EQuus Journeys
HORSEBACK TRAVEL & EQUESTRIAN TRADITIONS SINCE 1972

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Orkhon Valley Trail - Camping & Yurts

MONGOLIA

Experience the vast Mongolian wilderness on this **epic horseback adventure,** riding through endless green plains while camping in tents or staying in yurts alongside nomadic families. From the capital Ulaanbaatar, adventurous riders will set off on a journey, first to Genghis Khan's legendary city, Karakorum, then on to the legendary **Orkhon Valley**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Here riders can gallop across the steppe and discover the beautiful landscapes of the "Eight Lakes". Other highlights of this **riding holiday in Mongolia** include a visit to the mountainside Tuvkhun Buddhist Monastery and the Khogno Khan Park or "Mini Gobi".

Trail Riding	**13 days (8 riding)**	**From £2,325**	


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ITINERARY

Highlights

· Discover the Mongolian capital of Ulaanbaatar, a city of striking contrasts.
· Explore a variety of landscapes, including mountains, grasslands, hills and waterfalls, and areas such as the Bayan Gobi, Khanghai Mountains, and the famous Orkhon Valley.
· Experience some canters and gallops across Mongolia's vast wilderness.
· Enjoy a real adventure with six camping nights under the stars.
· Also stay and eat with local families and learn about Mongolia's nomadic culture.
· Soak up Mongolian culture with visits to the national museum, several monasteries, and a traditional song and dance show.

Day 1 — 1: ARRIVE IN ULAANBAATAR - No riding

International flight to Ulaanbaatar. You will likely arrive in the early hours of the morning. A member of the local team will meet you at the airport, and you'll be transferred to your hotel, where you can relax for the rest of the morning.

Later, you will meet your guide and the group at the hotel front desk and head out for lunch (to your own account). Afterwards, you'll visit the Gandantegchinlin Monastery. Founded in 1809 and
long serving as the spiritual heart of Mongolian Tibetan Buddhism, it one of Mongolia's most important tourist attractions. Next you'll visit the National Museum of Mongolia, which offers an overview of nomadic history, showcasing artefacts ranging from Stone Age
petroglyphs and Genghis Khan's Mongol Empire to intricate ethnic costumes, giving you an insight into Mongolian history and culture. Dinner is to your own account this evening.

Overnight at the hotel.

Day 2 — 2: KHARKHORIN - ORKHON VALLEY - No riding, 6-7 hours driving

After breakfast at the hotel, you'll journey away from the capital and towards the Orkhon Valley (a 6-7 hour drive).

On the way, you'll visit the legendary city of Kharkhorin, founded by Genghis Khan in 1220. Once the capital of the Mongol Empire and a key hub on the Silk Road, Kharkhorin played a crucial role in global economic, political, and cultural history. Here, you'll also visit the Erdene Zuu Monastery (late 16th century), one of
Mongolia's most important Buddhist sites, with 108 surrounding stupas and beautifully preserved temples.

You'll enjoy a picnic lunch on the road and continue towards the entrance of the Orkhon Valley, arriving in the evening. There you'll meet the horses and equestrian guides, and set up camp, ready to have a good night's sleep before your first ride tomorrow.

Overnight camping.

Day 3 — 3: ORKHON VALLEY - 5-6 hours riding

Today the adventure begins! After breakfast, you'll meet up with the horses and embark on your first trail ride in the Orkhon Valley, a UNESCO World Heritage cultural landscape, revered as the cradle of
nomadic steppe empires for over two millennia.

After a morning ride getting to know your horse, the team will set up a picnic lunch in a scenic spot. You'll then continue riding along the Orkhon River -- Mongolia's longest river -- toward Berkhiin Bulan, a picturesque river bend known for its tranquil waters and ancient Bronze Age burial sites.

Set up camp along the riverbank, gather for dinner at the campsite, and spend the night under the open sky.

Overnight camping.

Day 4 — 4: ORKHON VALLEY (TUVKHUN MONASTERY) - 5-6 hours riding

After breakfast, you'll set out on horseback towards the renowned Tuvkhun Monastery, perched high atop a forested mountain ridge at over 2,300 meters above sea level. Established in 1648 by Zanabazar -- Mongolia's first spiritual leader and master sculptor -- this sacred retreat served as his personal meditation sanctuary and the birthplace of the iconic Soyombo script.

