

Trekking in Altaï - Mongolia

This fantastic trekking adventure takes place in Western Mongolia, in Altai Tavan Bogd National Park among the snow-capped peaks of the High Altai Mountains, one of the longest mountain chains in Central Asia. In this remote corner where Mongolia, China, and Russia meet, we discover a beautiful swath of untouched wilderness, topped by the 14,000-foot peaks of Tavan Bogd National Park. With Bactrian camels and horses to carry our gear, we camp at alpine lakes, hike to a glacier, explore ancient burial mounds and petroglyphs that are haunting testaments to Mongolia's shamanic traditions, and experience a pristine mountain world where Kazakh nomads still hunt with golden eagles. Join us for a true expedition across trackless terrain - a singular experience for adventurous trekkers.



Your journey :

The west and north-western Mongolia are mostly populated by ethnic groups whose roots are Turkic, linked to centuries of invasions and migration of nomadic ancestors. These are the Kazakhs, Uriankhai, Tuva, and Tsataan Khoton, representing approximately 10% of the population.

These ethnic groups have different dialects but the basics are the same.

The Khazakhs for their part, speak Kazakh and are particularly committed to their country of origin, even if they remain "Mongols" and have a culture totally different from other ethnic groups.

Comparison, Tuvas and Uriankhai are much closer to the Mongolian ethnic majority, the Khalkha, but have different dialects ... although these differences have been polished over time.

The extreme west, the Bayan Ulgi region is a true crossroads of culture, is where live Kazakhs and Tuvas Uriankhai in perfect harmony.



Tavan Bogd massif, literally « the Holy Five », is one of Mongolia's jewels.

This massif is composed of 5 summits reaching 4 000m and beyond : Malchin (4050 m), Narandal (4100 m), Narlag (4200 m), Khuiten (4374 m), and Orgyl (4100 m). 2 great glaciers: the Alexander and the Potanin,

the longest glacier in Mongolia stretching over 19 km long.

Mountains of a rare pristine nature, preserved thanks to a relatively hard access, they still hold a strong wildlife such as snow leopard, Ibex and Argalis...

The Tavan Bogd will delight all the mountains fanatics.

Khuiten mount's peak has been reached officially for the first time in 1956.

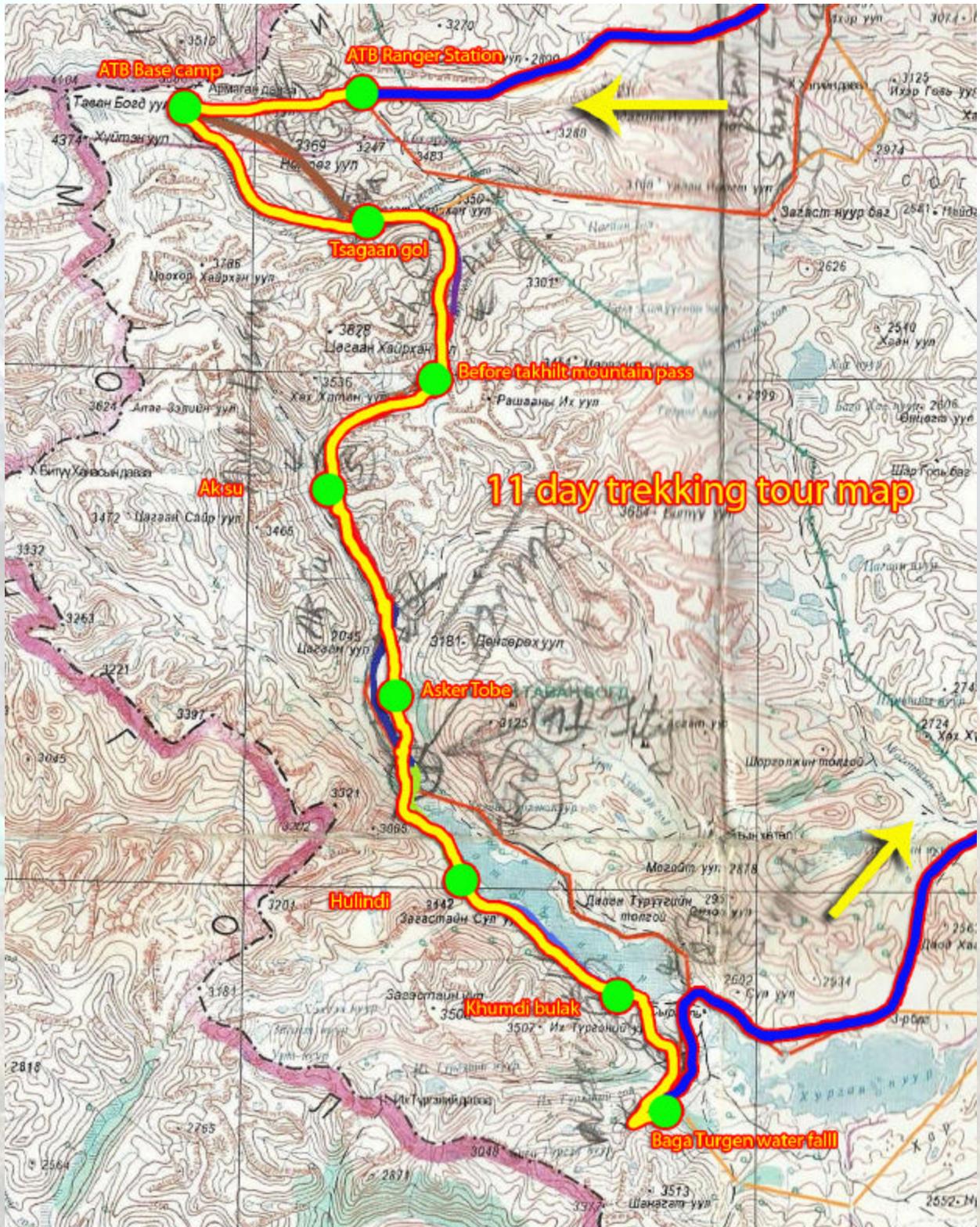
The Tavan Bogd are located in Bayan Ulgi region, a Kazakh area, with a strong culture turned toward eagle hunting, longed for many generations.

