



Overland Beijing and Ulaanbaatar (EBU)

Beijing to Ulaanbaatar 25 days, departing 13 Jun 2013

Comfort Zone: Basic Luxury

Physical Challenge: Easy Hard

Trip Style: Overlanding

Route: Beijing to Ulaanbaatar

Length: 25 days

Transport: Overland expedition vehicle.

Accommodation: A mixture of Hotels, Ger tents and wildcamping.



Ratings for this trip

Comfort Zone: Very basic / challenging

Very Basic comfort levels: You'll have to miss out on many of the comforts of home - but you'll be experiencing adventure travel at its purest. On OVERLAND TRIPS be prepared to camp in rough conditions, live with local nomads and travel along poor roads. There may be a number of nights wild camping as we could be travelling long distances to get you off the beaten track. On ADVENTURE HOLIDAYS you can expect tremendous variety, from local budget hotels, local guesthouses to homestays with a predominance of local transport. If we are trekking you may have some nights camping. On ADVENTURE HOLIDAYS you can expect tremendous variety, from local hotels to homestays with a predominance of local transport mixed with some private. If we are trekking you may have some nights camping.

Physical Challenge: Moderate Fitness

MODERATE FITNESS: You will travel through areas that may be physically challenging. For example you may be at altitude some of the time. Depending on the trip, activities may include treks of 3-4 hours across hilly terrain, horse-riding and other adventurous activities. A moderate level of fitness is required.

Countries Visited

China

As one of the world's largest countries and the most populous there is so much to discover in China.

Understanding the history of China is key to understanding modern China. The people are proud of it's past, and keen to share it's heritage with the world. In a country that defies superlatives the words 'vast', 'astonishing' and 'variation' don't really seem to cover it - China really does have it all. Jungle in the south, mountains in the west, desert in the north and 21st century cities.. well... almost everywhere.

Beijiing is the hub of political and international focus. With the 2008 Olympic games providing funds to modernise huge ares of the city, it is a truly modern city. However most visitors are most struck by it's old elements from celebrated site such as the Forbidden Palace to simple, traditional hutongs.



There's a lot of China to see and most of it is changing rapidly, so what are you waiting for? Get out there are discover it for yourself.

Mongolia

Mongolia, the birthplace of Genghis Khan, could be seen as the last frontier of overland travel. Perched on the edge of modernity it is a true wilderness of nomadic peoples and stunning scenery, everything from mountains to desert. Our journey through this wild country will take us through some of the remotest lands on Earth. We will travel through the lands of a variety of nomadic people, whether wildcamping or staying in the traditional Gers (yurts), with our Mongolian hosts. Do not expect the itinerary to run as planned, if it does it will be a miracle. The essence of this route is freedom and flexibility and no where more so than in Mongolia.

Staying with the reindeer herding Tsaatan people of Lake Khovsgol to riding camels in the desolate Gobi desert we will experience every aspect of this magical country.



Daily Itinerary

Day 1: Beijing

Thu 13 Jun 2013

There will be a short group meeting at 18:00 where we will go over the itinerary for the next 5 days.

Hotel for the night: Hu Guo Si Hotel
Hu Guo Si Hotel
No 125 Hu Guo Si Street
Xicheng District 100035
Beijing
Tel: +86-10-66181113

Beijing

Beijing is the throbbing, bustling capital of the vast Chinese universe. It controls the whole country and little goes on without Beijing's authority. It's a great place to visit as a traveller as there's a huge amount to see and do. Take a tour of the Forbidden City and learn about the history of the Ming Dynasty, or discover the wonders of the Summer Palace. With so much on offer we recommend you allowing yourself plenty of time in this amazing city, it's worth allowing yourself a few extra days here before or after a trip with us.



Day 2: Sonid Youqi

Fri 14 Jun 2013

Today we leave the capital behind us as we begin our overland journey towards Mongolia. Today will be a long drive day (Approx 600 kms), we will try and get as close to Erlian as possible which is where we will cross the China/ Mongolia border. Overnight in a local hotel or wild camp if conditions allow.

Day 3: Sainshand

Sat 15 Jun 2013

Border information: Exit China at Erlian, Enter Mongolia at Zamyn-Uud.

This morning we cross the border into Mongolia. Please be aware that border procedures could take up to 5 hours here. Once we have made it into Mongolia we will continue our overland journey Sainshand (approx 200Km).

We will camp tonight.

Day 4: Choir

Sun 16 Jun 2013

This morning we may have the opportunity to visit the Dechinchoinkhorlin Monastery before we continue our drive towards Ulaanbaatar.

Overnight camping near Choir.

Day 5: Ulaanbaatar

Mon 17 Jun 2013

Welcome to Ulaanbaatar.

There will be group meeting at 18.00 hrs.

Your leader will leave a note at reception telling you where this meeting will take place. Your leader will collect your kitty and check your passport and insurance details at this meeting.

Tonight you will stay in a well located hotel.

Hotel for the night: Zaluuchuud Hotel
Zaluuchuud Hotel
Baga Toiruu-43,
Sukhbaatar district.
Tel: +976 11 325544

Ulaanbaatar

Mongolia's capital, Ulaanbaatar (affectionately known as UB), is a city where new meets old as elderly Mongolians in traditional dress mingle with the nation's young business elite. Mongolia's close relationship with the USSR is evident in the Soviet style architecture and city layout. Explore the city's many

museums to learn about the country's turbulent history, including the reign of the most famous of Mongolian historical figures - the feared and respected Genghis Khan. One of the most fascinating is the Intellectual Museum where you can learn about the history and culture of this intriguing country through puzzles, toys and magic tricks!

