Mongolia cultural history, small group tour for mature travellers

03 Sep 19 to 24 Sep 19

Mongolia cultural & history tour

Mongolia is a relatively unexplored country for travellers full of diverse landscapes and interesting cultures. The **Mongolia cultural history, small group tour for mature travellers** explores this ancient land. Because there are few cities and towns, Mongolia has extensive rural lands that remain the precinct of nomadic herders.
Odyssey travel developed this Mongolia small group tour as a new experience for the adventurous. This tour is for those who would like to:

- roam the outdoors,
- discover the history of the nation,
- and learn about another culture through home visits.

During the Mongolian small group tour, you travel from the arid desert terrains of the Gobi and the mountain and lake scenery of the Altai-Mongol Mountain chain.

We journey into a country with warm summers, limited fast roads, and few fences. So this educational tour is best suited to active travellers.

**The Tour**

Only 4 nights of this 22-day program are spent in hotels; about half the nights are spent in twin-share gers with shared toilet and bathroom facilities. The remaining 7 are in tents with provided camping equipment. This accommodation assignment permits the program to venture into remote locations where you can enjoy some of the country’s best scenery. It also increases the possibility of seeing Mongolian wildlife. All meals are provided during the program. We travel in comfortable 4×4 vehicles and, when camping, have an appropriate supply vehicle and cook.

The contrast between ancient traditions and a 21st-century democracy is most visible in Ulaan Baatar, where traditional gers and Buddhist monasteries sit side-by-side with modern high-rises. But few of these contrasts exist once we leave Ulaan Baatar.
Mongolia’s natural landscape is little disturbed but for the families, livestock, and gers that have dotted the land for eons. Our exploratory program will visit a number of these landscapes from the well-watered north to the arid south.

**Itinerary**

The Mongolia cultural history, small group tours for mature travellers recommences with an introduction to the capital, Ulaan Baatar. After the capital, this small group educational tour heads to the forests and lake-land in the central north of Mongolia. Eventually, we end up in the Gobi with its sparse vegetation cover and stony surfaces. In the Gobi we explore the stunning landscapes inhabited by Bactrian camels, Argali mountain sheep, goitered gazelle, Golden Eagles, Saker Falcons, jerboas (similar to kangaroo rats), and many endemic reptiles.

There will be a variety of activities during this exploration of Mongolia. The tour will visit families, explore ancient cultural relics, take walking tours in a range of forest, grassland, and desert settings, and searching for interesting wildlife. Many of these activities involve walking, but each evening we return to the comforts of a ger camp or hotel.

This is one of three tours that Odyssey offers as a holiday or vacation experience for the mature traveller be they a couple or single traveller into Mongolia. Additionally, Dinosaurs of the Gobi or Mongolia and Russia are two popular small group tours offered to those seeking a holiday or vacation with a difference.

An Odyssey Travel Tour Leader and an English-speaking Mongolian
guide will accompany the tour, which is limited to 12 participants.

For more details about the **Mongolia cultural history, small group tour for mature travellers** , 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 a maximum of 15 participants.

**Top 5**

1. Learn about Mongolian culture and nomadic lifestyles by living amongst Mongolians.
2. Explore the legendary Flaming Cliffs, where the first dinosaur eggs were discovered.
3. Explore Hovsgol Lake, the biggest freshwater lake in Mongolia and one of the cleanest lakes in the world.
4. Discover Gun Galuut Nature Reserve where we can view Argali, or wild mountain sheep, a rare and endangered species.
5. Hike near the Valley of Ayaldai, one of the most magnificent sand dunes of the great Gobi.

**Itinerary**

**Day 1**

**Locations:** Ulaanbaatar

**Overview:** Upon arrival at the Ulaanbaatar airport, make your own way to the hotel. In the evening, a pre-trip briefing will be provided,
followed by a welcome dinner at a local restaurant. (D)

**Accommodation:** 3 nights at Hotel Ulaanbaatar or similar.

**Day 2**

**Locations:** Ulaanbaatar

**Overview:** We start the tour with a guided walk of the city in the morning. In the afternoon we drive to Zaisan Memorial, built by the Russians to commemorate fallen soldiers of World War II. Situated on one of the hills surrounding Ulaanbaatar, the area provides excellent views of the capital and the surrounding countryside. There is an opportunity to walk higher up the stairs to see the monument itself and get a view of the back of the mountain, overlooking the new district of Zaisan with a backdrop of Bogd Khan National park. In the evening, we sample traditional Mongolian dishes while dining in a large ger at Abtai-Sain Khan Palace. (B,L,D)

