



Adventure Cycling Specialists

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Wild Mongolia Arkhangai Mountain Ranges

Day	Description	Meals inc	Kms cycled*
1	Arrive Ulaan Baatar	D	
2	Visit to Winter palace of Bogd Khan. Free afternoon	B	
3	Drive to Bayanhongor	BLD	
4	Drive to Bayanhongor	BLD	
5	Cycle Shargaljuut Valley	BLD	66
6	Cycle Tuy River Valley	BLD	45
7	Cycle Tuy River Valley -Bridge camp	BLD	54
8	Cycle Tamir River Valley	BLD	24
9	Cycle to Tseterleg. Visit Aimag Museum. Cycle to Tsengar/Tamir river fork	BLD	73
10	Cycle to Tsagaan Sum	BLD	74
11	Arrive Orkhon Falls, afternoon free	BLD	49
12	Cycle Orkhon River Valley	BLD	50
13	Cycle to Kharkhorin, visit Erdene Zuu Khiid	BLD	50
14	Drive to Ulaanbaatar	BL	
15	Departure day	B	
		Total Kms	485

Note: the Kms cycled each day is an approximation only, as some of our campsites change on a regular basis depending on weather, group speed etc. The overall distance for the trip will not change however.

*Whilst every endeavour will be made to run the itinerary as stated, Bike Asia reserves the right to change any part of the itinerary at any time without notice due to weather, political, health or safety concerns.

The wilds of Mongolia have always sent out a call to those with an adventurous spirit. One of the true travelling frontiers, Mongolia offers an incredible experience for the cyclist. This cycling tour will take us on a crossing of the Arkhangai Mountains, from the edge of the Gobi desert at Bayanhongor to the old Mongolian capital of Kharkhorin. We cycle into the heart of Mongolia and meet its nomadic peoples. This is an offroader's dream, with only 17 of 485 kilometres cycling on sealed roads. You can expect to cycle everything: rock strewn dirt roads, rocky riverbeds, compacted earth, grass, long rocky downhills, steep climbs and horse trails. This is a fully-supported ride camping

under the stars when not in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia's capital. All cooking is catered for by our local team and served in the great outdoors. We will cycle through a diversity of landscapes, including the mountains of the Arkhangai, lush green grasslands, pine forests and the spectacular Orkhon Falls. We will see a diverse array of wildlife: many birds of prey, cattle, yaks, gophers, and the pride of many Mongolians, the horse. The sheer adventure makes this trip one of our favourites!

Day 1: Ulaan Baatar

Welcome to Ulaan Baatar! Today is arrival day and there are no activities planned. If you arrive early check into the hotel and go exploring. The city is fairly small and contained so it is perfect to get around on foot. The streets are spacious and architecturally interesting. Different parts of the city reflect the country's different historical and cultural influences: the Russian-influenced Communist era architecture and planning of the centrally located Sukhbaatar Square, the suburbs filled with the traditional "ger" homes, the Buddhist-inspired temples (sum) and monasteries (khiid). There are several museums and galleries to check out if you want to see dinosaur skeletons, modern art or rare religious items. Your leader will leave information at the hotel letting you know when and where to meet for the group meeting this evening. After all the formalities have been completed, we'll head out for our first taste of Mongolian food – maybe a horse meat steak for the adventurous eaters!

Dinner

Day 2 Ulaanbaatar

For our first morning in the country, we are going to visit the Winter Palace of the colourful and controversial **Bogd Khan**, the last traditional Mongolian ruler. You will have the rest of the day free to explore of the city.

Breakfast

Day 3/4: Ulaanbataar – Bayanhongor

This is the start of our adventure as we load up the 4WDs for a two day, 800+ km drive to Bayanhongor. This is a great introduction to the Mongolian countryside. Starting in the capital city's aimag (province) of Tov, we travel through several more aimags before arriving at our starting point for the cycling: Bayanhongor. We'll get to know our local crew who will be driving the support vehicles and cooking the food. At our destination we set up camp beside a small river at the foot of a grassy hillside.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 5: Shargaljuut

