



Equus Journeys

HORSEBACK TRAVEL & EQUESTRIAN TRADITIONS SINCE 1972

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Wonders of Zavkhan

MONGOLIA

A **riding holiday in Mongolia** like none other. From snow-capped mountains to rolling hills and deep valleys, sand dunes and turquoise lakes: **Zavkhan** has no shortage of natural wonders. On horseback, explore this beautiful and remote region of Mongolia and experience the warm welcome of the **nomads**. Embark on an unforgettable cultural and equestrian adventure with Equus Journeys.

Trail Riding	 16 days / 10.5 days riding	 From £2,043	
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Discover the stunning landscapes of Zavkhan on horseback



Mongolian horses in the wild



Discover the local culture and stay in yurts

ITINERARY

Highlights

- Ride across the Zavkhan region from North to South
- The region is very remote and still relatively unknown and untouched
- Explore an astounding variety of landscapes, perfect for riders looking for a truly scenic adventure
- The chance to meet with the locals and learn about their culture

Day 1 — 1: ULAANBAATAR - No riding

You will be met by the local team at the airport and transferred to your hotel for lunch. In the afternoon, you will explore the fascinating city of Ulaanbaatar, marked by its unique blend of Eastern and Western influences. Visits to the National History Museum and the Gandan Monastery provide a strong historical and cultural foundation for the journey ahead. Then its dinner and an overnight stay at the hotel.

Day 2 — 2: ULAANBATAAR - MOLTSOG ELS - ULAANBATAAR - 1-2 hours riding

After a good night's sleep, you will leave the capital to start your Mongolia adventure (a 2-3 hour drive). You will reach the Moltsoog Els sand dunes, where you will witness an unforgettable display of young Mongolian riders showcasing their horsemanship. Afterwards, you will embark on a short horseback ride, and get acquainted with the semi-wild Mongolian horses. You will stay overnight at the hotel.

Day 3 — 4: ULAANBAATAR – ULIASTAI – TELMEN - No riding

You will take an early domestic flight (1.5 hours) and then a 3-4 hour drive to Zavkhan, a region known for its diverse landscapes. Your camp lies beside Lake Telmen, one of the country's largest sacred lakes, where you will learn about local spiritual traditions and enjoy tea and dried cheese with a nomadic family. Overnight you will sleep in a tourist camp.

Day 4 — 4: TELMEN – TWO BUKH - 4-5 hours riding

Today, your adventure begins! You will journey west along the Takhilt River, where lush and sandy terrain varies between forested mountains and open valley. You will camp in a beautiful gorge known as Two Bukh (Two Bulls).

Day 5 — 5: TWO BUKH – NURAMT CANYON - 4-6 hours riding

We continue our journey westward through a very wild area. Leaving the main path, we venture further west, into a remote, sparsely inhabited region. Encounters with people become increasingly rare, though some yurts can still be seen. Overnight camping.

Day 6 — 6: TWO BUKH – NURAMT CANYON - 4-6 hours riding

We pass through a more mountainous and forested area, until suddenly a large sand dune blocks our way. We'll set up camp at the beautiful Nuramt Canyon. Overnight camping.

Day 7 — 7: NURAMT - GOL MOD - 4-6 hours riding

The trail takes you to the Bor Khyar, that stretches over a distance of 90km. The Ulaagchin river runs through the dunes, creating beautiful green oases. Following the river, you turn south where sand, river and mountains come together in a flurry of colours and contrasts. The scenery is truly stunning! You make camp at the source of the Ulaagchin river amongst larch trees. Night at camp.

Day 8 — 8: GOL MOD - KHAR NUUR - 4-6 hrs riding

You will continue your journey westward through dunes and steppes. Following the Ulaagchin River Valley, you'll reach the Bor Khyar dune, which merges with the river. In the dune, you'll find hundreds of large and small lakes. Behind this stunning view, where dunes and lakes meet, the forested Ulaan Mountain dominates the horizon. Overnight camping.

Day 9 — 9: GOL MOD - KHAR NUUR - 4-6 hours riding

Today you'll cross the dune to the south, where a magnificent sight greets you: the beautiful crystal-clear freshwater lake Khar Nuur, nestled in the sand dunes. You travel along the lake's eastern shores southward to reach your campsite, located at the lake's southern end. Tonight you will stay at a tourist camp.

Day 10 — 10: KHAR NUUR - 3-4 hours riding

A day of relaxation by the crystal-clear lake surrounded by dunes and mountains, with options to swim and explore the surroundings. Overnight in tourist camp.

