

Happy Camel Travel

Presents

**Adventure Cycling through
Central Mongolia
(9 days)**

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ADVENTURE CYCLING THROUGH CENTRAL MONGOLIA
(9 DAYS)

9 Days ♦ 7 Nights Cer Camp
♦ 1 Nights Tented Camp



Happy Camel invites you to discover the natural and cultural wonders of Mongolia, one of the last remaining seldom-explored countries. Largely inaccessible to the Western world until only recently, Mongolia offers a rare glimpse into an ancient nomadic culture that has changed little over the centuries.

The traveller will discover this untouched country by exploring the rare combination of ancient traditions of Buddhism, nomadic horse-based culture and natural beauties such as the high mountains, the grasslands and more.



◆ Cycling ♦ Karakorum
◆ Erdene Zuu Monastery ♦ Karakorum's New Archaeological
muzeum ♦ Tsenkher Hot Spring Resort ♦ Tuvkhun Monastery
◆ Orkhon Valley ♦ Family Stay



Trip Type: Rigorous Cycling in Central Mongolia

QUICK ITINERARY REFERENCE

DAY 1: KARAKORUM

DAY 2: TSENKHER HOT WATER SPRINGS, BATHS

DAY 3: ON THE WAY TO ORKHON VALLEY

DAY 4: ORKHON VALLEY AND WATERFALL

DAY 5 : FAMILY AT ORKHON VALLEY

DAY 6: TO HUIJIRT VILLAGE AND DRIVE TO ELSEN TASARKHAI

DAY 7: ELSEN TASARKHAI AND KHOGNO KHAN MOUNTAIN

DAY 8: HUSTAI NATIONAL PARK

DAY 9: DRIVE TO ULAANBAATAR

MAP OF THE ITINERARY



DETAILED TOUR DESCRIPTION

Our days will be mostly divided into two parts: driving and cycling. Given the huge scale of territory of Mongolia and poor infrastructure, reaching from one destination to another is a big deal. Next to cycling in order to make our cyclers to experience most of Mongolia we make sure that our travellers see, visit, taste, experience and share as much as possible.

Our itinerary is carefully designed offering you to experience beautiful diverse landscape & sceneries, different lifestyle of Mongolian people: nomads as well as locals in little villages.

We will be covering different terrain tackling one of the world most famous inhabitable desert area Gobi.

However, don't be put off. We will be well supported. Our bikes will be put on trailers. Part of the team will travel in front of cyclers making sure that first arrivals have all and looked well after when they reach destination.

Slow pacers will be followed by trailers and in case you would like to stop we will put bikes on trailer and you can hop in the comfort of Land Cruisers. The vehicles following or travelling ahead the group will take enough distance from cyclers. Cyclers will not see the vehicles and they will be joined and called upon by radio when needed.

DAY 1: KARAKORUM

After an early wake up, as a long full of events day ahead of us, we will set off early to **Karakorum** (also called Kharkhorin). We will drive about 260 km on relatively good paved road and stop by noon at local restaurant. After lunch driving more and about 40 km before Karakorum we will reach start point of cycling. We will take a little time to test the bikes, make adjustments and ready to go. The road we will take was previous main road from Ulaanbaatar to Karakorum before the asphalt road was put in use. Now it is healed terrain not used by traffic perfect for us, going up and down between fields.

Depending on our arrival time in Karakorum we will visit sightseeing places of once famous medieval prosperous capital of Genghis Khan and his successors. Karakorum is the site of the 13th century capital of the Mongolian Empire created by **Genghis Khan**. The founding of Karakorum started on the ruins of Turug and Uigur cities in the Orkhon valley at the eastern end of the Khangai Mountains in 1220 by the Genghis Khan's order. It completed 15 years later during the Ugedei Khan's reign. The town was a very cosmopolitan and religiously tolerant place.

