
OFFTRAVEL - OFF THE BEATEN TRACK EXPERIENCE

Mongolia in the Saddle



horseback riding tour at Khuvsgul Lake

9 - 22 August 2025

OFFTRAVEL

HIGHLIGHTS

- **A once-in-a-lifetime 8-day adventure on a horseback**
- **Khuvsgul Lake known as the “Mongolian Sea”**
- **Mountains, wild nature and unforgettable camps in the taiga**
- **Magnificent landscapes of Mongolia and exploration of the great steppe**
- **Meetings with nomads, visits to yurts and traditional Mongolian cuisine**
- **Relaxation in hot springs**
- **Historic Buddhist monasteries – Erdene Zuu and Gandan**

OVERVIEW

Mongolia is a country with a rich culture and an illustrious history dating back a thousand years. The country's most precious treasure is its nature – pristine, unspoiled and, contrary to popular belief, extremely diverse. Although the grassy steppe dominates in the country, one can also come across high mountains, wild larch taiga, and deserts with huge dunes. Crystal-clear lakes and swift streams complement the landscape.

Little has changed on the Mongolian steppe since the days of Genghis Khan. Ancient traditions and customs are still present at festivals and in everyday life. The Mongols are more than happy to welcome and invite guests into their yurts. The yurts and the huge herds of animals - sheep, goats, horses, yaks and camels – grazing freely are an integral part of the landscape.

Few things are more closely associated with the steppe than the thud of hooves and galloping riders. Horses have become the pride of the Mongols and a symbol of their unfettered freedom on the great steppe. This is why discovering **Mongolia on a horseback** is a fascinating adventure. During the eight-day rally, we ride through vast mountain valleys, covered with flowery meadows and beautiful larch taiga. We cross rocky mountain passes to reach unique places around the ‘Mongolian sea’ of Lake Khubsugul. After the horseback stage, we head towards Ulan Bator, visiting shepherds' yurts, Buddhist monasteries and small towns absorbing the exoticism of Mongolia.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Meeting in Ulaanbaatar and first steps in the capital of Mongolia

We meet in the early morning in front of the hotel or at the airport in Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia. We complete the necessary formalities, go for a typical Mongolian meal and set off by car to the north of Mongolia. On the way, we do our last shopping before the horse rally. We spend the night in tents in the steppe.

Day 2: Journey through the steppe

We go further to the north to the town of Hatgal, admiring the Mongolian landscapes, the holy mounds of owoo and the everyday life of the steppe inhabitants. On the way, we get a typical Mongolian meal at a roadside restaurant and we do the last shopping before the horseback tour. Overnight stay in yurts.

Days 3-10: 8-day horseback riding tour

We saddle up the horses and set off! We have about 200 km ahead of us through wild mountains, forests and streams...

For the first three days, the rally route takes us through the wide valleys of periodic rivers and the vast and very scenic passes of the Chubsugul Mountains, exceeding 2,000 metres above sea level. Although the terrain is hard and dry for the most part, there may be rocky or marshy places, which will require greater caution. On the fourth day, we enter the steppes of the Darchad Basin. Over the next two days, we again traverse wild mountain valleys and larch taiga to reach Lake Khubsugul. It is called the 'Mongolian Sea' by the Mongolians. It is the second largest and deepest lake in Mongolia. It is located in the northern part of the country, right on the border with Russia. Due to its many similarities to Lake Baikal, Khubsugul is also known as 'Little Baikal'. The lake is located at an altitude of 1,645 m above sea level, while the surrounding peaks that we pass during the rally exceed 3,000 m above sea level. The valleys and mountain slopes are overgrown with beautiful, fragrant larch taiga. The region abounds with wildlife - deer, elk, argali sheep, mountain goats, bears, wolves and foxes. All the wildlife is protected in the form of the Chubsugul National Park and the Horidol-Saridag Reserve. For the last two days, we return along the lake's western shore, through meadows and among forests to Hatgal.

We ride proven Mongolian horses - one of the oldest domesticated breeds. In size, structure, stamina and character they resemble the polish breed of Hucul horses. They excel in mountainous terrain. Each rider is given a horse that is as appropriate to their skills, physical conditions and preferences. Each day we spend about 5-8 hours in the saddle with breaks, including a longer lunch break. We use local touring saddles, suitable for long-distance endurance riding.

