



Mongolia and Naadam Highlights Dossier

Go Beyond Tour | 15 Days | Physical Level 4

Ulaanbaatar - Archery and Wrestling - Gorkhi Terelj National Park - Ulaanbaatar -
Khustain National Park - Kharkorin - Ongiin Khiid - Khongoriin Els Singing Dunes -
Bayanzag Flaming Cliffs - Baga Gazriin Chuluu - Ulaanbaatar

This tour is a journey of discovery through the land of Genghis Khan, traversing the endless plains to explore sites of immeasurable beauty. Meet the local people and get involved in the festivities.

- Experience traditional Mongolia at the Naadam festival
- Marvel at the Gobi Desert
- Discover the Terelj National Park
- Adventure to the Singing Sand Dunes
- Explore the Erdenezuu Monastery
- Enjoy the spectacular Grasslands



Mongolia and Naadam Highlights inclusions:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or Local Guides
- Visa fees for Australian passport holders
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

Go Beyond Tours:

Venture off the beaten track to explore fascinating destinations away from the tourist trail. You will discover the local culture in depth and see sights rarely witnessed by other travellers. These tours take you away from the comforts of home but will reward you with the experiences of a lifetime. These tours include:

- Walking through classic sites
- Unique cultural experiences and encounters
- Off the beaten track destinations

Physical Level 4:

All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights.

Mongolia and Naadam Highlights is rated as a **physical level 4** tour. A reasonable level of fitness is required but it's more about spending time on your feet rather than covering large distances. You'll be getting on and off coaches and boats, walking around the sights and climbing some steps. Travelling in Mongolia is both rewarding and challenging because of the lack of basic infrastructure, such as roads or a transportation system. This tour covers a vast distance and reaching the sites involves travelling through areas of Mongolia which are barren, remote and without any modern facilities.

- There will be long periods of walking whilst sightseeing, often on steep or uneven ground.
- There are hiking opportunities in Khongoryn Els sand dunes, Gorkhi Terelj National Park and at Baga Gazriin Chuluu, these normally involve approximately 2 hours on foot. There will not be sealed paths or stairs built in these areas.
- There are long days of driving on rough unsealed roads or tracks, a few days will involve driving for over 8 hours.
- Outside of Ulaanbaatar your accommodation will be in Ger Camps.

Of course, our National Escorts and local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary. If you require any more information about the pace of the tours, please contact our reservations team who will be happy to answer your questions.

Country Profile: Mongolia

Boarded by Siberia to the north and China to the south, Mongolia is the second largest landlocked country in the world, with a varying geography from the Gobi Desert in the south and mountain regions to the north and west. With a landscape that is quite breath-taking, it offers pristine lakes, rugged mountains and incredible wide-open spaces. Surrounded by mountains and lush forests, it is home to a variety of animals and species of birds. With a turbulent history, Mongolia was first declared a Mongol Empire in 1206 by Genghis Khan. One of the most wonderful events that take place in Mongolia is the fascinating Naadam Festival, with people arriving from all over the country to participate. This spectacular occasion is a photographer's paradise, with an array of activities, food and crafts on offer. Mongolia conjures up images of the legends of Genghis Khan, horses galloping through the expansive open plains and camels crossing the Gobi Desert. The warm-hearted locals will inspire you as they go about their lives with gentle peace and humility, but most of all they will reward you with the experience of a lifetime.

Travelling in Mongolia

Travelling in Mongolia is both rewarding and challenging because of the lack of basic infrastructure, such as roads or transportation system. This tour covers a vast distance and reaching the sites involves travelling through areas of Mongolia which are barren, remote and without any modern facilities. During the trip, there are hiking opportunities at places such as Khongoryn Els sand dunes, Gorkhi Terelj National Park and at Baga Gazriin Chuluu. These would normally involve approximately 2 hours on foot. There will not be sealed paths or stairs built in these areas. You do not need to train or be fit for this itinerary, but you will need to be able to complete these activities independently. Although the pace of this itinerary will allow you plenty of time to see the sites and experience the local way of life, there are also long days of driving on rough unsealed roads or tracks. A few days will involve driving for over 8 hours and you should be prepared for this.

