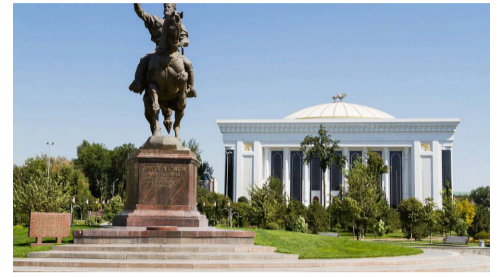
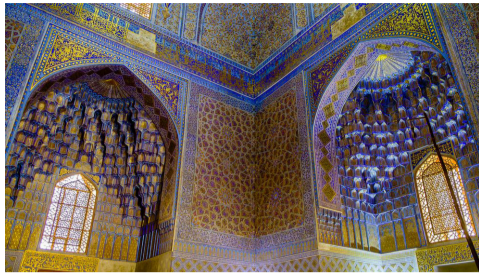




# SAMARKAND, THE TURKMEN & GOBI DESERTS, (EHWM)

Ashgabat to Ulaanbaatar 54 Days, departing 18th April 2021



## TRIP OVERVIEW

**Trip Style:** Overlanding

**Route:** Ashgabat to Ulaanbaatar

**Duration:** 54 Days

**Transport:** Overland Expedition Vehicle, Jeep, Russian Bus

**Accommodation:** Comfortable Hotel 12 nights  
Camping without facilities 3 nights  
Basic Hotel 12 nights  
Yurt Camp 7 nights  
Homestay 5 nights  
Wild Camp 14 nights

**Meals:** Breakfasts x 45, Lunches x 25, Dinners x 29

**Physical Challenge:**

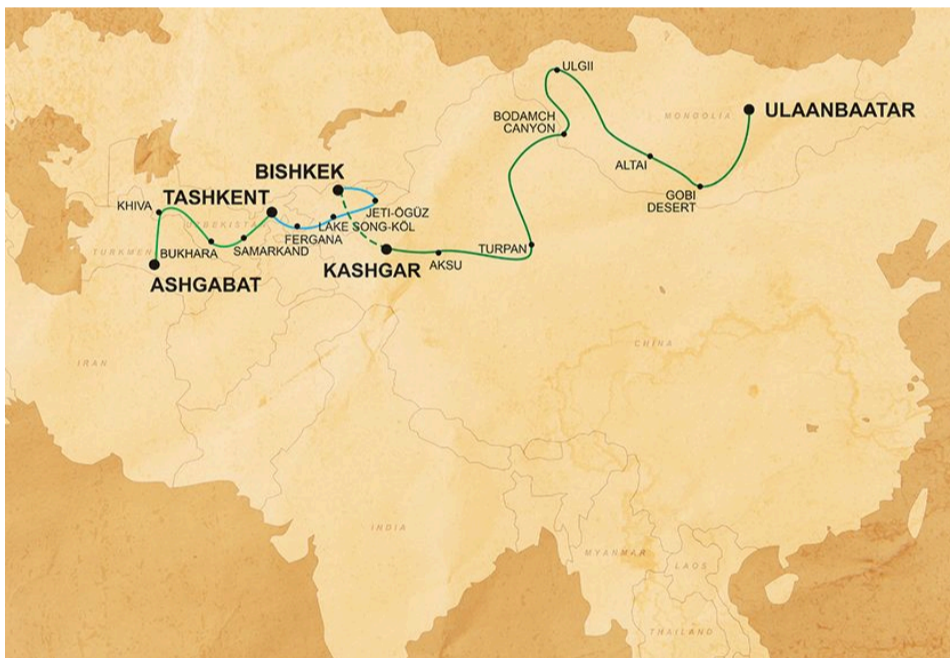


Depending on the trip, activities may include treks of 3-4 hours at altitude or across hilly terrain, multi-day treks at sea level, horseback riding, canoeing and other adventurous activities. A moderate level of fitness is required.

**Lifestyle Challenge:**



This is a fairly challenging trip; you may well be travelling at high altitudes, across deserts or through cold and windy or hot and steamy areas. The terrain and roads may be rough and the facilities can be very basic or non-existent. There may be some long drive days followed by wild camps, and physically and mentally it can be tough, but there will be some rest days and time to relax as well.



# DAILY ITINERARY

## Day 1 - Ashgabat (18th April 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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**Border Information:** if joining in Ashgabat, you will most likely enter Turkmenistan at Ashgabat International Airport (IATA code: ASB).

