

WIND of MONGOLIA

Team thanks you for trusting us to organize
your trip to Mongolia

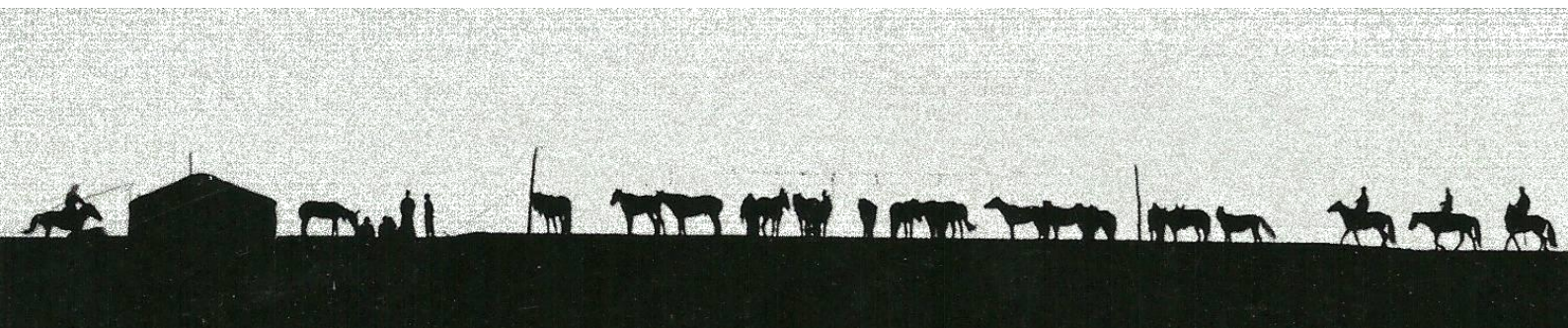


Wind of Mongolia
Opening new ways in Mongolia

A trip to Mongolia requires a bit of preparation, and we've taken care of that for you. Now it's your turn to start packing—here is a list of equipment to bring along, as well as some useful information about the country.

To fully enjoy your journey, we recommend not paying too much attention to what's said on blogs and social media. Set aside any preconceived ideas or expectations, let go of all prejudices, and most importantly—leave your watch at the bottom of your bag.

From the moment you arrive in the capital, let our team guide and support you. This will allow you to truly experience your trip: enjoy the passing of time, embrace new encounters, soak in the landscapes, and live at the rhythm of Mongolia.



Equipment to Bring for Your Stay in Mongolia – Spring or Summer

Mongolia has a hyper-continental climate: very dry, with sharply contrasting seasons, hot summers and cold winters. However, due to climate change, the weather has become more unpredictable and difficult to forecast. Recent trends point to drier springs and somewhat wetter summers. You can expect daytime temperatures between 20°C and 30°C, sometimes more, especially in the Gobi Desert.

Be prepared for rapidly changing weather conditions, including sudden temperature drops, occasional rain, and wind. A versatile wardrobe is essential: think T-shirts, but also a good fleece.

Here is a non-exhaustive list of gear and equipment to bring:

- *T-shirts
- *Windproof and waterproof jacket
- *Fleece jacket
- *Sleeping bag – especially if your itinerary includes stays with nomadic families or camping (we can provide one if needed)
- *Sleeping mat suited to your needs – available upon request
- *Comfortable shoes for evening strolls
- *Sturdy hiking boots if you've opted for a trek
- *Sunglasses
- *High SPF sunscreen to protect against strong UV rays
- *Moisturizing cream (the air is very dry)
- *Biodegradable hygiene wipes – very useful for freshening up at the end of the day, particularly during nomadic family stays or camping (no showers available)
- *Personal first-aid kit, including:
 - *Medicine for digestive issues (due to diet changes); Micropur tablets if you're sensitive
 - *Pain relievers for headaches
 - *Basic wound care supplies (band-aids, disinfectant, etc.)
 - *Broad-spectrum antibiotics
- *Headlamp and spare batteries (good batteries are hard to find outside the capital)
- *Insulated water bottle – to be filled with boiled water in the evenings for daily use



A Few Practical Tips

Mongolia is an immense country—3.5 times the size of France, 5 times that of Belgium—in short, far larger than most European countries, yet with only about 3 million inhabitants. This makes Mongolia the country with the lowest population density in the world, at just 0.7 people per square kilometer (excluding the capital, where about half the population lives).

The road network is sparse and serves only the major towns—of which there are only about thirty scattered across the country. It's easy to understand, then, that outside of Ulaanbaatar, well-stocked shops with products tailored to travelers' needs can be hard to find.

But this is also what makes the country so unique: vast, untouched landscapes where herds graze freely, nomadic families living in harmony with nature, and yurts dotting the wide-open steppes.

To truly enjoy Mongolia, the traveler must be ready to let go of European standards—both material and cultural. Here, time is not a priority. Most of the country lives by the rhythm of nature and livestock, and people are used to adapting to the unexpected, whether it be weather or other circumstances.

For example, it's not uncommon to find that a nomadic family with whom a night's stay was planned has moved on—perhaps due to heavy rains, drought, or other natural reasons related to their way of life. No worries—our guide and driver team will find a solution. Even if it means driving a bit further, they will locate another welcoming family.

Off the main roads, many tracks lead to the most remote and beautiful places, but they can be challenging due to terrain or soil conditions. These tracks are often damaged by recent or past storms. Detours and turnarounds are all part of the journey. As a seasoned traveler, it's important to accept such delays and last-minute changes—no one can predict in advance the state of the roads or exactly where families will be located. It's up to your driver to find alternatives. All of this is part of the Mongolian experience—and of its cultural richness.

Traveler's Code of Conduct

To truly appreciate Mongolia, you'll need to embrace all these differences—they are what make your stay with us so rich and unique.