There are plenty of things to do and see in Ulaanbaatar, visit the Museum of Natural History with its excellent dinosaur display, the Fine Arts Museum with its impressive selection of local art and traditional works or the Winter Palace Museum of Bogd Khan, which is stocked full of fascinating artefacts. Mongolia's largest and most important monastery, the lively Gandan Khiid, is well worth a visit to learn about the main religion of Mongolia - Tibetan Buddhism.

Day 6: Ulaanbaatar

Tue 18 Jun 2013

This morning we head out on a guided tour to see some of Ulaanbaatar's best and most treasured sights including the Gandan Monastery and the National Museum. This afternoon is free to explore more of this city.

Overnight in a local hotel.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Guided tour of the Gandan Monastery and the National History Museum, Ulaanbaatar	Included in tour
Visit the Black Market with time for Shopping, Ulaanbaatar	
Intellectual Museum, Ulaanbaatar	USD 4
Winter Palace Museum of Bogd Khan, Ulaanbaatar	USD 6
Fine Arts Museum, Ulaanbaatar	USD 3
Museum of Natural History, Ulaanbaatar	USD 5
Cultural Performance, Ulaanbaatar	USD 10

Day 7: Baga Gazryn Chuluu

Wed 19 Jun 2013

After breakfast our overland adventure begins as we set off for the drive to Baga Gazryn Chuluu in the Gobi desert. These intriguing rock formations are worshipped by the locals who make pilgrimages here from time to time.

Tonight we will camp near the Rocks.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Visit Baga Gazryn Chuluu, the intriguing granite rock formations.	Included in tour

Baga Gazryn Chuluu

This granite rock formation in the middle of the dusty plains sheltered Zanabazar during conflicts between the Khalkh and Oirat Mongols. Later it was home to two 19th-century monks who left rock drawings in the area. The rocks are worshipped by locals who sometimes make pilgrimages here.

Mountains, trees, caves and mineral water springs surround Baga Gazryn Chuluu making it a great area to camp.

Day 8: South Gobi

Thu 20 Jun 2013

After a relaxing start to the day we continue our overland journey south through the Gobi Desert.

Tonight we will camp under the stars.

South Gobi

Taking up around a third of Mongolia the Gobi is not a desert in the usual sense but 33 different gobis according to soil composition and colour. Littered with dinosaur remains the Gobi is a veritable wilderness within a wilderness, offering vast spaces, dramatic scenery and a variety of weird and wonderful fauna. This is a place where "off the beaten track" is the norm not the exception.

Day 9: Yolyn Am

Fri 21 Jun 2013

Today we make our way along the sand dunes to Yolyn Am via Dalanzadgad to resupply. Yolyn Am is better known as the Gobi Glacier which is part of the Great Gobi National Park. After lunch we can hike down the valley to take a better look at the glacier and nearby wildlife.

Accommodation tonight is in a Ger camp.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Visit the spectacular Yolyn Am Ice Canyon.	Included in tour

Yolyn Am

Yolyn Am could be described as an "oasis" in the desert. Due to the steep valley walls, thick rock and lack of wind this area remains cool even in the height of Summer allowing a glacier to survive, hence the name Iced Valley". The waterfalls caused when it rains make this a very attractive area to numerous types of birds, the largest of which, the bearded vulture lends its name to the valleys second name of "vulture canyon". We will have an opportunity to experience this fantastic area of natural beauty.

Day 10: Bayanzag

Sat 22 Jun 2013

Moving on from Yolyn Am we overland to Bayan Zag, or better known as the flaming cliffs and renowned

worldwide for the number of dinosaur bones and eggs found in the area.

Tonight we will camp near the cliffs.

Bayanzag

Bayanzag is more commonly known as the 'Flaming Cliffs' and is renowned worldwide for the number of dinosaur bones and eggs found in the area.

The natural beauty of the surrounding landscape is a good reason to visit in its own right. It's a classic desert of rock, red sands and scrubs.

Day 11 to 12: Khongoryn Els

Sun 23 Jun to Mon 24 Jun 2013

Today we head to some of the largest and most spectacular sand dunes in Mongolia, known as Khongorin Els or the singing dunes. Tomorrow we have a full day for optional activities in and around Khongorin Els including an optional camel ride over the sand dunes.

Tonight we will wildcamp near the dunes and then move to a Ger camp tomorrow.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Camel Riding at the dunes.	USD 32

Khongoryn Els

Khongoryn Els are some of the largest and most spectacular sand dunes in Mongolia.

Stretching for 185 kilometres the classic dunes of Khongorin Els sometimes called the singing dunes are our next destination. Reaching heights over 20 metres these are true giants. Although slightly arduous a climb to the top will reward you with superb views.

Day 13: South Gobi

Tue 25 Jun 2013

Today we will overland through the heart of the Gobi camping en route.

Day 14: Arvaikheer

Wed 26 Jun 2013

Today we head to Arvaikheer and visit the local market in order to re-supply. We will then continue our drive setting up camp en route to The Orkhon Valley.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Visit the Ongii Monastery ruins.	Included in tour

Arvaikheer

A superb place to re-supply and a great base for our visit to the seventeenth century Ongiin Monastery, the largest in the Gobi until the purges of the 1930s.

Day 15: The Orkhon Valley

Thu 27 Jun 2013

We will spend the day in a beautiful valley surrounded by pine trees and if the weather is suitable we have the option to climb down to the bottom of the gorge.

