



GOBI EXPLORER TOUR – MONGOLIA 2019

TOUR OVERVIEW

July 1600 USD
7 night tour in Mongolia

SUMMARY

A short adventure for those who wish to see the great Gobi Desert in a short space of time.

During this short but intensive tour, we delve deep into the Gobi Desert and become true explorers. Our first stop is at Mandalgovi. This desert town was once home to factories during the Soviet Union period.

Heading further south, we will check out the Yol Am Valley. This is located in the Gurvan Saikhan Mountain range. Before setting off on our hike, we will pay a visit to the small local natural history museum which includes strange exhibits and 10 million-year-old dinosaur eggs.

During this Gobi Desert tour, we also visit the Khongor Sand Dunes, also known as the 'Singing Dunes' for the eerie noise they make when swept by the wind, as well as visiting Bayanzag. This is otherwise known as 'Flaming Cliff's due to the rich red colouration of the clays and rocks which have been pushed up to form this landscape.

All this, whilst checking out the herds of camels as we go, hiking through untouched and unexplored areas, enjoying breathtaking sunrises, and experiencing life in a Mongolian tent/ Mongolia Ger.

Alternatively, it can be added to the 'Beyond the Steppes Tour' for an even bigger adventure.

SAFETY

At Koryo Tours our main priority (besides tour enjoyment) is your and the group's safety. Since 2012 we have worked with a local travel agency who help us ensure that the journey is safe in terms of vehicles we use and the areas we visit. You are entering the country as a legal tourist, and therefore must obey the local laws and customs. One of our experienced Koryo Tours guides will accompany the trip.

WHY SHOULD I BOOK THIS TOUR?

Many passengers visit Mongolia every year, but many only scratch the surface by stopping whilst on the Trans Siberian train journey for 3 or 4 days. We at Koryo will help broaden this experience by taking you further, and off of the central tourist route, to gain a better experience and understanding of this truly unique country. With visits to Mongolians, Kazakh eagle hunters, Shamans, Tuvan's, the Naadam festival and glaciers, you will not be disappointed.

Map & Itinerary



DAY 1	Drive from Ulaanbaatar to Mandalgovi Drive to the White Stupa Cliffs
DAY 2	Drive to Dalanzadgad Drive to the Yol Am Valley
DAY 3	Drive to Khongor Sand Dunes
DAY 4	Drive to Bayanzag Return to Dalanzadgad
DAY 5	Fly back to Ulaanbaatar Drive to the Chinggis Khan Statue
DAY 6	Departure Day



DAILY ITINERARY

JULY 12TH – FRIDAY (DAY 1)

Arrive in Ulaanbaatar

All the passengers joining this tour will be met at the airport and taken to the group hotel this evening, we will then join together as a group for a Pre-Tour Briefing followed by a Mongolian BBQ meal. Those not feeling too jet-lagged-can join us in one of UB's famous bars.

Meals: Dinner

Overnight:

Hotel 9: A local hotel situated in the heart of Ulaanbaatar, within 5 minutes walk from the main square. This hotel offers a great location from which to walk out and explore the city.

JULY 13TH – SATURDAY (DAY 2)

Into the Gobi Desert

We start our adventure early as we have a long drive south towards the Gobi Desert. On the journey, we will see the lush green rolling hills of UB open up to the semi-arid middle Gobi region.

For lunch, we will stop at a local restaurant in the regional capital Mandalagovi. This desert town was once home to factories during the Soviet Union period and now survives mostly on farming and the local farming college.

Continuing the drive southwards we see more signs of desertification, as well as herds of camels roaming the desolate desert plains.

Just as we cross from the Middle Gobi Region to the south, we turn to our destination for today - the White Stupa Cliffs, a rocky area of Tsagaan Suvarga National Park. The White Stupa Cliffs are so named as this massive feature is said from a distance to resemble a deserted city surrounded by crumbling white pagodas. In truth, its 60 meter high cliffs have been eroded by the winds and rain over 10 million years.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Overnight:

Tourist Ger Camp. We stay in tourist gers out in this desert region we have access to the restaurant area as well as bathroom facilities with hot showers and western style toilets.



JULY 14TH – SUNDAY (DAY 3)

Dalanzadgad & Yol Valley

Those who wish to wake up early enough, you will be able to catch a glimpse of sunrise over the surrounding desert.

After breakfast, we depart the Ger camp and make our bumpy drive back to the main road continuing south to the city of Dalanzadgad. This is our next regional capital at the heart of the South Gobi Province. We will check into our Ger camp, one of the best in the area where we will also eat lunch.

After finishing lunch, we will have a short drive to the deep and narrow Yol Am Valley, which is located in the Gurvan Saikhan Mountain range southern Mongolia. Before we set off on our hike, we will pay a visit to the small local natural history museum, this quirky museum has some strange exhibits along with some 10 million-year-old dinosaur eggs.

