

Mongolia

A small-group Civilized Adventure
Sept. 14 - 23, 2017

About Your Host: Denell Falk founded Civilized Adventures in 1994, building on 13 years in adventure travel. In the early days of Civilized Adventures, Denell established a close relationship with the Calgary Zoo, designing their natural-history based Zoofaris to Africa, South America and other nature hot-spots. From initially planning Calgary Zoo hosted groups, Civilized Adventures has worked with other organizations including the Jane Goodall Institute of Canada and the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (Calgary Centre). Today, Civilized Adventures clients consist of individuals, family groups, small groups of friends travelling together, and special-interest corporate groups.



Denell has been hosting groups for over 20 years, including special journeys testing out new experiences. She has led many groups to Africa (from traditional safari-based countries to the mysterious pyramids of Egypt), Asia, the South Pacific, Europe, South and Central America, as well as expedition cruises to Antarctica, the Spitsbergen region, and the Canadian Maritimes. Memorable "recce" trips have included an eye-opening exploration of Papua New Guinea, a walking trip in the foothills of the Indian Himalaya, our inaugural small-group journey to Sri Lanka, and a trip into Brazil's Pantanal and Amazonia regions.

Join Denell on this **new adventure to Mongolia!** The people are warm and welcoming and proud of their traditions. The countryside is spectacular, with vast rolling grasslands of the steppes, the sands of the Gobi, rugged mountains, and clear lakes. At the heart of the country is the rapidly changing capital of Ulaanbaatar. Mongolia is a destination for adventurous spirits: we offer the best possible accommodations throughout, however facilities are basic beyond Ulaanbaatar.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Ulaanbaatar's Gandan Monastery, seat of Buddhism in Mongolia - observe daily rituals
- Free time in Ulaanbaatar gives you time to visit the National Museum, Zanabazar Fine Arts Museum, and Bogd Gegen Palace or other sites of interest.
- 3 nights in a traditional Ger Camp staying in tent-like shelters, each with private facilities
- With the Ger Camp as our base, explore Hustain Nuruu National park (known for wild horses), visit Erdenezuu Monastery, and visit the hilltop Tovkhon Monastery in the Khangai Mountains.
- Stay at the acclaimed Three Camel Lodge and explore the stunning landscapes of the Gobi with its desert-adapted wildlife including many rare and elusive species.
- Hike in the Yol Valley, in the foothills of the Altai Mountains
- Visit a desert farm to learn about desert farming methods.
- See ancient rock drawings in the Gobi
- Ride a Bactrian camel through the dunes; visit a local camel herding family
- See the Flaming Cliffs
- Enjoy a cultural performance of traditional dances and khoomi throat

CIVILIZED ADVENTURES

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Sept. 14 – ULAANBAATAR
(Shangri-la Hotel, 1D).

Sept. 14 is “arrival day”. After visa formalities you’ll be welcomed by your guide and transferred (40 mins) to the 5-star **Shangri-la Hotel** located in the heart of the city. The hotel has elegant and spacious guest rooms that overlook Nayramdal Park or Great Chinggis Khaan Square. Various museums and shops are within walking distance.

The contrast between ancient traditions and a 21st century democracy is most visible in **Ulaanbaatar**, where traditional gers and Buddhist monasteries can be seen side by side with modern high-rises.

This afternoon we’ll see selected sites on our orientation tour. We begin with the **Gandan Monastery**, the seat of Buddhism in Mongolia. Strolling through the monastery grounds, hear the low tones of the horns used to call the lamas to the temple and observe their daily rituals, including the reading of sutras, the teachings of the Buddha. Also visit the magnificent **statue of Migjid Janraisig**, “the lord who looks in every direction.” This 82-foot high statue, gilded in pure gold and clothed in silk and precious stones, completely fills one of Gandan’s temples.

In the evening enjoy your dinner at a fine local restaurant.

Buddhism & Gandan Monastery: *Woven through Mongolia’s nomadic culture is a rich Tibetan Buddhist tradition in which ancient shamanist practices are still evident. Although Buddhist monasteries were either destroyed or converted into museums during the Stalinist purges of the 1930s, Gandan Monastery continued to operate as a showpiece for government officials. However, in spite of the government’s efforts to suppress Buddhism and other religious beliefs, Mongolia’s spirituality persisted and a significant resurgence of Buddhism began in 1990 when Mongolia became a democracy. Monasteries*

across the country are again opening their doors to worshippers, and the few lamas who survived the purges are now training others.