Kazakh peoples live in a yurts, but although they build cabins to face the cold winter, they're fewer nomads than their Mongolian cousins.

The Tavan Bogd foothills are also inhabited by one another minority ethnic group, the Tuvas, one of the most ancient of the country.



Altay Tavan Bogd - Trekking Tour (11 days- 11 nights)



Day 1. Reception in the airport

Installation in the hotel in Oulan Bator. Visit of the city and the great Gandan monastery. There are in Oulan Bator 7 main monasteries and several temples and palaces, the most visiting of them are Gandan and Bogdo Khaan, the winter palay, which was started to build in 1890.



Oulan Bator is located on the riversides of the river Tuul, in the past; it was called Urga, in honor of the son of a great Mongol Khaan. The name of Oulan Bator was given to the capital of Mongolia, during the 1921's revolution. This name means "red hero".

The streets of the capital are much less eventful in winter than in summer, but it reigns a permanent agitation, also late at night. The city is divided into several quarters with large diversity, it's possible to see yurts in center town. The growth of Oulan Bator is amazing and you will find in the capital all facilities of modern life ...

Day 2. Day in Ulaanbaatar

You'll continue the visit of Ulaanbaatar.

In winter, not a lot of possibilities visits except a museum and some monasteries, but a loop through by the big market city is really interesting, everything sell, from the little spoon for baby to the ancient silver cup.

It's possible to buy there some good equipment against cold weather.



Day 3. Domestic flight to Ulgii - Ulgii city.

Early morning, transfer to airport for the domestic flight.



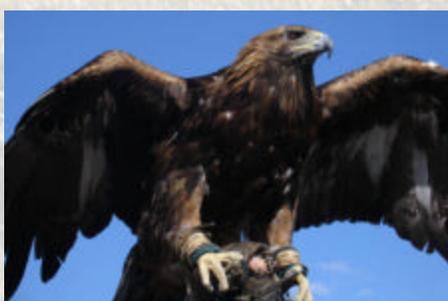
Around 10 o'clock, you'll arrive in Kazakh land in Bayan Ulgii. Reception on airport by our local team, guide and driver. Transfer to the hotel/ger camp or in our guest and have a lunch. Visit the local museum of Ulgii town with comprehensive information's of flora and fauna of Bayan Ulgii aimag as well as its colorful traditional costumes. (Ger is the Mongolian word for "Nomad Tent".)



