



Mongolian Wilderness Adventure

Visiting: Mongolia

Code: GCMW

Tour for **20 days** - Land Only

Please note that we are no longer actively selling this trip because we have too many similar trips in our current product range. Please contact one of our sales consultants for further details of our current trips. These trip notes are for the sole use of customers currently booked on this tour.

Plus a local payment of **USD 450.00pp** payable locally

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Mongolian Wilderness Adventure Trip Notes

At Imaginative Traveller we always aim to provide accurate information for our travellers. Unfortunately information such as the price of optional activities is occasionally subject to change, and this means that we are constantly revising our trip notes. In order to ensure that you have the most up to date information for your trip we suggest that you check the trip notes for your tour around one month before departure.

Trip code: GCMW

Trip valid from: 01/01/2012

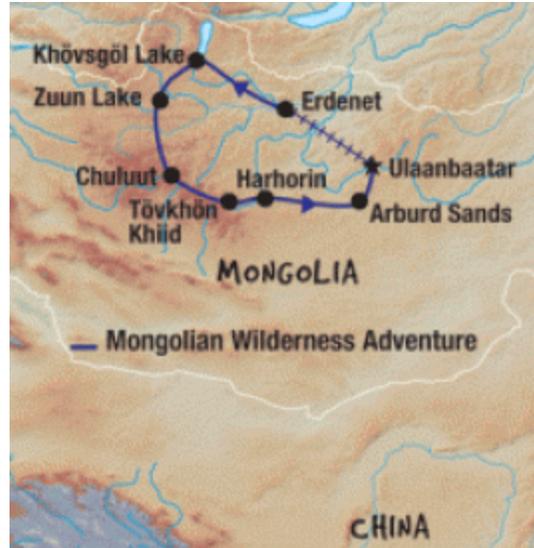
Trip valid until: 30/06/2013

Trip length: 20 days

Trip starts in: Ulaanbaatar, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Trip ends in: Ulaanbaatar, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Maximum group size: 16



Highlights

Camping By Selenge River

Camping In Chuluut Canyon

Enjoy Airrag With Arburd Sand's Nomads

Fish For Pike In Horgo National Park

Former Soviet Union-influenced Ulaanbaatar

Karakoram - Genghis Khan's 13th Century Mongol Capital

Low-impact Ger Camping In Gobi's Ikh Nart Nature Reserve

Ovoo Shamanistic Repositories

Siberian Border Lake Khovsgol

The Naadam Festival

Venture into the real Mongolia on this camping adventure as we traverse untouched parts of an untouched land. As it seems wherever you are in Mongolia you are always miles from nowhere.

Itinerary

**Day
1-2**

Ulaanbaatar

Arrive in Ulaanbaatar. Later this evening you will have the chance to meet your tour guide and the other members of the tour. Ulaanbaatar (or UB) is the gateway between new and old in Mongolia. One third of the population live here and as more foreign investment comes in, the old Soviet-influenced buildings are starting to be dwarfed by new office and apartment blocks while the Russian vans are starting to be outnumbered by new Japanese imports. But in the middle of this developing city the traditional 'Del' is still proudly worn. Ulaanbaatar has a number of important and impressive sights, in particular: Ganden Monastery, which currently supports a population of almost 200 monks; the black market where local traders sell everything from gas masks to Ger parts; and some interesting museums. Depending on your taste, perhaps visit the dinosaurs at the Natural History museum, the museum of Fine Arts or learn about the communist purges at the Victims of Persecution Memorial Museum. The Cultural show in Nairamdal Park is also well worth a visit. Check with your tour guide for the latest timings. Drinking is a popular Mongolian pastime and with 1 bar or night club for every 850 citizens, you'll have no trouble finding a place to relax in the evening and sample a few local brews or, of course, Mongolian Vodka. On the evening of Day 2, we depart by sleeper train bound for Erdenet. (B)

**Day
3**

Erdenet - Uran Togoo Reserve

We arrive into Erdenet in the morning where durable 4WD vehicles meet us and take us out for our first nights on the open steppe amongst the Uran Togoo reserve, one of the most fertile provinces of Mongolia. We drive through spectacular alpine scenery toward the beautiful area where the Bulgan, Arhangai and Hovsgol provinces meet. It is one of the most lush and beautiful parts of Mongolia, where we will spend the night camping. This is near one of Mongolia's largest river in terms of water volume, and it eventually empties into Lake Baikal in Siberia. The following day we start making our way towards Khovsgol Lake. (2B, 2L, 2D)