There will be a pre-departure meeting at 10:00am - please look out for a note from your leader at the reception of the joining hotel upon arrival with more details about this important meeting.

After the meeting we will have an included tour of the city of Ashgabat using local minibuses.

Please note that many of the options listed below will only be possible for those with extra time in Ashgabat before the start of your trip with us - please contact the Sales team if you would like to book pre-tour accommodation with us to have extra time exploring Ashgabat. If arriving at Ashgabat airport you will also need to have a confirmed arrival transfer and representative from our local supplier to meet you at the airport. Please contact your sales agent for prices and to book.

*\*Important note - any tobacco products are practically illegal in Turkmenistan, so please do not bring them or use them in Turkmenistan. Also please do not bring any medicines containing tramadol, codeine, temazepam, morphine or opiates to Central Asia. These are illegal in all circumstances in most of Central Asia and you will risk arrest. If in doubt about a particular medicine, please do not bring it. See the notes at the bottom for more details.\**

Accommodation: Ak Altyn Hotel A""

## Day 2 - Darvaza (19th April 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Today we set off north from Ashgabat and head into the Karakum Desert. We will have an included side trip to the amazing flaming Darvaza Gas Crater (also known as the 'Door to Hell!').

We will wild camp in the deserts near Darvaza Crater tonight.

## Day 3 - Kunye Urgench (20th April 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Today we will continue our overland journey north across the Karakum. We will visit the Kunye Urgench ruins towards the end of the day.

## Day 4 - Khiva (21st April 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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**Border Information:** Exit Turkmenistan at Shovot, enter Uzbekistan at Nijazov.

This morning we will visit the markets in the border town of Dashoguz, before driving across the border into Uzbekistan and continue to the beautiful historic town of Khiva.

## Day 5 - Khiva (22nd April 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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After breakfast we have a guided tour of the ancient city of Khiva. In the afternoon we will have plenty of free time to further explore this wonderfully preserved Khanate town.

## Day 6 - Bukhara (23rd April 2021)

Today we will have a full day's drive to the fascinating city of Bukhara, where we will spend the next 3 nights.

## Day 7 - Bukhara (24th April 2021)

Today we will have a guided tour of Bukhara and the surrounding area, including the Ismail Samani Mausoleum, Kalon Mosque, Zindon Prison and the Ark Fortress.

## Day 8 - Bukhara (25th April 2021)

Spend the day exploring this incredible historic city and its surroundings further and soaking up the atmosphere.

## Day 9 - Kyzylkhum Desert (26th April 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Today we will drive into the Kyzylkhum Desert near the town of Nurata. In the afternoon we will have the opportunity to head out on an optional camel ride into the desert!

In the Kyzylkhum Desert we will stay in a desert yurt camp.

## Day 10 - Samarkand (27th April 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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This morning we will spend some time exploring the Nurata Hills with the option of taking a dip in Lake Ajdar Kul. After lunch we will drive to Samarkand where we will stay for the next 3 nights.

## Day 11 - Samarkand (28th April 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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Today we will have a guided tour of the incredible historic city of Samarkand and the surrounding area, including the Registan, Ulug Beg Observatory, Bibi-Khanym Mosque and Shah-I-Zinda.

## Day 12 - Samarkand (29th April 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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We will have a free day today with the chance to wander the streets and delve into this beautiful city and its history further.

## Day 13 - Tashkent (30th April 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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This morning we will have a little more free time to explore more of Samarkand. After lunch we will drive to the Uzbek capital of Tashkent.

## Day 14 - Tashkent (1st May 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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Today we will have a free day to explore Tashkent.

## Day 15 - Tashkent (2nd May 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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**Border Information:** if joining in Tashkent, you will most likely enter Uzbekistan at Tashkent International Airport (IATA code: TAS).

There will be a pre-departure meeting at 10:00am - please look out for a note from your leader at the reception of the joining hotel upon arrival with more details about this important meeting. Your leader will need to carefully check your visas at this initial meeting.

The rest of the day is free to explore the Uzbek capital.

Please note that many of the options listed below will only be possible for those with extra time in Tashkent before the start of your trip with us - please contact the Sales team if you would like to book pre-tour accommodation with us to have extra time exploring Tashkent.

