

Mongolia & the Nadaam Festival (in reverse)

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23 Days

Fully Inclusive from the UK

Discover the rarely visited land of Genghis Khan, with its endless plains and breathtaking landscapes, and drive through the Gobi desert to the amazing Naadam Festival.

Fully Inclusive price includes:

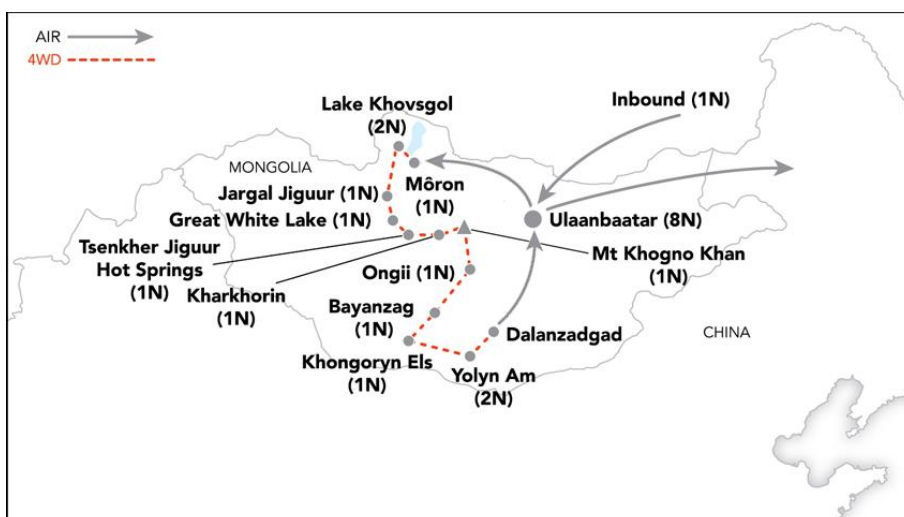
- International flights and current taxes
- Domestic transportation
- Accommodation
- All meals (excluding drinks)
- Touring with Guides and entrance fees
- Visa fees for UK passport holders

Your Tour Dossier

This document is designed to be read in conjunction with the other pre-departure information provided by Wendy Wu Tours including the tour itinerary as described in our brochure and/or website. It aims to provide a straightforward description of the physical activities involved in sightseeing or travelling during the tour.

If there are any particular challenges, from the length of time spent on your feet, the length of drives and flights, to the standard of remote accommodation; they will be explained here.

All passengers must read this document to ensure the itinerary is suitable for their interests and physical capabilities. This is not your final itinerary and therefore does not mention all the sites visited.



Welcome to Wendy Wu Tours

Mongolia continues to amaze, fascinate and thrill our passengers, many of whom have travelled to one country in Asia with us, then another, year after year. We urge you to keep in mind all the rewards, as well as challenges of travelling in a country with a history, culture and attitude so unlike your own.

A typical day's sightseeing may include the bustle and noise of a city street, sights and smells of a local market and interacting with the locals. Travelling in Mongolia requires patience and potential delays are to be expected due to standards of service. There is a low level of English spoken throughout Mongolia, so your local guides or National Escort will be indispensable during your trip.

Almost everything will be different to what you may be used to. We have found that our passengers who embark with a sense of humour and adventure, who accept that things do not always go to plan, are those who find their experience most rewarding. It is essential that all passengers recognize the demands of factors such as basic facilities and cultural differences they may encounter in some areas.

Mongolia & the Nadaam Festival (in reverse) - Active Paced Tour

These tours can involve long periods of sightseeing on foot, climbing of stairs and getting on and off boats, and are physically more demanding. Some easy trekking may be involved, as well as travel to remote areas and areas of high altitude, reaching up to 5,000m. These tours could involve long days of driving and overnight train journeys. These programmes require a good level of fitness.

