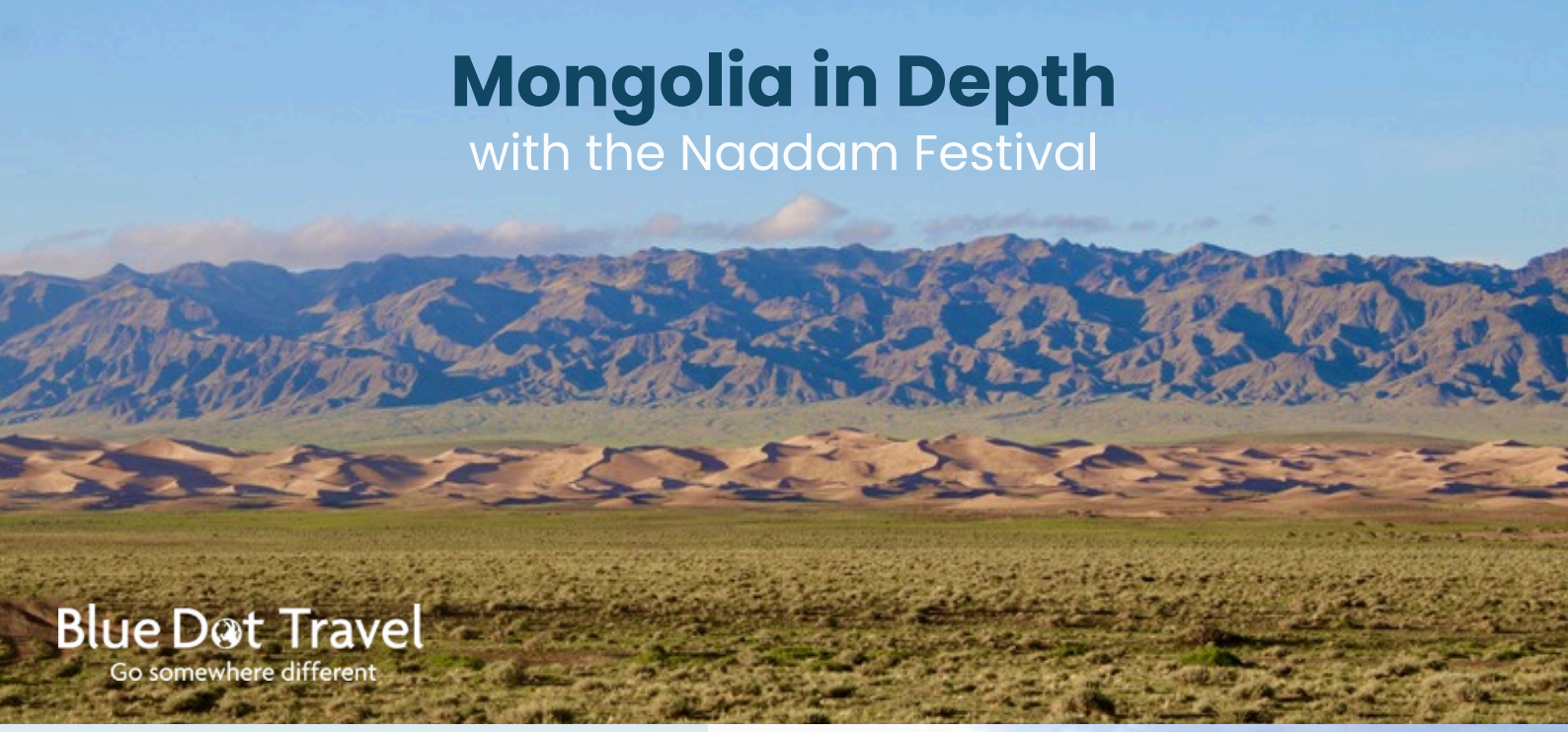
# Mongolia in Depth

## with the Naadam Festival




## July 2027 | 19 Days

$12,690 per person, twin share
Solo Supplement: $1,400



### Tour Highlights

- The wonderful Naadam Festival, vibrant with skilled horsemen, archery and wrestling
- Explore the Flaming Cliffs of the Gobi Desert, the location of the world's first discovery of dinosaur eggs
- Staying in authentic local ger accommodation
- Visit to the extraordinary Gandan Monastery
- Bronze Age petroglyphs at Khavtsgait
- Hike through the shore of stunning Ugii Lake
- Enjoy the hospitality of the local people by visiting a family 'ger'
- Explore the Gobi Gurvan Saikhan National Park
- Terelj National Park and 13th-century complex
- Experience traditional Mongolian throat singing; unusual but unique



# Mongolia in Depth with Naadam Festival








## Tour overview

A trip through the Land of the Sapphire Blue Sky is a truly unique experience.

If you're looking for a five-star type, cushy, comfortable holiday, then Mongolia is probably not for you. Mongolia is a land of extremes. If you want to get off the beaten track, Mongolia is unmatched in its wild beauty and rawness. On this small group tour, you will get a wonderful taste of what this country has to offer. What you will experience, hear, taste and see will engage all of your senses.

Mongolia is one of the world's least developed and least populated countries. With a population of only 3.3 million, roughly half of the country's residents live in the capital, Ulaanbaatar. Outside of that, the populations of Mongolia's largest "cities" remain in the tens of thousands, with many still living traditional nomadic lifestyles as herders.