*\*Important note - do not bring any medicines containing tramadol, codeine, temazepam, morphine or opiates to Central Asia. These are illegal in all circumstances in most of Central Asia and you will risk arrest. If in doubt about a particular medicine, please do not bring it. See the notes at the bottom for more details.\**

*\*Another important note - please be aware that all itineraries in Kyrgyzstan are highly weather-dependent. The itinerary described in these notes are a statement of best intention, but we must approach each trip in Kyrgyzstan with a large degree of flexibility, as our leaders and local guides will have to 'play things by ear' according to the local conditions and weather. In low season certain routes become impossible and it may become far too cold to camp - in all cases there are fantastic and well-tried alternatives in place which means we can always run an excellent and comprehensive trip here, but please do not treat the exact details of the itinerary listed here as gospel - thanks for your understanding!\**

## Day 16 - Fergana Valley (3rd May 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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This morning we travel in local transport over the Kamchik Pass to Kokand, where we will have the opportunity to visit the Khudayar Khan's Palace and the nearby Margilan Silk Factory before completing the journey to Fergana.

The truck must pass over the Kamchik Pass without passengers and will rejoin us this evening in Fergana City.

## Day 17 - Arslanbob (4th May 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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**Border information:** Exit Uzbekistan at Andijon, enter Kyrgyzstan at Dustlik.

This morning we leave Uzbekistan behind and make our way into the magical mountain kingdom of Kyrgyzstan!

Once we have crossed the border we continue our journey to Arslanbob in Kyrgyzstan's Fergana Valley - if we are delayed at the border we may choose to stay in the closer town of Jalalabad instead.

## Day 18 - Arslanbob (5th May 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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Today we have a free day to explore the local area. There will be options to do an all day hike to a big waterfall or alternatively do an optional horseride through the Walnut Forest

## Day 19 - Kyrgyz Fergana Valley (6th May 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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We will spend the next 2 days overlanding through the stunning and remote Kyrgyz Fergana Valley, stopping often to admire the views and perhaps take some impromptu hikes in the hills and countryside. Tonight we will find a wild camp close to Toktugal Lake. Please note that trips running in low season (May to mid-June and October to November), we may not be able to camp if temperatures are too low, in which case we will stay in local guesthouses along the route instead.

## Day 20 - Kyrgyz Fergana Valley (7th May 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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We will have another day of scenic driving as we make our way to our second wild camp at Karakuchi Gorge

## Day 21 - Son-Kol Lake (8th May 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

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Today we complete the drive to the incredible Song Köl Lake, where we will spend the next two nights.

We will have free time here to explore the area, and to enjoy some optional activities including hiking and horse-riding.

*Please note that trips during the low season will not be able to visit Song Köl Lake, as temperatures will be below freezing, the road will be snowed over, and there will be no yurts to stay in! Instead we will likely stay in yurts on the southern shore of Lake Issyk Köl.*

## Day 22 - Son-Kol Lake (9th May 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

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We will have free time in Song Kul Lake today to explore the area, and to enjoy some optional activities including hiking and horse-riding.

## Day 23 - Kochkor (10th May 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

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Today we drive to the small village of Kochkor, where we stay in local family-run guesthouses and enjoy traditional Kyrgyz hospitality!

Whilst here we will visit a small museum and women's felt making cooperative that produces 'shyrdaks', the felt carpets for which Kyrgyzstan is renowned. We may also have the opportunity here to see some excellent local musicians playing traditional Kyrgyz folk music and to see how a yurt is put up!

## Day 24 - Jeti-Oguz Valley (11th May 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Today we drive along the southern shore of Lake Issyk K l and up into the mountains to the alpine trekking region of Jeti Oguz. En route we will have an included demonstration from a local 'eagle hunter'.

The next day we will have a free day to hike in the incredible scenery here, or take an optional horse ride with some of the local nomads!

*Please note that on trips in the low season we may not be able to camp in Jeti Oguz due to low temperatures. If this is the case, we will stay for 1 night in a local hotel at the base of Jeti Oguz Valley (allowing time for some day walks) and then move via a stunning and incredible drive up a mountain in a Russian 4x4 truck to Altyn Arashan, a hot spring development in a stunning alpine setting, staying in dormitory accommodation.*

## Day 25 - Jeti-Oguz Valley (12th May 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Today is a free day where we will have the chance to hike in the incredible scenery around Jeti Oguz, or take an optional horse ride with some of the local nomads!