Day 11 — 11: KHAR NUUR - SENJIT KHAD - 4-6 hours riding

You leave the blue lake behind and head south towards Senjit Khad, a remarkable rock formation also known as the "Gateway to Heaven," located amid sandy dunes and plateaus. The geology and erosion in the area has given birth to strange, misshapen shapes. The area is also famous for its marmots and herds of semi-wild horses. Overnight camping.

Day 12 — 12: SENJIT KHAD - MUKHART - 4-6 hours riding

A morning ride leads you to the Mukhart Oasis, where you will spend the afternoon relaxing by the lush, tree-lined river. Camp overnight.

Day 13 — 13: MUKHART - 3-4 hours riding

After riding for 3-4 hours, it is time to say your goodbyes to the team and horses and transfer to Uliastai airport. Today will be a 2-3 hour drive.

Day 14 — 14: MUKHART - ULIASTAI - ULAANBAATAR

Early morning flight back to Ulaanbaatar (1.5 hours) with a free afternoon to explore or shop. Back to the hotel for dinner and a good night's sleep.

Day 15 — 15: ULAANBAATAR

Spend today in Ulaanbaatar at your leisure. Option to visit the local markets and enjoy an evening of traditional Mongolian music and dance. Overnight in the hotel.

Day 16 — 16: DEPARTURE

You will be transferred to Ulaanbaatar airport for your flight back. You may arrive home this evening, or early tomorrow, depending on your flight.

DATES & PRICES

We are currently updating our dates and prices they will be online soon. If you want details of this holiday, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Price details

No departure for this destination. Please contact our travel advisers for more information.

- International flights are not included but can be booked for you upon request - please contact us for rates.

- Rates are per person, based on riders sharing tents and yurts, and twin rooms at hotels.

- The group is composed of between 6 and 10 international riders, plus guides.

- It is possible to confirm a departure with 4-5 riders with the payment of a supplement of \$375 / £290 / €350 per person.

- All transfers are included as per the itinerary, at set times. Private transfers or transfers for late arrivals can be organised for an additional fee of \$30 / £25 / €28 per car (one way).

- If you sign up to the ride as a solo rider and there are no other riders likely to share, you will be charged a single room supplement of \$250 / £195 / €235 for hotel accommodation, and \$190 / £150 / €180 for tourist camps. You will then be reimbursed if a sharer is found for you at a later date.

- Internal flights between Ulaanbaatar and Uliastai are included in the price. Please note that this flight has a luggage limit of 15kg in the hold plus 5kg of hand luggage so please bear this in mind when packing.

- You can arrive a day earlier in Ulaanbaatar if you wish. For an extra night at a hotel in Ulaanbaatar, there is an additional fee of \$125 / £100 / €120 for a single room and \$75 / £60 / €70 for a twin or double room.

- One of the rides in July includes a visit to the Naadam Festival, and involves arriving in Mongolia a day earlier (the trip is 17 days).

- Rider weight limit: 80 kilos, 176 lbs, 12.6 st. Heavier riders please contact us.

Please Note

The itinerary may be modified at anytime for security reasons, meteorological or events beyond our control such as blocked roads, rivers in flood, drought, strikes and local holidays. Equus Journeys, our local partners and their local guides will always strive to find the best solution and will alter the itinerary as needed.

The names of the hotels and accommodation are given for information only and depending on availability, they may be modified without notice and replaced by another of a similar standard.

Price includes

SUPPORT TEAM

1 English speaking interpreter

Local guide and team leader

LOGISTIC

1 vehicle and driver

Cook and horsemen

1 horse per rider

INLAND TRANSPORTS

Internal flights between Ulaanbaatar and Uliastai

Airport transfers

ACCOMMODATION

4 nights in Ulaanbaatar hotel, 3 nights in tourist camp, 8 nights camping

MEALS

Full board from lunch D1 to breakfast D16

EXTRA

Museum and temple fees in Ulaanbataar
Traditional show in Ulaanbataar

Price doesn't include

MEALS

Beverage and personal extra

TRANSPORTS

International flights bookable on request
Visa fees

EXTRA

Tips to local team
Small group supplement

INSURANCE

Cancellation and travel insurances are not included. Please note that insurance is mandatory. We recommend to take out an insurance policy as soon as your travel is booked in case of cancellation.

EQUESTRIAN INFO

Horses

The legendary Mongolian horse, known for its role in conquest and history, is small but energetic, enduring, and perfectly suited for equestrian trekking across all terrains. Though renowned for their gentle nature, these horses are semi-wild, requiring some adaptation from riders. While some horses are livelier than others, all are carefully selected by the team for their temperament.