We will spend an hour or more, unpacking and assembling the bikes at our campsite. Then we begin our 485km journey north-east through the Arkhangai mountain ranges to the ancient capital, Kharkhorin, established by legendary Chinggis Khan. The riding starts beside the Shargaljuut River which we follow for the rest of the morning. We then leave the river valley behind as we cycle up a valley floor to our first steep climb for the trip. At the top we'll be rewarded with 360° of magnificent views. What goes up must come down; and we do! It's very steep, very fast and very rocky; mountain biking at its best in Mongolia. We'll keep up the momentum along some fast tracks until we reach our camp spot for the evening.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 6/7: Tuy River Valley

For the next two days we cycle up the Tuy River Valley, tackling its rocky riverbed and camping beside its waters at night. Because of the constant water source of this river, the area is populated with many family ger camps. The kids in particular are usually very curious about us and our bikes, so you'll find they often ride over on their horses to check us out. Many want to try riding the bikes so there are plenty of opportunities to

stop and mingle with the people of the area. On day 7 we'll set up camp at one of our favourite spots on this trip. It's by the water, so you can put a few beers in the river to cool down and pull out your fishing rod for a spot of fishing.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 8/9: Tamir River Valley

On both days we travel up the Tamir Valley, with the river on our right and we'll veer north-west over two sets of mountains before a fast downhill on dirt tracks into the town of Bulgan where we might stop to pick up more supplies. The road is hilly until 30 kilometres out of Tsetserleg, where we hit some fast dirt tracks with lots of mounds that make for some fine jumps. On Day 9 we'll camp on the outskirts of Tsetserleg so that we can visit the Aimag (provincial) Museum in the temple Zayayn Gegeenii Sum. If time permits we'll cycle out of Tsetserleg towards the town of Tsenger – on the only paved roads for the whole trip! Then we will set up camp in a great little spot at the junction the Tamir and Tsenger Rivers.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 10/11 – Tsenger River Valley

As we travel south we will have a slow ascent till we reach the Olgyin Davaa (Pass) and then a quick descent towards the Orkhon Falls where we will arrive early on day 11. The rest of the day is free for you to relax at the campsite or hike down the ravine into the gorge for a swim.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 12/13 – Orkhon River Valley

This is our last leg of cycling for the trip! We follow the Orkhon River all the way to Kharkhorin, the ancient capital at the time of the Mongolian Empire. We should arrive early on day 13 so that you have time to visit the Erdene Zuu Khiid, the first Buddhist monastery in Mongolia dating from 1586. On this night we break out the party clothes and enjoy some of the famous local airag – fermented mare's milk, for we're celebrating our journey across the Arkhangai Mountain Ranges!

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 14: Kharkhorin – Ulaanbaatar

We pack up the bikes and drive back to Ulaanbaatar, which is a full day's drive from Kharkhorin. In the evening we will go out for our final night dinner.

Breakfast and Lunch

Day 15: Departure Day

You are free to leave any time today

Breakfast

Inclusions

- 14 nights accommodation (3 nights hotel, 11 nights camping)
- Tents and foam sleeping mats for camping
- All transport en route (whilst cycling), vehicle transport from Ulaanbaatar to Bayanhongor and from Kharkhorin to Ulaanbaatar.
- Transport to/from Winter Palace – Ulaanbaatar
- Good Quality Mountain Bike
- Bike tools and spare parts
- Meals: Breakfasts (14), Lunch (12), Dinner (12)
- All water and snack food whilst cycling
- Local guide, cooks and drivers
- Bike Asia tour leader
- Entry tickets to Bogd Khan Winter Palace

Bike Asia Travel style

We think cycling through a region for the first time with a group of like-minded people is a great way to travel in Asia. Our aim is to provide you with the opportunity to meet new people, learn about new cultures, experience different landscapes and most all to have some fun. Cycling is a major part of our trips – they are cycle tours after all. We have designed our trips so that they are accessible to people with a reasonable level of fitness. Different trips will require varying degrees of physical ability. Each trip dossier has specific details on terrain, cycling conditions, distances covered each day and an altitude profile. All of our trips are fully supported, so should you want or need to take a rest, there will be a seat for you in the support vehicle and a place to put your bike. Our trips are also designed to allow you the opportunities and time to appreciate the environment, scenery and culture around you, and to participate in any activities that may be on offer.

