



MONGOLIA HORSE TREKKING

ITINERARY



Horse Trekking in the Zavkhan province of Mongolia gives you the opportunity to get far off the beaten track and explore the country and its culture in the most authentic way possible.

If you are an experienced rider, you will love the Mongolian horses and the unparalleled riding country. If you are not a rider, but an adventurous traveller who wants to experience Mongolia by horse, or on foot, then you are also in the right place.

The Zavkhan in Mongolia is a challenging area to reach and to travel in, which is why there has been almost no tourism development. But if you are prepared to camp out under the stars, to cook over an open fire, and ride wherever the trail may take you, then let's go!

LENGTH	17 days
GRADE	D - Average 4-6 hours riding per day. Remote and rugged terrain. A sense of adventure is essential.
START	Ulaanbataar, Mongolia
FINISH	Ulaanbataar, Mongolia
ACCOMMODATION	Camping
DEPARTURES	June 2018: 6, 25 July 2018: 17 August 2018: 5, 24 September 2018: 12
PRICES	Adult NZD \$4,290.00



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DAY 1 ULAANBAATAR

You will be met at the airport/train station and taken to your accommodation. You are free to explore this fascinating city before we meet for an evening meal and a chance to get to know your fellow travellers.

DAY 2 KARAKORUM

Drive across the vast rolling steppe that leads to Kharkhorin (Karakorum), which is the famous site of the 13th century capital of the Mongolian Empire (7 hrs). Visit Erdene Zuu Khiid (monastery), founded in 1586.

DAY 3 TERKHIIN TSAGAAN NUUR

The Great White Lake

The drive continues on to Terkhiin Tsagaan Nuur (8 hrs), a beautiful spot surrounded by forested volcanic mountains. Stop at Tsetserleg to stock up on any last supplies at the local market.

DAY 4 ZAVKHAN

Today you will cross the high Solingontyn Pass and reach the wilds of Zavkhan (6 hrs). Arrive by early afternoon at the river-side camp where you will meet the local wranglers and the horses. These are born and bred in the wild mountains of Mongolia. You will be matched with the horse you feel comfortable with, you will get to know each other very well over the coming days!

DAY 5 ZAVKHAN

Day ride

Have your first ride to familiarise yourself with the horse and the surroundings.



DAY 6 – 13 ZAVKHAN TO TARVAGATAI UUL NATIONAL PARK

For the next 8 days ride through steppe, forest and mountains of Tarvagatai Uul National Park. There is no set route while riding; however, around Day 8 you will reach an old hot spa for a well-earned soak. At the end of each day you meet the support vehicles with all luggage and camping equipment. By Day 13 you will be back in the area where you first started riding.

DAY 14 – 15 KHAR NUUR, THE DESERT LAKE

Hike, swim or just relax

After a final morning ride you are driven south-west through desert-steppe to Khar Nuur (5 hrs), a beautiful lake where desert sand dunes meet crystal clear water. No trip to Mongolia is complete without seeing the country's spectacular sand dunes, and here they plunge in to the clear waters of Khar Nuur, a lovely desert lake. Perfect for hiking, swimming or just relaxing after all that riding. Camp for two nights amongst sand dunes by the shores of Khar Nuur.

DAY 16 FLY BACK TO ULAANBAATAR

Drive from Khar Nuur to Uliastai (4 hrs), and fly back to Ulaanbaatar in the afternoon. Depending on the flight time, there may be the opportunity for further site-seeing in Ulaanbataar. Enjoy a well-earned hot shower and bed at your hotel.

DAY 17 TRANSFER TO THE AIRPORT

You are taken to the airport or train station for your homeward journey or onward travel. If your departure time allows, you can pick up any last minute gifts or do a little more site-seeing.



LIFE ON THE TRAIL

GRADE D

Even though you are riding and not hiking - you still need to be fit to get the most out of this adventure. You will be camping most nights in very remote areas. There will be times when you need to get off and lead your horse, so you need to be in good enough shape for hiking on rough trails.

