



UW COMMUNITY TOUR: A Mongolia Adventure

Trip Dates: Arrive Mongolia May 27, 2024, return to U.S. June 7, 2024



Friends and Alumni of the University of Wyoming, please join John Koprowski on a 12-day adventure where travelers will experience vast, untouched landscapes and learn about nomadic culture in Mongolia. The first 15 travelers who make a non-refundable deposit will be accepted on this journey.

John Koprowski is Dean of the University of Wyoming's Haub School of Environment & Natural Resources and a Wyoming Excellence Chair. He has spent his academic career conducting research in wildlife conservation that often integrates local communities to find sustainable solutions to conservation challenges. He has worked in over 20 countries on 6 continents. John first visited Mongolia in 2006 to teach a 3 week course in the Gobi Desert for the Zoological Society of London and the National University of Mongolia and has been collaborating on research there since 2018. He helped the UW set up international agreements with the National University of Mongolia and the Mongolian Academy of Sciences. He remains fascinated by the beauty of the landscapes, the richness of history and culture and the kindness of the people of Mongolia. John looks forward to introducing you to this amazing place.



Price: Double room nightly plus all inclusions, below, US\$3950/person if at least 15 travelers join (costs increase by about \$250/person we are under 15 travelers should all agree to still join).

Supplement for single occupancy is \$500/person.

WHAT'S INCLUDED:

Guide & transport:

- Expert guidance and insights from Dr. Koprowski at every step along our journey.
- Roundtrip travel outside Ulaanbaatar in comfortable Landcruiser-style 4WD vehicles seating 3 passengers each with local, trained English-speaking guides
- Departure transfers from Ulaanbaatar hotels

Accommodation:

- 11 nights in a standard room at hotels and gers in the countryside based on a twin occupancy; in ger camps community bathrooms are most common.

Meal plan:

- Daily breakfast included at each hotel or ger camp
- Most lunches will be provided at ger camps or as picnic lunches on the road
- Most dinners in the countryside at ger camp restaurants or restaurants when in Ulaanbaatar.

Excursions and entrances

- All entrance fees as indicated in the itinerary

All hotel, ger camp, meal and entrance taxes included.

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED:

- Airfare/flights and baggage costs – see below for flight recommendations
- Arrival transfers –however, we will try to assist you in scheduling a pick up through the hotel
- Drinks other than water with dinners (coffee, hot tea, and juice are often included in breakfasts)
- One lunch and one dinner in Ulaanbaatar during ‘on-your-own’ exploration.
- Personal travel insurance and medical evacuation costs
- Passport, Global Entry/PreCheck, or other such travel authorization fees.
- Gratuities
- Personal laundry
- Visa fees if you are not a US citizen
- Photography and video fees in museums and any other items not mentioned as included



ITINERARY *(Meals included: B=Breakfast; L=Lunch; D=Dinner)*

Day 1, May 27 - Arrival

At 6 pm, we will provide your pre-trip briefing and then host a welcome dinner at a fine local restaurant. (Hotel; D)

Day 2, May 28 - Ulaanbaatar

We will spend this day exploring the sights and sounds of Mongolia's capital. We will begin this morning with a private blessing with a Buddhist monk at Gandan, the country's largest monastery. An imposing 90-foot-tall statue of Megjid Janraisag (Avalokitesvara in Sanskrit) stands in the largest temple in the monastery. This statue is considered as the religious symbol of Mongolia's independence and democracy after the country's democratic transition of 1990. When a Mongolian student in the mid-1990s discovered fragments of the original statue (which was destroyed by Soviet authorities in the 1930s) in St. Petersburg, a nationwide campaign began to collect money to rebuild the Buddha. After years of hard work, this magnificent Buddha was resurrected and is now standing proudly, as a symbol of Mongolian Buddhist heritage. Next, we will visit Chinggis Khan National Museum for the collection of country's cultural, historical and archeological collection featuring the reign of the Great Mongolian Empire of the 13th century under Chinggis Khan and his sons ("Genghis Khan" in the west, the correct pronunciation of his name among Mongolians is Chinggis Khan). After lunch, we will visit the National History Museum located in downtown Ulaanbaatar. This museum offers an excellent introduction to Mongolia's history from pre-historic times through the 13th century Mongolian Empire and on to the democratic movement of the early 1990s, which overthrew the Communist regime. Enjoy dinner at a fine local restaurant. (Hotel; B, L, D)

Day 3, May 29 - Ulaanbaatar / Hustain Nuruu National Park

In the morning, drive to the magnificent Hustain Nuruu National Park where the Mongolian takhi or Przewalski's horses are being re-introduced. There will be many such journeys throughout the tour and we will keep a lookout for exciting raptors such as Steppe Eagle, Upland Buzzard and Saker Falcon. We should reach our destination in time for lunch, and we will have time to settle into our tourist 'ger' camp. Each 'ger' (or yurt) generally consists of twin beds with a central heating unit. Although simple, the gers are far more comfortable than the old alternative of field camping! Following lunch, we will start exploring the upland steppe habitat of Hustai National Park. One of the principal attractions of the reserve is a population of highly endangered Przewalski's Horse, and we will look to visit a small spring where they are known to drink in the late afternoon. At one time they were totally extinct in the wild, but thankfully a dedicated team were able to reintroduce them and Hustai is now one of the few strongholds for this impressive inhabitant of these beautiful upland slopes. (Ger camp; B, L, D)