Our local guides always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance, but they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

The more difficult aspects of this itinerary involve areas of high altitude, long driving distances and overnight train journeys. Travelling along the former Silk Road recreates the journey made by the caravans and horsemen for centuries – to experience the distance as well as the changing landscapes, faces and cultures as you move westwards. This itinerary covers an incredibly vast distance and involves longer drives and train journeys. Tourist facilities are by no means perfect in this part of the country and travellers should be prepared for some degree of 'culture shock'.

NB Please note that times and distances listed in the tour dossier are approximate.

Days 1-2: UK - Ulaanbaatar

You will be met at Ulaanbaatar airport in the Arrivals Hall by your Local Guide and/or National Escort from Wendy Wu Tours. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer (30 minute drive) to your hotel. This evening there will be a tour introduction will be held in the hotel. Food and drinks will not be served at this meeting. It is simply an opportunity for your group to meet and learn more about travelling in Mongolia.

Day 3: Ulaanbaatar

Sightseeing around the capital involves 4-5 hrs of sightseeing on foot with some driving time included. Please note that both the museums you visit today charge extra fees (approx. US\$10) for using a camera in their famous exhibits.

Day 4: Ulaanbaatar

Sightseeing today involves 3-4 hrs on foot. The local markets are nicknamed 'Khar Zakh' meaning black market. All customers should wear a money belt under their clothing today, and leave all valuables in the hotel safe. Keep a secure hold on your camera while in the market area.

Day 5: Ulaanbaatar – Terelj National Park

Today you will enjoy a full-day tour to Terelj National Park located 80km (1.5 hrs driving each way) from Ulaanbaatar. Sightseeing involves around 2-3 hrs on foot.

Days 6-8: Ulaanbaatar – Naadam Festival

Tickets to all arenas are allocated by local government tourist authority in the weeks leading up to the opening ceremony; therefore the exact programme for the festival cannot be given to you until later in your trip.

Here is an idea of what will happen over the coming days:

On the first day there is the grand Opening Ceremony and the first round of wrestling and archery is held in the afternoon at Naadam Stadium. This evening you will see the Naadam Traditional Folk Gala Show. On the second day you will travel on the bus to the site of the horse races, usually 10km outside of the city. Spend the third day catching any of the events going on around town.

Lunch during this time will usually be a boxed lunch organised by the hotel, so that you can enjoy it 'picnic style' without leaving the excitement of the festival. Please prepare your bag each day to contain everything you may need for the day – sun hat, sunscreen, drinking water and plenty of camera memory etc., at a minimum. It is usually hot at this time of year, and the seats are not under cover, so you will be exposed to sun all day. Valuables must be kept in the hotel safe or under your clothes in a money belt as you

will be walking through huge crowds on your way in and out of the stadium stands.

Day 9: Ulaanbaatar to Mõron

Transfer to the airport for a flight to Mõron (flight duration 2 hrs). Upon arrival you will be transferred to your hotel for an overnight stay. In the afternoon there will be leisurely sightseeing around the main town area, consisting of approx. 2 hrs on foot.

Days 10-11: Mõron to Lake Khovsgol

Today you will travel north to Lake Khovsgol, a drive of approx. 3-4 hrs in duration (130km). The unsealed roads can get muddy and difficult to pass. There will be sections of road along the lakeshore which are very bumpy. Check into the Ger camp which is located on the shore of the lake. Due to the variety of activities offered at Lake Khovsgol, we allow all customers choice in how they would like to spend time over the next two days. Your Local Guide will accompany you on a walk around the lake's shore and then can assist to organise some suggested activities if you wish such as a horse ride in nearby mountains, a visit to reindeer farm or a speedboat ride.

NB: Please note that the horse ride or rental of a speed boat will be at your own expense.

Day 12: Lake Khovsgol to Jargal Jiguur

After breakfast drive a distance of 350 km (7-8 hrs) to the Ger camp at Jargal Jiguur where you will have an overnight stay. We will stop for a simple, boxed lunch in Mõron before continuing on to the Ger camp, arriving before dinner time.

