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In Mongolia, jagged peaks give way to lush steppes and dry desert. Much like the landscape, the activities available to travelers are varied and distinctive. But one common theme runs through all of Mongolia's features: adventure!

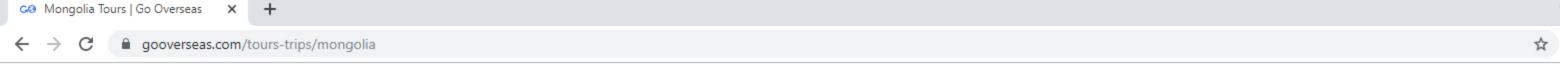
From countryside excursions to urban discoveries, the most rewarding experiences in Mongolia will usually take a few days, and sometimes specialized gear, to complete. Lake Khuvsgul's shimmery waters and wildlife-adorned trails will pull you north while the Gobi Desert's Singing Sands will call you south.

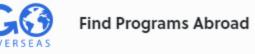
Mostly likely, you'll have your sights set on a second trip before you've even finished the first. To travel in Mongolia is to learn how fulfilling it can be to take your time getting from one adventure to another.

Guide Author



Mellisa Pascale
Go Overseas Writer





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Railway Tours

Known for traversing Russia, Mongolia, and China in an ambitious days-long rail journey, the Trans-Siberian train makes a stop in Mongolia's capital city of Ulaanbaatar. En route, passengers can tuck themselves away in cozy berths while the diverse landscape of northern Asia unfolds before them, from Mongolia's jade-hued steppe to the Gobi Desert's aptly named Flaming Cliffs.

Railway packages from tour companies include a few days layover in Ulaanbaatar. Here, travelers can discover ancient sites like Gandantegchinlen Monastery, a Buddhist temple. Other tour days might entail venturing just beyond the city to the Genghis Khan statue complex, a tribute to Mongolia's greatest warrior. Afterwards, you'll be able to hop back on the train and complete the Trans-Siberian trip.

Horse Tours

There are few activities that will get explorers closer to the Mongolian countryside than a horse trekking expedition. Tours take travelers through secluded terrain and national parks in a journey of several days, an opportunity that really highlights the nation's strong rural culture.

Mongolia's many countryside surprises are perhaps best experienced on the way to Hustai National Park. Guided horse trekking trips will take travelers through the Mongolian steppe, stopping to visit with nomadic herders en route and camping out under the stars. Upon reaching Hustai, visitors will be greeted by a dwindling species of wild horses, the Przewalski's horse.

Desert Camping Tours

One of Mongolia's most cherished sights, the Gobi Desert spoils its visitors with wavy dunes and wildlife encounters. Ascend the Khongoryn Els dunes and listen closely for the little melodies created by the wind on the sand. Camel rides are a staple of Gobi Desert visits, and you may be lucky enough to spot gazelles, ibex, and other regional fauna.

Multi-day tours guide travelers to the desert's many wonders. Visitors will spend their days conquering sand dunes and their nights in cozy *ger* camps. With close proximity to Ulaanbaatar, a Gobi Desert excursion is a natural extension of any adventure in Mongolia.

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Every corner of Mongolia possesses a landscape to photograph, a community to fall in love with, and an adventurous activity to undertake. Organizing a trip here involves a blend of preplanned to dos and room for spontaneity.

Best Time to Visit Mongolia

Summer in Mongolia is a wonderful time to be an adventurer. From hiking at Lake Khuvsgul to camping out overnight on horse treks, warmer temperatures make the country's many outdoor activities more comfortable. In July, Ulaan Baatar and countryside towns celebrate the Naadam Festival, a cultural event with historical ties.

Fall brings fewer crowds and additional seasonal attractions. Out west, Mongolia's eagle hunters host festivals in the autumn months. Travelers have a brief window to witness this traditional practice kept alive through generations of skilled hunters that groom wild eagles to retrieve small prey.

What to Look for in a Tour to Mongolia

It's evident that Mongolian tours should contain an element of adventure - - desert getaways and steppe excursions will make chronic wanderers swoon. However, a fulfilling tour is anything but go, go, go. You need opportunities to connect your activities back to Mongolian history and culture.

For tours in Ulaan Baatar, including visits to museums and temples help you to reflect on the country's evolution over the centuries. If you want to explore further, you should look for opportunities to taste the local cuisine, meet nomadic families, and attend regional festivals. The Mongolian way of life reveals itself in a variety of experiences.

Typical Tour Cost

The price of a tour in Mongolia is constructed largely around the length and type of your trip. Guided tours taking place over a few days can range from \$300 to \$600, while extended trips will be priced in the thousands. Urban tours tend to lie on the lower end of the financial spectrum. On the other hand, fees for countryside excursions, which may have to help cover food and basic outdoor supplies, will typically be much higher.

Packing Tips & Gear Rental

Since it's rare to spend all of your time in Ulaan Baatar, don't pack a bag you wouldn't want to carry around. Mongolia tours will have you constantly on the move, so it's important to only bring the essentials. Hiking boots and comfortable walking shoes are necessary for navigating Mongolia's terrain, as is outdoor apparel. If you'll be camping, bring warm attire, even in summer months.

You can count on renting a tent, sleeping bag, and utensils for making and consuming your meals. Some tour companies might have gear to loan out to guests, or else you can look into outside equipment rental services. As Mongolia is a destination for venturing outside, businesses tend to be prepared for the demand.

Other Tips for Travel in Mongolia

Out in the Mongolian countryside, restaurants and markets become a tad scarce. As such, your travels might have you sharing a cup of airag or even a full meal with a Mongolian family. It's polite for guests to present small presents, like toys or games, to express thanks for the hospitality they have received.

Opportunities like this to connect with local communities are wonderful, and they can be made even better with a little knowledge of the Mongolian language. It would be handy to write down some key phrases before you depart or to bring along a translation dictionary. At the heart of any trip to Mongolia is the chance to communicate across cultural barriers, so don't miss out by showing up unprepared.

Guide Author



Mellisa Pascale
Go Overseas Writer

















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Health

In terms of vaccinations, the CDC recommends travelers have their typhoid and Hepatitis A shots for travel to Mongolia, as these illnesses can be contracted through food. Speaking of meals, the Mongolian diet is heavy on meat and dairy. If you're not accustomed to consuming these foods, your body may take some time to adjust. It would help your transition to start eating similarly prior to departure.

Safety

When you're out discovering Mongolia's many marvels, the dangers lurking are fairly minimal. The Department of State gives Mongolia a travel advisory rating of 1, meaning it's essentially one of the safest places in the world for travelers to visit.

Some potential threats to look out for include stray dogs, who may be rabid, and theft of personal items. While Mongolia does have predators like wolves and snow leopards, attacks on humans are virtually nonexistent. Still, it's not advised to wander off at night while the rest of the camp is fast asleep. So long as you use common sense caution, your travels should be risk-free.

Guide Author



Mellisa Pascale Go Overseas Writer