



2019 Delegation Trip to Mongolia
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The 28th Annual Sister Cities Delegation Trip to Mongolia (August 1 to 17, 2019)



ITINERARY SPECIALLY DESIGNED BY THE ULAANBAATAR DENVER
SISTER CITIES COMMITTEE AND NOMADIC EXPEDITIONS

(As of April 9, 2019)

Delegation Chair: Jim Wagenlander

Day 1 (Evening only) Fly to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia [August 1, 2019]

The contrast between ancient traditions and the dawning of a 21st century democracy is most visible in Ulaanbaatar where traditional gers and Buddhist monasteries fascinatingly coexist with modern high-rises and good international restaurants. Some of us have already gathered in

Beijing, China but others join us now at the Beijing Airport and as a group we fly into Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia's capital and only large city (the cost of this and all international flights are separately arranged and paid for by the delegates and not by Nomadic Expeditions). You will be welcomed at the Chinggis Khaan International Airport by your Nomadic Expeditions guide and transferred to your deluxe Shangri-La Hotel. During the next few days the Mayor of Ulaanbaatar will formally greet our group and welcome us to Mongolia. (Shangri-La Hotel)

Days 2 – 4 Independent meetings

Next three days we tour the city and meet with government leaders and the private and non-profit sectors leaders. A business reception and a visit to the very special Tur Hurah compound are likely. In Ulaanbaatar, you will have a chance to meet and interact in meaningful ways with many Mongolians who have connections with Denver and Jim Wagenlander, our Delegation Chair. (Shangri-La Hotel; B)

Day 5 Ulgi

After leaving some of your baggage at the hotel, we transfer to the airport for a morning flight to Ulgi (3 hours), capital of Bayan-Ulgi, Mongolia's westernmost province. Ninety percent of the population of Bayan-Ulgi is Kazakh, and there will be ample opportunities to meet local families and experience Kazakh culture. Our journey in Bayan-Ulgi should most likely take us past ancient stone men statues, reminders of Mongolia's rich ancient history.

After lunch, a quick visit to local artisans in town. We next travel to your final destination for the day (2 hours), Nomadic Expeditions Wilderness Camp. Upon arrival enjoy dinner and an overnight stay. (Nomadic Expeditions Wilderness Camp; B, L, D)

Day 6 Eagle Hunters

The next day, we join a local eagle hunter at his gers and set up our tents at his camp. Here, we will learn about this age-old tradition of hunting with Eagles. In these parts of Mongolia, there are over 700 eagle hunters in the region and many have been learning and practicing this art form from their elders.

Golden Eagles will be released from a cliff to attack fox skins being dragged by their owners on horseback and we will observe how they land on the owners' hand, all while on a horse back.

We will learn about daily lives of these nomads. Kazakh women are renowned for their skills in embroidery and appliqué, and their gers are decorated with colorful textiles. Handcrafted felt carpets line the floor and delicately embroidered tapestries adorn the walls of their gers, with every design unique to a family. We will spend the night next to the gers. (Tent camp next to eagle hunters; B, L, D)

Day 7 Hoton Hurgan Lake

Today continue driving amidst the peaks of the Altai Mountains toward Aral Tolgoi, a border gate between China and Mongolia, located near the shores of Khoton and Hurgan Lakes. Along the way, you will see Moslem burial tombs (wall compounds built from adobe and stone). Enjoy lunch on the banks of the Hovd River before arriving at Khoton and Hurgan Lakes in the late afternoon. Overnight in tents. (Tent Camp; B, L, D)

Day 8 Hike to Rashaant River

We will start our trek alongside the Hoton lake shore to Rashaant river, visiting Biluut petroglyphs on the way. 15 km (Tent camp; B, L, D)

Day 9 Tsenkher Lake/ Ulgii Town

Trek to Tsenkher lake. This is one of numerous smaller alpine lakes formed after last glaciation. Contrasting with high snowcapped mountains this area strikes with its magnificent beauty and mystery. Today we trek total of 16 km. In the later afternoon drive back towards Ulgii Town and camp at the spot of your choosing. (Tent camp; B, L, D)

Day 10 Fly to Ulaanbaatar

Early morning, we complete our drive back to Ulgii and transfer to the airport for the return flight to Ulaanbaatar. You spend the rest of the day at your leisure and attend a dinner hosted by Jim's very good friend, Defacto Jargalsaikhan, a famous Mongolian political and economic commentator, and his wife Pagma in their apartment in the center of the city. Today we will also meet up with those delegates who are joining us for only the second half of the trip. (Shangri-La Hotel; B)

Day 11 Three Camel Lodge

We again leave some of our baggage at the hotel and we are all transferred to the airport and fly south to Dalanzadag (1.5 hours). Upon arrival in the South Gobi we drive on overland traxs to Three Camels Lodge in the heart of the Gobi where we check into this amazing award-winning eco-lodge with luxury gers.