Ethical travel

An integral part of travelling is to have a positive impact on the country that you are visiting. On this trip there are a number of things you can do to have a positive impact on the communities which we visit.

Dress Mongolia is still quite a conservative country. In rural areas and temples overly revealing clothing is considered offensive. You should make an effort to dress more conservatively in these situations. Walking around a village in bike shorts is not appropriate so if you wish to cycle in just bike shorts you should have something with you, on the bike, to put on over the top (long loose shorts or a skirt/sarong). When visiting temples shorts are acceptable providing they cover the knee. Singlet tops are not acceptable in temples.

Phrase Book A highly memorable part of your travels will be the local people you meet. In the tourist areas some people will speak English but away from these areas you should learn a few words of Mongolian. We will teach you some of the basics but if you want to really interact we recommend bringing a phrase book.

Donations Often when coming on trips overseas people like to bring items such as sweets, pens and books for children or old clothing for families. While this is a fantastic idea, if distributed in the wrong way it can actually create more problems. Giving away anything to local people can create an expectation that visiting foreigners equals free give-aways. In some communities in Asia this has created whole villages where the only interaction is the locals asking for things. If you would like to donate anything to the communities that we visit we suggest that you give the items to us and we will then pass them on to development organizations, schools or whole communities. In this way items are distributed to those really in need by those working in the communities.

Poverty In Mongolia there is poverty which you may see, mainly in the capital Ulaanbaatar. If you choose to give something to a beggar you must bear in mind the value of money in the country you are visiting. There are organizations which are working to alleviate this poverty and may be able to do more good with donations that you make. Your Tour Leader will be able to provide more information about this.

Support Organizations There are a number of organizations which we hope you can support in one way or another. Your Tour Leader will provide more information on these as you travel.

Group size

Maximum: 12

Minimum: 3

Accommodation

For this trip, 11 of the 14 nights are spent camping. We provide tents for all passengers and the sleeping arrangements are for twin-share so if you are a single traveller you will be paired up with someone of the same sex. This ensures that whether you are travelling solo or with friends, everyone is paying the same rate. We also provide one foam mat for

each participant. Should you want to bring your own super-deluxe self-inflating, ultra-light, ergonomically designed mattress... you're most welcome! For those non-camping nights, we will be staying in a hotel. We choose hotels (where possible) that are comfortable, centrally located places which are adequate in every way, with twin-share facilities and private bathrooms.

Transport

All transport listed is included in the trip price: all vehicles whilst cycling (one or two depending on the group size), the transport from Ulaanbaatar to Bayanhongor, the vehicle transfer between Kharkhorin and Ulaanbaatar at the end of the cycling component and transport out to visit the Winter Palace of Bogd Khan. You will need to pay for any transport taken during free time. **Transfers** Individual arrival and departure transfers can be organised through us for a fee, if you let us know when you book the trip.

Bikes

Bikes are included in the trip cost. Our mountain bikes are entry-level standard. We keep them well-maintained and we travel with all necessary tools and spare parts. We use Specialized, GT and Black Cat bikes with the following specifications:

- Hard tail (front suspension)
- Shimano Alivio 21 speed gears
- Shimano Alivio v-brakes
- Off road tyres
- One bottle cage
- Ergonomic seat
- A range of sizes

You may wish to bring your own pedals, clips, seat and handle extensions, as we can easily fit them to our bikes.

You are of course welcome to bring your own bike. Keep in mind though, that while we offer maintenance and spares for the bikes we provide, we can't guarantee that we can cater to your particular bicycle's needs so it would be best to bring your own parts and tools. If you are unsure we recommend that you speak to your local bike shop about what parts to bring.

To see the bikes we use click on the link below:

www.bikeasia.com/info/bike.html

Because we travel with a support vehicle it is not necessary to carry many things when on the bike. You may like to carry a daypack, bumbag or handlebar bag with personal belongings, camera, sunscreen etc., or you may prefer to leave a daypack in the support vehicle and carry only a camera & rain jacket (perhaps in a seatpost bag) when cycling.

