



From
£8,075 GBP

Single Room

£9,755 GBP

Twin Room

£8,075 GBP

Prices valid until
30th December 2024

16 days

Duration

Mongolia

Destination

Level 2 - Moderate

Activity

Mongolia Dinosaur Dig Tour | Small group tour in the Gobi Desert

May 03 2024 to May 18 2024

Mongolia Dinosaur Dig Tour

This small group educational tour, the Mongolia Dinosaur dig in the Gobi Desert, is arranged under the auspices of the Institute of Palaeontology and Geology, Mongolian Academy of Sciences. The goal of the dinosaur dig in the Gobi Desert is to assist in scientific research and field study projects through



sustainable tourism. This is a unique experience to contribute to the world's understanding of Mongolian dinosaurs through palaeontology.

The tour is typically led by one of Mongolia's leading palaeontologists, Dr Tsogtbaatar Khishigjav, along with young Mongolian scientists and the field staff. Dr Tsogtbaatar began his field research and excavation career in the early 1980s. Today, Dr Tsogtbaatar is the director of the Institute of Palaeontology and Geology.

The first nest of dinosaur eggs was discovered in Mongolia in 1928. These local geological beds are especially relevant as they yield not only the dinosaurs remains but also the fossils of mammals and other animal species as well as baby dinosaurs.

Itinerary & highlights for the Dinosaur dig tour

Our small groups palaeontological tour begins in Ulaanbaatar.

This city offers an intriguing contrast between ancient traditions and the dawning of a 21st century. Consequently this contrast is seen in the traditional gers and Buddhist monasteries coexisting with modern high-rises. In Ulaanbaatar, you visit Gandan Monastery, the seat of Buddhism in Mongolia. In the monastery grounds, you hear the low tones of the horns used to call the lamas to the temple. While here you can observe their daily rituals, including the reading of the sutras. You also visit the National History Museum for an overview of Mongolia's history and culture. Finally, you will also have the



opportunity to tour the Mongolian Paleontological Laboratory.

After our time in Ulaanbaatar, you travel through the Gobi, Mongolia's southernmost province of semi-arid desert. Of all the world's arid lands, the Gobi (which means simply "desert") has about it the greatest air of mystery. Probably because it lies at the heart of Asia's remotest hinterland between the Siberian wilderness to the north and the Tibetan Plateau to the south. Contrary to the sterile sameness that the word "desert" suggests, the Gobi holds many fascinations. Especially relevant to this tour are the sites of some of the most important palaeontological discoveries of this century.

The Dinosaurs of the Gobi small group tour includes ten days on a palaeontological dig. You have the opportunity to recover specimens of various dinosaur and mammal species in the fossil rich Tugrigin Shiree. This geological formation was discovered by Mongolian scientists in the late 1950's. Since its discovery it was then co-explored by Polish expeditions in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As a result of this work the Tugrigin Shiree is perhaps most known for its famous "Fighting Dinosaurs" (a fossil of a Protoceratops and a Velociraptor locked in combat). For this part of the trip, you will almost be living as palaeontologists, joining and following the research team in their daily work. As a result you have the opportunity to participate in actual excavations and make new discoveries. Following each day's adventurous prospecting, the group expert field-chef will serve a hearty meal. View an [article](#) of the



tour from Oct 2016.

This Dinosaur dig is one of a series of [archaeology tours](#) that Odyssey offers around the world each year.

If you would like to learn more about [Mongolia](#), explore Odyssey's country profile. For more details, click the 'Top 5' or 'Itinerary' buttons above! If you're keen to experience this tour, [please call](#) or [send an email](#). Or, to book, simply fill in the form on the right hand side of this page.

Tour Notes

- Group size is limited to 12 participants.

