



Spring Festivals in Mongolia Expedition.



Hello team!

Epic Expeditions is beyond stoked to welcome you to our newest (and possibly most exciting) destination: Mongolia! You're about to visit one of the most under-explored and fascinating countries in the world; one inhabited by nomadic horsemen, a vast array of landscapes, and uncountable adventures. We believe we have developed a truly special trip here and we aim to show you a damn good time on this Mongolian Expedition.

This information pack is LOADED with everything you need to start preparing yourself for the journey ahead. Please read this entire document thoroughly as there are many important details to take note of.

This information pack will be your primary trip resource and one you can keep circling back to in preparation for our Spring Festivals in Mongolia Expedition.

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Getting ready to experience Mongolia

A few months prior to the trip, we will be sending you a number of Google forms and documents to return in order to collect the necessary information from you.

Please do your best to fill in and return these in a timely manner.

Visa arrangements - general information

- MOST nationalities including USA, UK, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, etc are able to visit Mongolia without a visa or can obtain a visa upon arrival (VOA). Be sure to check the [official immigration website](#) to see if your nationality qualifies.
- All guests coming on the Mongolia Expedition MUST confirm their country's visa agreement with Mongolia well in advance of the start of the tour.

DOCUMENTS TO SUBMIT TO EPIC ASAP

- Please submit a copy of your passport ASAP as we need it to buy your internal plane tickets in Mongolia.

Flights to Mongolia

Arrival Airport: Ulaanbaatar: Chinggis Khaan International Airport (UBN)

Departure Airport: Ulaanbaatar: Chinggis Khaan International Airport (UBN)

Ulaanbaatar (the capital of Mongolia) is the largest city in Mongolia.

Connections to Ulaanbaatar can be rather limited so it is a good idea to book your flight well in advance to ensure you have as many connection options as possible.

Delays do happen when you are traveling long distances via various connecting flights. Because of this fact, We advise that you arrive into Mongolia one day before the tour starts. That way you can be sure to both arrive into the country on time and get a good night's rest before we start the tour.

Note: Included tour accommodation does not start until the evening of day 1. If you arrive into Ulaanbaatar in the days before the tour starts, you will need to book and pay for you own accommodation. We can help make hotel suggestions for you if you'd like.

Airlines

- Check the visa conditions of any country you plan to transit through, you may be required to have a transit visa. India and China are good examples of this.
- Please begin investigation of flights now, this will allow you to get an overview of prices, routes and possible connections. Keep an eye out for promo fares, particularly with low-cost carriers.
- Some may choose to connect through Istanbul as it is a larger city and it's international airport is serviced by many more international carriers.

CONNECTIONS

There are flights to Ulaanbaatar connecting from the following cities:

- Istanbul (Turkish Airlines/MIAT)
- Seoul (if coming from west coast USA) (Korea Air/MIAT)
- Hong Kong
- Beijing
- Frankfurt

When do you need to be there?

- To experience the full itinerary, you need to be in the hotel/meeting place and be rested by the morning of day 1. We will confirm the exact time and meeting place just prior to the start of the tour.
- The tour ends on day 7 and with the exception of breakfast and airport transfers, no services are included this day, so it makes sense to try and leave on day 7, unless you are spending extra time in Mongolia.
- Checkout from the hotel is around 11 am.

Accommodation in Mongolia

We offer a variety of unique and comfortable accommodation options on this trip. From hotels to traditional Ger camps (yurts); we do our best to make sure where we sleep is part of the overall tour experience.

It is important to discuss the significance of Gers in Mongol culture and what it will be like staying in them. Gers are large temporary structures built from felt and wood or metal support beams. They are always circular in shape and sort of resemble large tents or a small pavilion.

Gers are extremely important to Mongol society. They are believed to have been used by Central Asian nomads for over 3000 years and were crucial to their lifestyle and prosperity. To this day, Gers are still a cornerstone of nomadic lifestyle and are used regularly, not only on remote pasture land, but also in the backyards of families living in medium sized cities.

Gers range in size but generally accommodate 3-6 people. Most of them are equipped with a coal-burning stove that is lit at night to keep guests very toasty at night; smoke is vented outside the tent.

