

ITINERARY

Mongolia: The Gobi Desert, Steppe & Taiga

June 26-July 14, 2021



Wetlands such as Elsen Tasarkhai and Ugii Lake provide habitat for the petite Demielle Crane. These beautiful birds are fairly widespread in Mongolia, and we've seen them well on our tours. Photograph by guide Phil Gregory.

We include here information for those interested in this 2021 Field Guides Mongolia: The Gobi Desert, Steppe & Taiga tour:

- a general introduction to the tour
- a description of the birding areas to be visited on the tour
- an abbreviated daily itinerary with some indication of the nature of each day's birding outings

These additional materials will be made available to those who register for the tour:

- an annotated list of the birds recorded on a previous year's Field Guides trip to the area, with comments by guide(s) on notable species or sightings (may be downloaded from our web site)
- a detailed information bulletin with important logistical information and answers to questions regarding accommodations, air arrangements, clothing, currency, customs and immigration, documents, health precautions, and personal items
- a reference list
- a Field Guides checklist for preparing for and keeping track of the birds we see on the tour
- after the conclusion of the tour, a list of birds seen on the tour

The very romantic name Mongolia probably conjures up images of endless steppe grasslands, the vast wastes of the Gobi Desert and wild tribal horsemen. This is after all the land of Genghis (Chinggis or Chingiz) Khan and his successors, the dreaded Mongol hordes sweeping down on the civilizations of China, India, Central Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Europe and only being halted at the siege of Vienna in 1536. Yet after this shattering impact on history, the Mongols faded into obscurity and today Mongolia is a little known land, sandwiched far away between Russia and China in the heart of Asia. It is still an almost empty land of awesome landscapes, where a simple, nomadic lifestyle remains the norm, a land of vast and heavily overgrazed steppe grasslands, profuse wildflowers and fantastic birdlife.

For anyone interested in Asian or Palaearctic birds, or in travel to a very different location, Mongolia has a great deal to offer. It has a tiny population of only three million scattered across a huge area and is one of the least densely settled countries on earth. Happily, and despite the impact of various forms of communism, it is still a true wilderness, where

much of the wildlife still remains. The socio-political systems are fast changing, but Mongolia remains a fascinating transition zone of east Asia, where to the north is the southern edge of the great Siberian boreal forest (or taiga), in the centre the seemingly endless steppe and in the south the daunting sands of the Gobi Desert. As if this was not enough, you can then add to the diversity the vast mountains of the Altai, Gobi Altai, Khangay and Khentiy, and a multiplicity of lakes and marshes rich in wildfowl, shorebirds and cranes.

We want to be sure you are on the right tour! Below is a description of the physical requirements of the tour. If you are concerned about the difficulty, please contact us about this and be sure to fully explain your concerns. We want to make sure you have a wonderful time with us, so if you are uncomfortable with the requirements, just let us know and we can help you find a better fitting tour! Field Guides will not charge you a change or cancellation fee if you opt out within 10 days of depositing.

Physical requirements of this tour

- **TRAILS & WALKING:** Moderate amounts of walking (up to 2-3 miles per day), mostly along roadsides or tracks, in some cases with moderate elevational change (usually gentle rather than steep grades). In some instances, we walk off the road onto trails (optional).
- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES:** We regularly drive for long periods on this tour, sometimes on rough (corrugated) roads. Participants should be able to step up (and step down) 10-12 inches to get into and out of our vehicles. Overnight accommodation is often in traditional ger tented camps (in two locations, with en-suite bathroom). Gers are heated with wood-fired stoves, if required, and have regular beds. The air is very dry in some regions, so moisturizers are recommended.
- **PACE:** After breakfast (set for 5:30-6:00 a.m.), we will bird until lunchtime. Normally, we bird after lunch and continue traveling to our next destination.
- **WEATHER:** Temperatures will range from the low 40s to 90s F (10-25 C). Rain showers are a possibility, and snow is even possible at higher elevations. Windy conditions are to be expected.
- **ELEVATION:** We reach elevations of up to 7000 feet (2300 m).
- **VEHICLE SEATING:** So that each participant has equal opportunity during our travel, we employ a seat rotation system on all tours. Participants will need to be flexible enough to maneuver to the back of the vehicle on occasion. Those who experience motion sickness will need to bring adequate medication for the duration of the tour, as we are not able to reserve forward seats for medical conditions.
- **BATHROOM BREAKS:** Participants should be prepared to make comfort stops in nature, as there are simply no other options (away from our lodgings) on many sections of this tour's route.
- **OPTING OUT:** Where we are staying multiple days in the same lodging, participants can easily opt to sit out a day or sometimes a half-day. This will not be possible on days when we are changing locations (as we do often on this tour).