Your guide and translator will give you helpful advice to discover, appreciate, and also help preserve the nomadic culture and the families you will meet during your journey, as well as the natural environment in which they live.

Please make every effort to respect nature, the flora, and the wide-open landscapes that make Mongolia so special—and be mindful not to leave any waste behind.

In line with our commitment to responsible travel and respect for human rights, we kindly ask that you do not support any form of child labor, except within the context of children's natural participation in daily, cultural, or traditional nomadic family life. We also strongly condemn and prohibit any form of sexual exploitation, under any circumstances.

Mobile and Internet Coverage

During your trip in Mongolia, you will occasionally have GSM network coverage, mainly in and around villages. Depending on the available signal, you may be able to use your phone when needed.

The same applies to internet access—depending on your mobile carrier, your iPhone or other smartphone may be able to connect.

Some tourist camps do offer Wi-Fi, but this cannot be guaranteed.

Ideally, we recommend disconnecting entirely and enjoying the experience without relying on internet access.

Charging Your Devices

To charge your cameras, phones, and other devices, the only available options will be in towns or in tourist camps, where 220V outlets are generally available.

However, it is also a good idea to bring a charger that can be plugged into the car's cigarette lighter socket.

Electricity

Mongolia uses 220V electricity, and outlets are generally the same as in most European countries. However, to avoid any inconvenience, we recommend bringing a universal multi-socket adapter.

Access to the electrical grid is only available in towns. During your trip, you will stay in tourist camps where solar panels or generators may be available to charge your devices—but this cannot be guaranteed.

When staying with nomadic families, there is very little chance to recharge batteries. At best, you might be able to charge a phone using a 12V car charger, as nomadic families typically rely on solar energy for their own basic needs.

Health, Vaccinations, and Insurance

No specific vaccinations are required. Regarding your medical kit, there is nothing special to prepare—except perhaps some medication in case you have difficulty adjusting to Mongolian food.

Hospitals are available throughout the country and are equipped to treat common illnesses.

As for your insurance, we encourage you to review your insurance and assistance/repatriation policy, whether it is an individual contract or linked to your visa or other card. Often, these policies only cover you from the first medical facility onward. We can offer you a specialized insurance plan to cover this gap (please contact us for more information).

Jetlag

There is a 6-hour time difference with France in spring and summer, and a 7-hour difference in winter, as Mongolia has abolished daylight saving time.

So, when it is 2:00 PM in Paris, it is 8:00 PM in Ulaanbaatar.

Tourist Visa

The tourist visa is no longer required—at least until 2025—for the vast majority of European countries. You can check the list of these countries at this link:

<https://visasnews.com/mongolie-de-nouvelles-nationalites-eligibles-au-e-visa/>

Flights from Europe & CO2 Compensation

You have several options, including:

MIAT (Mongolian airline) — Frankfurt/Ulaanbaatar, 3 flights per week

or these two other airlines that offer carbon offset options:

Turkish Airlines — 4 flights per week — Paris/Istanbul/Ulaanbaatar

<https://turkishairlines.co2mission.com/en/offset/calculation>

Air China - A longer but less expensive option with several flights per day is the route Paris/Beijing/Ulaanbaatar.

<https://m.airchina.com/ac/c/invoke/carbonCalculation@pg?comeFlag=H5&lang=>

Emergency Contacts

Even though you likely won't need them—since you'll be in good hands from the beginning to the end of your stay in Mongolia—here are two emergency numbers, also available on WhatsApp, just in case:

+976 99 09 05 93 & +976 80 10 44 75



Travel Responsibly

Mongolia is a country rich in history and culture—the land of vast green steppes where the echoes of Genghis Khan's horsemen still seem to resound.

It is also an immense land where nature still reigns supreme, with untouched expanses where wildlife and plant life are ever-present. Mongolia is the world's last nomadic state, where nearly half the population still lives according to the rhythm of the steppes. Many nomadic herder families live in near self-sufficiency, moving their herds between summer, autumn, winter, and spring camps, staying true to their traditions and culture—traditions we invite you to discover during our journeys.

But this delicate ecosystem—where nature and nomadic culture are deeply intertwined—is fragile and must be protected, with your help.

Please be mindful not to leave any waste behind and to respect nomadic life.

Share meaningful moments with the families you meet by embracing cultural differences. Choose to buy souvenirs directly from local families or markets rather than from shops in the capital, even if the latter may appear more polished.

Enjoy local products and support sustainable development in the heart of the Mongolian steppes.



Travel Journal for Mongolia

The Country

Mongolia is located between Russia and China, two neighboring powers that, one after the other, have occupied the country. Since the early 1990s, Mongolia has opened its doors to the world, which explains its recent development and the increasing number of visitors.

Mongolia offers an incredible diversity of landscapes—yes, the iconic steppes, but also mountains such as the Altai in the west and the Khentii range in the east, along with various parts of the Gobi. In fact, there are several deserts in Mongolia called “Gobi,” all located in the south along the Chinese border. There is also the Ovörkhongai and Arkhangai regions, which feature hilly terrain due to ancient volcanic activity—you can see extinct volcanoes and natural hot springs there.

To the north lies the province of Khuvsgul, home to the vast lake of the same name, often called the “Blue Pearl of Mongolia.”

The steppe—often associated with the Mongolian image—actually only covers about 20% of the country. Mongolia is also the birthplace of several ethnic groups. The two most prominent are the Khalkha, who number around 2 million and make up about 80% of the population, and the Kazakhs, with just over 100,000 people, mostly living in the far west of the country (Bayan-Ölgii).

One of the many minority ethnic groups are the Tsaatan, with about 400 members living in the northern region of Khuvsgul province, particularly around Tsagaannuur.

The total population of Mongolia is officially around 3 million, making for a very low population density of about 1.6 inhabitants per square kilometer—and in some regions, as low as 0.6 inhabitants per km². Despite this, Mongolia's population is growing rapidly, with a growth rate of 2.8%, and more than half of its citizens are under the age of 30.

