



**MONGOLIA
EXPLORER:
16 DAYS**

A ONCE IN A LIFE TIME...

MONGOLIA ADVENTURE

A TRIP FOR ADVENTUROUS WOMEN

This is Mongolia, the way it SHOULD be done. We're going to some of the famous sights, sure, but it's so much more than that - you'll experience the magic that is the Mongolian way of life on this in-depth cultural experience.

Highlights:

- Experience the traditional Naadam festival - highlight of the Mongolian year - in a small town
- See the highlights of the Gobi; walk sand dunes, enjoy a camel trek, and meet camel herders
- The BEST thing about Mongolia is the homestays with their incredibly beautiful nomadic culture; we have organised **three** of these homestays
- Plant trees at the Gobi Oasis project and contribute to Mongolia sustainable for future generations
- Get your heart pumping with multiple opportunities for short hikes, horse rides and a float down a river through untouched countryside
- Participate in Mongolian cooking and learn their centuries-nomadic cooking traditions

ABOUT YOU

Most Patchies are Aussie women, experienced travellers, in their late 40s, 50s and 60s:

You love adventure and truly knowing a country. Just the idea of a 50 person 'big bus' tour makes you want to run for the hills!

You're gracious and know how to get on with it. You understand that even in the best vehicles, the air-con sometimes breaks. When travelling, all sorts of unexpected things can happen, sometimes uncomfortable: it's just part of the adventure.

You enjoy road trips. Mongolia is a big country that requires a fair amount of driving!

You're a great travel buddy. You bring a positive energy to any group. You enjoy trying new food, visiting new places, and making new friends.

You understand that to fit in with local cultures might mean trying something you've never tried before, or sitting on the floor to eat with a nomad family.

You're active and don't mind working up a sweat, if that's the best way to experience a place.

If that sounds like you, you'd make a great Patchie!



TRIP BREAKDOWN

TRIP LENGTH 16 Days, 15 Nights

DATES Starts: Ulaanbaatar, Sat, 08 Aug
Finishes: Ulaanbaatar, Sun, 23 Aug

GROUP SIZE Maximum 12

PRICE 5240 AUD (twinshare)

- **4960 Earlybird rate. Book before March 10 2020!**
- \$1200 deposit
- Twinshare: we'll match you with a roomie if you're travelling solo
- Private supplement: 1270



INCLUSIONS

- Airport transfers
- All entrance fees
- Transportation in a private vehicle with an English-speaking guide
- All meals: all breakfasts, lunches, dinners included
- All listed activities
- All accommodation

EXCLUSIONS

- Visa fees
- International Flights
- **Travel Insurance must be obtained** in order to join a Patch Adventures trip
- Additional hotel nights
- Tips & Gratuities: Please bring \$150 AUD for tipping (We know that tipping is not part of the Australian way of life, but unfortunately it has become a de rigeur part of travel.)



DAY ONE: ULAANBAATAR

Arrival in Ulaanbaatar. A friendly face will be waiting to meet you at the airport. The group will meet at the reception at 2pm for a walk across the expansive Sukhbaatar Square to the National History Museum, a fantastic snapshot of the country's past.

Next, we drop into a small theatre for a performance of traditional music and dance by the Tumen Ekh Ensemble. Perhaps a bit touristy, but it's real fun! Dinner is at our favourite local restaurant.

DRIVE TIME: 45 mins

ACCOMMODATION: Tuushin Hotel



DAY TWO: TEREJ

Terelj National Park is wonderful, but very popular. So, after visiting the iconic 'Turtle Rock', we'll get away from the crowds to visit a nomadic family for a home-made lunch. They'll then saddle us up for a beginner-friendly afternoon horse ride.

Get your bellies ready - they're preparing a nomadic evening feast for us! Cooking alongside Mongolian women in a ger is magical, so you can help out if you wish. We'll sleep in the family's guest gers.

DRIVE TIME: 2.5hrs/74km

ACCOMMODATION: Terelj Family Ger



Our beautiful Mongolian hosts will be the highlight of your trip



DAY THREE: COUNTRYSIDE KAYAK

We're going to get out the inflatable kayaks this morning and reconnect with nature on a wide, shallow, beautiful river. Breathe in the air and relax: it's just us, flowing water and the steppes. Nothing like it.

Next, Sanjaa is a local park ranger tasked with protecting with the Takhi horses. Chill out with him as dusk falls, watching these wild horses gather nearby for a refreshing drink. Dinner and fun follows with Sanjaa's beautiful family for another homestay experience.

DRIVE TIME: 3hrs/180km

ACCOMMODATION: Sanjaa's Family Ger



DAY FOUR: GOBI OASIS PROJECT

After a leisurely breakfast... Byamba Tseyen runs the Gobi Oasis tree planting nursery, which works to conserve the local environment. Today, we'll plant some of the seedlings ourselves, and contribute back to Mother Nature. (A small portion of your trip fee will be contributed to this project.)