Additional Information:

Accommodations on this tour vary from a modern-style hotel in Ulaanbaatar, to ger lodges in the countryside. The hotel in Ulaanbaatar is of good standard. The ger lodges are quite simple, consisting of large very clean, round trelliswork canvas and felt rooms called gers each with several Mongolian style, attractively painted beds (although we shall have just one or two persons per ger), and a wood-fired heating stove. In addition to the gers, there are separate dining and toilet/shower buildings, and two of our ger camps now have facilities with en-suite bathrooms available.

The main tar roads are quite good but the dirt tracks are generally somewhat corrugated (and often completely lacking in some places, where one merely drives across the steppe or desert!). Our transport consists of a Toyota 24-seater bus for most of the trip, and sturdy 4x4 vehicles up at Terelj. These take 5 or 6 people including the driver. Expect some dust in the desert zones, and corrugated road surfaces en route to the Gobi, but nothing too drastic.

Pre-trip Cultural Tour: Mongolica our ground agents have set up very enjoyable and interesting pre-trip cultural tours around Ulaan Bataar, seeing the National Museum, cashmere shops, a fantastic Buddhist temple that survived the Russian destruction of Mongolian culture, and a display of dancing, music, throat singing and a contortionist (a big deal in Mongolia!) Field Guides can set this up for you as required and our clients in the past two years have found it very worthwhile.

If you are uncertain about whether this tour is a good match for your abilities, please don't hesitate to contact our office; if they cannot directly answer your queries, they will put you in touch with the guide for the tour.

About the Birding Areas



The wide range of habitats is reflected in an exciting avifauna which encompasses both Siberian and Central Asian forms, including a number which are unique to Mongolia and its immediate surroundings. Prime specialties include Altai Snowcock (very hard), Black-billed Capercaillie (also hard), Oriental Plover, Asian Dowitcher, a chance of Relict Gull, Pallas's Sandgrouse, Mongolian Lark, Kozlov's and Brown Accentors, Black Redstart, Red-throated Thrush, Chinese Bush Warbler, Azure Tit, Henderson's Ground Jay, Saxaul Sparrow, Small Snowfinch, Godlewski's Grey-necked, Pine and Pallas's Buntings, while a rich supporting cast includes Swan Goose, Stejneger's Scoter, Pallas's Fish Eagle, Upland Buzzard, Amur Falcon, Demoiselle and White-naped Cranes, Mongolian Gull, Hill Pigeon, Asian Short-toed Lark, Pale Martin, Blyth's Pipit, Eyebrowed Thrush, Thick-billed Warbler, White-crowned Penduline Tit, Steppe Grey Shrike, White-cheeked Starling, Mongolian Finch and both Scarlet and Long-tailed Rosefinch.

Spring in Mongolia (which really only commences in mid-May!) is a delightful season when birds are in breeding plumage, song fills the air and migrants are still passing through on their way north to Siberia. Excellent birding and travel through wide-open spaces with incredibly few friendly people make for an unforgettable experience. This is quite an adventure, where the birds are amidst some of the most remarkable wilderness scenery on our planet! Roads are pretty poor dirt tracks in most of the country, so it takes a long time to cover any distance, but we have allowed for this in the itinerary and so there will still be lots of time for birding. We will start our birding in the vicinity of the capital Ulaanbaatar (or Ulan Bataar), where Azure Tit and Pine Bunting are to be found, and we will make a start on the waterfowl amongst the ponds.

