

Day 1: ULAANBAATAR

Arrival in Ulaanbaatar. A friendly face will meet you at the airport and whisk you over to your hotel. Gather at reception with the other Patchies at 9am for a 'long' walk across the Sukhbaatar Square – it's **really** big – to the National History Museum for an introductory snapshot of the country's past.

Next, you'll drop into a small theatre for a performance of traditional music and dance by the Tumen Ekh Ensemble. Perhaps a bit touristy, but well worth seeing.

Dinner is at our favourite local restaurant.

Included: Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel 9 (or similar)

Drive time: 1 h 15 minutes

Day 2: CHINGGIS STATUE - TERELJ NATIONAL PARK

A hearty breakfast this morning before your face-to-face meeting with Chinggis Khan, to find out what he's been up to. Then it's time to get out the inflatable kayaks and reconnect with nature on a wide, shallow, beautiful river. Breathe in the air and relax: it's just you and the group, flowing water and the steppe. It's a gentle paddle and beginner friendly.

Terelj National Park is wonderful, but very popular. After visiting the iconic 'Turtle Rock', you'll head over to your ger camp – a peaceful little spot nestled into the granite hills. (Ger is the Mongolian word for Yurt, and is pronounced like the word 'gear'.)

Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation: Deluxe En-Suite Ger, Terelj Lodge

Drive time: 2.5hrs



Day 3: TAKHI HORSES

Settle in for the drive to Khustai National park where you'll be welcomed by Sanjaa and his family, your hosts for this night.

Sanjaa is a local park ranger tasked with protecting the local Takhi horses. Chill out with him as dusk falls, watching these wild horses gather nearby for a refreshing drink.

The world's only truly wild horse breed, the Takhi horse became extinct in its native habitat of the steppe but was reintroduced to Mongolia from captive American stock in the 1990s, where to the amazement of scientists, it's making a comeback. Although, it is still classed as 'endangered'.

Dinner and fun follows with Sanjaa's beautiful family for your first homestay experience.

Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation: Ger homestay with Sanjaa's family

Drive time: 3hrs/180km

Day 4: BAGA GAZRIIN CHULUU - MANDALGOBI

Heading south today, you'll stop for a walk amongst the ruins of a 10th century temple before driving to meet Byamba Tseyn's family. They run the Gobi Oasis tree planting nursery – an NGO that works to conserve the local environment and combat desertification (the Gobi is said to be the world's fastest expanding desert).

Today, you'll plant some of the seedlings yourself and contribute back to Mother Nature. A small portion of your trip fee is contributed to this project.

Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation: Simple Private Ger, Gobi Oasis

Drive time: 5hrs/320 km



Day 5: TSAGAAN SUVARGA

It's time to say goodbye to your Gobi Desert hosts and head south to the Omnogobi province.

Your new ger camp is right near the eye-catching Tsagaan Suvarga. This rock formation has inspired many local legends that your guide will tell you all about. Taking in all the colours, you'll lose count of all the shades of yellow and orange (and a surprising purple here and there).

Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation: Twin Room, Ger Camp Gobi Caravanserai

Drive time: 3hrs/170km

Day 6: SOUTH GOBI - DALANZADGAD

Your next spot on your Gobi desert journey is Dalanzadgad, home to the Gobi Desert Museum.

After seeing a dinosaur egg (maybe for the first time in your life) and having all your desert-related questions answered, you'll take a stroll around local markets and get a souvenir or two.

End your day in a new ger camp. Sit down with your new group of friends and try to choose the most interesting ger so far. Just don't lose track of time, as you'll have an early morning tomorrow.

Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation: Deluxe En-Suite Ger, Gobi Mirage

Drive time: 3 hours 45 minutes



Day 7: YOLYN AM = KHONGORYN ELS (SINGING DUNES)

Yolyn Canyon is a beautiful, nearby gorge and perfect for a leg-stretching, 90-minute hike. You'll head over there in the morning.

On the road again and off into the heart of The Gobi Desert – you'll reach your ger camp by mid-afternoon. Rising as high as 200m, the Khongoryn Els dunes stretch across the landscape for a hundred kilometres.

Around sunset, hike up to the top to hear the dune song, a phenomenon written about since the times of Marco Polo.

Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation: En-suite Wooden Lodge, Gobi Erdene

Drive time: 4.5hrs/190km

Day 8: KHAVTSGAIT PETROGLYPHS - BAYANZAG

We've got a special reason for going back east: checking out artwork that dates back to 3,000 BC.