Horses and horse culture play a large role in daily and national life in Mongolia. It is traditionally said that "A Mongol without a horse is like a bird without wings." Mongolia has a horse population of more than 3.5 million, which exceeds the country's human population. On the road, it can take hours of driving before you pass a tiny ger community, a Mongolian on horseback, or even another vehicle. Yet in between, you are blessed with views of a countryside so dramatic that it will be indelibly imprinted on your memory.

From the stark Gobi, the incredible rock formations and magnificence of Khongor Dunes in the south, to the crystal-clear lakes and rushing rivers of the north, Mongolia will delight you with its fascinating culture and stunning beauty.




**Activity rating: Moderate to Active**

You should be able to walk for up to an hour at a moderate pace with occasional stopping, manage 3-4 flights of stairs, stand at attractions for periods of time, and board and disembark transport independently



**Monday 5th July** DEPARTURE
Depart for Hong Kong, where we will stay overnight (included in your international flight package).

**Day 1, Tuesday 6 July** ARRIVE ULAANBAATAR
Arrive in Ulaanbataar from Seoul. After clearing immigration, we'll be transferred to our centrally located hotel for a two-night stay. We'll enjoy a welcome dinner at a local restaurant.
Overnight: Ulaanbaatar (hotel) **D**

**Day 2, Wednesday 7 July** ULAANBAATAR CITY TOUR
Our city tour starts at Sukhbaatar Square, the central square named after the revolutionary hero of 1921. Damdiny Sukhbaatar, who declared independence from China. We'll visit the Gandan Monastery, the centre of Buddhism in Mongolia and home to the Golden Buddha Statue of Migjid Janraisig. It's a beautiful sight to experience monks at worship or going about their daily lives amongst the grounds of this important religious site. After lunch, we'll visit the National Museum, renowned for its extensive collection of elaborate costumes, hats, and jewellery from the main Mongolian ethnic groups. The The museum also houses an exhibit dedicated to the Mongol empire, giving insight into the country's long nomadic tradition. Overnight: Ulaanbaatar (hotel) **B/L/D**

