



IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF CHINGGIS KHAN

September - 10 Days

This is a customisable trip. It is adaptable, giving you the freedom to build a unique and personal trip for your chosen date. Upgrade your accommodation for all - or just part - of your trip, slow down the pace with few extra nights here and there or add a few more active adventures along the way.

In The Footsteps of Chinggis Khan In Brief



Chinggis Khan, together with his sons and grandsons, conquered the most densely populated civilisations of the thirteenth century. At its zenith the empire covered between 11 and 12 million contiguous square miles. It remains the largest contiguous land empire the world has ever known.

This itinerary focuses on the homeland of Chinggis Khan - Khentii Aimag in north-eastern Mongolia. Although there is little archaeology, this is the region in which he was born, raised crowned, and considered to be buried. You'll experience the landscapes that form his homeland as well as the way of life of the people that make his homeland their own home in the 21st Century.

The land itself only offers a hint at the flow of history, people and the culture that existed here during the time of Chinggis Khan but you'll be walking in the footsteps of the man himself.

Your Itinerary Overview

All images used throughout this document were taken either by EL guests or members of the EL team. This is the Mongolia that you will also experience.

Ulaan Baatar

<p>Day One - final arrival day into UB</p>	<p>City Walking Tour</p> <p>A more local introduction to this vibrant frontier style with our free city walking tour</p> <p>UB is home to roughly 45% of Mongolia's population and spending time on our informal and relaxed city walking tour will give you a contrasting insight into a way of life, compared to that of the rural population. This day is not about museums or shopping – it's about getting out and about and exploring and discovering.</p>	<p>Your own choice of accommodation</p>	<p>Free transfer</p>	<p>Local Lunch</p>
				

Khentii Aimag

<p>Day Two</p>	<p>Tsonjin Boldog and 13th Century Camp</p> <p>An introduction to Chinggis Khan and what life may have been like in the 13th Century.</p> <p>Having visited the 131ft high statue of Chinggis Khan (the view out over his 'homeland' is spectacular) you'll move on to the 13th Century Camp .</p> <p>It's divided into six separate camps with each one described as being a 'living museum' and designed to show an important cultural aspect of 13th Century life in Mongolia.</p>	<p>Tent Camp</p>	<p>Roughly 90km on dirt road and asphalt (aproximately 2.5 hours driving time not including stops) . Averages of between 30 and 65 km/hr are usual.</p>	<p>L/D</p>
				

<p>Day Three</p>	<p>Khokh Nuur</p> <p>Hidden in the foothills of the Khentii Mountain Range, this lake is said to be where Temujin first proclaimed himself a khaan (king) of the Mongols.</p>	<p>Tent Camp</p>	<p>Roughly 250km on dirt road and asphalt (aproximately 5-6 hours driving time not including stops). Averages of between 30 and 65 km/hr are usual.</p>	<p>B/L/D</p>
				
