



**Mongolian Explorer:  
The Gobi & Beyond with Naadam Festival  
2020**



# **Mongolian Explorer: The Gobi & Beyond with Naadam Festival**

Overland Expedition Across the Land of Nomads

**One departure in 2020 – Explorer Series – 14 Days**

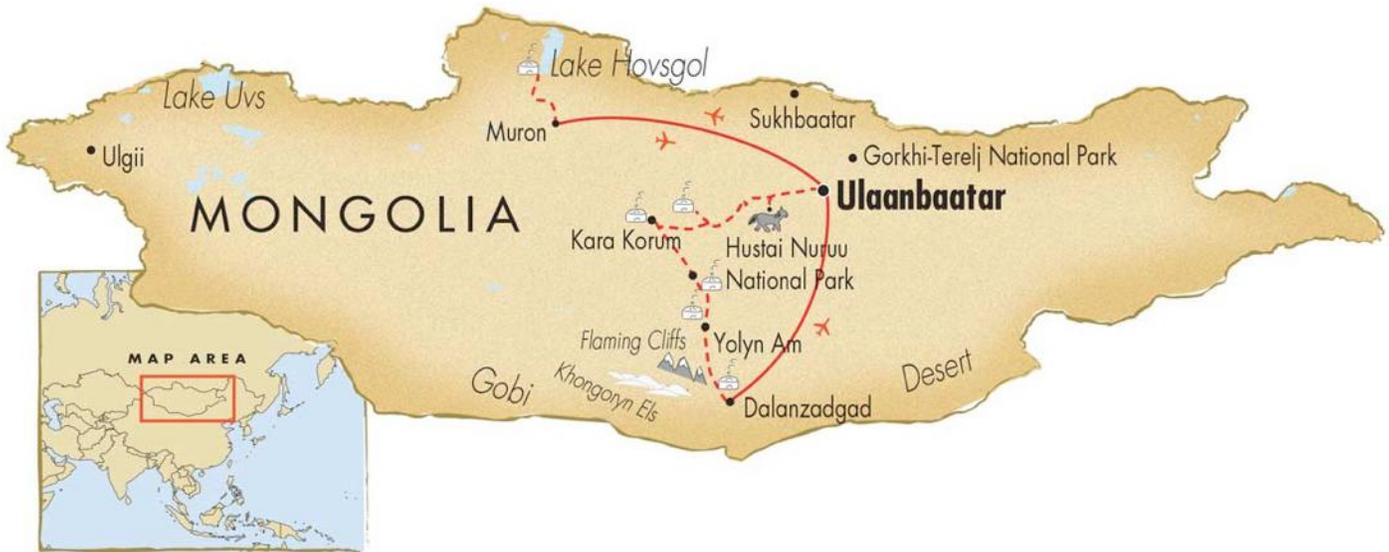
June 30-July 13

*Mongolia: The name conjures up images of vast grasslands, wind-swept steppe, and endless sky. Here, an empire built on horseback galloped across two continents, leaving behind the names Genghis and Kublai Khan. Follow their lead, using the horsepower of modern vehicles to cover the incredible distances at the heart of Mongolia. End in the capital, where the skills of that nomadic army are preserved at the extraordinary Naadam Festival.*



## Daily Itinerary

Day 1, Tuesday, June 30	Arrive Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
Day 2, Wednesday, July 1	Ulaanbaatar • fly to Muron • Lake Hovsgol
Day 3, Thursday, July 2	Lake Hovsgol
Day 4, Friday, July 3	Lake Hovsgol • Muron • fly to Ulaanbaatar
Day 5, Saturday, July 4	Ulaanbaatar • Przewalski Horse Preserve • Khogna Khan
Day 6, Sunday, July 5	Khogna Khan • Kara Korum
Day 7, Monday, July 6	Kara Korum • Ongiin River
Day 8, Tuesday, July 7	Ongiin River • South Gobi Desert
Day 9, Wednesday, July 8	South Gobi Desert • Togrogiin Shiree • Moltsog Els • Flaming Cliffs
Day 10, Thursday, July 9	South Gobi Desert • day trip to Yol Valley
Day 11, Friday, July 10	South Gobi Desert • fly to Ulaanbaatar
Day 12, Saturday, July 11	Ulaanbaatar • Naadam Festival
Day 13, Sunday, July 12	Ulaanbaatar • Naadam Festival
Day 14, Monday, July 13	Depart Ulaanbaatar



