

Tsagaan sar: Mongolian New Year 2022 - Year of the Tiger
9 days – 8 nights # 29 January – 6 February '22
Ulaanbaatar, Khenti Mountains, Khenti Mountains, Aryabal Temple, Terelj National Park
Folklore, Nature, Adventure, Culture

This program is not suited for less than 6 people traveling together
It may be operated for groups limited by the availability of 4x4 vehicles

A unique opportunity to immerse yourself in the Mongolian steppes in the heart of winter, while attending the biggest celebration of the Mongolian people!

The traditions

Similar to other Asian lunar calendars, the Mongol year has followed a lunar calendar with a 12-year animal cycle since ancient times. The New Year symbolizes the coming of spring and the re-awakening of nature. The term 'White Month' is said to refer to dairy products such as milk, which become more plentiful again with the return of Spring. Preparations for the festival will begin in the month before Tsagaan Sar, with plenty of dumplings (buuz) made ahead of time and new clothes made or bought. The festivities start on 'Bituun', the day before Tsagaan Sar, with a feast for all the family containing several traditional dishes. In the morning, it is custom to rise early to greet the dawn of the new year. After the sun has risen, to ensure good health and happiness in the coming year, everyone must take "their first steps of the year". The direction of the steps everyone has to take depends on which lunar year you were born in. For instance, someone who was born in the mouse year must take their first steps to the north on the first day of the monkey year. To keep people literally on their toes, the following year the direction will be different. Once the steps are taken, families will greet each other in a pre-ordained manner starting with the elder of the household. Once the greetings are done, food and drink become the focus of the day. The most auspicious drink for the new year is milk tea, made earlier in the day by the women of the house. During the first few days of the new year it is customary to visit family members - again this is done in an ordered way, with the custom being that the younger ones go to the older families. As with Chinese New Year, even though the official public holidays last a few days, the New Year festivities continue until the 15th day and the first full moon of the year. Like many other ethnic holidays and festivals, Tsagaan Sar was banned during Mongolia's Communist period. The holiday was practiced again following the Democratic Revolution in Mongolia in 1990.

Winter in Mongolia:

Winter, the atmosphere, the landscape and the cold encourage us to live at a much slower pace. Livestock occupy most of the tasks. It is necessary to take the animals out in the sun, to clean the stables, to dry the excrement against the stone to make fuel, bring the cattle to drink in the river, distribute the fodder, milk, etc. When the sun is at its zenith, and the cold is less intense. Everyone takes care according to their inspirations. At the end of the afternoon, you have to feed the animals, water them, bring them in before the intense cold of dusk. In the evening, the mother prepares the meal while the man is outside to take care of the cattle. The food is mainly meat, wheat or wheat flour, which is cooked in the form of dough or pancakes. Each moment of the day is accompanied by hot salted tea, with bread to better fight against the cold. Milk, from cow or goat, is precious because cattle provide only a small amount, which is shared among the youngest children. Meetings between neighbors are very frequent, especially after the New Year. From New Year's Day, the evenings begin and will not end until the buuz (steamed meat dumplings) reserves are used up. Neighbors and friends invite each other to drink, eat, chat, and this revival of life makes it possible to forget the rigors of winter, even making one believe in its decline.

Day 1 - Jan 29: Ulaanbaatar

Upon arrival at Ulaanbaatar airport you'll be met and greeted by our guide and driven to a yurt (local camp tent) for meals and overnight. The first day is often tiring because of the jet lag. Try to rest well and relax. [D]

Day 2 - Jan 30: Ulaanbaatar

In the afternoon we visit the Mongolian capital with among others the Gandan Monastery, where thousands of nomadic pilgrims come to pray. The visit to this ancient temple ends with a prayer meeting. Visit the capital cultural curiosities such as museums or the Royal Palace of the last Mongolian emperor. Then, we continue with a tour of the market where we meet the locals coming to stock up. This evening dinner of specialties in a yurt-restaurant and overnight at the yurt camp.. On arrival, we offer breakfast, lunch will be provided in a standard restaurant in town and dinner will be at the yurt hotel. [B/L/D]

