ABSOLUTENOMADS
ADVENTURE TRAVEL & TOURS

Explore the Gobi Desert

Mongolia Tour

Overview

For many visitors to Mongolia, a visit to this vast outdoor paradise isn't complete without visiting the world-famous **Gobi Desert**. It is an area synonymous with explorers, past and present, rugged natural scenery, and a taste of nomadism at its most raw.

Our **Explore the Gobi Desert Tour** ticks all the boxes, leaving the bustle of UB behind and cutting south through hills and steppe into this arid, yet beautifully mesmerizing region.

We'll call at all the highlights mixing history with culture and natural scenery with adventure on this foray into the great outdoors that is the Gobi Desert, we stop at some of the region's most renowned sights such as the **flaming cliffs**, famed for the area's fossil finds and extreme natural beauty, well also be sure to stop at the **Yol valley** for a trek into this lush valley at the heart of the dusty Gobi.

From valleys and cliffs, we'l; go to the giant towing dunes of **Khongoryn Els**, stopping on the way to visit remote Mongolian herders and more, so join us as we circle the Gobi Desert in search of myth, heroes, mystery and adventure.



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What's Included?

Included:

- All Listed Meals
- All Listed Accommodation
- Internal Flights
- Local Guide / Tour Leader
- Visa Assistance
- Transport & Driver
- Water

Not Included:

- Flights to/from Mongolia
- Travel Insurance
- Snacks/Drinks/Extra Expenses
- Tips for Guides / Tour Leader



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Itinerary Overview

*Check out the brief overview of our **Explore the Gobi Desert Tour** – or scroll down to see the in-depth run through of each day of the trip.*

Day 1.	Arrival into Ulaanbaatar
Day 2.	Into the Gobi
Day 3.	Dalanzadgad & the Beautiful Yol Valley
Day 4.	The Singing Sands of Khongoryn Els
Day 5.	The Flaming Cliffs of Bayanzag
Day 6.	An Adventure to Baga Gazriin Chuluu
Day 7.	Return to Ulaanbaatar
Day 8.	Departure Day

Day 1

Arrival into Ulaanbaatar

No matter your arrival time, as with all our tours, the **Absolute Nomads** representative will be there to meet you and escort you to your hotel.

Once you've had a chance to relax, we'll head out into the city for a bit of light exploration before heading to our first group meal.

Accommodation: *Hotel 9, Ulaanbaatar*

Included Meals: *Dinner*

For more information about the accommodation on this tour, check out the 'Accommodation' Tab on the Tour Page.

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Day 2

Into the Gobi

We'll start our adventure early as we have a long drive south towards the **Gobi Desert**. On the journey, we will see the lush green rolling hills of **Ulaanbataar** open up to the semi-arid middle Gobi region.

For lunch, we will stop at a local restaurant in the regional capital, **Mandalagovi**. This desert town expanded and grew during the Soviet Union period becoming a centre of manufacturing and industry, which unfortunately declined following the collapse of the Union. These days the town is home to a large agricultural college with farming also providing the primary income regionally.

Continuing our drive southwards, we will see more signs of desertification and herds of camels roaming the desolate desert plains.

We'll cross from the middle Gobi region into the south, turning off the main highway and heading out across the desert scrub to our destination, the **White Stupa Cliffs (Tsagaan Suvarga).** The White Stupa Cliffs are located in the rocky **Tsagaan Suvarga National Park**; they are an impressive geological rock formation. Millions of years of wind, rain, and tectonic shifts have sculpted this ancient sea bed. The cliffs that have been formed, as the name suggests, resemble crumbling white Buddhist pagodas (stand even further back, and they look like a deserted city).

Not far from the fantastic **White Stupa Cliffs**, we find our ger camp accommodation tonight, out in the desert; once we have checked in, you'll be able to enjoy a welcome drink and view your first Gobi sunset.

Accommodation: *Tourist Ger Camp*

Included Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

Day 3

Dalanzadgad and the Beautiful Yol Valley

For those who watched the sunset the previous day, you may wish to complete the set and wake for the **desert sunrise**; alternatively, snuggle up in your duvet and enjoy the warmth of your ger.

After breakfast, we'll depart the camp and continue southwards to the city of **Dalanzadgad. Dalanzadgad** is the regional capital at the heart of **South Gobi Province** and the region where we will be spending much of the following days.

Dalanzadgad has a population of around 70,000, although it never feels like it since this settlement in the desert always appears empty with a wild west frontier feel to it. We'll stop for a spot of lunch and stock up on road snacks before driving on to our main highlight of the day **Yol Am Valley**.

A relatively short drive from Dalanzadgad finds us at the famed **Yol Am Valley (Vulture Valley);** this narrow canyon is located in southern Mongolia's **Gurvan Saikhan Mountain Range**. Before beginning our hike, we will visit the small local natural history museum; this quirky museum is quite interesting as it houses some of the region's paleontological finds in the shape of ten million-year-old dinosaur eggs.

We begin our adventure at the valley's wide entrance, following the small river into the canyons, narrowing cliffs eventually. As the step-sided walls cut the sun from the canyon's bottom, we will catch a glimpse of the locally famous frozen river. Over the winter months, the river builds up a thick layer of ice, which thaws slowly and, at times, remains long into the summer months. As you follow the winding path, eagles rise to circle in the thermals high above the canyon whilst wild goats can be seen perched on the high valley walls and picas scurry amongst the rocky terrain.

For those who may have used all of their energy climbing the dunes yesterday, there are plenty of horses for rent at the entrance of the canyon.hnjm

Accommodation: *Tourist Ger Camp*

Included Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

Day 4

The Singing Sands of Khongoryn Els

The adventure continues as we board our vehicles and journey onwards through the wilds of **the Gobi Desert** heading deeper into its sandy clutches to the **Khongor Sand Dunes (Khongoryn Els),** also known as **the Singing Sands**.