Mongolian culture is fairly consistent across ethnicities, except for the Kazakhs, who are Muslim but still live in yurts. The Tsaatan have a distinct shamanic culture, live in tipis, and raise reindeer.

The majority of Mongolians are Buddhists, and many temples can be found throughout the country, including in the heart of the capital.

The yurt—called ger in Mongolian—is the iconic dwelling of the country, whose origins date back hundreds of years. It can be seen everywhere, even in the center of Ulaanbaatar. It is the traditional home of nomads, and its size and decoration reflect the family's wealth and status. The yurt is central to nomadic life, and everyone is welcomed inside, following a well-respected "code of conduct."

The significance of the yurt is so strong that even Mongolians living in apartments in Ulaanbaatar still refer to their homes as ger.

Another powerful symbol of Mongolia is the horse, which is deeply woven into the country's culture and history. The horse is a source of pride and wealth for nomads. A family with a herd of horses is considered well-off. The importance of the horse is so profound that many everyday Mongolian expressions and terms originate from it.

The climate

Mongolia is located on a high-altitude plateau and experiences a hyper-continental climate, characterized by very hot summers and very cold winters.

In summer, temperatures can reach up to 35°C, with an average around 25°C. Although 70% of the annual rainfall occurs during summer, it usually falls as short showers. In the Gobi Desert, temperatures can climb as high as 45°C.

Winter is very cold, with an average temperature of -24°C, but temperatures can drop significantly to -30 or -35°C. In places like Khuvsgul or Khovd, temperatures can approach -40°C. This dry cold is more bearable than the cold in France, especially since the sun shines almost continuously during winter.

Spring and autumn are very short seasons in Mongolia, and in just a few days, you can experience all the climate variations typical of European seasons. These two seasons are marked by significant temperature fluctuations and strong winds.

Nevertheless, climate change is also affecting Mongolia and can disrupt these general weather patterns.

Ulaanbaatar – The Capital of Mongolia

The city of Ulaanbaatar was founded in 1639 on the banks of the Tuul River, formerly known as Urga, in honor of the son of a great Mongolian lord.

By 1870, Urga had a population of 30,000, including 10,000 monk-lamas. It was the capital of the nomadic people, featuring large monasteries, yurts districts surrounded by wooden fences, and rammed earth houses built in the Chinese style. The name Ulaanbaatar, meaning "Red Hero," was given to the capital during the 1921 revolution.

Today, with over 1.3 million inhabitants (out of the country's total of 3 million), Ulaanbaatar is a city with wide avenues, Soviet-style apartment blocks that are gradually being replaced or hidden by modern buildings, and several temples.

The streets of the capital are much quieter in winter than in summer, but there is a constant buzz, even late into the night. The city is divided into several districts, each showing great diversity; until recently, yurts could still be seen in the very center of the city.

Ulaanbaatar's growth is astonishing, and you will find in the capital all the conveniences of modern life...



Shops – Post Offices – Miscellaneous

In general, shops are open from Monday to Sunday, from 9 AM to 7 PM. However, some are open until 10 PM, such as the state-run store.

Post offices are open from Monday to Saturday from 10 AM to 8 PM, and on Sunday from 10 AM to 5 PM.

The international dialing code for Mongolia is +976.

The Market

The main market is called Narantuul, also nicknamed the "Thieves' Market." It's a place of exchange and trade, and it's very interesting to walk around there. However, the overcrowding also makes it a prime spot for pickpockets... so be careful! You'll find typical Mongolian products at good prices. Although the language barrier can be quite daunting, when it comes to money, people always manage to understand each other! The market is open every day except Tuesday.

Restaurants in Ulaanbaatar.

There are countless restaurants of all kinds and cuisines, and it's often difficult to find the right place.

If you've decided to explore Mongolia, here are a few great spots in Ulaanbaatar where you can enjoy traditional Mongolian cuisine.

The Mongolians

<http://shangrilacentreub.mn/mongolians-restaurant/>

The Moriton

<https://www.facebook.com/p/The-Moriton-Restaurant-Art-Gallery>

Altai barbecue

<https://www.facebook.com/p/Altai-Mongolian-Grill-100064750174269/>

Mongolian Hot Pot

<https://www.facebook.com/mongolianhotpotrestaurant/>



Si après votre séjour, vous avez envie de changer de saveurs, voilà quelques adresses :

The Bull hot pot, which combines Mongolian and Asian cuisine.

<https://www.facebook.com/thebullhotpot/>

The Namaste, Indian restaurant

<https://namaste.mn/>

The Rosewood, European and Italian cuisine

<https://www.rosewood-restaurant.com/>

Route 22

<https://www.facebook.com/route.ub>

You might also want to skip the meat and go for a vegetarian meal

The Bosco verde, Vegetarian Italian cuisine

<https://www.facebook.com/p/Bosco-Verde-Italian-vegan-restaurant-100063562871155/>

Agnista

<https://www.facebook.com/AgnistaVeganFood/>

Souvenirs

Of course, you'll likely want to bring back a few souvenirs for yourself or as gifts for your family and friends. For that, please be careful not to buy items made with animal parts, such as horns — even from livestock — since a goat or sheep horn can resemble those of protected species like ibex, gazelle, or argali. The same caution applies to furs (if purchased locally — although buying them from the state-run store is allowed). Many animals are protected, and any part of them is strictly prohibited for sale and export. For example: traditional hats bought from nomads that include fur elements, or knives with horn handles, etc.

There are also traditional objects that include deer teeth, which we strongly recommend you avoid purchasing, as deer are a protected species.

Similarly, it is advised not to pick flowers or bring back any plants or flowers, as many of them are likely protected. Avoid collecting stones as well, especially if they resemble gemstones or semi-precious stones — they are very likely to be confiscated, and this could lead to fines or complications during your departure.