The great Siberian boreal forest with its wonderful spring wildflowers will be visited at the start of the tour at **Terelj NP**, with forest and forest steppe birds such as Oriental Cuckoo, Eurasian Hoopoe, a good range of woodpeckers including Lesser-spotted, Great-spotted, White-backed and perhaps Eurasian Three-toed and Black Woodpecker. Other birds include Great Tit, Willow Tit, Pine Bunting, Red-throated Thrush, Siberian Rubythroat, Siberian Stonechat, White-cheeked Starling, Dusky Warbler, Greenish Warbler, Yellow-browed Warbler, Taiga Flycatcher, Asian Brown Flycatcher, Eastern Buzzard (*japonicus*), Blyth's Pipit. There are two challenging species here, Chinese Bush Warbler and Black-billed Capercaillie, and finding them will depend on local conditions. We plan a night at a very remote and isolated small ger camp, which is in a good area for Black-billed Capercaillie, also Three-toed Woodpecker and maybe Eurasian Eagle Owl. It is a lovely quiet spot, and should make a great start to the tour.

Khustai (Hustai) Nuruu National Park is where Przewalski's Wild Horse (*Equus przewalskii*) is being re-introduced in the country. Bird species here should include Golden Eagle, Saker Falcon, Cinereous Vulture, Himalayan Vulture, Meadow Bunting, Daurian Partridge, Amur Falcons, Eurasian Hobby, Daurian Jackdaws, Black Stork, and Isabelline Shrike, Mongolian Lark and Meadow Bunting. After extensive birding, we will drive to a small spring where the wild horses drink water.

Wetlands around **Dashinchilen** and **Ugii Lake** en route to Kharkorin hold some exciting species, and this is where we saw both Relict Gull and Siberian White Crane in 2017, though in 2018 an outbreak of foot and mouth disease prevented

access to one key site for the crane. White-naped, Demoiselle and Common Crane can also be seen, as well as various waterfowl including Ruddy and Common Shelduck, Red-crested Pochard, Garganey, maybe Falcated Duck and Eastern Spot-billed Duck. Whooper Swan is likely and genuine wild Mute Swan, as well as breeding Swan and Bar-headed Goose.

We fly to Dalanzadgad town in the Gobi Altai, near **Yolyn Am** (High Mountain), which may give us the spectacular Lammergeier (Bearded Vulture), Himalayan Vultures plus Mongolian (Kozlov's) Accentor, Sulphur-bellied Warbler, Beautiful Rosefinch and Wallcreeper. Altai Snowcock is one of the most challenging species for the trip but we hope to see it in this beautiful area.

Moving westwards to **Khongoryn Els National Park**, we will explore areas of desert, sand dunes and the strange saxaul 'forest', haunt of the rare Saxaul Sparrow as well as Steppe Grey Shrike. As we travel onwards through the wide-open emptiness of the Gobi Desert, we will investigate areas of steppe and scrub, searching out the specialities of the area including the strange Henderson's Ground Jay and Asian Desert Warbler. A highlight of our journey will be the exploration of several brackish steppe lakes to the north of the Gobi Altai. Here we will have reached the breeding grounds of the fabled Relict Gull, and we can also look for Swan and Bar-headed Geese, Pallas's Fish Eagle, Demoiselle Crane, Pallas's Gull, Asian Dowitcher and many other interesting birds. It is also good for mammals with a couple of gazelle species, Ibex and Argali and various jerboas and jerbils, plus a chance of Asiatic Wild Ass or kulan.



The powerful Steppe Eagle is one of several eagle species we'll see on the tour. In some years they can be plentiful; we saw as many as 30 in a field that was being plowed on our 2017 tour! Photograph by participant Becky Hansen.

Itinerary for Mongolia 2020

Day 1, Sat, 26 Jun. Depart US for Mongolia. If you have the time, we urge you to come a day or two early in order to rest up before the tour. City tours can be easily arranged for those interested, and these have been very popular.

Day 2, Sun, 27 Jun. Arrival in Ulaanbaatar. Upon arrival at Chinggis Khaan International Airport in Ulaanbaatar, capital of Mongolia, you will be met by our local representatives, and transfer to our hotel (which is some 30-45 minutes away, depending on the traffic). For those who arrive in the morning, we will try to make an afternoon trip to Tuul River Forest and a gravel pond to see Azure Tit, Azure-winged Magpie and some waterfowl in the wetlands. The main tour begins with a Welcome Dinner at one of the most famous restaurants in Ulaanbaatar before returning to our comfortable western style Zuchi Hotel or similar.

