



## Mongolia Explorer

MONGOLIA - TRIP CODE GK

DISCOVERY

### Why book this trip?

Endless blue skies, a picturesque plateau, vast desert and welcoming nomadic hospitality is everything that is great about this exploration of Mongolia. As well as this we visit old monasteries, cross part of the great Gobi Desert and experience traditional Nomadic hospitality.

- **Nadaam Festival Departure** - Experience Mongolia's '3 sports festival' including horse racing, wrestling and archery
- **Gobi Desert** - Travel through one of the most remote parts of our planet and marvel at the deserted scenery
- **Karakorum** - Explore Genghis Khan's ruined capital and the revived Erdene Zuu Monastery



**INCLUDED MEALS**  
 Breakfast: 14  
 Lunch: 13  
 Dinner: 12



**TRIP STAFF**  
 Explore Tour  
 Leader  
 Driver(s)  
 Local Guide(s)



**TRANSPORT**  
 Bus  
 Flight



**ACCOMMODATION**  
 9 nights simple ger  
 5 nights  
 comfortable hotel



**TRIP PACE:**  
 Moderate



**GROUP SIZE:**  
 10 - 16

## Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

### DAY 1 - Join trip in Ulaanbaatar

Arrive in Ulaanbaatar, the largely modernised capital hub of Mongolia. Despite its concrete façade, this city is home to nearly half of the population, and many can be seen in their traditional dress with a huge proportion continuing to live in gers in the suburbs.

For those arriving on time our Leader plans to meet you in the hotel reception at 6pm for the welcome meeting and for those that wish, there is the chance to go out for dinner. There are no other activities planned today, so you are free to arrive in Ulaanbaatar at any time. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to arrive into Chinggis Khan International Airport (ULN), which is 30 minutes' drive from our hotel. Should you miss the welcome meeting, your Leader will inform you of any essential information as soon as you catch up in the hotel lobby on day two.

If your flight arrives earlier in the day, perhaps you might choose to explore locally on foot.



**ACCOMMODATION:**  
 Bayangol Hotel (or similar)

**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



**MEALS PROVIDED: NONE**

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## DAY 2 - Drive to Hognokhan Mountain

Today, a long yet scenic drive takes us to Hognokhan Mountain where we will spend the next two nights at our ger camp. Hognokhan Mountain is a particularly serene spot and you will have plenty of time to explore and relax here.

The ger camps on this trip generally consist of several canvas and felt tents plus a large dining tent or restaurant. Each ger has 2 or more beds, bedding, plus a table and stools, all hand-painted in local style. Toilet and washing facilities are shared and separate to the living gers, with a mixture of flushing and long-drop style toilets. Should you wish to charge your cameras and electronic devices during your trip, there is electricity in the restaurant gers.



### ACCOMMODATION:

Delger Ger Camp (or similar)



Grade: Simple Ger



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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## DAY 3 - Explore the monastery and Hognokhan Mountain

After breakfast there will be the opportunity to hike up Hognokhan Mountain - a three hour walk that is amply rewarded with breathtaking views from the top. The beautiful flowers and butterflies en route also make it worthwhile. You may wish to visit the nearby freshwater pool and watch the impressive birdlife that inhabits this area. There is a chance to visit the Erdene Khombo monastery, led by a lady abbot located in the mountain nearby. Alternatively, simply relax with a good book and an exceptional view.