The Khavtsgait engravings depict life thousands of years ago. It's intriguingly pleasant to walk amongst the rocks and discover the drawings for yourself. Take a moment to pause and let your mind wander back to those ancient times.

Later on, you'll continue on to Bayanzag – one of the most famous paleontological sites worldwide, known for the first discovery of a dinosaur egg and also many bones.

Walk around the spectacular sandstone formations, known as the Flaming Cliffs due to their deep red hue.

Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation: Ensuite Lodge, Gobi Tour

Drive time: 4hrs/190km



Day 9: ONGIIN KHIID

Another road trip today with a scenic journey north towards the Gobi Desert. Driving is part of the fun when it comes to this vast country. Most areas are still unpaved, so the driving can get a bit bumpy as the vehicle winds its way following tracks made by other vehicles.

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.

Feel free to go inside the tiny, reconstructed temple where you'll be able to see the monks who run the Monastery.

Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation: Standard Ger, Ongiin Nuuts Ger Camp

Drive time: 4hrs/180km

Day 10: KHUJIRT - ORKHON VALLEY - UURTIIN TOKHOI CANYON

Although your next drive is a bit longer, you won't be putting your camera down until you reach the Orkhon Valley. Get lost in the sights of plains without an end and count the sheep (and goats) that pass you by.

Your daydreaming will be interrupted by a short visit to the village of Khujirt. Afterwards, you're off to your ger camp, where you can treat yourself to a spa afternoon. If you feel like this day is missing an adventure, join your group for a walk to the Uurtiin Tokhoi Canyon.

Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation: Superior Ger, Talbiun Ger Camp

Driving time: 6hrs/250km



Day 11: ORKHON WATERFALL - NOMADIC HOMESTAY

You're a ger-expert by now and you'll prove it at your next destination. The road to reach it is not as smooth as we'd like it to be, but we'll make the drive comfortable.

Your new hosts will greet you with a homemade meal and teach you how to build a ger. After sharing some belly laughs, head to the 20-metre-high Orkhon Waterfall.

Once you get back to the ger, you'll see just how much the hosts have decided to spoil you. They'll prepare khorkhog, a dish reserved for special occasions, made using hot stones.

Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation: Simple Private Ger, Galaa's Family

Drive time: 3hrs/90km

Day 12: GALAA'S FAMILY

Today is a special one 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 – head off on a horse ride if you like. Try your hand at archery as well – another skill that the Mongols are accomplished at and is part of their heritage as an ancient sport. This is a day you won't forget quickly.

Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation: Simple Private Ger, Galaa's Family

Drive time: No drives today



Day 13: TOVKHON KHIID HIKE - KHARKHORIN

After breakfast and a brief drive, there's a three-hour hike (of intermediate difficulty) to and from Tovkhon Monastery.

Walk up to the unique hilltop temples through the magical, forested countryside and catch a beautiful view.

If you prefer to sit out the hikes, of course, do so. You can catch your breath and wait for the rest of the group. Then, you'll all continue your journey to Kharkhorin.

Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation: Deluxe Ensuite Ger, Secret of the Silk Road Ger Camp

Drive time: 4.5hrs/140 km

Day 14: ERDENE ZUU MONASTERY - KHOGNO KHAAN

The Erdene Zuu Monastery – the most important in Mongolia – has been waiting patiently for you, for more than five centuries. This morning you'll get there in time to hear something very special and you'll feel honoured to have been a part of it. That's about all we can tell you; the rest is up to you to find out!

Inspect the main temples of 'Hundred Treasures', Mongolia's first Buddhist monastery.

Head on over to the beautiful nature reserve of Khogno Khaan where the lower temple complex of Uvguun Khiid also waits. How does it make you feel, being amongst these reconstructed temples, prayer-wheels and old ruins?

Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation: Deluxe Ensuite Ger, Burd Star Resort

Drive time: 4.5hrs



Day 15: ULAAN BAATAR

Back to Ulaanbaatar today. Is the trip finished already? Almost, it seems.

It's time to say goodbye to the slow pace of the Mongolian countryside as you 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, join your Patchie crew for a farewell meal at one of our favourite restaurants.

Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel 9 (or similar)

Drive time: 4.5hrs/290km

Day 16: FAREWELL, FRIENDS...

And that's it! There'll be hugs and tears aplenty as we say goodbye to our trip leader and driver. After two weeks, you'll have fallen in love with them.

You'll arrive at the airport with head and heart filled with new memories.

We can tell you from experience – Mongolia will stay with you for a long time!