Tonight we will stay in a Ger camp.

The Orkhon Valley

For some of the best examples of Mongolia's legendary historical sites, monuments and monasteries, as well as areas of breathtaking natural beauty, the Orkhon valley is of significant importance. The valley is the keeper of many religious and cultural antiquities; home to a number of sites that form a key part of Mongolia's varied and fascinating history.

Day 16: Tuvkhon Monastery

Fri 28 Jun 2013

Today we will visit the nearby waterfalls then hike to the Tuvkhon Monastery. The Monastery was established in the 1650's by Zanabazar, one of Mongolia's most respected religious leaders, views of the Orkhon Valley are worth the climb.

Tonight we will camp in the valley near the Monastery.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Visit the waterfall and hike to Tuvkhon Monastery (approx 2.5 hrs, first hour uphill).	Included in tour

Day 17 to 18: Tsenkher Hot Spring, Tsenkher

Sat 29 Jun to Sun 30 Jun 2013

After Breakfast our trip heads North crossing the Hangai Nuruu mountains through a series of passes until we reach the area Mongolians call 'the paradise of the horse herders' for its lush grasses and open valleys. Tomorrow we have a full day for optional activities including a horse ride and a visit to a nomadic family.

We will spend the next 2 nights in a nearby Ger camp.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Enjoy a relaxing soak in the natural springs.	

Tsenkher Hot Spring

On this stage of our journey we will be travelling and wild camping through some of Mongolia's most stunning scenery.

Spending two nights at the Tsenkher hot springs we will have a full day to go hiking. Then what could be nicer than soaking away the day's exertions in the indoor or outdoor hot springs, coming out of the ground at 86.5 degrees centigrade.

Day 19: Kharkhorin

Mon 01 Jul 2013

An early start as we head to Mongolia's earliest capital, Kharkhorin or otherwise known as Karakorum.

This afternoon we will visit Erdene Zuu, the first Buddhist Monastery in Mongolia. Tonight we will set up camp near the ancient site.

Activity	Approximate Cost
visit the ruins of the old city, the Erden Zuu monastery and other historical monuments in the area.	Included in tour

Kharkhorin

The fabled city of Kharkhorin began life as a mere command point for Mr. Genghis Khan's military conquest of China but later became the capital of his son, Ogodei Khan. The place is steeped in history this is a place where legends come to life. As recorded by the Venetian traveller Marco Polo it is perhaps best known to us as the capital of Genghis Khan's grandson, Master Kubilai Khan before he moved on to Dadu, modern day Beijing. We will spend a night here and be sure to visit the Erdene Zuu Monastery. Built out of the ruins of the city it was the first great northern Mongolian monastery. Largely destroyed in the communist purges of the 1930s the monastery is now a museum.

Day 20: Ogii Lake

Tue 02 Jul 2013

This morning, if time permits we will visit the ancient ruins of Karakorum then drive to Ogii Lake where we set up camp. Ogii Lake is famed for its great bird watching opportunities where it is not uncommon to spot at Swan Goose, White Spoonbill and Dalmatian Pelicans.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Visit the Kultigen monument and the Turkish Museum	Included in tour

Ogii Lake

This wonderful lake is a great place to spot the local birdlife. Cranes and ducks, among other species, migrate to the area around late April. The lake is also renowned for its fishing.

There are some beautiful areas around the lake that makes this a perfect location to camp Overnight.

Day 21: Khustain National Park

Wed 03 Jul 2013

Our destination today is the Khustain National Park. This park is famed for the wild Horse (Takhi) reintroduction project and now boasts more than 200 takhi.

Tonight we stay at a Ger camp.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Visit the Takhi (wild horse) reintroduction project.	Included in tour

Khustain National Park

Khustain National Park is also known as Khustain - Nuruu, or Birch Mountain Range.

The reserve is famed for reintroducing the *takhi*, Mongolia's wild horse. Today there are more than 200 takhi in Khustain as well as Maral (Asiatic red deer), steppe gazelle, deer, boar, manul (small wild cat) wolf and lynx.

Day 22 to 23: Terelj National Park

Thu 04 Jul to Fri 05 Jul 2013

Today we make our way to Terelj National park. This is one of the closest National parks to Ulaanbaatar. The alpine scenery is magnificent and there are many optional activities available here such as rafting, hiking and horse riding.

Camp for the next 2 nights in the National park.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Rafting and hiking opportunities along the river.	USD 53

Terelj National Park

Terelj National Park features unique rock formations, scenic valleys, a winding river, and restful groves of trees. Many nomads live in the park itself, where they find good grazing for their animals.

Opportunities to ride a horse, raft or kayak down the Terelj river are available in Terelji National Park.

Day 24: Ulaanbaatar

Sat 06 Jul 2013

After breakfast we will return to the capital (approx 2 hrs), visiting the Chinggis Khan Monument en route. The afternoon is free to explore.

Tonight we stay in a comfortable hotel.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Visit the Black Market with time for Shopping, Ulaanbaatar	
Visit the Chinggis Khan Monument, Ulaanbaatar	Included in tour

Day 25: Ulaanbaatar

Sun 07 Jul 2013

Today is your departure day. No activities are planned for today.

Visa Information:

Important Notes

The routes, activities and places visited described in these trip notes are intentions and are meant as a rough guide only.