Day 2: Altai Tavan Bogd Ranger station

In the far western corner of Mongolia lie the Altai Mountains, a stunningly beautiful region of snow capped peaks, immense glaciers and large alpine lakes. We would start our trip heading West by 4x4 jeeps. On the way you have chance to see remote mountain country, when crossing big passes. Along the way we marvel at the Yamaat petroglyphs, a recently uncovered site in remote terrain featuring more than 10 thousand images of hunting and combat scenes, mythological figures, and symbolic sacred art. In the evening we would visit a Kazakh Eaglehunter and get in to the Eagle hunting world.

Overnight in tent.



Day3- Altai Tavan Bogd Camp.

This is where our trek begins. After a big western style breakfast, you will get prepared for the trek while our camel crew loads up our camels. We would cross a few rivers as we follow a trail to Altai Tavan Bogd (ATB) Base camp. In this remote corner where Mongolia, China, and Russia meet, we discover a beautiful swath of untouched wilderness, topped by the 14,000-foot peaks of Tavan Bogd National Park. We trek for 12 km today to the National Park Base camp at the foot of the magnificent Altai Tavan Bogd Glaciers. The glacier is at the foot of Khuiten Peak (4374m) the highest point in Mongolia. Nearby, Nairamdal Peak marks the triple border point common to Mongolia, Russia and China. Overnight in tent



Day 4 – Tsagaan gol

Heading downhill we will trek to Tsagaan gol valley following the white glacier river and beautiful deep canyons, Near the Tuvans gers we will cross the glacier Tsagaan river trough bridge. Until 2011, we had to cross the river by horse; actually that was an exciting river crossing with horses and camels. We then head downriver and set up camp in a lush green pasture at the foot of glacial bowls. In the evening we would visit a local Tuvan family.



This very little population of Tuvan people is keeping their old tradition as it was. They believe on Shamanism. According to situation we would have chance to meet a Tuvan Khomii throat singer.

Day 5 – Before Takhilt mountain pass.

Heading downhill, we stop in to visit some of the local Tuvan people, who follow traditional Shamanistic beliefs. Tuvan language is different than both Kazakh and Mongolian languages. Their traditional clothes and gers looks like Mongolian ones. We continue on and ascend up into the Khar sala valley. The scene of Khara sala valley is very beautiful with snow capped high peaks. We would set up our camp right in to this valley.



Day 6- North Tsagaan gol valley – Ak Su.

We head away from the Khar sala valley, and ride over the 3100m mountain pass. We start with steep pass, mostly until late June there would be snow on the pass. After the pass we will move downhill a long way to the bottom of Ak su valley. On the way you will have chance to see some waterfalls. We're at the halfway point of our trek. It's a beautiful spot, in a wide valley, shouldered by high snowcapped mountains, the white Tsagaan River and tributaries nearby.



Day 7- Asker Tove.

We will trek through forest heading down to the mouth of the Ak su valley.



After trekking not far from mouth of Ak su valley we will set up camp on Asker Tove which is one of the beautiful spot and is the junction of the Arshaani and Ak su rivers.

Day 8- Hulindi

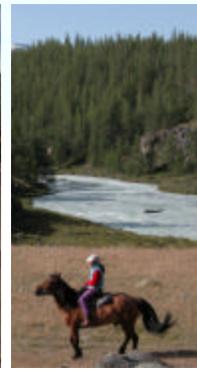
We cross over to the east side of the Tsagaan Gol river, and continue down through the river valley and on horseback we cross a few rivers as we follow the lakeshore to Hulindi. We would set up our camp in very beautiful spot on khoton lake shore.



It is possible to fish here, if we have chance, we will have fish on our dinner.

Day 9- Khumdi bulak.

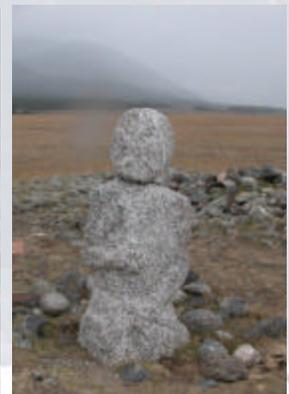
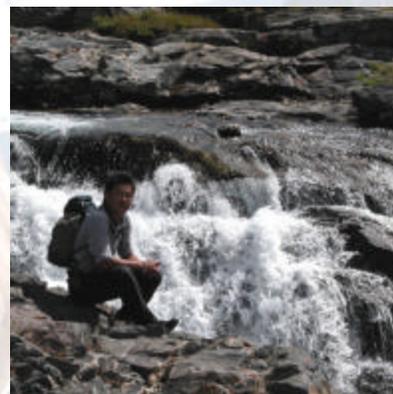
Today we will be trekking through the Alpine forest, heading eastwards. On the way we will have to pass some bigger rivers, stop on some Kazakh families. The Kazakh culture and language is different than Mongolian and Tuvans.



