
GEEO ITINERARY

Mongolia

Day 1: Ulaanbaatar Arrive in Ulaanbaatar at any time. Meet your group for a welcome meeting around 6:00 or 7:00 p.m.

Arrive in Ulaanbaatar at any time. The city's airport is **Chinggis Khaan International Airport (UBN)**, also known as New Ulaanbaatar International Airport. Due to the potential for flight delays or cancellations, we recommend that you plan to arrive in Asia at least a day in advance. This will also give you time to adjust to the time difference and overcome any jet lag. We can book extra hotel nights for you in Ulaanbaatar before and/or after the trip. Please note that hotel check-in usually opens around **2:00-3:00 p.m.**, so if your flight arrives early in the morning, you may wish to book a pre-trip hotel night so that you can rest when you arrive. There are no planned activities until an intro meeting around 6:00 or 7:00 p.m., usually in the hotel lobby. Check for a sign or ask at the reception desk about the exact time and location of the group meeting. Please make every effort to arrive in time for this meeting. If you are delayed and will arrive late, please inform us. Your tour leader will then leave you a message at the front desk informing you of where and when to meet up tomorrow. After the meeting, you might choose to get dinner at a nearby restaurant with your traveling companions and your tour leader to further get to know one another. The sleepy capital of Mongolia is an evolving city, showing many signs of its Soviet past contrasted with an increasing Chinese influence and a re-emergence of traditional Mongolia.

Accommodation: J Hotel (or similar) * *For the actual hotel your specific departure will be using, please check your voucher.*

Day 2: Ulaanbaatar Enjoy a free day exploring the capital city. Opt to take a morning tour, including visits to Gandan Monastery, Bogd Khan Palace, and Zaisan Hill.

Today is a free day for you to explore the fascinating capital city of Mongolia. To take in the sights of UB (Ulaanbaatar), opt for a guided tour. You won't want to miss the Gandan Monastery, Bogd Khan Palace, and Zaisan Hill. **Accommodation:** J Hotel (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast

Day 3: Ulaanbaatar/Baga Gadzrin Chuluu Drive to the Dungobi Aimag region, stopping at the Choir Monastery along the way. Spend the night at a Mongolian ger camp.

Today we leave the capital city and head south through the steppe to the Middle Gobi. Along the way, we visit the Choir Monastery, established in 1779. The monastery was a major religious center with many lamas living there until the 1930s, when the monastery was destroyed during a time of religious persecution in Mongolia. Today, its ruins are protected by the government. After visiting the monastery, we continue on to a small ger camp not far from Mandalgovi, the regional center. Gers are traditional Mongolian tents made with wooden frames and layers of felt. The camps that we stay at during this program will have four beds per ger with mattresses, linens, and extra blankets provided. They have a central stove to keep the place cozy and a small table with chairs. **Approximate travel time:** 7 hrs by private vehicle **Accommodation:** Erdene Ukhua Ger Camp Campground (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

Day 4: Baga Gadzrin Chuluu/Yolyn Am Arrive at Yolyn Am in the Gurvan Saikan mountains. Go for an icy hike.

Today, we arrive at Yolyn Am, a narrow gorge in the Gurvan Saikan mountains. It is an amazing place for hiking, so be sure to bring sturdy shoes and warm clothes. As part of the Gobi Desert, the area sees little precipitation. Yolyn Am is notable for its deep ice field that reaches several meters thick and several kilometers long by the end of winter. In the past, the ice field remained frozen year-round, but it now typically melts in the summer by mid-July. **Approximate travel time:** 7 hrs by private vehicle

Accommodation: Khan Bogd Ger Camp (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

Day 5: Yolyn Am/Khongoryn Els Drive to Khongoriin Els. Along the way, stop at a natural history museum.

This morning, we drive to Khongoriin Els. Along the way, stop by a small museum with collections of local flora and fauna, along with dinosaur eggs and bones, taxidermy birds, and a snow leopard.

Approximate travel time: 5 hrs by private vehicle **Accommodation:** Gobi Anar Ger Camp (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

Day 6: Khongoryn Els Immerse yourself in the wonders of the Gobi Desert.

This morning, visit the biggest sand dunes in the western Gobi, then meet a nomadic camel-herding family. Opt to hike along other nearby sand dunes, and try riding a camel. Khongoryn Els has the biggest sand dunes in the western Gobi. They also are known as "singing sands" for the musical noise the wind makes as it blows across the sand. **Accommodation:** Gobi Anar Ger Camp (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

Day 7: Khongoryn Els/Bayanzag Explore the Flaming Cliffs.

Today, we get to explore the beautiful Flaming Cliffs, a world-renowned archaeological site known for the vast amount of dinosaur bones and eggs found here. The red sandstone cliffs and canyons offer visitors a scene of breathtaking beauty. Take some time to explore. **Accommodation:** Bayan Zag Ger Camp (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

Day 8: Bayanzag/Ongiin Hiid Drive through western parts of the Gobi. Visit the ruins of the Hoshuu and Ongiin Khiid monasteries.

