

# Mongolia's Golden Eagle Festival

ANCIENT TRADITIONS OF THE STEPPE

## SMALL GROUP TOUR



### 10 Days

#### Explorer Series Land Tour

\$4,695 per person (includes internal air)  
Partial single supplement \$550 (see page 97)  
Comprehensive tour inclusions listed on page 97

**Group Size** 6-12 travelers

#### 2011 Land Tour Dates

September 26-October 5

**Stay a little longer...** Extend your stay in Mongolia with a visit to the Gobi. Contact us for details.

### MIR Signature Experiences

- Spend three days in remote Ulgii, getting to know ethnic Kazakh nomadic families
- Watch the competition among the eagle hunters with their lordly birds
- Attend a performance of Kazakh music and dance arranged for Golden Eagle Festival participants



A bird of prey takes flight at the festival

photo: P. Oxford



An eagle hunter prepares for the Golden Eagle Festival

Explore **UlaanBaatar** and **Gorkhi-Terelj National Park** before flying to **Mongolia's** westernmost province, where the **Altai Mountains** unite **Western China, Russia, Mongolia and Kazakhstan**. Here on the rocky ridges overlooking the snow-dusted steppe, a dwindling number of ethnic Kazakhs carry on a 6,000-year-old tradition, hunting with magnificent Golden Eagles, one of the world's largest predatory birds.

**Days 1-4: UlaanBaatar, Gorkhi-Terelj National Park** Drive outside UlaanBaatar to Gorkhi-Terelj National Park, where horses are available for hire and huge rock formations crop up at intervals through the rocky soil. Spend two nights in a ger here to get a feel for the huge distances and enormous sky that you will experience in the west. Back in the capital, visit the Gandan Monastery and the National Museum of Mongolian History and enjoy a traditional Mongolian cultural performance.

**Days 5-8: Ulgii, Golden Eagle Festival** Fly to Ulgii, capital of Bayan-Ulgii, the westernmost province of Mongolia and one of its most beautiful, where the nomadic local populace is ethnically Kazakh. Visit with a traditional Kazakh family and enjoy their hospitality. Attend the fascinating Golden Eagle Festival, where the speed and agility of the eagles and the bond between hunter and bird are tested and celebrated. The opening ceremony begins with a parade to highlight the craftsmanship of the traditional costumes and hunting gear and continues with an evening performance in honor of the participants. The next day's competition finds the eagles attacking fox skins dragged by their trainers, with judges evaluating their skill at hitting the target, their diving speed and gripping technique.

**Days 9-10: UlaanBaatar** Fly back to the capital and gather for a festive farewell dinner to toast your adventure on the high steppe of Mongolia.