**Day
4-7**

Khövsgöl Nuur (Khövsgöl Lake)

We spend a several days driving to Lake Khovsgol, travelling via Moron through the Arhangai areas where many nomads live and exist. Lake Khovsgol, is a magnificent clear blue lake on the Siberian border. We stay near the banks of the lake and have two full free days to hike around the lake or just relax and enjoy the views. The landscape initially becomes more arid and rocky but later we drive through pine forest before getting our first glimpse of the magnificent Lake Khovsgol. The lake is 2,760 square km, surrounded by mountains and contains water is so pure that you can drink it. It is without any doubt the scenic highlight of Mongolia. You can either relax on the lakeside, enjoying stunning views, or trek into the surrounding hills. (3B, 3L, 3D)

**Day
8-9**

Zuun Nuur (Zuun Lake)

We spend a full day driving to the beautiful Zuun Nuur (Zuun Lake). Here we explore the open steppe and see herder communities living as they have done for centuries. We have a full day to explore the lake area. (2B, 2L, 2D)

Day 10-11 Khorgo Uul National Park

A full day's travel takes us to scenic Khorgo Uul National Park. Hike up the extinct volcano Khorgo and enjoy views of the 'White Lake' (Terkhiin Tsagaan Nuur). We enter the scenic Horgo national park to view and hike along White Lake. This volcanic lake is one of the most stunning and dramatic in all of Mongolia. It positively teems with hungry pike, making for some of the best fishing of the trip. En route to the lake, we pass through a strange landscape littered with black volcanic rock. The lake itself is ringed on all sides by large hills (hike to the top for some wonderful views over the lake and beyond) and topped by an extinct volcano - Horgo. We have an easy climb to get to the top of this volcano to enjoy the views. (2B, 2L, 2D)

Day 12 Chuluut Gorge

Our journey continues to Chuluut Gorge. A hike amidst this beautiful canyon is a must, with the chance of seeing ancient petroglyphs etched into the rock. The journey we undertake leads us to Chuluut Canyon where we will set up camp. We have a chance to explore this scenic canyon on a full day hike. Chuluut Canyon is a beautiful canyon situated along Chuluut river with its many rapids and tributaries. If you are lucky enough on the hike you may discover some petroglyphs dating back 10000 BC. (B, L, D)

Day 13-15 Tsenkher Hot Springs, Orkhon Valley & Tövkhөн Khiid

A full day of driving brings us to the northern side of Hangai Mountains through Tsetserleg and onto the Tsenkkher Hot Springs. We spend the night here and soak in the natural hot springs. We then continue on to explore the Orkhon Valley. Our drive will take us to the northern side of the Hangai Mountains, through Ikhtamir and Tsetserleg and onto the Orkhon Valley – the cradle of Mongol civilisation. We take a day trip to Tövkhөн Khiid (Tovkhon Monastery). This reconstructed monastery is an important pilgrimage centre for Mongolian Buddhists. The Monastery is perched on the forested hills above the valley and was a retreat of Zanabazar, the first of the Mongolian Bogdo Gens. (2B, 2L, 2D)

Day 16 Harhorin & Högnö Khan Uul

Avoiding the tourist trail, we make our way to the ancient Mongol capital, visiting the Erdene Zuu Khiid, the first centre of Lamaism (Tibetan Buddhism) in Mongolia. Building started in 1586 and continued for the next three centuries. In its heyday the complex contained 62 temples and housed up to one thousand monks. Tragically, most temples were destroyed during the communist period but three remain standing and are sufficient to evoke some idea of how impressive it must have once been. In the afternoon we continue driving to Högnö Khan Uul National Park. (B, L, D)

Day 17-18 Arburd Sands

We spend a full day driving north through grasslands and sand dunes to Arburd Sands. This area offers a realistic glimpse into nomadic lifestyle. As we visit a local family you may be invited into the ger and offered airrag (fermented mares milk), vodka or snuff as a sign of respect. This area is also well known for its horsemanship and we will see boys as young as 8 years old expertly controlling their horses. We will spend the next few days hiking and exploring this fascinating area. (3B, 3L, 3D)

