ABSOLUTENOMADS
ADVENTURE TRAVEL & TOURS

Explore: Northern Mongolia Tour

Mongolia

Itinerary Overview

On this adventure, we'll be crossing through northern Mongolia to visit the stunningly beautiful Khovsgol Lake. On our adventure we'll meet local families, visit secluded temples, and climb extinct volcanoes.

Day 1.	Arrival in Ulaanbaatar
Day 2.	Visit Amarbayasgalant Monastery
Day 3.	Mining Cities & Extinct Volcanoes
Day 4.	Arrive at Khovsgul Lake
Day 5.	Enjoy the the day at Khovsgul
Day 6.	Small Villages & Nomadic Yak Herders
Day 7.	Natural Wonders of Mongolia
Day 8.	Stone Forests, Lakes, & Lava Tubes
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Day 12.	Return to Ulaanbaatar
Day 13.	Departure Day

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Day 1

Arrival in Ulaanbaatar

Our journey begins in **Ulaanbaatar**, the capital of Mongolia and it's largest city. We'll begin our trip with an early afternoon stroll through the streets of the capital, starting with the famous central square, known as **Sukhbaatar Square**.

This square sits in the centre of the city and is named for **Damdin Sukhbaatar**, a revolutionary hero of the Mongolian revolution whose statue stands in its centre. It is also home to government palace, from where an enormous bronze statue of **Chinggis Khan** presides over the city, flanked by the statues of **Kublai Khan**, and **Ogdei Khan**.

From here, we'll walk down **Peace Avenue**, once of the city's main boulevards, to arrive at the **State Department Store**. During socialist times, this was a government-owned department store, however it's since been overtaken by many weird and wonderful shops selling everything from cashmere and washing machines, to lego and stuffed eagles!

Leaving the department store, we'll visit the unique **Beatles Statue** in the city centre before talking a leisurely walk along **Seoul Street** back towards our group hotel.

This evening, we'll enjoy our first group meal, followed by a pre-tour meeting from our tour leader on what to expect as we set out on our adventure into Mongolia!

Accommodation: *Hotel in Ulaanbaatar*

Included Meals: *Dinner*

Day 2

Visit Amarbayasgalant Monastery

This morning we'll set out on our journey as we leave Ulaanbaatar and make our way north. As we drive further and further into the stunning countryside of Mongolia, we'll make a stop at the city of **Darkhan** for some lunch and a chance to get a feel for life outside the capital in one of the country's smaller cities.

After lunch, we'll set out once again. Our destination is the beautiful monastery of **Amarbayasgalant**. Built in the early 18th century on the order of the Chinese emperor, it was constructed to honor Zanabazar, the first spiritual leader of Mongolian Buddhism.

Today, the monastery boasts a blend of Mongolian, Tibetan, and Chinese influences on its architecture and is still an important centre for Buddhism in Mongolia with many monks still in residence.

We'll spend some time visiting this beautiful complex of temples before heading to our nearby local ger camp for a night in traditional Mongolian style!

Accommodation: *Eco-Ger Camp*

Included Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

Day 3

Mining Cities & Extinct Volcanoes

This morning we'll wake up early for a chance to catch the morning chants of the local monks who call Amarbayasgalant their home.

Once we've finished enjoying the calming nature of our surroundings, we'll hit the road once again as we head deeper into the Mongolian wilderness.

Our first stop today will be the city of Erdenet, the second largest city in the country and a relic of the Soviet Union. The city was founded as a mining town, and is still home to the country's largest copper mines as well as being full of Soviet-era architecture and history. However, our short stop to visit Erdenet won't distract us from our destination today, the incredible Uran Togoo volcano.

An extinct volcano, Uran Togoo is a protected region of Mongolia, known for its volcanic formations and breathtaking landscapes. We'll spend the afternoon exporing the lava fields and walking up to the crater from where we'll be greeted with some stunning views of the country surrounding us, spotting various birds and small mammals as we go.