After a morning of riding, you'll enjoy a scenic picnic lunch along the trail before reaching the tranquil monastery grounds. Riding down the mountain slopes, enter Aguitiin Am ("Cave Gorge"), a valley historically named for its natural rock shelters used by 17th-century Buddhist monks for solitary meditation retreats. Set up your wilderness camp along the mountain stream in this peaceful gorge, gather for dinner under the open sky, and spend the night surrounded by nature.

Overnight camping.

Day 5 — 5: ORKHON VALLEY (KHANGHAI MOUNTAINS) - 5-6 hours riding

Today you'll wake up in nature and then begin riding deeper into the Khangai Mountains, Mongolia's ancient central mountain range defined by rolling larch-forested peaks, pristine river valleys, and fertile
pastures that have sustained nomadic pastoralists since the Bronze Age.

You'll have a delicious picnic lunch along the trail before arriving at your first nomad host family in the late afternoon. Here, you will experience nomadic life -- a centuries-old way of life centred around seasonal migrations, livestock herding, and renowned
pastoral hospitality.

In the evening, you'll share a traditional home-cooked dinner with your hosts, learn about their daily routines, and spend the night sleeping in an authentic ger (yurt) pitched right beside the family's dwelling.

Overnight at the family camp (yurts).

Day 6 — 6: ORKHON VALLEY (BUURUG) - 5-6 hours riding

Today you'll once again set off on horseback through the Orkhon Valley, where dramatic basalt cliffs and black lava fields bear witness to prehistoric volcanic eruptions that forever altered the river's path.

You'll stop along the way for lunch at a spot nestled in the woods along the riverbank. Afterwards, you'll continue roaming through the valley on horseback toward Buurug, a tranquil high-altitude valley tucked into larch forests that serves as the natural northern gateway to Naiman Nuur National

Park.

In the late afternoon, set up camp near the entrance of Naiman Nuur (also known as the Eight Lakes), an exceptionally beautiful mountain sanctuary formed by ancient volcanic activity and renowned for its high-altitude lakes and pine-forested peaks. In the early evening, you'll gather at the camp for a warm dinner and spend the night under the open sky.

Overnight camping.

Day 7 — 7: NAIMAN NUUR "EIGHT LAKES" - 5-6 hours riding

This morning, you will meet the local yak guides and give them only your essentials for the coming days. Your belongings will then be packed on to the yaks -- traditional, hardy animals essential for navigating the roadless mountain terrain of the Khuisiin Naiman Nuur (Eight Lakes).

Formed by ancient volcanic eruptions and dammed lava flows, this high-altitude sanctuary sits over 2,400 meters above sea level, encompassing a high mountain basin of interconnected alpine lakes surrounded by pine forests and extinct volcanic peaks.

Later, you'll arrive at the mountain camp of a local yak breeder family -- your home for the next two nights -- where you will settle into yurt. You'll enjoy a home-cooked lunch with the family inside their yurt before mounting your horses to ride around the basin and explore three of the area's pristine lakes. In the evening, you'll gather with the family for dinner.

Overnight at the family camp (yurts).

Day 8 — 8: NAIMAN NUUR "EIGHT LAKES" - 5-6 hours riding

You'll set out on horseback through mountain larch forests to explore the remaining five lakes of the Khuisiin Naiman Nuur Nature Reserve.

Volcanically formed years ago and linked by underground channels, these secluded high-altitude lakes (including Shireet Nuur, the largest and deepest in the park) offer serene vistas framed by extinct volcanic peaks and alpine meadows.

Enjoy a peaceful picnic lunch along the lakeside, before returning to your host family's camp for a home-cooked dinner.

Overnight at the family camp (yurts).

Day 9 — 9: ORKHON VALLEY (GYATRUUNII AM) - 5-6 hours riding

You'll bid farewell to your host family and begin the ride from Naiman Nuur back toward the Orkhon Valley. You will meet up with the support vehicle later today carrying the rest of your luggage.

Guided by your equestrian team and pack yaks, ride along steep mountain trails through Gyatruunii Am (Gyatruun Gorge), a historic mountain pass long used by local nomads for seasonal livestock migrations.