Day 3 - Jan 31: Ulaanbaatar, Khenti Mountains

After breakfast, we take the 4x4 to cross the beautiful winter landscapes of the Khenti steppes which in winter present a real spectacle of light and color. If the sky is often clear, observations of the snow-covered steppes are magnificent from fall until early spring. The colder the night, the more colorful and intense the sky will be. For this excursion, don't forget warm outerwear: A waterproof jacket and pants, a hat and a good pair of gloves. Good hiking shoes are highly recommended. We left for a half day of 4x4, 61 miles through the center of the country, until reaching our horse breeder installed in the depths of the valleys covered with icy snow. Dinner and overnight with nomads in the region. Breakfast in a yurt restaurant, meal with the breeders. Night with breeders in yurts. [B/L/D]

Day 4 - Feb 1: Khenti Mountains (Among the nomads)

The atmosphere varies over the morning and it will take some time to absorb this landscape born of disproportionate geological convulsions, which made the most astonishing rock forms spring from the depths of the earth. Basalts spread black flows on granite bases. Rocks piled up or phonolite pierce the plateaus and tend towards the sky with unreal stone fingers. With the snow here and there, the Khenti mountain range, an unfairly overlooked place was, in fact, classified as a Natural Park by the government in 1998. Optional horseback ride or walk to discover the valley and its surprising rock formations. Night in a yurt with breeders in full preparation for the New Year's festivities. Hot lunch and dinner prepared by our cook, overnight with a nomadic family. [B/L/D]

Day 5 - Feb 2: Bituun (Lunar New Year's Eve)

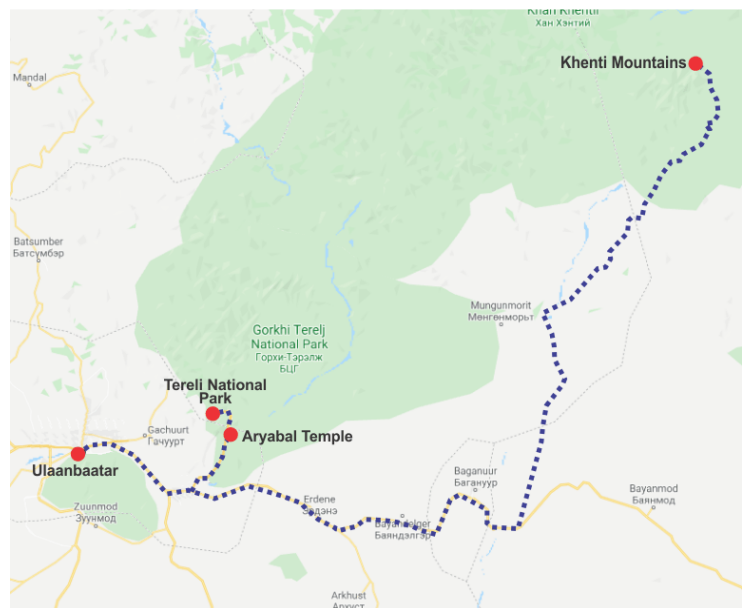
Festive and friendly atmosphere of Mongolian families awaiting the New Year celebration. It is on the eve of Lunar New Year that the nomads wait for dawn to wish themselves a happy new year. We will visit families of camel breeders on our route with a stop for lunch. In the middle of the afternoon, depending on the progress, we arrive at our host family to celebrate New Year's Eve over a Mongolian festive meal. Superb atmosphere guaranteed! [B/L/D]

Days 6/7 - Feb 3/4: Tsagaan sar (Lunar New Year celebration)

This 2-day New Year celebration is a very important gathering of Mongolian families. Nomadic breeders meet and give each other gifts to celebrate this event during the greeting ceremony. Around the fire we share the warm atmosphere of the Mongolian winter. Tasting of specialties and meeting the nomads occupy the rest of our stay. Overnights in a yurt. [B/L/D]

Day 8 - Feb 5: Khenti Mountains, Aryabal Temple

We are leaving the breeders this morning to and take the vehicle in the direction of Ulaanbaatar. Lunch break on the way. In the afternoon we visit the Aryabal Temple.