Day 3, Mon, 28 Jun. Birding around Ulaanbaatar. Today, we will visit the riparian woodlands at the Tuul River and some thickets at Bogd Mountain, with good chances for Demoiselle Crane, Amur Falcon, White-crowned Penduline, Tit, Arctic Warbler and Azure Tit. Overnight at Zuchi Hotel or similar.

Day 4, Tue, 29 Jun. Ulaanbaatar to Gorkhi-Terelj NP at Shar Guy. Our goal today is to find Boreal forest and forest steppe birds, including Oriental Cuckoo, Eurasian Hoopoe, Great spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Willow Tit, Pine Bunting, Red-throated Thrush, Siberian Rubythroat, Siberian Stonechat, White-cheeked Starling, Dusky Warbler, Greenish Warbler, Yellow-browed Warbler, Taiga Flycatcher, Asian Brown Flycatcher, Eastern Buzzard (*japonicus*), Blyth's Pipit. There are two challenging easily missed species, Chinese Bush Warbler and Black-billed Capercaillie here, however, finding them will depend on local conditions. Our overnight will be at the small remote Khadag ger camp near the Black-billed Capercaillie site; we hope that the Capercaillie may still be lekking at this time, which is the reason we have scheduled this as the first stop in the tour. Because the camp is remote, there is no electricity, so be sure you have a flashlight with you.

Day 5, Wed, 30 Jun. Shar Guy to Terelj. This morning we will drive to the east of our tourist camp to get to riparian river forest. We will look for Eurasian Eagle Owl at a sandstone cliff site, Three-toed Woodpecker, Black Woodpecker, Long-tailed Rosefinch, Olive-backed Pipit, Common Rosefinch, and Taiga Flycatcher in breeding plumage. Overnight in Tumen Khaan tourist ger camp near birding sites.

Day 6, Thu, 1 Jul. Tumen Khaan area. We will spend today birding boreal forest sites, plus riparian woodland looking for Red-throated Thrush, Lesser-spotted and White-backed Woodpecker, and maybe roosting Ural Owl. Overnight at Tumen Khaan.



At Khustai National Park, we'll see a re-introduced herd of Przewalski's Wild Horses. These beautiful animals were nearly extinct, but are currently doing well, with about 200 roaming the steppes in Khustai.

Photograph by participant Becky Hansen.

Day 7, Fri, 2 Jul. Terelj to Hustai NP. After breakfast, we will drive to Khustai Nuruu National Park where Przewalski's Wild Horse (*Equus przewalskii*) is being re-introduced in the country. Bird species should include Golden Eagle, Saker Falcon, Cinereous Vulture, Himalayan Vulture, Meadow Bunting, Daurian Partridge, Amur Falcons, Eurasian Hobby, Booted Eagle, Daurian Jackdaws, Black Stork, and Isabelline Shrike, Mongolian Lark and Meadow Bunting. After extensive birding, we will drive to a small spring where the wild horses drink water. In the late evening, we'll be back to the park restaurant and have a dinner with Mongolian cold beers. Overnight in Hustai tourist ger camp.

Day 8, Sat, 3 Jul. Hustai National Park. Daurian Partridge will be one of the targets today, as well as exciting mammals like Argali, Red Deer and Mongolian (White-tailed) Gazelle, and a supporting cast of buntings, raptors including Cinereous Vulture and Lammergeier, and Pied Wheatear. Overnight in Hustai tourist ger camp.

Day 9, Sun, 4 Jul. Khustai to Dashinchilen/Tsargaan wetlands and then Ugii Lake. We'll do some early birding in the morning in Khustai NP. After breakfast, we head to the west to the steppe lake complex at Dashinchilen/Tsargaan where we will look for a number of ducks and shorebirds. Key species today will be Bar-headed Goose, Swan Goose,

Grey-lag Goose, Common (*longipennis*) and White-winged Black Terns, Demoiselle Crane, White-naped Crane, Common Crane, Asian Dowitcher, Pallas's Reed Bunting, Citrine, White and Yellow Wagtails. We will reach a freshwater lake called Ugii Nuur in the evening. Overnight in Ugii Lake Tourist ger camp.