Stop for a scenic picnic lunch along the trail as you descend through dense larch forests into the lower valley, where you will set up camp, gather for dinner, and spend the night under the open sky.

Overnight camping.

Day 10 — 10: ORKHON VALLEY (GYATRUUN HOT SPRINGS) - 5-6 hours riding

After breakfast, set off on the final day of your horseback adventure as you ride toward Gyatruun Springs, a unique natural site in the Khangai Range featuring both thermal hot springs and cold mineral springs.

Emerging from subterranean volcanic fissures, these waters have been prized by local nomads for centuries for their therapeutic properties; with hot springs soothing muscle fatigue and cold mineral waters traditionally taken for vitality. Enjoy lunch right at the springs before spending the afternoon sampling the cold mineral waters and relaxing in the warm geothermal pools to unwind after your ride.

In the evening, set up your campsite nearby in Gyatruunii Am, gather for dinner, and spend the night in your tent under the open sky.

Overnight camping.

Day 11 — 11: ORKHON WATERFALL - ELSEN TASARKHAI ("MINI GOBI") - No riding

After saying goodbye to your equestrian guides, horse team, and host

family, you'll be driven to the iconic Orkhon Waterfall (Ulaan Tsutgalan), a spectacular 20-meter cascade formed by ancient volcanic eruptions, where the Ulaan River plunges dramatically into a dark basalt canyon. You'll then continue to Elsen Tasarkhai (often called the "Mini Gobi"), a striking landscape where golden sand dunes stretch alongside green steppe and granite mountains.

After a scenic picnic lunch, mount iconic two-humped Bactrian camels to trek through the sweeping sand dunes, experiencing the gentle, sway of traditional camel riding while taking in the unique desert-meets-steppe panorama. Afterwards, you'll visit Erdene Khamba Monastery, a tranquil 17th-century sanctuary founded by Undur Gegeen Zanabazar at the foot of sacred Khogno Khan Mountain.

In the late afternoon, arrive at your Khogno Khan Tourist Camp, gather for dinner, and spend a comfortable evening taking in the surrounding desert-steppe scenery.

Overnight at the tourist camp.

Day 12 — 12: ULAANBAATAR - No riding

Today you'll depart early from Elsen Tasarkhai for the drive back to Ulaanbaatar, enjoying a picnic lunch along the way as the open countryside transitions into the capital by early afternoon.

Upon arrival in the city, you can set out on a guided shopping outing to explore local artisan markets and speciality shops, offering a chance to pick up world-renowned Mongolian cashmere, traditional crafts, and unique souvenirs.

In the evening, end an incredible trip with a traditional Mongolian song and dance show -- complete with khoomii (overtone throat singing), melodies of the morin khuur (horsehead fiddle), urtiin duu (long songs) and biyelgee folk dances.

Dinner is not included this evening, leaving you and the rest of the group free to choose from Ulaanbaatar's rich dining scene.

Overnight at the hotel.

Day 13 — 13: DEPARTURE - No riding

After breakfast at the hotel, a driver will collect you and take you to the airport for your flight home.

DATES & PRICES

DEPARTURE	RETURN	PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS	STATUS
18/05/2027	30/05/2027	£2,325	Open
01/06/2027	13/06/2027	£2,325	Open
15/06/2027	27/06/2027	£2,325	Open
29/06/2027	11/07/2027	£2,325	Open
13/07/2027	25/07/2027	£2,325	Open
27/07/2027	08/08/2027	£2,325	Open
10/08/2027	22/08/2027	£2,325	Open
24/08/2027	05/09/2027	£2,325	Open
07/09/2027	19/09/2027	£2,325	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 riders sharing a double, twin or triple room in Ulaanbaatar, as well as yurts (3-6 people per yurt) during the ride.

- Groups are composed of a minimum of 4 riders and a maximum of 8 international riders, plus guides. The ride will also confirm for fewer riders on payment of a small group supplement:

- For 3 riders, a supplement of €300 / $345 / £260 per person is payable.
- For 2 riders, a supplement of €450 / $505 / £380 per person is payable.

- It is possible to arrange a single tent during the trail, a single yurt at the tourist camp, and a single hotel room in Ulaanbaatar, for an additional €200 / $230 / £175. Please note that single yurts when staying with local families may be possible upon request, subject to availability, but will incur an additional fee of €200 / $230 / £175.