<p>* This will depend on the road conditions</p>				

<p>Day Four and Five</p> 	<p>Baldan Bereeven Khiid Öglögchiin Kherem and Binder</p> <p>This region hosts a number of cultural heritage sites demonstrating an evolving sacred cultural landscape. You'll also explore what is thought to be one of the burial sites of the direct lineage of Chinggis Khan.</p> <p>This region is also home to the Buriat ethnic group.</p>	<p>Tent Camp</p> <p>The next few days you drive through and explore Khentii Aimag – named for the Khentii Mountains that dominate the north west of this province. Due to the lack of a 'touchable' history is it easy to be persuaded that Mongolia is actually short on history. It is definitely not – Mongolia is an ancient land and has a rich and varied history. However, the country only offers a hint at the flow of peoples and the cultures that have preceded modern Mongolia.</p>	<p>Roughly 150km on dirt road (split between two days). Averages of between 30 and 65 km/hr are usual.</p> <p>* You will cross the mighty Onon River using the birvaz. The what? The birvaz is one of my favourite inventions - a floating platform on a pulley system that crosses the river - used by locals with their motorbikes or in this case, by EL with our Furgon van. Tserendorj is the operator and crossing the river this way gives you time to discuss the weather, the state of the Mongolian economy and to count fish.</p>	<p>B/L/D</p>
<p>Day Six and Seven</p>  	<p>Dadal</p> <p>Explore the area known as the birthplace of Genghis Khan. Dadal is an attractive small community on the border of the Onon-Balj National Park. Genghis Khan's birthplace believed to lie at confluence of the Onon and Balk rivers at Delüün Boldog - 3km north of Bayan-Ovoo (the centre of Dadal district) in the Delüün Boldog hills.</p> <p>Option for one day horse trek for those interested into the Onon-Balj National Park - on the border of Siberia.</p>	<p>Tourist Ger Camp or Tent Camp</p> <p>* Hot shower available at the local town shower house - your own private cubicle with plenty of hot water. Queue with the locals and enjoy experiencing a little of their daily way of life</p>	<p>Roughly 190km on dirt road (approximately 5-6 hours driving time not including stops). Averages of between 30 and 65 km/hr are usual.</p> <p>* This will depend on the road conditions</p>	<p>B/L/D</p>
<p>Day Eight</p> 	<p>Ondorkhan</p> <p>Ondorkhan is the capital of Khentii Aimag - in 2014 Ondorkhaan's name was changed to Chinggis in honour of the man who came from Khentii Aimag.</p> <p>Is Ondorkhan considered a highlight of Mongolia by the guidebook writers? No! But, it is a vibrant town where you can enjoy a hot shower and reconnect to the western world through WI-FI (when it's working!). There's great food in the local restaurants as well as karaoke - that the locals absolutely love!</p>	<p>Provincial Hotel (en-suite but twin share rooms)</p>	<p>Roughly 255km on dirt road (approximately 5-6 hours driving time not including stops) . Averages of between 30 and 65 km/hr are usual.</p> <p>* This will depend on the road conditions</p>	<p>B/L/D</p>

Day Nine



Khodoo Aral / Avarga

Stated in sources as being the first capital of the Mongol Empire. There is also a medicinal spring.

When you stand here remember that Chinggis governed by horseback. That's why so little remains of what is said to be the first capital.

Tent Camp

Roughly 150km on dirt road (approximately 5-6 hours driving time not including stops) . Averages of between 30 and 65 km/hr are usual.

* This will depend on the road conditions

B/L/D

Ulaan Baatar

Day Ten

Return UB

We'll transfer you to your accommodation in UB and the rest of the day will be yours to create your own experience. Remember you could use our UB guide to help you to explore the urban side of Mongolian life in downtown Ulaan Baatar. Alternatively, one of our trip assistants could be made available but please let me know in advance

Accommodation of your choice in UB

Roughly 285km on dirt and asphalt road (approximately 5-6 hours driving time not including stops) . Averages of between 30 and 65 km/hr are usual.

B/L

Map Of Route



Alternatively, use our interactive map

Pricing And Group Size

Group Size - Flexible. Children under 15 travel for free. Those between 15-18 years of age for 50% of the price. Early booking discount of 15% off below price if the US\$ 600 deposit is paid before January 31st 2018.

- 2 Guests US\$ 2170 pp
- 3-4 Guests US\$ 2015 pp
- 5 Guests US\$ 1825 pp
- 6 Guests US\$ 1645 pp

Exclusions

Please be aware that my trip pricing excludes the price of accommodation in UB though. Why? Everyone is different is the standard of accommodation they prefer at the start and end of a trip. As there is now such a variety of hotels in UB it is easier to exclude this cost. I provide a list of ideas covering varying standards and budgets and I can also help with booking. There's everything from a homestay through to Airbnb, US\$10 guesthouses and the Shangri-La!



I provide detailed Pre Departure Guidelines but this is your 'quick (ish) glance' introduction to the EL travel style.

Why this section? I'm not greedy. EL is not a general travel agency and we don't want to be all things to all people. We are an independent micro business driven by the philosophy to support local so that our style of trip is beneficial to all. We use no outside agencies.

We are not perfect. We are just ordinary people trying our best to do something we love. We are not an ever-expanding group of travel professionals. We make mistakes. But we genuinely know and love Mongolia and are willing and eager to learn, develop and strengthen based on feedback from our guests and from all we work with. If it helps, we get repeat custom.

Female Mongolian trip assistant

I am lucky enough to be in a position to run my own business and, as a female, it is important to me to use my skills and influence to improve the prospects for other women. However, we don't source the best guides that work the tourism circuit and that already have guaranteed work with other companies. Part of my business philosophy is to provide training and development opportunities to Mongolian women so instead, we provide opportunities to those that other companies won't take as they don't fit the stereotype or have the professional qualifications.