Mongolia has a culture, environment and tradition vastly different to our own. There is not the same level of infrastructure or tourist facilities as other countries you may have travelled in. Those customers who embrace differences and a degree of unpredictability will enjoy this destination most.

Joining Your Tour

The tour is 15 days in duration including international flights. Due to flight schedules you may arrive on Day 3. Travellers booked on 'Land Only' arrangements should make their own way to the starting point. Join the tour on Day 1 in Ulaanbaatar and end the tour on Day 14 in Ulaanbaatar. Please refer to your final itinerary.

Itinerary Changes

It is our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate. In these circumstances, we will make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

Itinerary – Mongolia and Naadam Highlights

Day 1: Fly to Ulaanbaatar

Fly to Mongolia's capital Ulaanbaatar. On arrival you will be met at Ulaanbaatar airport by your National Escort from Wendy Wu Tours. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer 30 minutes to your hotel.

Please note that some Australian flight departures may depart the evening (July 5) before day 1 (July 6) of the tour.



Destination Information

Ulaanbaatar – Occupying one-third of the country's population, the capital of Mongolia is also its largest city. Ulaanbaatar or UB is a sprawling, industrialised city of pulsating commerce, wild traffic and a bohemian counterculture. It's the coldest capital in the world but come summer the city bursts into life after slumbering through a long winter.

Day 2: Ulaanbaatar

In the morning you will have a tour introduction. Food and drinks will not be served at this meeting, it is simply an opportunity for your group to meet and learn more about travelling in Mongolia.

Later, visit the 19th-century built Gandan Monastery, the largest and most important monastery in Mongolia. Later, explore the National Museum of Mongolia where you can gain an insight into the culture of Mongolia, Chinggis Khaan Square (also known as Sukhbaatar Square) and the Zaisan Hill Memorial. Sightseeing today involves 4-5 hours on foot with some driving time included. Tonight, experience a famous Mongolian BBQ and a rich artistic cultural performance of traditional throat and 'long song' singers, musicians, dancers and contortionists.



Destination Information

Gandan Monastery – Gandan Monastery means 'great place of complete joy', and is the largest, most significant monastery in the country. Building began in 1838 and today there are over 150 monks in residence. Lining the walls of the temple are many images of the Buddha of Longevity, Ayush.

Museum of Mongolian History – The museum aims to preserve Mongolian culture through the display of historical, ethnographical and cultural objects ranging from 800,000 years ago, to the end of the 20th Century.

Zaisan Memorial – Built by the Russians to commemorate 'unknown soldiers and heroes' from various wars, the Zaisan Memorial features stirring socialist realism imagery with Soviet mosaics and reliefs. The view from the top is amazing on a clear day, it's 187 steps to the top of the monument!

Day 3: Pre-Naadam Events / Ulaanbaatar

Travel around 2 hours out of Ulaanbaatar to a wrestling camp and spend a few hours watching the athletes practice. Learn about the rules of Mongolia wrestling and the various techniques and tricks. Later, visit an archery training camp, where you will observe Mongolian archers lining up their shots. Learn how precision and technique play a key role in successful archery and have a go at using the traditional bow and arrow yourself. Spend your first night in a traditional ger and learn to cook a Mongolian BBQ and share it with the wrestlers at dinner.



Destination Information

Wrestling Camp – Known as Bökh, which means "durability, this is a folk wrestling style where touching the ground with anything other than a foot loses the match. Wrestling is the most important of the Mongolian culture's historic "Three Manly Skills", that also include horsemanship and archery. Genghis Khan considered wrestling to be an important way to keep his army in good physical shape and combat ready.

Archery Camp – Due to its traditional lifestyle, archery has been exercised among Mongolians for centuries. Ancient people used their version of bows and arrows for hunting and then later in the history, these tools started to be used as a weapon during battles and, later, been able to be developed as a sport.