You may come across items that are — or appear to be — antiques at markets or in some shops. Please be extremely cautious, as these may be subject to export restrictions or might have been stolen from monasteries or galleries — such as swords, knives, religious objects, or artworks (unless accompanied by an official certificate or receipt).

The law can be very strict depending on the infraction. Even if the object is not officially banned from export, customs officers will likely confiscate it if there is any doubt.

Feel free to ask your guide for advice.

We recommend purchasing souvenirs that support the local economy — items made through sustainable production, livestock cooperatives, local communities, or other initiatives that promote sustainable tourism and the country's development more broadly.

Your guide will take you to dedicated shops where you can find a wide range of items, such as products made from cashmere, felt, leather, or more artistic pieces like drawings, paintings, calligraphy, and of course, traditionally styled clothing.

Sightseeing in the Capital

Mongolian Natural History Museum

This magnificent museum in Ulaanbaatar is well worth a visit. Located next to Sükhbaatar Central Square, it is open from 10 AM to 5:30 PM.

You can discover the fauna and flora of Mongolia there.

Mongolian History Museum

This very interesting museum in Ulaanbaatar offers an overview of the different stages of Mongolian empire history up to the present day. It is open from 10 AM to 4:30 PM. The history museum is spread over three floors.

On the first floor, you can find items dating back thousands of years (petroglyphs, sculptures, tombs from the Uyghurs and Huns).

On the second floor, there are costumes, jewelry, and representations of the various ethnic groups found in Mongolia. Finally, the third floor is dedicated to the Mongol Horde. The Buddhist tradition also holds a prominent place on this floor.

Gandan Buddhist Monastery

In the 13th century, Kublai Khan declared Buddhism the official religion of the state. From the 16th century onward, Buddhism grew significantly among the Mongolian population and was then referred to as the "Yellow Religion."

The Gandan Monastery was built in 1840 and was designated to become the religious center of the Mongolian state. It grew to become a college for monks and a place where astrology and medicine were taught.

The first temple was initiated by Bogdo Chultem-Jigmid-Dambijantsan, the fifth reincarnation since Zanabazar. It was constructed by Mongolian masters using wood, following the national architectural style of the time.

Inside the temple, you can see a bronze statue of Rinpoche Zanabazar. Visiting this remarkable temple offers a fascinating insight into the religious heritage of this Buddhist country.



Sükhbaatar Square

In 1921, the hero of the Mongolian communist revolution, Damdiny Sükhbaatar, officially declared Mongolia's independence from China. Born in 1893, he is considered the "Mongolian Lenin."

His statue, mounted on a horse, can still be seen today in the center of Ulaanbaatar's main square. In 2014, Sükhbaatar Square was renamed Chinggis Khan Square.



Khustai National Park

Located 90 km west of Ulaanbaatar, this 506 km² reserve was established in 1992. Since 1990, the government has protected it with the goal of reintroducing the takhi, the wild Asian horse better known in the West as the Przewalski's horse, which disappeared from Mongolia in the 1960s.

The national park features a vast birch forest and was designated the 425th Biosphere Reserve in the world in 2002.

The Przewalski's horse is the last truly wild horse in the world and has never been domesticated. It once lived across Central Asia and even in Europe, as evidenced by the cave paintings in Lascaux.

Other rare species living in the Khustai Nuruu reserve include the maral (Asian red deer), steppe gazelles, deer, lynx, wolves, wild boars, and more.



Khovsgol National Park

Lake Khovsgol is a freshwater lake covering 2,620 km², located at an altitude of 1,645 meters in the far north of the country. It is connected to Lake Baikal by a tributary. Its depth can reach up to 262 meters. It is estimated to hold about 2% of the world's freshwater reserves. Due to its clarity, sharp-eyed observers can see fish at depths of several tens of meters.

The lake freezes from January to May or June, with ice thickness reaching about 1.5 meters.

Because it lies in a volcanic activity zone, it can suddenly experience impressive waves, even during summer.



The Gobi

Famous Gobi Desert! And yet, despite what media and blogs might suggest, the word "Gobi" simply refers to a desert area. There are about thirty gobis spread across Mongolia's territory.

Each one is different and all are equally fascinating. The most well-known is the southern Gobi, bordering China, which has gained attention thanks to a main road and numerous accommodations around major sites such as the "White Cliffs" (Tsagaan Suvarga), Bayanzag with its Arizona-like scenery and ochre cliffs, the Yol Canyon where ice remains even in summer due to its narrow and deep shape, and of course the Khongor dunes, known as "Khongiin Els."

There are other dune ranges in the west and northwest, just as beautiful but less famous and less touristy because access used to be more difficult.

Recently, domestic flights have made these stunning sites much more accessible.



The Celebrations

The most important celebrations are the Mongolian New Year — Tsagaan Sar — which takes place in February and lasts about a week, and the national holiday on July 11th, during which numerous horse races are held over 3 to 4 days; this festival is called Naadam. The entire country then comes alive with the rhythm of horse racing, with specially trained horses competing for the occasion.



The Festivals

There are many festivals throughout the year, the most well-known being:

- In March, the Thousand Camels Festival in the southern Gobi
- The Ice Festival on Lake Khövsgöl, also in March
- Also in March, the Reindeer Festival in Tsagaannuur
- The Khovd Ice Festival, also called Silver Reeds
- Several Yak festivals in spring and summer
- The Eagle Hunters' Festival in Bayan-Ölgii in September and October
- In November, the Ten Thousand Horses Festival, or Winter Horse Festival, in Khentii province... and many more, which we invite you to discover during our trips.

The currency

The Mongolian currency unit is the Tögrög, abbreviated as ₮. Banknotes come in denominations of 20,000, 10,000, 5,000, 1,000, 500, 100, 50, 20, and 10 tögrögs. In 2025, 1 USD is approximately 3,400 ₮ and 1 EUR about 3,900 ₮.