My 'girls' are dynamic young Mongolian women who are searching for an opportunity to train and develop - they're the future of Mongolia. Or, as some of them are teachers and lecturers, they're inspiring the future of Mongolia. If you want to discuss Mongolia's economic policy then we're probably not for you. But, if you want to spend time with someone who sincerely loves their home country, loves their job and genuinely care about you as our guests they we are for you. Yes, it may get frustrating for you at times but everyone needs to start somewhere and I'm proud to be able to provide that starting block.

Male Mongolian Driver

I employ eight drivers. I know each one personally. They are not necessarily modern city men - they are of the traditional 'strong and silent' type. If you take the time to get to know them, you'll see why I employ them.

As well as handling the challenges of the Mongolian roads and making delicious Mongolian barbecues, they are supremely talented at the Mongolian skill of 'mongolchlokh' - improvising the Mongol way. It's a joy to watch so if your vehicle does break down, don't get angry. Instead, watch the drivers do what they do best - improvisation.

Yes, their English is limited but their role is to handle the Mongolian roads and not to converse fluently in a multitude of languages. They are great, all-round men.

The Russian UAZ / Furgon

It has a high wheel-base, ample luggage space, a sociable layout with forward and backward facing seats, surround side windows and most importantly, impressive off-road capability.

As is typical with all Furgons, due to the design of the vehicle, seat-belts are not available but our Furgons are fitted with grab handles in the passenger area.

Each EL vehicle has it's own simple mobile kitchen, its own sunshade, a small library as well as a 220v inverter/charger. We only put a maximum of three to four EL guests per vehicle.

City Nomads Folding Bike

Each of our Furgon vans carries ONE City Nomads folding bike. This is a complimentary service Turuu and I have decided to offer.

Using the help and knowledge of the Trek bike shop in UB, we opted for a folding bike as it fits well in the van. It is also more adaptable for a range of heights.

They are not mountain bikes and not offered as such. It is just a way for you to take off for an hour or so to explore the local area independently.

Ger Accommodation

As much as possible we use family operated ger camps. Rural families frequently offer accommodation as a way of supplementing their income and providing extra financial security for themselves.

The circumstances and type of ger accommodation provided will change from family to family. Consider them as small rural businesses NOT rustic homestays. Some accommodation is offered by herders (maybe one separate ger), some is offered by 'retired' herders who no longer migrate (two to four separate gers), some by families that live in small town communities and some by families that own small ger camp businesses (mini ger camps of between 7 to 10 gers). On a couple of itineraries it may also involve sleeping on the floor of the family ger on a mat (such as in western Mongolia).

- Be prepared for a variety of standards. Please remember that this is someone's way of life and home and that they provide what they can in relation to their circumstances.
- Most will have one Asian style long-drop/squat toilet which is shared by all. No families have access to running water from a tap so throughout our trips, we make stops at the local town shower houses - your own private cubicle with plenty of hot water.
- Beds will vary in comfort - most rural family members still traditionally sleep on the floor so don't really understand the concept of double memory foam mattresses! The long drop toilets are not there to disgust you - this is what they use daily.
- You should have your own private ger either to share as an EL group (small group trip) or on your own (tailor made trip) but we don't offer exclusivity as this limits the income of the families so do expect other westerners during peak times

Tourist Ger Camps

If requested, we do offer accommodation at the more typical ger camps. We don't book the most luxurious or the most exclusive. Instead, we choose the ones that we think work best for you and your style of trip as well as the locations you are visiting. There WILL be times during your journey when the availability of certain amenities at these ger camps may be lacking. The reasons for this can be varied - low season; high season; electricity/generator problems; remote locations; the simple fact that some amenities are only catered for between certain times of the day. Examples of this could be a ger camp having a lack of hot water, or only having hot water at certain times. Lighting in the evening at some places may be by candle-light, and electricity may not be available.

Camping

Please check your itinerary to see if there is any camping. We use VANGO Hurricane or Nemesis tents. There is also always a kitchen tent and also a toilet tent.

When camping, we do not camp too close to family gers as this intrudes on their privacy. However, local life is only a short walk away. If you like landscapes then you will love our campsites.

If you are a solo traveller, we aim for you to have your own tent with no single supplement required. However, this is a free service so please understand it cannot be guaranteed.