Guide & local team

You will be accompanied by at least two local horse guides. There will also be a cook to prepare meals and a vehicle driver. An interpreter will accompany you during the ride.

Minimum riding ability

MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

You need to be an experienced rider who is used to riding outdoors across varied terrain for several hours. Also note that Mongolian horses, while friendly, may be semi-wild. Riders should be prepared for a range of temperaments, and to adjust their riding as required.

Weight limit: 85 kgs / 187 lbs / 13,3 st

PACE

Whilst much of the ride is at a walk there are plenty of opportunities for long trots and canters across the immensity of the steppes.

TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

Each horse is saddled and unsaddled by the accompanying Mongolian herders. Feel free to participate in the process if you'd like – simply ask the herders for guidance! You may be asked to assist with camp tasks such as erecting and dismantling tents.

TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE

Previous experience of riding a trail for several days is an advantage but is not required. Riders who do not ride regularly are requested to get riding fit before the holiday.

Visiting a new country offers the opportunity to meet other cultures with different mentalities, therefore it is important to accept these differences and respect the local way of life. Be prepared to adapt to a different style of riding and accept that Mongolians relate to their horses in a different way to us.

Your belongings are transported by car.

EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT

The saddles used include Kazakh, Russian, and Mongolian styles, all equipped with saddle bags. Comfort levels may vary from rider to rider, so please inform the team of any discomfort on the first day so adjustments can be made.

Recommendations:

- Riders over 1.90 meters tall should bring their own adjustable stirrup leathers, as local saddles may not offer sufficient length.
- Consider bringing a sheepskin or extra padding to ensure comfort during long rides. Use strings to attach it securely to the saddle.
- A helmet is strongly recommended for safety and hygiene. Be sure to bring your own riding helmet or hat.

TRAVEL INFO

COMFORT

- In Ulaanbaatar you will stay in a hotel with private bathrooms and wifi.
- Nights in touristic camps: yurts with 2-6 beds, bathroom facilities and hot water (sometimes inconsistent).
- Nights in camp: Tents shared between two or three people. Mattresses are provided but you need to bring a sleeping bag.
- With local families you will sleep in a shared yurt (4-6 people). A toilet may be available but no shower.

Please note: Accommodation may be shared between male and female.

MEALS

The food is simple, abundant and based on fresh products prepared by a local cook and adapted to western tastes. Meals are served on small camping tables with stools, except for some picnic lunches.

Breakfast is usually hearty.

Lunch is often hot when meeting the logistics truck, but sometimes a picnic.

Dinner is a full hot meal (soup, main course, dessert) and may well include lamb/mutton purchased from local nomads.

Water:

Do not drink water from unknown sources. The cook will boil water each day for you to fill up your water bottles but you should also bring water-purification tablets such as Micropur.

CLIMATE

Mongolia enjoys over 260 sunny days a year and experiences very little rainfall. However, summer brings the most precipitation. The country often sits at the center of a high-pressure system, keeping the skies clear most of the year, earning it the nickname "The Land of Blue Skies."

Despite the sunshine, Mongolia experiences an extreme continental climate due to its geographical features: a vast, semi-desert plateau averaging over 1,500 meters in altitude. Summer temperatures can fluctuate wildly, ranging from +3°C to +35°C during the day and from -3°C to +6°C at night.

Recommendations:

- Wear loose, comfortable, and warm clothing (fleece jackets are ideal).
- Bring t-shirts for layering, which allows you to adjust your temperature more easily.
- Always carry full rain protection, as weather can change quickly.

TIPS

If you are happy with the service you receive from your local guides and driver then you may wish to leave a tip. In order to remain consistent with their standard of living, we would recommend something in the region of £50-55.

PACKING LIST

When packing please remember that the region can be cold and it would be wise to bring layers!

Please note that there is a weight limit of 15kg for hold/checked luggage and 5kg for hand luggage (mainly due to the internal flight limitations). Soft bags are preferred as they are easier to fit into the back up vehicle.

Pack carefully and sensibly: the following guide is here to give you an idea of what to bring:

Head

- Equus Journeys strongly recommend that you wear a riding helmet and that you take your own to ensure a correct fit. There are many lightweight options available nowadays
- Sunhat for when not riding
- Sunglasses - with a cord attached so they don't fly off when riding
- Buff or bandana
- Warm hat for cold nights

Upper body

- Thermals (long or short sleeved)
- Long sleeved shirts provide protection from the sun and are an extra layer
- T-shirts
- Lightweight fleece or jumper
- Warm fleece or jumper (and a spare in case one gets wet)
- Warm and waterproof jacket - it can rain at any time of year and the evenings can be particularly cold. No ponchos or anything that can flap around!

