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FESTIVAL NAADAM IN MONGOLIA

Duration: **19 days / 18 nights** · Physical effort: **Moderate**

Up-to-date dates, prices and included services: moai.ch/mongolia-naadam

A two-week photo tour in Mongolia, where the heart of the experience is the Naadam, the grand national festival that blends sport and tradition.

From ancient capitals and centuries-old monasteries to dune landscapes, lakes, and mountains, this journey lets you capture Mongolia's cultural richness and primordial beauty through your lens. The vibrant atmosphere of Naadam—with its colours, sounds, and millennia-old rituals—becomes the focal point around which an exploration unfolds, revealing the country's most authentic soul.

Small group, maximum 6 participants.

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The route



1 **Ulaanbaatar**
1 night · Day 2

2 **Baga Gazrin Chuluu**
1 night · Day 3

3 **Tsagaan Suvarga**
1 night · Day 4

4 **Dalanzadgad**
1 night · Day 5

5 **Khongoryn Els**
1 night · Day 6

6 **Flaming Cliffs**
1 night · Day 7

7 **Ongiin khiid**
1 night · Day 8

8 **Ulaan Tsutgalan waterfall**
1 night · Day 9

9 **Tsetserleg**
1 night · Day 10

10 **Terkhiin Tsagaan Lake**
2 nights · Days 11–12

11 **Shankh Monastery**
2 nights · Days 13–14

12 **Kharkhorin**
1 night · Day 15

13 **Ulaanbaatar**
2 nights · Days 16–17

Itinerary

Day 1 – Departure

Flight from Switzerland or Italy with a stopover, arriving on Saturday morning (day 2) in Ulaanbaatar.

Overnight **flight**.

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Night on the road

Day 2 – Arrival in Mongolia

Arrival in **Mongolia**. No visa required for travellers from Switzerland and Italy.

First exploration of the capital.

Overnight: Hotel in Ulaanbaatar · Meals included: lunch, dinner

Day 3 – Baga Gazryn Chuluu

Baga Gazryn Chuluu is a **granite stone mountain** stretching 15 km long and 10 km wide, located at an altitude of 1,768 metres above sea level in the **Gobi Desert**, central Mongolia. This historically rich and legendary place is famous for its sacred caves, rock carvings, and panoramic views that attract hikers and nature lovers.

Transfer: **250 km**

Overnight: Tourist camp · Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 4 – Tsagaan Suvarga

Tsagaan Suvarga is a **coloured limestone formation** rising between 30 and 60 metres high and stretching 400 metres long, located in the Gobi Desert. Once a **seafloor**, it preserves marine fossils and shells, offering a fascinating journey into the geological history of the region.

Transfer: **270 km**

Overnight: Tourist camp · Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 5 – Dalanzadgad and Yoliin Am Valley

Dalanzadgad, the capital of Ömnögovi Province in southern Mongolia, is the gateway to the **Yoliin Am Valley**, which cuts through the towering rock formations of the **Zuun Saikhan Mountains**, known as the "**Eastern Beauty**".

Transfer: **220 km**

Overnight: Tourist camp · Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 6 – Khongoryn Els

The Khongoryn Els, among the **largest and most spectacular sand dunes** in Mongolia, are located in the heart of the Gobi Desert and offer breathtaking landscapes and striking natural contrasts.

Transfer: **200 km**

Overnight: Tourist camp · Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 7 – Bayanzag

Bayanzag, also known as the "**Flaming Cliffs**" (rupi fiammeggianti), is a famous **palaeontological site** in Mongolia, renowned for the discovery of the world's first dinosaur eggs. The name, given in the 1920s by **American explorer Roy Chapman Andrews** during his research for the American Museum of Natural History in New York, comes from the **vibrant orange hue** that the sandy rocks take on at sunset. The area is also

characterised by the abundant presence of **saxaul**, a typical desert plant.