Contrary to the sameness that the word 'desert' suggests, the Gobi is a fascinating and diverse region and it is not all sand and includes sites of some of the most important paleontological discoveries of the 20th century. For the next few days explore the stunning landscapes of the

Gobi, habitat for Bactrian camels, Argali mountain sheep, goitered gazelle, Golden Eagles, Saker Falcons, jerboas (similar to kangaroo rats), and endemic reptiles.

Our delegation will enjoy drinks upon the Mesa above the lodge (with breathtaking views of the Gobi), followed by a great dinner at the lodge restaurant ger and your first overnight in your own one or two person very comfortable ger. (Three Camel Lodge; B, L, D)

Day 12 Yol Valley National Park / Havtsgait Valley

Drive in the morning to Yol Valley National Park, cradled between the foothills of the Altai Mountains. An ancient river carved this surprisingly green valley. Now, its remnant streams create ice formations at the base of the valley that sometimes persist as late as July. A hike through the valley along a rocky creek allows you to discover habitat for indigenous vulture-like lammergeiers, Altai snowcocks, ibex, yaks and Argali mountain sheep. Enjoy visiting the local small natural history museum for overview of the flora and fauna of the area. We return to the Three Camel Lodge (This is a 4-hour trip).

In the afternoon, you have the options to drive to the Havtsgait Valley, site of ancient rock drawings left by early Gobi settlers from 15,000-40,000 years ago. Hundreds of petroglyphs adorn rocks scattered on the top of the mountain. Or you can stay in the cozy bar at the Lodge sipping a cold drink and gazing out on the beautiful Gobi from the swinging benches on the Lodge's porch. (Three Camel Lodge; B, L, D)

Days 13 & 14 Hongoryn Els sand dunes

We all wake early to the sight of the sun rising over the vast Gobi landscape and the herd of horses that graze not far from the Lodge. After a wonderful breakfast, we drive to the huge Hongoryn Els sand dunes isolated in a large valley three hours to the west. "Els" is the Mongolian word for sand dunes and "Hongoryn" describes the exquisite pale tawny color of one of the world's most beautiful dunes fields, yet another remarkable landscape of the world's northernmost desert. These are some of the largest and most spectacular sand dunes in Mongolia. They are also known as the Duut Mankhan – "Singing Sands" for the remarkable low-pitched groan that is emitted when the surface is disturbed by the wind or human interactions. The towering dunes of Hongoryn Els, which run 60 miles alongside the Gobi Altai Mountain range and reaching upwards of 600 feet, can undeniably be deemed as the most magnificent in the Gobi. These two days, at a site temporarily set just for us, we will enjoy day hikes to the dunes and have opportunities to take either a short or extended camel ride. Two nights in tents with a camp kitchen and socializing with the crew and others in our group as we lounge in our open sided dining tent, sometimes as the sun sets over the dunes. (Tent Camp; B, L, D)

Day 15 Three Camel Lodge / Flaming Cliffs

In our second morning at the dunes we drive back to the Three Camel Lodge, but not before taking in one more short hike on the dunes set out to. We then follow a different route back Three Camel than what we took earlier.

After lunch at the Lodge, in the late afternoon we drive to Bayan Zag (1 hour), commonly known as the Flaming Cliffs for the orange glow of its rock at sunset. It was here in 1923 that Dr. Roy Chapman Andrews and his exploration team from the American Museum of Natural History found the first nest of dinosaur eggs. To the trained eye, the red sandstone of the Flaming Cliffs is rich with dinosaur fossils, and paleontological expeditions continue to make significant discoveries at this site. We return to the Three Camel Lodge in the evening and have a celebratory dinner with young music and dance performers. (Three Camel Lodge; B, L, D)

Day 16 Fly back to Ulaanbaatar

Early morning, we transfer to the airport for the return flight to Ulaanbaatar. Upon arriving back at the city, we can stop to shop at Gobi Cashmere and then later the State Department Store and Mary and Martha's (a fair-trade artisan store). Spend the rest of the day at your leisure. In the evening, you will gather for a final dinner hosted by Nomadic at Hazara Indian Restaurant, a tradition for our SisterCities delegations (Shangri-La Hotel; B)

Day 17 (Morning only) Departure [August 17, 2019]

Morning transfers to airport for individual departures for home or other travel in Asia. Jim Wagenlander will stay a few more days in Mongolia.

B=Breakfast L=Lunch D=Dinner

Nomadic Expeditions and the Ulaanbaatar Denver Sister Cities Committee reserve the right to alter the above itinerary if deemed necessary or to improve your experience.

(A 6th Page with more trip details to be provided later)