Sept. 15 – HUSTAIN NURUU NATIONAL PARK • KHARAKHORUM
(Ger Camp, B, L, D).

This morning, we travel by 4WD vehicles to **Hustain Nuruu National Park** (1.5 hours), home to the last remaining species of wild horse, the “takhi”, commonly known as Przewalski’s Horse. In 1994, twenty-five years after becoming extinct in the wild, the takhi was reintroduced to the Mongolian steppe from zoo populations by the Foundation for the Preservation and Protection of the Przewalski’s Horse. Sixteen horses were flown from Netherlands to Mongolia in 1994, and nearly 400 now roam in re-introduction sites of Mongolia and China. Learn about current conservation efforts and the status of the herds found within Hustain Nuruu and try to spot these beautiful horses in their natural habitat.

After lunch, continue driving (~3 hrs) towards **Kharakhorum**, site of the legendary 13th century capital of the Mongol Empire. Chinggis Khan’s son, Ogodei, created Kharakhorum to serve as the empire’s capital, but after forty years it was abandoned and a new capital was established in Khanbalik, in present-day Beijing. Relocating the capital of the Mongol Empire from the expansive steppes of Kharakhorum to the warmer fields of China marked a great shift in the history of the Mongols.

We overnight at Munkh Tenger Ger Camp. This camp is a series of gers or traditional style dwellings that can each accommodate two people. They are basic but comfortable, with wood stoves for heat and a private bathroom. Remember, this is remote, and water is sourced from a well; it’s amazing there is any plumbing here at all. Even more surprising is that electricity is available 24 hours a day. There is a large central ger that houses the kitchen and restaurant.

From this traditional base camp we’ll explore our surroundings and experience the unique culture of the region.

Sept. 16 – SHANKH HIID
(Ger Camp, B, L, D).

Today we visit the **Shankh Hiid**, a monastery within a short driving distance of Erdene Zuu and Kharakhorum that was once frequented by Zanabazar, the renowned Buddhist artist and religious leader, and a descendent of Chengiss Khan.

We continue to **Erdenezuu Monastery** in the town of Kharakhorum. The Monastery’s Abbott will join us to show us the grounds of the monastery.

Surrounded by 108 stupas, **Erdene Zuu** has been a place of Buddhist activity for more than 500 years. Explore the monastery grounds and observe the monks as they perform their prayers and rituals. The temples are richly decorated with spectacular Buddhas, as well as Buddhist art and architecture. Just behind the monastery compound, visit the site of archeological digs being conducted by German archeologists at the former sight of Kharakhorum. Among the findings: an entire foundation of a house with brick stove and a beautifully forged gold bracelet.

Kharakhorum, Chiinggis Khan and Erdenezuu: *It is impossible to mention Mongolia without conjuring up images of the great warrior, Chinggis Khan. The empire created by Chinggis and his descendants was the largest contiguous land empire in recorded history, and its scope has never been matched. The great Khan and his son created the beautiful and legendary Kharakhorum to serve as the heart of this monolithic empire. At the time, Kharakhorum was one of the largest junctions of the Silk Route, connecting the Oriental world with the West. Unfortunately, this bustling capital was abandoned by Khublai Khan and later fell into ruin. There are only a few traces left of this once great city, but Mongolia’s largest monastery, neighboring Erdenezuu, was reputedly constructed from the ruins of Kharakhorum in the 16th century.*

In the afternoon, drive to **Kulteegin Monument**, erected during the Turkic Empire in the 8th century. Built in honor of a prince, this statue has been the subject of research by archeologists from around the world, and many roof tiles found in the area along with other significant artifacts are today exhibited at the newly established museum funded by the government of Turkey. Return to your ger camp.

The Gobi, with the Altai Mountains beyond



Sept. 17 – TOVKHON MONASTERY

(Ger Camp, B, L, D).

Today, we will make a trip to the amazing **Tovkhon Monastery**, located on the top of one of the Khangai Mountains. It was originally built by Mongolia's first religious leader and was a meditation retreat for the renowned sculptor Zanabazar. It partially survived the destruction of the communist purge of the 1930s and is now under reconstruction. (Approx. 4-5 hours driving).