## MIR Signature Features

- Travel to the “back of beyond” as you explore areas once only accessible to the most daring of adventurers.
- Explore Mongolia’s blue pearl, Lake Hovsgol, home to reindeer herds of the Tsaatan nomads.
- Marvel at the expanse of green rolling steppe as you visit Kara Korum, the legendary city of Genghis Khan.
- Visit the home of a local nomad and perhaps sample *airag*, fermented mare’s milk.
- Sip tea in the doorway of a traditional nomadic ger as you watch the sun set over the vast expanse of the Gobi.
- Climb the sands at Moltsoq Els, some of the Gobi’s few dunes.
- Gaze upon the Flaming Cliffs, where the first nest of dinosaur eggs was discovered.
- Cheer for the wrestlers, jockeys, and archers of the Naadam Festival.
- Dream of Genghis Khan as you listen to the eerie and otherworldly sound of Mongolian throat-singing.

## Tour Highlights

Ulaanbaatar	Gandan Monastery, Naadam Festival, National History Museum
Lake Hovsgol	Mongolia’s largest and deepest lake, hiking and optional horseback riding
Hustai Nuruu National Park	Home of the Przewalski horse
Kara Korum	(UNESCO World Heritage Site), 13th century capital of the Mongol Empire, Erdene Zhu Monastery, Turtle Rock
Ongiin River area	Remote ger camp
South Gobi	Flaming Cliffs, Moltsoq Els, Togrogiin Shiree, Three Camel Lodge ger camp, optional camel riding, visit local nomads
Yol Valley	Gurvansaikhan Mountains, rich natural environment



## Daily Itinerary

For clients considering a flight itinerary with early a.m. Tuesday arrival into Ulaanbaatar, please be aware that the hotel will be available at standard check-in time of 3:00 p.m. Those wanting room access earlier will have to purchase an additional night at travelers' expense. For those arriving early a.m. Wednesday Day Two, the room is pre-booked and included in your package price, but touring will begin after breakfast on Day Two, which will mean a quick start. Please call us if you have any questions about arrival times and additional night expenses.

### Day One, Tuesday, June 30 Arrive Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Upon arrival in Ulaanbaatar, transfer from the airport to the hotel.

Ulaanbaatar is the political, industrial, and cultural heart of Mongolia. Located in a basin 4,400 feet above sea level, Ulaanbaatar is surrounded by the beautiful Khan Khentii mountains. Mongolians are traditionally nomadic people, and the concept of a settlement or city is fairly new. **Ulaanbaatar, or "Red Hero,"** was established only 350 years ago, when the trade routes between St. Petersburg and Beijing made it an important trade and commercial center. At one time, over 90 percent of native Mongolians followed a nomadic lifestyle. Now, almost half of the country's population lives in Ulaanbaatar.



Most travelers arrive late this evening, and will overnight at the hotel on arrival.  
Meals: Independent – *Best Western Tuushin or similar*



## Day Two, Wednesday, July 1

### Ulaanbaatar • fly to Muron • Lake Hovsgol

Early this morning, transfer to the airport for the flight to Muron. Arrive in Muron and transfer by jeep to the ger camp on the shores of high-altitude Lake Hovsgol for dinner and an evening to relax. You can leave your large luggage at the hotel in Ulaanbaatar and bring along a smaller bag for the journey to Mongolia's north.



There may be some time for **light hiking/touring** of the area this afternoon. Dinner at the camp.

Meals: B, L, D – *Toilogt Ger Camp or similar*

## Day Three, Thursday, July 2

### Lake Hovsgol

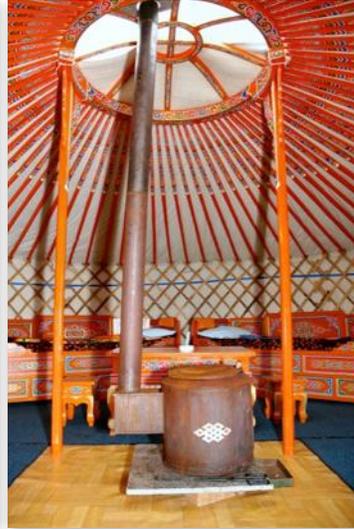
Spend today exploring **Lake Hovsgol**, Mongolia's largest and deepest lake. The southernmost lake in the 25-million-year-old

Baikal Rift Zone, Hovsgol is probably more than two million years old. Set amidst some of Mongolia's most beautiful scenery, where the steppe meets the *taiga* forest of Siberia, the lake is surrounded by a national park. The cold, pristine waters remain clear up to 50-75 feet, and abound with species of fish and plankton found nowhere else on earth. The **lush meadows of the park** support moose, elk, deer, and the **reindeer herds of the Tsatan nomads**, and shelter thousands of migratory birds on their way north to Siberia.