Day 13: Jargal Jiguur to Great White Lake

This morning drive 120km (2-3 hrs) to Great White Lake. Here you will have the opportunity to visit the Khorgo Volcano and enjoy a walk up to its cone which takes approx. 15 mins to ascend. Arkhangay Province has a reputation for flies so please ensure you bring repellent with you today.

Day 14: Great White Lake to Tsenkher Jiguur Hot Springs

A morning exploration of the lake will consist of a hike along the shore. This will take approx. 3 hrs. After lunch, drive 220km (4-5 hrs) to Tsenkher Jiguur Hot Springs. There will be time at your leisure during your stay here.

Day 15: Tsenkher Jiguur Hot Springs to Kharkhorin

Drive 150km (3 hrs) to Kharkhorin where upon arrival you will check into the Ger camp. Explore the ancient sites within Kharkhorin and the memorable Erdene Zuu Monastery. Both sites involve walking over rough, uneven surfaces.

Day 16: Kharkhorin to Mt. Khogno Khan

Drive 100km (2 hrs) to Mt. Khogno Khan. Exploration today will involve walking 45 mins up a dirt path to see the ruins of the Uvgun Khiid Monastery and view the spectacular surrounding scenery. There will be opportunity to relax at the base of the mountain.

Day 17: Mt. Khogno Khan to Ongii

Today's travelling distance covers around 300 km over 7-8 hrs between Mt. Khogno Khan and Ongii. The Ger camp is located close to the ruins of the Ongii River and Ongiin Khiid Monastery and you will have the opportunity to explore the ruins of the two ancient monasteries.

Day 18: Ongii to Bayanzag

The morning is at your leisure to explore the Gobi Desert and the surrounding sand dunes. After lunch, drive in 4WDs between Ongii River and Bayanzag, which involves covering a distance of more than 180km, some of which is on jeep trails over dry plains where there are no direct roads. 4WDs are best suited to Mongolia's road conditions. This afternoon visit the Gobi Dinosaur Cemetery and the surrounding landscape.

Day 19: Bayanzag to Khongoryn Els

Drive 150km (3-4 hrs) by 4WD to Khongoryn Els, also known as 'singing sand dunes'. They are located to the west, in the heart of the Gurvansaikhan (Three Beauties) National Park, reaching the Ger camp around lunch time. There will be plenty of time to explore the sand dunes this afternoon travelling first by 4WD to the northern edge of the dunes and then explore the dunes on foot. This hike will take at least 2 hrs return.

Days 20-21: Khongoryn Els to Yolyn Am

Continue by 4WD east to the edge of the Gobi Desert, 220km (over 4-5 hrs) to the Ger camp near Gurvansaikhan (Three Beauty) National Park. Between the steep walls of the 2km long Yolyn Am Canyon, there is a stream which freezes in winter and it is possible to walk along the ice. At this time of year, the ice will be melting and you will need to take care when undertaking this activity. The hike into the Yolyn Am canyon takes 2-3 hrs return. There will be an opportunity for the early risers to go into the park this morning to see the multitude of wildlife in this section of the Gobi, including the mountain ibex, argali and many birds of prey.

Day 22: Yolyn Am to Ulaanbaatar

Drive to the airport in Dalanzadgad (approx. 1 hr drive) for your flight to Ulaanbaatar (flight 1.5 hrs in duration). The rest of the day in Ulaanbaatar will be at your leisure.

Day 23: Ulaanbaatar - UK

Any time before your flight is at leisure. You will be transferred from your hotel to the airport, according to the departure time of your international flight.

Land Only

If you are travelling on a land only basis, then you will need to make your own way to the starting hotel in Ulaanbaatar on Day 2. On Day 23, you will checkout from your Ulaanbaatar hotel, and continue as per your own arrangements.