We are accompanied by proven and experienced local guides who know the terrain well. They look after the horses, take care of saddling and re-saddling (participants' help welcome). The guides also lead additional pack horses to transport our equipment. We ride lightly, equipped with riding panniers into which we pack e.g. drinks, a rain coat or a camera.

The trek is open to people who ride well on horseback, have experience riding off-road and have learned to ride smoothly on their own in three gaits. We move in a troop or loose formation, with different gaits adapted to the terrain. In a few places it may be necessary to lead the horses. If conditions permit, we divide the troop into two groups for a set period of time - those wishing to go faster and those wishing to go at a slower pace (with guides leading

the pack horses). Each group is then supervised by at least one guide and all riders move within sight of each other.

The safety of the participants is further supervised by having appropriate first-aid training and an expedition first-aid kit. The guides also have radio communication, as well as a satellite communicator.

Meals are cooked together. We start the day with a substantial breakfast, have lunch on the trail during the day and in the evening cook a hearty dinner in a cauldron on the campfire. We take provisions purchased in Mongolia for the rally, including delicious dried meat. We also enrich the menu with fresh fish bought from fishermen from the lake. Although Mongolia is a country where a lot of meat is eaten, there is no problem preparing vegetarian meals.

During the rally we sleep in comfortable two-person tents, with two entrances and two vestibules. We always camp near water and places convenient for swimming - streams or a lake.

On the last day, we return to Hatgal in the afternoon, change to a car and drive to the town of Moron, where we stay overnight in yurts or a hotel.

Day 11: Picturesque landscapes of Arkhangai

We leave Hatgal and we drive to Arkhangai Aimag. We cross over the huge river Selenga and enter the most picturesque region of Mongolia, famous for wonderful pastures and the finest kumis. The route leads us along gravel roads through the steppe and high mountains. We cross meandering rivers and watch hundreds of grazing animals. We visit the shepherds' yurts, where we taste the famous salty milk tea and kumis – a drink made of mare's milk, homemade cheese, traditional archi vodka and other delicacies of Mongolian cuisine. Overnight stay in tents on the steppe.

Day 12: Relax in hot springs

In the afternoon we drive through the larger city of Cecerleg. Then we turn off to thermal springs Tsenger peacefully located among larch forests in the picturesque mountain valley. Overnight stay in yurts.

Day 13: Harhorin, and the oldest Buddhist monastery

We move to Harhorin, where we visit the Erdene Zuu monastery. This is the first Buddhist monastery in Mongolia, erected at the end of the 16th century in the place of Karakorum – the former capital of the Genghis Khan's empire. The monastery complex, which consists of temples in Chinese and Tibetan style, is surrounded by a high wall with 108 stupas. The monastery still is a place of prayer and meditation for monks. There is also a museum inside the monastery. In the afternoon, we set off to the dunes of Mongol Els. Overnight stay in tents by the dunes.

Day 14: Gandan Monastery and attractions of the capital

In the morning, we visit the Gandan Monastery. This is the most important Buddhist centre in the country famous for the 26 meters high statue of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara. In the afternoon we visit the National Museum of Mongolia. It presents the culture, art and life of Mongols over hundreds of years. We will see rich collections of traditional clothes, weapons, religious and everyday items. We will take a walk to the Genghis Khan Square, where the State Great Khural – the house of the Mongolian authorities – is located nearby. In the evening we will meet at a farewell dinner at the restaurant. Overnight stay at the hostel.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Country: Mongolia
Date: 9 – 22 August 2025
Duration: 14 days
Number of participants: 5 - 10 people (minimum number of participants: 5 people)

Expedition Cost: 1200 EUR (payable within 3 days from an Agreement date)

Includes:

- organization of the Expedition and support of the English-speaking Leader
- hire of the personal tourist equipment (2-person tents, transportation bags, saddle bags)
- providing of team equipment (camping equipment, satellite communicator, first aid kit)
- expedition package (T-shirt, multifunctional neckwear)
- health & accidents insurance
- Touristic Guarantee Found and Touristic Assistance Found fees

Expedition Cost: 1600 USD

Includes:

- local transfers in rented cars
- rental of horses with the necessary equipment
- hire of local horseback riding guides
- rental of a car for luggage transportation during the horseback riding trips
- full board from day 1 till 14 of the Expedition (breakfast, lunch and dinner based on local gastronomy; during the horseback riding trips – meals prepared by a cook in camping conditions)
- accommodation (14 nights) in yurts (dormitory), guesthouse (double, triple and dorm rooms) and hotel (double rooms) according to the Itinerary
- entrance fees to visited places

Self-organized flight to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

Additional information:

- The participant should be familiar with current passport, visa and sanitary regulations as well as health requirements including recommended vaccinations, available on the website of the embassy or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of his / her country of residence.
- The participant should have trail horseback riding experience (multi-hours recreational trail trips) and should have walk, trot and galop riding skills.
- The expedition is organized under the rules stated in the [Terms and conditions of participating expeditions](#).

