



Photos: Ana Nordenstahl



Photos: Bertrand Sinsaine



Photo: Haroldo Castro



Photo: Jan Wigsten



Photo: Densmaa



Photo: Jan Wigsten

## Gobi Steppe Ride

A horseback journey across the Mongolian steppe, hosted by the Steppe Nomads—the world's largest remaining pastoralist people. This is a one-of-a-kind experience, unavailable anywhere else on Earth. Once covering 25% of the planet's landmass, the great steppe habitats of the Pampas, Puszta, Prairies, and Ukrainian steppes have been mostly lost to agriculture. Only Mongolia's steppes remain intact. Its high elevation gifts Mongolia with exceptionally clear air and dazzling starry skies year-round. Riding into the immense Mongolian void—silent, treeless, and fenceless—is a powerful visual experience of vastness and solitude. Apart from nomadic herders and their livestock, there are few signs of human activity. This ride covers remarkably diverse terrain, with scattered water sources attracting wildlife. Wolves may be heard during summer nights, though they are rarely seen. The trip is operated as a Nomadic Journey—fully supported, with all luggage transported by vehicle. A Mongolian ger (yurt) accompanies us as a mobile restaurant.

### Day 1: Ulaanbaatar

Arrival in the Mongolian capital and transfer to the hotel. Tour briefing after dinner.

### Day 2: To Suman

We begin with a visit to Gandan Lamasery, the center of Mongolia's Buddhist revival—possibly witnessing morning prayers. Mongols follow Tibetan Buddhism, with the Dalai Lama as their spiritual leader. We then drive south, enjoying a picnic lunch en route. Our crew—local steppe nomads—will welcome us with their horses. A short trial ride will be offered in the late afternoon.

### Day 3: Suman

We remain at Suman for a full day of riding across the Gobi grasslands, taking in uninterrupted 360° views of the horizon.

### Day 4: To Ikh Zorgol Hairkhan Mountains

We break camp and load provisions onto our support vehicle. While the support team heads directly to Zorgol Hairkhan, we ride a scenic detour via Bayan Mountain, habitat of Gobi wildlife such as Siberian Ibex (*Capra sibirica*) and Argali Sheep (*Ovis ammon*). Gazelles and foxes may also be spotted. We camp at Zorgol Hairkhan for two nights.

### Day 5: Ikh Zorgol Hairkhan Mountains

This sacred massif, referenced in *The Secret History of the Mongols*, features striking vertical rock formations in the middle of flat steppe. Genghis Khan is said to have wintered here during a period of tribal conflict. Wildlife includes the Cinereous Vulture (*Aegypius monachus*), Eurasia's largest vulture, with visible nests in rocks and trees. We may visit Hökh Sudliin Am, a valley known for *Sanguisorba officinalis* (Great Burnet), used in traditional Mongolian medicine.



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### Day 6: To Saikhan

We travel to Saikhan via Baga Zorgol Hairkhan Uul-Baga' meaning 'small', a lesser counterpart to Ikh ('big') Zorgol. Encounter nomadic families as we approach Hariin Nuur ('Remote Lake'), an important water source attracting birds. Our private camp awaits at Saikhan.

### Day 7: To Bumbat

Today's full-day ride takes us to the remote and uninhabited Bumbat region. Expect dramatic rock formations and increased chances of spotting Argali Sheep, Cinereous Vultures, and Saker Falcons (*Falco cherrug*).

### Day 8: Bumbat

We spend another full day riding and exploring Bumbat's varied landscapes.

### Day 9: To Arburd Sands

Our final ride takes us to the Arburd Sands a little-known region of sand dunes near Ulaanbaatar. These dunes, shaped by wind and underlain by permafrost, also host seasonal lakes.

We enjoy a hot lunch at our low-impact seasonal ger camp and may visit local herders, especially those raising cashmere goats.

### Day 10: Arburd Sands

A final loop ride across the 20 km stretch of Arburd Sands-an area known to harbor wolves. Alternatively, relax at camp. This evening, we bid farewell to our steppe horsemen.



Photos: Bertrand Sinsaine

### Day 11: Return to Ulaanbaatar

Drive back to Ulaanbaatar. Check into the hotel and enjoy the city at your leisure. Most attractions are within walking distance. Your guide is available to assist with shopping or sightseeing.

### Day 12: Departure

Transfer to Chinggis Khaan International Airport for departure.

### Practicalities

We emphasize meaningful encounters with local people and deep respect for the horse and traditional equestrian culture.

### Transport

Support vehicle transports all luggage. One or two spare horses will be available.

**Includes:** English speaking guide, and farewell dinner. All meals outside Ulaanbaatar. All overnights in hotels (2n.) gers (2n.) and tents (6n.) in shared double, camping equipment and all local transport.

**Excludes:** Drinks, laundry, lunch in Ulaanbaatar. Air or train tickets in and out of Mongolia. Bring your own sleeping bag, riding helmet and short chaps.

### PRICE ex Ulaanbaatar:

2 - 10 members: **USD 2900 per person**

Single supplement (11n): **USD 550**

Private trip supplement:

2/4 members **USD 500 per trip**

5/up members no charge

### DATES ex Ulaanbaatar:

GSR01: 19 - 30 Jun

GSR02: 20 - 31 Jul

GSR03: 19 - 30 Aug

