

The Tsaatan Tour

15-day

Day 1. Ulaanbaatar – Amarbayasgalant Monastery

Route: Ulaanbaatar→ Baruunburen soum | Driving: Approx. 360 km | 6-7 hours

This morning, meet your guide and depart north through the rolling steppe landscapes of Selenge Province. The highlight of the day is Amarbayasgalant Monastery, meaning "Monastery of Tranquil Felicity." Nestled in a secluded valley at the foot of the Buren Khaan Mountains, it is considered one of Mongolia's most beautiful and best-preserved Buddhist monasteries. Built between 1727 and 1736, the monastery served as the spiritual center of northern Mongolia and houses the remains of Mongolia's first Bogd Gegeen, Zanabazar.

Activities

- Drive through Mongolia's vast grasslands
- Guided visit of Amarbayasgalant Monastery
- Explore ornate temples and assembly halls
- Learn about Mongolian Buddhism and Zanabazar
- Short hike to panoramic viewpoints above the monastery
- Sunset photography

Cultural & Historical Highlights

- UNESCO Tentative World Heritage Site
- Home to more than 50 temple structures at its peak
- Fine example of combined Mongolian, Tibetan and Chinese architecture

Accommodation: Ger Camp near Amarbayasgalant

Meals: Lunch | Dinner



Day 2. Amarbayasgalant – Uran Togoo Volcano

Route: Baruunburen, Selenge → Unit, Bulgan province | **Driving**: Approx. 250 km | 4-5 hours

Continue to Bulgan Province, home to fertile grasslands and volcanic landscapes. Uran Togoo Volcano is one of Mongolia's finest extinct volcanoes, rising nearly 1,700 meters above sea level. The perfectly preserved crater provides impressive views across forests, rivers, and open steppe.

Activities:

- Scenic drive through northern Mongolia
- Hike to the crater rim of Uran Togoo
- Explore volcanic formations and basalt rocks
- Birdwatching and nature photography
- Enjoy panoramic views from the summit

Geographical Highlights

- Formed by volcanic activity approximately 20,000 to 25,000 years ago
- Surrounded by rich volcanic soil supporting diverse vegetation
- Protected Natural Monument since 1965
- Excellent example of Mongolia's volcanic geography

Accommodation: Tourist Camp near Uran Togoo

Meals: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner



Day 3 - Murun City

Route: Uran Togoo → Murun | **Driving**: Approx. 320 km | 5-6 hours

Drive through central northern Mongolia toward Murun, the provincial capital of Khuvsgul. Along the way, enjoy vast grasslands, nomadic settlements, and herds of livestock.

Activities

- Scenic countryside drive
- Visit local market in Murun
- Explore city center
- Prepare supplies for the Taiga journey

Cultural Highlights

- Main transportation hub of northern Mongolia
- Home to ethnic Khalkh, Buryat, Darkhad and Tsaatan communities
- Important supply center for remote nomadic regions

Accommodation: Hotel in Murun

Meals: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner



Day 4 - Darkhad Family Stay

Route: Murun → Ulaan Uul region → Darkhad family | Driving: Approx. 250 km | 7-8 hours

Travel deep into the Darkhad Depression, one of Mongolia's most remote and culturally unique regions. Meet your host Darkhad family and experience traditional nomadic life.

Activities

- Drive through dramatic northern landscapes
- Meet local herding family
- Learn about livestock management
- Traditional dairy tasting
- Evening cultural exchange

Cultural Highlights

- One of Mongolia's most sparsely populated regions
- Strong traditions of shamanism remain today
- Home to yak, horse, sheep, and cattle herders
- Important migration corridor for northern nomadic communities

Accommodation: Family guest ger stay

Meals: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner



Day 5 - Horse Trek to Tsaatan Family

Route: Darkhad Valley → Taiga | Horse **riding-** 4 hours

Begin your journey into the taiga forests. Riding Mongolian horses, travel through mountain passes, rivers, and larch forests toward the homeland of Mongolia's reindeer herders.