Accommodation: *Eco-Ger Camp*

Included Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

Day 4

Arrive at Khovsgol Lake

Today we'll set out north, heading ever-closer to the majestic Khovsgul Lake. As we approach the lake itself, we'll make a short stop in Murun town, a chance to grab some lunch and stock up on any snacks before we continue our adventure.

As we continue on, we'll pass some ancient bronze age sites which litter the countryside in Mongolia. From Deer Stones to rock carvings, these monuments date back to around 1200-700 BCE and have remained largely untouched due to the sparse nature of the population in Mongolia.

Continuing on, after a brief stop at Khatgal village, we'll arrive on the shores of Lake Khovsgul, famous around Mongolia for its natural beauty, and a popular spot for locals to visit during the summer months to enjoy the stunning countryside.

We'll arrive at our ger camp, far from the main road, nestled amongst the trees around the shore with some incredible views of the lake itself – a chance to kick back, relax, and enjoy the evening.

Accommodation: *Ger Camp*

Included Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

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Day 5

Enjoy the Day at Khovsgol

Today we'll forgo the travelling and spend our time relaxing and enjoying our surroundings. Khovsgol is teeming with stunning scenery, hiking opportunities, and a chance to experience local life.

For those wishing to relax, the day is yours. Otherwise, we'll have a few optional activities throughout the day including horse riding with a local family, taking a boat out onto the crystalline waters of Khovsgul, hiking through the surrounding area, and even an evening visit to a local shaman for a chance to learn about local life and customs from this most ancient of practitioners.

Either way, today will be a chance to relax and break up our epic journey before we hit the road again tomorrow in search of local nomads!

Accommodation: *Ger Camp*

Included Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

Day 6

Small Villages & Nomadic Yak Herders

This morning we'll say goodbye to our hosts on the shores of Lake Khovsgul, making our way south, away from the lake itself and back towards the heart of the country.

We'll make a brief stop at Murun town again as we make our way into the true wilderness of Central Mongolia. Our destination today is a small village called Shin-Ider. The village amidst some of Mongolia's most stunning landscapes, as the forests of the north transition to the steppe which blankets middle-Mongolia. The surrounding area is defined by rolling hills and vast grasslands, punctuated by the local nomadic families who tend their herds here and call these pastures home.

After lunch, we'll head out to visit one of these families. Different families often herd different animals depending on the region. Today, we'll be paying a visit to a yak-herding family. This will give us a chance to learn not only about these majestic animals, but also how nomadic people continue to live as their ancestors have done for thousands of years.

We'll learn the traditional etiquette for visiting a Mongolian ger, and bring along a few gifts as a thank you to our hosts. Who knows, perhaps we'll even get a chance to meet some of their animals!

Accommodation: *Ger Camp*

Included Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

Day 7

Natural Wonders of Mongolia

Today we'll leave the village of Shin-Ider and continue our adventure south, heading towards our destination for the day, Khorgo-Terkiin Tsagaan National Park. This protected area is situated in Arkhangai, once of the most beautiful of Mongolia's central provinces.

We'll make sure to stop regularly for photos as the landscape transitions from grassland to distinctly volcanic.

Upon arrival, we'll enjoy a free afternoon in our camp – a chance to try some nomadic archery, hike the surrounding wilderness, or just enjoy the fresh air and lovely weather.

Accommodation: *Ger Camp*

Included Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

Day 8

Stone Forests, Lakes, & Lava Tubes

Today we'll truly explore the Khorgo-Terkiin Tsagaan National Park, setting out to visit another great extinct volcano, known as Khorgo Volcano. This great natural wonder last erupted around 8,000 years ago and is surrounded by lava fields, basalt rock formations, long-extinct lava tudes, and caves – some of which have legends associated with them!

We'll also visit the nearby Terkhiin Tsagaan Lake, a volcanic freshwater lake home to many fish, migratory birds, and wild animals like deer and ibex.