Nomadic Kazakh families are very friendly and hospitable people. We will camp on the magnificent lake shore. Today we would have Kazakh traditional dinner in one of local families.

Day 10- Baga turgen Water fall. (Horse riding)

Today you'll gonna ride horse, after a little riding lesson you would saddle up on your horses. We would ride to a stone man which is from 5th century, and then ride heading the beautiful glacial water fall. Our campsite would be just near to that waterfall and this is the last destination of our trek.



Day 11- Ulgii camp

Today we will be heading to Ulgii following the Khovd River downhill. On the way we will stop in Tsengel Soum which is a small village.

After driving a full day we will get to Ulgii camp. The first thing which you want would be ...a comfortable bed.

In the evening we will make a small celebration at the camp.

A typical Kazakhs party!!



Day 14: Transfer to Ulaanbaatar

Middle of morning, direction the small airport.

Transfer by air to Oulan Bator, a little more than 4 hours to flight back to UB

Arrived in the capital in the afternoon.

Installation in the hotel.... and a good shower !!

Then, last moments for some shopping.



Jour 15: International flight



Dates and Tour costs (Prices are for 2012):

Tour Cost includes:

- * English speaking local guide
- * Accommodations (including ger camps)
- * All meals included
- * National Park fees
- * All camping gear, including Dining tent, etc
- * Transport including pack-horses or camels
- * Airport transfers
- * Camp Crew
- * Domestic flight
- * Full journey in UB, meals & hotel

Tour Costs:

.....USD/peson.

Tour cost descends relative to number of people

Contact us

Group size: 2-8 people

Dates: 03 July-14 July,
17 July- 28 July
31 July- 11 August

For private tours it is possible to customize dates

More about the tour, weather conditions, and recommendations.

It is designed for those who are experienced in mountain hiking and enjoy camping. On trek, we typically hike a total of 5-8 hours a day (8-10 miles), with a stop for a trailside lunch, at altitudes ranging between 6,000 and a maximum of 10,000 feet. In general, the hiking is over relatively flat or rolling terrain, but we do cover a number of miles each day and the trip is expedition in nature, even though most of the hikes are not that difficult. Make sure you have properly fitted broken-in shoes and a good blister kit. Sturdy waterproof boots and gaiters are essential for potential snowy conditions atop Takhilt Pass. For your own enjoyment, we recommend that you make a special effort to be in good physical condition. Daily brisk walking, jogging, or staircase walking is an excellent preparatory exercise. Would recommend using sleeping bags rated to -15 Celsius. Our staff cooks and serves the meals, and there is a shared toilet at camp. Treated drinking water is distributed each day on trek.

On Days 3-10, our trek gear is transported between camps by camel and pack horses, and on other days by a 4x4 Russian van. We will have a few local horses with us on this hike, for those interested; an occasional short horseback ride to take a break from hiking may be possible, but not guaranteed.

Our overland travel is by 4X4 Russian vehicles across rough roads, bumpy tracks, and opens country. These older vehicles, while basic, are heavily preferred for traversing the rugged country of western Mongolia, as they can seemingly go anywhere and are relatively easy for drivers to repair without assistance or special-order parts. It is not uncommon to stop periodically to avoid overheating and allow the air-cooled engines to cool down.

Mountain weather is always unpredictable. Come prepared for at least some rain, wind, and some very cold nights and mornings and also dry hot days. Night time temperatures can drop to 30°F! A dusting of snow is not uncommon here at this northern latitude, even in the summer, and atop Takhilt Pass, we do expect to hike through snowy terrain. That said, there are also many beautifully clear and sunny days with bright blue skies.

Highlight of this trip in Altai

- * Trek in Mongolia's High Altai, with its spectacular mountain scenery
- * Encounters with nomadic Kazakh families and experience their genuine hospitality
- * Explore recently discovered petroglyph sites
- * Discovery Eagle hunters culture
- * Trek for 5-7 hours a day through spectacular mountain scenery