Day 19-20 Ulaanbaatar

We drive back through the grasslands to Ulaanbaatar leaving behind the dramatic remoteness of this amazing landscape. We return to the relative bustle of Ulaanbaatar for our final night, perhaps gathering for a folk performance that includes mesmerising Mongolian throat singing. Our adventure ends after breakfast on Day 20. (2B)

Itinerary Variation

While the information presented here details our planned itinerary, including routes taken, activities included, accommodation and meeting times, please accept that unforeseen changes may occur. We are constantly on the lookout to improve our program and further enhance your experience. Naturally, we will keep you up to date with any last minute amendments to your tour.

About The Imaginative Traveller

Our aim has always been to provide exceptional travel experiences. We believe that adventure travel should be stimulating, and that it should give you an authentic experience of a place. We want our travellers to relish the amazing diversity of countries and cultures the world has to offer. Our focus is on innovation, not imitation.

Obsessed with quality

One of our strengths has been our obsession with quality. We've always believed that our commitment to you doesn't end as soon as you've paid for your holiday. On the contrary, it is just beginning. Whilst most operators simply get a local company to handle the day to day operation of their tours, we do it all ourselves. We have managers for each of our **key destinations** around the world and all our small groups are escorted by our own leaders. Our local teams include guides, drivers, administration staff and contacts in the local community who help us ensure that our adventures are active and involving.

For comparability, all prices in this dossier are quoted in one currency. We use the US Dollar since that is familiar to most. However, once on tour you will need to pay for all goods and services in the local currency. See your Country Dossier for details of exchange rates.

Trip Grade

Culture

Whether you're taking in man's greatest works at places like Petra or Angkor Wat, experiencing grand set-pieces like the Trans-Mongolian Railway or trying your hand at regional specialities like tango in Buenos Aires, getting to grips with local cultures is what travel's all about. A few tips from a guide and a sense of adventure are pretty much all you need. So what are you waiting for? It's time to get the lowdown on high Tibet among Lhasa's magisterial temples; follow up Delhi's eye-popping bustle with a fix of its fiery food; and mix manic markets and Incan masterpieces in Peru.

Fitness

None of the activities featured in this trip require special training or skills, just a reasonable level of fitness and a willingness to participate. If you are in any doubt contact your doctor for advice.

Included

Tour guide, accommodation, meals, transportation, and sightseeing excursions as per itinerary.

Not included

- * Visa costs
- * Border Taxes
- * Entrance fees
- * Drinks, tips, laundry and other items of a personal nature.
- * International flights
- * Arrival & Departure transfers
- * Meals other than those listed

Meals

19 breakfasts, 16 lunches, 16 dinners

Accommodation

10 nights Camping,6 nights Ger tent (4-share),2 nights Budget/tourist class hotels,1 night Sleeper train

Single room supplement

Most of our travellers like the thought of travelling with a few like-minded souls. There are NO compulsory single supplements on most tours as we simply arrange twin shared accommodation for you and another tour member of the same sex. But don't worry if that doesn't appeal. We do understand there are times when you just want a bit of privacy and 'me' time so we are more than happy to arrange a private room upon request when you book.

Transport

Bus,On foot,Sleeper train

Entrance fees

Not included. Allow US\$30

Optional excursions

*prices below are guide only

Ulaanbaatar - Museum of Natural History

- T 2,200 (US\$2.20)

Ulaanbaatar - National Museum of Mongolian History

- T 2,000 (US\$2)

The itinerary and supplementary information has been compiled with care and provided in good faith. However it may be subject to change, and does not form part of a contract between the client and The Imaginative Traveller.

Responsible Travel - Travellers' Guidelines

At Imaginative Traveller we love helping our clients experience the beauty and cultures of the destinations we visit. However, hand in hand with this we have always been aware that we have a responsibility to minimise any negative impacts that tourism can bring.

Responsible Travel is twofold. It's about taking people to the places they want to go in a safe and responsible manner but also about respecting and maintaining the natural and often delicate balance of the destination. Economic gain from tourism is often fundamental to a country, but should never be at the expense of its culture or the environment.

Our Aims

It is our aim to provide journeys that have minimal negative and maximum positive impact on the places we visit.

