



# NOMADS & WILDS OF MONGOLIA, (ZUU)

Ulaanbaatar to Ulaanbaatar 21 Days, departing 9th July 2021



## TRIP OVERVIEW

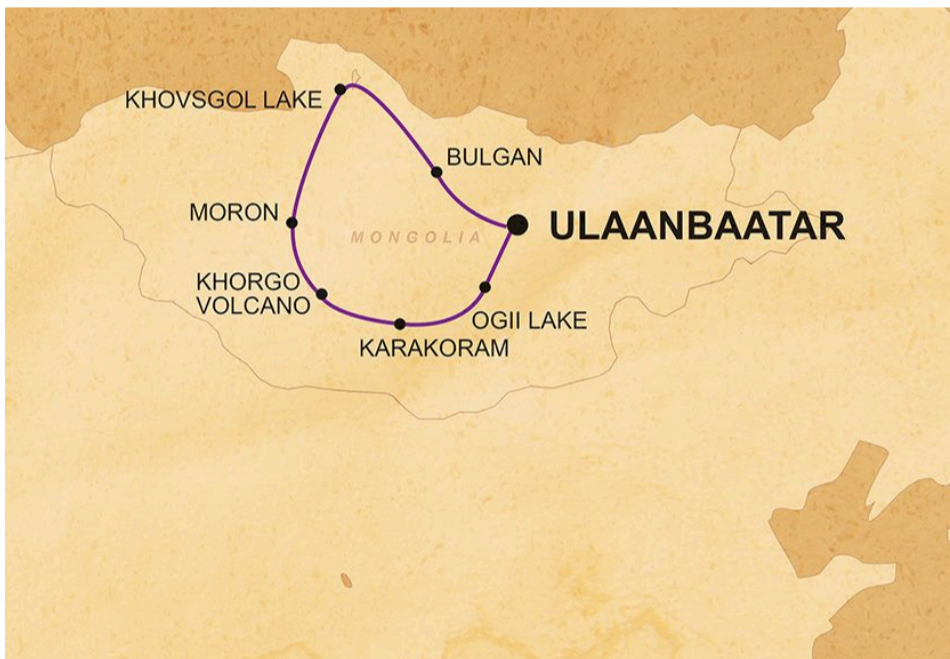
**Trip Style:** Overlanding  
**Route:** Ulaanbaatar to Ulaanbaatar  
**Duration:** 21 Days  
**Transport:** Overland Expedition Vehicle  
**Accommodation:** Comfortable Hotel 3 nights  
 Yurt Camp 9 nights  
 Camping without facilities 8 nights  
**Meals:** Breakfasts x 20, Lunches x 8, Dinners x 15

**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 trip for people with a real sense of adventure. You will be camping for the majority of the trip and the trip will include many long drive days and wild camps. The terrain may be very rough and the roads and facilities may be very basic or non-existent. The itinerary may be very flexible.



# DAILY ITINERARY

## Day 1 - Ulaanbaatar (9th July 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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**Border information:** If you are joining in Ulaanbaatar, you will most likely enter Mongolia at Ulaanbaatar Chinggis Khaan International Airport (IATA code: ULN).

There will be a group meeting today at 6:00pm - please look out for a note from your tour leader at the hotel reception with more information about this important meeting, but please do not be alarmed if the note is not there as this is often a travel day for the tour leader and they may arrive in the afternoon. If you arrive early, the rest of the day will be free to explore the Mongolian capital!

Please note that many of the options listed below will only be possible for those with extra time in Ulaanbaatar 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 Ulaanbaatar.

Accommodation: Kempinski Hotel

## Day 2 - Ulaanbaatar (10th July 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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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 we will spend a few hours exploring the Black Market. This huge market contains every single item a Mongolian may need, so a trip here will certainly give visitors a fascinating insight into people's lives, whether they are nomads or urban apartment dwellers.

## Day 3 - Ögii Lake (11th July 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

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Today we drive out of the city and into the vast plains of Mongolia. We hope to arrive at Khar Bukh Balgas ruins in the early afternoon.

Khar Bukh Balgas was built during the Kitan period in about 1000CE, and was part of a chain of fortresses that were used to govern and control the northern region and borders of the Kitan state. Upon arrival at the site, we will explore the ruins and learn about the various kingdoms that dominated Mongolia during that era.

After our visit to the ruins we will drive to Ögii Lake where many nomadic families spend their summer. The lake is famed for its great bird watching opportunities where it is not uncommon to spot a Swan Goose, White Spoonbill and Dalmatian Pelicans.

*Please note that we cannot give any accurate drive time estimations for our Mongolia trip as the journey times are heavily dependent on the state of roads, which is in turn heavily dependent on the weather. The roads in Mongolia are mostly dirt tracks in very poor condition, which means that an even greater degree of flexibility is needed for this trip in all regards.*

## Day 4 - Kharkhorin (12th July 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

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Today we have an early start as we head to Mongolia's earliest capital, Kharkhorin (otherwise known as Karakoram).

Our first stop on the way to Kharkhorin will be at the Kultigen Monument. This massive stone tomb was built in honour of a Turkic prince and warrior killed in a nearby battle. We then continue on a fairly short drive to Kharkhorin.

Kharkhorin was famed throughout Asia as the capital of the Mongol Empire. We will visit the ruins of the old city, the Erdene Zuu monastery, and other historical monuments in the area.

## Day 5 - Orkhon Valley (13th July 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Today we head south

## Day 6 - Orkhon Valley (14th July 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Today we will continue our journey through the Orkhon Valley to the Tuvkhon Monastery, which we can embark on a two and a half hour trek to visit (the first hour will be uphill!). This monastery was established during the 1650s by Zanbazar, one of Mongolia's most respected religious leaders. The monastery's wooden buildings are integrated with a natural system of caves perched near a hilltop, from which you have beautiful views of the Orkhon Valley and the surrounding pine forests.