Back at Byamba's home you, will have a Mongolian cooking lesson. Together, we'll prepare a traditional nomadic dinner and then eat.

DRIVE TIME: 4hrs/240km

ACCOMMODATION: Ger Camp



DAY FIVE: THE FLAMING CLIFFS

This morning, we're on the road again, stopping at the impressive rock formations of Tsagaan Suvarga, where you can explore the area on foot for an hour or so before continuing on to Bayanzag.

Bayanzag is one of the most famous paleontological sites worldwide, known for dinosaur bone discoveries. Walk around the spectacular sandstone formations, known as the Flaming Cliffs due to their deep red hue. We'll stay the next two nights at a deluxe ger camp.

INCLUDED: 6hrs/400km

ACCOMMODATION: Deluxe Ger Camp



DAY SIX: KHAVSGAIT PTEROGLYPHS

Yolyn Am is a beautiful local gorge and perfect for a leg-stretching 90 minute hike. We'll head over there in the morning.

In the afternoon, we're visiting the Khavsgait Pteroglyphs (Bronze Age rock engravings) depicting life thousands of years ago. It's surprising fun to walk amongst the rocks and discover drawings for yourself. Take a moment to pause and let your mind wander back to those ancient times.

DRIVE TIME: 1.5hrs/70km

ACCOMMODATION: Deluxe Ger Camp



DAY SEVEN: CAMELS & DUNES

It's a driving day today as we head towards the Singing Dunes where you will visit a camel herding family. Enjoy the hospitality in their ger where you will be able to try camel milk and other traditional Mongolian fare.

Afterwards, saddle up for a camel ride alongside the dunes. Around sunset we'll hike up to the top to hear the dune song, a phenomenon written about as long ago as Marco Polo.

DRIVE TIME: 4hrs/180km

ACCOMMODATION: Ger Camp



DAY EIGHT: NAADAM

Today you will witness the celebrations of a rural Gobi Naadam - the local Khongor Khurd Festival. The traditional events include wrestling, horse racing and a concert as well as soaking up the festival atmosphere. Your guide will have details of the exact agenda and timings. A bit of relaxed fun!

Like all Naadam festivals in Mongolia, it is a little touristy, but much less touristy than the Naadam in UB.

DRIVE TIME: None

ACCOMMODATION: Ger camp



Naadam: a little bit touristy, but an unmissable example of Mongolia's culture and history



DAY NINE: ONGIIN KHIID

Today is a road trip day as we start the scenic journey north towards the heartland of Mongolia. Driving is part of the fun when it comes to this vast country!

After we enjoy the usual photographic and picnic stops en route, you'll settle into your Ger camp next to the temple complex of Ongiin Khiid. Enter the tiny reconstructed temple, and see the monks who run the monastery.

DRIVE TIME: 7hrs/350km

ACCOMMODATION: Standard Ger Camp



DAY TEN: URTIIN TOKHOI CANYON

After breakfast we continue north. The open flat plains give way to greener undulating countryside, with more families and livestock. By this point in the trip, surrounded by this beautiful scenery, all the cares in the world are forgotten as you totally disconnect.

Arrive at camp by around 3pm. Those who like can go horse riding or walking through the Urtiin Tokhoi Canyon of the Orkhon Valley. Otherwise, unwind: get your hair washed and massaged in a 'spa' ger.

INCLUDED: 6hrs/250km

ACCOMMODATION: Standard Ger Camp



DAY ELEVEN: ORKHON VALLEY

We continue up the Orkhon valley today - the scenery is beautiful but the roads rough! Although today's drive is only about 90km it will take over 3 hrs to arrive.

Galaa, a local, will be hosting us for 2 nights near Orkhon Waterfall. During your time with Galaa's family you will get a chance to erect a ger - with a little help from the locals, of course! In the evening, enjoy a nomadic feast. Simple, hearty, delicious. Note: for these 2 nights there is a portable shower only.

DRIVE TIME: 3hrs/90km

ACCOMMODATION: Family Homestay Ger



DAY TWELVE: GALAA'S FAMILY

Today is a special experience as you experience the day to day life of a nomadic family. This is yak-herding country, so you can help milk the yaks and see how the milk is made into a variety of foods. Galaa's family will welcome you into every aspect of their activities!

You will also have time to explore and relax in the beautiful surroundings - including heading off on a horse ride. Try your hand at archery as well, if you like. This is a day which you won't forget quickly.

DRIVE TIME: None

ACCOMMODATION: Family Homestay Ger



Galaa and his family are ready to welcome us for a full day of interaction and enjoyment



DAY THIRTEEN: TOVKHON KHIID

Say a reluctant goodbye to your nomadic hosts after breakfast for a 3hr hike up to Tovkhon Monastery. We'll walk up to the unique hilltop temples through the scenic forested countryside and catch a great view!