Food

Food is a very important part of any travel experience. Most of the meals on this trip are included in the cost, with a few exceptions like free days. To see which meals are included, read the inclusions list or the itinerary. The areas that we will be travelling in just do not have any amenities such as restaurants, so we have to bring our own cooks and food with us! Breakfast, lunch and dinner are always a cooked meal, usually of several courses...! Pasta, stews, soups, vegetables, steaks, eggs, bread, cheese -they have all of it. Vegetarians and vegans are well catered for and should you have any other dietary restrictions, you just need to inform us so that our cooks can prepare for

this when they are buying all the food supplies for the trip in Ulaan Baatar. Due to the climate and land quality in Mongolia, it can be difficult to obtain several things such as fresh fruit, green vegetables. We are aware of this and compensate where possible.

Money

You will need to bring money on the trip to pay for the following: some meals, drinks, activities in the free time, departure tax and of course shopping. We suggest various ways to access your cash. These include:

- Licensed money exchanges will provide local currency in exchange for all major forms of foreign currency (but please note that it will be very difficult to exchange old, well-worn notes). At these exchanges it will also be possible to change travellers' cheques but only those in US dollars and from major companies.
- ATMs where you can use your Visa/MasterCard, (but they do **not** (as of 2005) accept Maestro/Cirrus cards)
- Credit card facilities, but only at top-end hotels, expensive souvenir shops, all airline offices and most travel agencies.

The amount you bring will depend on how much you plan to spend. The following will give you an indication of prices.

Beer would cost MNT 1000 (supermarket) -MNT2500 (bar)
Dinner at local restaurant MNT 1500 – MNT 3500
Dinner at foreign restaurant MNT 5000 – MNT 10000

The Mongolian currency is the Mongolian Tugrik (MNT). Exchange rates at the time of writing are:

1 AUD = MNT970
1 EUR = MNT1590
1 GBP = MNT2330
1 CAD = MNT1050
1 NZD = MNT860
1 USD = MNT1165

There will be very few opportunities to spend money, Ulaanbaatar will be one of the few places where you can do any shopping.

We also recommend that you bring US \$100 in emergency funds, to be used when circumstances beyond the control of Bike Asia necessitate a change in itinerary.

Insurance

Obtaining your own travel insurance is required in order to participate on a Bike Asia trip. It will need to include a minimum coverage of medical expenses with emergency evacuation, personal liability and accident insurance. Your group leader will need to see a copy of your insurance at the group meeting on the first day.

Some recommended insurance companies are;
World Nomads;

www.worldnomads.com

Covermore;
<http://www.covermore.com>

Joining point instructions

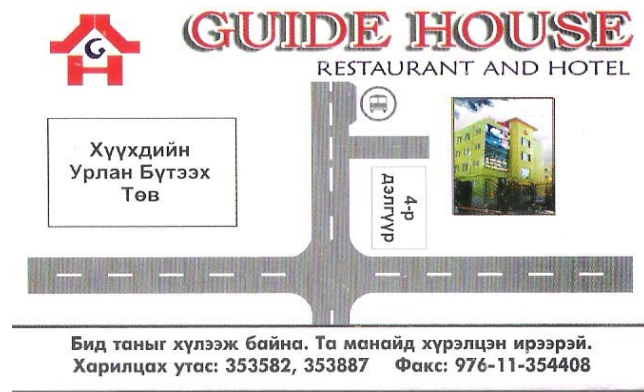
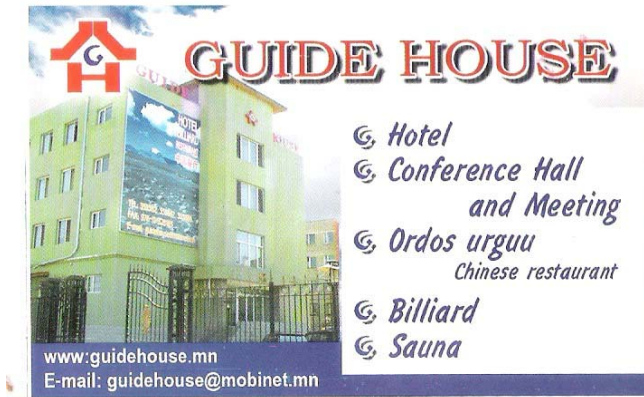
You will need to arrive at the starting point hotel in time for the group meeting, which will be held on the evening of day 1. The hotel is located in the centre of the city, with twin-share rooms, private bathrooms, hot water and television and 24 hour reception. You should print out this dossier so that you have a copy of the address to show your taxi driver. The hotel address is:

Guide House Hotel

Address: Amar Street, Ulaanbaatar, MN, 212121

Telephone: 976-11-353582

Fax: 976-11-354408



Fitness

You will need to a good level of fitness to participate in this trip. There are nine cycling days in total with most days cycling between 50-80km on off-road terrain. Whilst this trip does not involve a lot of long mountain climbing, on most days we are cycling on undulating terrain with climbs over valley passes, some of which are very steep. The cycling is done at an altitude between 1000 – 2000 metres above sea level.

Cycling conditions

The terrain is almost completely off-road with the greater part being hard-packed dirt tracks strewn with rocks. There is almost no traffic but you still need to be constantly alert for rocks, potholes and track divots.

Health

In order to make the most of your holiday, you need to be as healthy as possible! For a list of vaccinations we recommend that you seek advice at a travel clinic at least six weeks prior to departure. Our group leader will have Senior's Level first aid training and will travel with a first-aid kit, however it is also recommended that individual travellers have a basic first aid kit with any personal medical requirements. Our group leader is not authorised, for legal reasons, to administer any kind of drugs including pain relief tablets, antibiotics etc so be sure to pack a supply of your favourite pain-killers. Pharmacy products vary in different countries and you may not be able to buy products that are widely available at home. Include the following: plasters, dressings, bandage, calamine lotion (a must for soothing sunburn), oral re-hydration treatment (in case of bouts of diarrhoea), insect repellent, insect sting relief, eye drops (can get dusty), lots of moisturiser and lip balm for the dry weather, antiseptic cream and antiseptic wipes.

For more information on travel health, you can click on the links below:

Australia;

<http://www.tmvc.com.au/>

United States

<http://www.cdc.gov/page.do>

United Kingdom

<http://www.travelhealth.co.uk/>

Lonely Planet

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/health/>

Visas

Most travellers will need to obtain a Mongolian visa, either through a travel agent or direct with the Mongolian Embassy. For the latest information, see your travel agent.

If you are travelling through another country to get to Mongolia (e.g. China, Korea, Japan or Russia) you should make enquiries as to whether a visa for that country will also be needed.

Luggage/Packing list (guide only)

We strongly advise against using a hard shell suitcase for this trip. Mongolia is not a suitcase or wheellie-bag friendly country. We will be camping most nights and the ground will be grass and earth. A **soft backpack** would be the most suitable, and the easiest to transfer in/out of the trucks in the morning and evening. Keep in mind when you are packing that often our local crew are lifting our bags before we cycle into camp, so try to pack as lightly as possible. Please check our climate charts to assess your clothing requirements, or contact us if you are unsure.

PERSONAL

- Long trousers
- Shorts
- Shirts
- Warm jacket
- Thermals
- Woollen socks
- Jumper
- Hat
- Sandals/light shoes
- Swimming Costume
- Sunglasses
- Light rain coat
- Toiletries
- Tampons
- Small towel
- Sunscreen
- First aid kit
- Mosquito repellent
- Camera and film
- Contact solution
- Eye drops
- Gloves/scarf

TRAVEL

- Passport with 6 months validity and spare pages
- Passport photo
- Travel insurance details
- Flight tickets
- Money/ travellers checks/cash/ credit card
- Guide/phrase book
- Money pouch
- Sleeping bag
- Sleep sheet
- Medication (i.e.; cold tablets, headache tablets, sleeping tablets)
- Main/day pack
- Alarm clock
- Plastic bags
- Pocket knife
- Torch
- Telescopic fishing rod & lures
- Playing cards
- Frisbee/football

BICYCLE

- Something to carry your personal belongings in while cycling, eg. daypack, bum bag, handlebar bag.
- Helmet
- Cycling gloves
- Water bottle/bladder
- 2 x Padded bike shorts with something to put on over the top when off the bike.
- Your own seat, pedals, cleats. (optional)
- Light wind-proof jacket for cycling
- Cycle shoes (with cleat attachment if you use them)
- Handle extensions
- Gel-seat

Pre/post trip accommodation

If you would like us to organise some extra nights accommodation either before or after the trip at our starting or finishing point hotel, just let us know when you book the trip.