## Day 7 - Tsenkher (15th July 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

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Today our trip heads north, crossing the Khangai Nuruu Mountains through a series of passes until we reach an area that Mongolians call 'The Paradise of the Horse Herders' due to its lush grasses and open valleys.

We drive to the Tsenkher hot springs, where water flows out of the ground at 82°C, and where we can enjoy a relaxing soak.

## Day 8 - Tsenkher (16th July 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

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This morning we will take a short, easy walk to meet one of the many nomadic families that spend their summers in the region. The afternoon is free to explore the valley and surrounding hills either by foot or by horseback.

## Day 9 - Tamir River (17th July 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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This morning we drive to Tsetserleg, the provincial capital, where we will make a short visit to the local market. If time permits, we will also visit the provincial museum.

We will then continue our journey north past the Tamir river, and will wild camp tonight.

## Day 10 - Khorgo Volcano (18th July 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

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Today we continue north past Taikhar Chuluu (a massive rock which is connected to local mythology) and the Chluulut Canyon to arrive at our ger camp near the Khorgo volcano.

In Chluulut Canyon we will stay at a nearby ger camp.

## Day 11 - Khorgo Volcano (19th July 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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This morning we will take a hike to the top of the Khorgo Volcano and take in the incredible views over its perfect crater. From the top of the volcano we continue our hike through fields studded with pine trees, stopping off en route at the Yellow Dog Cave, an interesting volcanic phenomenon.

We will then return to the truck and continue our journey north. We will aim wild camp tonight in the remote plains north of Khorgo.

## Day 12 - Moron (20th July 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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Over the next few days we continue driving north on one of Mongolia's most beautiful routes, crossing high mountain passes, vast grasslands, and small creeks! We will pass by the beautiful alpine Lake Zuun en route.

We hope to arrive at Mörön, the provincial capital, the following afternoon. We will visit the local market, Danzadarjaa Monastery and the local museum. If we don't have time on this section of the trip, then we can visit the town after coming back from Khövsgöl Lake.

We will aim to wild camp near Zuun Lake and near the town of Mörön.

## Day 13 - Moron (21st July 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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We hope to arrive at Mörön, the provincial capital, this afternoon. We will visit the local market, Danzadarjaa Monastery and the local museum. If we don't have time on this section of the trip, then we can visit the town after

coming back from Khövsgöl Lake.

## Day 14 - Khovsgol Lake (22nd July 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

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This morning we will drive out to an ancient burial site featuring Mongolia's mysterious deer stones, these are memorial stones representing important leaders and warriors, carved with deer motifs. After visiting the site, we continue our trip northward to one of the world's biggest fresh water sources, the stunning Khövsgöl Lake.

Khövsgöl Lake and its amazing surroundings are home to several of Mongolia's ethnic minorities as well as a refuge for a wide variety of wildlife. One of the most interesting ethnic groups living near the lake is the Tsaatan, also known as 'The Reindeer People'. A small tribe of Tsaatan consisting of about 40 families lives with its herds of reindeer in the forests around the lake. These graceful animals provide the tribe with all its basic needs - milk, meat and transportation. As there are very few Tsaatan left and this is a mobile population, we may meet them but there are no guarantees - however, the scenery of the area is well worth the exploration.

## Day 15 - Khovsgol Lake (23rd July 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

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Today we will take a hike around the forests and meadows near the lake. Lying at about 1650m above sea level, surrounded by mountains rising above 3100m, the waters of Khovsgol are deep and spectacularly clear and pure. We will hike through thick pine forests carpeted with flowers and explore the setting of Mongolia's 'Blue Pearl'.

## Day 16 - Moron (24th July 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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We will spend the next 3 days crossing central-northern Mongolia on our way back towards the capital of Ulaanbaatar. We will aim to wildcamp in the plains east Moron tonight.

## Day 17 - Selenge River (25th July 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Today's drive offers diversified landscapes from vast, open steppes to beautiful sand dunes. At the end of a long drive day we will camp near the Selenge River

## Day 18 - Bulgan (26th July 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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After packing up camping this morning we will continue on our journey and aim to reach the town of Bulgan where we will find a wildcamp on the outskirts of the town.

## Day 19 - Amarbayasgalant Monastery (27th July 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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This morning we will try to visit the Amarbayasgalant Monastery. Built between 1727 and 1736 by the Manchu Emperor Enkh Amgalan, Amarbayasgalant is among the largest monasteries in Mongolia to have survived the purges of the 1930s. With about 60 monks living and studying here, the monastery functions today as one of Mongolia's central religious institutions, and consists of 29 different temples, all built in the classic Tibetan style.

## Day 20 - Ulaanbaatar (28th July 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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Today we have a full day drive from northern Mongolia back to the city of Ulaanbaatar. This evening is free to relax and explore, and to have a well-earned final meal and drinks in one of the city's many restaurants!

## Day 21 - Ulaanbaatar - End Date (29th July 2021)

**Border information:** If you are leaving in Ulaanbaatar, you will most likely exit Mongolia at Ulaanbaatar Chinggis Khaan International Airport (IATA code: ULN).



Today is the end day for passengers finishing their trip in Ulaanbaatar. Please note there is no accommodation included on the trip tonight - please contact your sales agent if you are interested in booking extra nights of accommodation in order to fully explore and take part in some of the optional activities listed below.

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.

## 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.

Please ensure you have an up to date version of these notes. **These notes were printed on the 17th May 2021**