We intend following the planned route but exact night stops cannot be guaranteed. It sometimes happens that we decide to make a change to our basic planned itinerary. This may be for a variety of reasons - climatic, road or bureaucratic conditions may demand it. By their very nature overland itineraries need to be flexible and the regions that we are travelling through are often unpredictable. We run adventure journeys in off the beaten track areas, often in areas without western infrastructure. You should expect that some these areas do not adhere to western safety standards.

ZBU130729A - Beijing to Ulaanbaatar

Please note that this trip will not run on Overland vehicles but will take the Trans-Mongolian train from Beijing to Ulaanbaatar. The itinerary for this trip only is as follows:

Day 1 - Beijing

Day 2 - Beijing, Free day for optional activities

Day 3 - Board our train out of China and travel into Mongolia - This is an overnight journey (approx 30 hrs) that includes a long border crossing during the night where our passports are processed. It's here that the bogies (train wheels) have to be changed because of the differing rail gauges used in China and Mongolia.

Day 4 - Ulaanbaatar - Arrive into Ulaanbaatar in the afternoon; the rest of the day is free.

Day 5 - Ulaanbaatar

ZBU130731B & ZBU130822B - Ulaanbaatar to Beijing

Please note that this trip will not run on Overland vehicles but will take the Trans-Mongolian train from Ulaanbaatar to Beijing. The itinerary for this trip only is as follows:

Day 1 - Ulaanbaatar, Free day for optional activities.

Day 2 - Ulaanbaatar, Free day for optional activities.

Day 3 - Ulaanbaatar, Free day for optional activities.

Day 4 - Overnight Train - We travel from Mongolia to China. The overnight journey (approx. 30 hours) leaves early in the morning and includes a long stop at the Mongolia-China border where the train changes bogies (wheels) due to the different rail gauges. The train may have a basic restaurant car but it is advisable to stock up at the supermarket before leaving Ulaanbaatar. Please note that you will not be accompanied by any Dragoman crew on this train.

Day 5 - Beijing - Arrive into Beijing in the afternoon; the rest of the day is free.

Please note that the kitty for this section is \$US 175.

Physical Preparation

Physical preparation for Asia Itineraries

In Asia you will need to be healthy enough to cope with extremes of climates from the hot deserts through to the colds of the high mountains. Overland travelling can be demanding - long, rough travel days, dusty conditions can be challenging to some. You will need to be fit enough to help every day with the camp chores (cooking, washing up, general camp set up) as well as putting up and taking down your own tent. There are some long driving days and some early morning starts. The step up into the overland vehicle, while not overly high can become tiring and you need to judge yourself to be physically fit enough to haul yourself up and down the step at least 8-10 times a day. By and large our Asia trips have a good range of hotel accommodation mixed up with camping so that life is not too rough.

Visa Information

Most countries we visit on our travels will require visas. Some are best obtained before you leave home and others can be obtained en-route. Whilst the ultimate responsibility for obtaining visas is yours, we will endeavour to assist you wherever possible.

The visa requirements for your trip vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. The information provided is given in good faith and we do try to keep the visa information as up to date as possible. Please be aware though that rules do change, often without prior warning, which is why it is important that you check for yourself.

For visas that are needed in advance you can choose to submit the applications directly to the relevant embassy /consulate. However our recommendation is that you use a visa agent to assist you with your applications. While this does increase the cost it will make the process much easier for you. Dragoman have teamed up with 'The Visa Machine' to create a safe, secure, hassle-free way of obtaining visas and visa advice. Our unique link within their website is designed to make the visa process as straightforward as possible. Simply go to <https://dragoman.thevisamachine.com> and click on your region of travel followed by your trip route and 'The Visa Machine' will advise you about not only the required visas but also the dates by which you should apply. 'The Visa Machine' can then assist you in the actual visa application thus taking all the worry and hassle out of the process. This should apply for ALL nationalities and countries of residence.

As you will need to submit your passport together with your applications, we recommend that you avoid making any travel plans in the weeks leading up to your departure. However if you do need to travel in this period please let us know as soon as possible so that we can help you work out the options for your visa application process.

China

Please apply in advance for your visa. The visa is valid for 3 - 6 months from the date of issue and has a validity of 30, 60 or 90 days. All nationalities should check with the respective embassies for more information and costs.

You require a single entry tourist visa for either 30, 60 or 90 days depending on your trip.

It is advised that you do not mention Kashgar, Urumqi, Turpan or Tibet anywhere on your chinese visa application form as this may lead to your application being rejected.

Please note Dragoman will require a clear photocopy of your passport as soon as possible after booking.

For further information and details of how to fill out your application form please visit <http://dragoman.thevisamachine.com/> and search for your trip.

Mongolia

A visa is required for travel to Mongolia for most nationalities. The USA, Singapore, Malaysia, Israel, Hong Kong and Cuba have a visa free agreement with Mongolia.

Most embassies do not require a letter of invitation for a Mongolian visa however should you be required to present one with your visa application please contact us. There may be a fee for this service.

You will need to apply for a single entry & exit tourist visa that covers the duration of your stay in Mongolia. Visas are usually **valid for 3 months from the date of issue.**

Visas are **not** available on arrival at any land borders into Mongolia. Due to changes in visa regulations we are no longer able to provide visa invitations for visa on arrival at the Chinggis Khan International Airport.

Please note that if you are on a longer combination trip i.e. Istanbul to Mongolia or Bangkok to Mongolia for example, we advise you to obtain a visa for Mongolia in Beijing en route with the help of your crew.