If you are not a rider we recommend you have a couple of rides or lessons with your local horse trekking outfit at home, it will be a completely different experience to riding in Mongolia - but it will help with your confidence when you climb on board a Mongolian horse for the first time.

If you weigh over 100kgs (220 pounds) please talk to us. It's not necessarily a problem if you are fit and active.

It is difficult to describe a typical day, as they vary so much. Around six hours is about the time spent in the saddle each day. A mix of walking, trotting and cantering, with galloping for the confident riders, eats up the miles and makes the day fly by, and is our preferred way to travel.

If we feel the group is up to it, we will offer you the chance to try completely new routes some days. You do need to be prepared for some longer days when doing this. On a 'normal' day we would cover around 30-50km, depending on terrain.



GUIDES AND SAFETY

John Williamson - Expedition Leader

John first came to Mongolia in 2000, bought a horse and spent 6 months riding through this amazing country.

He ran the first trip to Mongolia in 2004 by convincing a group of friends and acquaintances to join us on an exploratory trip. John now helps guide trips each year. He is a Member of The Long Riders' Guild, the world's first international association of equestrian explorers and long distance travellers.

Armangul - Local Guide and chief organiser

..or 'super-woman' as we call her. She is our local organiser and seems to know everyone. Her hospitality is boundless. She can turn her hand to anything, whether it's fixing an engine, singing and playing the dombra, milking a horse, or cooking up another tasty batch of borzig (a sort of Mongolian donut).

Wranglers

The wranglers are responsible for looking after the horses, watering them and staking them out at night. You are welcome to help once you work out the local techniques. Our wranglers will most likely be Bekan, Quartbek and Alois. They have been riding since before they could walk, and know the mountain trails like the back of their hand. They are great singers and will be expecting to hear you sing traditional folk songs from your own country...

Translator

In many respects, the translator has one of the most demanding jobs in the team. A good translator is able to break down the barriers between our very different cultures to let you enter the world of the local nomads. They must be familiar with countryside life so they can discuss what is going on around us when we visit families - and steer us through the mine-field of cultural etiquette. For those who are interested, they should ideally be able to discuss the current political situation and history of Mongolia with you around the campfire.

That's why we are extremely lucky to have Kulshaat in the team, a well educated local woman she is just as comfortable discussing the finer points of Mongolia's economy in excellent English, as she is milking a yak - a very rare combination. While she may look sweet and innocent, she has a wicked sense of humour - if she offers you a handful of berries to try, check they're not goat droppings!

Cook

The key to any successful expedition is good nourishment, so the role of cook is a very important one! Our local cook will prepare breakfast and dinner each day over either an open fire or a wood stove when we are at the ger camp. It's a demanding job and we are lucky to have some very talented Mongolian cooks available in the Altai area.

Drivers

Adilkhan is our main driver in the Altai, with his Russian jeep, he will be joined 2-3 other drivers, driving similar vehicles or the Russian "Furgon". A very sturdy, go anywhere type of vehicle, that is easy to fix, compared to the computerised Japanese 4wds.



ACCOMMODATION

Two nights in an Ulaanbaatar hotel, two nights in ger camps (traditional-style 4- bed gers), 12 nights wilderness camping.

FOOD

We pride ourselves on the meals we create from the limited supplies available. We bring fruit and vegetables with us from Ulaan Baatar, along with staples such as rice, flour and pasta. We trade for delicious yoghurt, cheese and milk when we encounter local people. In the evening we cook fresh bread on the camp fire. In autumn we feast on blueberries, currants, pine nuts and other fruits of the forest. And the rivers hold some excellent eating fish, if you can catch them.

We typically have a vegetarian main dish, and a separate meat dish, so vegetarians will be fine. We can also cater for people on a gluten-free diet. However if you're vegan, please talk to us! You are welcome to pitch in with cooking if you enjoy creating camp fire cuisine, so bring along your favourite yak (or chick-pea) recipe. We sometimes bring a cook along, but it's also fun to work as a team.

TRANSPORT

Russian "Furgon". A very sturdy, go anywhere type of vehicle used in Mongolia.