Ger Camp – A traditional ger or (Yurt in Central Asia) is a portable, round tent covered with skins or felt and used as a dwelling by several distinct nomadic groups in the grassy steppes of Mongolia. The structure comprises an angled assembly or latticework of pieces of wood or bamboo for walls, a door frame, ribs (poles, rafters), and a wheel (crown, compression ring).

Day 4: Gorkhi Terelj National Park

Travel the 2 hours to the Gorkhi Terelj National Park Ger Camp via the Genghis Khan Equestrian Statue. Spend the afternoon exploring the area, enjoying the alpine scenery and seeing Turtle Rock. From here, hike over steep and uneven ground to Aryabal Monastery and later enjoy a visit with a local nomadic family. Learn about their lifestyle including the preparation of dairy products. There are options to do some horse riding (with a helmet and guide), archery or hike to a Tibetan.



Destination Information

Genghis Khan Equestrian Statue – Mongolia's most iconic landmark is the 40m-high glistening silver Genghis Khan statue. Constructed in 2008 from stainless steel, the dramatic statue, has a lift (elevator) rising up its tail, from where there are steps to the horse's head. Atop, enjoy spectacular views of the steppe below.

Gorkhi Terelj National Park – This popular national park is characterised by picturesque Swiss Alps like alpine scenery, open grassland fields and magnificent mountain ranges where you could experience and enjoy outdoor activities including horseback riding, camel or yak trekking, hiking, and photography.

Day 5: Ulaanbaatar / Pre Nadaam Festival Events

In the morning, drive to the horse racing field close to the Khustain National Park for the beginning of the Naadam Festival. After visiting Hui Doloon Khudag (Horse racing field) return to Ulaanbaatar city for Naadam Eve and visit Central Square where you can view the Naadam Mongol costumes on display. In the afternoon, visit the Winter Palace of the Bogd Khan and enjoy free time to do some shopping search out local handicrafts like cashmere and felt products.



Destination Information

Mongolian Horse Racing – Unlike Western horse racing, which consists of short sprints, Mongolian horse racing as featured in Naadam is a cross-country event, with races 15–30 km long. Up to 1000 horses from any part of Mongolia can be chosen to participate. Children from 5 to 13 are chosen as jockeys and train in the months preceding the races.

Winter Palace of the Bogd Khan – Built between 1893 and 1903, this palace is where Mongolia's eighth Living Buddha, and last king, Jebtzun Damba Hutagt VIII lived for 20 years. The palace was spared destruction by the Russians and turned into a museum. The summer palace, on the banks of Tuul Gol, was completely destroyed. There are six temples; each now contains Buddhist artworks, including sculptures and thangkas.

Day 6: Ulaanbaatar / Nadaam Festival Events

One of the special features you will encounter over the next 2 days is experiencing first-hand the annual Naadam Festival. The highlight of your journey begins as the group mixes with locals and nomads alike to witness the Opening Ceremony of the Naadam Festival, at Central Stadium. Here you can see featured events that include wrestling, horseracing and archery. You will have the chance to view the procession of the athletes, officials and monks, as the first round of competition in the wrestling tournament begins.



Tickets to all arenas are allocated by local Government tourist authority in the weeks leading up to the opening ceremony; therefore, the exact programme for the festival cannot be given until during your trip. After the grand Opening Ceremony, the first round of wrestling and archery is held in the afternoon at Naadam Stadium. This evening you will see the Naadam Traditional Folk Gala Show, which includes the renowned 'throat singing'.

Please prepare your bag each day to contain everything you may need for the day – sun hat, sunscreen, drinking water and plenty of camera memory etc. at a minimum. It is usually hot at this time of year, and the seats are not under cover, so you will be exposed to the sun all day. Valuables must be kept in the hotel safe or under your clothes in a money belt as you will be walking through huge crowds on your way in and out of the stadium stands. Lunch during this time will usually be a boxed lunch organised by the hotel, so that you can enjoy it 'picnic style' without leaving the excitement of the festival.