Here is a brief rundown of what kind of accommodation to expect in each location:

Ulaanbaatar: 3-star hotel in the city center

Eagle Hunter Family and Olgi: Ger camp (2-5 people per Ger, depending on the size).

* Single supplements are available upon request for an extra charge of \$350 USD.

Food in Mongolia

Mongolian food is actually more diverse than its reputation would suggest. Meat and bread are very integral to the local diet. Fresh fruits and salads are still common though – especially in cities, which bodes well for vegetarians. Food can vary greatly depending on where we are.

In Ulaanbaatar, there will be pretty much everything you would hope to find in a major city. International restaurants are plentiful and are of a high quality. In the more remote parts of the country, cooking is more traditional. Classic Mongolian cuisine is very hearty — there will be a lot of bread, dairy, soups, and red meat. Spicing is simple. Vegetables are generally hearty and include potatoes, dark greens, and roots, like carrots.

Mongolians are in general very hospitable and it is not uncommon for us to be invited into the home of a nomad family for local cheese, tea, and sweets. Kumis (fermented mare's milk) may also be offered. It is a very strange drink and we encourage going outside comfort zones to try it. Hosts will not be offended if you say no.

DAILY MEALS - EXAMPLES

Breakfast: fried eggs, porridge, jam, sweets, bread, cheese, milk, tea, coffee, fruit

Hotel/City Lunch: Soup course, rice, veggies, meat, chicken, french fries, some sort of salad, pasta, tea.

Dinner: larger meals, rice, stews, grilled meats, bread, salads, sweets. Always, always hot tea!

Please let us know early on if you have any diet restrictions/preferences. If you are vegetarian/vegan, you might want to consider bringing some of your own food (for snacks/breakfast stuff), as it can be very difficult to cater to individuals in a big group, though we always do our best.

PERSONAL SNACKS

If you have done some hiking or group travel before, then you know how important snacks are! While Epic does provide some snacks and hearty meals, it is always a great idea to bring some of your favorite travel snacks from your home country.

- It is possible to find snacks in Ulaanbaatar that are similar to those one might find in the Western world. We suggest bringing your favorite assortment of snacks and chow down during long car rides. Gummies, nuts, jerky, energy gels, Cliff bars, granola bars, dark chocolate, superfood powder, bliss balls... These are all solid snack foods.
- Choose high calorie, low weight snack foods.

Expedition safety

STAYING SAFE ON THIS TOUR

- You may have guessed, this adventure tour carries a certain amount of risk since we are traveling in a remote part of Mongolia. This is not your average holiday per se. There will be no cocktails on the beach.
- Guest Safety is Epic's #1 priority, and our experienced ground team does everything within their power to set our group up for a safe adventure.
- The name of the game is security and safety first, and being mindful of injury prevention.
- In case of emergency, your Epic trip leader is equipped with a satellite communication device, which can contact outside emergency first responders from any place in Mongolia.

HORSE RIDING IN MONGOLIA

It is one of the aspects of the country that makes it so fascinating. Nomadic herders have been pasturing their animals on the Mongol step for millennia — a practice that is still very much alive and well today as it is in other parts of Central Asia.

The horses are tame and suitable for beginner riders. There will be a few opportunities to ride once we are in Western Mongolia.

If you have a fear of horses, of course it is not mandatory to ride - but we encourage everyone to push their comfort zone limits and at least give it a go! This is the chance for a truly unique experience and if not in Mongolia, where else will you ride horses in such an epic location?!

Travel insurance for Mongolia

- Our top recommendation for travel insurance is [Global Rescue](#).
- We recommend that you use [Rise and Shield](#) or [Safety Wing](#) - they specialize in covering travel to unusual destinations and cover travel to Iran (but do not cover all nationalities).

MEDICAL CONSIDERATION

Vaccination can be a contentious issue and ultimately down to the decision of an individual, there are some vaccinations that are recommended for travel to Mongolia so please consult with a travel clinic for further advice.

[General Information on health considerations](#) while traveling in Mongolia:

Money In Mongolia

The official currency of Mongolia is the Tugrik.

ATMs are common in the larger urban areas, like Ulaanbaatar and Olgii. We also recommend that you bring some foreign cash (for tips and souvenirs). USD, Euro, British Pounds are all fine. Cards seem to work everywhere in Mongolia as well.