Activities

- Guided horseback riding
- Taiga forest exploration
- Mountain scenery and river crossings
- Introduction to reindeer culture

Cultural Highlights

- The Tsaatan are one of Mongolia's smallest ethnic groups
- Their livelihood depends largely on domesticated reindeer
- Their culture is closely connected to Siberian traditions
- They live in traditional teepees rather than ge

Accommodation: Teepee stay near Tsaatan settlement

Meals: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner



Day 6 – Full Day with the Tsaatan Family

Route: Mild relaxing journey within Taiga | **Horse riding-** 2-3 hours

Spend a full day learning about one of the world's last remaining nomadic reindeer-herding cultures.

Activities

- Observe reindeer milking and grazing
- Learn about nomadic migration patterns
- Visit other Tsaatan families
- Enjoy cultural exchange with host families

Cultural Highlights

- Reindeer are used mainly for milk, transportation and cultural identity
- Traditional beliefs emphasize harmony with nature and ancestral spirits
- Shamanism remains an important part of community life
- Fewer than a few hundred Tsaatan people maintain this traditional lifestyle

Accommodation: Teepee stay near Tsaatan settlement

Meals: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner



Day 7 – Return to Darkhad Family

Route: Taiga → Darkhad Valley | **Horse riding-** 4 hours

Return through the taiga and mountain valleys to the Darkhad region.

Activities

- Horse trekking through remote wilderness
- Wildlife observation opportunities
- Traditional dinner with host family

Natural Highlights

- The northern taiga is home to moose, red deer, wolves, and rare bird species
- The region contains some of Mongolia's most pristine forests and watersheds

Accommodation: Family guest ger stay

Meals: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner



Day 8. Khuvsgul Lake

Route: Taiga → Ulaan-Uul- Khatgal- Khuvsgul Lake | **Driving**: Approx. 230 km | 6-7 hours
Journey further north toward magnificent Lake Khuvsgul, often called the "Blue Pearl of Mongolia." The lake contains nearly 70% of Mongolia's fresh water and is surrounded by pristine taiga forests and rugged mountains. It is one of Central Asia's most spectacular natural destinations.

Activities

- Scenic drive through forested mountain regions
- Arrival at Khuvsgul Lake National Park
- Lakeside walking excursion
- Sunset viewing over the lake

Geographical Highlights

- Over 2 million years old
- Extends approximately 136 km in length
- Maximum depth of 262 meters
- Connected geologically to Lake Baikal in Siberia

Accommodation: Lakeside Ger Camp

Meals: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner



Day 9 – Khuvsgul Lake Exploration

Route: Taiga → Ulaan-Uul- Khatgal- Khuvsgul Lake | **Driving**: Approx. 230 km | 6-7 hours

Wake up to breathtaking views of crystal-clear waters and forested mountains. Today is dedicated to discovering the beauty of one of Mongolia's largest lakes.

Activities

- Boat cruise on Lake Khuvsgul
- Birdwatching and nature photography
- Walking or cycling along the lakeshore/ optional
- Horseback riding along scenic lakeshore trails/ optional
- Relax by the shore

Natural Highlights

- Home to over 250 bird species
- Surrounded by alpine meadows and Siberian larch forests
- Important habitat for endangered wildlife

Accommodation: Lakeside Ger Camp

Meals: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner



Day 10 – Shine-Ider Village

Route: Khuvsgul lake→ Murun- Shine-Ider soum | **Driving**: Approx. 230 km | 4-5 hours

A relaxing transit day through some of Mongolia's lesser-visited countryside, offering authentic views of everyday nomadic life and beautiful open landscapes before continuing to the volcanic region of Arkhangai. Shine-Ider serves as a pleasant stopover on the way to central Mongolia, allowing travelers to break up the long journey while experiencing the peaceful atmosphere of rural Mongolia. Upon arrival, enjoy time to relax and take in the surrounding natural scenery.