Destination Information

The Nadaam Festival – The Naadam Festival is a local celebration of the Mongolian people and culture and the festival's origins can be traced to the Mongol Army. Naadam literally means "games" and is locally termed "eriin gurban naadam" or "the three games of men". The games are Mongolian wrestling, horse racing, and archery.

Day 7: Khustain National Park / Naadam Festival Events

Travel approximately 50km outside the city to enjoy the second day of the Naadam festival. Continue onto the Khustain National Park, around 2 hours away where you'll spend the night in a ger.

A thrilling day unfolds as you to view the cross-country horseracing. Also known as 'tumnii ekh' (leader of ten thousand), this certainly is sought after amongst the younger competitors. Cheer along with the locals as the athletes compete and enthral in the carnival-like atmosphere. Boxed meals will be provided for lunch in the horse racing field today.



In the early afternoon travel to the wrestling events. A total of 1024 wrestlers meet in a single-elimination tournament that lasts nine or ten rounds. Mongolian traditional wrestling is an untimed competition in which wrestlers lose if they touch the ground with any part of their body other than their feet or hands. When picking pairs, the wrestler with the greatest fame has the privilege to choose his opponent. Wrestlers wear two-piece costumes consisting of a tight shoulder vest (zodog) and shorts (shuudag).

Destination Information

Khustain National Park – Spanning over 506 sq km, this national park was established in 1993 to protect Mongolia's wild horse, the takhi, as well as the reserve's steppe and forest-steppe environment. In addition to the takhi, there are populations of maral (Asiatic red deer), steppe gazelle, deer, boar, Pallas's cats, wolves, lynx, marmot and some 223 species of birds.

Day 8: Kharkorin

Wildlife watching is best at dawn, so rise just before sunrise and head off in 4WD for a 2 hours of wildlife spotting where you'll see an abundance of Mongolia's famous wild horse and many deers, gazelles and birds. Return to your ger camp for breakfast and travel the 5 hours onto Kharkorin where you'll spend the night in a ger. The area where you'll camp tonight is known for its scenic valley surrounds and horse-trekking.



Stretching out for about 1km east of town is the site of ancient Karakorum. The city twice served as a capital during the reign of the Mongol Empire and at the creation of the Northern Yuan province. We will stop off and visit Erdenezuu Monastery, which is one of the earliest surviving Buddhist monasteries in Mongolia and the Kharkorin Museum.

Destination Information

Erdene Zuu Monastery – You will be amazed to see Erdene Zuu Monastery, one of the best sights in central Mongolia. The well preserved first Buddhist monastery in Mongolia, Erdene Zuu was established on the ruin of ancient Kharkhorin City in 1586 and is the most ancient surviving Buddhist monastery in Mongolia.

Kharkorin Museum – Kharkhorin's museum is small, but highly impressive – probably the country's best museum outside Ulaanbaatar. Everything is beautifully designed and well displayed.

Day 9: Ongiin Khiid

Today is a long but scenic travel day to Ongiin Khiid (8 hours) travelling through wild grassy steppes and visiting the ruins of the Bari Lam Khiid & Khutagt Lam Khiid Monasteries and their museums.

In the monasteries' heyday there were 17 temples on the northern side of the river and 11 on its southern bank, along with four Buddhist universities. Ongiin Khiid was a place of devotion and scholarship until the complex was destroyed in the 1937 communist purges when over 200 lamas were murdered. Others suffered forced conscription into the communist army and still others ran away to become herders and hopefully live in peace.



Your guides will set up your ger camp on arrival close to the Ongii River where you'll spend another night under the stars and visit a Mongolian family nearby to learn about their lifestyle and taste Mongolian dairy products.