While outside Ulaanbaatar, accommodations are in gers, the **traditional nomadic dwelling**. Most Mongolian ger camps are small, rustic encampments consisting of a number of round yurt-like dwellings. Modern gers may be covered with canvas rather than the traditional felted wool. The walls of a ger are typically made of sections of birch or willow lattice formed into a circle and secured with leather straps. In the center of the ceiling is a hole which allows smoke to escape and fresh air and light to enter. Gers include wood-framed beds, dressers and a wood-burning stove. Shower/toilet facilities are located in a separate building.

Meals: B, L, D – *Toilogt Ger Camp or similar*





### Day Four, Friday, July 3

#### Lake Hovsgol • Muron • fly to Ulaanbaatar

This morning, transfer back to Muron. Following a picnic lunch, catch the flight back to Ulaanbaatar. Please note, today's schedule will depend on flight times back to the capital. Dinner in Ulaanbaatar, with overnight at the hotel.  
Meals: B, L, D – Best Western Tuushin or similar

### Day Five, Saturday, July 4

#### Ulaanbaatar • Przewalski Horse Preserve • Khogna Khan

This morning after breakfast, set out toward Khogna Khan. En route, stop at the **Hustai** **Nuruu National Park**, home of the **Przewalski horse**. They were reintroduced into the wild in 1994 by the Foundation for the Preservation and Protection of the Przewalski Horse in the Netherlands, which flew 16 horses to Mongolia, their historic homeland, 25 years after they had become extinct in the wild. Though the horses are better known by the name of the Polish scientist who first classified them, their preferred name and that used by local Mongolians is *takhi* (pronounced “ta-hee”). Horse sightings are not guaranteed.

Enjoy lunch at the preserve before continuing on to the Khogna Khan ger camp. Here, take the opportunity to do some light hiking or perhaps ride a horse before settling into the camp. The **Khogna Khan Mountains** of Central Mongolia are part of a nature reserve that also includes dunes, forest, steppe, and mineral springs in one area.

Dinner and overnight are both at the ger camp.  
Meals: B, L, D – Khanhar Ger camp, Hoyor Zagal Ger Camp, or similar



### Day Six, Sunday, July 5

#### Khogna Khan • Kara Korum

Depart Khogna Khan and head for Kara Korum after breakfast. Today is spent learning about the history of **Kara Korum** and the **Erdene Zhu Monastery**, both part of the **UNESCO Site** called the **Orkhon Valley Cultural Landscape**. The Erdene Zhu (“Hundred Treasures”) Monastery has remained intact since its construction in 1586, and is the first Buddhist center in Mongolia. Built from the stones of the ruined capital, it stretches nearly a quarter of a mile in either direction, and is surrounded by a brick wall with 108 *stupas*, or shrines. At one time, there were a thousand monks in residence. During the purges of the 1930s, many of the temples were



destroyed and the monks were imprisoned or killed. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the monastery has returned to life as Mongolians rediscover their Buddhist heritage.

Arrive at the **ruined city of Kara Korum**, Genghis Khan's capital. This 13th century city served as the seat of power for an empire that stretched across two continents. At its zenith, Kara Korum was visited by delegations from all over the world. Legend says that in the central square there once stood a beautiful fountain in the shape of a tree. Built by a French master, the tree was entwined with snakes made of gold and silver, and from their mouths poured all manner of intoxicating beverages. An image of this fountain can be found on the backs of some Mongolian banknotes. Kara Korum had served as capital for only 40 years when Kublai Khan moved the capital to Beijing. The city was later destroyed by invading Manchurians. All that visibly remains today is the enigmatic **Turtle Rock**, made of stone and weighing several tons. It is thought that the turtle sculpture stood at the corner of this once vast city and served to protect the city against evil forces.  
Meals: B, L, D – *Monkhtenger Ger Camp, Dreamland Ger Camp or similar*





## Day Seven, Monday, July 6

### Kara Korum • Ongiin River

Depart this morning, adventuring into the “back of beyond” and beginning to penetrate the heart of the Gobi Desert. This will be one of the longest days of the itinerary, driving under the big Mongolian sky toward the **Ongiin River**. Dinner and overnight tonight near the banks of the Ongiin riverbed. Meals: B, L, D – *Ongiin Nuuts Ger Camp or similar*

## Day Eight, Tuesday, July 7

### Ongiin River • South Gobi Desert

Following breakfast, journey farther into Mongolia’s wild hinterland of the South Gobi Desert. Arrive at the **Three Camel Lodge** ger camp for lunch and rest. Sheltered under a volcanic outcrop where ancient people carved their petroglyphs, the lodge offers an authentic Mongolian experience.