Meals

Each of our vehicles has a simple portable kitchen as it offers you more freedom and flexibility as we're not reliant on anyone else to provide meals. It also means we can have picnic lunches en-route so as we prepare them you can be exploring the local landscapes or sitting and taking in the view.

But, it's not the same as a modern well-equipped kitchen. Also, it's I and the trip assistants that prepare your meals and we're not professional chefs.

We buy as much fresh produce as possible but fresh fruit is not available daily. Please remember where you are and that there will be limitations as to what we can provide.

The meals we provide for you will not be a fusion of modern Asian-Western cuisine as promised by other companies cooked up by a private chef. We frequently include the families we work with in our meals and so cook to please all including the EL drivers who are traditional Mongolian men. I believe that getting a real 'taste' for Mongolia means sampling the local cuisine (see below for those with dietary requirements- don't panic!).

This means you won't be getting bacon sandwiches or Thai curries or paella or Chinese stir fry. We just provide honest, heartening grub.

Interaction / Meeting The Locals

None of the Mongolians we work with are tourism professionals. Mongolians can be warm and welcoming and they can also be taciturn, reserved and very very indifferent. We do not try to change Mongolians or their way of life for our/your own benefit or comfort. We don't ask them to change their daily schedule or to put on an 'act'.

The guidebooks mention the traditional hospitality of Mongolia's nomads, but they don't mention their daily workload and how this often means there is not time to welcome visiting guests with tea. Also, as in our everyday lives, sometimes plans change and a family has to go to UB (for a medical reason etc). We never ask a family to change their daily living for us.

On your feedback, you will almost certainly comment that you will wish you had more interaction with nomadic families but their livestock and their family life must come first. Reverse the situation for a moment and think about the impact on your life if visitors wanted to document everything about you.

I do understand that for our guests it's the interaction from spending time with Mongolian people that provides the most meaningful experience and frequently proves to be a highlight of a trip to Mongolia. But, I don't want to go down the route of asking families to change to accommodate our wishes as this would force a contrived experience.

Yes, there will be tasks in which you can participate. But, you need to be proactive. Offer your time and help. Nothing is planned in any program, because we do not disturb the rhythm of life of the working families visited. We are just trying to share / experience a portion of their life.