- Transfers to and from the airport are included.

- Accompanied minors are welcome from 12 yo, provided they match the riding requirements.
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
Pack yaks to carry luggage and equipment when visiting the "Eight Lakes"

INLAND TRANSPORT

Airport transfers

ACCOMMODATION

Double, twin or triple hotel room when staying in Ulaanbaatar
2-person tents on camping nights
Shared yurt when staying at a tourist camp (3-6 people per yurt)
Shared yurt when staying at the camps of nomadic families (3-6 people per yurt)

MEALS

Full board during the ride, including water – meals in Ulaanbaatar are not included.

EXTRAS

Entry fees to parks and museums mentioned in the itinerary

Price doesn't include

MEALS

Beverages and personal extras, meals in Ulaanbaatar

TRANSPORT

International flights
Visa fees

EXTRAS

Tips to the local team

Optional

ACCOMMODATION

Sleeping bag -- available to borrow free of charge (on request, subject to availability)

EQUESTRIAN INFO

Horses

The legendary Mongolian horse is small but strong, energetic and enduring; perfectly suited for equestrian trekking across all terrains. Though good natured, these horses live a semi-wild life, and riders should be adaptable – open to different ways of riding and handling the horses. Some horses are livelier than others, but all are carefully selected by the team to suit the rider.

Guide & local team

The tour guides, drivers and equestrian guides are seasoned professionals dedicated to providing a unique and high-quality experience. The local families, who are an integral part of the team, are also used to welcoming and hosting guests.

Minimum riding ability

MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

You need to be an experienced rider, competent at all paces, and used to riding outdoors for several hours over varied terrain. You should be comfortable riding in open spaces and in a group. Please note that Mongolian horses, while friendly, are considered to be semi-wild. Riders should be prepared for a range of temperaments, and to adjustment their riding as required.

Rider weight limit is 85 kg / 187 lbs / 13 st 5 lbs.

PACE

While a significant part of the ride is at walk, this is still an active ride, with lots of trots, spirited canters and some gallops. On the days when you visit Naiman Nuur National Park, the pace will be slower due to the terrain and because you're travelling with yaks.

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 – but please first ask the herders and listen to their guidance. While staying with local families, you may be asked to participate in tasks such as washing up.

TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE

You should be in good health as you will be riding in a remote location, far away from medical help. Riders should also be physically fit, as you will be spending several hours in the saddle on riding days.

Previous experience of a trail riding holiday is highly recommended but not required. Riders who do not ride regularly are requested to get riding fit before the holiday.

Please also note: This ride is designed for those seeking adventure – you should be comfortable spending long periods outdoors in a remote area (with limited or no phone service), with sleeping in tents, and to stay at family camps with basic yurt accommodation and limited bathroom facilities. Please inform your travel advisor of any allergies or medical conditions in advance.

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.

EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT

The saddles used are Russian and Mongolian style. 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 1.90m tall should bring their own adjustable stirrup leathers, as local saddles may not offer sufficient length.
• Consider bringing a sheepskin seat saver or extra padding to ensure comfort during long rides. It must be securely attached to the saddle - please ask the local guides for assistance.
• A helmet is strongly recommended for safety and half chaps are recommended for comfort and to protect your legs. Please bring your own helmet and chaps to ensure a proper fit.
• Please note: Saddlebags are not available on this ride as Mongolian horses aren’t used to them. But you will have a support vehicle and the guides will carry water. Backpacks are not to be worn whilst riding.

TRAVEL INFO

COMFORT

The first and last nights are spent in Ulaanbaatar, and you will stay in a double, twin or triple room at a hotel with private bathrooms and wifi.

For 6 nights, you will camp in tents under the stars. Camping equipment - tents, mattress, camping tables, chairs - will be provided. A portable shower, alongside a very basic Mongolian toilet (hole in the ground) will be set up when camping.

For 3 nights, you will be hosted by local families. You will sleep in a yurt with other guests, separate from the family. There are 3-6 beds in a yurt. Please know that the accommodation provided by local families varies in comfort, but is basic, giving you an opportunity to experience nomadic life.
The families don't provide shower facilities but you will be provided with a portable shower (you may also bathe in nearby lakes and rivers).
Toilets may be compost toilets or holes in the ground. Please also note that yurts may be mixed between male and female guests.