BOOKING CONDITIONS

Additional Costs

Not included in trip fee:

- Airfare to and from Ulaanbataar, Mongolia.
- Items of a personal nature such as insurance, and excess baggage charge.
- Passport, visa and vaccination fees.

Single travellers

Please advise at the time of booking if you require single occupancy tent/room.

Payment

For bookings 4 or more months in advance of the departure a 25% deposit can be paid with the remainder due 65 days prior to your trip.

For bookings within 4 months of the departure, full payment is required.

Cancellations

More than 8 weeks prior to departure - 80% refund if full amount paid

4 to 8 weeks prior to departure - 50% refund of the trip cost

Less than 4 weeks prior to departure - NO REFUND

Transfers

Your deposit can be held and put toward a re-booked trip for the following year (but only if your current trip is not yet fully booked and therefore people have not been turned away).

Travel Insurance

We suggest clients take out a comprehensive travel insurance.



PACKING LIST

WHAT TO TAKE

Your personal luggage will be carried on pack-horses. See below for a suggested packing list. Please bring only essential items in the interest of the horses! You will be provided with water-proof bags for your gear, which will be loaded in to special pack-bags for the horses. You will also be provided with personal saddle bags which are big enough to fit snacks, camera, water bottle, sun cream etc. A raincoat or warm jacket can be tied (securely!) to your saddle. Your own travelling bags will be stored in Altai.

You will need enough layers of clothing to allow for a wide range of temperatures, which vary widely between day and night and from day to day. In June/July/Aug it is likely to be warm during the day (15C to 30C), but can be down to 5C at night. By September it will start to get cool during the day, and can be well below zero at night (see sleeping bag choice below). It can get cold sitting around the campfire in the evening at any time of year. So you need to bring light clothing for warm days, and plenty of warm clothing for the evening, especially by September. A down jacket is good, because it squashes down when not being worn (makes a good pillow too).

Camping equipment

- 3 - 4 season sleeping bag & liner (small pillow optional)
- Sleeping mat - essential

Riding / camping clothes:

- Boots/walking shoes*
- Comfortable trousers or jodphurs - zip off trousers are not recommended
- Shirts / T-shirts
- Spare shoes / sandals (for around camp)
- Thermal tops and leggings (polypropylene or wool)
- Jersey / polar fleece / down jacket
- Raincoat, goretex or similar (no flapping poncho type jackets - these scare the horses!)
- Light water-proof over-trousers
- Socks & underwear
- Swim wear
- Sun hat (a string to hold it on is handy when you are in full gallop!)
- Warm hat / beanie
- Warm gloves
- Towel (quick-drying)
- Toiletries

Personal first aid kit:

- Insect repellent and after-bite cream
- Sun cream and lip balm
- Diarrhoea - Imodium or Lomotil
- Rehydration salts - if suffering from above
- Constipation - mild laxatives. Remember you'll be on a low-fibre diet!
- Headache or other mild aches and pains - paracetamol or disprin
- Coughs and colds - nasal decongestant, throat lozenges
- Wound care - antiseptic ointment
- Selection of bandages

Other useful items:

- Head torch
- Camera
- Sunglasses
- Water bottle
- Dry bags (plastic bags) for keeping gear dry
- Fishing rod / handline
- Pocket knife
- Photo album (to show the locals your family, horse etc.)
- Spare boot laces
- Sewing kit
- Book

* A pair of light hiking boots is ideal. They can be used for riding, wearing around camp, leading your horse over rough ground, and for wandering around the streets of Ulaanbaatar. No need for serious hiking boots, but trainers (sneakers) are really not serious enough. The stirrup irons we use are 'plate-type' and wide enough to take light hiking boots. Some people do prefer to take a pair of short riding boots, which are also fine (as long as they have some tread on the sole), and keep another pair of boots or trainers for around the camp.

A pair of sandals can also be useful (depending on the time of year). It may sound odd, but a pair of gumboots can be very useful around camp, when the grass is long and wet. We provide chaps, so there is no need to bring long riding boots.