## Day 26 - Karakol (13th May 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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Today we will move on from Jeti Oguz or Altyn Arashan to the Russian-style town of Karakol, where we will have a free afternoon to explore and relax!

## Day 27 - Chong Kemin Valley (14th May 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Today we will drive to the northern shore of Lake Issyk K l and visit the ancient petroglyphs at Cholpon Ata. We will then continue to the beautiful area of Chong Kemin where we will spend 2 nights.

In Chong Kemin we will wild camp. If it is too cold or simply preferred by the group, we may choose to camp in the grounds of a guesthouse in Ashu, a village in the Chong Kemin valley, where there could be the possibility to upgrade to rooms.

## Day 28 - Chong Kemin Valley (15th May 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

---

We will spend another night in Chong Kemin today and will have free time to explore and hike in this stunning area, or to get involved in an optional white water rafting excursion!

## Day 29 - Bishkek (16th May 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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Today we have a short drive to the Kyrgyz capital of Bishkek, with the opportunity to visit the Burana Tower en route. We will have free time to relax and explore the city upon arrival.

## Day 30 - Bishkek (17th May 2021)

**Border Information:** If joining in Bishkek, you will most likely enter Kyrgyzstan at Bishkek Manas International Airport ( IATA code: FRU ).

There will be a pre-departure meeting at 10.00am - please look out for a note from your leader at the reception of the joining hotel upon arrival with more details about this important meeting. Your leader will need to carefully check your visas at this initial meeting as well.

The remainder of the day is free to explore the relaxed and atmospheric city of Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan.

Please note many of the options listed below will only be possible for those with extra time in Bishkek before the start of your trip with us - please contact your sales agent if you would like to book pre-tour accommodation with us to have extra time exploring Bishkek.

*\*Important note - do not bring any medicines containing tramadol, codeine, temazepam, morphine or opiates to Central Asia. These are illegal in all circumstances in most of Central Asia and you will risk arrest. If in doubt about a particular medicine, please do not bring it. See the notes at the bottom for more details.\**

## Day 31 - Tash Rabat (18th May 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Today we will have a full day's journey south to Tash Rabat, once a key staging post on the Silk Road close to the Kyrgyzstan-China border. During our time here we will visit an ancient caravanserai and have some time to explore the surrounding area.

In Tash Rabat we will wild camp. In cold weather ( or if simply the group prefers or there is no availability ), we may choose to stay in local nomadic yurts that are set up for guests near the caravanserai, sleeping 8 - 10 people per yurt.

## Day 32 - Kashgar (19th May 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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**Border Information:** Exit Kyrgyzstan at Torugart, enter China at Torugart.

Today we will drive over the 3752m Torugart Pass, crossing into China and heading down to the Uighur city of Kashgar.

## Day 33 - Kashgar (20th May 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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This morning we will have an included visit to Shiptons Arch - the largest natural arch in the world!

In the afternoon we will have free time to explore the town, the central Id Kah Mosque and its surrounding square, while your crew finalise the customs procedures for our truck to continue further into China.

## Day 34 - Kashgar (21st May 2021)

We will have another free day in Kashgar today as we wait for the paperwork to be finalised for the truck.

## Day 35 - Aksu (22nd May 2021)

Our journey through China begins as we leave Kashgar and head east through the Taklamkan Desert! Our crossing of the desert usually takes 3 days/2nights and we will plan to stay in local hotels along the way. Our first night we will plan to spend in Aksu

## Day 36 - Korle (23rd May 2021)

Another full drive day through the desert and onto the small town of Bayanbulak

## Day 37 - Turpan (24th May 2021)

Today we will travel to the oasis town of Turpan, where we will have time to explore the surrounding sites including the famous Jiaohe ruins.

## Day 38 - Takeshikenzen (25th May 2021)

**Meals:** Lunch, Dinner

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Today is mostly a travel day as we make our way closer to the Chinese/ Mongolian Border.

We will either wild camp tonight if possible or stay in a local hotel.

## Day 39 - Hovdiin Bulgan (26th May 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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**Border Information:** Exit China at Takeshiken, enter Mongolia at Hovdiin Bulgan.

This morning we will complete the drive to the border and cross into Mongolia. We will stop in the small town of Bulgan to stock up on supplies for the next few days before we find a place to camp for the night in this remote area of Western Mongolia.