21st Century Mongolia Versus Guidebook Mongolia



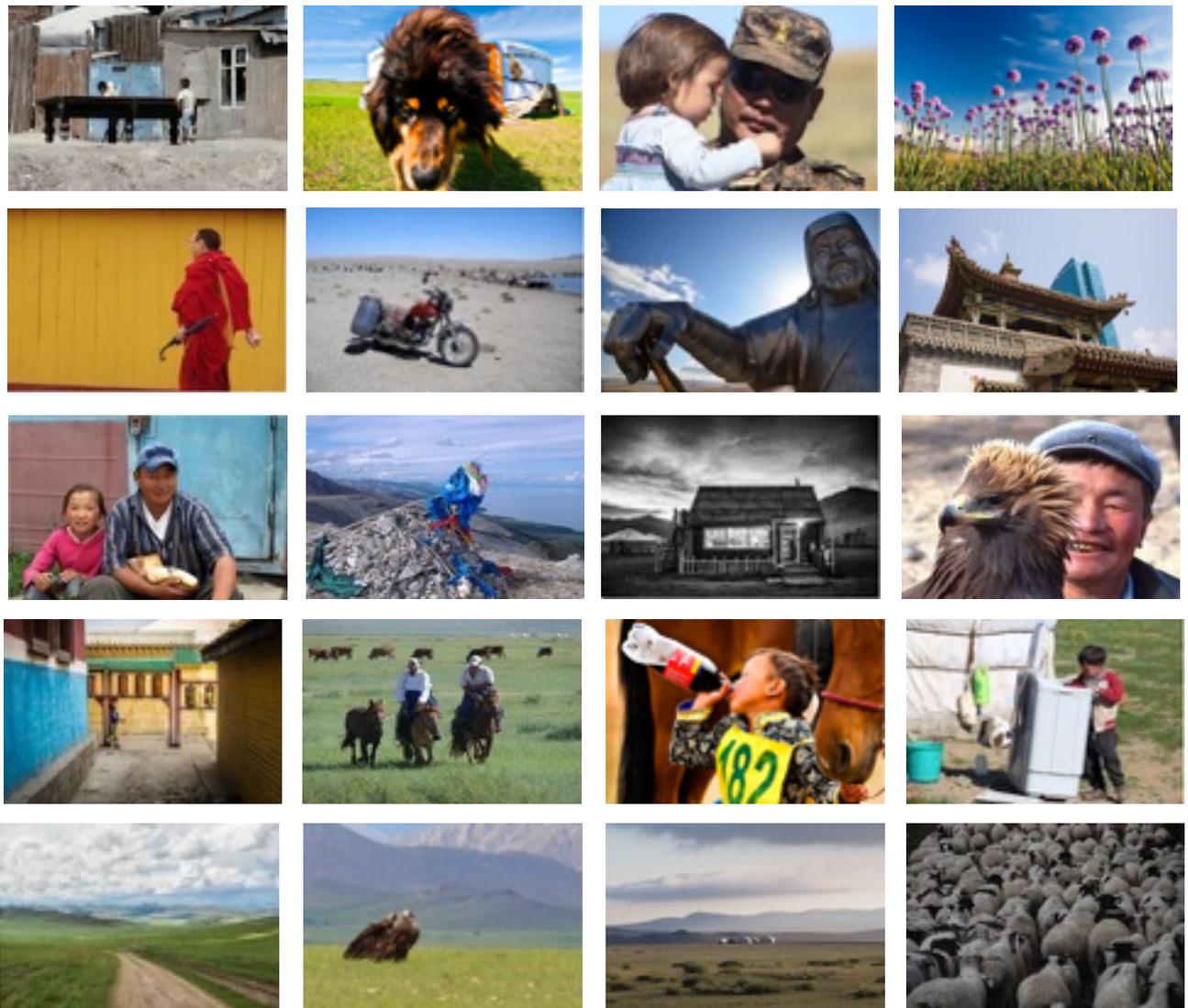
Mongolia is frequently depicted as a pristine untouched wilderness where the traditional nomadic way of life still remains. Well. It is. And it isn't. Our trips focus on 21st Century Mongolia - we try to provide a 'realistic' overview rather than that portrayed by guidebooks and other tour companies. To just want to experience the life of the traditional nomadic way of life is to ignore a majority of the population.

Mongolians are not just divided between those who live in Ulaanbaatar and nomads. It's not just about the minority groups of the Kazakhs or the Tsaatan either. Mongolians live in the cities of Darkhan and Erdenet. They also live in the other provincial centres as well as the smaller town and rural communities. There are teachers and Christians and those with disabilities and policemen and musicians and military personnel and accountants and miners and geologists and drivers and shop owners and construction workers and street cleaners - they are all Mongolians.

Mongolia's herders are under a lot of pressure. Yes, you want to experience their way of life but for them, their most important focus is looking after their livestock. The guidebooks mention the traditional hospitality of Mongolia's nomads, but they don't mention their daily workload and how this often means there is not time to welcome visiting guests with tea. Don't travel to Mongolia expecting to sit each evening discussing with your hosts about their way of life as nomads. It just won't happen.

So. What do you do? Ditch your expectations based on what you've read and watched. Instead come with an open mind and be challenged and surprised. The landscapes are immense and weathered and stark and remarkable. But you will be shocked by the amount of rubbish. Yes, there is still a nomadic way of life. But herders have smartphones. The traditional culture still remains. But the literacy rate hovers around 97% (yes, 97%) and there is a drive for modernity and progress.

But it is a country that will impact on you greatly. Of that there is no doubt.



There's a hunger for knowledge, understanding, and excellence that drives Mongolian society, and things are changing quickly, but remember that a lot of major changes have happened within just a couple generations. Be patient with Mongolia. While it works through the changes that are going to make it better place, savour the gifts it offers and try to spend less time worrying about small issues that aren't being met - such as hot showers or lack of western toilets. Remember, Mongolians are living this life everyday through all seasons not just for a few weeks.

Mongolians are tough people and make living in their country look easy. But, Mongolia is not an easy option - tourism is still in its infancy so there is only a rudimentary tourist infrastructure in place. It's actually quite refreshing but will be challenging for you.

As Jack Weatherford writes in *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World* - 'Compared to the difficulty of daily life for the herders, living permanently in those areas, ours were only the smallest of irritations.'

Any questions, queries or concerns? Just send them across to me at jess@eternal-landscapes.co.uk. I am always happy to be of help!

Jess