



# 8 DAY ARKHANGAI NAADAM AND HORSE TREK

## NOMADIC CULTURAL IMMERSION

USD\$550 PP



# ARKHANGAI

Arkhangai is the central province in Mongolia, and is diverse in its landscape with wide open plains, craggy mountaintops, forested hillsides, lush river valleys and a myriad of lakes. It has been the home to nomadic herders for millennia, who still live their ancient culture, in many ways revolving around the horse.





## NAADAM FESTIVAL

This festival is the highlight of the Mongolian summer season, and festivals are held in all major cities, small towns, and remote villages. The Ulaanbaatar Naadam is by far the largest and grandest, but with half a million people attending, you have to see most things from a distance through a telephoto lens.

The Arkhangai Provincial Naadam is big enough to have all the pomp and ceremony and performance in the Opening Ceremony, and hosts all the events – wrestling, horse racing, archery, anklebone competitions etc. It is small enough, though, to allow you to be right in amongst the action, standing on the horse race finishing line, ringside at the wrestling and even meet competitors.

## HORSE TREKKING

One of the last travel frontiers, Mongolia is vast, remote and incredibly beautiful. On this trip you will spend a few days on horseback with a genuine nomadic herdsman, expert horseman, and experienced guide. There is no better way to really experience the genuine nomadic culture than by travelling from family to family by horse.

Stay with nomadic families each night, experiencing first hand this unique and ancient culture. Engage with families in their daily work as they work with livestock, prepare meals, make traditional dairy products.





## NOMADIC CULTURE

Many places in this world offer beautiful landscapes and scenery, but the thing that is truly unique to Mongolia is the ancient nomadic culture, which in many ways remains untouched by modern times.

Begin your trek in the home of your guide's family, renowned for producing some of the best yak-milk dairy products, and then each night of the trek you will stay with a different nomadic family and experience their way of life.

Many families will have children, who can become the highlight of your visits, and present incredible opportunities for stunning photography.

Eat your evening and morning meals with the families, unless you prefer to take your own.

## THE HORSES

Mongolian horses are smaller and stockier than the typical European / American horse, but do not underestimate their strength and stamina. They are incredibly hardy and tough little horses. They are usually a little more spirited than western horses, so your guide will carefully select the right horse for your level of experience and competence.

We provide a 'Russian' style of saddle and tack, which foreign travellers usually find more comfortable than the traditional wooden saddle.

There is no required experience to undertake a trek, first-timers and beginners are more than welcome, as are children. The trek you undertake will be adjusted to suit the abilities of your group.



Photo Credit: Brett Rushworth

# TOUR ITINERARY

Following is a proposed itinerary, beginning and ending in Ulaanbaatar. Your itinerary is 100% customisable, so please discuss your ideas and situation and we can tailor the itinerary to suit your individual travel plans.

**DAY 1** – Depart Ulaanbaatar in a private vehicle and drive around 7-8 hours west out of the hustle and bustle of the city into the wide open spaces of the Mongolian countryside. Stop enroute at an area of sand dunes sometimes referred to as 'The Little Gobi', then at Kharhorin where you can explore the Erdene Zuu Monastery and/or the Kharhorin Museum – one of the better museums in the country. Continue on to Fairfield Guesthouse in Arkhangai and settle in to the guesthouse here.





## ITINERARY (CONTINUED)

**DAY 2** – A 20 minute drive will take you to the nomadic family gers where you will begin your horse trek. Meet the family of your guide, and be welcomed into their home in the traditional manner, and drink tea together. Head out for a 3 day trek on horseback, riding up into the Tamir River valley, and into the foothills of the Khangai range. Immerse yourself into the ancient culture of the nomadic herdsmen.

**DAYS 3-4** – Continue on your horse trek with your guide, staying each night with a different nomadic family. (Discuss how many days you have available for your trek, as this can be shortened or extended to any duration). Return to the guesthouse for a hot shower, comfortable bed and some western food and barista coffee. Get reconnected to friends and family on the free wifi.

## ITINERARY (CONTINUED)

**DAY 5** – Sleep in! Enjoy a long leisurely breakfast, and if you are so inclined, take a stroll around town, the monastery, museum and temple. In the afternoon, drive for about an hour out to the Tsenkher Hot Springs, and soak out any aches and pains from your horse trekking. Enjoy a dinner at the resort by the springs, and then return again to sleep at Fairfield.

**DAYS 6-7** – See the Naadam Festival in Tsetserleg, with the opening ceremony, wrestling, archery, anklebone competitions, and shops and stalls hosted at the central stadium, and horse racing a 15 minute drive from town.

**DAY 8** – Return to Ulaanbaatar by private car, taking an alternative route via Ugii Nuur (Ugii Lake) and the Khar Balgas ruins which date back to around 700 AD. You will be returned to your UB accommodation.





## CHECKLIST

**Clothing** – Suitable sturdy clothing for riding horses, not too brightly coloured as this can unsettle horses. Warm layers as the evenings can be quite cool. Raincoat, preferably of a material which is not 'crackly' and noisy, as this can spook the horses.

**Footwear** – Sturdy riding / hiking boots

**Sleeping bag** – Recommended for warmth, and as a clean layer when sleeping. Nomadic families are typically very clean people, but do not have modern washing machines typically. (Sleeping bags are available for hire from Fairfield if required)

**Riding helmet** – Helmets are not provided. Bring your own if you wish, or Fairfield has a limited number available for hire.

**Protection** – Sunglasses, sunscreen, insect repellent, personal medications

**Insurance** – Travellers are required to register travel insurance details with Fairfield prior to the horse trek

A more complete packing list is available upon request.

# TERMS AND CONDITIONS

## Terms of Payment

Upon completion of refinement of the tour plan to suit, a final price will be confirmed. A 50% deposit is required to be paid prior to arrival. The balance of payment will be made upon arrival at Fairfield in local currency or by credit card.

## What is included

- A private car and driver to and from Ulaanbaatar including all fuel costs
- Guesthouse accommodation including a cooked breakfast each morning, hot showers, free wifi etc.
- All costs relating to the horse trek: transport to and from launch point, guide, horses, pack horses, meals and accommodations with nomadic families
- Transport to and from Tsenkher Hot Springs, plus entry to the pools and showers
- Transport to and from the horse racing location for the Naadam festival

## What is NOT included

- Flights to and from Mongolia
- Mongolian entry visa fees (see notes re visa application following)
- Travel insurance. We recommend seeking travel insurance coverage prior to travelling
- Accommodation and activities before or after the tour
- Daytime meals during the driving days. Your driver will stop at a teahouse and you will be able to order directly from the menu.
- Daytime snacks while on horse trek
- Daytime and evening meals during the Naadam festival days. You will explore the festival as you desire, and there are many options for purchasing food as you go.
- Personal expenses such as laundry, beverages, alcoholic drinks, telephone calls, optional activities, sightseeing or meals which are not included in the itinerary

## Fitness and health considerations

This tour does include a three day horse-riding element, and as such a basic level of physical fitness and ability is required. It is not, however, an enormously demanding trip. Horse riding experience is not required.

## Visas

Visitors from most countries require a tourist visa to enter Mongolia, and these are quite easy to obtain through a Mongolian embassy, consulate, consulate-general or honorary consul. We are able to provide an official letter of invitation to facilitate this process. Please request this if needed, and we will advise you of the information required to produce this letter.