Destination Information

Bari Lam Khiid & Khutagt Lam Khiid Monasteries – Ongiin Khiid Monastery consists of two monasteries, located on the bend of the Ongi River. The first monastery, Barlim Khiid, was built in 1810 on the north bank of the river. The second, Khutagt Khiid, was built in 1970 on the south bank and can only be accessed when the water level of the river is low or iced over. Once the largest monasteries and home to a thousand monks, it was destroyed in 1937. Two monks now call the ruins home, after a small temple was constructed in 2004.

Day 10: Khongoriin Els Singing Dunes

After an early breakfast, travel by 4WD for 4-5 hours to the 'singing sand dunes' of Khongoriin Els, the location of Mongolia's largest sand dunes. Witness the remarkable desert landscapes and explore the sand dunes both by 4WD and on foot. The hike will take at least 2 hours return. For the more adventurous, climb to the top for fantastic views and to watch the sunset. You'll have the chance to enjoy a typically Mongolian experience by riding a two humped camel along the iconic singing sand dunes.



Destination Information

Khongoriin Els – Also called the ‘Singing Sand Dunes’ due to the noise the sand dunes make when the sand is moved by the wind, Khongoriin Els are the most spectacular sand dunes in Mongolia. They measure up to 800m high, 12km wide and approximately 100km long. The dunes’ nickname comes from the sound produced by small avalanches of sand on a windy day, and the noise has been likened the distant hum of an aircraft propeller.

Day 11: Bayanzag Flaming Cliffs

This morning is free for you to continue your exploration of the Gobi Desert and the sand dunes. In the mid-morning, transfer around 1 hour in 4WD vehicles to the Gurvan Saikhan (Three Beauty) National Park.

The Three Beauties Mountain range is known for Vulture Valley, incredible sharp mountains and vast sand dunes. You will also have the opportunity to view the stunning scenery of the famed Eagle's Gorge, or Yolyn Am, which is the native name.



Between the steep walls of the 2km long Yolyn Am Canyon, there is a stream which freezes in winter and it is possible to walk along the ice. At this time of year, the ice will be melting and all customers need to take care when undertaking this activity. The hike into the Yolyn Am canyon takes 2-3 hours return. There will be an opportunity for the early risers to go into the park earlier this morning to see the multitude of wildlife in this section of the Gobi, including the mountain ibex, argali and many birds of prey.

Continue by 4WD for approximately 2 hours to Bayanzag, more commonly known as the ‘Flaming Cliffs’. Your overnight stay here will be in a Ger camp near the Flaming Cliffs.

Destination Information

Gurvansaikhan National Park – Gurvansaikhan National Park is 2.7 million hectares and contains mountains, dinosaur fossils, sand dunes, rock formations and a valley that is snow-capped for the year.

Yolyn Am Ice Fields – Known as the ‘Valley of Eagles, Yolyn Am is located in the Gobi National Park. It offers spectacular scenery with its deep and narrow gorges.

Bayanzag – Bayanzag is a traditional desert made up of peaks and canyons in a striking fiery red and orange sandstone. It is known worldwide for the number of dinosaur fossils found in the area. The first excavated was in 1922 by palaeontologist Roy Chapman Andrews.

Day 12: Baga Gazriin Chuluu

This morning, you will visit the Gobi Dinosaurs Cemetery and explore the surrounding landscape. You will have the opportunity to hike in the area and take in the awe-inspiring views before heading onwards to a ger camp for the night.

Travel the 7-8 hours to Baga Gazriin Chuluu a series of granitic formations located in the Middle Gobi province.



Destination Information

Baga Gazriin Chuluu – Ruggedly beautiful, this granite-rock formation in the middle of the dusty plains sheltered Zanabazar during conflicts between the Khalkh and Oirat Mongols. Later it was home to two 19th-century monks who left rock drawings in the area. Locals who sometimes make pilgrimages here worship the rocks. Naturally, there is a legend that Genghis Khan grazed his horses here.

Day 13: Ulaanbaator

This morning, visit the Tsorjiin Khureenii Khiid Monastery en route back to Ulaanbaator. The travel time today is around 6-7 hours. This evening, enjoy a traditional folklore performance and a farewell dinner.