Mongolia’s premier eco-lodge, the ger camp makes use of Mongolia’s most abundant resources – wind and sun. Local artisans followed the canons of Mongolian Buddhist architecture in constructing the main lodge without a single nail. Travelers sleep in traditional felt gers, each with an unobstructed view of the Gobi and the heights of the Gobi-Altai Mountains beyond.

Meals are served in a large ger, modeled after the ceremonial tents of the great khans. Each deluxe twin ger at the lodge offers en suite western toilet, sink, and shower. Additional western-style bathroom and shower facilities are located in the main lodge as well.

Meals: B, L, D – *Three Camel Lodge Ger Camp or similar*

## Day Nine, Wednesday, July 8

### South Gobi Desert • Togrogiin Shiree • Moltsog Els • Flaming Cliffs

After breakfast, drive to **Togrogiin Shiree**, a white escarpment where the famous “**Fighting Dinosaurs**” (a fossil of a *protoceratops* and a *velociraptor* locked in combat) were discovered in the 1970s. In the late afternoon, visit the town of Bulgan, a local settlement established near a natural spring.

Next, venture to **Moltsog Els**. The image that many have of the Gobi is of rolling sand dunes, but the vast majority of the terrain is actually sandy soil covered in very sparse scrub growth. Occasional stands of stunted trees indicate where water may be found, but with few exceptions, dunes are absent. One of the notable



exceptions is Moltsoq Els, where the constantly shifting sands are piled by the wind and reach surprising heights. Enjoy a hike and perhaps a **camel ride** in this unforgiving landscape.

After lunch, stop at the **famous Flaming Cliffs**. Named for their red-gold luminescence in the rays of the setting sun, the Flaming Cliffs are one of the most renowned paleontological sites in the world. Roy Chapman Andrews, leader of an American Museum of Natural History expedition, found the world's first nest of dinosaur eggs here in 1922. Andrews, who is widely believed to be the inspiration for the film character Indiana Jones, gave these cliffs their English nickname. The nomadic Mongolians call the area "Bayanzag." The heat and low humidity of this beautiful part of the Gobi have protected and preserved the numerous fossils that have been found here.

Meals: B, L, D – *Three Camel Lodge Ger Camp or similar*

## Day Ten, Thursday, July 9

### South Gobi Desert • day trip to Yol Valley

This morning, head for the **Yol Valley**. At the foot of the beautiful peaks of the Gurvansaikhan Mountains towering 10,000 feet above the surrounding steppe, the cool Yolyn Am Canyon ("Vulture's Mouth") shelters snowbanks that in some years remain frozen into the hot summer months. Hike amidst the spectacular canyon scenery. Yaks are often pastured here in the mountains during the summer months. The Gobi is also the natural habitat of Argali sheep, snow leopards, ibex, wild Bactrian camels, and eagles.

The **Gurvansaikhan National Park** is inhabited by nomadic families who make a living from their herds of camels, sheep, and goats. Cashmere goats are highly prized for





their fine wool. The scarce but nutrient-rich foliage of the Gobi produces particularly thick fleeces. Pay a **visit to a family of nomadic herders** and learn about their unique way of life.

Time permitting, pay a visit to the small **Natural History Museum** here, which displays specimens of indigenous species. Return to the ger camp in the evening for dinner and overnight.

**Note:** Schedules are subject to change today, as there may be an opportunity to experience a local Naadam before returning to the capital for the main National Festival. If so, time in the Yol Valley may be more limited.

Meals: B, L, D – *Three Camel Lodge Ger Camp or similar*

*“Still we lingered on, loath to leave that wild free life. Snow drove us out in mid-September...and that night we could not sleep. The walls oppressed us; we missed the kiss of the night wind on our faces.”*  
— Roy Chapman Andrews, Mongolia Explorer, *Ends of the Earth*, 1929



### *Day Eleven, Friday, July 10*

#### **South Gobi Desert • fly to Ulaanbaatar**

Following breakfast, transfer to the airport for a short flight back to Mongolia’s capital. After an arrival transfer to the hotel, take an afternoon tour around the city.

Return to the hotel for rest, followed by dinner at a local restaurant.

