



# Equus Journeys

HORSEBACK TRAVEL & EQUESTRIAN TRADITIONS SINCE 1972

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## Across the Orkhon valley

### MONGOLIA

Embark on a **horseback adventure** through the **legendary Orkhon Valley**. Gallop through endless green plains, channelling the freedom and grandeur that once inspired ancient Mongol warriors. Explore Genghis Khan's legendary city, **Karakorum**, and discover the beautiful landscapes of the **"Eight Lakes"**. Find refuge in the warmth of a **local yurt**, where welcoming **local families** share their **traditions** with your group of riders.

Trail Riding	 15 days / 8 days riding	 From £1,310	
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### ITINERARY

## Highlights

- Ride in the heart of the Orkhon Valley - a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Immerse yourself in the diverse culture and local traditions by staying with local families.
- Enjoy a relaxing day at the Gyatruun springs.
- Visit the Khustain Nuruu nature reserve where the legendary Przewalski horses await.
- Explore three of the greatest monasteries in the country.
- Experience the power and hardiness of the Mongolian horse!

## Day 1 — 1: Home – Ulaanbaatar

Fly to Ulaanbaatar – this is a long trip, and it is likely that you will have to switch planes at least once and you should aim to arrive on Day 2. Flights are not included but can be booked upon request.

## Day 2 — 2: Ulaanbaatar - No riding

The local team will be waiting for you at the airport. From there, you will be transferred to the hotel.

After lunch, you will set off to discover Ulaanbaatar. This capital, influenced by Soviet-style architecture and deeply steeped in history, is today quite vibrant.

You will visit both the National History Museum and the Gandan Monastery - the largest religious centre in Mongolia. These buildings will provide you with historical and cultural knowledge, enriching your understanding of the country.

The evening promises a memorable experience as you are treated to traditional songs and dances performed by the National Academic Ensemble of Mongolia.

Overnight at a hotel.

## Day 3 — 3: Ulaanbaatar - Khustain Nuruu - Khugnu Khan - 4-6h driving and 2h walking

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Today, you will begin your journey through the central steppes of Mongolia.

Travel westward, towards the Khustain Nuruu nature reserve. This sanctuary is renowned for the successful reintroduction of the legendary Przewalski horses.

In the afternoon, your expedition leads you to the Khugnu Khan nature reserve, where your host family awaits. Their warm welcome includes "Suutei Tsai" – a savoury salted milk tea – and "Aaruul" – Mongolian cheese.

As the sun sets, you will help with the preparation of the evening meal. This moment becomes a genuine instance of cultural exchange and shared experience.

Overnight in yurt.

## Day 4 — 4: Khugnu Khan - Kharkhorin – Tuvkhun - 4-6h driving and 2h walking

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Your morning is dedicated to exploring the Khugnu Khan nature reserve. This is where the beauty of Mongolian nature truly unfolds, revealing a large sand dune nestled amidst the lush green steppe. A walk among the strange rock forms of Mount Khugnu Khan will take you to the ruins of the Uvgunt Monastery.

Back in the vehicle, you will drive until you reach Kharkhorin, the former capital of the Mongol Empire. Here, you will explore the historic Buddhist monastery – Erdenezuu.

Later today, you will venture into the heart of the renowned Orkhon Valley, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the ancestral cradle of the Mongolian people. This valley stands as one of the nation's most densely inhabited areas, drawing nomadic families engaged in livestock farming due to its favourable climatic conditions.

Before calling it a day, you will make one last stop at the Tuvkhen monastery.

Overnight in yurt

## Day 5 — 5: Nomadic Camp - No riding

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Today, you will spend the day immersed in the lifestyle of Mongolian nomads, gathering insights into the intricacies of their customs and traditions. Those who wish may engage in the daily tasks – milking animals, leading the herds to pastures, manufacturing dairy products, and many more!

Overnight in a yurt with a local family.

## Day 6 — 6: Gyatruun Hot Spring - 4-6 hours riding

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In the morning, you will get on horseback and explore the forested massif which dominates the southern part of the valley. Follow a narrow track through the larch forests which leads to the Gyatruun springs. There are two springs side by side, one is hot and the other is cold. Both springs are celebrated for their healing properties. Indulge in a relaxing moment amidst this splendid backdrop before heading back to camp.

Overnight in a yurt with a local family.