Personal Spending

Based on the range that previous travellers have spent on this trip, we recommend you allow between a minimum of US\$15 and a maximum of US\$30 per day for Central Asia, China and Burma and between a minimum of US\$10 and a maximum of US\$20 for India, Nepal and South East Asia.

This will cover individual expenses such as drinks, meals whilst out and also when staying in hotels, souvenirs, tips and personal permits.

Please note: For trips in Southern India that occur over Christmas and New Year please allow approximately **\$130USD** extra on the kitty for seasonal increases in accommodation costs

Money exchange

Mongolia

The official currency of Mongolia is the Tugrik (MNT).

Tugrik may only be obtained within Mongolia. The safest way to carry your money is as traveller's cheques which can be exchanged at most banks and currency exchange points in Ulaanbaatar. The easiest currencies to exchange are USD and EUR, although it is possible to exchange RUB, CNY and other currencies at some exchange points. Larger denomination notes often attract a better exchange rate.

Please be aware that there are no reliable banking or exchange facilities outside of Ulaanbaatar. Major credit cards may be accepted in some shops and restaurants in the capital. Some banks will allow cash advances against a credit card but cash withdrawals are subject to a 5% or more service charge.

In Ulaanbaatar you may be able to find ATMs that accept international cards and use them to withdraw local currency; however these should not be relied on as your sole financial source. Some souvenir sellers and tourist restaurants may accept USD or EUR as payment but all other purchases in Mongolia must be made in local currency.

What else you need to know

Pre and post trip accommodation and connecting flights

At Dragoman we believe you should make the most of the places you visit, so if you would like to see more of your joining or finishing point cities, why not book additional accommodation to extend your stay. Dragoman can take away the hassle of time zones and language barriers by making the booking for you. This accommodation is only available at the joining or finishing city of your trip, immediately before or after the trip you are travelling on.

While Dragoman is happy to assist with booking your pre and post trip accommodation, it is important that you understand you may be able to book your own room at a cheaper rate directly through the hotel or on the internet.

Our additional accommodation prices are based on the hotel's rate plus an administration fee. Please note our rates do not reflect last minute walk in rates or internet specials.

We can also book arrival airport transfers for you as long as we have your flight arrival details. These are normally payable in cash upon arrival, however we do have pre paid transfers in a few destinations.

Please contact our reservations team for details of the accommodation and transfers that we can offer as not all hotels offer this service.

Accommodation on tour

Dragoman overland trips are designed for shared accommodation, whether camping or staying in hotels and therefore do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers will share with people of the same sex for the duration of the trip, in accommodation ranging from twin to multi-share. The type and variety of accommodation is determined by conditions on each of our routes. The campsites will range from rather basic to those with excellent facilities, including swimming pools, restaurants and bars. In some cases it may also be possible to upgrade locally to bungalows, lodges or even tree-houses. One of the highlights of overlanding is that in more remote areas we will wild camp. This allows us to get far away from the tourist crowds to some beautiful, secluded spots. We will also arrange as many village or local homestays as possible, allowing us to get close to indigenous populations and ensures our money stays within local communities.

Group size?

The maximum group size we take on our overland journeys ranges from 19 to 22 depending on the geographical location, however the average number of passengers is more likely to be around 16.

Please note that there is an overlap of 2 trips in Zanzibar. This means a group starting a trip in Nairobi for example will visit Zanzibar at the same time as groups starting their trips in Dar es Salaam. In practical terms this means there could be up to 44 group members in Zanzibar at the same time.

Who travels with Dragoman?

Our passengers come from around the world and are always an interesting mix of nationalities and ages. On average there is a pretty even split, males to females and between solo travellers, couples and small groups of friends. We believe that overlanding should be open to as many people as possible and so although we have a minimum age limit of 18, as long as you are fit, healthy and passionate about travel, we are happy to take you, whatever your age is. One

of the beauties of group travel is the camaraderie and friendships that are formed along the way and as well as the variety of people that you will meet.

Our Community

At any time before or after you book you can join our community - Dragoland. This is a great place to ask questions before you travel and catch up with your fellow travellers once your trip has finished. You can share photos, videos and stories You can also download a selection of free travel apps. See the home page to sign in, it's free and easy.

We also have a Facebook page where travellers regularly swap info with each other - you can [join here](#)

Our crew and guides

Our crew are passionate about travel and always up for adventure. It takes someone special to become a Dragoman leader. Our crew undergo the most intensive training program of all overland companies, spending 10 weeks learning the ropes at our base in Suffolk, UK and then up to six months on the road as a trainee. On all Dragoman overlanding trips two western crew who are responsible for the group and the overall organisation will accompany you. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad knowledge of the places visited and to offer suggestions of things to do and see. In East and Southern Africa we will also have an African camp master/cook who is in charge of running the camp and organising all of the meals. Their knowledge of the local produce makes shopping at the markets great fun and you will learn how to prepare and cook some unusual dishes. In the rest of Africa, South America and the majority of Central Asia and China we use local guides who may stay with us for just a few hours or will actually travel with us for some or all of the journey. In these cases they become a third crew member and are able to offer their local knowledge as well as a real insight into the lives of the local people.

(If travelling in East & Southern Africa, also please see the note about our code-share crew)

Your tour leader has a duty of care to all of their passengers and therefore they have the authority to ask passengers to leave the trip if they require medical assistance, are behaving in an anti-social manner or refuse to comply with local laws and customs. In all matters relating to the trip, the leader's decision will be final and we appreciate your respect of this.