Meals: B, L, D – *Best Western Tuushin or similar*

### *Day Twelve, Saturday, July 11*

#### **Ulaanbaatar • Naadam Festival**

Today is the opening day of **Mongolia’s national festival, Naadam**. The annual Naadam Festival is Mongolia’s favorite festival, showcasing that nation’s best in wrestling, horse racing, and archery, as well as uniquely Mongolian sports such as “ankle-bone shooting.” It originated many centuries ago, but in the 20th century, this celebration of courage, strength, dexterity, and marksmanship acquired new context and became more national in character. The festival now commemorates July 11th, the anniversary of Mongolia’s independence from China.

After breakfast at the hotel, head to the stadium early to secure seats for the Opening Ceremony. The procession begins at the central square and ends here, as the ceremony participants enter the stadium



and take their places on the field. The opening ceremonies will take about an hour once the processional is complete.



After lunch at a local restaurant, enjoy a city tour that includes the National History Museum and the **Gandan Monastery**. Start with the Gandantegchinlen (Gandan) Monastery, founded in 1838. Until then, Mongolia's monasteries had been small, mobile organizations that moved with the nomads. Meaning "Great Place of Complete Joy," the monastery was badly damaged during the 1930s Stalinist repressions, but the main temple was allowed to remain as a showcase for foreigners. Today, this temple houses a 20-ton gilded statue of "the Lord Who Looks in Every Direction," created in the 1990s to replace the one

destroyed in 1937.

Continue with the **National History Museum**. This museum provides an interesting overview of the country's history and culture. The newly remodeled museum displays traditional implements of daily nomadic life, including Stone and Bronze Age artifacts, historical costumes of Mongolia's minority tribes, sacred relics, and agricultural, fishing, and hunting equipment.

Enjoy a special performance that includes **Mongolian throat-singing** tonight – a memorable goodbye to this amazing land.



The unique musical technique of throat-singing is more than an exotic novelty; it is part of a rich tradition. It is believed that throat-singing evolved from human efforts to duplicate natural sounds such as a breeze blowing across the steppe or a rushing river. In throat-singing, a single vocalist produces two, and sometimes three distinct tones, or overtones, simultaneously. There are several styles of throat singing, including *sygyt*, the brightest style in which the highest register of the voice is used; *khomei*, which is a softer style with the tones slightly muffled; and the *borbannadyr* style, which produces a very low, growling sound. In many cases, the singer is accompanied on a horsehead fiddle.

Dinner is at a local restaurant, and overnight at the hotel.  
Meals: B, L, D – *Hotel Best Western Tuushin or similar*





photo by Helge Pedersen

## Day Thirteen, Sunday, July 12

### Ulaanbaatar • Naadam Festival

Continue celebrating Naadam today, attending all the events: **Start with wrestling** back at the stadium. Continue with archery, and proceed to the outskirts of town to watch the start/finish of the **horse racing**. Rub shoulders with the crowds of spectators, and get caught up in the festival atmosphere.

Lunch is at a local restaurant and, if time allows, touring continues to any remaining scheduled sites.

Take some time in the afternoon to return to the

hotel and freshen up. Enjoy a farewell dinner tonight to celebrate the journey's end.

Meals: B, L, D – Best Western Tuushin or similar

## Day Fourteen, Monday, July 13

### Depart Ulaanbaatar

Following breakfast, the tour concludes with a departure transfer to the airport. Please note, many flights depart Ulaanbaatar late night on Day Thirteen, or very early morning on Day 14. Travelers leaving at those times will have access to the hotel room until departure, but will miss breakfast on Day Fourteen morning. For travelers leaving later on Day Fourteen, the program ends with hotel checkout and departure transfers after breakfast; standard checkout times (usually 10:00 a.m.) apply.

Meals: B (flight schedules permitting)



## Special Note

This tour is timed to coincide with the Naadam Festival in Ulaanbaatar. You will spend most of Day 12 at the festival grounds, and will likely spend much of Day 13 at festival events as well. Attending a festival is an exciting way to see a country or city at its best, but please note **schedules and itineraries are highly likely to change** around the Naadam celebrations. Though we make every effort to adhere to our planned itinerary, the increased number of travelers and large crowds require a larger than normal dose of flexibility and adaptability.





### **Dates for 2020 – One Departure – Explorer Series**

The land itinerary is scheduled to operate on the following dates. Please note that you need to depart the U.S. at least one day prior to the tour start date, due to airline flight schedules.

