons are ideal for planning optional events such as valley trekking, lake boating, swimming, horseback riding, or visiting a nearby family to learn about nomadic life.

#### Activities:

- ? Hike to Khorgo extinct volcano
- ? Possibility to do a boat tour on the lake
- ? Possibility of horseback riding

**Hotel:** Ger Camp

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

## Day 13

### Day 13: Grassland (180 km)

We will drive for 2 consecutive days' northwards to reach Khovsgol Lake. We will drive through the central grasslands where you will see large herds of horses, cows and yaks. You will cross several rivers, smaller and larger ones, all full of fish.

#### Activities:

- ? Drive through the grassland

**Hotel:** Ger Camp

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

## Day 14

### Day 14. Khovsgol Lake



The first stop will be at the Uushig Deer Stone complex. A complex of deer stones dating back to prehistoric time. Evidence of Prehistoric people's artwork known as deer stones and burial mounds. After visiting the complex, we will further drive north to the Khovsgol lake.

The Khovsgol Lake, Mongolia's blue pearl, is a massive 2.760 square km alpine lake (130 km long and 40 km wide), surrounded by more than 2.000-meter-high mountain chains, dense pine forests, and green meadows with grazing yaks and horses. The lake receives crystal clear water from over 100 small rivers and streams. Just one river, the Egiin, drains the lake, and its waters gradually meet Baikal Lake.

Activities:

? Visit Uushig deer stone complex from the Stone Age

? Visit Khuvsgul Lake

**Hotel:** Ger Camp

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

### Day 15

### Day 15. Khuvsgul Lake

We will spend a full day exploring the lakeshore and surrounding mountains. For those interested they will have the possibility to go horseback riding, visit reindeer families, go hiking, and canoeing (if weather permits) etc. Tsaatan or Dukha, one of the last remaining reindeer herders of the world. Their unique way of life is centred and structured around reindeer and guided by Shamanism, ancestral spiritual practice based on nature worship.

Activities:

? Visit reindeer family

? Possibility to go on a boat tour

? Possibility of horseback riding

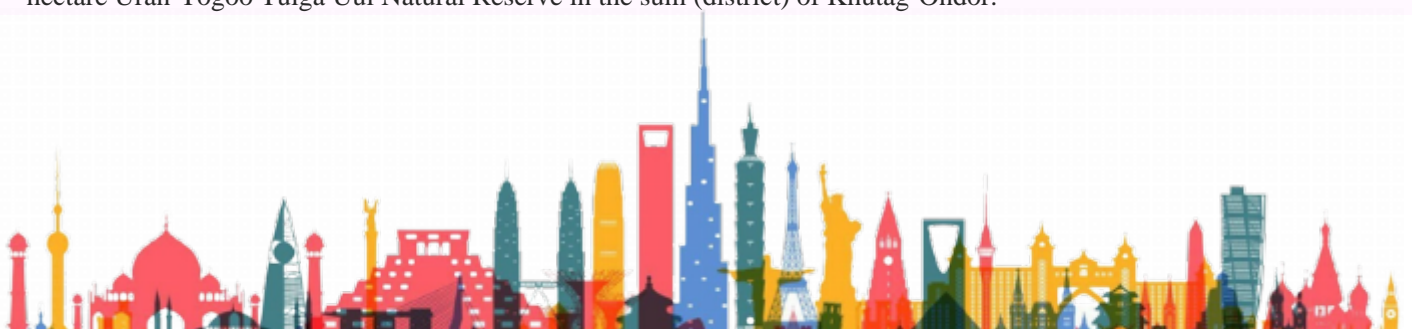
**Hotel:** Ger Camp

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

### Day 16

### Day 16: Bulgan & Uran Togoo Mountain (400 km)

About 60km directly west of Bulgan city is the extinct volcano of Uran Uul and nearby Togoo Uul, now part of the 1600-hectare Uran-Togoo Tulga Uul Natural Reserve in the sum (district) of Khutag-Ondor.



Trails to the top of the relatively unimpressive volcano lead up from the west side, which also has some nice camping areas. On the top of the extinct volcano is a crater, 500 to 600 meters wide and 50 meters deep, filled with a small “crater lake” about 20 meters in diameter.

Activities:

? Visit Uran Togoo national park

? Hike to a small extinct volcano

**Hotel:** Ger Camp

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

### Day 17

### Day 17: Amarbayasgalant Monastery (250 km)

Today we will reach Amarbayasgalant Monastery. The monastery is set in an exquisite valley surrounded by mountains. After Erdene Zuu Monastery, Amarbayasgalant Monastery is considered as the second most important monastery and the most intact architectural complex of Mongolia. The monastery was built in the 18th century by the Manchu emperor Yongzheng and dedicated to the great Mongolian Buddhist Zanabazar.

Activities:

? Visit Amarbayasgalant Monastery

**Hotel:** Ger Camp

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

### Day 18

### Day 18: Ulaanbaatar (350 km)

We will return to Ulaanbaatar today. You can use your free evening to see as you fit. You will go and see the 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 19

### Day 19. Departure

Transfer to the airport.

**Meal:** Breakfast

## Inclusions

- Hotel in Ulaanbaatar.
- City touring.
- Local transportation.
- Airport transfers.
- Accommodation.
- Camping and kitchen equipment.
- All meals except the first breakfast and lunch.
- Tour guides.
- National park entrance fees/Museum and Monasteries entrance tickets.
- Folklore show.

## Exclusions

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

## Note

The price is calculated on the base of at least 2 people on the tour.





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

Private touring

## Departure Period

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

2-3 pax

AUD 8,281 P P twin share

ON REQUEST

4-5 pax

AUD 7,118 P P twin share

ON REQUEST

6 plus

AUD 5,712 P P twin share

ON REQUEST