Day 10, Mon, 5 Jul. Ugii Lake to Kharkorin. Next morning, we will drive around Ugii Lake, where on the shoreline we can see White-winged Black Tern, Mongolian Gull, Common Ringed Plover, Bar-headed and Swan Geese, and sometimes Pallas's Fish Eagle and White-tailed Eagle. On the western side of the lake, there is a river delta where we may find more Swan Geese, plus possible Pochard and sometimes Asian Dowitcher. Near our ger camp, we'll find nesting Rock Sparrow, Small Snowfinch and Upland Buzzard. We may also find White-winged (Stejneger's) Scoter and perhaps even Dalmatian Pelican. Then, we drive several hours to Kharkorin town where there are ruins of the Great Mongol Empire dating back to the time of Chinggis Khaan when this was the capital of Mongolia. Overnight in Anja Tourist Ger Camp.

Day 11, Tue, 6 Jul. Kharkorin to Elsen Tasarkhai steppe wetlands. A visit to the splendid Erdenezuu Buddhist temple will be made, where Blyth's Pipit nests, and there are some good souvenir shops that have inexpensive items. Birding in the planted sea buckthorn shrubs near this town can be rewarding, and we might find some late migrants such as Greenish, and Yellow-browed Warblers, flycatchers, etc.

We will then drive to the east to get to sand dunes and a wetland in the middle of a steppe area. We should see the breeding Arctic (Black-throated) Loon/Diver, Eastern Marsh Harrier, White-naped Crane, Bar-headed Goose, Oriental Reed Warbler and Chinese Spot-billed Duck in ponds with reeds, with a chance of Asian Dowitcher. Here we'll stay in a simple clean tourist camp at Hoyer Zagal, which may now have en-suite gers available.

Day 12, Wed, 7 Jul. Elsen Tasarkhai to Ulaanbaatar.

The morning will be spent in the Elsen Tasarkhai area and in the afternoon we will head back to Ulaanbaatar. After checking into the hotel in UB, the large bags will go ahead with the vehicles to meet up with us again in Dalanzadgad. We will fly to Dalanzadgad tomorrow (Day 13). Overnight at the comfortable Zuchi Hotel or similar in Ulaanbaatar.

Day 13, Thu, 8 Jul. Ulaanbaatar to Dalanzadgad and Khanbogd ger camp. We'll take an early morning flight from Ulaanbaatar to Dalanzadgad (1 hr. 20 min), then meet up with our driver, guide, bus and the bags before heading out to a steppe area nearby to check for Oriental Plover. Then we will head to our remote ger camp, which has a bird-rich rocky valley adjacent to it, where we will seek Rufous-tailed Rock-thrush, (Eastern) Black Redstart, Mongolian Finch, White-winged Snowfinch and both Grey-necked and Godlewski's Bunting. Night in Khanbogd tourist ger camp.



White-winged Snowfinch is a bird of the higher elevations; it has a spotty distribution throughout central Europe and Asia. We've found these finches in Yolyn Am, near our Khanbogd ger camp.

Photograph by participant Becky Hansen.

Day 14, Fri, 9 Jul. Yolyn Am, Gobi Altai. We will spend the morning at Yolyn Am, trying for Altai Snowcock early on. We can expect good views of Lammergeier (Bearded Vulture) and Himalayan Vultures, plus Mongolian and Brown Accentor, and maybe Sulphur-bellied Warbler, Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch and Wallcreeper. Altai Snowcock is one of the most challenging species for the trip, but we have a slight chance to see it in this area. This is also a good mammal area, with chances of both Ibex and Argali. Later we can visit the Mukhart Shivet valley to see Barred Warbler, and maybe a nest of Lammergeier, plus some remnant ice patches. Overnight in Khanbogd tourist ger camp.

