

# **Happy Camel Travel**

**Presents**

**Trekking in Central and North  
Mongolia  
(15 days)**

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**TREKKING IN CENTRAL AND NORTH MONGOLIA**  
**(15 DAYS)**

15 Days ♦ 1 Night in Hotel ♦ 7 Nights Tented Camp  
♦ 2 Nights Family Stay



*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 the more.*



- ◆ Trekking ♦ Karakorum ♦ Erdene Zuu Monastery
- ◆ Karakorum's New Archaeological Museum ♦ Terkhiin Tsagaan Lake ♦ Khuvsgul Lake ♦ Egiin River ♦ Uushig Deer Stone Complex ♦ Tsaatan Family ♦ Amarbayasgalant Monastery
- ◆ Family Stay



Trip Type: Rigorous Trekking in Central and North Mongolia

**QUICK ITINERARY REFERENCE**

DAY 1: KARAKORUM

DAY 2: TETSERLEG & TERKHIIN TSAGAAN LAKE

DAY 3 : TERKHIIN TSAGAAN NUUR AND KHORGO VOLCANO

DAY 4: ZUUN NUUR

DAY 5: DRIVE TO TREK STARTING POINT

DAY 6: A DAY WITH NOMADS

DAY 7, 8 AND 9: TREKKING ALONG EGIIN RIVER

DAY 10 AND 11: TREKKING ALONG KHUVSGUL LAKE

DAY 12: SELENGE RIVER

DAY 13: BULGAN & URAN TOGOO VOLCANO

DAY 14: AMARBAYSGALANT

DAY 15: ULAANBAATAR

## MAP OF THE ITINERARY



## **DETAILED TOUR DESCRIPTION**

### **DAY 1: KARAKORUM**

Today we will set off for a driving day to **Karakorum**.

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 Turug and Uigur cities in the Orkhon valley at the eastern end of the Khangai Mountains in 1220 by the Genghis Khan's order. It was 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 Möngke 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.

Between 1260 and 1380 Karakorum lost the status of the Great Mongolian Empire and became the capital of Mongolia. When Kublai Khan claimed the throne of the Mongol Empire in 1260, as did his younger brother, Ariq Boke, he relocated his capital to today's Beijing. Karakorum was reduced to the administrative centre of a provincial backwater of the Yuan Dynasty.

In 1368, the rule of Mongolian Yuan Dynasty collapsed and the centre of Mongolian government was shifted to its homeland after 110 years since **Khubilai Khaan** moved the Empire capital to China in 1260. It gave Karakorum a chance to prosper again.

In 1388, Ming troops under General Xu Da took and destroyed the town.

Today nothing is left from this legendary city.

In 1580, when Abtai Sain Khan together with his brother, lord Tumenkhen, visited the 3rd Dalai Lama and expressed their wish to build a temple in Mongolia, he advised them to reconstruct one old temple in Karakorum. The temple in Takhai ruins that was restored in 1588 according to the Dalai Lama's recommendation is the Main Zuu temple of Erdene Zuu monastery.

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 most recent addition, 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: TETSERLEG & TERKHIIN TSAGAAN LAKE**

By lunchtime we will reach **Tsetserleg**, capital city of Arkhangai province. It is a lovely little town surrounded by forested hills. Here we will visit the **Buyandelgeruulekh Monastery**, the town main functioning monastery and the nice little Museum of Arkhangai located in Zayaiin Gegeenii Monastery. From the museum we will walk hill upward to a small abandoned monastery and enjoy the beautiful view we have from there over Tsetserleg and the surrounding hills.

We will eat lunch in a local restaurant. In the evening we will reach **Terkhiin Tsagaan Lake**. It is one of the most beautiful lakes of the country. The lake is surrounded by extinct and craterous volcanoes, and was formed by lava flows from a volcanic eruption many millennia ago. As a result of the volcano eruptions the landscape is covered with black volcanic rocks.

(Ger camp B, L, D)

#### **DAY 3 : TERKHIIN TSAGAAN NUUR AND KHORGO VOLCANO**

Today we will relax around the **White Lake** (also named the Terkhiin Tsagaan Nuur). We will make an excursion to the top of Khorgo Uul Volcano and we will pass the gorges that lead from Tariat to the volcano. The volcano crater is 200 m wide and 100 m deep and is covered with trees at the back and around the opening of the crater. To the south of Khorgo there are numerous basaltic "gers" formed during the cooling of lava; some of the gers have gates and upper holes and reach 1.7 m high.

