

2020 Altai Eagle Festival Tour Trip in Mongolia Itinerary

Day 1 Sept. 9 Arrive in Ulaanbaatar (UB)

Arrive in Ulaanbaatar. You will be met at the Chinggis Khan International Airport by our staff and transferred to our hotel, the [Blue Sky Hotel and Tower](#), located in the center of UB, directly across from Sukhbaatar Square and within walking distance to most sites in UB. Depending on what time you arrive, you may be able to spend some time on a walking tour of central Ulaanbaatar, Sukhbaatar Square, the iconic State Department Store, and checking out some shopping, sightseeing and museums along the way. We will have dinner at a restaurant near the hotel.

Overnight in hotel, Dinner

Day 2 Sept. 10 Full day in UB

After breakfast, we will spend the morning on a walking tour of central Ulaanbaatar, making our way through Sukhbaatar Square to the Museum of Natural History, touring central city area, checking out the iconic State Department Store. We will grab some lunch mid-day at one of the many dining options available. The afternoon has a few options including additional museums, shopping - especially the exquisite cashmere and wool, touring around central UB, or free time. In the early evening we will take a short walk to the performance theatre of the Tumen Ekh ensemble. The ensemble performs the ancient arts of Mongolia including long song, Khoomi (throat singing), contortionist, morin khuur (the horse head fiddle), Tsam dances and more. Following the performance we will dine at a nearby restaurant.

Overnight in hotel, B,L,D

Day 3 Sept. 11 Visit with Mongolian nomadic family, outside UB

After breakfast, we will drive outside of UB into the surrounding countryside, getting an idea of the vast and open country we will be in for the next 2 weeks. We will visit a nomadic family in their traditional Mongolian ger, enjoy some local delicacies including fresh and homemade yogurt, airag (mare's milk), ride a horse or camel, and enjoy the traditions and pace of the ancient traditional Mongolian life. Upon returning to the city, we will have dinner at one of the restaurants in our hotel.

Overnight in hotel, B,L,D

Day 4 Sept 12 Full day in UB

After breakfast we will take a van to Gandan Monastery where we will tour the grounds and temples which provide insight into Buddhist life and practices in Mongolia. From here we will travel by van to the museum at the Winter Palace of the Bogd Khan, a complex built between 1893 and 1903, where Mongolia's eight Living Buddah, and last king, lived. We will then have an exquisite lunch followed by a hike up to the Zaisen Memorial which overlooks the city, and whose large tiled mural honors allied Mongolian and Soviet soldiers killed in World War II. Next we'll drive to Narantuul Black Market, an open air market full of traditional Mongolian clothing, horse-riding gear, souvenirs, and just about anything you can imagine. We will have dinner near the hotel.

Overnight in hotel, B,L,D

Day 5 Sept. 13 Fly to Olgii, drive to Tavan Bogd National Park

We will take a very early morning 2-hour flight to Olgii. After a quick breakfast upon arrival, we will meet our guide/translator, and then we will make a 5-hour van drive (150 km) to Tavan Bogd National Park where we will meet a local herder family and stay in nearby private gers. Our cook(s) will prepare dinner and we will dine in our kitchen ger.

Overnight in ger, B,L,D

Day 6–7 Sept. 14–15 Horse riding and hiking

In the surrounding mountains, we will be riding trusty Mongolian horses, allowing us great views of Hoton and Hurgan Lakes and the surrounding Altai mountain range. Our van will follow us and carry extra gear, water, and lunch. There will be hiking options for people who might not want to ride both days. At our camp we will have an opportunity to experience the rural and nomadic life of the herding family.

Overnight in ger, B,L,D

Day 8 Sept 16 Hoton and Hurgan Lakes and archeological sites

This day provides a full day drive (110 km) to Dayan Lake through Hoton and Hurgan Lakes and the dramatic landscape of snow-capped peaks. We will visit petroglyph complexes and several Turkic Stone Men, Babals, ranging in size from 2 feet to over 6 feet in height and weighing several hundred pounds. In the evening we will arrive at our eagle hunter family's place. We will stay in private gers next to the family.

Overnight in ger, B,L,D

Day 9 Sept 17 Eagle Hunter Family and Dayan Lake

Here we will get an introduction to eagle hunting, enjoy the routine of daily life, and watch the last days of training before the Altai Eagle Festival. Photography opportunities abound. We will drive a short distance to Dayan Lake for lunch, with some hiking or fishing there in the afternoon.

Overnight in ger, B,L,D

Day 10 Sept 18 Arrive at Eagle Festival site

We will drive to the Altai Eagle Festival site and stay in a private ger camp nearby.

Overnight in ger, B,L,D

Day 11 Sept 19 Altai Eagle Festival

Two days will be spent enjoying the Golden Eagle Festival where local Kazakhs show their eagle hunting culture and their unique traditions. Starting with the opening parade, the first day of competition includes the eagle calling, along with some mounted horse games and other events. There is a plethora of local food and handicraft vendors to check out. You can climb up to the top of the hill where the eagle hunters are releasing the birds for the competition, or if interested, take a camel ride. Needless to say, there is a lot to see, do, and photograph here. We will return to our nearby ger camp for dinner and there may be an evening cultural event to attend.

Overnight in ger, B,L,D

Day 12 Sept 20 Altai Eagle Festival

The second day of the festival features a competition of the eagle catching the prey, mounted horse games, and may include camel races and archery competitions too. We will be treated to some live traditional music during lunch on this second day. Following the festival on Sunday, we will drive to Ölgii and dine and stay the night at the Makhsum Hotel.

Overnight in hotel, B,L,D

Day 13 Sept 21 Return to UB

With possibly an early morning wake-up, we will drive to the Ölgii airport and fly back to UB. After lunch at the Blue Sky Hotel, there will be opportunities for checking out the Black Market, perusing the cashmere shops in the city center, catching a few more museums, or just relaxing and taking in your last afternoon in Ulaanbaatar. We will have our final dinner as a group at a fabulous nearby restaurant.

Overnight in hotel, B,L,D

Day 14 Sept 22 Depart UB

Leave Ulaanbaatar for home.

B, Fly home