## Day 7 — 7: Khuisiin Naiman Nuur - 4-6 hours riding

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Over the course of the next four days, you will have the opportunity to explore the natural wonders of Naiman nuur, encompassing eight lakes situated at an elevation of 2200m. This site is the result of volcanic eruptions that occurred centuries ago. The region is rich in flora and fauna. If you are lucky, you may spot deer, mouse deer, wild boars, or even wolves.

Against this picturesque backdrop, you will ride from one lake to another. For those seeking a more adventurous experience, there is the option to take a refreshing swim or even try your hand at fishing.

Each evening, a different family will open their yurt door to you, providing an authentic and immersive experience of Mongolian evenings.

## Day 8 — 8: Khuisiin Naiman Nuur - 4-6 hours riding

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Over the course of these days, you will have the opportunity to explore the natural wonders of Naiman nuur, encompassing eight lakes situated at an elevation of 2200m. This site is the result of volcanic eruptions that occurred centuries ago. The region is rich in flora and fauna. If you are lucky, you may spot deer, mouse deer, wild boars, or even wolves.

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## Day 9 — 9: Khuisiin Naiman Nuur - 4-6 hours riding

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Over the course of these days, you will have the opportunity to explore the natural wonders of Naiman nuur, encompassing eight lakes situated at an elevation of 2200m. This site is the result of volcanic eruptions that occurred centuries ago. The region is rich in flora and fauna. If you are lucky, you may spot deer, mouse deer, wild boars, or even wolves.

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Each evening, a different family will open their yurt door to you, providing an authentic and immersive experience of Mongolian evenings.

## Day 10 — 10: Khuisiin Naiman Nuur - 4-6 hours riding

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Today is the last day in which you will explore the natural wonders of Naiman nuur. This site is the result of volcanic eruptions that occurred centuries ago. The region is rich in flora and fauna. If you are lucky, you may spot deer, mouse deer, wild boars, or even wolves.

Against this picturesque backdrop, you will ride from one lake to another.

For those seeking a more adventurous experience, there is the option to take a refreshing swim or even try your hand at fishing.

Today you will spend the night in a campsite.

## Day 11 — 11: Gyatruun - Ulaantsutgalan – Tuvkhun - 4-6 hours riding

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Over these two days, you will cross the valley from the west to the east.

This journey will take you through expansive grassy plains. The Orkhon River flows alongside, weaving its way through flower-filled Edelweiss beds and steep gorges. Suddenly, the vast steppe seems to split, revealing a breathtaking sight: the Ulaantsutgalan waterfall. This remarkable waterfall, standing at approximately 20 meters in height, emerged thousands of years ago due to successive earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

Overnight in a yurt with a local family.

## Day 12 — 12: Gyatruun - Ulaantsutgalan – Tuvkhun - 4-6 hours riding

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Today you will continue to cross the valley from the west to the east.

This journey will take you through expansive grassy plains. The Orkhon River flows alongside, weaving its way through flower-filled Edelweiss beds and steep gorges. Suddenly, the vast steppe seems to split, revealing a breathtaking sight: the Ulaantsutgalan waterfall. This remarkable waterfall, standing at approximately 20 meters in height, emerged thousands of years ago due to successive earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

Overnight in a yurt with a local family.

## Day 13 — 13: Tuvkhun monastery - 3-4h riding

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Today, you will ride through the wooded mountains of the Khangai range, heading towards the Tuvkhun monastery. This monastery is seamlessly blended with the surroundings, so you only spot it once you are already at its foot. This sanctuary is devoted to Zanabazar, the inaugural Buddhist spiritual guide of the Mongols.

Overnight in a yurt with a local family.

## Day 14 — 14: Bat-Ulzii – Ulaanbaatar - No riding

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After saying your goodbyes to the local family, you will be driven to Bat-Ulzii, the central hub of the canton, boarding the local bus bound for the Mongolian capital. The total trip is around 8-9h.

Overnight at a hotel.

## Day 15 — 15: Ulaanbaatar – Home

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After breakfast, you will be transferred to the airport. Please note that you may only arrive home the following day.