Aryabal is a Buddhist God who listens to all the prayers of humankind and releases humankind from suffering. It was built in the shape of an elephant's head. The number 108 is an auspicious number in Buddhism. Therefore, the stairs leading to the temple consist of 108 steps and symbolize the elephant's elongated trunk. Moreover, plaques with 144 Buddhist teachings, written in English and Mongolian, line the sides of the path to the temple. Dinner and overnight at a yurt in the Terelj National Park. [B/L/D]

Day 9 - Feb 6: Aryabal Temple, Ulaanbaatar, USA

After breakfast at the camp we take some time to visit the magnificent national park. After lunch at the yurt we return to Ulaanbaatar in time for dinner and a show of traditional songs and dances. After dinner, transfer to Ulaanbaatar airport to board your flight back home. [B/L/D]

Note: We remind you that this trip is exceptional and wintry, for this reason, the itinerary is indicative and may be subject to changes in the event of force majeure, weather and aircraft delays, etc. When you arrive, your English-speaking guide will explain the route to you in detail day-by-day!

[D] = Dinner | [B/L/D] = Breakfast, Lunch and. Dinner

Your Tour includes:

- Arrival and departure transfers
- 8 nights' accommodation in tourist yurts:
 - Ulaanbaatar 2 nights
 - Khenti 5 nights
 - Terelj National Park 1 night
- Meals:
 - Breakfast daily
 - 8 lunches
 - 9 dinners
- Mongolia in winter
- Ulaanbaatar sightseeing
- Meet nomad people
- Mongolian New Year
- Dog sled ride
- Catch the horses
- Optional horseback riding
- Visit. Aryabal Temple
- Visit Terelj National Park
- Transportation by 4x4 vehicle

- Entrances to natural parks and sites visited
- English-speaking guide, cook, driver
- Local taxes

Price does not include:

- International or Domestic airfares
- Any taxes and surcharges relating to airfares
- Travel insurance
- Entry Visa and visa fees: € 60 on site
- All alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks except as indicated
- Other meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Camel and horse rental
- Extras and gratuities
- Expenses of personal nature
- Porterage at airport and hotels
- Optional tours and activities
- Any service not specifically listed under "included"

Accommodation in your Tour

Location	Camp Type
Ulaanbaatar	Tourist yurt
Khenti	Tourist yurt
Tereli National Park	Tourist yurt

Accommodations will be confirmed at time of booking

Small note for those who wonder about the comfort of the trip:

The nights are all in the comfortable, well-appointed tourist yurts. Nights 3 through 7 are with nomadic breeders. This proximity to nomads can bring you an interesting and enriching experience.

Tour Prices:

These programs can be customized for individuals and groups.

Changes to this program may be requested by phone (1855-55-TOURS) or using the web FIT Quote Request

- **Airfare**

We also be glad to add the necessary airfare from your gateway so you take advantage of our special discounted leisure fares

- **Program**

You may add or remove;

- Trip days
- Cities and sites
- Meals

- **Other options**

- The program was designed with private services, however, we may substitute shared sightseeing where available

- **Quotation**

Once we have designed the program the way you want we'll give you a quote within 2 business days.

Tour Code: MN02UBN20XX

Options:

- We can revise the itinerary to spend more time and provide more depth in those areas that you are interested on.
- Any other changes to the itinerary will be accommodated depending on the facilities available in the area.

Group Quotations

- If you wish to use these programs for your group or as the basis for a customized journey please either call us (1-855-55-TOURS or use the web Group Quote Request.
- In either case our specialists will work with to refine all the details and they will get you a quote with 2 business days. Quotes may be obtained for the air and land portions of just for the land journey.
- Booking both air and land with us will represent savings for you because of our buying power and longtime relationship with the airlines.
- We will also may have the choice between regular fares and special leisure fares not available to the public.