Highlights

1. Recover specimens of various dinosaur and mammal species in the fossil rich Nemegt Basin
2. Visit the Gandan Monastery and several museums in Ulaanbaatar
3. Experience eight days on a paleontological dig
4. Learn about the range of fossil vertebrate species recovered in Mongolia
5. Explore several significant fossil sites used by the American Museum of Natural History and local paleontologists

Itinerary



Day 1

Locations: Ulaanbaatar

Overview:

The contrast between ancient traditions and the dawning of a 21st century democracy is most visible in Ulaanbaatar where traditional gers and Buddhist monasteries coexist with modern high-rises.

Upon arrival at the hotel located near downtown Ulaanbaatar the group meets in the afternoon. Enjoy a welcome dinner at a fine local restaurant.

Accommodation:

Ulaanbaatar Hotel; D

Day 2

Locations: Ulaanbaatar

Overview:

Begin the day with a visit to Gandan Monastery, the seat of Buddhism in Mongolia. Strolling through the monastery grounds, you will hear the low tones of the horns used to call the lamas to the temple and can observe their daily rituals, including the reading of sutras (teachings of the Buddha). Also visit the recently reconstructed Chenrezi and Kalachakra Temples, as well as the magnificent statue of Migjid Janraisig ("the lord who looks in every direction"). This 82-foot high statue, gilded in pure gold and clothed with silk and precious stones, completely fills one of Gandan's temples.

After lunch, drive through downtown [Ulaanbaatar](#) to the National History Museum for an excellent overview of Mongolia's history and culture. The newly remodeled museum displays traditional implements of daily nomadic life including Stone and Bronze Age artifacts, historical costumes of Mongolia's minority tribes, sacred religious relics, and agricultural, fishing and hunting equipment.

Next, travel back in time with a visit to the dinosaur halls of the Natural History Museum, showcasing the spectacular fossils found in the Gobi desert. On display are fierce Tarbosaurus fossils (closely related to Tyrannosaurus rex), dinosaur eggs, large Hadrosaur fossils (duck-billed

dinosaurs), and many others, all of which illustrate the richness and importance of the paleontological sites in the Gobi desert. Also visit the paleontological laboratory of the Academy of Sciences and enjoy a private behind-the-scenes look at fossils that are being prepared for exhibition. In the evening, enjoy dinner at a fine local restaurant.

Accommodation:

Overnight at the hotel. (Ulaanbaatar Hotel; B, L, D)

Day 3

Locations: Gobi/ Flaming Cliffs

Overview:

In the morning, fly over vast steppe to the Gobi (1.5 hours), Mongolia's southernmost province of semi-arid desert. Of all the world's arid lands, the Gobi (which means simply "desert") has about it the greatest air of mystery, perhaps because it lies at the heart of Asia's remotest hinterland between the Siberian wilderness to the north and the Tibetan Plateau to the south. Contrary to the sterile sameness that the word "desert" suggests, the Gobi holds many fascinations including sites of some of the most important paleontological discoveries of this century.

Upon arrival, transfer to the Three Camel Lodge. In the afternoon, drive to the legendary "Flaming Cliffs," named for the red-sandstone that glows a brilliant reddish-orange at sunset. It was here, in 1922, that Dr. Roy Chapman Andrews and his exploration team from the American Museum of Natural History found the first nest of dinosaur eggs the world had ever seen. Explore the cliffs, which abound with numerous scattered fossil remains. In the evening return to the lodge and overnight.

Accommodation:

Three Camel Lodge: B, L, D

Day 4

Locations: Hongoryn Els Sand Dunes

Overview:

After breakfast, drive to Hongoryn Els (5 hour drive), which means “Singing Sands” in Mongolian. Picnic lunch on the way. Though the Gobi is primarily a stony desert covered with a sparse layer of scrub vegetation, there are a few areas where you can find the traditional desert landscape of seemingly endless sand dunes. Hongoryn Els is the largest of these areas, with dunes reaching upwards of 800m and extending parallel to the Gobi Altai Mountains for approximately 100 km. Dinner and overnight at the ger camp.