It is easy to exchange foreign currencies in Ulaanbaatar. Bank cards such as Visa, MasterCard, and also UnionPay work at ATMs located throughout the capital.

Food

Mongolian food often suffers from a somewhat undeserved bad reputation. That's why we created a "gastronomy" tour, aiming to let you discover the cuisine as authentically as possible during our trips, especially through encounters with nomadic families.

Mongolian diet is mainly based on meat, which is easy to understand given that Mongolia is a country of nomadic herders. Vegetables are not very common in traditional cuisine, but they are gradually making their way into dishes thanks to the opening of the market and the beginnings of greenhouse agriculture.

Similarly, many fruits are now imported, and in Ulaanbaatar, you can find almost every type of restaurant imaginable, including French or more generally European cuisine.

In the countryside, you will most likely find only Mongolian dishes, such as the famous Buuz—steamed meat dumplings. A smaller version of these dumplings called Bانش is usually cooked in soups or even in milk tea.



You will usually eat Buuz with your hands.

A close relative of Buuz is the Khuushuur, which is also a meat pastry, but flattened and fried like a meat-filled doughnut.

Many dishes are made with meat combined with wheat or rice noodles, such as Tsuivan and Puntuuz, which are mixes of meat and "fresh" noodles, with varying amounts of vegetables depending on the season and the family. The same basic preparation can also be found in soup form.

The most famous and festive dish in Mongolia, beloved even by Mongolians themselves, is undoubtedly the legendary Khorkhog — lamb cooked with hot stones heated in the fire, a legacy from the great Khans.

It can be made with lamb or goat, but the most prized meat among Mongols is certainly marmot, prepared with hot stones placed inside the animal, giving it a very unique and inimitable flavor!



Dairy products are also an important part of the diet, but none of them closely resemble European dairy products. Of course, there is the well-known *suute tsai*, a salted milk tea, which is actually much better than what most blogs make it out to be.

You will also find various kinds of cheeses, although these are more like dried yogurts called *aruul*. You will often see them placed on the roof of a yurt to dry.

Aruul can vary in taste — from more or less sour to slightly sweet — and in texture, from soft to very hard. In any case, *aruul* is a major staple in the general diet of Mongolians.



Of course, there are other delights such as fresh yogurt, fresh cream called *oruul*, homemade butters, and more. Mongolians refer to this whole range of dairy products as the "white fruits."

The cold climate has led to a diet very rich in fat; thus, fatty cuts of meat are highly prized in rural areas, and traditional dishes are often quite rich.



So you will need to be a bit adaptable and learn to appreciate meals that may seem repetitive and low in vegetables. But we strive to offer tours that reflect the authentic local experience, and this applies in every sense.

It's also important to know that being offered a large piece of fat on your plate is a sign of generosity and goodwill that should be appreciated for what it truly means... Fatty meat is a symbol of the animal's good health, the well-being of the herd, and a recognition of the whole family's hard work.

Enjoy your meal!

Drinks

The most traditional drink is of course milk tea, but you might also be offered "khar tsai," which is black tea—meaning tea without milk. Everyone is also familiar with the famous Airag, fermented mare's milk. It is one of the few sources of vitamins A and other minerals, often served fresh. Its taste varies greatly depending on the level of fermentation, with an alcohol content around 4%. It can quickly get you tipsy and is known for its purgative properties, which no one can deny.

Regarding water, there is generally no issue with unsafe drinking water, but Mongols—especially nomads—always boil their water, which explains their preference for drinking hot water. You can choose to drink fresh water or keep boiled water stored in a flask. In autumn and winter, nomads often prepare a kind of sparkling juice made from wild berries.

Bottled mineral water is widely available in shops along the way. However, we strongly recommend not drinking tap water in Ulaanbaatar.

The Others Drinks

Don't forget the other drinks, beers and vodkas.

Mongols brew several kinds of beer, all equally good, which you can enjoy in the capital and that are often available in shops throughout the steppes.

And then there's vodka—the quintessential Mongolian drink, often of excellent quality. Vodka is everywhere in daily life and a cultural pillar. It is considered quite rude to arrive at someone's home without bringing a bottle of vodka. This tradition has extended beyond its cultural roots and led to some social issues, which the current government is trying to address.

In short, vodka, although potentially harmful, does not carry the same meaning as in Europe. Very often, you'll be offered a "toast," a kind of Mongolian aperitif that might surprise you. This 38° vodka, introduced during the Soviet era, is actually a cultural continuation of milk vodka, *Tsagaan Arkhi* (white alcohol), whose origins date back to the era of the great Khans.

Milk vodka is a 12-15° spirit distilled from fermented milk. It is served at celebrations throughout the year, often warm, but in summer frequently chilled.



The culture of small gifts in Mongolia – It is culturally important to bring a small gift when visiting families in Mongolia. This is a very common practice and part of everyday life. When visiting friends or traveling to the steppe where you will stay with a family, it is customary to bring along small gifts. Mongols often give each other a bottle of vodka as a present; however, it is generally better to avoid this type of gift. Therefore, it is important for travelers to participate in this ritual by following a few simple rules.

Giving a gift is part of a broader ritual of hospitality. When you arrive at a family's home, they will always offer you salted milk tea, followed by dairy products (such as butter cream or aruul, dried yogurt) and/or a local alcoholic drink (made from fermented milk or airag, the famous fermented mare's milk).

The gift is given when you leave your hosts, offered with both hands (in the same way the hosts presented the milk tea). The gift should remain symbolic — under no circumstances are you expected to overwhelm the families with presents.

Here are some small gifts that are always appreciated

No need for expensive gifts; simple and useful items are generally very appreciated, such as pens, small toys, caps, T-shirts, candles, cigarettes, lighters, Swiss or Opinel-style knives, notebooks, sewing supplies like scissors, thread, and needles, a dynamo or USB-rechargeable flashlight, sunglasses, or baby moisturizing cream. Mongolian women, who take great care of their appearance even in the steppe, also highly appreciate creams, perfumes, and other beauty products.

