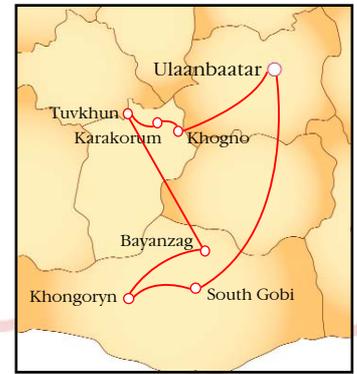


Guided Trek in the Ancient Gobi Desert

The ancient capital of the Mongolian Empire in the 13th century was Karakorum. Karakorum is located on the banks of the Orkhon River and on the northeastern slopes of the Khangai Mountains. Karakorum existed for 140 years but was the capital of the empire for only 32 of those. It served first as a base camp for the leader of the Hereit tribe, before being used by Chinggis Khaan in 1222 as a supply point for the Mongol armies. During Ugudei's reign, the son and successor of Chinggis Khaan, Karakorum become a true urban, diplomatic and commercial center. The town was largely inhabited by foreigners including officers and secretaries of the empire, merchants, diplomats, and artists. Karakorum was burned down by the Chinese Min Dynasty in the late 15th century. Today, almost nothing remains of the imperial site of Karakorum.



Day 1: Ulaanbaatar

The Mongolei Reisen crew will greet you at the Buyant-Ukhaa International Airport for transfer to the 4 star hotel, conveniently situated in downtown Ulaanbaatar. After freshening up from your trip, we will spend the day touring some of the capital's most noteworthy sites starting out at the capital of Mongolian Buddhism, Gandan Monastery. The monastery was one of the few preserved through the 20th century and features a spectacular 25 meter, 20 ton statue of the Megjid Janraysig Buddha. From here, we will go to the Natural History Museum which holds the skeletons of several of the unique dinosaurs discovered in Mongolia, including the famed 'Fighting Dinosaurs' skeletons - considered to be one of the most unique in the world. The heart of Ulaanbaatar, Sukhbaatar Square, is just a short walk away. Here we will see the statue of Sukhbaatar, the hero of the Mongolian revolution, the Parliament house, National Opera, and City Hall. Afterwards we'll

visit Zaisan Hill, which offers great views of the city. In the evening, you will attend a performance of traditional dancing and khoomii (Mongolian throat singing).

Overnight in hotel. **(L, D)**

Day 2: South Gobi

We'll start our trip with an early-morning flight to the South Gobi Desert, a dramatic landscape of mountains, rock and sand, dotted with grazing camels and herders' gers. We'll visit the remarkable "Vulture's Gorge" within the Gobi Gurvan Saikhan National Park, an exotic setting of green meadows and dense glaciers situated deep within the arid Gobi. At times, the caverns fill with several meters of ice, forming a stark contrast to the desert surrounding it. If we're lucky, we might see some of this area's abundant wildlife, including the rare argali sheep and mountain goat.

Overnight in ger camp **(B, L, D)**

Day 3: Khongoryn Els sand dunes

We drive west along the Altai Mountains to Khongoriin Els, Mongolia's largest sand dunes, reaching heights of approximately 800 meters and known locally as the "singing dunes" because the sands produce an eerie rumbling sound as they shift slowly in the wind.

Overnight in ger camp close to the dunes **(B, L, D)**

Day 4: Bayanzag (Flaming Cliffs) / Ongi Monastery

One of Mongolia's more noteworthy sites is the ancient rock formations at Bayanzag, made famous by American scientist Roy Chapman Andrews's discovery here of complete dinosaur skeletons and eggs in the 1920s. From here we travel to the site of Ongi Monastery - formerly home to a community of more than 500 Buddhist monks - whose ruined structures testify to the devastating religious purges of the 1930s. On the way to Ongi Monastery you will have the opportunity to visit a local camel-

breeding family and learn about their unique nomadic lifestyle.

Overnight in ger camp (B, L, D)

Day 5: Tuvkhun Monastery

After breakfast we travel to the outstanding Tuvkhun Monastery, located at the peak of a remote, wooded mountain. A short hike up the mountain path leads to this relaxing location where we will learn about the history of this important pilgrimage site and the heritage of its founder, the great religious figure Undur Gegeen Zanabazar, who produced many celebrated works of art at this site after choosing Tuvkhun for his meditation retreat in 1651. With an exquisitely peaceful view over the surrounding larch forest from an altitude of more than 2000 metres, you will have no trouble understanding why Tuvkhun is considered such a sacred location.

Overnight in ger camp (B, L, D)

Day 6: Karakorum

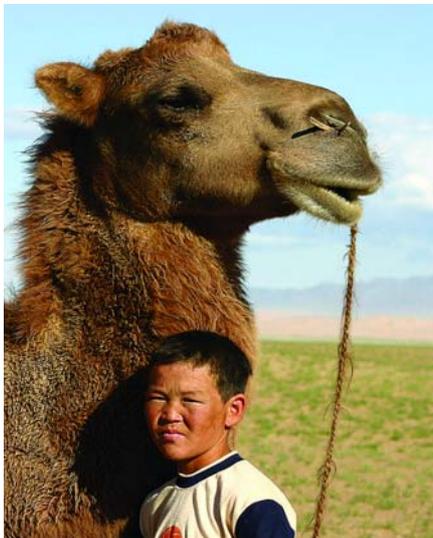
Our next stop is Karakorum, the former capital of the world's greatest land empire, established by Chinggis Khaan. Here we will tour the fascinating Erdene Zuu Buddhist Monastery, a religious complex spanning over 400 square meters surrounded by 108 stupas, which, at its peak, was home to over 1000 monks. The original monastery was destroyed in the communist purges of the early 20th century but work has been carried out to rebuild the monastery on its original foundation. It was first established on the ruins of Karakorum in 1586 by Abtai Sain Khan the grandfather of Saint Zanabazar, as the first architectural example of a new style of Buddhism he founded called "Yellow" Buddhism. The site has some of the best works of religious art and architecture in Mongolia and evening strolls through the grounds provide a great opportunity to immerse yourself in the amazing history of the city.

Overnight in ger camp (B, L, D)

Day 7: Khogno Khan Mountain

The day starts with a drive to the imposing Khogno Khan Mountain, one of the top attractions of Mongolia. The panoramic view from the mountain will give an unforgettable impression of Mongolia's size. On a clear day, we'll be able to see over 200 kilometres over the landscape. We will then visit the Mongol Els Sand Dunes, located unexpectedly in the middle of the great steppe, and tour the small Ovgon Monastery, nestled in the mountain cliffs.

Overnight in ger camp (B, L, D)



Day 8: Ulaanbaatar

The journey concludes in Ulaanbaatar, with the remainder of the day free for rest or shopping. Overnight in hotel (B, L, D)

Day 9: Departure

Our adventure together ends with your transfer back to the Buyant-Ukhaa International Airport for your departure.

Departures:

- 05.06.06 - 13.06.06
- 17.07.06 - 25.07.06
- 21.08.06 - 29.08.06
- 21.05.07 - 29.05.07
- 04.06.07 - 12.06.07
- 23.07.07 - 31.07.07
- 24.07.07 - 29.07.07
- 06.08.07 - 14.08.07
- 20.08.07 - 28.08.07
- 03.09.07 - 11.09.07

Tour includes:

- * 2 nights in 4 star hotel
- * 6 nights in ger camps
- * 3 meals per day
- * **Mongolei Reisen team:**
English speaking guide and driver
- * All domestic transportation
- * Local entry fees

Tour excludes:

- * Personal items
- * International travel + tax
- * Travel insurance
- * Alcoholic drinks