Sept. 18 – KHARKHORUM • ULAANBAATAR

(Shangri-la Hotel, 1B, 1L).

Begin driving back to **Ulaanbaatar** (5-6 hours), where you'll return to the beautiful Shangri-La Hotel. The rest of the afternoon and evening are at leisure, for your own explorations.

Sept. 19 – GOBI • YOL VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

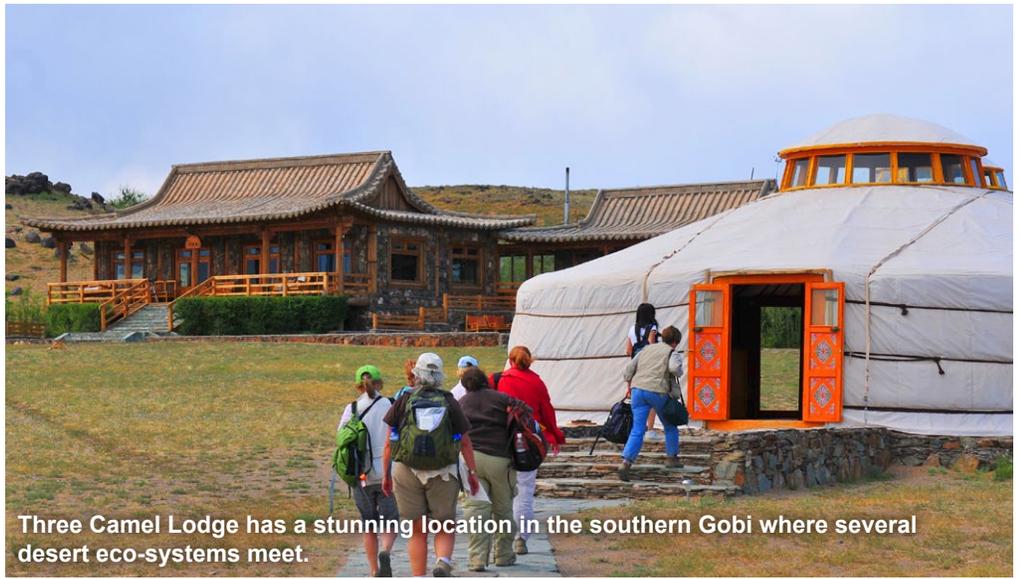
(Three Camel Lodge, B, L, D).

In the morning transfer to the airport then fly to Dalanzadgad airstrip in the southern **Gobi**. From here we continue by 4WD vehicles that are suited to the roads and tracks of the desert.

About the desert called Gobi: *Of all the world's arid lands, the Gobi has the greatest air of mystery, perhaps because it lies at the heart of Asia's remotest hinterland between the Siberian wilderness to the north and the Tibetan Plateau to the south. Contrary to the sameness that the word 'desert' suggests, the Gobi is a diverse and fascinating region, and includes sites of some of the most important paleontological discoveries of the 20th century. For the next three days, explore the stunning landscapes of the Gobi, habitat for Bactrian camels, Argali mountain sheep, goitered gazelle, Golden Eagles, Saker Falcons, jerboas (similar to kangaroo rats), and many endemic reptiles. The Gobi is also home to some of the Northern Hemisphere's most rare and elusive mammals, such as the dhole, snow leopard, and Gobi bear, known in Mongolian as Mazaalai.*

We drive to **Yol Valley National Park** (1 hour), cradled in the foothills of the **Altai Mountains**. An ancient river carved this surprisingly green valley, and its remnant streams create ice formations at the base of the valley that sometimes persist as late as July. A **hike through the valley** leads to the habitat of indigenous vulture-like Lammergeiers, Altai snowcocks, ibex, yaks, and Argali mountain sheep.

We continue driving to **Three Camel Lodge** (2 hours), an eco-lodge located near the



Three Camel Lodge has a stunning location in the southern Gobi where several desert eco-systems meet.

Gurvansaikhan Gobi National Park. Settle into your ger, followed by dinner.