We will then hike for around 2 ½ hrs through the beautiful Yol Valley. If we're lucky, we'll see some of the local wildlife as well as catching a glimpse of the famous ice field, which is slowly disappearing.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Overnight:

Tourist Ger Camp. We stay in tourist Gers this is one of the best camps in the area and its lovely location means its great for relaxing.

JULY 15TH – MONDAY (DAY 4)

Khongor Dunes

After a big breakfast, we set out off on the road again as we head deeper into the clutches of the Gobi desert. After a brief stop for fuel, it's off-road as we make our way to the Khongor Sand Dunes. These dunes are also known as the Singing dunes, due to the eerie noise the sand makes when swept by the wind. The dunes stretch from the Gobi all the way to the Altai Mountain Range some 180 km away.

We arrive in time for our afternoon tea with a local nomadic family. When the heat of the afternoon has passed, we start our late afternoon camel riding to the base of the highest dunes. For those that can hike to the top of the largest dune, this affords us breathtaking views of the surrounding area.

After this, we return to our dessert ger camp for a nice meal and the chance to enjoy a drink looking out over a Gobi sunset.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Overnight:

Camping/ Tent: Camping next to local family on this night.

JULY 16TH – TUESDAY (DAY 5)

Bayanzag

Today we will drive to Bayanzag, which bizarrely translates as 'rich in sexual scrubs', but its other name 'the Red Flaming Cliffs' is more preferable. This area was first claimed to have been found in 1922 by Roy Chapman. It is known now for the discovery of many dinosaur fossils and as well as its beauty. It is named 'Flaming Cliffs' due to the rich red colouration of the clays and rocks which have been pushed up to form this landscape.

We will spend some time enjoying this Mongolian grand canyon, taking photos whilst enjoying some short hiking. If you are lucky and do discover a fossil, don't forget these must now be declared.

After we have enjoyed our time, its back in the cars for our return to Dalanzadgad and our relaxing Ger camp.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Overnight:

Tourist Ger camp



JULY 17TH – WEDNESDAY (DAY 6)

Return to Ulaanbaatar

This morning we fly back to Ulaanbaatar.

In the afternoon, we will have time for a visit to the largest statue of Chinggis Khan in Mongolia. At this silver giant, we can travel to the top of the horses head via an elevator for views over the surrounding countryside. This strange complex also houses souvenir shops and a small history museum.

We return to Ulaanbaatar for our last group meal and a farewell drink.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Overnight:

Hotel 9

JULY 18TH - THURSDAY (DAY 7)

Departure Day

We end our adventure in the morning, with transfers to the airport for international flights. Pack your souvenirs, your dirty clothes and your memories, and have a safe trip home!

Meals: Breakfast



ACCOMODATION

We will be staying in a range of accommodation on this adventure from comfortable hotels in Ulaanbaatar to tourist ger camps in the Gobi Desert . *All accommodation is based on a shared option.

Single supplement is 55 USD per person: This will guarantee you a single room option in our hotel stay and camping. Whilst in the ger camp you may still be sharing.

FOOD

Most meals are included in this tour although there is time allowed in Ulaanbaatar for your own exploration. Your tour guide will be able to advice on the options when you arrive.

DIETRY REQUIREMENTS

Vegetarian food choices can be very limited once we leave Ulaanbaatar, although the chefs in the ger camps may be able to take special dietary requirements into account on the tour. If you have any special dietary requirements, please make sure that you let us know in advance.

In this region the availability of certain specialized products for restricted diets, e.g. gluten-free or dairy-free is minimal or non-existent. As such we would strongly recommend you bring these dietary items if you need them.

TRANSPORT

All ground transport and domestic flights are included in this tour.

We use a mixture of vehicles: in Ulaanbaatar we will utilise larger private buses, and when we travel in the countryside, 4x4s are the vehicle of choice. Due to the nature of the adventure there will be long and sometimes bumpy drives. We will break these up where possible.

VISAS

Many nationalities still require a visa for a visit to Mongolia. Please do not hesitate to contact your tour manager to see if this is the case.

The application process for a Mongolia visa is quite simple; you can apply for a visa yourself at your nearest Mongolian embassy. You will need to fill out an application form and submit one or two passport photos along with your passport. At times you may be required to provide proof of a tour booking with a Mongolian travel company. We can of course send this if required.

The Experts in Travel to Rather Unusual Destinations.

PACKING

Generally speaking, we recommend you pack as lightly as possible and make sure that you are able to carry and lift your own luggage and walk with it for short distances.

Most travellers carry their luggage in a backpack or wheeled luggage, although an overnight bag with a shoulder strap would suffice if you travel lightly. Smaller bags or backpacks with wheels are convenient. A lockable bag or small padlock is useful as your luggage may get stowed separately and unattended while out and about.