### ACCOMMODATION:

Delger Ger Camp (or similar)



Grade: Simple Ger



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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## DAY 4 - Visit Erdene Zuu Monastery en route to Karakorum

Leaving Hognokhan we drive to Karakorum, Genghis Khan's capital in the 13th century. En route, we'll visit the immense Erdene Zuu Monastery - Mongolia's first Buddhist centre established in the 16th

century and now an active monastery as well as a museum. At its zenith, there were 1,000 resident monks and, although most of the temples were destroyed in the 1930s, the monastery is slowly being restored and is considered by many as the most important monastery in Mongolia. The political climate in Mongolia is changing and Buddhism, previously suppressed, is currently experiencing a resurgence. On a hill outside the monastery sits an interestingly shaped rock - a reminder for the monks to remain celibate. We also visit the Karakorum Museum which chronicles the history of the Khan Empire along with artefacts from the ruined city.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Anja Eco Ger Camp (or similar)



Grade: Simple Ger



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### DAY 5 - Drive to our camp near to Saikhan Ovoo

Today we undertake the longest drive of the trip, but the scenery is so spectacular that the eight hours is sure to pass quickly, especially as it is interspersed with plenty of stops. Once again, there are no roads and few tracks to follow. The other thing that will doubtless strike you when travelling through these great expanses of Mongolia is the varied bird life. Mongolian Lark, Demoiselle Cranes and Black Vultures may be seen, to name but a very few. Very bizarrely, this land-locked country also seems to attract many coastal species, such as plover, redshank and avocet. Our accommodation for the night is in a permanent ger camp, so the bathroom and restaurant facilities are in a purpose-built block, as opposed to our previous ger accommodation which had separate kitchen, restaurant and shower gers. Next to the ger camp are the ruins of the Ongi Monastery - once home to over 1,000 lamas until it was destroyed during the Stalinist purges in the 1930s.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Secret of Ongi Ger Camp (or similar)



Grade: Simple Ger



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### DAY 6 - Cross the Gobi Desert to Bayanzag

Today we drive through one of the remotest parts of our planet. The sheer vastness of the desert is awe-inspiring and, as our driver sets off across terrain with no tracks, let alone roads, we marvel at how he

knows where he is going. The Mongol culture of today is still mainly pastoral and we hope to come across itinerant herdsmen, a group of two or three families, their gers pitched on the steppe. The nomads live in harmony with their surroundings and move with the seasons. Many rear camels, sheep and goats. It is likely that, at some point during our trip, we will be invited to share a drink of airag or koumiss (fermented mare's milk) with these friendly people. There are many polite points of etiquette to learn, but our guide will help us through these so we do not inadvertently cause offence. The provision of a gift when you visit a ger is part of the culture in Mongolia, so feel free to pack something small. Practical items such as torches or sewing kits, that save a trip to town are often the most appreciated. We plan to visit the spot where the first dinosaur eggs were discovered in Central Asia.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Gobi Tour Ger Camp (or similar)



Grade: Simple Ger



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### DAY 7 - Drive to Dungenee and the Yol Valley

Moving on again today we make our way to Yol Valley. This gorge sees such little sunlight that there are usually traces of ice even though we are in the middle of the desert. Due to the altitude of the surrounding Gurvan Saikhan Mountains, a temperate ecosystem exists, with argali sheep, ibex and snow leopards living here - as opposed to the desert species we might expect. Our accommodation for the night is in a camp, with the smell of feverfew, camomile and thyme in the grass and looking out over the Gobi Desert and beside a mountain range, this spot exudes peace and tranquillity.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Gobi Oasis Ger Camp (or similar)



Grade: Simple Ger



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### DAY 8 - Take a walk through the Yol Valley

We spend today exploring the Yol Valley starting with a visit to the small museum and then taking a short drive to the head of the valley where we take a leisurely walk. The scenery of the valley is very beautiful and has permanent glaciers, small waterfalls and a narrow, steep-sided canyon; rare animals live in the

valley including Siberian Ibex, snow leopards and bearded vultures.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Gobi Oasis Ger Camp (or similar)



Grade: Simple Ger



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### DAY 9 - Fly to Ulaan Baatar