As to how much money you should bring, here are some costs for you to take into account...

- Souvenirs vary in price from a couple of dollars to hundreds, depending on what you are buying and how good you are at haggling.
- Soft drinks and water are about \$1 to \$2.
- A meal will set you back between \$10 - \$15.
- **Money Recommendation for this trip:** If you take out the equivalent of 300 USD in Mongolian Tugrik, you should have more than enough to get meals on your own, get souvenirs, buy beer, pick up snacks, and extra drinks and meals along the way.

When we return to Ulaanbaatar or Olgii at the end of the tour, you will have a chance to get out more cash should you need (for shopping, tipping staff, last minute purchases, etc).

TIPPING STAFF

Epic staff, including our ground team in Mongolia go above and beyond for guests before, during, and after the trip to make sure that everyone has the best possible experience imaginable. So, how do you show your guides some love? Well, besides bringing coffee, tipping is the next best option.

Note: Tipping is 100% optional and should reflect your overall experience with our staff. No guest is required to tip, however we have received many questions regarding tipping in the past which is why we include this info in this information pack. Below we have included the industry standard recommendation to offer our staff some additional compensation based on your overall experience. Show your staff some love!

Tipping recommendations (in USD per guest)

- Lead Epic Guide: \$100-130
- Local Mongol Guide: \$100-130
- Eagle Hunter Family: \$25

SIM cards & internet access in Mongolia

The main mobile providers in Mongolia are MobiCom, Skytel, G-Mobile, and Unitel. Each offers different coverage and plans. Coverage is generally reliable in cities, but in many areas of Western Mongolia—where this trip takes place—there is little to no cell signal. A few of the places we stay do offer decent Wi-Fi, but connectivity will be limited throughout the trip. This is part of the experience—we encourage guests to embrace the opportunity to unplug and enjoy a true digital detox.

Please keep in mind that internet access and speeds in Mongolia may not match what you're used to. It's important to have realistic expectations.

If you'd like an additional connection option, you can also consider using an eSIM. We recommend [Sally](#) for that.

Meeting the people & being culturally sensitive

Compared to its more authoritarian neighbors, Mongolia is a remarkably tolerant place (unlike China and Russia).

Locals freely express their opinions on topics as varied as religion to foreign relations, usually casually over a cup of tea or glass of vodka. Outsiders in Mongolia should be relieved to know that their presence will not be a nuisance or an insult in any way; in fact, most Mongol people are happy to have you visiting.

Mongolians, and Kazakhs in particular, are extremely welcoming and hospitable, which is customary of the nomadic lifestyle. Guests are treated with reverence, warmth, and lots of food. Respect is given to us and respect is expected in return. It is our responsibility as travelers to make sure that we pay our own respects and to leave a positive impact.

Here are some things to consider when interacting with local people:

- The official religion of Western Mongolia is Islam, though many people are not religious, they just have some cultural links to Islam.
- By many standards, Mongolia is one of the most westernized countries in this part of Asia. Dress codes are loose and genders frequently mingle. We will not visit any mosques so special dress for these will not be required.
- A good strong handshake and eye contact between men is the surest way to show respect. Handshakes are usually done with the right hand. Some Mongol men use the left hand as well and fully clasp yours. The position of the left hand on the arm indicates the level of respect being shown - the closer their left hand is to yours, the more comfortable they are with you. Some may also bring their right hand to their heart afterwards as an added gesture.
- In general, Mongol people do not shy away from drinking and shots of vodka or beer are regularly offered to guests. If you abstain, it is acceptable to say no. If you accept, it is customary to drink when there's a toast and to finish the entire drink in one go.

ABOUT THE GUIDES

Each tour group is accompanied by one Western trip leader.

As well as the western trip leader, we have a Mongol ground team. Note that, aside from our Epic trip leader and the Mongol guide, other guides/team members may or may not speak English well.

Weather conditions in Mongolia

Late March in Ölgii (Bayan-Ölgii Province), Western Mongolia is still very much winter—so think crisp, cold, and snowy, though the first signs of spring are just beginning to stir.