## Day 40 - Altai Tavn Bogd NP (27th May 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Over the next 3 days we will be driving mostly offroad making our way further west towards Altai Tavn National Park wild camping along the way. Today we will drive through Bodnach Canyon and then onto Tal Lake. On the way we will visit one of the biggest deer stone sites in Western Mongolia.

## Day 41 - Altai Tavn Bogd NP (28th May 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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We will have an early start today as we continue our journey on to Khoton and Khurgan Lakes where we will have 2 nights camping next to the beautiful lake in the National Park.

## Day 42 - Altai Tavn Bogd NP (29th May 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Today we will have the day to spend relaxing by the lake or stretch your legs and opt to do a full day hike to Turken Waterfalls.

## Day 43 - Olgii (30th May 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

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This morning we will leave the national park and continue on to the town of Ulgii.

In the afternoon we will have an included visit to the local museum to understand more about Ulgii and the surrounding areas. We will also head to the local markets to explore and stock up on supplies again.

## Day 44 - Tsambagarav NP (31st May 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Today we drive out of the town of Ulgii and do a full day's drive off road onto Tsambagarav National Park.

We hope to arrive early afternoon where there will be free time to explore this beautiful national park and admire the view of Tsambagarav which is one of the highest mountains in Mongolia sitting at 4195 metres.

Tonight we will wild camp in the National Park

## Day 45 - Tsenkher Caves (1st June 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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We have an early start this morning to begin our drive to Tsenkher Caves.

Once we arrive and have set up camp we will have a chance to stretch our legs and walk to the caves to see the rock paintings which have been there for thousands of years.

Tonight we will wild camp near the caves

## Day 46 - Altai (2nd June 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

---

Over the next 2 days we will continue our journey east, edging closer to the famous Gobi Desert.

We will bush camp tonight near the Antaishir Mountain range

### Day 47 - Taats Lake (3rd June 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Another full drive today ahead of us in the afternoon we hope to reach Taats Lake which has a beautiful sandy beach giving us the opportunity to relax and enjoy the peaceful surroundings in this area.

### Day 48 - Gobi Desert (4th June 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Leaving Taats lake we will drive to Khongor Sand Dunes.

Late this afternoon we will hike to Duut Mankhan which is the highest point of the dunes to see the stunning sunset over the dunes.

### Day 49 - Gobi Desert (5th June 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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With another full day in Khongor we have a chance to enjoy and take in the incredible landscapes with an opportunity for Camel Riding as well.

### Day 50 - Bayanzag (6th June 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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This morning we will leave the sand dunes behind and drive to Bayanzag known as the site of the Flaming Cliffs. Late in the afternoon we will see them change colours with the sun direction and enjoy another stunning sunset.

We continue on through the Gobi Desert taking in the vast open lands in all directions taking in another beautiful sunset as we reach our camp for the night.

### Day 51 - Yolyn Am (7th June 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Today we will continue through the Gobi and Yol Valley, we will eventually start to head north to Tsagaan Suvraga which is translated to White Stupa. This sediment structure is over 60 metres high with steep slopes which appear to be the ruins of an ancient city.

Tonight we will wild camp

### Day 52 - Baga Gazryn Chuluu (8th June 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Today we will drive to Baga Gazrynn Chuluu. When we arrive we will get a chance to explore the impressive rock formations rising from the desert steppe.

Tonight we will spend our last night wild camping before we reach Ulaanbaatar.

### Day 53 - Ulaanbaatar (9th June 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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This morning we will leave the desert behind and make our way to Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia.

In the afternoon we will have free time to explore the city.

Tonight we will stay in a comfortable local hotel.

### Day 54 - Ulaanbaatar (10th June 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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**Border Information:** If you are leaving at Ulaanbaatar, you will most likely exit Mongolia at Ulaanbaatar Chinggis Khaan International Airport.

Today is a free day to further explore the city of Ulaanbaatar.

Please note that if you are leaving at Ulaanbaatar, today is the last day of the trip and there is no accommodation included tonight.

Accommodation:

## ITINERARY DISCLAIMER

The routes, activities and places visited described in these notes are intentions and are meant as a rough guide only. By their very nature, overland itineraries need to be flexible and the regions that we are travelling through are often unpredictable. We intend to follow the planned route but exact night stops and inclusions cannot be guaranteed and it sometimes happens that we decide to make a change to our planned itinerary. This may be for a variety of reasons; climatic, road or bureaucratic conditions may demand it. Changes to the itinerary may occur with little notice so please be prepared for modifications to your trip.