Transfer: **180 km**

Overnight: Tourist camp · Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 8 – Ongiin Khiid

Ongiin Khiid, located on the banks of the **Ongi River**, is the collective name for the ruins of two **monastery complexes** (about thirty buildings constructed from the 1600s) that once housed a lively monastic community. Today, among the remains of temples and residences, the site retains a melancholic charm and offers a glimpse into the **spiritual and cultural history of Mongolia**.

Transfer: **240 km**

Overnight: Tourist camp · Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 9 – Ulaan Tsutgalan

The **Orkhon Waterfall**, also known as Ulaan Tsutgalan (**Red Waterfall**), is one of the most spectacular attractions in central Mongolia. About 25 metres downstream from the waterfall, you can descend to the bottom of the gorge, admiring up close the power of the water and the **suggestive surrounding landscape**.

Transfer: **280 km**

Overnight: Tourist camp · Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 10 – Tövhön Khiid

Tövhön Khiid is located atop a **rocky hill surrounded by forests**, in a secluded area, offering an atmosphere of deep spirituality and contemplation. **Tsetserleg**, on the other hand, is the **capital of Arkhangai Province** and lies on the north-eastern slopes of the **Khangai Mountains**, forming a lively urban centre surrounded by an imposing natural landscape.

Transfer: **150 km**

Overnight: Chuluut River Camp · Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 11 – Chuluut River

The Chuluut River flows through a **basalt rock canyon** with steep walls ranging from 20 to 40 metres in height, stretching for about 100 km. The basalt formation is the result of ancient **magmatic activity** linked to **Terkhiin Tsagaan Lake**, a freshwater lake located between the Khangai Mountains, in the heart of Mongolia.

Transfer: **200 km**

Overnight: Camp · Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 12 – Terkhiin Tsagaan Lake

Terkhiin Tsagaan Lake is located near **Mount Khorgo**, a dormant volcano in the **Taryat-Chuluut volcanic field**, in Tariat District, Arkhangai Province, Mongolia. The surrounding landscape, with ancient lava flows and lake environments, offers a captivating natural spectacle.

Overnight: Camp · Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 13 – Shankhiin Khiid

Shankhiin Khiid, one of the **oldest and most significant Buddhist monasteries** in Mongolia, stands as a vital testament to the country's spiritual and cultural heritage. Over the centuries, it has hosted generations of monks who have preserved sacred texts and kept alive ancient religious traditions.

Transfer: **340 km**

Overnight: Camp · Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 14 – Naadam Celebrations

The **Naadam Festival of Kharkhorin**, one of Mongolia's **most cherished traditional celebrations**, offers the chance to witness **traditional Mongolian wrestling**, **horseback and on-foot archery**, and **horse racing**, sports rooted in ancient nomadic traditions. Since 2010, Naadam has been recognised as part of UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The festive atmosphere, enriched by **music**, **dances**, and **culinary delights**, transforms the ancient Mongolian capital into a place of gathering and sharing, where the past and local culture come alive and renew themselves.

Overnight: Tourist camp · Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 15 – Kharkhorin

Kharkhorin, the **ancient capital of the Mongol Empire**, is today a place rich in history and traditions, home to the **Erdene Zuu**, one of the **oldest and most significant monasteries in the country**. Not far from here stands the **Mountain of Khogno Khan**, with its stunning natural landscapes stretching across steppes and rocky formations, offering visitors an enchanting scenic and spiritual setting.

Transfer: **100 km**

Overnight: Tourist camp · Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 16 – Ulan Bator

Return to **Ulan Bator** (Ulaanbaatar), the **capital of Mongolia**, is the country's main political, economic, and cultural hub. Despite its urban growth and modern atmosphere, the city still preserves ancient traditions, visible in Buddhist monasteries, local markets, and traditional festival celebrations, making Ulan Bator a bridge between nomadic past and dynamic present.

Transfer: **300 km**

Overnight: Hotel in Ulan Bator · Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 17 – Ulan Bator

Explore the capital.

Overnight: Hotel in Ulan Bator · Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 18 – Return

Departure from Mongolia in the morning, flight with a stopover.

Night on the road · Meal included: breakfast

Day 19 – Arrival

Arrive in Switzerland or Italy in the morning.

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NOTES

Thank you!

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