For 1 night, you will sleep in a shared yurt at a tourist camp, these typically offer more comfort than family camps. Shared bathrooms with showers and toilets will be available at the tourist camp.

You will need to bring your own sleeping bag, we recommend a comfort rating of at least at least minus 10°C, remembering that camping nights can be cold. Sleeping bags can sometimes be provided free of charge (upon request and subject to availability)
We recommend bringing a power bank for charging your devices, as there is no electricity when camping and staying with local families. You may also charge your devices in the support vehicle on driving days.

MEALS

Meals are carefully arranged to give you a taste of Mongolian life: Most meals are hearty and meat-based, featuring beef, lamb, and chicken, served with rice, noodles, bread, flour-based dishes, and vegetables. You'll also enjoy treats like jam, honey, butter, aaruul (dried cheese), milk tea and eggs. Dietary requirements can normally be accommodated, please inform your travel advisor upon booking.

Water:
Do not drink from unknown sources. You will be supplied with fresh water to drink. You may 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 centre 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 1,500m in altitude. Summer temperatures can fluctuate wildly, ranging from +3°C to +35°C during the day and from -3°C to +20°C at night.
We recommend wearing layers and carrying rain gear, as the 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 the standard of living, we would recommend approx €60 per person to be shared between the team.

PACKING LIST

Please pack carefully and sensibly: the following guide is here to give you an idea of what to bring. A support vehicle will carry your luggage for most of the ride so there is no weight limit as such, but we recommend approximately 20kgs. Please remember that the region can be cold and the weather extremely changeable -- please bring layers and rain gear. We recommend that you pack essentials in your hand luggage - such as your sleeping bag, towel and sanitary products (within allowance), rain jacket and riding gear -- just in case your luggage is delayed.

We highly recommend that you separate your belongings and pack a small/dry bag for the days when you visit the Naiman Nuur lakes, as the luggage will be carried by yaks. You can leave the rest of your luggage in the support vehicle and pick it up later.

Head
- Equus Journeys strongly recommends that you wear a riding helmet and that you take your own to ensure a correct fit.
- 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

- Long-sleeved shirts provide protection from the sun and are an extra layer
- T-shirts
- Lightweight fleece or jumper
- Warm fleece or jumper
- Down jacket
- Waterproofs. (But no ponchos or anything that can flap around!)

Legs
- Riding trousers or jodhpurs - we recommend riding in them at home before taking them on holiday to ensure they don't rub
- Casual trousers for the evenings
- Waterproofs

Hands and Feet
- Riding boots (short ankle boots).
- Half chaps.
- Waterproof hiking boots.
- Trainers or equivalent light shoes (optional)
- Several pairs of 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 (available to rent).
- Sleeping bag liner - silk, cotton, or fleece - adds an extra layer (optional)
- Camping pillow (not essential but very useful)
- Pyjamas or thermals for sleeping in

Please remember it can get cold at night, especially if you are travelling in June/September: please pack accordingly.

Other useful items
- Water-purification tablets
- Swimsuit - for swimming/bathing in lakes
- Towel - camping towel will dry and pack more easily
- Small backpack for accessing items required during the day or for when hiking
- Bumbag for carrying small items whilst riding (optional)
- Head torch or small torch for moving around camp at night
- 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/power bank

Medical kit
- 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
- Antiseptic wipes
- Handwash gel

Gifts for local families

Mongolian tradition wants the traveller to thank his host for his kind hospitality by offering small gifts. Some ideas for gifts include fresh vegetables and fruits (to be bought on the way), cakes or sweets (from home or bought locally), other local products/specialities from your home country, toys or books for children, kitchen utensils or camping accessories. You may also wish to take some photographs or postcards of your home with you to show your hosts.

Please avoid offering soaps, pens, or used clothes.

Other recommendations:

- Please print copies of your passport and insurance documents and take them with you.
- Backpacks should not be worn whilst riding. We recommend bringing a small bumbag or a coat with pockets so that you can carry small items with you during the day (camera, sunscreen, lipbalm etc). The guides will carry saddle bags carrying water.