Tipping

One of the reasons that our trips run so well, and are so much fun is the effort and energy put in by our local crew. On this trip, we will have drivers, cooks and a local guide. Their mix of professionalism, enthusiasm and sense of fun are infectious. We recognise that the wages in an economically developing country are vastly different to ours and ask that if you are satisfied with the service you show your appreciation with a tip. Your group leader will collect this at the end of the trip and organise a small thankyou presentation. As an indication only, we recommend you allocate USD 30. Tipping is **NOT** compulsory and it is meant to be a reward for good service.

Safety

Our cycling tour leader has the authority to change or cancel all or part of this trip if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns. This decision would not be taken lightly, and where possible it would be made in consultation with our local crew, local operator and Bike Asia management. Your leader will be present on all included activities, staying at all the same hotels, guesthouses and of course cycling with you. During free time, should you choose to participate in any optional activities that are not part of our itinerary, please note that we cannot give any representations or guarantees about the safety of the activity, the standard of the operators running them or the equipment that they use.

In the group meeting, the cycling leader will run a session on cycling safety. Whilst some travellers will have years of touring experience, for others, this might be their first cycling trip ever. We need to cater for a range of abilities and experience and it is in everyone's interest to learn about the particulars of cycling in this region from someone who has already done it. It goes without saying that by running and participating in a cycling trip, both parties accept an inherent level of risk. However, we take the safety of our passengers very seriously and we ask that you cycle in a safe and responsible manner and that you look out for the well-being of your fellow travellers. Cycling helmets must be worn by all cyclists at all times whilst cycling.

Most national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest information before departure. The links for some major travel advisories and updates are listed below;

Australia;

<http://www.smartraveller.gov.au>

Britain;

<http://www.fco.gov.uk>

Canada;

http://www.voyage.gc.ca/consular_home-en.asp

New Zealand;

<http://www.mfat.govt.nz/travel/>

United States;

<http://travel.state.gov>

We recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling in cities, for the safe-keeping of your passport, money, credit cards and traveller's cheques. Utilise the hotel's safety boxes or safe once you arrive in Ulaanbaatar.

Communication

In Ulaanbaatar, you will be able to access email, phone, fax and post offices. Outside Ulaanbaatar there will not be a chance to email. The only communication will be phone, which is available in most towns that we cycle through. You should leave your family or

friends the Bike Asia contact details. Our office staff will be able to get in touch with us in an emergency. Bike Asia will have a satellite phone for emergency purposes on hand at all times whilst in the countryside.

Group Leader

Our leaders are passionate about Asia and cycling...phew! They love what they do and take their job seriously. They will make every effort to ensure you have a safe, enjoyable trip with as much fun as possible. They bring many qualities and skills to this role, knowledge of group cycling, safety, management and liaising between you and the local crew. In working for us, they have made a commitment to learning as much about the culture, language and customs of Mongolia as possible, and they are happy to share any of this knowledge with you. However, please keep in mind that they are not local and will not know everything.

Rules

We don't have many, but the ones we do have are important. We always abide by the laws of the country that we are travelling through. This means you are not to use any illegal drugs or use prostitutes. Any passenger who does so will be asked to leave the trip immediately.

Feedback

After you have completed the trip, we want to know what you thought about it. This is important to us, as it is through your feedback that we monitor our trips and make improvements for the future. Log on to our website and click on the feedback link. It will take you a minimum of 3 minutes, or should you feel like writing in more detail, then a little longer. If you fill in the feedback form, we'll give you an automatic 5% discount on any of our trips in any other region.

Photos

We are always looking for good photos of the regions we travel through. If you have some that you would like to send us, we would love to have a look.

Newsletter

Our quarterly email newsletter has information on events happening in Asia, travel stories, cycling stuff, last-minute deals on our trips, travel tips and more. If you would like to subscribe, just go to our homepage and enter your email address. Your email address will be kept confidential.