The silver tree, part of Möngke Khan's palace has become the symbol of Karakorum. Now **Erdene Zuu Monastery** is all that remains of what once was a huge monastery of 100 temples and about 1.000 lama's residence. We will explore the grounds of Erdene Zuu Monastery surrounded by its massive 400 m X 400 m walls. We will be guided around the 3 remaining temples: Dalai Lama, Zuu of Buddha and Lavrin Temple. We will also see the Turtle Rock and the Phallic Rock. Another place we will visit will be

Karakorum's New Archaeological Museum. It is a small museum but housed in a modern well-run building with good lighting and display cases with clear English labels. The exhibits include dozens of artefacts dating from the 13th and 14th centuries which were recovered from the immediate area, plus others that were found from archaeological sites in other parts of the provinces, including prehistoric stone tools. You'll see pottery, bronzes, coins, religious statues and stone inscriptions. There's also a half-excavated kiln sunk into the museum floor. Perhaps most interesting is the scale model of ancient Karakorum, which aims to represent the city as it may have looked in the 1250s, and is based on descriptions written by the French missionary William of Rubruck. Another chamber exhibits a most recent addition, a Turkic noble tomb with wall paintings and artefacts, including gold items and jewellery. There is a short video of actual burial site.

(Ger camp, L, D)

DAY 2: TSENKHER HOT WATER SPRINGS, BATHS

We will drive westward in the direction of **Khangai Mountains**. The Khangai Mountain separates the South-Mongolian arid Gobi Desert region from the fertile rolling hills of the north. With its numerous little rivers in which water from melting snow flows the northern side of the mountain offers a lush, fertile home to many nomads.

On average, the Khangai Mountains are 2500-3000 M above the sea level and are composed of mainly granite, intrusive chert and sandstone belonging to Paleozoic era. The Khangai Mountains is about 800 km long, ranging from Zavkhan province territory to Tuv province. They function as the continental divide of the world water system.

After about an hour driving we leave asphalt road and set off to cycling through green mountainsides and the network of smaller and larger rivers offer excellent pastureland for the herds of horses, yaks and cows. We will often be greeted and observed by herd of curious yaks. Lunch on the way.

In the evening we will reach **Tsenkher hot spring resort**. This resort has a large open-air pool at its customer's disposal. The hot water of the pool flows continuously in from the hot water spring. At the spring, the temperature of the water is over 80 ° C. A complex pipelines system regulates the water temperature. Some will spend hours sitting in the pool talking to their friends while staring at the stars or scanning the nightly nature around them.

(Ger camp B, L, D)

DAY 3: ON THE WAY TO ORKHON VALLEY

After breakfast in our Ger camp we will cross deep water river on our jeeps mostly inundated in summer and start our full cycling day. We will cycle through a magic combination of forested hills, granite formations and broad ferrite valleys dotted with scattered gers. Our journey will take us through deep into Khangai Mountains: lush, green abundant with wild

flowers and plants. Our track following flowing rivers and undulating hills. To complete the perfection of nature many Gers of nomads peacefully minding their business, taking care of their livestock. The area is the home to huge number of yaks of Mongolia. Today cycling will need more physical demand as we pass mountains up and down on a terrain quite rocky. As we are followed by our jeeps those who are tired can always sit in your vehicle. Early evening, we arrive at our campsite already settled for night and arranged by our team. We will sleep in spacious tents. Spend evening around camp fire and enjoy complete wilderness and quietness.

(Tented camp B, L, D)

DAY 4: ORKHON VALLEY AND WATERFALL

Leaving our campsite, we will be heading to **Tuvkhun Monastery** on our jeeps established during the 1650's by **Zanabazar**, one of Mongolia's most respected religious leaders. The monastery's wooden buildings are integrated with a natural system of caves perched near a hilltop, from which you have beautiful view of the **Orkhon Valley** and the surrounding pine forests. On the top of the cliff, a pile of stones to worship a god of this mountain forms a hill. It is called Ovoo.

After lunch we will be cycling to the direction Orkhon waterfall in Orkhon valley. The valley is registered as world cultural heritage by UNESCO due to its ancient findings, artefacts related to early 6th century and even before that. As well as, 12th to 13th century great Mongol empire had expanded its capital Karakorum here. Moreover, pasture nomadic lifestyle still remains here and it keeps both historic and nomadic view of life.