Day 4, May 30 - Hustai National Park /Mongol Els / Kharakhorum

After breakfast, begin your overland journey towards Kharakhorum (4 hours driving). En route, visit Mongol Els, one of world's most northerly located sand dunes located next to the Hognu Han National Park. After a picnic lunch, continue driving and reach your ger camp in Kharakhorum in time for dinner. Overnight in gers. (5 hr of driving; Ger camp; B, L, D),

Day 5, May 31 - Turkish sites and Erdenezuu Monastery

After breakfast, begin the day with a short journey about 1 hour to the north to visit 7-8th century archeological sites of Turkish era. This interesting site will give you insights about times of Mongolia before the reign of the Great Mongol Empire. Next, arrive at the Erdenezuu Monastery and begin with a short walk in north of Erdenezuu Monastery, where the ancient capital city stood. The construction of the original Kharakhorum city was completed during Ogedei Khan, Chinggis Khan's third son who inherited the empire his father created after his death in 1228. It's located within a beautiful valley of the Orkhon River, which bears hundreds of historically and archeologically significant sites, awaiting its unlocking, including 2000 years old burials, deer stones (believed to be a form of burial) and ruins of cities pre-dating the time of Chinggis Khan. Its' ruins were used in the construction of Mongolia's largest Buddhist Monastery Erdenezuu, erected in its place, which still stands today. Visit the monastery grounds in the afternoon. Dinner and overnight in gers. (Ger camp; B, L, D),

Day 6, June 1 - Kharakhorum / Ongi Monastery

Today, begin your overland journey south to the Gobi desert via Ongiin Hiid Monastery (7-8 hours driving). We will also have our first opportunity to stop along the way and visit a nomadic horse herder family. Mongolians are known for their hospitality offered in form of food and shelter. Nomadic children, who often spend their summer school breaks with their parents, are found helping their parents. Continue driving until you reach Ongiin Hiid Monastery, a ruin of monastery located on the northern tip of the Gobi desert. The Ongiin Monastery was once called the “Pearl of the Gobi” and was on the cross roads of Central Asian Silk road camel caravan merchants. We will explore the monastery ruins and surrounding hills on foot and stay at a ger camp located on the Ongi river banks. (Approx. 6 hours driving; Ger Camp; B, L, D)

Day 7, June 2 - Ongi Monastery / Gobi Gurvansaikhan National Park

After breakfast, begin driving to your ger camp Gobi Mirage located near the beautiful Gobi Gurvansaikhan Mountains, enjoying a picnic lunch along the way. This particular location will allow you to have a magnificent view of Gobi’s iconic mountain range known as “Three Beautiful Mountains” and give a feeling of Gobi’s serenity. Enjoy the rest of the day relaxing at the ger camp. (Ger camp; B, L, D)

Day 8, June 3 - Yolyn Am / Havtsgait Petroglyphs

After breakfast, drive a short distance to mountains of Yolyn Am. Enjoy some gentle hiking through steep-sided gorges and high altitude meadows. Birding these beautiful slopes is a real pleasure and we’ll be on the lookout for exciting species such as Chukar, Daurian Partridge, Bearded and Himalayan Vulture and Saker Falcon. Another key target today will be the little known and near endemic Kozlov’s (Mongolian) Accentor, which are only known to breed in these stunning mountains. While exploring the valleys, slopes and ridges, we will be on the lookout for a wide range of mountain species, including the impressive Bearded Vulture (Lammergeier), a couple of pairs of which nest in the canyons here. Another major target is the local Altai Snowcock, which often give their characteristic whistling calls in the early morning just after dawn. After a picnic lunch, drive a short distance to Havtsgait Petroglyphs, a remarkable collection of ancient rock drawings dating to 3,000-4,000 thousand years ago, located on a top of a small rocky mountain top. One of the leading Mongolian specialists Dr. Christopher Atwood wrote a paper about this site, concluding that this site might be one of the earliest recorded sources depicting a Mongolian ger. In the afternoon, return to your ger camp and enjoy dinner. (Ger camp; B, L, D)

Day 9, June 4 - Tugrigin Shiree / Flaming Cliffs

In the morning, we will begin driving to the Tugrigin Shiree, which was discovered by Mongolian scientists and co-explored by Polish expeditions in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Tugrigin Shiree is perhaps most known for its famous “Fighting Dinosaurs” (a fossil of a Protoceratops and a Velociraptor locked in combat), which were discovered in the 1970s. We will explore this white sandstone escarpment for dinosaur fossils. In the late afternoon, will drive to the legendary Flaming Cliffs, red sandstone formations that stretching over 3 kilometers in width, where hundreds of dinosaur fossils have been discovered over the course of the last century. Paleontological expeditions from many countries, including from the U.S, Poland, Japan and Russia have worked here during last 90 years. Each year, rain and wind reveal yet more fossils and every summer, exceptional new discoveries are made. We will explore the cliffs in the footsteps of legendary American explorer Roy Chapmen Andrews who discovered the first dinosaur eggs here, that the world had ever seen. Enjoy a sunset view at this majestic place before returning back to our ger camp. (Ger Camp; B, L, D)

