

Happy Camel Travel

Presents

**Eight Lakes and Orkhon Valley
Trekking
(10 days)**

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EIGHT LAKES AND ORKHON VALLEY TREKKING
(10 DAYS)

10 Days ♦ 5 Nights Tented Camp
♦ 2 Nights Family Stay ♦ 2 Nights Ger Camp



Happy Camel invites you to discover the natural and cultural wonders of Mongolia, one of the last remaining seldom-explored countries. Largely inaccessible to the Western world until only recently, Mongolia offers a rare glimpse into an ancient nomadic culture that has changed little over the centuries.

The traveller will discover this untouched country by exploring the rare combination of ancient traditions of Buddhism, nomadic horse-based culture and natural beauties such as the high mountains, the grasslands and more.



- ◆ Trekking ♦ Karakorum ♦ Erdene Zuu Monastery
- ◆ Karakorum's Museum ♦ Orkhon Waterfalls
- ◆ Bituu River ♦ Eight Lakes ♦ Khuis Lake ♦ Shireet Lake
- ◆ Khogno Khan Mountains ♦ Uvgun Monastery
- ◆ Tasarkhai Els ♦ Family Stay



Trip Type: Rigorous Eight Lakes and Orkhon Valley Trekking

QUICK ITINERARY REFERENCE

DAY 1: DRIVE TO KARAKORUM

DAY 2: DRIVE TO ORKHON WATERFALL

DAY 3: BOOROG CAMP SITE

DAY 4: KHUIS LAKE

DAY 5: SHIREET, KHALIUN AND BUGAT LAKE

DAY 6: KHOKH DAVAA MOUNTAIN PASS

DAY 7: SHAVART LAKE

DAY 8: TREKKING TO ORKHON WATERFALL

DAY 9: DRIVE TO ELSEN TASARKHAI AND KHOGNO KHAN MOUNTAIN

DAY 10: DRIVE BACK TO ULAANBAATAR

MAP OF THE ITINERARY



DETAILED TOUR DESCRIPTION

DAY 1: DRIVE TO KARAKORUM

After breakfast we will set off for our first driving day. Karakorum is the site of the 13th century capital of the Mongolian Empire created by Genghis Khan. The founding of Karakorum started on the ruins of Gokturk and Uigur cities in the Orkhon valley at the eastern end of the Khangai Mountains in 1220 by the Genghis Khan's order. It completed 15 years later during the Ugedei Khan's reign. The town was a very cosmopolitan and religiously tolerant place. The silver tree, part of Mungke Khan's palace has become the symbol of Karakorum. The highest peak of its prosperity was from 1220 to 1260. The specific feature of this stage is that Karakorum existed as the great capital of the Euro-Asian Empire with Mongolia as its core and as the centre of politics, economy, culture, religion, intellect, and diplomacy and the prominent tie of international relations.

At the arrival, we will visit one of the biggest Buddhist monastery Erdene Zuu. Now Erdene Zuu Monastery is all that remains of what once was a huge monastery of 100 temples and about 1.000 lamas residing there. We will explore the grounds of Erdene Zuu Monastery surrounded by its massive 400 m X 400 m walls. We will be guided around the 3 remaining temples: Dalai Lama, Zuu of Buddha and Lavrin Temple.

Another place we will visit will be **Karakorum's New Archaeological Museum**. It is a small museum but housed in a modern well-run building with good lighting and display cases with clear English labels. The exhibits include dozens of artefacts dating from the 13th and 14th centuries which were recovered from the immediate area, plus others that were found from archaeological sites in other parts of the provinces, including prehistoric stone tools. You'll see pottery, bronzes, coins, religious statues and stone inscriptions. There's also a half-excavated kiln sunk into the museum floor. Perhaps most interesting is the scale model of ancient Karakorum, which aims to represent the city as it may have looked in the 1250s, and is based on descriptions written by the French missionary William of Rubruck. Another chamber exhibits a Turkic noble tomb with wall paintings and artefacts, including gold items and jewellery. There is a short video of actual burial site.

We will also see the Turtle Rock and the Phallic Rock, visit little market behind walls exposing local arts by locals.