DATES & PRICES			
DEPARTURE	RETURN	PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS	STATUS
09/06/2024	23/06/2024	£1,310	Open
28/06/2024	12/07/2024	£1,310	Open
14/07/2024	28/07/2024	£1,310	Open
06/08/2024	20/08/2024	£1,310	Guaranteed departure
20/08/2024	03/09/2024	£1,310	Open
03/09/2024	17/09/2024	£1,310	Open
13/09/2024	27/09/2024	£1,310	Open

## Price details

- Flights or transportation to your destination (international/domestic) are not included, but can be booked on request - please contact us for rates.
- Rates are per person, based on two riders sharing tents/yrurts.
- Groups are composed of a minimum of 4 riders and a maximum of 12 international riders, plus guides.
- Please note: the ride will also confirm for less riders on payment of a supplement:  
2 riders - £285/€325/\$350, per person  
3 riders- £75/€85/\$90, per person  
Once the group has reached 4 people, we will remove this supplement from your invoice and refund you if you have already paid it.
- There is no single supplement if you are willing to share a room/tent with another guest of the same sex. To guarantee your own room/tent there is a single supplement of approx. €60/£55/\$70.  
Single accommodation is not possible when staying with local families.
- All transfers are included as per the itinerary, at set times. Private transfers can be organised and are around €30/£25/\$35 per car.
- 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 guide
- 1 or 2 local equestrian guide(s) during the trail

### LOGISTICS

- 1 support vehicle

### INLAND TRANSPORT

- Airport transfers
- Local bus from Bat-Ulzii to Ulaanbaatar

Transfer from Ulaanbaatar to Gyatruun (private vehicle)

## ACCOMMODATION

Hotel in Ulaanbaatar - double room with private bathroom

2-person tents

Yurts - shared between 5-6 people

## MEALS

Full board from lunch on day 2 to breakfast on day 14

Water

## EXTRAS

Entry fees to parks and museums mentioned in the itinerary

## Price doesn't include

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### MEALS

Beverages and personal extras

### ACCOMMODATION

Sleeping bag for night at camp

### TRANSPORT

International flights

### EXTRAS

Tips to the local team

Small group supplement - see above for the details

### INSURANCE

Visas

Cancellation and travel insurance are not included in the above listed price. Please note that insurance is mandatory. We recommend taking out an insurance policy as soon as your trip is booked to cover you in case of cancellation

## Optional

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### ACCOMMODATION

Single room/tent supplement

## EQUESTRIAN INFO

## Horses

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The Mongolian horse is legendary. They are small, energetic and tough but gentle and perfect for trail riding on all types of terrain. The horses are sociable and live happily in a herd. They are not difficult to ride but some will be more spirited than others.

## Guide & local team

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

## Minimum riding ability

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### MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

You need to be an experienced rider who is used to riding outdoors across varied terrain for several hours.

Weight limit: 80 kilos, 176 lbs, 12.6 st.

## **PACE**

While a significant part of the ride is at walk, there are plenty of opportunities for long trots and spirited canters.

## **TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION**

The local team will tack and untack the horses for you. While camping, you may be asked to assist with tasks such as putting up 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**

Kazakh and Russian saddles.

Whilst the stirrup leathers are adjustable, riders who are tall may find that they are short in length and are recommended to take their own pair of leathers.

We recommend our riders to wear a helmet to the correct standard and you should bring your own to ensure a proper fit.

## **TRAVEL INFO**

### **COMFORT**

- 2 nights in Ulaanbaatar: you stay in a hotel with private bathrooms and wifi
- 10 nights in touristic yurt camps: 5-6 beds in a yurt, bathroom facilities and hot water.
- 1 night in camp: two-man tents. Mattresses are provided but you need to take your own sleeping bag.

Please note there is no electricity throughout the ride. You may bring solar charger/powerbank, if you wish.

### **MEALS**

Meals are overall simple, and consist mainly of meat and some vegetables.

Most dinners will be prepared by the Mongolian families you stay with, except on the camping night in which a member of the local team will take on that responsibility.

You will be supplied with fresh water to drink. You may also bring water-purification tablets such as Micropur. Do not drink from unknown sources.

### **CLIMATE**

Mongolia has over 260 days of sunshine a year! Generally there is very little rain - the annual average in the north is 200-350mm and this decreases in the south. Mongolia is located in the heart of a high pressure system which leads to clear skies and Mongolia is sometimes known as the "Land of Blue Skies".

Winters are long and cold (October - April) and so rides run during the summer months of May - September. There is a short rainy season during mid-July - September but rainfall is usually short and scanty in the late afternoon. Temperatures are mild in the north and hotter in the south. Because of the altitude, nights can be cold even in summer. From September you can expect cold nights, sometimes down to 0°C, Winds can be strong, particularly in spring and autumn and the weather can change quickly, so take layers and be prepared!

### **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!

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

Soft bags are preferred as they are easier to fit into the back up vehicle

#### 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

#### 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
- 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)
- 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)
- Toilet paper and a lighter to burn it with
- 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