Day 10, June 5 - Gobi Desert / Ulaanbaatar

After breakfast, begin driving back to Ulaanbaatar, enjoying a picnic lunch along the way. Upon arrival, transfer to your hotel. Dinner on your own. (Approx. 8 hours driving; Hotel; B, L)

Day 11, June 6 - Ulaanbaatar

Enjoy one full day for last minute sightseeing and shopping. Lunch on your own. In the evening, enjoy a wonderful performance of traditional Mongolian music and dance, featuring Khoomii or “throat” singing, followed by a farewell dinner at one of the city’s fine local restaurants. Overnight at hotel. (Hotel; B, D)

Day 12, June 7 - Departure

After breakfast transfer to the airport for your return flight home. (B)

FLIGHTS

Mongolia is not easy to get to and therefore we recommend that you book early; airfare prices are generally \$2000 to \$3000 roundtrip. You will fly to **Ulaanbaatar's Chinggis Khaan International Airport (code UBN) with arrival by midday May 27** so that we can meet at the hotel for a 6 pm pre-trip briefing and welcome dinner. MIAT (Mongolian Airlines), Asiana, and Turkish Airlines fly to UBN with direct flights from Istanbul (Turkey on Turkish), Frankfurt (Germany on MIAT), Narita (Japan on MIAT) and Incheon Seoul (Korea on MIAT and Asiana).

Pro tip: Consider completing your application for TSA Precheck to ease your passage through security in the USA and Global Entry to dramatically decrease your time in immigration and customs upon return to the USA.

IMPORTANT DETAILS:

In order to enter Mongolia, you should:

- Make sure that your **passport does not expire earlier than November 25, 2024** (you must have at least 6 months of valid passport time left to enter Mongolia).
- U.S. citizens do not require a visa to enter Mongolia and no changes are expected prior to our trip

We recommend that you purchase travel insurance in case of emergency or extraordinary circumstances.

DEPOSIT AND FULL PAYMENT DUE DATES:

- **Non-refundable deposit:** \$1,000 USD is due at booking; deposit required before 1 Dec 2023.
- **Balance of full payment:** Due by January 15, 2024.

READINGS TO EXPLORE FOR UW ALUMNI MONGOLIA ADVENTURE:

History of Mongolia:

1. *Genghis Khan and the Quest for God: How the World's Greatest Conqueror Gave Us Religious Freedom* by JR Weatherford (2016). ISBN 978-0735221154
2. *The Secret History of the Mongol Queens: How the Daughters of Genghis Khan Rescued His Empire* by JR Weatherford (2010). ISBN 978-0307407153
3. *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World* by JR Weatherford (2004). ISBN 0609809644

Fun and informative non-fiction

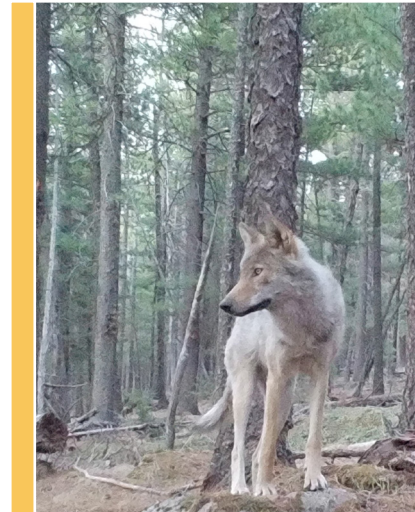
1. *Eagle Dreams: Searching for Legends in Wild Mongolia*, by S Bodio (2015). ISBN 978-1629144795
2. *I Golfed Across Mongolia: How an Improbable Adventure Helped Me Rediscover the Spirit of Golf (and Life)* by A Tolme (2009).

If you like wildlife guides and stories...

1. *Birds of Mongolia* (Princeton Field Guides) by G Sundev and C Leahy (2019). ISBN 978-0691138824
2. *Into Wild Mongolia* by G Schaller (2020). ISBN 978-0300246179
3. *Tracking Gobi Grizzlies* by D Chadwick and Haub School alum J Riis (2016). ISBN 978-1938340628

Helpful general travel guides...

1. *Lonely Planet's Mongolia Travel Guide*, by Holden et al. (2018) ISBN - 1786575728
2. *Lonely Planet's Mongolian Phrasebook and Dictionary* by Sanders et al. (2014) ISBN - 1743211848



For more information contact John Koprowski at jkoprows@uwyo.edu or to reserve your spot on this adventure contact UW Global Engagement at global@uwyo.edu