Activities

- Scenic drive through Khuvsgul Province
- Photo stops along mountain and river valleys
- Observe nomadic herding lifestyle along the route
- Short walk around the surrounding grasslands
- Enjoy a quiet sunset over the steppe

Accommodation: Tourist Camp

Meals: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner



Day 11. Shine-Ider – Khorgo-Terkh National Park

Route: Shine-Ider→ Tariat soum | **Driving**: Approx. 230 km | 4-5 hours

Continue into the heart of the Khangai Mountains and arrive at the spectacular Khorgo-Terkh National Park, one of Mongolia's most scenic natural areas. The park combines volcanic craters, lava fields, forested mountains, and the beautiful waters of Terkhiin Tsagaan Lake.

Activities

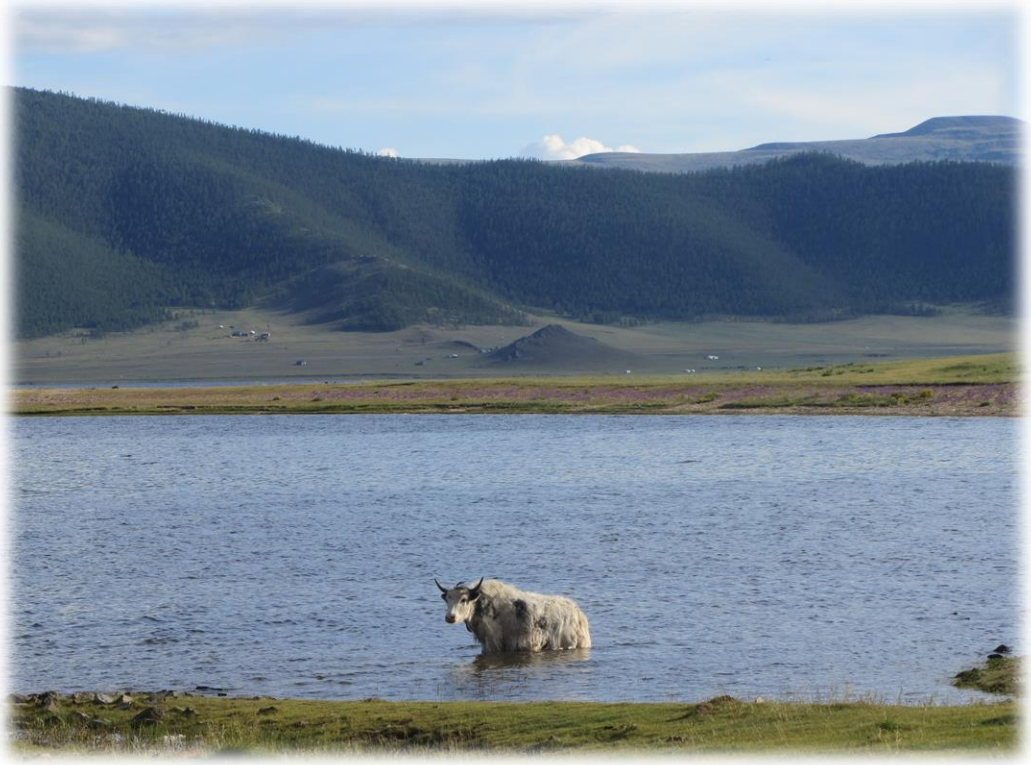
- Visit Terkhiin Tsagaan Lake
- Explore volcanic lava formations
- Walk along the lakeshore
- Birdwatching opportunities
- Sunset views over the lake

Geographical Highlights

- Created by volcanic eruptions thousands of years ago
- National Park established in 1997
- Volcanic activity formed the natural dam that created the lake

Accommodation: Lakeside Ger Camp

Meals: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner.



Day 12. Khorgo-Terkh National Park Exploration

A full day to enjoy the geological wonders of the national park.