Medical conditions

We ask all of our passengers to declare any pre-existing medical conditions and in some cases you will be asked to complete one of our medical questionnaires. For trips that travel to areas of high altitude we also require all passengers to complete an altitude questionnaire. The ratings for each trip are a good indication of how challenging they are and in some cases passengers should be prepared for some long driving days and possible limited facilities. We are always happy to give extra advice if you have additional concerns.

Vaccinations

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to region and recent bulletins issued by health authorities. It is essential to get the latest advice on the region(s) you are planning to travel in. It is essential that you check with either your doctor or a travel clinic in good time before you travel.

In the UK we have been working with Nomad Travel for many years and their website has comprehensive, up to date vaccination and health information. Dragoman customers will receive a 10% discount off all vaccinations given at [Nomad Travel clinics](#).

A good source of up to date information is the World Health Organisation - <http://www.who.int/en/>

Malaria

Get expert advice before travelling about types of malaria pills and take them as instructed. Recommended types do change from time to time and from area to area. Consult your vaccination centre for the most up-to-date requirements

The mosquito usually bites between the hours of dusk and dawn and so covering up by wear long-legged and long-sleeved clothing, preferably light coloured and buttoned at the wrists can help. Do not sleep without closing windows, tent doors or, if sleeping out, use a mosquito net. Wear repellent applied directly to the skin or soaked into clothing.

Treating clothes and mosquito nets with a Permetherin solution provides significant protection. It should be available at most travel stores. Mosquito coils are useful on still nights, in hotel rooms but cannot be used inside the tents.

Meals and group participation

On an overland journey you are more than just a passenger, you're part of the crew, pitching in to set up camp, shop for food, cook and generally help out. We operate a rota system, dividing the group into smaller units of 5 or 6 people, so that these duties are shared equally amongst the group. These jobs will include things like collecting water and

firewood, loading the back locker, supervising the kitty and food stores etc. While camping on overland journeys, all meals will be included in the kitty and this means that you will be working as a group to prepare meals and cook for your group. (On trips south of Nairobi we have a cook on board the truck, however you will still be required to help prepare meals). If you have any dietary requirements please tell us at the time of booking and also remind your crew at your welcome meeting. A typical camp breakfast might be toast with spreads, cereal and something hot such as eggs or pancakes as well as tea and coffee. Lunch is almost always a sandwich heaped high with healthy salad and assorted fillings, with fruit to follow. Dinner might be a BBQ, risotto, pasta dish and there is always the chance to try some local cooking. Generally our passengers find the more they put into a trip, the more they benefit from it.

Responsible tourism & code of conduct

Dragoman is committed to ensuring that we have a positive impact on local communities and that we implement policies to minimise any negative impact on the local environment. We are dedicated to making sure that we adopt a responsible attitude to the areas through which we travel and believe that our trips should benefit the local people and their environment. Dragoman recognises that we are guests of local communities and strive to make these communities our partners, so that they benefit directly from our visit.

You can find full details of Dragoman's responsible tourism policy linked from the home page. All passengers are required to obey all laws of the countries through which we pass. This particularly applies to the smuggling of contraband and possession of narcotic drugs, firearms, antiquities and ivory. Any passenger found contravening such laws or customs may be required to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price.

Overland travel and security

One of the real advantages of overland travel is that the vehicle provides a very real level of security when travelling. There is no doubt that a properly equipped overland vehicle, with safes, fully lockable doors and windows is an obvious advantage when travelling in much of the world. We recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt whilst travelling for the safe-keeping of your passport, air tickets, cash and other valuable items (although most of these can be locked in the safe whilst you are on the trip) and advise passengers to leave any valuable jewellery, watches etc at home. Generally speaking, you will not be travelling on local public transport and will have the added security of travelling in a group with experienced crew on hand to offer advice.

Please note: Any personal effects that are left on the truck, even if they are stored in the safe, are left at your own risk and Dragoman cannot be held responsible for any damage or theft that may occur.

The safety of our passengers, leaders and operators is a major priority of Dragoman. With this in mind we monitor world events very closely. By the very nature of the adventure travel that we take, there are risks and hazards that are inherent in our itineraries. Dragoman makes operational decisions based on informed advice from a number of sources:

The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice

Reports from other travel companies and local suppliers

Leaders reports from off the road

Local contacts we have built up over 29 years of experience

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. You should always make yourself aware of the travel advice before you book and again before you travel. Below are links to some of the websites

Britain. <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/travel-advice-by-country>

Australia. <http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/>

New Zealand. <http://www.safetravel.govt.nz/>

United States. http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html

Canada. http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/menu-eng.asp

Dragoman has comprehensive passenger liability protection and tour operator insurance. These policies have total indemnities of £3,000,000 and £10,000,000 respectively. This is in addition to local vehicle insurance and your personal travel insurance.

Emergency contact

We have a dedicated 24 hour telephone number which should only be used once you have left the UK and in the event of a real emergency. Should you need to call the number, we will do what we can to help but please bear in mind that real progress or action may not be possible until normal office hours.

If your flight is delayed or cancelled, please let us know and then make your way to the joining hotel as instructed in these trip notes. If you cannot get through leave a message and a contact number as these will be regularly checked and the crew informed if necessary.

Emergency Number: +44 (0) 7985106564.

Insurance

It is a condition of booking that you have comprehensive travel insurance. Without evidence of valid travel insurance you will not be allowed to start the trip.