We do not believe that, as visitors, we should impose our own cultures on others; rather that we should experience foreign cultures and appreciate them for what they are.

Whilst it is our aim to show destinations and cultures in a positive light, we do not believe in papering over the cracks or shielding visitors from the realities of life. This does not mean, however, that we condone or endorse certain situations or regimes that may be in place.

Our guidelines are meant not as rigid instructions but rather as suggestions to make our holidays more enjoyable – for everybody. As cultural and environmental sensitivities vary from country to country more specific guidelines can be found in our individual country and trip dossiers.

Travellers' Guidelines

- ✓ Before you depart try to spend some time familiarising yourself with the destination you will be travelling to – their culture and customs. The country dossiers on our website offer detailed information about all the regions we visit. They also include some useful phrases in the local language for you to use on your trip! A few words of the local language can open up many more opportunities for you to interact with the people you will meet.
- ✓ Although it is tempting to give out pens, sweets and money to people begging, and particularly tempting to give to children, we feel that this encourages a begging mentality and has a long-term negative impact on communities. If someone begging earns more than someone in the same community who works this can discourage local employment. If children regularly bring home money it may discourage their parents from sending them to school. It is of course your own personal choice but you could consider giving to registered charities or contributing to our Responsible Travel fund instead. Money donated through our fund to our worldwide projects is matched pound for pound by Imaginative Traveller and used to help local grassroots projects.

- ✓ Always ask permission to photograph local people and respect their decision if they would prefer not to have their picture taken.
- ✓ Respect local dress codes, especially at religious sites. Our tour leaders are always on hand to give you advice about this.
- ✓ In many of the countries we visit you might see examples of animal cruelty (for example dancing bears, performing monkeys and snake charmers). Please do not take photographs of this or offer money as it encourages the activity.
- ✓ Respect the environment you are in. It sounds obvious but do not throw litter, take it with you or use rubbish bins! You may see locals throwing rubbish on the street but do not follow their example!
- ✓ When shopping in countries where haggling is the norm – enjoy it and only pay what you feel is a fair price for the goods you are purchasing. However, remember that the shopkeeper does have to make a living so do stop once you have reached a price you are happy with. Bargaining should be fun but always remember that a small amount can mean much more to the vendor than to you.
- ✓ Endeavor to take home souvenirs made locally; the money you spend can be very important to the local communities. However, do use your common sense and don't buy anything that you think might be made out of endangered animals or plants.
- ✓ To help keep as much money as possible in the host country - try to eat in locally owned restaurants and order local drinks and produce rather than international brands.
- ✓ In hotels do be conscious of how much water you are using. Many of the areas we visit regularly have shortages; try not to have hour long showers! Don't leave lights, air conditioners or fans on when you leave the room – you wouldn't at home!
- ✓ Respect the environment you are in, especially when in national parks or reserves. Pay attention to rules about keeping on paths, keeping a distance from animals and not removing any of the natural habitat.
- ✓ Relax and immerse yourself in the differences of the culture you are in – you'll be back home in the familiar soon enough (and wishing you were still on holiday!). These cultural differences are part of what makes your experience special.

If you would like to offset the carbon dioxide that will be produced on your flights you can do this on our website ([on our Responsible travel page](#)). We work with [climatecare](#), who will reduce the equivalent amount of carbon dioxide that you produce in another part of the World through their emission reduction projects. These projects are low carbon efficient technologies in developing countries and not only serve to reduce emissions but also help to spread the adoption of low carbon technologies and improve the quality of life for local communities. Details of [climatecare's projects can be found on their website](#).



If you would like to contribute to our Worldwide projects, helping communities all over the World, you can also do this on our website or with a sales consultant. Please refer to our [responsible travel page](#) on the website for details of our current projects. Any donation you make will be matched £ for £ by Imaginative Traveller (up to a maximum of £1000).

Have a great trip!

Please do let us know if you have any comments about responsible travel at rto@imtrav.net

The Imaginative Traveller & Gecko's Adventures This trip is operated by our partner company, Gecko's Adventures. Gecko's is an Australia based company with more than 10 years experience in adventure travel and they share our ethos for offering unique holiday adventures. As this is a code shared departure you can expect there to be both Imaginative Traveller and Gecko's travellers on your trip.
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