**Day 3, Thursday 8 July** MONGOL NOMADIC SHOW AND HUSTAI NATIONAL PARK
Today, we will drive approximately 55 km west of the capital towards the Mongol nomadic camp, where we will attend a Mongol nomadic show. The show covers traditional dairy products, felt-making processes, nomads' migration from one pasture to another, and traditional games and musical instruments. After having lunch at the camp, we'll continue our drive, about another 50km drive to Hustai National Park. There was a time when it would have been nearly impossible to see a Przewalski's horse (named after Russian geographer and explorer Nikolay Przhevalsky). They became extinct in the wild in the 1960s due to overhunting and harsh winters. Only two captive groups remained in the world – in zoos in Munich and Prague. In 1992, some of these horses were reintroduced into the wild at Mongolia's Hustai National Park, and the herd has been carefully monitored since. Tonight is our first night in a traditional ger at the Mongol Nomadic ger camp. Whilst the accommodation is basic, this is a unique opportunity to experience life as the Mongolian nomads do. Overnight at Mongol Nomadic ger camp (standard gers). **B/L/D**

**Day 4, Friday 9 July** ULAANBAATAR - KHUVSGUL LAKE
After breakfast, we'll transfer to the airport for our domestic flight to Murun, the capital of Khuvsgul province in northern Mongolia. This region is renowned for its magnificent mountain scenery, lush forests and crystal-clear lakes, offering a wonderful contrast to the vast open steppes surrounding Ulaanbaatar. On arrival, we'll meet our local drivers and travel towards Lake Khuvsgul. On the way, about 16 km from the airport, we'll visit the Uushgiin Chuluu deer stone site, which consists of 14 Bronze Age deer stones erected in memory of the chiefly figures. Especially interesting is the 2.6 m-high Deerstone 14, one of the few found in Mongolia and the Russian Altai; it was engraved with many of the traditional themes, including stylised deer, a belt with hanging weapons such as a war hammer and dagger, and a striped pentagonal shape believed to be a shield. We'll drive another 130 km to stunning Lake Khovsgol. With an area of 2,620 square km and a depth of more than 244m, Lake Khovsgol is Mongolia's largest freshwater lake. Spend the rest of the day at leisure, soaking in your surroundings in this remote area of pristine beauty. Overnight: Ashihai resort, Lake Khovsgol **B/L/D**

**Day 5, Saturday 10 July** KHUVSGUL LAKE
Today, we'll enjoy the extraordinary natural beauty of Lake Khuvsgul, one of Mongolia's most treasured landscapes. Stretching approximately 136 km and surrounded by the mountains of northern Mongolia, this magnificent freshwater lake is among the oldest and deepest in the world. Its remarkably clear waters, pine-covered hills and peaceful shorelines make it a wonderful place to relax and appreciate the natural environment. We'll have free time to explore the lakeside surroundings today, with walking options available. This remote region is home to traditional herding communities whose lifestyles have changed little over generations, and is one of Mongolia's most beautiful destinations.
Overnight: Ashihai resort, Lake Khovsgol **B/L/D**

**Day 6, Sunday 11 July** NAADAM FESTIVAL
Today, we will witness the spectacular Naadam Festival, featuring the three key Mongolian traditional sports of wrestling, archery, and horse racing. The opening ceremony of our rural Naadam festival takes place in Khatgal village. A rural Naadam offers a chance to get much closer to the action and provides a more intimate experience with the local people. The Naadam festival commemorates the victory of the People's Revolution, which led to Mongolia's independence and its rich cultural heritage. The distinctly Mongolian feel and flair of the Naadam Festival make it a wonderful spectacle, a joyous time, and an intriguing cultural event. Colourful ceremonies and parading soldiers kick off the celebrations. The ancient game of wrestling follows, with men competing in multiple rounds. Both men and women compete in archery, using the traditional Mongolian compound bow that terrorised Europe when Genghis Khan and his Golden Horde expanded their empire westward. The quintessentially Mongolian art of horse racing follows. While these are traditionally male-dominated sports, women and children also compete. Overnight: Ashihai resort, Lake Khovsgol **B/L/D**







**Day 7, Monday 12 July** ULAANBAATAR
Today we'll say goodbye to the beautiful landscapes of northern Mongolia and transfer to Murun Airport for our return flight to Ulaanbaatar. From the air, we may enjoy wonderful views of Mongolia's vast countryside, with its rolling grasslands, mountains and scattered nomadic settlements. Overnight: Ulaanbaatar (hotel) **B/L/D**