### Drive Times

Drive times are listed in the day-to-day itinerary. These are the approximate number of hours that the vehicle will be in motion, and does not include any time taken for coffee or lunch stops, border crossings, photo stops, activities en route, comfort breaks, shopping stops, toilet stops, etc. The times given are approximate estimates only and whilst given with the best of intentions, the drive times are heavily dependent on traffic, road conditions, weather, police roadblocks, and many other factors.

### Accommodation and Meals Included

The type of accommodation and included meals are listed for each day of the itinerary. These listings show our intention and on most departures the listings will be accurate. However due to the flexible nature of overland itineraries, climatic, bureaucratic or road conditions may demand changes to our listed intentions or groups may simply decide to amend the plans from time to time.

### Optional Activities

A selection of optional activities is listed in the day-to-day itinerary. This list is designed to be a helpful guide as to what is commonly available in each location, and is neither an exhaustive list, a guarantee that the activity is available, or an endorsement or recommendation. Certain activities may not be available on your particular visit and it may not be possible to do all the activities listed in the time available at each destination. It is recommended to give yourself extra time in your joining or ending city if you would like to participate in some optional activities there. Prices listed are for entrance only and do not include transport costs to and from the sites or local guides unless indicated. The prices are displayed according to our latest information and in the best faith, but prices do fluctuate due to exchange rates, season, numbers of participants, and simple increases from the operator, and therefore any prices listed are a guide only and cannot be guaranteed. If you partake in any optional activities, you do so at your own risk and it must be clearly understood that your participation is your own decision and does not form part of your contract with Dragoman. You may be required to sign/complete a waiver form or optional activity form for some optional activities. For more information around activity safety and insurance, please see the Essential Information document.

## EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

In the event of a real emergency once you have left your home country, please contact us on our out of office hours number. If you cannot get through on the phone, please leave a message with your name, reference number, contact details and a message with the help that you need and we will get back to you. Please bear in mind that real progress or action may not be possible until normal office hours, depending on the issue.

If your flight is delayed, please inform us as soon as you can and then make your way to the joining hotel as instructed in the Joining Point section of these notes.

**Out of hours Number: +44 (0) 7985 106564**

## A FEW RULES

We expect all group members to act respectfully towards our staff and other group members. Bullying will not be tolerated.

Engaging in commercial or exploitative sexual activities, committing acts of violence or threatening violence towards local people, other group members or any member of our staff is not allowed. Any customer engaging in such activities will be required to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price.

You must at all times comply with the laws, customs, foreign exchange and drug regulations of all countries visited and conduct yourself in accordance with our responsible travel policy. Any customer found contravening such laws or regulations will be required to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price.

Although we are aware that in some parts of the world taking, carrying or selling drugs, or carrying weapons may be legal, it is not acceptable for Dragoman customers and our tour leaders have the right to ask you to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price if you are found to be engaging in such activities.

# 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](mailto: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.

# IMPORTANT NOTES

## OVERLANDING LIFESTYLE

Dragoman was founded in 1981, and has had many years of experience of leading overland trips across 4 continents. Overlanding is all about sharing a great travelling experience with like-minded people. On your trip you'll travel in one of Dragoman's purpose-built iconic expedition vehicles on an off-the-beaten-track adventure along rugged roads, experiencing the sights, sounds and smells of the world up-close. Your journey will be overland, sometimes across vast distances, so some long days spent driving are inevitable - but these will be interspersed with breaks of a day or two at a destination or activity.

On an overland journey, you are more than just a passenger and everyone gets involved setting up camp - we supply the tent but it's up to you to pitch it! As part of your trip, you will be assigned a truck job which could be collecting firewood or water, luggage loading, organising food, stores, etc. Like all great adventures, the more you put in the more you'll get out! For more details of how an overlanding trip works, please see the Essential Information document.

## SAFETY STANDARDS

We run adventure journeys in off the beaten track areas, which often have poor infrastructure. You should expect that some of these areas do not adhere to 'Western' safety standards. For more information, please see the Essential Information document

## MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN REMOTE AREAS

We will be travelling to areas in remote locations where medical assistance will not be available, and communications may be sparse. We do not carry satellite phones on our regular trips. Therefore, if you have a medical condition such as a heart condition that would put you at risk, we would suggest that this is not the trip for you. Also, please be aware that should an emergency occur, there is likely to be a considerable delay in accessing medical care, and by joining our trip you accept this risk.