Please refer to the Wendy Wu Tours brochure and/or website for details on departure dates, prices, itineraries, inclusions and tour extensions available as well as full booking conditions.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Before You Leave

Itinerary Changes - The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. The schedules of the domestic airlines in Mongolia are subject to frequent changes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your Local Guide or National Escort will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Roads in Mongolia have generally been improved over recent years, but some road construction and/or weather conditions may still lengthen the driving times. Our intention is to adhere to the day to day itinerary as printed; however order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

Visas - A visa is required for entry into Mongolia. A standard visa processing service is included in your tour cost. We will require your passport, completed visa application form, and 1 passport photo, taken within the last 6 months, to process your visa. We will require all this information 8 weeks prior to departure. As per our standard visa processing service, we will have your passport for at least 4 weeks. Any passports and visa applications that require an express 2 week service, or that are received in our office less than 6 weeks prior to departure will incur a £50 per passport express fee.

In rare cases, you may be required to provide further information or documentation to the Chinese embassy and/or be required to attend an interview at the embassy in London. If this is the case we will notify you as soon as possible.

Please note that if you intend to arrive more than 24 hrs before your tour commences or intend to stay in Mongolia after your tour has ended and **you are NOT staying in a hotel** you will need to register with the local Public Security Bureau. If you are staying in a hotel, registration is done on your behalf as part of the check-in process.

Vaccinations and Your Health - We recommend that you contact either your local GP or a travel doctor for advice on vaccinations and travel health. www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk is a comprehensive website that you may also find useful.

Climate - Please refer to our website or brochure for detailed temperature charts.

Insurance - It is a condition of booking with us that you take out suitable travel insurance. You must provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number when you book with us or as soon as possible thereafter. Wendy Wu Tours will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

What to Expect on Tour

Development - Although Mongolia is developing quickly, it still lacks international standards of civil infrastructure and tourist facilities. For example, you may see a hole in the road without a warning sign or safety barricade; concepts of personal responsibility are also different to those in the UK. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in the UK. However, all of our suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense as well as refer to notices and follow advice from your National Escort/Local Guides.

Group Size – All our group tours are guaranteed to run subject to a minimum number of 8 travellers and a National Escort will accompany each group of over 10. The maximum group size varies depending on the tour, but is usually no more than 28 passengers.

Accommodation - Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. In more remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the UK and Mongolia. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

While travelling outside Ulaanbaatar you will be staying in Ger camps. Gers are the traditional home of nomads across Mongolia. They are made from a wooden frame and layers of felt and canvas erected on a wooden platform. The interior is filled with warm fabrics and furs as well as ornate wooden furniture. Ideally suited to Mongolia's nomadic way of life and harsh weather, the Ger has been the most popular dwelling for hundreds of years. Gers are also known by the Russian name 'yurt'. Each Ger will consist of up to four single wooden beds, linen, a stove for heating purposes, a thick blanket, table and chairs. Shower and toilet facilities will be in a separate area, hence a flashlight is needed.

The supply of electricity is limited, as is the supply of hot water. Showers are available, however the camp may have enough power to heat water for 5 or 6 people only, so the members of your group should keep this in mind and plan ahead for showers. It is recommended to advise staff at least an hour before you intend to shower as hot water will need to be boiled for you.

Cafes and communal areas are also located within the camp grounds. Most of the Ger camps we use will also have a laundry service available, at a small additional cost. Staying in a Ger will allow you to experience the most unique and intrinsic aspect of the nomadic life in Mongolia. Although they are not luxurious, they do offer comfortable accommodation while we travel through the most remote regions of the country.

Electricity

Whenever you are outside Ulaanbaatar the supply of electricity is not as reliable with daily outages experienced in most parts of countryside. The Ger camps and local guesthouses sometimes use diesel generators. This means the electricity supply can be limited to a few hrs per day and can be unpredictable. We recommend you bring a supply of batteries from home as shops and markets in this region may not stock reliable or genuine batteries.

Book now on **0844 499 3899** visit www.wendywutours.co.uk or see your preferred travel agent.