Three Camel Lodge is unique, and your stay here will be one of the highlights of this trip. The lodge has been acclaimed by National Geographic as one of the "Unique Lodges of the World". After spending time in a more traditional ger lodge, you'll surely appreciate the special touches you'll find here. The style is traditional and superb service and touches of sophisticated luxury combine to deliver an exceptional experience. This is the only luxury eco-lodge in the Gobi. You'll enjoy gourmet cuisine with a local flair and in between excursions you can book a massage, or check out the gift shop which has carefully selected items. Individual gers have comfortable beds, a wood stove/heater and a private bathroom complete with shower.

Sept. 20 – GOBI • YOL VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

(Three Camel Lodge, B, L, D).

After breakfast, drive to **Tugrighiin Shiree** (1.5 hours), first explored by Polish expeditions in the late-1960s and early-1970s. Tugrighiin

Shiree is best known for the famous "Fighting Dinosaurs," a fossil of a Protoceratops and Velociraptor locked in combat.

Visit **Bulgan**, a small town near a natural spring. Bulgan has **one of the only farms in the Gobi**, which supplies local ger camps including Three Camel Lodge with fresh fruits and vegetables, an example of local businesses being supported by ecotourism.

Drive to the **Havtsgait Valley**, site of ancient rock drawings left by early Gobi settlers for more than 15,000-40,000 years ago. Hundreds of petroglyphs adorn rocks scattered on the top of the mountain.

Sept. 21 – GOBI • YOL VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

(Three Camel Lodge, B, L, D).

Drive to **Moltsog Els**, one of the few regions of the Gobi covered by **sand dunes**. Explore the sand dunes on foot or on back of a Bactrian camel. You will also have the opportunity to visit a local camel herding family and experience their hospitality and way of living. (continued)



Moltsog Els, one of the few regions of the Gobi covered by sand dunes. Explore on foot or on the back of a Bactrian camel, and visit a local herding family and experience their hospitality and way of living.

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In the afternoon drive to **Bayan Zag**, commonly known as the **Flaming Cliffs** for the orange glow of its rock at dawn and dusk. It was here in 1923 that Dr. Roy Chapman Andrews and his exploration team from the American Museum of Natural History found the first nest of dinosaur eggs. Although not obvious to the untrained eye, the Flaming Cliffs are rich with dinosaur fossils and have been the site of important paleontological discoveries.

Sept. 22 – ULAANBAATAR

(Shangri-la Hotel, 1B, 1D).

Fly to Ulaanbaatar in the morning and visit the **Bogd Gegen Palace**, home of Mongolia's last theocrat, Bogd Jabtzan Damba Hutagt VIII, which displays elaborate ceremonial robes and other personal effects of Mongolia's '8th Living Buddha'.

Spend the rest of the day at leisure. In the evening, enjoy a **performance featuring traditional Mongolian dances and khoomi throat singers** followed by a farewell dinner.

Sept. 23 – DEPART

(1B).

This adventure ends with your transfer to the airport.

**EXTEND TO "THE STANS":
Kyrgyzstan & Uzbekistan.
Sept. 23 - Oct. 3, 2017**



This 10 day trip begins on Sept. 23 with a flight to Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Two days later fly to Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

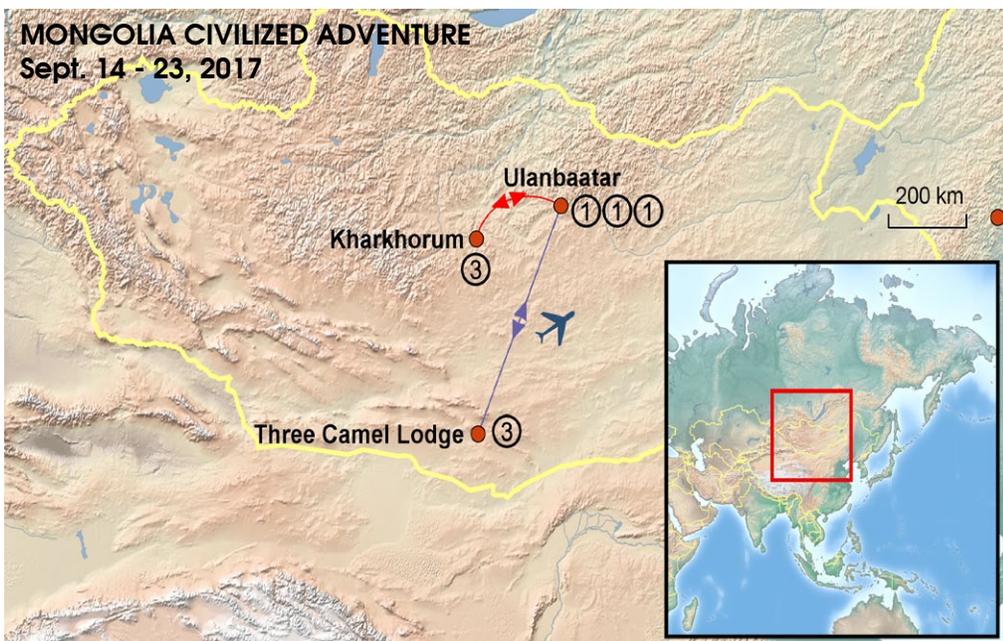
Explore **Bishkek, Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva**, with two days in each.