Activities

- Hike to the summit of Khorgo Volcano
- Explore the volcanic crater
- Visit lava caves created by ancient eruptions
- Horse riding along the lake/ optional
- Wildlife observation
- Enjoy breathtaking sunset views over the lake

Accommodation: Lakeside Ger Camp

Meals: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner



Day 13 – Tsenkher Hot Springs

Route: Khorgo-Terkh NP→ Chuluut Gorge→ Tsetserleg→Tsenkher | **Driving**: Approx. 210 km | 3-4 hours

Nestled in a forested valley of Arkhangai Province, Tsenkher's geothermal waters emerge naturally from underground at temperatures approaching 85°C before cooling in bathing pools.

Activities

- Relaxing mineral baths
- Forest walks
- Optional massage treatments

Geographical Highlights

- One of Mongolia's most famous geothermal areas
- Mineral-rich waters believed to have therapeutic properties
- Surrounded by volcanic and mountain landscapes

Accommodation: Tourist Ger Camp

Meals: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner



Day 14. Tsenkher – Erdene Zuu Monastery – Khugnu Tarna Natural Reserve

Route: Tsenkher-Kharkhorin→Elsen Tasarkhai | **Driving**: Approx. 230 km | 4-5 hours

Today's journey combines Mongolia's history and natural beauty. Visit Kharkhorin, the ancient capital of the Mongol Empire founded by Chinggis Khan in the 13th century. Explore the famous Erdene Zuu Monastery before continuing to the dramatic dunes of Elsen Tasarkhai, often called the "Mini Gobi."

Activities

- Visit Erdene Zuu Monastery
- Learn about the Mongol Empire
- Walk among the sand dunes of Elsen Tasarkhai
- Camel riding
- Visit local horse and camel herding families

Historical & Cultural Highlights

Elsen Tasarkhai

- Often called the "Mini Gobi"
- Stretch of sand dunes extending over 80 km

Khugnu Khan Mountain

- Sacred mountain rich in wildlife and archaeological remains

Accommodation: Ger Camp at Elsen Tasarkhai

Meals: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner



Day 15: Khugnu Tarna Natural Reserve – Ulaanbaatar

Driving: 280 km | 4-5 hours

Enjoy a final morning among the dunes before returning to Mongolia's capital. The route offers a final glimpse of the country's endless grasslands and nomadic lifestyle.

Activities

- Sunrise by Elsen Tasarkhai dunes
- Scenic drive back to Ulaanbaatar
- Drop off service

Meals: Breakfast | Lunch

End of Services



Journey Summary

During this expedition you will have experienced:

- Mongolia's most important Buddhist heritage site
- Ancient volcanic landscapes
- The Darkhad cultural region
- One of the world's last reindeer-herding societies
- Khuvsgul Lake, Mongolia's freshwater treasure
- Volcanic national parks and lava fields
- Natural geothermal hot springs
- Sand dunes, mountains, and steppe ecosystems



Meals Included

- 14 Breakfasts
- 15 Lunches
- 14 Dinners

Things to bring on the tour:

- Extra batteries for your devices or solar charger
- Personal sheet for sleeping bags that we provide
- Flexible bags, backpack, torch light, caps & sunglasses
- Sunscreen, toothbrush, wet wipes, toilet roll, and mosquito deed
- Hiking boots (waterproof) and slippers, long boots for horse-riding(optional)
- Personal medication- pain killers, bandages, pills for motion sickness
- Books, cards, music player, and other games for your entertainment
- Snacks (chips, nuts, dried fruits)

Things included in the tour:

- Meal: breakfast, lunch and dinner
- Accommodation: ger guesthouses run by local family, tourist camps, camping
- Fees for museums, national park entrance, road toll
- 4x4 off road vehicle, and petrol
- A tour guide and a driver
- Sleeping bag
- Drinking water (bottled)

Things not included:

- Alcoholic and soft drinks
- International flights
- Travel & medical insurance
- Cost for optional activities
- Excess baggage fee