June 30-July 13, 2020 (includes Naadam Festival)

### **Package Prices – 2020**

6-12 travelers, \$8,395 per person, twin share

Plus internal air \$600 per person (economy class, subject to change)

Single supplement \$1,995 per person

### **Land Tour Includes**

- Accommodations as noted in itinerary. Ger camps with shared facilities are used in Lake Hovsgol, Khogna Khan, Kara Korum, and Ongiin River. At Three Camel Lodge in the Gobi, all gers offer en suite western-style toilet, shower, and sink.
- Breakfast, lunch and dinner every full day of the tour (13 breakfasts, 12 lunches, and 12 dinners).
- Restaurant tips for included meals.
- Services of experienced, English-speaking local guides, drivers, and other staff, including a MIR Tour Manager.
- Arrival/departure airport transfers. MIR will arrange for all travelers to be met on arrival and seen off on departure whether we make your airfare arrangements or not, provided you arrive and depart on the tour start/end dates in the tour start/end city.
- Ground transportation throughout the itinerary by jeeps or minivans (type and number of vehicles depends on group size and terrain).
- Guided sightseeing tours and entrance fees as outlined in itinerary.
- Special events, excursions and cultural performances per the itinerary.
- Baggage handling where available.



- Gratuities to local guides, drivers, porters and other service personnel.
- Complete pre-departure information including detailed packing list, reading list, *Touring with MIR* handbook with country-specific information, maps, and travel tips.
- Assistance booking your custom flight arrangements (on request; please note that international air fare is not included in the land tour cost).
- Final document packet, including luggage tags, final updates, and more.
- Naadam Festival entrance fees.

## Not Included

- Internal airfare (internal airfare is quoted separately and is subject to change by airlines).
- International airfare or taxes/fuel surcharges.
- Meals not specified as included in the itinerary.
- Partial single supplement charge, if requested or required.
- Items of a personal nature (phone calls, email, laundry, alcohol, excess baggage, etc).
- Gratuities to Tour Manager.
- Visa/passport fees, airport departure fees, if required (note: no Mongolian visa is required for U.S. passport holders).
- Expenses incurred as a result of delay, modification, or extension of a tour due to causes beyond MIR's control.
- Travel and trip cancellation insurance.

### Interested in travel insurance?

To learn more about all the benefits of purchasing a Travel Guard travel insurance plan, please visit [www.travelguard.com/mircorp](http://www.travelguard.com/mircorp) or contact Travel Guard at 1-877-709-5596.

## Start Planning Next Year Now

### Dates for 2021- One Departure - Explorer Series

At the time of writing, the land itinerary for this program next year is projected to be generally as depicted for this year. Next year's dates and prices are shown below – please call if you're ready to book now.

June 30-July 13, 2021

### Package Prices - 2021

6-12 passengers, \$8,495 per person, double occupancy  
 Plus internal air \$650 (economy class, subject to change)  
 Single supplement \$2,095 per person.

## Explorer Series

Explorer Series tours, with a maximum of 12 travelers, are the perfect match for those seeking a more active adventure. These interactive cross-cultural journeys are more limited in size and more spacious in



depth and focus. We use a variety of accommodations, ranging from small private hotels and bed and breakfasts to rustic lodges and homestays, and trips may feature hiking or kayaking opportunities.

### **Important Notes: Is This Trip Right For You?**

This Explorer Series program, by nature, is designed to be adventurous, but also as comfortable as is possible for rustic travel in this region. Accommodations will vary from a four-star class hotel in Ulaanbaatar to simple and basic accommodation in ger camps outside the capital. Eight nights are spent in ger camps (five nights will be spent in gers with shared shower/WC facilities in a separate building; three nights will be spent in Three Camel Lodge Ger Camp where all gers offer en-suite toilet, shower, and sink). Services are improving in the region; nevertheless, you may encounter problems with plumbing, bureaucratic service, road conditions, unpaved sidewalks, uneven surfaces and steps, and availability and quality of public restrooms. You are traveling in some areas which, relatively speaking, have seen few travelers, and the infrastructure is not yet fully developed. Air-conditioning is a luxury and not available in facilities outside the capital or in vehicles.

This program is rated as **rigorous touring** due to several factors. Outside of the capital, there are almost no roads, so all overland transfers, including around Lake Hovsgol, through the countryside to the Gobi and around the city outskirts for the Naadam horse racing, will involve very rough and bumpy drives over dusty and unpaved tracks in basic vans, Russian jeeps, or other vehicles. This itinerary features a significant amount of touring on foot, both in the city and out of it. In the city, you're likely to encounter uneven surfaces and attractions accessible only via steep staircases. Museums generally do not have elevators. In the rural areas, there will be a variety of challenging terrains. If time and scheduling permit, you will have the opportunity to hike down the Yol Valley, which is mostly grass with occasional shallow streams or smooth rock. The Flaming Cliffs, likewise, feature rounded rocks, some steep, and loose sand and gravel for those who wish to explore. Seating at the Naadam stadium in Ulaanbaatar is on hard, unbacked benches, and a significant amount of time (three or more hours) will be spent there. The sun can be intense in the stadium as well. Naadam time also brings out large crowds and pickpockets, so it is important to be extra vigilant of your personal items at that time.