(Ger camp B, L, D)

#### **DAY 4: ZUUN NUUR**

Today we will drive through the central grasslands where you will see large herds of horses, cows and yaks. You will cross several rivers, smaller and larger ones, all full of fish.

Tonight we will reach **Dzuun** a small lost lake in the middle of the Mongolian steppes. You'll have a chance to observe several water birds on the lake.

(Ger camp B, L, D)

**DAY 5: DRIVE TO TREK STARTING POINT**

Today evening we will reach our trekking start point. We will get settled into our host family Ger.

(Family staying B, L, D)

**DAY 6: A DAY WITH NOMADS**

Today we will spend full day with our hosts and get involved in many variety of daily activities of herders pursue daily. Bring animals to camp in the evening, milk horses, yaks, goats, and sheep. Process milk, make butter, yogurt and cheese. Savour delicious, fresh dairy products you help producing. Fresh yak cream and fresh yogurt are the best you have ever tasted anywhere in the world.

(Family staying B, L, D)

**DAY 7, 8 AND 9: TREKKING ALONG EGIIN RIVER**

After breakfast we will start our trekking. We will load our gears on pack horses. During the whole trip we will be supported by horsemen and packhorses. The horsemen will be responsible for the horses and, being from the region, they will be our guides.

We'll start hiking along the Egiin River. During the whole trek we will have time for fishing or swimming. Please bring you fishing equipment. For four more days we will trek along the **Egiin River**. On the way we will visit many gers and experience the nomadic life of Central Asia. Our translator will help us to forge contact with the local population.

(Tented Camp, B, L, D)

**DAY 10 AND 11: TREKKING ALONG KHUVSGUL LAKE**

For three more days, we will ride along the western shore of the Khuvsgul Lake enjoying the view over the Mongolian blue pearl. **Khuvsgul Lake** is a huge 2.760 square km alpine lake (130 km in length and 40 km in width), surrounded by mountain chains of more than 2.000 meters high, thick pine forests and lush meadow with grazing yaks and horses. More than 100 small rivers and streams feed the lake with crystal clear water. Water exits the lake through only one river, the **Egiin**, whose waters eventually reach the Baikal Lake. The lake contains about 1.5% of the world's fresh water (excluding water contained in the icecaps). The lake and rivers are full of fish. Around a dozen species of fish inhabit the lake and rivers. The most well-known are the sturgeon, grayling, lennok, salmon, taimon, etc.

There is a big chance that we will cross some Tsaatan families settled long the shores of the Khuvsgul Lake.

(Tented Camp, B, L, D)

**DAY 12: SELENGE RIVER**

After having enjoyed rest day along the Khuvsgul Lake, we will take the road again, south-eastwards to Amarbayasgalant Monastery. This trip will take us two days through the Mongolian grasslands, arriving at Amarbayasgalant Monastery on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day in the evening. We will overnight in a family close to the **Selenge River**.

(Family staying B, L, D)

**DAY 13: BULGAN & URAN TOGOO VOLCANO**

About 60km directly west of Bulgan city is the extinct volcano of **Uran Uul** and nearby **Togoo Uul**, now part of the 1600 hectare Uran-Togoo Tulga Uul Natural Reserve in the sum (district) of Khutag-Ondor.

Trails to the top of the relatively unimpressive volcano lead up from the west side, which also has some nice camping areas.

(Ger camp B, L, D)

**DAY 14: AMARBAYSGALANT**

After a second day of driving we will finally reach **Amarbayasgalant Monastery**. The monastery is set in an exquisite valley surrounded by mountains. After Erdene Zuu Monastery, Amarbayasgalant Monastery is considered as the second most important monastery and the most intact architectural complex of Mongolia. The monastery was built in the 18th century by the Manchu emperor Yongzheng and dedicated to the great Mongolian Buddhist Zanabazar.

(Ger camp B, L, D)

**DAY 15: ULAANBAATAR**

Today we will drive back to Ulaanbaatar. Our team will take you directly to your hotel. You may enjoy the free afternoon to catch up all the places you haven't visited yet. 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 the local flights if any.

**INCLUDED IN THE PRICE**

- Land transportation
- Ger camp stay
- Tented camp stay

- Family stay
- Meals 14B, 15L, 14D
- 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

### **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.

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If interested we also offer during your countryside trip a family stay. In some cases, (because of cold or lack of Ger Camp) you will have to overnight in a Mongolian nomad family.

## **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.