In the afternoon, we'll pay a visit to a local nomadic family from the area, a chance to learn how life works for the nomadic people living in this protected national park, and how their lifestyle is vital to continuing the local traditions of the Mongolian people.

As the evening draws in, we'll retire back to camp as we prepare for another adventure tomorrow!

Accommodation: *Ger Camp*

Included Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

Day 9

Journey to the Tsenger Hot Springs

Our destination today is one of the more unusual on our trip. We'll depart our ger camp in the National Park and continue heading south towards the town of Tsetseleg and passing a great river canyon, the perfect spot for some nature photography!

Finally, we'll arrive at the Tsenger Hot Springs. These geothermal springs are filled with naturally heated mineral water which emerges from the ground at around 90 degrees celcius! Local Mongolians believe in the healing powers of the waters, and will travel out to the region from far and wide to cure joint pain and other ailments.

Our camp tonight is a locally-run hot spring resort, a chance to relax and enjoy the surroundings, as well as making use of the geothermal springs around us.

Accommodation: *Hot Springs Local Ger Camp*

Included Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

Day 10

The Ancient City of Kharkorum

Today we'll say a final goodbye to the Mongolian wilderness and make our way towards one of Mongolia's most famous cities – the ancient capital of Kharkorum. Once the beating heart of the Mongol Empire, home to palaces and temples, today Kharkorum is a much more humble affair.

Upon arriving in the city, we'll pay a visit to Kharkorum market, a classic example of a Mongolian market and a chance to search for weird and wonderful things, as well as some local snacks.

We'll also spend some time visiting the Kharkorum City Museum, a chance to learn the history of the region from the bronze-age settlements through the age of empires, right up to the modern day.

Finally, the centerpiece of the city, we'll visit the Erdene-zuu Monastery in the heart of the city. One of the only remaining parts of the original city, the monastery is still functioning and is home to many resident monks, as well as some exquisite examples of traditional Mongolian Buddhist architecture, religious iconography, and artworks.

Finally, we'll retire to our nearby ger camp to enjoy a traditional Mongolian performance by some local artists, a fitting end to our day in the ancient capital.

Accommodation: *Ger Camp*

Included Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

Day 11

Explore Turkic History & Ugii Lake

This morning we'll depart the ancient capital of Kharkorum and make our way deep into the countryside once again in search of Mongolia's legacy as part of the nomadic Gokhturk empire.

Our first stop today will be the remote Ancient Turkic Gokhturk Museum at Khoshoo Tsaidam, a chance to learn about the nomadic peoples of the steppe in the centuries before the famed Mongolian Empire.

This small museum is home to many monumental stones and other artefacts from the days of the nomadic Turkic peoples who once inhabited this region of Arkhangai Province.

After the museum, we'll continue north towards our overnight stop, the picturesque Ugii Lake. Our final night in the Mongolian countryside, we'll spend our evening enjoying the natural beauty of the region, remeniscising on our time in the wilderness, and prepare to return to civilisation tomorrow morning.

Accommodation: *Ger Camp*

Included Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

Day 12

Return to Ulaanbaatar

Today we'll make our final journey back into the capital, returning from two weeks of untouched wilderness into the hustle and bustle of modern city life in Ulaanbaatar.

Upon arrival in the city, we'll make a stop at the Ganden Monastery, the symbolic centre for Buddhism in Mongolia, home to hundreds of local monks, and the first permanent structure ever built in Mongolia. During the communist purges of the 1930s, it was one of the few religious institutions to survive and has since grown to encompass several temples and libraries.

As we arrive into the city centre, we'll enjoy some free time before dinner. A chance to pick up some souvenirs, explore the city solo, or just take a well-deserved rest!

We'll wrap-up our adventure with a final group meal. We hope you'll be heading home with a head full of memories and a phone filled with photos!

Accommodation: *Hotel in Ulaanbaatar*

Included Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

Day 13

Departure Day

Airport transfers are available between the group hotel and Chinggis Khan International Airport. Additional nights hotel bookings can be arranged.

Accommodation: *Ger Camp*

Included Meals: *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*