To reap the full rewards of this adventure, travelers must be able to walk at least two to three miles a day, keeping up with fellow travelers. Flexibility, a sense of humor and a willingness to accept local standards of amenities and services are essential components to the enjoyment of this trip.

Every effort has been made to make the information in this schedule accurate. However, trip itineraries are always subject to change. In Mongolia, the airline infrastructure is not as developed as it is in the West. Flight schedules change constantly, and there is a strong likelihood that the program as reflected in this document will have moderate to significant routing and timing changes based on changing flight schedules. We will do our best to inform participants in advance of any changes, but due to the nature of travel in Mongolia, this may not always be possible. This tour maintains a focus on cultural interaction; we will be visiting private homes, and participants may share meals with local residents. It is therefore important that tour members have a desire to involve themselves in the local culture in order to enjoy this trip.

### **Are You Prepared?**

A Travel Guard travel insurance plan can help cover your vacation investment, offset expenses from travel mishaps and provide you with emergency travel assistance. To learn more about all of the benefits of purchasing a Travel Guard travel insurance plan, please visit [www.travelguard.com/mircorp](http://www.travelguard.com/mircorp)

Please read the U.S. State Department's Travel Advisory regarding travel to Mongolia here:



<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/mongolia-travel-advisory.html>

If you are not already enrolled in STEP, Smart Traveler Enrollment Program, a free service to enroll your trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate, please consider enrolling. For more information: <https://step.state.gov/step/>

## Weather

Mongolia has a short travel season, June-September. While the Gobi will be quite warm in the summer, the rest of Mongolia is at its best. Rain is possible. The daytime temperature range is 60-100 degrees Fahrenheit for the summer, but nights can be much colder. In all seasons, the desert cools down significantly at night, so all travelers should plan to bring a jacket or windbreaker.

**Please remember, weather at all times of year has an element of the unpredictable.** This information comes from [weatherbase.com](http://weatherbase.com) and is based on data from previous temperatures on record. It is always advisable to check with [weatherbase.com](http://weatherbase.com) closer to your departure date for current conditions and forecasts for the specific region you will be visiting.

## International Airfare

MIR's in-house, full-service air department is available to assist with your air travel needs. Check with MIR before booking air on your own, as we are happy to research and compare the best fares available through multiple channels. Airfare varies depending on a wide variety of factors, such as dates of travel and seasonality, seat availability, special airline promotions, how restrictive ticket changes are, how long the fares can be held without purchase, routing considerations such as stopovers and more. Tour dates are based on the land tour only. Our preferred carriers for this tour are Korean Airlines and Air China, as they offer convenient itineraries and competitive rates from multiple cities across the U.S. to Mongolia.

Flight arrivals into Ulaanbaatar tend to be late-night or early morning, and often require an additional night at the tour hotel at travelers' expense. Hotel check-in begins on Day One at around 3:00 p.m., and travelers arriving earlier than that will need to pay for an additional night in order to secure early access to the hotel. For those arriving early morning on Day Two, the hotel is included in the package price – but with such arrivals please be aware that touring starts after breakfast on Day Two which means a quick start to the tour without much time to rest prior to meeting the group. Please contact your tour specialist at MIR for any questions on this.

Please call us at 1-800-424-7289 to discuss air options and routings for this program, and to request a quote for your specific plans and dates of travel. We will be happy to put together a no-obligation suggested air itinerary and estimate for you at your request.

## Visas

Please note: A Mongolian visa is not currently required for U.S. passport holders, but may be required for citizens of other countries. Other visas may be required for countries visited en route to Mongolia, such as Russia or China. Please call for more details.

## Pre and Post-Tour Extensions

For those wanting to extend their stay in Mongolia, MIR can arrange for a post-tour extension to Ulgii to visit the Kazakhs in western Mongolia. Perhaps you would like to travel to China before or after the trip



to visit Tibet, Xi'an, Shanghai, or Hong Kong; or visit Siberia to see the world's deepest lake, Lake Baikal. MIR can book hotels, make train reservations, and more.