Day 15, Sat, 10 Jul. Khongoryn Els - Gobi desert sand dunes and saxaul forest. We have a long drive today on dusty tracks, but will make stops for any interesting birds or scenery along the way. We will arrive at our next location, the famous dunes of Khongoryn Els, in the afternoon. We will find many of the Gobi species here, including, Desert Wheatear, Asian Desert Warbler, Henderson's Ground Jay, Saxaul Sparrow, Long-legged Buzzard, and Great Grey Shrike. The remainder of the day is free to relax following the drive. Overnight Gobi Erdene ger camp, hopefully staying in the new en-suite cabins there!



The Saxaul Sparrow is found in association with the Saxaul Tree. We've seen them in the wet meadows near the dunes of Khongoryn Els. Photograph by guide Phil Gregory.

Day 16, Sun, 11 Jul. Khongoryn Els and Gobi Erdene.

We will have a full day looking for the Gobi species found in this interesting area, and visiting the wetland meadows adjacent to the great sand dunes. Birds should include Saxaul Sparrow, Hill Pigeon, Lesser Kestrel and both Daurian and Grey Shrike. Mammals can include Black-tailed Gazelle, Gobi Jerboa, Great Gerbil, Tolai Hare and the delightful Long-eared Hedgehog. Overnight Gobi Erdene ger camp.

Day 17, Mon, 12 Jul. Gobi Erdene to Flaming Cliffs.

Today, we travel over the remote desert and rocky mountain outliers to the famous dinosaur site at Flaming Cliffs, where the very first dinosaur eggs were discovered in the 1920's. We will make a short visit to the site in the afternoon. Godlewski's Bunting and Long-legged Buzzard are likely, and there is a good chance for Oriental Plover and Pallas's Sandgrouse. An area of cultivation with a poplar tree shelterbelt can be good for migrants; in 2018 we saw Chinese Pond Heron, Eurasian Golden Oriole and Steppe Grey Shrike here. Overnight at Gobi Tours ger camp or back to Dalanzadgad and the hotel if the flight is early.

Day 18, Tue, 13 Jul. To Ulaanbaatar. The morning will be spent birding between Flaming Cliffs and Dalanzadgad, with a visit to a city park and hopefully the Dalan Bulag springs (depending on flight times). In the afternoon, we will fly back to Ulaanbaatar city, where we will spend the final night of the tour in a comfortable hotel, and our bags will catch up with us that evening. We will have a farewell dinner together at a famous Mongolian restaurant. Overnight Zuchi Hotel or similar.

Day 19, Wed, 14 Jul. Transfer to the airport for your homeward flight. Depending on traffic, the transfer should take around 30-45 minutes. Plan to arrive some 2 hours before your flight, and allow for traffic delays! You will arrive back home in the US on the same date, after recovering that lost day by once again crossing the International Date Line—in the opposite direction. Happy Travels!

About Your Guide

Phil Gregory was born in the UK and became a birder when the steam engines were scrapped and birding offered a way to travel and look for wonderful things. The quest for birds has led to many forays in Europe, Africa, Asia, Australasia, and the Pacific. He and his wife, Sue, worked as teachers for eight years in Nigeria and Zambia, and for seven years in Papua New Guinea. Since 1997 they have lived in Australia.

Phil's major interests are field identification, vocalizations, and the geographic distribution of birds. He has contributed to various reference books including *The Handbook of Birds of the World* and has now written 3 books: *The Lynx Field Guide to the Birds of New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago* (2017), *A Field Guide to the Birds of North Queensland* (with photos by Jun Matsui in 2018) and a family monograph on *Birds of Paradise and Bowerbirds* (2020). He also published and now maintains three on-line checklists, for Australia and its island territories, New Guinea and associated islands and the Solomon Islands.

Phil and his wife, Sue sold the well-known Cassowary House at Kuranda, near Cairns in far north Queensland in early 2020, and have relocated to a rainforest property near Malanda on the Atherton Tablelands, which they share with his son and his wife plus a grandson and two dogs. Look for Phil guiding Field Guides tours to Japan, Taiwan, Cambodia, Ghana, Mongolia and Madagascar.

Visit <https://fieldguides.com/our-staff/> for Phil's complete tour schedule; just click on his photo.