Legs

- Lightweight, comfortable riding trousers or jodhpurs - we recommend riding in them at home before taking them on holiday to ensure they don't rub
- Thermals
- Casual trousers for the evenings, such as jeans or tracksuit bottoms
- Waterproof over trousers

Hands and Feet

- Comfortable riding boots. We recommend short boots with half chaps but you may wish to take long chaps as an extra layer against inclement weather. We don't recommend taking your favourite long leather boots in case they get damaged. We would suggest something with a good grippy sole.
- Waterproof shoes/boots can be useful for abundant dew in the mornings or when it rains
- Trainers or equivalent light shoes for moving around in the evenings
- Several pairs of warm, thick socks
- Gloves - your hands are particularly exposed to the sun, cold or rain whilst riding. Waterproof gloves can be particularly useful

Nightwear

- Sleeping bag. You need at least a comfort factor down to minus 5°C, but would recommend at least minus 8 or 10°C (especially outside of July/August). It is possible to request a sleeping bag from the local team (limited availability)
 - Sleeping bag liner - silk, cotton or fleece - adds an extra layer
 - Pyjamas or tracksuits or thermals for sleeping in
- Please remember it can get very cold at night, especially if you are travelling in June/September: pack accordingly.

Other useful items

- Water-purification tablets
- Swimsuit - for swimming/bathing in lakes
- Towels - camping ones will both dry and pack more easily
- Small backpack for accessing items required during the day (carried by support crew)
- Camera and high capacity memory card. Spare battery
- Bumbag for carrying your camera and small items whilst riding
- Headtorch or small torch for moving around camp at night - bring spare batteries and bulbs
- Water bottle (2 litres or 2 x 1 litre)
- Wet Wipes or equivalent (for when washing facilities aren't available)
- Small plastic bags for rubbish
- Ear plugs (for light sleepers)
- Solar charger/powerbank

In your hold luggage

- Any liquids, such as shampoo, moisturiser, deodorant unless they are less than 100ml and all bottles can fit in a small, clear, plastic ziplock bag. We recommend biodegradable washing products where possible.
- Swiss army knife (or equivalent)

In your hand luggage

- Any valuables, such as your camera, ipod, ipad etc.
- Your riding hat

Medical kit

- Micropur tabs
- Sunscreen and lip balm - should be high factor
- Insect repellent, preferably containing DEET
- Any medication you regularly take
- Blister plasters in case of any rubs
- Antiseptic cream, plasters, aspirin, anti-histamine, insect-bite salve etc...
- Spare prescription glasses/contact lenses
- Eye drops
- Imodium or similar anti-diarrhoea medication
- Re-hydration sachets
- Water purification tablets
- Antiseptic wipes
- Handwash gel

Our Recommendations

- Soft bags are preferred as they are easier to fit into the back up vehicle.
- Backpacks cannot be worn whilst riding. We recommend a small bum bag or a coat with pockets so that you can carry small items with you during the day (camera, sunscreen, lipbalm etc)
- We recommend travelling in your riding boots and carrying your hat and some riding clothes in your hand luggage - then if your luggage goes astray you are still able to ride!
- Tall riders may benefit from taking a pair of long stirrup leathers with them (the local stirrups are adjustable but are sometimes limited in length)
- We recommend taking a copy of your passport and insurance documents with you in case you lose your originals
- Please take your rubbish home with you. There are no recycling facilities in Mongolia, so take your used batteries, aerosols etc back home and dispose of them appropriately. Try to leave excess packaging material at home before travelling
- You may wish to take some photographs or postcards of your home with you to show your hosts. You may also wish to take some crayons, colouring books etc for the children

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

1. **Travel light.** It's a little known fact, but the lighter you pack, the better for the environment as heavy bags will produce higher emissions (when flying a plane or driving a car!).
2. **Reduce plastic waste.** Take your favorite reusable bottle with you. Avoid single-use bags, cups, or straws.
3. **Preserve nature.** Always take your rubbish with you during the ride and recycle them. Leave all the flowers or plants as you found them, and never get too close when observing wildlife. Make sure to use eco-friendly products such as body wash or laundry detergent (if camping) to protect both your skin and the environment.
4. **Choose your experiences carefully.** Respect animal life by not participating in any activities that abuse wild animals (shows, elephant rides, etc.).
5. **Support local populations.** Buy local handicrafts, be respectful of customs, and learn about the culture of local communities.
6. **Share!** Raise awareness among your family and friends about sustainable tourism.

For more information please [see this page](#).