## VISAS, HEALTH, INSURANCE & MONEY

Before you travel there are vital things to consider such as:

- Any visas needed for your trip
- Any vaccinations needed (please consult your GP or travel clinic)
- Organising your local payment (the kitty)
- Buying travel insurance (insurance is compulsory to be allowed to join our trips)

For more information on these topics, please see the Essential Information Document.

# ALTITUDE WARNING

## **Warning - this trip goes above 2800m.**

Please note that this trip spends time above 2800 metres/9200 feet where it is possible for travellers to experience some adverse effects on your health due to the altitude, potentially including Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), High Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE) and High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE). Because of this it is very important that you make yourself aware of the cause and effects of travelling at altitude and monitor your health during this trip.

For further information please [download our AMS information sheet](#) or refer to the following website: [www.high-altitude-medicine.com](http://www.high-altitude-medicine.com). If you are starting your trip in a destination above 2800m/9200ft we strongly advise reading this information prior to arrival. Your leader will also hand you a copy of the AMS information sheet during your trip as well as holding a short meeting prior to travelling to altitudes above 2800m/9200ft for the first time.

**Some travel insurance companies will stipulate a maximum altitude limit. Please ensure that you are covered and if necessary pay the additional premium of extended cover.**

## EXPLORATORY TRIP WARNING - THIS IS A NEW TRIP FOR US!

Please note that all or part of this trip is a brand new itinerary, and is going through completely new areas for Dragoman. This is what we call an Exploratory trip, and it means that all the passengers on this trip will be the route's pioneers for the first season!

While we have thoroughly researched all aspects of this new route and put the itinerary together with the best of intentions, please note that your crew will be finding a lot of information out for us on the ground and will be playing a lot of things by ear. The itinerary may be altered in places where it becomes necessary and the drive times may differ significantly from the published estimates.

Most Exploratory trips will have slight or significant changes made to them after this first season, and frankly we would be very surprised if an Exploratory trip was to run perfectly to the published itinerary. Usually we find that this is rarely a problem but rather an exciting feature and that there are much more pleasant surprises in store than unpleasant ones. You will be immersing in to the camaraderie with your crew and fellow travellers and give you the fantastic opportunity to shape the trip as a group.

However, the warning is sincere and this trip must be viewed as Exploratory - if this concerns you or you would rather stick to a tried-and-tested itinerary, then we recommend that you wait a year or two until we have this itinerary perfected following operating it many times, or of course to consider one of the more established trips in our extensive portfolio.

There will be numerous challenges on this trip including border delays, visa and paperwork delays, potential re-routing at short notice, lack of western facilities, road closures and other obstacles and unforeseen issues.

There is a risk of cancellation if the FCDO advise changes (as of now the route is safe to travel all the way through).

West and Central Africa will test everyone's patience due to potential issues with obtaining visas. This is likely to lead to long delays in places where there may not be much to do. It may also be necessary to fly over some places which would be at your own expense.

This trip will have a higher level of participation compared to our other Dragoman trips and you will be required to help out with setting up camps, cooking etc. The campsites are also likely to be basic for much of the trip along with a high number of bush camps.

This will be a challenging trip and you must be fit in order to participate. If you have a pre-existing medical condition or any medical concerns you should check with your doctor prior to travel that this would be a suitable trip for you. You should also be aware that in the event of accident or illness, access to medical centres will be limited.

On the flip side, we'll be visiting regions and areas very rarely seen by Western travellers. Meeting people who have perhaps never seen foreigners. Enjoying the chaotic and buzzing cultures of West and Central Africa. And of course, the immense satisfaction of completing a classic adventure that only a handful of people ever get the chance to complete.

## VERY IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT MEDICATIONS IN CENTRAL ASIA

Please note that as of 2014 all medications containing **tramadol, codeine, temazepam, morphine, opiates or any containing similar constituent components** have been made illegal in Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. This includes many over-the-counter medicines that are commonly available elsewhere, such as Nurofen! Please see here for more information - <http://sambuh.com/procedure-psychotropic-substances.html>

It is very important that you do not bring any such medications as the customs officials will treat this as though you were trying to bring illegal narcotics into the country. The rules are strict; it does not matter if you are only transiting through, and it makes no difference if you have a prescription or a doctor's note. Please do not bring these medications to Central Asia under any circumstance. The consequences could be huge, not only for yourself but for the tour leaders, for Dragoman's future operation in the region and especially for our local agents and guides.