Here's a breakdown of what to expect:

Weather in Ölgii, Western Mongolia – Late March

Temperature: Daytime: -5°C to 3°C (23°F to 37°F) Nighttime: -15°C to -8°C (5°F to 17°F)

General Conditions: Things can still feel like winter, but the transition into spring can also be felt. Snow can be still on the ground and light snowfall is possible. Expect a dry climate, with a lot of sunny, clear days.

Overall: Late March in Ölgii is cold but beautiful, with snowy landscapes and clear skies. With the right gear and planning, it's a great time to experience the Nauryz festival and nomadic culture in a more raw, wintery setting.

What to pack for Mongolia

Porter allowance for the trek: Each client has a 20 kg porter allowance (luggage is ported by camels).

It's extremely important that you bring the right gear for the trip. In case of emergency, there are outdoor shops in Ulaanbaatar, but buying equipment at the last second will be inconvenient and costly. Prices for outdoor gear in Mongolia are no less than those in Europe or the USA.

Springtime temperatures in Western Mongolia can vary a lot, but generally, expect it to be cold during the day and at night. We suggest that you bring extra layers, proper gloves, and a warm winter parka so that you can battle the elements in comfort.

TEST ALL OF YOUR PERSONAL GEAR BEFORE COMING TO Mongolia.

Note: For our internal flight to/from Olgii, the airline has a weight limit of 15 kg per person for checked luggage. Cost is 5000 (\$2) tugrik per extra kg.

Please check out our trip packing list for a detailed breakdown of what you need to bring on this trip.

Spending extra time in Mongolia

If you want to stay in Mongolia and continue exploring - great idea! Tourist visas are typically good for 30 days in length. Guests often ask us where they should visit in Mongolia if they have extra time.

There are many options; here are a few suggestions based upon different travels:

Gobi Desert: Visit epic sand dunes, sites where they discovered dinosaurs, and some truly dramatic canyons

Kharkhorin: Lying far in eastern Mongolia, Kharkhorin is the former capital of the Mongolian Empire before they moved their court to Beijing.

Lake Khuvsgol: A 100-mile alpine lake in Northern Mongolia. The area is part of a national park that makes up the greater region around Khuvsgol. Five distinct Mongolian ethnic groups populate the area, including the Buriat, Khalk, Darhat, Urianghai and Tsaatan. Shamanism has a strong influence on local traditions, culture, and general way of life.

Early client departure protocol

In the event that a trip participant needs to leave the planned trip itinerary early due to illness, injury, family emergency, personal reasons, or simply because they want to, etc then there are a few things to note:

Should a trip participant choose to leave the planned itinerary early for any reason, from the moment they leave the tour, all expenses from that point onwards are the responsibility of the trip participant. This includes, but is not limited to, hotels/accommodation, transportation, emergency helicopter

vacuation, internal flights (even if we have purchased you a flight for the trip you are attending), meals, airport transfer, guide services - everything that is normally covered by Epic Expeditions during your tour is no longer covered once a trip participant decides to leave.

Once the decision has been made to leave the tour, the trip participant must sign an "Early Departure Waiver Form" - formally releasing Epic Expeditions of any further obligations to fulfill our tour/guide/transport/logistics services.

That said, in an emergency situation or in case of severe illness, Epic Expeditions staff will do everything within our means to aid the trip participant until they are in a safe/stable condition. When possible, Epic staff can also help you book new accommodation, flights, transport, etc when possible - but all of these expenses are for the trip participant to pay.

Point being, our staff will always be available to the best of our ability to facilitate the logistics of your departure, should you choose to leave the trip early.

Liability waiver

All tour participants will be required to sign an industry-standard waiver releasing Epic Expeditions from liability related to any aspect of this trip. Waivers are usually issued on day 1 of the tour at our first team briefing. If you would like to request a copy of the waiver in advance, please email us.

Paying the balance

Final balance payments will be due approximately 3-4 months before the tour begins. If you have a balance owing we will advise you of how and when to pay this. Please remember that deposits are non-refundable.

If you would like to pay the balance sooner, please email us!

Any questions? Email us at contact@epicexpeditions.com

Again, we are very excited to get to meet you in person in Mongolia soon!