In short, anything useful is welcome, while avoiding overly sophisticated gifts and those that are "Made in China." Sweets are also commonly given and very popular with children, as well as games like frisbees, balls, puzzles, Uno, or other easy-to-play board games. But you can also get creative and bring other thoughtful items!

Donations. If you wish to make larger gifts or donations, there are many NGOs based in the capital that support various development programs and local community initiatives. One such organization is Eeltei Baylag, which we present at the end of this travel booklet, but there are many others as well.

Your guide will be there to assist you—don't hesitate to ask them for more information.

Photo. Even though you will always be warmly welcomed into a nomadic family's yurt and charmed by their legendary hospitality, we kindly recommend that you always ask for permission before taking photos of a nomadic family—out of politeness and respect for their privacy. Your guide and translator will assist you and explain the appropriate customs.

The nomadic families you will meet or stay with

On all of our trips, we make it a point to introduce you to nomadic life—one of Mongolia's greatest cultural treasures. We have been working with many nomadic families for several years, carefully selecting them for their personal motivation, warm hospitality, and authenticity.

This also means we must respect their way of life and avoid disrupting their daily routines, as their livelihood truly depends on it.

You must also understand that a family may have moved their camp, or may be temporarily busy with herding, haymaking, or berry picking. All of this is essential to preserving their way of life, their culture, and ensuring meaningful and genuine encounters.



Nomadic Life

Nomadic life is both peaceful and full of activity, with daily tasks flowing one after another, untouched by the concept of time.

There is no stress, but no time for naps either. Herds are guided closer to the yurts in the evening, only to be led to better pastures again the next morning. The milk from the previous day's milking is turned into yogurt, cheese, or airag (fermented mare's milk), and the cream is separated from the rest of the milk. Meals are prepared, and already the end of the day approaches—time to start milking again. Small fires made from dried cow dung are lit to produce smoke that keeps away flies and mosquitoes.

Meanwhile, the men take care of the horses and yaks. There is always something to be done—gathering the herd, selecting horses for riding or for the summer races. Every family member has their role under the yurt, and each one has assigned tasks. Young children often collect dung to dry, while the older ones tend to the lambs and calves.

And of course, last-minute chores always find their way into the day—repairing the felt covering of the yurt, washing the canvas, and many others.

These are tasks you'll be welcome to take part in—just offer to help, don't be afraid to milk the yaks or ride out on horseback to bring the herd back to camp.



An unchanging rhythm in the purest tradition of Mongolian nomadic life.

It is important to note that being "nomadic" also means that families may move, change location, head to the hills if a river floods, or relocate when the pastures are no longer rich enough due to a dry season.

The life of nomads revolves around several seasonal camps: typically a winter camp, a spring & autumn camp, and a summer camp. Weather conditions and the season determine when families will move from one camp to another.

This can sometimes cause minor issues when our drivers are unable to find the family's current location—such is the nature of nomadic life.

Nothing in your program is set in stone; it may be adapted at the last minute to match the rhythm of the families.

Out of deep respect for the lifestyle and work routines of the families we cooperate with—and who are at the heart of your journey—we do our best not to disrupt their daily lives.

You'll be invited to share a slice of life with them, but you'll also need to let go of European standards of fixed schedules and structured routines.

Meals in Nomadic Families

Mealtime doesn't hold the same meaning as it does in Europe.

It is simply a time to eat out of necessity—it's not necessarily a moment for conversation or strong family bonding, as we often experience in Western cultures. Of course, this is different during festivities or family celebrations.

It is therefore rare that you will share a meal with a nomadic family. However, they will be happy to welcome you and offer you the best of what they have. You must learn to appreciate this gesture for what it truly is, without focusing solely on taste or culinary standards.

It's common to hear, "It's a shame they didn't eat with us," which is understandable—but you'll need to keep an open mind and understand that this behavior is simply part of their culture and way of life.

We must accept and preserve this to ensure that the moments we share with nomadic families remain authentic and respectful of their traditions, rather than being shaped by our own cultural expectations.

Accommodation

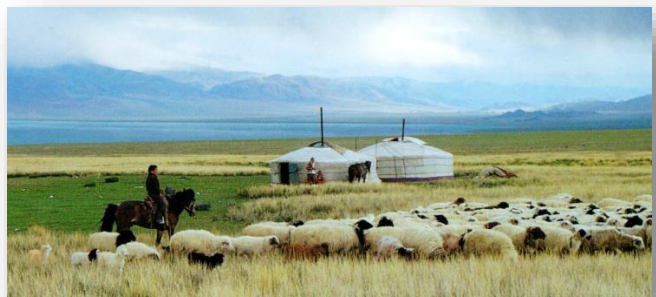
Several types of accommodation are possible and will be offered to you, to vary your stay and allow you to have authentic encounters without completely giving up your comfort. For maximum authenticity, we will offer you nights spent with nomadic families.

In nomadic camps, the rhythm is "Mongolian," as is the comfort, but this allows you to discover these interesting and very welcoming people.

There aren't really fixed schedules, but life is well organized, with everyone having their place. You may miss a bit of privacy, but you will find warmth and friendliness. You will probably also miss some comfort, but you will experience unforgettable moments. If you are in a small group, we recommend sleeping in a tent for space reasons inside the ger (yurt).

Meals will be very typical, somewhat unbalanced, but offered with great generosity.

The toilets reflect life in the ger: rustic and practical.



Guest yurts. As the name suggests, these are yurts meant to welcome guests, whether foreigners or Mongols.

Some families, often a bit wealthier, have a second yurt that allows them to receive travelers without disturbing their own daily life, especially their life in their main yurt. It can also be a family that has set up several yurts for somewhat more commercial purposes, but in any case, you will have your own yurt for 2 or 4 people, offering a bit more privacy and allowing you to freshen up without having to go far away into the valley.