Please note that we cannot allow you to travel on a Central Asia trip if you refuse to dispose of such medicines or refuse to cooperate with the tour leaders if they need to inspect any personal medicines. Thank you for your understanding in this matter.

If you have any prescription medications that do not come under the above list, please bring the prescription along and declare the medicines on any customs declaration forms throughout your trip.

## TURKMENISTAN NOTES

### TURKMENISTAN NOTE

Please note that any additional accommodation in Turkmenistan must be booked through Dragoman due to the strict controls on foreigners in the country - it is essential that everyone is registered immediately upon their entry to Turkmenistan at accommodation booked by the agent on your visa Letter of Invitation, as such it is not possible to independently arrange your own accommodation here. It is also now compulsory for all passengers arriving into Turkmenistan through Ashgabat airport to be met on arrival by an official representative from our local supplier and have a confirmed transfer to their hotel. These transfers can be booked directly through your sales agent. If you do not have a confirmed transfer upon arrival you may be refused entry into Turkmenistan.

Due to strict Turkmenistan Laws, foreigners are not permitted to travel outside of Ashgabat without being accompanied by an official guide from a registered company. If travelling on a Dragoman Trip and you wish to explore Turkmenistan further any additional time must be booked through our registered supplier as a private tour and we must be notified at the time of booking as it is not possible to travel with 2 different company's in the same visit. Any Additional nights in Turkmenistan must also be booked at a registered hotel in Ashgabat.

Please also note that there are strict laws against tobacco products in Turkmenistan. Whilst it is not yet completely illegal to possess tobacco, it is strictly prohibited to smoke in any public place, is illegal to sell tobacco, and is illegal to import more than 2 small packs of cigarettes. Breaking these laws even slightly can lead to large fines and even detention in jail. To be safe, it is highly recommended to simply not bring any tobacco products into Turkmenistan and avoiding their use entirely until you have left the country. All the above also applies to vaping, e-cigarettes, etc. Your crew may insist on such material being disposed of before entering through the country on the overland truck, and your co-operation with this is both appreciated and expected.

## UZBEKISTAN NOTES

## KYRGYZSTAN NOTES

### KYRGYZSTAN NOTE

We will be travelling through high remote mountains and the itinerary may have to vary somewhat due to weather or road conditions. When it is too cold to visit Song K l Lake or camp (May to mid June, October and November) we will run a alternative itinerary which may include a yurt stay on the southern shore of Lake Issyk-Kul, a night at a homestay or a night at a hot spring development know as Altyn Arashan.

We will need to remain flexible with these itineraries as temperatures can vary.

In general, the summer months (June, July and August) can be warm during the day but temperatures can drop to 0 C at night. For this reason we recommend taking warm clothes and a warm sleeping bag for ALL trips in Kyrgyzstan. For trips that run during the colder months (May to mid June and September to October/November) we recommend you bring extra warm clothing and an all-season sleeping bag as it is not uncommon for temperatures to fall to -10C, sometimes colder.

We recommend you check local average weather conditions for each country you will be travelling to in order to properly prepare for your trip.

## MONGOLIA NOTES

### MONGOLIA NOTE

Please note that Mongolia has incredibly poor infrastructure, and is one of the most challenging regions that we drive through in the world. Roads are non-existent in much of the country and we will wild camp for several nights in a row in very remote areas. It can also be cold, especially towards the start or end of the season, and there is always the possibility of rain throughout the high season. It will be a miracle if the truck does not get bogged at some point on a trip in Mongolia, and the itinerary may have to vary somewhat due to weather and road conditions so flexibility is of utmost importance.

In general, the summer months (July and August) can be warm during the day but temperatures can still drop to 0 C at night. For this reason we recommend taking warm clothes and a warm sleeping bag for ALL trips in Mongolia. For trips that run during the colder months (June and September to October) we recommend you bring extra warm clothing and an all-season sleeping bag as it is not uncommon for temperatures to fall to -10C, sometimes colder.

We recommend you check local average weather conditions for each country you will be travelling to in order to properly prepare for your trip.

## CHINA NOTES

Please ensure you have an up to date version of these notes. **These notes were printed on the 26th January 2021**