**Day 8, Tuesday 13 July** AROUND ULAANBAATAR
Today, we'll visit the atmospheric ruins of Manzushir Monastery, located in the beautiful foothills of Bogd Khan Mountain, south of Ulaanbaatar. Originally established in the 18th century, the monastery was once an important Buddhist religious centre, with numerous temples and hundreds of resident monks. Sadly, the religious purges of the 1930s destroyed much of the complex, leaving evocative ruins surrounded by forested hills and impressive granite rock formations. We'll explore the monastery's remains and learn about the important role Buddhism has played in Mongolia's history and culture. The peaceful mountain setting contrasts beautifully with the busy capital. Return to Ulaanbaatar for dinner. Overnight: Ulaanbaatar (hotel) **B/L/D**

**Day 9, Wednesday 14 July** TO THE GOBI DESERT
Today, we'll transfer to the airport for our flight to the legendary Gobi Desert. One of the world's great wilderness regions, the Gobi is a land of dramatic contrasts, where vast rocky plains, towering sand dunes and rugged mountains stretch towards the horizon. Contrary to popular imagination, much of the Gobi is not covered in sand but consists of gravel plains. It is famous for being a premier paleontological treasure trove, a historic Silk Road crossroads, and a dramatic "cold desert" rather than a typical sandy wasteland. This remarkable region is home to unique wildlife, ancient archaeological sites and some of Mongolia's most breathtaking landscapes. Overnight: Gobi Mirage (deluxe gers) **B/L/D**

**Day 10, Thursday 15 July** KHONGOR SAND DUNES
Today, we'll drive 180 km on bumpy roads to the famous Khongor Dunes, one of Mongolia's largest and most spectacular sandy expanses, covering more than 900 square kilometres in Gobi Gurvan Saikhan National Park. Rising dramatically from the surrounding plains, the dunes reach heights of 100 to 300 metres. Known locally as the "Singing Dunes", they take their name from the unusual sounds created by wind moving the sand. Their pale yellow sands contrast with the vast surrounding steppe and a lush green strip of vegetation along the Khongor River, which forms a small oasis at the northern edge of the dunes. In the late afternoon, as the desert sun begins to set, we'll have the opportunity to enjoy a 30-minute camel ride at the base of the dunes. (it's good fun but not for everyone) Overnight: Gobi Discovery Camp (standard gers) **B/L/D**

**Day 11, Friday 16 July** PETROGLYPHS AND FLAMING CLIFFS
Today, we'll explore two of the Gobi Desert's most fascinating historical and natural sites. First, we visit Khavtsgait, where ancient petroglyphs are carved into the rocks of a sacred mountain. Dating back thousands of years, these remarkable engravings depict animals, hunting scenes and aspects of everyday life in prehistoric Mongolia. A short uphill walk takes us to the rock carvings, with wonderful views across the surrounding desert landscape. Later, we'll continue to the Flaming Cliffs, known locally as Bayanzag. These dramatic red sandstone formations became internationally famous after American explorer Roy Chapman Andrews discovered dinosaur fossils and eggs there in the 1920s. The cliffs glow a magnificent deep red in the late-afternoon sunlight, creating one of the Gobi's most memorable sights. We'll walk along the designated pathways and admire the spectacular desert scenery. Overnight: Gobi Mirage (deluxe gers) **B/L/D**