Afterwards continue to Kharkhorin. There should be time to visit the Monument of the 3 Kings overlooking the Orkhon River, and the fertility stone on the edge of town. Then settle into your gers - complete with thoroughly deserved hot showers!

DRIVE TIME: 2hrs/70km

ACCOMMODATION: Ger Camp



DAY FOURTEEN: ERDENE ZUU

This morning, we'll get to Erdene Zuu Monastery in time to hear the monks chanting followed by a guided tour around the main temples.

In the afternoon, come with us to the beautiful nature reserve of Khogno Khaan, where we'll visit the lower temple complex of Uvguun Khiid. Check out the reconstructed temples, prayer-wheel and look around the ruins. We'll also go for a short hike to take in the beautiful nature.

DRIVE: 2hrs/90km

ACCOMMODATION: Ger Camp



DAY FIFTEEN: ULAANBAATAR

Back to Ulaanbaatar today. Is the trip already finishing? Nearly! It's time to say goodbye to the slow pace of the Mongolian countryside as we head back to the city, tarmac roads all the way! You'll also get the chance to do some last minute shopping - cashmere, anyone?

After freshening up at the hotel, enjoy a farewell meal at one of our favourite restaurants.

DRIVE TIME: 4.5hrs/290km

ACCOMMODATION: Tuushin Hotel



DAY SIXTEEN: ULAANBAATAR

And that's it! There'll be hugs and tears aplenty as we say goodbye to our trip leader and driver.

You'll then be transferred to the airport with head and heart full of new memories. Mongolia will stay in your heart for a long time.

ACCOMMODATION PREVIEW

We'll stay mostly in ger camps built specifically for travellers like us. Homestay gers have beds for all - comfy, but simple. Ger camps generally have set menus -e.g. cucumber & tomato salad; beef goulash; fruit compote.

GER CAMP EXAMPLE - GOBI



GER CAMP EXAMPLE



HOMESTAY EXAMPLE





Mongolian food is simple and hearty. While there is a lot of meat, milk and cheese in Mongolian cuisine, **we can cater for most dietary needs** including vegan, vegetarian and gluten free. Sadly, we cannot cater for those with severe nut allergies. In all of our homestays, you're welcome participate and learn, as much or as little as you like. It's a great way to spend extended time with local Mongolian women, who traditionally occupy this role.

TRIP SUMMARY

B L D

DAY 1: Short afternoon city visit, dinner at favourite local restaurant

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DAY 2: Terelj National Park, horse ride, nomadic family home stay and feast

✓ ✓ ✓

DAY 3: Countryside kayak float, Sanjaa park ranger and wild horses

✓ ✓ ✓

DAY 4: Gobi Oasis tree planting project, Mongolian food cooking lesson

✓ ✓ ✓

DAY 5: Tsagaan Suvarga, the Flaming Cliffs of Bayanzag

✓ ✓ ✓

DAY 6: Yolyn Am gorge hike, Khavsgait Pteroglyphs

✓ ✓ ✓

DAY 7: Singing Dunes, camel ride alongside the dunes, nomadic camel herder family

✓ ✓ ✓

DAY 8: Naadam Festival

✓ ✓ ✓

TRIP SUMMARY

B L D

DAY 9: Driving day, Ongin Khiid monastery



DAY 10: Driving day, Urdiin Tokhoi Canyon



DAY 11: Orkhon valley & waterfall, Galaa family homestay



DAY 12: Nomad lifestyle day. Enjoy interactions with Galaa's family



DAY 13: Tovkhon Khiid, 3 hour hike, Kharkhorin. Monument of the 3 Kings



DAY 14: Erdene Zuu Monastery Complex and nature reserve of Khogno Khaan



DAY 15: Ulaanbaatar shopping afternoon



DAY 16: Trip now over, transfer to airport



KEY PACKING LIST

THE FULL PACKING LIST IS ATTACHED, BUT HERE ARE THE KEY ITEMS.

VISA (**Mandatory**)

Comfortable walking shoes

Travel Insurance Details (**Mandatory**)

A mixture of lightweight and dry fast clothing and warm layers are essential

Lightweight rain jacket or poncho

Gastrostop/immodium (Just in case)

Insect repellent, and sun protection: hat, sunscreen, sunnies

Reusable water bottle

Torch or flash light esp. for stay at family ger

A good book or a journal for long drives

IMPORTANT: Any additional nights must be added at least **2 weeks** before departure

FAQ

VISAS

All travellers will need a visa. We'll send you application instructions when final payment is made, and gladly assist where needed.