Destination Information

Tsorjiin Khureenii Khiid Monastery – An unusual sight is the half-hidden stone ruins of the 200-year-old monastery, Tsorjiin Khureenii Khiid. Concealed among the rocks, and shaded by a grove of aspen trees, some of the rooms at the back of the now roofless complex still have traces of blue paint on their crumbling walls. The granite path to and from the ruins is lined with aromatic sage and stinging nettle; the isolated location is stunning.

Days 14-15: Depart Ulaabaator

You will be transferred from your hotel to the airport for your flight to Hong Kong and onto Australia arriving the same or following day.



Mongolia and Naadam Highlights Travel Information

Visas

Entry visas are required by all visitors to Mongolia. Wendy Wu Tours' Visa Department can assist you with the process of obtaining a visa. We will supply you with all paperwork and submit the visa application on your behalf. Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia.

Visa application forms and all relevant documentation are due in our office 75 days prior to departure; if received after this date urgent visa processing fees will apply. Passports will be returned with your final documentation 4 weeks prior to your group tour's scheduled departure. If you require your passport to be returned earlier, a \$15AUD courier fee will apply.

Insurance

We strongly encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the originals.

Eating in Mongolia

The combination of vast barren plains and nomadic lifestyle has created a unique culinary tradition in Mongolia, which you will have the opportunity to experience on your tour. All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our Mongolian & the Naadam Festival group tour, from the groups' arrival until the groups' day of departure.

While staying in Ulaanbaatar, the breakfast will contain a mixture of local and western-style dishes, served buffet and set styles. During the Naadam Festival and most days of driving in the countryside, you will be provided with a 'picnic box' lunch. All other meals will be served in restaurants located in Ulaanbaatar or at the Ger camps.

Food in Mongolia tends to be simple, as they have limited ingredients, such as mutton (used in a variety of ways), beef, potato, cucumber, tomato, onion, carrot and sheep's milk. People on restricted or vegetarian diets can be catered for on a limited basis with foods such as noodles, rice and steamed vegetables. Please contact us to discuss this if you are concerned.

We would suggest that you bring some staples or snacks to supplement this diet with you from Australia. Tea/coffee bags and noodles are generally available in all Ger camps. You may wish to bring some biscuits or energy bars if you would like but these can be purchased in Ulaanbaatar. There will be some days that meals may be served late due to the length of the drive that day – refer to the above itinerary to plan for this.

Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character. The group tour hotel in Ulaanbaatar has private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and a telephone. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort/Local Guide. Rest assured that

all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs. Please note that double bed requests can be made at time of booking but can't be guaranteed.

Hotels - Check-out time in Mongolia is 12:00. Please keep this in mind on the days when you are travelling between cities as it may result in a delay of access to your room or a change of itinerary to allow for this delay. Our office in Mongolia will inform the hotels of your expected arrival time, but occasional delays due to last night's guests checking out at midday are beyond our control.

Ger camps - While travelling outside Ulaanbaatar you will be staying in Ger camps. Gers are the traditional home of nomads across Mongolia. They are made from a wooden frame and layers of felt and canvas erected on a wooden platform. The interior is filled with warm fabrics and furs as well as ornate wooden furniture. Ideally suited to Mongolia's nomadic way of life and harsh weather, the Ger has been the most popular dwelling for hundreds of years. Gers are also known by the Russian name 'yurt'. Each Ger will consist of up to four single wooden beds, linen, and a stove for heating purposes, a thick blanket, one electrical socket and a low bearing table and chairs. Shower and toilet facilities will be shared in a separate area, hence a flashlight is needed.

The supply of electricity is limited, as is the supply of hot water. Showers are available, however the camp may have enough power to heat water for five or six people only, so the members of your group should keep this in mind and plan ahead for showers. It is recommended to advise staff at least an hour before you intend to shower as hot water will need to be boiled for you.