ESSENTIALS

In addition to your 'normal' daily clothes, you will need the following essential items:

- Day pack — for carrying essentials when exploring destinations like water, camera, snacks, jacket, etc.
- Walking shoes or boots are essential
- Sun protection— hat, strong sunscreen, sunglasses, and lip balm.
- Mosquito repellent
- Rain jacket
- Soap and Shampoo
- Water bottle — we recommend a 1.5-liter capacity for which we can provide potable water. Bottled water is also available but we prefer to use safe drinking water rather than contribute to polluting the environment.
- Bedding, including blankets, will be provided at the camps although towels will be needed in some locations.
- One main piece of lockable baggage — Internal flights in Mongolia are subject to weight limits of 10kg (checked in luggage) + 5kg (hand luggage) and extra weight costs \$2/kg.



RECOMMENDED

- Personal medical kit — we recommend you carry items such as mild painkillers, electrolytes, Band-Aids and insect repellent.
- Spare batteries — our trips have access to power to recharge batteries for phones and cameras most days, but we recommend you take spare batteries for your camera.
- Electrical travel adapter plug.
- Money belt.
- Torch or flash light.
- Hand sanitizer.
- Neck pillow for those long, bumpy drives.

OPTIONAL

- A good book, a journal, and music player for longer drives.
- Walking poles if needed.
- Images from home — during our trip there will be many opportunities for you to meet and talk with locals. One way to start any conversation is with pictures. We recommend that you bring some photos / postcards of your family, home, city or country where you live, animals peculiar to your country etc.

VALUABLES

Please try to avoid bringing unnecessary valuables, and use your hotel safe. We strongly recommend that you photocopy all important documents e.g. air tickets, passport, vaccination certificates, etc. and keep the copies separate from the originals. While not valid, a photocopy makes it very much easier to obtain replacements if necessary.



CURRENCY

The official currency of Mongolia is the Tugreg. Mongolia is a mainly cash economy with most small businesses and shops unable to take credit card. Only change money at officially authorized currency exchanges; these are often found at banks, hotels and shopping malls. There are ATMs in Ulaanbaatar and other larger towns, but none in rural areas and they may not always accept foreign cards or have enough cash to dispense. US dollars are the most widely accepted foreign currency; other currencies such as Euros, UK sterling, Russian Rubles, and Chinese Renminbi can be exchanged in Ulaanbaatar.

TRAVELLING ON A GROUP TRIP

As you travel on a group trip you will be exposed to all the pleasures and maybe some of the frustrations of travelling together. Your fellow travellers will probably come from all corners of the world and likely a range of age groups too.

We ask you to be understanding of the various needs and preferences of your group — patience with your fellow travellers is sometimes required for the benefit of everyone's travel experience. Remember too that you have responsibilities to the group. If you are requested to be at a place at a certain time, ensure that you don't keep the rest of the group waiting.

We have found time and time again that the very best trips we operate are those where the dynamics within the group work well — this takes just a little effort on your part.

Due to privacy reasons we are unable to provide you with contact details and any personal information about your fellow travellers booked on your trip prior to departure.



IMPORTANT TRAVEL NOTES

- As a responsible tour operator, your safety is our priority. Mongolia is a safe country to visit, but your tour leader and local guides will be able to advise you further about travel in this location.
- This tour is not suited for children under the age of 12 (please check with Tour Manager if you would like to bring a child on the tour), as well as those who are less able as some hiking is involved (albeit, relaxed) and camping in more remote locations.
- If you have a medical condition which may affect your health or safety during your trip you must inform us before visa application.
- After the tour, we will send out a list of all participants' emails so you can keep in touch, swap photos etc. If you do not wish to be on this list then please let us know.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

CANCELLATION If the tour is cancelled by our partners, we will fully refund the tour price. Please note this tour is charged in US\$. If we receive any other currency this will be converted to US\$ on that day's exchange rate fixed by the Bank of China. Any refund will be made according to the US\$ amount we received and not the original currency sent. With all refunds Koryo Tours will not be held liable for any bank charges. We do have a deadline for cancellations although due to the nature of travel in Mongolia we may need to book certain services earlier such as flights and hotels. In many cases these are none refundable. Your tour manager will let you know when this needs to be done. After this it would be impossible to offer a full refund should you then need to cancel.

STANDARD DISCLAIMER: Koryo Tours reserves the right to withdraw service and cancel a tour at any time. In this eventuality a full refund of any monies paid by the customer will be made.

Koryo Tours cannot be held responsible for any mishap to yourself or your property and in particular any consequence or effects of flight/train cancellation/delay, robbery, sickness, government intervention or other such happenings.

INSURANCE Koryo Tours insist that tourists travelling on all of our tours have full medical insurance. You are advised to insure yourself against any possible risk that may occur and in particular to ensure that sufficient insurance has been obtained in respect of any dependant relatives. It is your responsibility to be covered by insurance which must include medical expenses and the cost of repatriation should you become too ill to continue.