Meals will remain traditional, but depending on the family, they may be somewhat "improved."

Toilets will be just as "rustic" as in a nomadic camp.

Yurt camps. These are simply proper hotel-like structures with individual yurts, and a yurt or chalet serving as a restaurant. Depending on the camp and its level of comfort, there will be a shared building for toilets and bathrooms.

Service and amenities vary according to the level of comfort chosen, and naturally, prices will differ as well... but a bit of comfort and a good shower now and then are special moments that come at a cost.

Meals in yurt camps are often Europeanized, and travelers are usually offered a choice.



A few words about every-day life

bonjour	sènnébénou
merci	baïrlala
de rien	tzougèr
au revoir	baïrtè
on y va	yaoui
attendez	bèdjé
combien ça coûte?	in hidbè?
j'ai faim	bi oulsoudjbènnè
j'ai froid	bi dartchbènnè
quel est votre nom?	taninirkhinbè?
je m'appelle Mya	mini nirMya
c'est bon	cékhanbènnè
bonne nuit	cékhanamrarè
qu'est-ce que c'est?	in yobè?
quand?	hidzè
où?	khanne
comment?	yadj
voiture	machinne
chauffeur	djolotch
non	ougoui
oui	tiim
bon appétit	cékhanhollorèu
excusez-moi	outchlarè

chaud	khalon
froid	khuiten
ce n'est pas possible	innebolkhogoui
c'est possible	innebolone
je suis français	bi frantskoune
les toilettes	djorrlon
arrêtez!	dzokhsorè
0	tic
1	nic
2	kho-yeur
3	gorove
4	dourouve
5	tav
6	dzorkha
7	doloo
8	naïm
9	yeus
10	arov
beau	cékhan
vilain	moukhè
Grand - Petit	tom - djidjik
bon	sène
mauvais	mou

Quelques phrases utiles:

Français	Mongol
Bienvenue (avec un certain respect)	Тавтай морилогтун (tavtai morilogtun)
Bonjour (de façon courante)	Сайн уу ?(Sain uu ?) Сайн байна уу ? (Sain baina uu ?)
Allo (au téléphone)	Байна уу (Baina uu)

Comment allez vous ?	Юу байна вэ? (Yu baina ve?)
(réponse) Je vais bien	Сайн та сайн байна уу (Sain ta sain baina uu)
Comment t'appelles-tu ?	Таны нэр хэн бэ? (Tany ner khen be?)
Je m'appelle....	Миний нэр ... (Minii ner ...)
D'où viens-tu ? (pays)	Та хаанаас ирсэн бэ (Ta haanaas irsen be?)
Je viens de...	Би ...ээс ирсэн (Bi ...ees irsen)
Enchanté de vous rencontrer	Тантай уулзсандаа баяртай байна (Tantai uulzsandaa bayartai baina)
Bonjour (le matin)	Өглөөний мэнд (Öglöönii mend)
Bonjour (l'après midi)	Өдрийн мэнд (Ödriin mend)
Bonsoir	Оройн мэнд (Oroin mend)
Bonne nuit	Сайхан амраарай (Saikhan amraarai) Сайхан нойрсоорой (Saikhan noirsooroi)
revoir (quand on part)	Баяртай (Bayartai)
AU revoir (on se voit plus tard)	Дараа уулзая (Daraa uulzii!) see you later
Au revoir, à demain	Маргааш уулзая (Margaash uulzii) see you tomorrow
Bonne chance	Амжилт хүсье (Amjilt husey)
Santé ! (pour trinquer)	Эрүүл мэндийн төлөө! (Erүүл mendiin tölөө)
Passez une bonne journée	Өдрийг өнгөрүүлээрэй (Odriig ongoruuleerei)
Bon appétit	Сайхан хооллоорой (Saihan hoollooroi)
Bon voyage	Сайн яваарай! (Sain yavaarai!)
Je comprends	Би ойлгой байна (Bi oilgoj baina)
Je ne comprends pas	Би ойлгохгүй байна (Bi oilgokhgüi baina)
Pouvez-vous parler moins vite	Илүү удаан ярина уу (Iluu udaan yarina uu)
Pouvez-vous répéter	Дахин хэлж өгнө үү? (Dahin helj ügnü үү?)
Pouvez-vous l'écrire	Үүнийг доор бичнэ үү (Uuniig door bichne uu)
Comment le dire en mongol?	Монголоор -г яаж хэлэх вэ (Mongoloor ...-g yaj heleh ve?)
Parles-tu mongol ?	Та монгол хэл мэдэх үү? (Ta mongol hel medeh uu)
Parlez-vous mongol?	Чи монгол хэл мэдэх үү? (Chi mongol hel medeh uu)
Oui, un peu...(en réponse à "parlez vous...?")	Тийм, би монгол хэл жаахан мэднэ (Tiiym, bi mongol hel zhaahan medne)
Excusez moi	Өршөөгөөрэй (Örshөөgөөrei)
Combien ça coute?	Энэ ямар үнэтэй вэ? (Ene ymar unetei ve?)
Désolé	Уучлаарай (Uuchlaarai)
Merci	Баярлалаа (Bayarlalaa)
(en reponse) pas de quoi.	Зүгээр (Zügeer)
Où sont les toilettes ?	Бие засах газар хаана байдаг вэ (Biye zasakh gazar khaana baidag ve?)
A l'aide ! Au secours !	Туслаарай! (Tuslaarai!)
Feu!	Гал (Gal!)
Stop!	Зогс (Zogs!)

Appelez la police!	Цагдаа дуудаарай! (Tsagdaa duudaarai!)
Félicitation (pour toute célébration)	Танд зул сарын баярын болон шинэ жилийн мэндийг хүргэе (Tand zul sariin bayriin bolon shine jiliin mendiig hurgey)
Bonne anniversaire !	Төрсөн өдрийн баяр хүргэе (Törsön ödriin bayar хүргиye)

Some Mongolian Customs & Traditions

Life in Mongolia is still deeply rooted in the past, and many rules govern the daily lives of Mongols.