Cafes and communal areas are also located within the camp grounds. Most of the Ger camps we use will also have a laundry service available, at a small additional cost. Staying in a Ger will allow you to experience the most unique and intrinsic aspect of the nomadic life in Mongolia. Although they are not luxurious, they do offer comfortable accommodation while we travel through the most remote regions of the country.

See below images for examples of Ger camps (these may not be the exact camps your group stays at but are a good representation of what to expect):



Transport

There is more than 20,000km of road stretching across Mongolia. Only 1,600km of this distance is paved. In the countryside, you will be travelling across many different surfaces, from gravel highways to wide, open plains where the route is marked out by poles. The roads can be rough, and a level of discomfort can be expected.

In Ulaanbaatar, we use modern, air-conditioned coaches. Everywhere else we use sturdy 4WD vehicles, which best suit this terrain. Each 4WD vehicle will hold three passengers per vehicle and the National Escort will rotate from each vehicle to become the fourth passenger. They will drive in convoy and endeavour to stay within sight of each other throughout the day. Seatbelts are not compulsory by law in Mongolia and local people largely choose not to wear them. Wendy Wu Tours will ensure that the 4WD vehicles are fitted with seatbelts. Drivers often use seat covers to make their vehicles more presentable. If they obstruct your access to seatbelts, please

request that they be adjusted or removed. It is recommended that where seat belts are available customers must use them and remain seated at all times whilst the vehicle is moving. Please see your National Escort if you have any concerns.

Development in Mongolia

Although Mongolia is developing quickly, it still lacks the international standards of civil infrastructure and tourist facilities. Concepts of personal responsibility are also different to those in Australia. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in Australia; for example, you may see a hole in the road without a warning sign or safety barricade. All of our suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense, refer to notices and follow advice from your National Escort or Local Guides.

Wendy Wu Tours and our partners in Mongolia use our local knowledge to design our itineraries to provide the best paced sightseeing possible. However, we ask that you keep in mind that public holidays, road construction and weather conditions can create traffic congestion or interfere with the itinerary set out here. Your National Escort will do their utmost to avoid problems but cannot guarantee against delays, changes or – in rare cases – cancellations of sections of your itinerary.

Mongolia continues to amaze, fascinate and thrill our customers, many of whom have travelled to more and more areas of this wonderful region with us, year after year. We urge you to keep in mind all the rewards, as well as the challenges, of travelling in a developing country. Almost everything will be different to what you may be used to. A typical day of sightseeing may include breath-taking views, long hours of driving, the hospitality of the traditional nomadic Ger and a more basic level of accommodation. Travelling in Mongolia requires patience, a sense of humour and an adventurous attitude towards exploring a country that is unspoilt, remote and endlessly fascinating.

There is a low level of English spoken throughout Mongolia so the Local Guides or National Escort will be indispensable during your trip.

Souvenirs

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs so we include some stops at workshops or factories, which demonstrates a craft or product unique to that region with pieces available to buy. We understand that souvenir hunting is not for everyone so we aim to take you to places, which hold local interest. We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

Group Size

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by both a National Escort and local guides. There will usually be no more than 18 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with local guides only.

Tipping Policy

Local tipping is customary in Asia. However, this can often lead to awkwardness in knowing when it is appropriate to tip and how much, as well as ensuring you have a suitable amount of change available at the time. For your convenience, with years of experiences in providing the best customer service, Wendy Wu Tours operates a kitty system on our Group Tours so your National Escort will look after this aspect of your trip for you. It also ensures that the amounts paid are reasonable for you but still fair for the local people. The amount is stated on each Group Tour page will be advised again on your final documentation. Tipping is in US Dollars and will be collected by your National Escort on arrival and distributed throughout the tour on your behalf. Any additional tipping on any of our tours is welcomed at your discretion. Further guidance for tipping contributions will be outlined in your final documentation.