Leader: Maciej Musil

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REQUIRED EQUIPMENT | CHECKLIST

BAG	travel bag or big backpack (60-80 liters) (as a main luggage)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	small backpack (20-30 liters) (used as a plane hand-luggage and during sightseeing)	<input type="checkbox"/>
SLEEPING	warm sleeping bag (comfortable within temperature range as low as -5°C)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	foam sleeping mat, self-inflating mat or light air mattress	<input type="checkbox"/>
	inflatable travel pillow (optional)	<input type="checkbox"/>
FOOTWEAR	light shoes	<input type="checkbox"/>
	sandals	<input type="checkbox"/>
	flip-flops (optional)	<input type="checkbox"/>
OUTERWEAR	wind protection hooded jacket (e.g. softshell)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	warm thermoactive sweatshirt	<input type="checkbox"/>
	down vest or sweater (e.g. Primaloft)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	hoodie or long sleeve shirt	<input type="checkbox"/>
	long pants	<input type="checkbox"/>
	shorts	<input type="checkbox"/>
	warm gloves and hat	<input type="checkbox"/>
	light headgear to protect against the sun	<input type="checkbox"/>
	multifunctional neckwear (e.g. Buff)	<input type="checkbox"/>
UNDERWEAR	warm long-sleeved T-shirt and leggings (e.g. from Merino wool)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	underwear	<input type="checkbox"/>
	T-shirts (1 piece per 2-3 days)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	swimsuit	<input type="checkbox"/>
HYGIENE	quick-drying towel (large)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	quick-drying towel (small)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	hygiene utensils and cosmetics (biodegradable) in small bags	<input type="checkbox"/>
	wet wipes (biodegradable)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	toilet paper	<input type="checkbox"/>
	antibacterial hand gel	<input type="checkbox"/>
	sun block (min. SPF 30)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	lipstick	<input type="checkbox"/>
ACCESSORIES	sunglasses	<input type="checkbox"/>
	touristic knife	<input type="checkbox"/>
	lighter	<input type="checkbox"/>
	pen and small notebook	<input type="checkbox"/>
	waterproof bags and strong plastic bags (2-3 pcs.)	<input type="checkbox"/>

	zip lock bags for documents and electronics	<input type="checkbox"/>
	neck pouch or hip pack (for documents and money)	<input type="checkbox"/>
KITCHEN	reusable water bottle (e.g. Nalgene) (min. 1 liter)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	cup	<input type="checkbox"/>
	bowl	<input type="checkbox"/>
	spoon or spork	<input type="checkbox"/>
ELECTRONICS	flashlight (headlamp) and a set of spare batteries	<input type="checkbox"/>
	mobile phone and charger	<input type="checkbox"/>
	power bank	<input type="checkbox"/>
DOCUMENTS and MONEY	passport	<input type="checkbox"/>
	photocopy of passport (pages with photo and data)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	payment card (optional)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	cash (undamaged notes, without inscriptions or stamps)	<input type="checkbox"/>
HORSEBACK RIDING EQUIPMENT	riding helmet	<input type="checkbox"/>
	riding boots	<input type="checkbox"/>
	riding pants	<input type="checkbox"/>
	raincoat	<input type="checkbox"/>
	gaiters or chaps	<input type="checkbox"/>
	riding gloves	<input type="checkbox"/>
	safety vest for horse riding (optional)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	saddle bags	<input type="checkbox"/>
PERSONAL FIRST AID KIT	individual medications (after consultation with a doctor): painkillers, anti-inflammatory and antipyretics, medications for poisoning and stomach problems, cream for abrasions, electrolytes, medications taken regularly	<input type="checkbox"/>
	basic dressings: disposable gloves, alcohol gauze pads, plasters, sterile compresses, elastic bandage	<input type="checkbox"/>
	thermal blanket (NRC foil)	<input type="checkbox"/>