It is clear that in the capital city, modernism quickly erases many of these small codes of etiquette that remain strictly observed under the nomad yurt.

This code of conduct, both inside the yurt and in everyday life, has its origins in practical aspects of past and present life.

Here are a few to give you an idea, knowing that our nomad friends understand very well that you may not know them.

Traditionally, it is forbidden or frowned upon to:

- * Lean on or pass between the yurt's wooden poles. This custom undoubtedly has practical origins: passing between the poles means going very close to the stove, with a high risk of burns.

- * Step on the yurt threshold. It is considered bad luck to step or stumble on the yurt's entrance threshold. Medieval travelers in Mongolia reported that anyone who stepped on the Khan's palace threshold was put to death.

- * Throw waste into the fire. Fire is considered the purest element, and no rubbish should be cast into it.

- * Walk or sit to the north of a person older than yourself. Elders are traditionally accorded great respect. The oldest and most respected guests sit at the back of the yurt, with others sitting beside them in descending order of age.

- * Pass between the fire and the back of the yurt or dwelling. The fire and the back of the house are the two most sacred parts of the yurt; nomads believe an energy line passes between these points and it must not be broken. All visitors must enter and exit from the same side.

- * Walk counterclockwise. The "narzuv," literally "the direction of the sun's rotation," refers in Mongolia to the clockwise direction. For example, when folding down the yurt roof flap or moving inside the yurt, one always moves clockwise.

- * Bring weapons into the hearth. Visitors must remove their knife from their belt before entering the home and hang it visibly to show friendly intentions.

- * Whistle under the yurt or even in a vehicle is considered bad luck.

On social manners:

- * Never take something with your left hand.

- * When someone offers you something, you must receive it respectfully. The European way of "grabbing" a glass, plate, or other items is often seen by Mongols as aggressive.

- * Instead, take what is offered with your right hand, palm open, while your left hand supports your right arm at the elbow or forearm, also palm open.

- * Inside the yurt, do not stretch out your legs. This has a practical reason, as if everyone did it, it would be hard to move in such a small space.

- * Inside the yurt or elsewhere, do not put your hands behind your head, opening your arms and armpits, as these are believed to be the passageways for evil spirits.

- * There are customs governing how guests are received. Mongols generally show great respect to visitors and will welcome anyone into their home without prior notice. The three main types of receptions are tsailaga, budaalaga, and dailaga, literally meaning offering tea, offering rice, and offering dinner.

- * The custom of Tsailaga is the most common and is followed when a person respectfully offers tea to a visitor, relative, or friend; when a nomad family settles and wishes to meet new neighbors; or during any holiday. Budaalaga and dailaga are similar but demonstrate greater respect for the visitor.

In summary, many rules govern nomadic life and yurt living, but depending on the family, their age, and origins, these rules are more or less strictly observed. In any case, the open-mindedness and welcoming spirit of nomad families override any "breach" of the rules, and awkward moments more often lead to exchanges and laughter that "break the ice," rather than offense.



As part of its commitment to sustainable tourism development, Wind of Mongolia supports the NGO Eeltei Baylag.

In Ulaanbaatar, your guide will invite you to discover the Eeltei Baylag brand.

- Eeltei Baylag (EBCN) is a network of herders' cooperatives created in 2022, formerly known as the "Sustainable Cashmere Union," established in 2017 as part of the Agronomes et Vétérinaires Sans Frontières (AVSF) program focused on Sustainable Cashmere development. EBCN is a creator of Sustainable and Certified Cashmere.

<https://www.ebcn-mongolianscashmere.com/>

- One of the main sources of income for Mongolian nomadic herders comes from cashmere.

While in the 2010s the cashmere market was considered one of the harmful factors contributing to desertification in Mongolia, herders found themselves caught between the need to cope with the consequences of climate change and their financial subsistence needs.

One opportunity was to demonstrate that herders were key actors in ensuring the sustainability of nomadic life by preserving their ecosystem. In 2013, AVSF developed the Sustainable Cashmere Integrated System program and began implementing it in 2014.

- Thanks to this sustainable cashmere program:
- Sustainable cashmere cooperatives were established in the provinces of Bayankhongor, Khentii, and Arkhangai.
- The union of cooperatives was created as a local and international representative.

- The Sustainable Cashmere certification was registered with the Intellectual Property Office.
- Marketing efforts were made to promote Mongolian sustainable cashmere on international markets, resulting in cooperation with three luxury brands.
- More and more herders are joining existing groups or creating new ones to ensure effective and sustainable pasture management.
- Herders now prioritize quality over quantity, have integrated animal health into their breeding practices, and have strengthened ties with veterinary services.
-



Today, EELTEI BAYLAG offers more than 22 product categories. The quality, valorization of finished products, and their marketing have several very positive impacts on the local economy:

Giving true recognition back to the herders, who are the key players in this industry
 Creating job opportunities for local artisans and women from nomadic families who can get involved in spinning or knitting (EBCN organizes training for this).

Improving cashmere quality allows for a higher gross sale price per kilogram than the market average.

Today, the EBCN network includes 9 cooperatives across 3 major regions of Mongolia — Bayankhongor, Arkhangai, and Khentii — with over 558 herder families.

EBCN's policy aims to diversify the sources of income for nomadic herder families as much as possible by offering them involvement in:

- * Sustainable cashmere collection
- * Manufacturing finished products
- * Working with other raw materials available in each family, such as sheep and camel wool
- * Felt manufacturing
- * Soap making based on white goat fats
- * Participation in sustainable and fair tourism by hosting travelers, such as through the agency **Wind of Mongolia**

Have a Safe travel !!!