Whatever policy you choose, you must ensure that it is designed for adventure/overland travel. As such it must cover you for adventure activities such as white water rafting, trekking, horse-riding and that the 24 Hour Emergency Assistance Company must be experienced in handling situations in developing countries - for example they have the ability to arrange repatriation from remote areas such as the Sahara or if you were trekking in the Andes. Please double check if you have annual travel and/or credit card policies to ensure they have the cover you require, as many of these policies are not able to cope with adventure travel to remote areas. We recommend that any policy has the following minimum levels of cover: Medical (incl. repatriation) £5,000,000 Personal Liability £5,000,000 Cancellation and Curtailment £5,000 Loss of Baggage, personal effects, money and other inclusions are down to personal choice.

Issues on the trip

While we always endeavour to provide the best possible holiday experience, due to the nature of travel and the areas we visit sometimes things can and do go wrong. Should any issue occur while you are on your trip it is imperative that you discuss this with your group leader or our local partner straight away so that they can do their best to rectify the problem and save any potential negative impact on the rest of your trip.

We recognise that there may be times when your group leader may not be able to resolve a situation to your satisfaction. If this is the case please contact our customer relations department on customer_relations@dragoman.co.uk. You may also choose to provide details in your feedback questionnaire which we ask you to complete at the end of your trip but we do ask you to be aware that it is very difficult for us to provide any practical help after the trip is complete.

Passports

Check that your passport will still be valid for 6 months after the end of the trip - this is important as some countries WILL refuse entry to anyone whose passport is due to expire. A temporary or "visitor's" passport is not valid on our trips. You will need to provide us with your passport details prior to departing for your trip. If you change your passport please remember to inform us.

Luggage & Kit List

Although you will not have to carry your main bag long distances you will need to help load and unload them onto the truck. For this reason we recommend that you use a backpack or soft bag rather than a heavy suitcase. During your trip your main luggage will be kept in the back locker so you will also need a small daypack. This can be used to carry your camera, water bottle and other personal effects for daily use.

The size of baggage that can be brought on this tour is limited by the locker space on the truck. Different trucks have different-sized lockers however to be safe we recommend that your bag be no larger than 66cm deep, 30cm wide, and 30cm high. The weight limit for luggage on all trucks is maximum 20kg. Backpacks should not have an external frame unless it can be easily removed and stored separately to avoid damaging other people's luggage.

Your clothes and equipment should be appropriate for the conditions you are travelling in. On overland trips Dragoman will provide all camping equipment apart from sleeping bags and ground mats (except on routes between Nairobi and Cape Town where ground mats are provided).

The clothes and equipment should be appropriate for the conditions you are travelling in, which will vary depending on which part of the world you're heading to. On overland trips Dragoman will provide all camping equipment apart from sleeping bags and ground mats*, so you'll need to bring those with you. Think about the climate and altitude of the areas you'll be travelling to, there's nothing worse than being cold at night so it's worth investing in a decent sleeping bag if it's likely to get cold. And remember even when it's warm during the day, it can often get cold at night, particularly in desert regions.

**Ground mats are provided on our non "in-depth" overland trips that run in South and East Africa, between Nairobi and Cape Town.*

For a general idea of what you need this list provides a guide:

- Sleeping bag - Check the expected climate en route. Nights in desert and mountain regions can be very cold in winter months
- Mattress or compressed foam
- A day pack is useful for short hikes in the countryside, wandering around cities, etc and also for keeping inside the vehicle for items used during the day
- 2 sets of comfortable travelling clothes (light, easily washable cotton clothes are best)
- 1 set of casual but smart clothes for evenings out. Women should bring a skirt that covers their knees and a scarf for visiting places of worship
- 2 pairs of shorts
- Sun hat or warm hat if trekking
- 1 pair of sunglasses
- Warm sweater/fleeces
- 1 waterproof jacket with hood
- 1 pair of comfortable walking shoes/boots (or ankle height canvas jungle boots)
- 1 pair of sandals or flip-flops
- Underwear and socks (thermals are also a good idea if you are travelling to altitude or to the desert as it can get very cold at night)
- Swimwear
- 2 small towels
- Washing kit, including a small mirror
- Clothes washing detergent, small scrubbing brush & washing line (just a length of cord)
- Head torch/flashlight with spare batteries & bulbs (only the 3 standard sizes of round 1.5v batteries are widely available en route)
- Passport photos (average of 2 per country for which visas will be applied for en route)
- Good water bottle at least 1 litre
- A pouch or money belt worn inside your clothing, or unobtrusive pocket sewn into the inside of a pair of loose fitting trousers, is a must.
- Alarm clock
- Pocket calculator (useful when exchanging money)
- Writing materials & notebook/diary
- Multi purpose knife
- Cotton sheet sleeping bag (or sheet folded and sewn up on 2 sides). It will help keep your sleeping bag clean, and can be used on its own on warm nights.
- Mosquito net - The tents supplied by us have mosquito netting and you will only need a net if you think you will sleep out under the stars a lot of the time.
- "Wet Ones" (moistened tissues) and hand gel
- Toilet paper - this can be purchased almost everywhere en-route but one roll is worth packing
- Assorted sized plastic bags - protects clothing and equipment from dust and damp

For a comprehensive kit lists take a look at the Dragoman kit list that Nomad Travel have created. Dragoman customers will receive a 10% discount on all equipment purchased either online or in store. Click to see the kit lists www.nomadtravel.co.uk/kitlist/overlanders-kit-list

Water

The sale of bottled water contributes to an enormous environmental problem around the world. In addition to the water in bottles, the production of a 1 litre plastic bottle takes 2 liters of water and 200ml of oil. A large proportion end up in limited landfill or discarded in waterways and natural environments.