## Also Nearby...

For more tours to this region, you may want to check out:

### Flexible Essential Trips – Classic Private Journeys

**Essential Tibet**, 8 days. The highlights of this stirring journey are the holy city of Lhasa and the remote monasteries and sacred refuges hidden in the heart of the forbidding Tibetan Plateau.

**Essential Siberia**, 7 days. By the shores of Siberia's UNESCO-listed Lake Baikal, survey the nomadic heritage, Buddhist monasteries and overwhelming natural beauty of this fascinating part of Russia.

### Small Group Tours

**Siberian Odyssey: Legends of Lake Baikal & Tuva**, 13 days. Explore South Siberia, a remote and atmospheric land where mounted Scythians thundered across the steppe long ago. Meet the Buryats of UNESCO-listed Lake Baikal and the Tuvan and Khakass people, whose Mongolian neighbors imbued them with Buddhism, shamanism and *khoomei*, or throat-singing.

**Mongolia to Moscow: A Trans-Siberian Railway Adventure**, 17 days. Travel on regularly scheduled Trans-Siberian trains over a dramatic and variegated route that offers limitless opportunities to meet the diverse local people – Mongol, Buryat and Russian. Experience the rolling green hills and nomadic traditions of Mongolia, Siberia's UNESCO-listed Lake Baikal and endless *taiga* forest on your way to the booming capital, Moscow. The July departure of this program features the Naadam Festival in Ulaanbaatar.

**Siberia & Mongolia: Spirits and Nomads**, 16 days. Beautiful and exotic, Siberia and Mongolia are worlds away from the traditional beaten path. Explore the Mongolian capital, Ulaanbaatar, then fly to the red sands of the Gobi Desert. Celebrate a local Naadam Festival, far from the glitz and ruckus of the capital. In Siberia, take to the waters of great Lake Baikal, the oldest and deepest lake on earth, and ride a section of the fabled Trans-Siberian Railway.

### Conditions of Participation

Your participation on a MIR Corporation trip is subject to the conditions contained in the 2020 Tour Reservation Form and Release of Liability and Assumption of Risk Agreement. Please read this document carefully and contact us with any questions.

### Cancellation and Refund Policy

Payment Terms: Non-refundable deposits are accepted by check, Visa, MasterCard or American Express. Final land payments may be made by check or credit card for reservations made directly with MIR. If booking through a travel agent, please contact your agent to find out what form of payment they accept. (MIR can accept final payment from travel agents by agency check only.) Airfares are subject to change until ticketed; payment policies vary by carrier.

If you cancel your trip, please notify MIR in writing. Upon MIR's receipt of notice, the following charges apply to land tours (policies for air tickets, custom group trips vary).



### *MIR Small Group Tours*

Cost of cancellation, if received:

61 or more days prior to departure, deposit due or paid in full of \$750;

31-60 days prior to departure, 50% of land tour cost;

30 days prior to or after trip departure, no refund.

## **References**

We encourage you to speak directly with satisfied past travelers. Please request a list of references.

## **Why MIR?**

Regional knowledge is crucial to the success of any trip to our corner of the world. MIR combines detailed information about geography and infrastructure, history and art, language and culture, with the depth of knowledge that comes only from decades of regional experience. You may wonder how we differ from other tour operators...

## **Destination Specialization**

MIR focuses exclusively on the exceptional region at the crossroads of Europe and Asia. This area has been our overriding passion since 1986; we don't do the rest of the world. Our hard-earned expertise gained over the last three decades can take you from end to end of the largest country in the world – Russia – and to all of its neighbors. We specialize in travel to Siberia, the Silk Route, St. Petersburg & Beyond. Our destinations include: Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, the Baltics (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), the Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia), Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan), the South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia), Turkey, Mongolia, China, Tibet, and Central/East Europe (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia).

## **30 Years of Experience**

A travel company doesn't last more than 30 years in the business without a solid track record. MIR has helped thousands of individuals achieve their travel goals. Our dedication and experience have earned us their trust and the trust of many well-respected institutions. Today MIR is the preferred tour operator for museum, alumni and special interest organizations across the country.

## **Recommended & Respected**

MIR has twice been rated one of the "Best Adventure Travel Companies on Earth" by *National Geographic Adventure*. Several of our tours have won awards in top travel publications, such as *Outside* magazine and *National Geographic Traveler*. Our trips have been featured in books such as *Riding the Hula Hula to the Arctic Ocean* and *1,000 Places to See Before You Die*.





## More Questions?

Please feel free to call us with questions at 1-800-424-7289, 8:30am-5:30pm Pacific Time.

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