We pass some of the typical Gobi terrain along the route, a mix of loose pebbles, gravel, and fine sand. As we journey, we will cross a fertile area of the steppe where we'll be sure to visit one of the traditional nomadic families who call this desolate region home.

The **Khongor Sand Dunes,** as the name suggests, are a dune system found within the **Gobi**; as only around 3% of the Gobi desert is covered in sand, the sight of these 300 metre high gigantic dunes is something to behold. The shifting sands of **Khongoryn Els** stretch out for over 180 km, although we arrive in the most impressive area and stay at a Ger camp with views across these giants.

Once we have eaten lunch and waited for the day to cool a little, we'll continue our adventure and visit one of Khongor's resident camel herder families. Although most of these herder families are now in this region to supply camels to tourists, we can think of no better way to approach these monstrous sandy giants. After arriving, we will have time enough to climb and explore the dunes; it may take a little longer than you think to climb the impressive dunes.

If you are fortunate, you may also experience why they have been named the singing dunes, as when the wind blows across the sand's surface in the right direction, an eerie sound is emitted, sounding like an aircraft to some and a hidden being to others.

Another day nearing its end, but as with much of the Gobi Desert's natural scenery, the **Khongor Dunes** come alive at sunset. Perhaps view the area from the top of the dunes or the comfort of our relaxing Ger camp while enjoying a cold drink after dinner.

Accommodation: *Tourist Ger Camp*

Included Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

Day 5

The Flaming Cliffs of Bayanzag

The **Gobi Desert** is vast and our foray onto its plains today only gives us a snippet of its actual size; the Gobi Desert reaches into six Mongolian provinces (Aimags) and even crosses into China. The Gobi is the sixth-largest desert globally and the second in Asia. A wide-open place of extremes; our stop for today is perhaps one of the most well known.

Our main destination for today, **Bayanzag** – (**the Flaming Cliffs**), is stunningly beautiful with its flame-coloured sandstone cliffs and canyons. Aside from its obvious wow factor, **Bayanzag** is also where American palaeontologist Roy Chapman Andrews first discovered the world's first-ever fossilised dinosaur eggs and a mightly haul of various other fossils. A walk along the cliffs here is a walk in the footsteps of the man whom Indiana Jones was modelled on!

We will also take a walk amongst the lower regions of **Bayanzag,** nicknamed by some as Mongolia's answers to the Grand Canyon; they clearly haven't visited the canyon however since Bayanzag doesn't resemble the grand canyon but is truly a marvel in its own right. The lower areas of the cliffs offer us breathtaking views of the enflamed rock face and reflect the cliff's more local name, **Bayanzag**. Bayanzag translates to “rich in saxaul shrubs” which sounds a little odd until you find these peculiar spindly shrubs sprouting from the desert floor, creating a strange and otherworldly feel to the area.

Once we have finished our exploration, it's off to the nearby Ger camp where we can relax, drink, and maybe return to the cliffs to catch the changing colours as sunsets, making a perfect end to an exciting day.

Accommodation: *Tourist Ger camp*

Included Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

Day 6

An Adventure to Baga Gazriin Chuluu

For those early risers today, you may wish to view the changing colours of the flaming cliffs once again; this time, sunrise offers the opportunity, and is said to be the best time, to see the true beauty of this famous geological formation.

Following breakfast, we make our way across country, continuing our journey to an area known as **Baga Gazriin Chuluu**. The trip will take us across typical Gobi scrub, transitioning into the more famed and well-known traditional Mongolian steppe.

As we approach Baga Gazriin Chuluu, it comes as a real surprise a red granite outcrop of rocks rising to 1768 metres above sea level in the middle of the flat, featureless Mongolian steppe.

Baga Gazriin Chuluu is designated a national park home to 20 rare species of plant, ibex, marmot and mountain sheep. The area offers us impressive geology and the chance to explore this and more with some good hikes, which also encompass some of the ancient petroglyphs and burial mounds found in the area.

Should time permit on our journey, we will also have time to interact with a few more local **nomadic herders** who will also be passing through the region (just on a longer journey). Time permitting, we'll stop for the ubiquitous cup of milky tea before continuing on our own adventure.

Once at the ger camp, for those who wish, there may be the opportunity for some optional **horse riding**, a great location to experience a ride out on a true Mongolian steed.

Accommodation: *Tourist Ger Camp*

Included Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

Day 7

Return to Ulaanbaatar

After an early morning start, we say a fond farewell to Mongolia's southern region and drive back to the bustling capital Ulaanbaatar.

However, our tour isn't over as we're off into the city to explore some of Ulaanbaatar's must-see sites, the first stop **Gandan Monastery.**

Gandan Monastery is Ulaanbaatar's largest and most impressive Buddhist monastery; the complex is comprised of varying temples from different periods; one of the highlights is viewing the 26-meter-high gold-coated indoor buddha.

From temple to museum, we'll head further into the city and stop at the **National Museum of Mongolian History** to see artefacts from Mongolia and Central Asia dating as far back as the Stone Age to the present day. From there, it's a short jaunt back across the square to the comfort of our hotel, where you'll have the chance to wash the Gobi sand from your hair before relaxing, shopping and prepare for our last group meal together.

Accommodation: *Hotel 9, Ulaanbaatar*

Included Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

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Day 8

Departure Day

We'll end our adventure in the morning, with transfers to the airport for international flights. Pack your souvenirs, dirty clothes, memories, and have a safe trip home!

END OF TOUR