Please avoid the purchase of bottled water by using the chemically sterilized water stored in the purpose built storage tank or in water jerry cans in your Overland vehicle. You are free to refill your bottle as many times a day as you like. You are helping the environment and your hip pocket!

Personal medical kit

All of our trucks have a fully stocked medical kit onboard for use in emergency situations only. Therefore in addition to this we recommend that you purchase your own personal medical kit. In the UK we have teamed up with Nomad Travel Stores and Clinics to produce the Dragoman Travel Medical Kit. It has been designed in conjunction with the truck kits and contains everything you would need for any minor accidents. For more details please visit their website:

nomadtravel.co.uk/catalog/view/dragoman-medical-kit

Electrical equipment

Your vehicle will be equipped with a 12 volt socket so to charge your iPod, MP3 player, camera, laptop and mobile phone you will need a DC 12 volt adapter - the type that can be used from a cigarette lighter in your car. Please be aware that only one piece of equipment can be charged at a time and it will not be allowed if there is a risk of running the vehicle's batteries low. Batteries may also be recharged from hotel room wall sockets and the majority of the campsites we stay at have electricity points so please bring along your normal charging adapters as well. You will need to ensure that you have the correct country adaptor for your specific charger.

The kitty

The Kitty is a group fund paid separately from the trip price at the start of your trip which covers all things that the whole group does, such as:

- Hotel accommodation and campsite fees
- Meals whilst camping (not in hotels)
- Activities listed as included (e.g. National Park entrances, excursions and local guides).

It is an amount that each passenger puts into a central fund and is monitored by the Dragoman crew. It's payable in full at the start of your trip, and in instalments at the start of each individual trip on combination trips

The kitty system is very unique to over landing as it allows us to have flexibility on the road. You can see exactly how your money is being spent and ensure that you are getting the best value by buying locally.

The kitty advertised in the brochure is an estimate at the time of printing. Local inflation and costs vary throughout the year and so we review kitties on a monthly basis. Once you book your trip it is very important that you check our website on a regular basis and just before departure for any changes to the kitty amount.

Your kitty can be paid in a mixture of US Dollar cash and local currency and most of our travellers choose to bring a cash passport with them for withdrawing local currency (you can visit www.cashpassport.com for further information on these). This is a very secure way of carrying your money whilst travelling. You treat them exactly like an ATM card and draw out local currency from an ATM to give to your leader within each country.

Travellers cheques have become increasingly difficult to change around the world with passengers and our leaders experiencing huge frustration and numerous hours spent trying to find a bank which will change travellers cheques. For this reason we no longer accept them on our trips.

Continuing your trip

Having an amazing trip and met a great group of people? Having too much fun to go home yet? If on your trip you decide you would like to continue, then why not speak to your trip leader who can advise you of the cost and availability of continuing your journey.

Contingency emergency fund

Sometimes, civil or political unrest, or reasons beyond Dragoman's control (e.g. a natural disaster), can mean that an itinerary is disrupted and we have to make a contingency plan. This may involve hiring alternate transport or even the whole group flying over an area. Although Dragoman will help organise travel arrangements, in circumstances outside Dragoman's control you should be prepared to contribute towards the costs and therefore we ask you to bring along a 'Contingency Fund' of USD400. In almost all cases trips run smoothly and this fund is therefore never used. We also recommend that you take along an internationally recognised credit or charge card with a decent limit in case of emergencies, such as medical treatment en route, or even the need to be repatriated; though these occurrences are rare. Remember that travel insurance policies usually only refund you for expenses after you have already paid out.

Tipping

Tipping is entirely voluntary. The Dragoman crew may be travelling with you for many weeks and usually they become good friends with most members of the group. It is sometimes easy to forget that they do work hard to ensure that you do have a great trip. If you feel you would like to tip them, they certainly would appreciate it. On a number of our trips, we also use a local guide as well as our own Dragoman crew. These guides live and travel with you through their home country and it is usual to tip them when they leave. We recommend USD10 to USD15 per person.

Currencies & Cash

It is not really worth trying to buy local currencies before you travel. Do also bear in mind that many countries have strict regulations about the amount of their own local currency you are allowed to import - if you are found with amounts in excess of the allowed amounts, it may well be confiscated!

For trips in Turkey, South East Asia, India and Nepal a sensible mix of cash and ATM cards is best. However, most of our past passengers have said they wished they had been told to bring more cash. Apart from the convenience of being able to change money in many more places, you will sometimes get a much better exchange rate for cash.

For trips in Central Asia, China, Burma and Mongolia please refer to the money exchange notes.

You should take a mixture of denomination notes. Banks and moneychangers in most countries will now only accept bills with a metallic strip running top to bottom of the bill and which are dated from 2003 or later. You should not take worn or damaged notes, or any that have been written on. Cash machines are readily available in most areas but are not always reliable therefore we recommend that you do not rely on them as your only source of cash. Credit cards such as Visa, MasterCard and American Express are the most commonly accepted, but be prepared for very high commission charges. Please do not rely on cards for daily use, as they are not always accepted outside of larger towns and cities. Please bring a mixture of small and large denominations as in more remote areas it can be hard to change amounts over \$50.

These trip notes have been compiled to help you prepare for your journey, once you have booked. They include the full itinerary and dates, information and kit lists, meeting hotels, insurance, vaccinations, visas, and other information that will help you get ready for your trip.

Please ensure you have an up to date version of these Trip Notes

These trip notes were printed on 23/05/2013