On the Road

There is more than 20,000km of road stretching across Mongolia. Only 1,600km of this distance is paved. In the countryside, you will be travelling across many different surfaces, from gravel highways to wide, open plains where the route is marked out by poles. The roads can be rough, and a level of discomfort can be expected.

In Ulaanbaatar we use modern, air-conditioned coaches. Everywhere else we use sturdy 4WD vehicles which best suit this terrain. Each 4WD vehicle will hold three passengers and one staff member per vehicle. They will drive in convoy and endeavour to stay within sight of each other throughout the day. Seatbelts are not compulsory by law in Mongolia and local people largely choose not to wear them. Wendy Wu Tours will ensure that the 4WD vehicles are fitted with seatbelts. Drivers often use seat covers to make their vehicles more presentable. If they obstruct your access to seatbelts please request that they be adjusted or removed. It is recommended that where seat belts are available customers must use them and remain seated at all times whilst the vehicle is moving. Please see your National Escort or Local Guide if you have any concerns.

Wendy Wu Tours and our partners in Mongolia use our local knowledge to design our itineraries to provide the best paced sightseeing possible. However, we ask that you keep in mind that public holidays, road construction and weather conditions can create traffic congestion or interfere with the itinerary set out here. Your Local Guide will do their utmost to avoid problems but cannot guarantee against delays, changes or – in rare cases – cancellations of sections of your itinerary.

Tippling - As with most countries, tipping is a way of life in Mongolia. For our passengers' convenience we ask for a compulsory amount to be paid at the beginning of our group tours to cover tipping for guides, drivers, restaurant staff etc. Approximate tipping amounts can be found in our brochure and/or website; however exact tipping amounts will be stated in your final documentation pack.

Meals - While staying in Ulaanbaatar, the breakfast will contain a mixture of local and Western-style dishes, served buffet style. During the Naadam Festival and most days of driving in the countryside, you will be provided with a 'picnic box' lunch. All other meals will be served in restaurants located in Ulaanbaatar or at the Ger camps.

Food in Mongolia tends to be simple as they have limited ingredients, such as mutton (used in a variety of ways), beef, chicken, potato, cucumber, tomato, onion, carrot and sheep's milk. People on restricted or vegetarian diets can be catered for on a limited basis with foods such as noodles, rice and steamed vegetables. Please contact us to discuss this if you are concerned.

We would suggest that you bring some staples or snacks to supplement this diet with you from Australia. Tea/coffee bags and noodles are generally available in all Ger camps. You may wish to bring some biscuits or energy bars if you would like but these can be purchased in Ulaanbaatar. There will be some days that meals may be served late due to the length of the drive that day – refer to the below itinerary to plan for this

Personal Expenses- You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Based on the advice of previous customers an approximate amount of £150 per week should be sufficient; however for those that can't resist a bargain, consider allocating a higher amount.

Exchanging Cash - Banks and hotel exchange desks in Beijing, Xian and Urumqi will normally recognise and accept cash in British Pounds. In other towns you will find banking facilities less reliable, or staff who refuse to deal with currency they are unfamiliar with. If you are bringing cash in British Pounds you will need to plan ahead for time spent outside those cities. Alternatively, cash in American dollars are accepted more often.

Optional Extras - Our tours are planned to be as fully inclusive as possible. However, from time-to-time your National Escort or Local Guide may suggest optional tours/sightseeing in addition to the standard sightseeing planned for that city. Such options are at an additional cost, with prices ranging from 100-300 Yuan per person (payable in local currency). If you do not wish to take part in any optional extras, you will have the option of enjoying some free time at leisure or to return to the hotel.

After Your Booking

Book now on **0844 499 3899** visit www.wendywutours.co.uk or see your preferred travel agent.

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice followed by deposit documentation, which includes a visa application form, help sheet, and a Mongolia travel guide. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approx. 2 weeks prior to departure, and will include a travel wallet, badge, lanyard, suggested packing list and a phrase book, along with your final itinerary and international etickets.

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