More we get close to waterfall the terrain will get quite challenging on rocky tracks. Quaternary era a volcano erupted near the beginning of the Tsagaan Azarga or White Stallion River and the lava flowed down the Orkhon valley forming the 10-meter-thick layer of basaltic rocks. The basaltic layer was crosscut by the Orkhon River continuously and the canyon was formed as a result. At the beginning of this canyon lays the 20 meters high, 10-meter-wide **waterfall**. The most adventures of you will climb down the canyon and swim the lake located at the foot of the waterfall. A famous Mongolian barbeque over hot stone is on menu tonight.

(Ger camp B, L, D)

DAY 5 : FAMILY AT ORKHON VALLEY

The area surrounding the **Orkhon waterfalls** is a green, with forest covered mountainous area. The valley is known as the cradle of the Mongolian civilization. Many ancient Mongolian as well as Turkish monuments lie within its borders.

Immerse yourself within locals. Discover in depth their way of life. Get involved in their daily activities such as milking, process milk into butter, cream, cheese etc... Bring animals to the family camp for evening. Goats and sheep must be brought next to the Ger for every night to be in protection from wolves. Evening, barbeque cooked over hot stones is on the

menu. Engage a friendly chat & stories of their life over one or two shots of vodka. Herders make local vodka from fermented milk. Tastes little bit similar to rice vodka.

(Ger camp B, L, D)

DAY 6: TO HUJIRT VILLAGE AND DRIVE TO ELSEN TASARKHAI

After breakfast we leave waterfall. After about 30 km biking on rocky tracks, the terrain will become quite pleasant. Depending on weather especially during rainy summer, the tracks might be muddy.

After lunch bit before Hujirt village we will stop biking and start driving toward to Elsen Tasarkhai known as little Gobi.

Once we reach Ger camp get settled in your Gers, take shower and enjoy evening.

(Ger camp B, L, D)

DAY 7: ELSEN TASARKHAI AND KHOGNO KHAN MOUNTAIN

Today we will spend full day exploring this beautiful area on our bikes.

Khogno Khan Mountains is an impressive massif in the open steppes. Not far from here runs the **Tasarkhai Els**, a 100 km long sand dune.

We will bike to Khogno Khan Mountains, walk up the mountain and enjoy the incredible view over the plains, the sand dune and grasslands. We will also visit the nice little **Uvgun Monastery**.

(Ger camp B, L, D)

DAY 8: HUSTAI NATIONAL PARK

Today we will drive to Hustai National Park. After arrival at the camp of the Hustai Nuruu National Park we will meet the staff of the park and be introduced to the project. Once get introduced to project we will explore the park in search of wild horses on our bikes. This will be our last day of biking in Mongolian wilderness.

Przewalski's Horse (*Equus ferus przewalskii*, also known as the Takhi horses) is a rare and endangered subspecies of wild horse native to the steppes of central Asia. The **Takhi** became extinct in the middle of the 20th century. They then could only be found in the zoos. Special breeding programs increased their numbers. At one time extinct in the wild, it has been reintroduced to its native habitat in Mongolia at the Hustai Nuruu National Park, Takhiin Tal Nature Reserve and Khomiin Tal. **Hustai Nuruu National Park** was declared reserve status (category III) for over 50,000 hectares of the Hustai Nuruu area in 1993 but after significant scientific field researches into the area it was upgraded to a national park in 1998. Hustai Nuruu National Park is located about 100 km southwest from Ulaanbaatar. It protects today Mongolian's Takhi wild horses. Today there are around 350 Takhi horses in Hustai.

The park is home to 459 species of vascular plants, 85 species of lichens, 90 species of moss and 33 species of mushrooms. 44 species of mammals have been recorded, including Red deer, Mongolian gazelle, Roe deer, Wild boar, Wild sheep, Ibex, Mongolian marmots, Grey wolves, Lynx, Pallas' cat, Red fox, Corsac fox and Eurasian badger. The 217 species of birds include Golden eagle, Lammergeier, Great bustard, Whooper swan, Black stork, Daurian partridge and Little owl. There are 16 species of fish, 2 species of amphibians, and 385 species of insects (including 21 species of ants, 55 species of butterflies, 10 species of bush crickets and 29 species of grasshoppers).

(Ger camp B, L, D)

DAY 9: DRIVE TO ULAANBAATAR

We will have a short drive back to Ulaanbaatar. Afternoon is free time for last minute sightseeing. You might want to go and see the beautiful cultural show enjoy the colourful and rhythmic Mongolian dance, throat singing & admire the contortionists.