Visit exotic bazaars, traditional teahouses, ancient villages and experience daily life by exploring neighbourhoods, visiting schools and local homes. Discover cultural treasures like magnificent temples and mosques and ancient palaces. Enjoy extraordinary photo opportunities with spectacular mountains and deserts as backdrops. Experience unique culture, warm and welcoming people, accompanied by our top local professional guide and Denell Falk, President of Civilized Adventures.

Please request a **DETAILED ITINERARY**.

MONGOLIA CIVILIZED ADVENTURE

Sept. 14 - 23, 2017



Starting Ulaanbaatar/ Ending Ulaanbaatar	Per person
Adult, twin-share	US\$ 6,989
Single Supplement:	US\$ 1,700

All quoted prices and itinerary effective at time of publication (Sept. 8, 2016). Itinerary is subject to change due to improvements or changes in local conditions; prices are subject to change.

STOP IN CHINA ENROUTE.

It's possible to fly via Beijing to Mongolia. If you'd like to walk on the Great Wall, see the Terra Cotta warriors in Xi'an, or perhaps visit the Giant Pandas near Chengdu, we can design a custom program just for you.

INCLUSIONS

- Complete pre-departure information and meeting (held in Calgary)
- Trip Handbook and miniguide
- Regional flights within Mongolia
- All accommodation on a twin-share basis. Solo travellers can have their own room at a supplement (space may be limited)
- All meals as listed (B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner)
- Services of professional English speaking guide throughout the trip
- All transfers and touring as listed, including any entrance fees or local transport fees that apply.
- Escorted by Denell Falk with a minimum of 10 guests. (Maximum group size will be 14)

EXCLUSIONS

- International return flights to/from Ulaanbaatar
- All items of a personal nature, including drinks/bar expenses, tips, souvenirs, laundry, internet charges, etc.
- Optional travel insurance
- Gratuities to local staff (approx. US\$ 100pp)
- Any activities and excursions not specified
- Visas to enter Mongolia (Canadians are exempt for stays under 30 days)
- Any increases due to circumstances beyond our control (i.e. park fee increases, fuel surcharges, currency fluctuations)

HOW TO RESERVE YOUR SEAT

Please complete a booking form and waiver, available from our office or online at www.civilizedadv.com, and return them to us with your deposit. We accept Visa and MasterCard. **SAVE: pay by cheque and we'll take 2% off!** Please make **cheques** payable to: Civilized Adventures Inc.

- Deposit: US\$ 2,500 is due upon booking.
- Installment: US \$2,600 due Fri. May 5 '17
- Final payment is due Thurs. July 6 '17

Please note: All payments are non-refundable once received. We strongly suggest you purchase adequate trip cancellation/interruption insurance to protect your funds. Should Civilized Adventures have to cancel a departure due to unforeseen circumstances, we'll offer alternative arrangements. If these alternatives are not suitable, all payments will be returned to you

TRAVEL INSURANCE & FLIGHTS

We offer insurance through Reliable Life and TravelGuard. Please ask our Adventure Travel Specialists for a customized quote and for flight options

ADVISORY: We strive to deliver a quality "Civilized Adventure". Travellers must understand that they are visiting developing countries and must be prepared to deal with unusual occurrences, local inadequacies, and unpredictable events. If you are flexible, curious about new people, places and environments, and have a positive attitude, we welcome your participation. This type of travel is rewarding if you can embrace the inherent challenges. Please call us if you have any questions or concerns. Our ultimate goal is to ensure that you get the most out of your travel experience.

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