**Day 12, Saturday 17 July** YOL VALLEY
After breakfast, we'll drive to Yol Valley, which is also known as Bearded Vulture Valley. We'll learn about local wildlife in the Natural History Museum before gently hiking through the valley to discover their habitats. Nestled deep within the hills, this valley is a haven from the desert heat. Some areas of the valley are continually sheltered from the hot sun, and consequently, the stream freezes over in winter and remains partially frozen until late summer. It is wide at the entrance and gradually narrows into a remarkable gorge. We will hike into the gorge, which is a 2.5-hour round-trip, and along the way, we might see ibex, mountain goats, Altai pica, yaks, and vultures. In the afternoon, you can enjoy your stay in your lovely ger or have coffee and drinks in the lounge area. Overnight: Gobi Mirage (standard gers) **B/L/D**

**Day 13, Sunday 18 July** GOBI - ULAANBAATAR
This morning we'll drive back to Dalanzadgad to visit to the Gobi Museum of Nature and History. The Gobi is internationally renowned for its extraordinary fossil discoveries, particularly the dinosaur remains that have helped scientists understand life on Earth millions of years ago. The region has yielded some of the world's most important dinosaur fossils, including eggs, skeletons and the remains of species that once inhabited this ancient landscape. Our museum visit will provide an interesting insight into the geology, prehistoric wildlife and natural environment of southern Mongolia. Later, we'll transfer to the airport for our late-evening flight back to Ulaanbaatar and overnight near the airport. Overnight: Ulaanbaatar (hotel) **B/L/D**







**Day 14, Monday 19 July** TO ULGII – WESTERN MONGOLIA
Early in the morning, we'll be transferred to the airport for our flight to Ulgii. Raw, rugged, remote and backward, this region has for centuries been isolated – both geographically and culturally from central Mongolia. With its glacier-wrapped mountains, shimmering salt lakes, and hardy nomadic culture, as well as its traditions of falconry and horsemanship, western Mongolia is a timeless slice of Central Asia. After checking in the hotel we'll visit a local museum and then drive 50km from Ulgii to enjoy a short hike and the breathtaking scenery of the snow-capped Altai Mountains at Tolbo Lake, where white Russians were surrounded by the Bolsheviks and their Mongolian allies in 1921. Overnight: Ulgii (local hotel) **B/L/D**

**Day 15, Tuesday 20 July** WESTERN MONGOLIA WITH EAGLE HUNTERS
Today promises to be one of the most memorable cultural experiences of our Mongolian adventure as we visit a local Kazakh eagle hunter's family. The Kazakhs are semi-nomadic people who have roamed the mountains and valleys of western Mongolia with their herds since the 19th century. Falconry developed in Central Asia, and for centuries, Kazakh men have hunted from horseback with trained golden eagles, the largest and most powerful of raptors. Foxes, rabbits and even wolves are hunted in winter for their fur across the snowy mountains and steppes. We'll spend time with a local eagle hunter's family, who would love to share their centuries-long traditions and customs passed down from generation to generation, and, if you choose, hold a Golden eagle or a sneaker falcon. Learn about the traditional costumes worn by Kazakh men and the wonderful embroidery work of our hostess, who will prepare lunch for our group. After visiting the eagle hunter's family we'll drive to Friendship Hill to marvel at the Altai mountains' vast landscapes and the Khovd River's turbulent waters. Overnight: Ulgii (local hotel) **B/L/D**

**Day 16, Wednesday 21 July** TERELJ NATIONAL PARK
AAfter breakfast, we'll transfer to Ulgii Airport for our morning flight back to Ulaanbaatar. On arrival, we'll continue east towards the spectacular Genghis Khan Equestrian Statue, one of Mongolia's most recognisable landmarks. Standing an impressive 40 metres high, this enormous stainless-steel monument depicts the legendary Mongol leader mounted on horseback, gazing across the surrounding countryside. The statue celebrates the extraordinary legacy of Genghis Khan, who united the Mongolian tribes and established an empire that became the largest contiguous land empire in history. Then we'll visit Terelj National Park, a unique area located near the big city, featuring granite rock formations such as Turtle Rock. Overnight: Terelj National Park (Deluxe ger camp) **B/L/D**