**Accommodation:** Hotel Ulaanbaatar or similar.

**Day 3**

**Locations:** Ulaanbaatar

**Overview:** We begin the day with a visit to Gandan Monastery, the seat of Buddhism in Mongolia. Woven through Mongolia’s nomadic culture is a rich Tibetan Buddhist tradition in which ancient shamanic practices are still evident. Walking through the monastery grounds, we will hear the low tones of horns used to call the lamas to the temple and observe their daily rituals, including the reading of sutras, the teachings of the Buddha. We visit the recently-renovated Chenrezig and Kalachakra Temples, as well as the magnificent statue of Megjid 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 we walk through the central square which attracts hundreds of people to take pictures in front of the parliament house and enjoy the sunshine. We walk to the National History Museum for an excellent overview of Mongolia’s history and culture. Here, we visit the dinosaur halls, showcasing the spectacular fossils unearthed in the Gobi. In the evening we enjoy a performance featuring traditional Mongolian dancers and khoomi throat singers, followed by dinner at a fine local restaurant. (B,L,D)

**Accommodation:** Hotel Ulaanbaatar or similar.

### Day 4

**Locations:** Ikh Nart Nature Reserve

**Overview:** The beautiful Ikh Nart Nature Reserve is located about 300 kilometres southeast of Ulaanbaatar in the eastern Gobi grassland region. Consisting of networks of granite rock mountains and hills, this area is a habitat of the elusive wild sheep where scientific research has been taking place recently. Projects taking place in the park are administered by a number of organisations including the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, Denver Zoological Foundation, and the University of Vermont. The projects study the argali sheep the Siberian Ibex. We will have an opportunity to visit these project sites and acquire first-hand knowledge about their behavior and ecology. (B,L,D)

**Accommodation:** Ger camp.

### Day 5

**Locations:** Ikh Gazryn Chuluu

**Overview:** Today, we continue our journey deeper into the Gobi
desert and head towards Ikh Gazryn Chuluu Nature Reserve. Despite the fact that it has received its status only few years ago, it is known as one of the most beautiful natural settings with granite rock formations which are unmatched in beauty in the country. (B,L,D)

**Accommodation:** Ger camp.

### Day 6

**Locations:** Tsagaan Suvraga

**Overview:** Today, we drive through some of the most amazing Gobi terrains, stopping for a picnic lunch at the wonderful Tsagaan Suvraga gorge made out of white sandstone cliffs, from where a fantastic view of the Gobi basin could be seen, with colors ranging from white and yellow to pink and deep red. We will stay overnight at a local ger camp. (B,L,D)

**Accommodation:** Ger camp.

### Day 7

**Locations:** Gobi Gurvan Saikhan basin

**Overview:** After an early morning breakfast, we will drive to the great wide basins of the Gobi Gurvan Saikhan National Park of the southern Gobi province. We will drive through the valley of “Seventy springs” where the provincial capital Dalanzadgad is located. After a refueling stop there, we will continue driving to our ger camp for the next 2 nights. (B,L,D)

**Accommodation:** Ger camp.
Day 8

Locations: Yol Valley

Overview: In the morning, we will visit Yol valley – a narrow gorge where, due to lack of direct sunlight, sheets of ice have built up by a small stream which stays frozen until as late as July. We will look for the elusive “yol,” or Bearded Vulture. In the afternoon, we will drive to the legendary Flaming Cliffs, where the first dinosaur eggs the world had ever seen were discovered during the third Central Asiatic Expeditions of the American Museum of Natural History in 1923. (The expedition leader was the energetic Roy Chapman Andrews, who is often thought to have inspired the Indiana Jones character later in Hollywood!) (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Ger camp.

Day 9

Locations: Hongoryn Els sand Dunes

Overview: This morning, we drive to the towering sand dunes of Hongoryn Els dunes, stretching over some 160 kilometres from east to west. After climbing sand dunes and camel riding, we stay overnight in a ger camp. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Ger camp.