(Ger camp, L, D)

DAY 2: DRIVE TO ORKHON WATERFALL

After our breakfast at the ger camp, we will set further westwards into to Orkhon valley where the Orkhon River flows

In the Quaternary era a volcano erupted near the beginning of the Tsagaan Azarga or White Stallion River and the lava flowed down the Orkhon valley forming the 10-meter-thick layer of basaltic rocks. The basaltic layer was

crosscut by the Orkhon River continuously and the canyon was formed as a result.

We will have our lunch at our host family located nearby **Orkhon Waterfalls** which cascades down a basalt canyon to a depth of 20 meters and 10 meter wide. After lunch we will have plenty time to explore the waterfall, its canyon and surrounding area.

This is where we will leave our vehicles behind and load our gear and food on pack horses. Tomorrow we will set off for a six-day trekking in the mountainous area of the **Khangai**. Our translator will help us to forge contact with the local population.

(Family stay, B, L, D)

DAY 3: BOOROG CAMP SITE

The **Khangai Mountains** are a mountain range in central Mongolia, some 400 kilometres west of Ulaanbaatar. The tallest mountain is the Otgon Tenger Uul with its summit at 4.020 m above sea level.

The mountains feed the river Orkhon, Selenge, Ideriin, Zavkhan and the lake Orog and Böön tsagaan. In the west the Khangai Mountains transition into the Great Lakes Depression.

We will leave the Orkhon Waterfall and trek stream upwards along the **Bituu River** until we go through a pass that leads us to the **Eight Lakes** valley. This totally remote area was created by volcanic activities. It is locked between several extinct volcanoes and high mountain peaks. As its name says, the valley shelters a large number of small lakes, all interconnected by rivers. The lakes are supplied with fresh water running from the mountains.

(Tented Camp, B, L, D)

DAY 4: KHUIS LAKE

The first lake we will reach is **Khuis Lake**. This lake is dotted with a large rock island. Our trekking path becomes a mix of everything such as rocks, forests, bushes and muds, and it gets more adventurous. We only see few nomadic families at the end of today's trekking.

(Tented Camp, B, L, D)

DAY 5: SHIREET, KHALIUN AND BUGAT LAKE

We will continue our trekking towards **Shireet Lake**. On the way to Shireet Lake, our trek takes through other several smaller lakes. The Eight Lakes valley is one of the most beautiful, untouched and picturesque place of Khangai Mountain range. You will enjoy hearing only nature, the stream going downward to the lakes and birds tweet. One can feel deeply relaxed and refreshed. In the afternoon we come back to the Khuis Lake camp site and overnight here.

(Tented Camp, B, L, D)

DAY 6: KHOKH DAVAA MOUNTAIN PASS

Today our trek continuously takes us to the west-north of the Eight Lakes region. We will pass big valleys that are rich of alpine forest with many little streams along the way.

(Tented Camp, B, L, D)

DAY 7: SHAVART LAKE

Shavart Lake is a small lake in open grassland. The lake gets much bigger after heavy rain. We will continue our trekking in a big volcanic rocky valley where there are several families live with their livestock. You will bear witness to awesome views of the lakes and volcanic craters. This is truly a sight that needs to be seen to be believed; it lies beyond the imagination.

(Tented Camp, B, L, D)

DAY 8: TREKKING TO ORKHON WATERFALL

Today our trek ends. We will trek back to Orkhon valley. The valley is surrounded by the foothills of the Khangai mountain range. Meadows and fir forests are prominent here. The Orkhon river valley is lined with the remains of an ancient lava flow. The valley is registered as world cultural heritage by UNESCO due to its ancient findings, artefacts related to early 6th century and even before that. As well as, 12th to 13th century great Mongol empire had expanded its capital Karakorum here. Moreover, pasture nomadic lifestyle still remains here and it keeps both historic and nomadic view of life. ll be back to the local host family at the waterfall later in the afternoon.

(Family stay, B, L, D)

DAY 9: DRIVE TO ELSEN TASARKHAI AND KHOGNO KHAN MOUNTAIN

After a good rest will drive to **Khogno Khan Mountains**. Khogno Khan Mountains is an impressive massif in the open steppes. Not far from here runs the **Tasarkhai Els** known as a little Gobi, a 100 km long sand dune.

End the afternoon we will hike in the region of Khogno Khan Mountains, walk up the mountain and enjoy the incredible view over the plains, the sand dune and grasslands. We will also visit the nice little **Uvgun Monastery**.