This morning we will take the short flight back to the capital. In the afternoon we have an opportunity to explore Ulaan Baatar. We will visit the National Museum of Mongolia, which, although stuck in a time warp from a presentation perspective, contains an impressive array of exhibits taking you through the ancient and more recent history. We will also visit the Bogd Khan Palace. Built at the turn of the last century as a winter palace for the last king and eighth living Buddha of Mongolia, this simple two storey wooden building was, for many years, the tallest building in Mongolia.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Bayangol Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### DAY 10 - Watch the start of the Naadam Festival celebrations

Today we have our first experience of the Naadam festivities in and around Ulaan Baatar. The itinerary for the festival is finalised at a very late stage, but we can expect to watch the horse races and wrestling competitions that are typical of this annual festival. It may be possible to watch some of the training sessions for the archery competitions as well. Naadam is the country's largest festival, locally known as 'Eriin Gurvan Naadam' which translates as 'the three games of men' - horse racing, wrestling and archery.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Bayangol Hotel (or similar)

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## Grade: Comfortable Hotel



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### DAY 11 - Join in with the locals at the Naadam Festival

Today the festivities officially begin, with pomp and ceremony almost akin to an Olympic Opening Ceremony. Along with much of the population who will be tuning in on their TVs, we start by watching the parade of nine white horsetail banners entering the stadium. These banners were originally used by Genghis Khan, with the white colour symbolising peace and nine considered a lucky number. The horses and presidential guards then parade on to the National Stadium for the opening ceremony. We follow them to watch the ceremony which is opened by the President and followed by a wrestling competition featuring up to 500 participants. We'll join the locals for a picnic lunch in the gardens surrounding the stadium.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Bayangol Hotel (or similar)

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## Grade: Comfortable Hotel



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### DAY 12 - Visit Ganden Monastery; drive to Jalman Meadows

An early start this morning to watch the lamas partake in their morning prayers at Ganden Lamasery. After soaking up the calm atmosphere, we leave the city and head for the countryside, driving for about three and a half hours through the stunning steppe landscape, and stopping to admire the famous huge statue of Genghis Khan en route. Jalman Meadows is the peaceful setting of our semi-permanent ger camp which will be our home for the next two nights. Located in a true wilderness between steppe and taiga forest, the meadow may be covered in a blanket of wildflowers during July and August, with butterflies to rival those found in an English meadow one-hundred years ago. Your Tour Leader will lead you on one of the beautiful walks in the area, depending on the wishes of the group. Alternatively, you may wish to simply relax by the river and enjoy the tranquil surroundings.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Jalman Meadows Ger Camp (or similar)

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## Grade: Simple Ger



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### DAY 13 - Relax or try rafting at Jalman Meadows

Today is free to continue to enjoy your surroundings. One option is a two-hour stroll upstream along the banks of the river in the company of a raft-pulling yak. The one-hour drift back to camp is gentle and with a serene soundtrack of birdsong. Whilst life jackets are provided for rafting, to take part in this optional excursion we recommend you are confident swimming at least 25 metres unaided.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Jalman Meadows Ger Camp (or similar)

Grade: Simple Ger



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### DAY 14 - Morning at Jalman; Afternoon drive to Ulaan Baatar

You have the opportunity to spend the morning as you wish. You might choose to walk in the forest or relax at the ger camp, making the most of its well-stocked 'Library ger'. Or, discovering your inner Mongol, you may choose to challenge the rest of your group to an archery competition, using the camp's kit. After lunch we will drive back to the capital for our final night in Mongolia.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Bayangol Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & LUNCH

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### DAY 15 - Tour ends Ulaanbaatar

The trip ends after breakfast at our hotel in Ulaanbaatar.