PAYMENT TERMS

Non-refundable deposit of \$1200 to confirm your spot. Note: as soon as we receive your deposit, we'll be sending it to Mongolia and it can not be reversed. Final payment is due at least 95 days in advance. Any cancellation from this point is 100% non-refundable. If the trip is cancelled by us due to some external event, we will refund 100% of your trip payment.

ALCOHOL

Alcohol is widely available in Mongolia. It will be available for sale at all ger camps at affordable prices and can be bought in UB.

POWER ADAPTORS & CHARGING

You'll need a universal power adaptor on this trip as Mongolia uses multiple types. You won't have power plugs in ger camps, but you can charge your devices in our vehicles.

FAQ

MONEY MATTERS & GIFTS

It is **not** recommended to bring Mongolian Togrog to Ulaanbaatar, as you can obtain it easily at money changers and ATMs. In countryside towns, you can obtain money but it's best not to rely on it. However, your expenses during the trip will be minimal and mostly confined to the alcohol you buy at ger camps. **Bringing gifts for your host families is also highly encouraged.** Aussie-themed gifts and clothing are highly welcomed as are toys for the kids. Fabric, scarves, warm socks, and gloves are also very welcome.

WEATHER & CLOTHING

You're visiting Mongolia at the perfect time, with warm days and cool evenings. The potential for days over 30 is real, so be ready with light layers. Rain showers are not uncommon, please come prepared for this. On the long driving days, it's recommended to wear blouses with long sleeves and pants for your comfort. For the cool mornings and evenings, we recommend you bring at least one warm jacket or sweater, and a light sweater. Comfortable walking shoes will serve just fine.

ANIMAL WELFARE

We take animal welfare seriously and do not work with providers who treat their animals poorly. But, please note that animals often co-exist with their owners in what can be very difficult conditions. This is part of the reality of life for them and we accept this.

FAQ

ARRIVAL

Airport transfers are included. You can plan to arrive at any time, but we recommend arriving in the morning to give yourself time to settle in.

PRIVATE SUPPLEMENT & SHARING

Solo travellers will be matched with a room-mate. Of course, if you prefer to have your own space, you can take the private room supplement!

Note: in the home stays, the private supplement won't apply.

FITNESS LEVELS

You'll need a reasonable fitness level to participate in this trip, but nothing extreme. If you can walk for several hours - ie 8-12km - at a moderate pace on undulating terrain, you'll be fine. There will be some uphill/downhill walking and the dune walk will be tiring, although very much worth the effort. **All activities are optional**, meaning that if you don't feel like it, you can skip it.

ADDITIONAL NIGHTS

We can organise additional hotel nights in UB for you, no worries.

FAQ

DIET & FOOD

YES! We **can** easily accommodate vegetarian, vegan and gluten free diets no problems, or any variation of the above. Just let us know in advance so we can prepare as much of the food needs to be brought with us from UB. Note: this food will be simple and may get repetitive. We **cannot** cater for those with severe nut allergies. Any other medical conditions get in touch.

OUR VEHICLE & DRIVING

Some days do involve long stretches of driving and you need to be the kind of person who enjoys road trips. Any such necessary long drives are offset by photo stops, picnic lunches, roadside pitstops, tea/coffee breaks, and of course seeing points of interest, leg-stretching walks, dropping in on nomadic families, etc.

Our trusty steed is a UAZ Purgon, comfortable and built to withstand off-road Mongolian driving conditions. We'll have 2-3 of these. You'll fall in love with your skilful drivers.



FAQ

INTERNET, WIFI, AND MOBILE PHONES

Fixed Line Internet & Wi-Fi Internet access will be restricted to larger towns and villages which you will have the opportunity to pass through every few days - these will have internet cafes, often with slow connection (and also affected by sporadic power cuts). Whilst a few ger camps will have Wi-Fi we advise all guests not to rely on this being available, and if you absolutely must have access during a trip, you can purchase a local sim card with data. Just ask your trip leader for assistance.

GUIDE

Our guide for this trip will likely be a woman, but this is not guaranteed. We have a pool of highly capable guides, but the nature of Mongolian culture means that our planned guide may be called away before the trip to assist their family.

GETTING THERE AND AWAY

We recommend flying in, as the train times are not conveniently matched with our departure. Continuing your trip via train, either to Russia or Beijing, is possible, but August is a bad time of year to visit Beijing because of the weather (too hot!) and the air quality and we do not recommend doing this.



Welcome to Patch! Mat and I pour our heart and souls into every single trip, including this one. Mat designed this trip with our able ground coordinators Olly & Goyo. He rode horses & camels around the Mongolian countryside, milked yaks, slept in gers, helped with the cooking.. (something we'd LOVE to see more of back here in Australia, hint hint..), everything to understand a perfect trip. We're proud to offer the Mongolian Explorer to you.

Rebeca, Founder & Chief Patchie, Patch Adventures.