Day 10

Locations: The White Cave

Overview: Turning north on our expedition, we drive north to the Bayandun province of the Bayanhongor province, visiting one of the most significant caves in the country named Tsagaan Cave en-route. The dolomitic limestone solution cavity shapes the narrow, inclining
entryway which leads to a rotunda-like main chamber followed by at least 2 smaller chambers beyond. (B,L,D)

**Accommodation:** Ger camp.

**Day 11**

**Locations:** Boon Tsagaan Lake

**Overview:** We will steer our wheels to the Altai city, stopping at Bon Tsagaan Lake, a popular stop for shore birds. One of few rivers in Gobi, the Baidrag flows out of the lake. We overnight at a local hotel, exploring the town market. (B,L,D)

**Accommodation:** 1 night at Local Hotel.

**Day 12**

**Locations:** Darvi

**Overview:** We will continue on to the town of Darvi, located some 1,200 kilometres from the capital Ulaanbaatar. If we are lucky, we might have a chance to spot the elusive Saiga antelopes. One of the little-known monuments of the 3rd century BC Hunnu Empire are found in this area as well. We will travel under the serene view of the majestic Sutai Khairkhan this afternoon. (B,L,D)

**Accommodation:** Tent Camp.

**Day 13**

**Locations:** Uyench Soum

**Overview:** Continuing our journey, we will go to more remote parts of southwestern Mongolia, known as the Gobi – Trans-Altai region. We will have opportunities to visit authentic nomadic families today.
and enjoy their hospitality. (B,L,D)

**Accommodation:** Tent Camp.

### Day 14

**Locations:** Har Us lake  
**Overview:** Today, we will drive to the scenic Har Us Lake, staying in a small encampment set up with a local cooperative of herders. We learn about the projects they are involved in, including the preservation of saiga antelopes and snow leopards. (B,L,D)  
**Accommodation:** Ger camp.

### Day 15

**Locations:** Blue Caves  
**Overview:** Making a day trip, we will explore one of the Jargalant mountain valleys and visit Mongolia’s best-known cave, the Tsenkher, literally translated as “blue,” and study its famed petroglyphs of the early Stone Age period. (B,L,D)  
**Accommodation:** Field camp.

### Day 16

**Locations:** Mount Tsambagarav  
**Overview:** We will enter the western-most lands of Mongolia proper and reach the breathtaking Tsambagarav Mountain, one of Mongolia's landmark peaks. Its green valley is a popular summer camping ground for the local nomads with whom we will meet and spend the night with, singing and hearing stories. (B,L,D)  
**Accommodation:** Ger Camp.
Day 17

Locations: Tsengel Khairhan Mountain

Overview: We are entering the ethnic Kazakhs land today as we drive to the magnificent Tsengel Khairkhan Mountain – another popular summer camp for local Kazakh nomads. We will visit an eagle hunter family and learn how eagles are trained for hunting. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Ger Camp.

Day 18

Locations: Dayan & Hungaran Lakes

Overview: The lakes we will visit are some of western Mongolia’s most secluded and beautifully preserved waters. We will drive to Syrgal and the valleys of Dayan and Hurgan lakes. At the Chinese-Mongolian border are 3 lakes where small streams cross them, creating scenery that is both rewarding and humbling. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Ger Camp.

Day 19

Locations: Dayan & Hungaran Lakes

Overview: We will spend one full day exploring the local sights and sounds and spend the day leisurely. We visit some ancient Turkik stones and petroglyphs of life-size horses. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Ger Camp.

Day 20

Locations: Ulgii

Overview: We will drive back to the town of Ulgii for our final night in
western Mongolia. We will visit a local mosque and town market. (B,L,D)

**Accommodation:** 1 night at a Local Hotel.

### Day 21

**Locations:** Uglii/Ulannbaatar

**Overview:** In the morning, we will transfer to the airport for our flight (3 hours) back to Ulaanbaatar. In the evening, we enjoy a traditional Mongolian performance followed by a farewell dinner at a fine local restaurant. (B,L,D)

**Accommodation:** 1 night at Hotel Ulaanbaatar or similar.

### Day 22

**Locations:** Ulaanbaatar

**Overview:** Our tour ends today after breakfast. (B)

**Accommodation:**

### Inclusions / Exclusions

**What's included in our Tour**

- All sightseeing including entrance fees.
- Odyssey Tour Leader for the duration of the tour.
- Internal flight and taxes.
- Visa fees for Australian and New Zealand passport holders.
- Service charges and gratuities.
- Detailed tour information booklet.
- All transportation and transfers.
- Field trips, excursions, and led walks as indicated.
- 21 nights of accommodation in hotels, gers, and tented camps with all meals.
The tour will be led by professional English-speaking Mongolian guides.

What's not included in our Tour

- Return economy class international airfare and departure taxes.
- Items of a personal nature such as telephone calls and laundry.
- Comprehensive travel insurance.

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