There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart from Ulaanbaatar at any time. If your flight is departing later in the day luggage storage facilities are available at our hotel. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you need to depart from Chinggis Khan International Airport (ULN), which is 30 minutes' drive from our hotel.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## Trip information

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### Country information

#### Mongolia

##### Climate

Mongolia has an extreme continental climate similar to that of south-central Siberia or Manchuria and enhanced by a mean elevation of 1500m. Winters are long and very cold. There is a swift transition in May to a short, warm summer and an equally rapid return to the winter cold in October. Summer temperatures vary from around 35°C in the desert to as low as 15°C in the mountains. Frost can occur in the mornings in the Terelj National Park. Rainfall is low everywhere; no more than 38-51cm a year in the mountains and as little as 13cm in the drier lowland parts although do come prepared for the occasional downpour. However, temperatures drop very quickly when rainfall does occur. (Rainfall can be heavy, therefore, a good quality rainjacket and waterproof trousers are essential). Be prepared for all weather conditions during your tour.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
+7	2 Pin Round	Buddhist, Atheist	Mongolian

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### Budgeting and packing

#### Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Rafting with yak cart- In Jalman Meadows US\$ 15.

Horseriding - In Jalman Meadows US\$ 7 per hour.

Ulaan Baatar - Cultural evening US\$ 12.

## Clothing

Daytime temperatures are warm and we recommend lightweight clothing plus some warm layers for the drop in night temperatures experienced in high desert areas and mountains of Mongolia. You will also need a good waterproof jacket as rain can be heavy.

## Footwear

Light walking boots and comfortable shoes and sandals.

## Luggage

20kg

## Luggage: On tour

One main piece of lockable baggage ideally a soft holdall, kitbag or frameless rucksack. Keep luggage to a strict minimum as you will be expected to carry your bag throughout. Porters are not available in Mongolia.

Please note that the luggage allowance for the domestic flight is 10kg per person for the hold plus 5kg hand luggage. It is possible to pay for small amounts of excess baggage at a cost of approximately £1 per kilogram. Excess baggage can also be kept securely in Ulaan Baatar until our return to the city.

## Equipment

Torch and head torch  
Walking poles (if you use them)  
Insect repellent  
Sun Screen  
Water bottle for day to day use

## Tipping

### Explore leader

Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. You may however, want to recognise a leader that's done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It's a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we'd recommend between £15 to £20 per person per week as a guideline.

### Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow US\$ 40 for tipping. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

## Mongolia

### Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

<b>Lunch price</b>	<b>Dinner price</b>	<b>Beer price</b>	<b>Water price</b>
£5	£13	£1.5	£0.7

## Foreign Exchange

### Local currency

Tugrik.

### Recommended Currency For Exchange

Most people spend around \$200 to \$300 over the two weeks. It is easier to carry your funds in small denomination US\$ cash as this is the most readily accepted form of currency for the ger camps. Please bring only clean bills issued after 1991.

### Where To Exchange

In major cities and towns

### ATM Availability

Limited

### Credit Card Acceptance

In major restaurants.

### Travellers Cheques

Can be exchanged in Ulaan Baatar.

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## Transport, Accommodation & Meals

### Transport Information

Bus, Flight

### Accommodation notes

The ger camps in Mongolia consist of several canvas and felt tents plus a large dining tent or restaurant. Each ger used on this tour has 2 or more beds, bedding, plus a table and stools. All are hand painted in local style. Although they are comfortable, we advise that you try to leave behind your western standards to fully appreciate the atmosphere of these traditional dwellings. The ger camps in Mongolia consist of several canvas and felt tents plus a large dining tent or restaurant. Each ger used on this tour has 2 beds, bedding, plus a table and stools. All are hand painted in local style. Although they are comfortable, we advise that you try to leave behind your western standards to fully appreciate the atmosphere of these traditional dwellings. Toilet and washing facilities are shared and separate to the living gers, with a mixture of flushing and long-drop style toilets.

Should you wish to charge your cameras and electronic devices during your trip, there is electricity in the restaurant gers.

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## Essential Information

## Government Travel Safety Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

### Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

## Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

## Visa and Passport Information

Mongolia: A single entry visa is required by British, Irish, New Zealand, Australian, & Canadian citizens and must be obtained prior to departure. A Mongolian visit visa is usually valid for a stay of up to 30 days within six months from the date of issue. All passports must have at least 6 months validity remaining on entry to Mongolia.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may be able to apply through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://www.travcour.com) to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

## Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

## Transfers

Find out more about [Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions](#) before you book.

### Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

## **Joining Tour Abroad**

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

## **Insurance**

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

## **Flight information**

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them [here](#).

### **Flight Information**

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

### **Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore**

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

## Ability to swim

An ability to swim is essential for your safe enjoyment of the water based activities on this trip. If you wish to participate in these activities then we insist that you are able to swim.

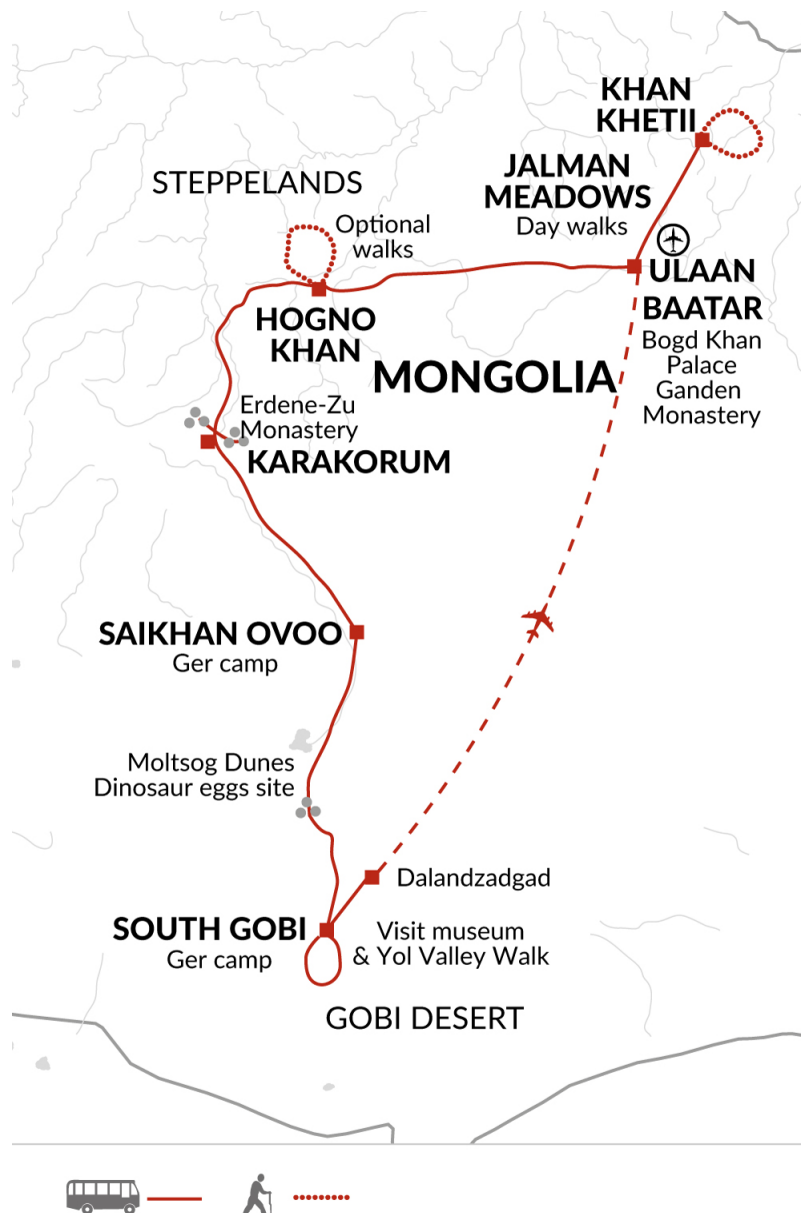
## Mongolia

### Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against typhoid, tetanus, infectious hepatitis and polio. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

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### Additional Information



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## Reviews

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**AWARD WINNING  
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE  
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT  
TRANSFERS**