*"I had a wonderful time on the tour. Guide **Phil Gregory** is a world-class bird expert with a great personality who did an outstanding job as an expert guide and traveling partner."*
R.W., Papua New Guinea

Financial Information

FEE: \$7475 from Ulaanbaatar

DEPOSIT: \$750

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: February 26, 2021

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$750

LIMIT: 8

Special Note: Tour fees may be subject to change due to the global economic effects of COVID-19.

We have published the itinerary and price for this tour with the understanding that during these uncertain times we are likely to encounter unforeseen changes. Travel and hospitality companies all over the world have been adversely affected by the pandemic, and there is no guarantee that all of the lodging and transportation we have booked for this tour will still be available at the time of departure. We hope to maintain our services as indicated in our itinerary as well as our published tour fee. However, if changes are required we will make every effort to maintain the quality of the itinerary as it is published with the most appropriate substitutions available. Should any necessary changes result in an increase in service rates to us, we reserve the right to pass on those increases in fees to the tour participant.

Other Things You Need to Know

TOUR MANAGER: The manager for this tour is Sharon Mackie. Sharon will be happy to assist you in preparing for the tour. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call her!

DOCUMENTS: A current **passport** valid beyond the date of your return is necessary for US citizens to enter Mongolia. We recommend that your passport be valid for at least 6 months beyond the dates of your return, as regulations vary from country to country, and are subject to change. Please make sure your passport has at least six months validity beyond your return date. No visa is currently necessary if traveling as a tourist for under 90 days.

If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Mongolian consulate nearest you for entry requirements. Information about consulates and entry requirements is generally available online or you can contact us and we will be happy to look this up for you. Passports should have an adequate number of blank pages for the entire journey. Some countries require a blank page for their stamp and as a precaution it is best to have one blank page per country you will visit or transit.

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: This tour starts and ends in Ulaanbaatar. Field Guides is a full service travel agency and your tour manager will be happy to assist you with flights to join this tour. Field Guides does not charge a service fee for these services to clients booking a tour. However, we understand that tech-savvy clients often prefer to shop online or that you may wish to use mileage to purchase tickets. Regardless of which method you choose, your tour manager will be happy to provide assistance regarding ticket prices and schedules, along with rental cars and extra hotel nights as needed.

Please be sure to check with your tour manager prior to purchasing your ticket to make sure the flights you have chosen will work well with the tour itinerary and that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. Once purchased, most airline tickets are non-refundable and carry a penalty to change. Field Guides cannot be responsible for these fees.

Also, it is imperative that we receive a copy of your comprehensive flight itinerary—including any and all flights not covered in the tour fee—so that we may track you in the event of missed connections, delays, or other mishaps.

LUGGAGE: Please be aware that many airlines have recently modified their luggage policies and are charging additional fees for checked bags. Updates could easily occur before your departure, so you may wish to contact your airline to verify the policy. Additional charges for bags on any flights, whether these are covered by the tour fee or not, will be the client's responsibility.

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The **tour fee** is \$7475 for one person in double occupancy from Ulaanbaatar. It includes all lodging from Day 2 through Day 18, all meals from dinner on Day 2 through dinner on Day 18 (Breakfast is covered in the tour fee on Day 19). Please enjoy breakfast on Day 19 on your own schedule, if your flight departure time allows for it.), all ground transportation, all internal flights, entrance fees, tips for baggage handling and meal service, and the guide services of the tour leader(s).

The above fee does not include your airfare to and from Ulaanbaatar, airport taxes, visa fees, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, optional tips to local drivers, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The **single supplement** for the tour is \$750. If you do not have a roommate but wish to share, we will try to pair you with a roommate from the tour; but if none is available, you will be billed for the single supplement. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee. The single supplement is calculated by taking the actual cost of a single room and subtracting one-half the cost of a double room (plus any applicable taxes).

TOUR LIMITS: Our limits are firm and we don't exceed the limit by one to accommodate a couple when only one space remains open. However, on occasion, we will send along a guide in training on a tour. In these cases one seat in the van or bus will be taken by the guide in training. Our guides will have a rotation system within the vehicle so that clients share the inconvenience equally. We hope this minor inconvenience will be more than offset by the advantages of having another guide along.