(Ger Camp, B, L, D)

DAY 10: DRIVE BACK TO ULAANBAATAR

We will have a driving day back to Ulaanbaatar. Afternoon is free time for last minute sightseeing. Opt to see the beautiful cultural show enjoy the colourful and rhythmic Mongolian dance, throat singing and admire the contortionists.

(B, L)

RESERVATION

Your trip will be confirmed after a deposit of 35% of the due amount is paid to our bank account. Once the payment is done, we will start organizing your trip and book accommodation.

INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

- Land transportation
- Ger camp stay
- Family stay
- Tented camp stay
- Meals 9B, 10L, 9D
- Tour guides
- Camping and kitchen equipment
- National park entrance fees/Museum and Monasteries entrance tickets

NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

- Hotel in Ulaanbaatar
- City touring
- International transport
- Passport and visa costs
- Medical, trip insurance and evacuation costs
- International airport taxes, excess baggage charges.
- Alcoholic and soft drinks
- Meals not included in the itinerary
- Laundry
- Telephone calls
- Items of personal nature
- Other items not specifically mentioned as included
- Airport transfer

DELAYS

We are not responsible for any additional charges incurred arising from the delay or extension of a trip due to weather, equipment failure, illness, or other causes beyond our control. No refunds can be made for any unused services or accommodations on the trip.

TRANSPORT

Toyota Land Cruisers series 80, 100, 105 - have 4 passenger seats. Comfortable on our bumpy road, forward facing seats equipped with seat belts and has air condition and plenty space for luggage in trunk and on roof track.

Delica -Japanese 4X4 van. Delicas have 5 passenger seats. Comfortable on our bumpy road, bit slower on off-road than Land Cruisers. Forward facing seats equipped with seat belts and has air condition. Panoramic

view windows. Having not much space in trunk, luggage mostly put on roof rack.

Furgon -Russian military van. Furgons have 7 passenger seats. Mostly forward facing seats. It has plenty space. Furgons have no air condition and not equipped with seat belts. If you are in group and looking for adventure on tight budget it might be a good solution. Excellent vehicle on rough off-road condition. However less comfortable than Land Cruisers and Delicas.

FOOD

Traditional Mongolian food based on different type of meat: mutton, beef, goat, horse and camel. As well as we eat dairies and usually heavy meals due to our radical climate of cold long winter and hot dry summer. However nowadays our food culture is becoming more diverse and you can easily find international food in restaurants and buy diverse imported food at supermarkets. We will do our best to accommodate your food requirement. Please let us know in advance if you have any special food requirement.

ACCOMMODATION

In Ulaanbaatar we can book your hotel. We offer accommodation from guesthouse to the most prestigious 5 star hotels with suites.

All hotel we recommend are centrally located and in walking distances from restaurant, shops and museums.

While in the countryside, depending on the trip you choose, you will overnight in Ger Camps, Family Stay and Tented Camp.

Gers from Ger Camp are the traditional felt tents of nomadic herders. Each ger is furnished with a wood stove and beautifully painted furniture such as beds, a table and stools. Gers are based on double occupancy. Each ger camp has its restaurant, western style toilet and hot water showers. Most visitors find their stay in gers, which provide an authentic taste of Mongolian culture and adventure, their most enjoyable experience in Mongolia.

Family Stay. In summer time many nomads build extra Gers next to theirs and welcome guests. You will have mostly your private Ger. However, facilities stay basic and simple

Tented Camp is a camp build on a nice spot. The travellers will sleep in Western style tents. We will however do our best to offer you the best available service. We pride ourselves on the level of comfort we provide while camping in these remote areas, but camping is not for everyone. It is important to remain open-minded and physically willing.

REMARK

Mongolia is a developing country in terms of infrastructure. The standard of the roads is very low, with no tarmac outside the capital. As a result be prepared for bumpy and dusty rides.

Travelling in a seldom-explored country, with very little infrastructure requires flexibility, tolerance, a spirit of adventure and respect and understanding for cultural differences. The trip itinerary is subject to changes due to weather, trail conditions, government restrictions, or other reasons beyond our control. We will however do every attempt to adhere to the given schedule.

PAYMENTS

Your trip will be confirmed after a non-refundable deposit of 35% of the due amount payable by bank transfer or visa. The rest payment is due to settle once you are in Mongolia before your trip starts.