Packing list and Climate

You will find a complete packing list and a helpful climate chart in the 'Suggested Packing List', which will be included in the pre-departure information link sent within your deposit documentation. Seasonal weather patterns can be quite unpredictable. Up to the minute information on worldwide weather can be found on www.weather.com

Luggage

All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each; a suitcase with a maximum weight of 15kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of 5 kilograms. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

Exchanging Cash

It is highly recommended that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money when travelling to cities outside of Ulaanbaatar. US Dollars are easily exchanged throughout Mongolia and other currencies such as Australian Dollars can generally be exchanged in hotels and airports provided notes are new and undamaged. We suggest exchanging your money before travelling to remote areas and smaller towns, as exchange facilities can be limited. Your National Escort will remind you to do this before departure.

Personal Expenses & Optional Tours

Personal Expenses - You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Based on the advice of previous customers an approximate amount of AUD\$350AUD per person, per week should be sufficient; however, for those that can't resist a bargain or may wish to participate in all of the optional excursions, consider allocating a higher amount.

Optional Tours - May be offered in each city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits and if seats are available. Please ensure you have additional

Climbing Steps

funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities. Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

Sightseeing at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps. These palaces were built to provide defense against potential invaders so nearly all of them stand on top of a hill, while the interiors have layers of narrow hallways and steps to slow down the advance of enemies once they were inside. The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails. Buddhist temples or pagodas also tend to be built at an elevation, as this is the most auspicious position according to ancient beliefs. This means you sometimes need to walk from the bus park to the entrance, and/or need to climb some steps inside.

People with knee or hip injuries, who have poor balance or are otherwise unable to complete these activities independently should consider the suitability of this itinerary carefully.

Vaccinations and Your Health

We recommend that you contact either your GP or Travelvax (1300 360 164) for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Travelvax has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.travelvax.com.au

Before You Leave

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.smartraveller.gov.au as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.

After your booking

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice followed by deposit documentation, which includes a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 3 weeks prior to departure.

Travelling on an Active Paced Tour

We hope you are looking forward to what we are sure will be a trip of a lifetime. Before you embark on this adventure, we ask you to consider the points listed below that relate to our active paced tours. This will ensure you understand what is involved with an active paced tour and therefore help you decide if your chosen tour is right for you.

This is to ensure that your tour runs as smoothly as possible for you and your fellow tour members.

Please consider the following aspects of active paced tours prior to confirming your arrangements;

- ☐ While we believe that age is no barrier, please give special consideration to the fact that medical assistance and public infrastructure can be limited in these areas.
- ☐ There will be long periods of physical activity, including walking, climbing of stairs, in/out of boats. Tour participants who will travel with a cane/walking stick may come across difficulties. It is our experience that using a cane/walking stick in these areas where there are rough and uneven surfaces, stairs to climb and high altitudes, becomes difficult.

- ☐ Only limited meal options will be available. People with special dietary requirements should expect difficulties on these tours. Please understand that depending on the trip you are taking, you may be given very little or no meat.
- ☐ Your tour may include basic accommodation facilities including home stays, guest houses, truck stops and tented accommodation. This may mean, no or limited hot water, and no private bathroom facilities.
- ☐ There will be long periods of driving on often unsealed, rural and bumpy roads in vehicles ranging from tour coaches to local jeeps and canter vehicles.
- ☐ Altitude affects people in many different ways and a certain level of fitness is required in order to limit the effects. Please discuss how to manage altitude sickness with a health care professional.
- ☐ Overnight trains only have basic bedding in four berth compartments with limited or no ladder facilities to climb to the top bunk. You may be sharing with other tour members or locals.
- ☐ Some tours may have sightseeing en route to the next destination. Therefore, participation is required or you will need to remain with the coach until the rest of the group has finished touring.

National Escorts/ Local Guides will endeavor to provide rest stops in your itinerary where possible. Please be advised that some days may have a more physical programme than others.

If you are comfortable with the above-mentioned aspects of travelling on an active paced tour, we look forward to welcoming you on what is sure to be a unique and memorable experience.

However, if you have any hesitations please contact your valued travel agent or our reservations department to discuss the tour further or explore alternative options.

Last updated 16/10/19