**Day 17, Thursday 22 July** TERELJ NATIONAL PARK TO ULAANBAATAR
This morning, we'll enjoy more of the beautiful scenery of Terelj National Park, one of Mongolia's most picturesque natural areas. Surrounded by forested mountains, open valleys and unusual granite rock formations, the park is a wonderful example of the country's diverse landscapes. We'll visit the famous Turtle Rock, an enormous natural rock formation that, as its name suggests, resembles a giant turtle. After lunch at our lodge, we'll drive back to Ulaanbaatar and visit Bogd Khan Winter Palace Museum, the home of the last Mongolian King. The museum contains several Buddhist artworks and the private collection of Bogdo Khaan, a state and spiritual leader. The artworks displayed here were made by top Mongolian, Tibetan, and Chinese master sculptors in the 18th and 19th centuries. Overnight: Ulaanbaatar (hotel) **B/L/D**

**Day 18, Friday 23 July** ULAANBAATAR
Today is our final full day in Mongolia, offering an opportunity to enjoy the capital at a more leisurely pace. You may wish to explore the city centre, browse the shops for traditional handicrafts and beautiful Mongolian cashmere, visit a local café or simply relax at the hotel. This evening, we'll be treated to a wonderful performance celebrating Mongolia's rich cultural heritage. Traditional musicians, dancers and the extraordinary art of Mongolian throat singing provide a memorable finale to our journey. Afterwards, we'll enjoy a farewell dinner together, and the bar at the top of the hotel is a great spot for a final drink together. Overnight: Ulaanbaatar (hotel) **B/D**

**Day 19, Saturday 24 July** DEPARTURE - ULAANBAATAR
After breakfast, we'll transfer to Ulaanbaatar International Airport for our flight home. **B**

***Note:*** *Staying in a traditional ger camp is a must-do cultural experience in Mongolia. It's a drawcard for many travellers. A traditional ger is a round, wooden-framed tent covered with wool felt and waterproof tarpaulin. The ger camps we use vary in size, but they share common features: each ger accommodates a couple or two solo travellers, with permanent beds and a Western-style mattress. You'll notice that we refer to some camps as "deluxe". The gers in these camps feature an ensuite toilet and shower, whilst the "standard gers" have shared facilities. Electricity is available at all camps, though some use a generator due to unreliable power supplies. Overall, you'll find the accommodation simple but comfortable, with a definite cultural charm. A much larger ger is used for communal dining, and at most camps, there is an additional ger with a lounge and bar.*















## Accommodation

Our hotels are carefully chosen to capture the local atmosphere and set you up in an ideal location. You can expect accommodation that comprises a mix of standard hotels, boutique-style hotels, and smaller, independently owned establishments. Below are some of the hotels on this tour. Final hotels may change, and a complete list will be shared with you.

**Best Western Tuushin, Ulaanbataar**
**www.tuushinhotel.com**

**Gobi Mirage Ger Camp**
**www.gobimirage.mn**

**Mongol Nomadic Ger Camp**
**www.mongolnomadic.com**

## Why Blue Dot?

Travel is more than just moving from one place to another; it is an opportunity to explore this vast planet, connect with its people and marvel at its beauty. We have established a group of loyal, like-minded travellers who share this feeling and have taken multiple tours with us. With Blue Dot, you'll experience

- Thoughtfully designed itineraries with unique experiences
- Small, inclusive groups with a maximum of 16 travellers
- The support of both an Australian tour leader* and experienced local guides
- Programs designed to meet the needs of mature-age travellers
- Hands on, personalised service including customised flight bookings
- Tipping included in your tour cost

*Australian leaders accompany groups with more than 10 travellers.

## Blue Dot welcomes solo travellers

In fact, over half of our clients are solo travellers. We understand it can be daunting to travel on your own, and we'll ensure your travel is safe, inclusive and enjoyable. You can confidently join our groups, knowing that we bring solo travellers together to share the camaraderie of an unforgettable adventure.

## Enquiries and bookings

A $500 deposit is required to secure your booking.

For more information:

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