(B, L)

RESERVATION

Your trip will be confirmed after a deposit of 35% of the due amount is paid to our bank account. Once the payment is done, we will start organizing your trip and book the local flights if any.

INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

- Land transportation
- Tented camp
- Ger camp stay
- Meals 8B, 9L, 8D
- Tour guides/Cycling guide/
- Mountain Bike
- Camping and kitchen equipment
- National park entrance fees/Museum and Monasteries entrance tickets

NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

- Hotel in Ulaanbaatar
- City touring
- International transport
- Passport and visa costs
- Medical, trip insurance and evacuation costs
- International airport taxes, excess baggage charges.
- Alcoholic and soft drinks
- Meals not included in the itinerary
- Laundry

- Telephone calls
- Items of personal nature
- Other items not specifically mentioned as included
- Airport transfer

DELAYS

We are not responsible for any additional charges incurred arising from the delay or extension of a trip due to weather, equipment failure, illness, or other causes beyond our control. No refunds can be made for any unused services or accommodations on the trip.

TRANSPORT

Toyota Land Cruisers series 80, 100, 105 - have 4 passenger seats. Comfortable on our bumpy road, forward facing seats equipped with seat belts and has air condition and plenty space for luggage in trunk and on roof track.

Delica -Japanese 4X4 van. Delicas have 5 passenger seats. Comfortable on our bumpy road, bit slower on off-road than Land Cruisers. Forward facing seats equipped with seat belts and has air condition. Panoramic view windows. Having not much space in trunk, luggage mostly put on roof rack.

Furgon -Russian military van. Furgons have 7 passenger seats. Mostly forward facing seats. It has plenty space. Furgons have no air condition and not equipped with seat belts. If you are in group and looking for adventure on tight budget it might be a good solution. Excellent vehicle on rough off-road condition. However less comfortable than Land Cruisers and Delicas.

FOOD

Traditional Mongolian food based on different type of meat: mutton, beef, goat, horse and camel. As well as we eat dairies and usually heavy meals due to our radical climate of cold long winter and hot dry summer. However nowadays our food culture is becoming more diverse and you can easily find international food in restaurants and buy diverse imported food at supermarkets. We will do our best to accommodate your food requirement. Please let us know in advance if you have any special food requirement.

ACCOMMODATION

In Ulaanbaatar we can book your hotel. We offer accommodation from guesthouse to the most prestigious 5 star hotels with suites.

All hotel we recommend are centrally located and in walking distances from restaurant, shops and museums.

While in the countryside, depending on the trip you choose, you will overnight in Ger Camps, Family Stay and Tented Camp.

Gers from Ger Camp are the traditional felt tents of nomadic herders. Each ger is furnished with a wood stove and beautifully painted furniture such as beds, a table and stools. Gers are based on double occupancy. Each ger camp has its restaurant, western style toilet and hot water showers. Most visitors find their stay in gers, which provide an authentic taste of Mongolian culture and adventure, their most enjoyable experience in Mongolia.

Family Stay. In summer time many nomads build extra Gers next to theirs and welcome guests. You will have mostly your private Ger. However, facilities stay basic and simple

Tented Camp is a camp build on a nice spot. The travellers will sleep in Western style tents. We will however do our best to offer you the best available service. We pride ourselves on the level of comfort we provide while camping in these remote areas, but camping is not for everyone. It is important to remain open-minded and physically willing.

REMARK

Mongolia is a developing country in terms of infrastructure. The standard of the roads is very low, with no tarmac outside the capital. As a result, be prepared for bumpy and dusty rides.

Travelling in a seldom-explored country, with very little infrastructure requires flexibility, tolerance, a spirit of adventure and respect and understanding for cultural differences. The trip itinerary is subject to changes due to weather, trail conditions, government restrictions, or other reasons beyond our control. We will however do every attempt to adhere to the given schedule.

PAYMENTS

Your trip will be confirmed after a non-refundable deposit of 35% of the due amount payable by bank transfer or visa. The rest payment is due to settle once you are in Mongolia before your trip starts.