Accommodation:

Ger Camp; B, L, D

Day 5

Locations: Hongoryn Els / Nemegt basin

Overview:

After early breakfast, drive from Hongoryn Els through the austere and beautiful Gobi landscape to Nemegt basin (7 hour drive). Spend the next eight days prospecting for and excavating fossils. Discovered by a joint Soviet/Mongolian expedition in 1946, the labyrinth of gorges which comprise the Nemegt basin has yielded specimens of various dinosaurs, early mammals and other organisms, including the forbidding Tarborsaurus baatar (a relative of Tyrannosaurus rex), Saurolophus angustirostris, and Therizinosaurus cheloniformis.

During the expedition, our guides will set up camp with tents for every two people, outfitted with sleeping bags and mats.

Accommodation:

Tent Camp; B, L, D

Day 6-7-8-9-10-11-12

Locations: Nemegt Basin

Overview:

Days in the field typically begin at 7:00 am with a hearty breakfast at 8:00 am. You will then prospect for the rest of the day under the supervision of Dr. Badamgarav, with a break for lunch. After dinner, Dr. Badamgarav will review the day's work and discuss the significance of any discoveries.

Accommodation:

Tent Camp; B, L, D

Day 13

Locations: Ukhaa Tolgod

Overview:

After breakfast, drive to the now legendary Ukhaa Tolgod, the newest site which the American Museum of Natural History discovered in the mid-1990s. Ukhaa Tolgod is known for the fossilized egg embryo, which was found here almost complete. Continue driving to Hongoryn Els in time for dinner and overnight. (Approximately 7 hours driving.

Accommodation:

Tent or Ger Camp; B, L, D

Day 14

Locations: Three Camel Lodge

Overview:

After an early breakfast, drive to Tugrigiin Shiree, first discovered and explored by Polish expeditions in the late 60s and early 70s. Tugrigiin Shiree is perhaps most known for its famous "Fighting Dinosaurs" (a fossil of a Protoceratops and a Velociraptor locked in combat), which were discovered in the 1970s. Explore this white-sandstone escarpment and nearby sand dune. In the late afternoon, continue your journey in the South Gobi until you reach Nomadic Expeditions' Three Camel

lodge ger camp.

Accommodation:

Three Camel Lodge; B, L, D

Day 15

Locations: Ulaanbaatar

Overview:

After breakfast, drive to Dalanzadagad for your return flight to [Ulaanbaatar](#). Upon arrival, transfer to your hotel.

Following lunch, drive to the Zanabazar Fine Arts Museum, named in honor of the renowned 17th century artist and politician, who was also the first Buddhist leader of Mongolia. The museum contains one of the best collections of Buddhist art and artifacts in the world, including many of Zanabazar's original works.

In the evening, we'll attend a performance featuring traditional Mongolian dancers and hoomi (throat) singers. Overnight at hotel.

Accommodation:

Ulaanbaatar Hotel; B, L, D

Day 16

Locations: Departure

Overview:

Tour concludes after breakfast. (B)

Inclusions / Exclusions

What's included in our Tour

- 15 nights accommodation in lodges, gers and tented camps.
- 15 breakfasts, 15 lunches and 15 dinners.

- 2 internal flights and taxes (economy class, baggage limit may apply).
- All sightseeing including entrance fees.
- Services of an English speaking guide.
- Odyssey Tour Leader for the duration of the tour.
- Detailed tour information booklet.

What's not included in our Tour

- Return international airfare and departure taxes.
- Comprehensive international travel insurance.
- Mongolia Visa fees (where applicable).
- Items of a personal nature such as telephone calls and laundry.

Level 2 - Moderate

Participants must be able to carry their own luggage, climb and descend stairs, be in good health, mobile and able to participate in 3-5 hours of physical activity per day, the equivalent of walking/hiking up to 8 kilometres on uneven ground.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any requests for further information about this tour or any others offered by Odyssey Travel.