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, complete the Registration/Release and Indemnity form and return it with a **deposit of \$750** per person. If registering by phone, a deposit must be received within fourteen days, or the space will be released. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to departure, or **by February 26, 2021. We will bill you for the final payment at either 120 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later.** Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

SMOKING: Almost all of our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. If you smoke, please be sensitive to the group and refrain from smoking at meals, in vehicles, and in proximity to the group on trails and elsewhere.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Refund of deposit and payment, less \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 120 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 119 and 70 days before the departure date, 50% of the tour fee is refundable. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable.

This policy only applies to payments made to Field Guides for tour fees (and any services included in those fees). Airline tickets not included in the tour fee and purchased separately often carry penalties for cancellation or change, or are sometimes totally non-refundable. Additionally, if you take out trip insurance the cost of the insurance is not refundable so it is best to purchase the policy just prior to making full payment for the tour or at the time you purchase airline tickets, depending upon the airlines restrictions.

Field Guides reserves the right to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute in case of emergency another guide for the original one.

TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE: We strongly recommend you consider purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or your family prior to or during a trip. Because we must remit early (and substantial) tour deposits to our suppliers, you acknowledge and agree that we will not issue a refund when cancellation occurs within 70 days of departure, and only a partial refund from 70 to 119 days prior to departure (see CANCELLATION POLICY). In addition, the Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and if it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. US medical insurance plans seldom cover health costs incurred outside the United States unless supplemental coverage is purchased. Furthermore, US Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States.

When making a decision regarding health insurance, Americans should consider that many foreign doctors and hospitals require payment in cash prior to providing service and that a medical evacuation to the United States may cost well in excess of \$50,000. Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas often face extreme difficulties. When consulting with your insurer prior to your trip, please ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas healthcare provider or whether you will be reimbursed later for expenses that you incur.

US citizens will receive information from us regarding optional tour cancellation/emergency medical insurance. Our agent, CSA, will insure for trip cancellation and interruption, medical coverage, travel delay, baggage loss and delay, and emergency medical transportation. If you purchase the insurance prior to, or within 24 hours of making final payment for the tour, and cover all non-refundable parts of the trip (including any non-refundable flights and in some cases, other

arrangements), pre-existing conditions are covered. You may purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website at <https://fieldguides.com/trip-cancellation-insurance/> and clicking the link to CSA. The CSA webpage also includes a contact number.

Currently we are unable to offer CSA insurance policies to residents of New York and Hawaii. We have had clients provide positive feedback after acquiring insurance thru InsureMyTrip (<https://www.insuremytrip.com/>) in the past, and would suggest that company as an alternative. When purchasing insurance with a company other than CSA, you will want to understand whether the timing of your purchase will affect coverage before paying your first deposit. Insurance purchase requirements can vary from company to company, and such requirements could limit your options if you do not look into this until making your final payment for your tour. Please let us know if you have any questions about this.

Please note, once the insurance is purchased it is non-refundable, so please check with your tour manager prior to making the purchase to assure the tour will operate as scheduled. Citizens of other countries are urged to consult their insurance broker.

RESPONSIBILITY: For and in consideration of the opportunity to participate in the tour, each tour participant and each parent or legal guardian of a tour participant who is under 18 agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Field Guides Incorporated, its agents, servants, employees, shareholders, officers, directors, attorneys, and contractors as more fully set forth in the Release and Indemnity Agreement on the reverse side of the registration form. Field Guides Incorporated acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, or other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles or for any reason whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. You acknowledge and agree that Field Guides Incorporated is not responsible for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

Participants should be in good health and should consult a physician before undertaking a tour. If you have questions about the physical requirements of a tour, please contact our office for further information. Participants should prepare for the tour by reading the detailed itinerary, the information bulletin, and other pertinent matter provided by Field Guides. Each participant is responsible for bringing appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended in our bulletins.

THE RECEIPT OF YOUR TOUR DEPOSIT SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE CONSENT TO THE ABOVE CONDITIONS. EACH TOUR PARTICIPANT AND EACH PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF A TOUR PARTICIPANT WHO IS UNDER 18 SHALL SIGN AND DELIVER THE RELEASE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.

NCP 7/2020
PG 6/19
Peg 9/20