Today we drive through the western parts of the Gobi. In the surrounding mountains, we will visit the ruins of the Hoshuu and Ongiin Khiid monasteries, which were important social centers in the region before they were destroyed in 1939 during anti-religious purges carried out under the leader of the Communist Party of Mongolia. The systematic destruction of religious sights under Communist rule was pervasive. Built in 17th century, the Ongiin Khiid monastery was among the largest temples in the country and was home to over 1,000 monks. When the monastery was destroyed, over 200 monks were killed, and many of the survivors were imprisoned or conscripted into the army. See the ruins of the monastery and learn the sad history of this place. We then drive to the Delger Khangai Mountains area, where we will explore the ruins of the monasteries in that area, as well. **Approximate travel time:** 5 hrs by private vehicle **Accommodation:** Secret of Ongi Monastery (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

Day 9: Ongiin Hiid/Nomad Camp Leave the Gobi and drive through the Mongolian grasslands. Spend the day with a local nomadic family, observing how they live. Enjoy a traditional meal.

This morning, we start a long drive northwest, leaving the Gobi behind and heading into the Mongolian steppes. The nomads of the steppes lead simple lives and herd their cattle along the same routes their ancestors traveled hundreds of years ago. In the evening, we share a dinner with a local nomadic family, when we can try the famous Mongolian barbecue. Depending on the size of the nomadic family and their gers, accommodations can be very basic, with minimal to no facilities. In case the nomads can't provide enough space for our group, we will camp nearby; camping gear will be provided if required.

Approximate travel time: 6-7 hrs by private vehicle **Accommodation:** Nomadic Family Stay (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

Day 10: Nomad Camp Learn more about nomadic life in the steppes.

Get to know your nomadic hosts and opt to participate in traditional activities like milking a yak and

preparing fresh dairy products. Discover what it takes to handle a Mongolian horse, and if the season is right, try *airag* (fermented mare's milk), long important to cultures across Central Asia.

Accommodation: Nomadic Family Stay (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

Day 11: Nomad Camp/Kharkhorin Drive to Kharkhorin. Visit the Erdene Zuu Monastery along the way.

Today we journey to Kharkhorin, stopping at the beautiful Erdene Zuu Monastery along the way. Its construction began in 1586 and continued for over 300 years. It was the first center of Lama Buddhism in Mongolia. At its peak, the monastery housed over 1,000 monks and held 62 temples. In the 1930s, most of the temples were destroyed and most of the monks were killed during the Communist purges. Today, the monastery is slowly being restored. Explore the monastery grounds and, if you're lucky, listen to monks chanting. Afterwards, we'll pay a visit to the Karakorum Museum. Considered the best museum outside of Mongolia's capital, the Karakorum Museum contains a treasure trove of ancient artifacts within, including pottery, metalwork and locally significant finds from the 13th and 14th centuries.

Approximate travel time: 6 hrs by private vehicle **Accommodation:** Munkhtenger Ger Camp (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

Day 12: Kharkhorin/Khustai National Park Stay in Khustai National Park, home to Mongolian wild horses.

Today, we drive to Khustai National Park. Home to the last of the truly wild horses in the world, the park is a wonderful opportunity to see the Takhi horses in their natural environment. At one point, there were no more wild Mongolian horses, but after a hugely successful captive breeding program in various worldwide zoos, they have been reintroduced. **Approximate travel time:** 6 hrs by private vehicle

Accommodation: Hustai Ger Camp (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

Day 13: Khustai National Park/Ulaanbaatar Drive back to the capital for last-minute sightseeing. Opt to see a local cultural performance, including an excellent display of dancing and Mongolian throat singing.

On our last full day in Mongolia, we return to the capital for some last-minute sightseeing today. In the evening, you have the option of going to the Mongolian Cultural Show, which features fifteen different performances, including traditional songs, dancing, throat singing, and contortionists. **Approximate travel time:** 3 hrs by private vehicle **Accommodation:** J Hotel (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast | Lunch

Day 14: Ulaanbaatar Depart Ulaanbaatar at any time.

There are no planned activities today, so you may depart Ulaanbaatar at any time. If you wish to extend your stay in Ulaanbaatar, consider booking post-tour accommodation with us. Please note that check-out time from the hotel is usually mid-morning, but luggage storage services are available at the reception desk. Want more adventure? Book two or more GEE0 programs in the same school year and receive a discount! GEE0 will give you 10% off of the lesser value program(s) (up to 3 programs per year). If you would like to extend your time abroad but don't see another GEE0 program that interests you, let us know. We can work with you to find a trip from our tour operator's much larger catalog. Their tours are open to the general public and not designed specifically for educators, but we can still offer you and your travel companions a discounted educator price on any additional tours that you book. **Meals included:** Breakfast

***Itinerary Disclaimer:** While it is our intention to adhere to the routes described on our website, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable, to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The information on our website is a general guide to the tour and region, and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.