



EQUUS Journeys

HORSEBACK TRAVEL & EQUESTRIAN TRADITIONS SINCE 1972

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Across the Orkhon Valley

MONGOLIA

Embark on a **horseback adventure** through the **legendary Orkhon Valley**. Gallop through endless green plains, channelling the freedom and grandeur that once inspired ancient Mongol warriors. Explore Genghis Khan's legendary city, **Karakorum**, and discover the beautiful landscapes of the **"Eight Lakes"**. Find refuge in the warmth of a **local yurt**, where welcoming **local families** share their **traditions** with your group of riders.

Trail Riding	 13 days / 7 days riding	 From £1,528	
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ITINERARY

Highlights

- Ride in the heart of the Orkhon Valley - a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Enjoy an 8-day horseback trek through Mongolia's wild nature.
- Meet five nomadic families and share in their daily life.
- Visit three large Buddhist monasteries.
- Learn to cook traditional dishes.
- Experience a variety of landscapes: lakes, mountains, steppes, hot springs, and more.
- Experience the power and hardiness of the Mongolian horse!
- Opportunity to attend the Naadam Festival in Ulaanbaatar.

Day 1 — 1: ULAANBAATAR - No riding

The local team will be waiting for you at the airport. From there, you will be transferred to the hotel. After lunch, you will set off to discover Ulaanbaatar, an intriguing city of striking contrasts. This capital, with its Soviet-style architecture and vibrant atmosphere, reflects both its communist and capitalist influences, and nomadic and settled lifestyles. You will visit the National Museum, which will provide a solid historical foundation for discovering the country.

The evening promises a memorable experience as you are treated to traditional songs and dances performed by the National Academic Ensemble of Mongolia. Overnight at a hotel.

Day 2 — 2: ULAANBAATAR – KHUSTAIN NURUU - KHUJIRT - No riding, 1-2 hours walking

In the morning, you will leave the bustling capital to begin your adventure across Mongolia's vast central steppe. Following a paved road westward, you will catch your glimpses of rural Mongolia: wild horses galloping along the road, smoke rising from a yurt nestled in an irrigated valley. In the heart

of the steppes, young Mongolian horsemen perform a captivating equestrian show against a bright blue sky. Dressed in vibrant traditional attire, they demonstrate impressive horseback skills with daring acrobatic moves. Accompanied by rhythmic drum beats and traditional songs, the atmosphere is festive and lively. The harmony between horse and rider is palpable, illustrating the unbreakable bond Mongolians share with their pastoral heritage.

In the afternoon, you will travel to Khujirt, where your first nomadic family welcomes you. Inside the warm yurt, you will taste your first “Suutei Tsai”—a salted milk tea, and “Aaruul”—a dried Mongolian cheese. Today will include 4-6 hours in a vehicle and 1-2 hours of walking. You will stay overnight in a yurt with the locals.

Day 3 — 3: KHUJIRT – GYATRUUN - No riding

Today, you will dive into the famous Orkhon Valley, the true heartland of the Mongol people and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The region's diverse landscapes make it a rich tapestry of colours and textures. More populated than other regions, the valley has been home to many nomadic families due to its favourable climate and abundant pastures. It also boasts archaeological remnants dating back to the 6th century.

Crossing a high pass with a spectacular view of the Orkhon Valley, you will journey westward to the camp of your host family, about 50km away in the valley's depths. Today will include 3-4 hours driving on dirt roads and 1-2 hours of walking. You will sleep overnight in a yurt with the locals.

Day 4 — 4: GYATRUUN HOT SPRINGS - 4-6 hours riding

Today you will begin your horseback journey, exploring the forested hills in the southern part of the valley, winding along narrow trails amid larch forests that lead us to the Gyatruun hot springs. These springs, one hot and the other cold, are famous for their healing properties. You'll enjoy a relaxing soak in this beautiful setting. Overnight in a yurt with locals.

Day 5 — 5: HORSEBACK TREK TO KHUISIN NAIMAN NUUR - 4-6 hours riding

Over the next three days, you will explore the stunning natural area of Naiman Nuur – the eight lakes. Sitting at 2,200m, ancient volcanic craters contain nine clear blue alpine lakes surrounded by tall forested mountains. The area's thousands of plant species include medicinal varieties, and if you're lucky, you may see deer, wild boar, or wolves. Tonight you will stay in a yurt with locals.

Day 6 — 6: HORSEBACK TREK TO KHUISIN NAIMAN NUUR - 4-6 hours riding

Continue to explore the natural wonders of Naiman Nuur, a region which is rich in flora and fauna. Riding from lake to lake in this idyllic setting, the more adventurous can swim or try fishing. Tonight, a new family will welcome you into their yurt for a truly authentic Mongolian evening.

Day 7 — 7: HORSEBACK TREK TO KHUISIN NAIMAN NUUR - 4-6 hours riding

Continue to explore the natural wonders of Naiman Nuur, a region which is rich in flora and fauna. Riding from lake to lake in this idyllic setting, the more adventurous can swim or try fishing. Tonight, you will stay in a tourist camp.

Day 8 — 8: GYATRUUN – ULAAN TSUTGALAN - 4-6 hours riding

Crossing the valley, you will ride towards the Tuvkhun Monastery. Heading across grassy plains dotted with basaltic rocks and bordered by dormant volcanoes, you will eventually reach the Ulaantsutgalan Waterfall, a 20m cascade formed around 20,000 years ago by earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. In the evening, you will sleep in a yurt with locals.

Day 9 — 9: ULAAN TSUTGALAN - TUVKHUN - 4-6 hours riding

Today, you will cross the Orkhon River to visit a nomadic family living at the foot of the Tuvkhun Monastery. After lunch, you will ride through the forested Khangai Mountains. Hidden until we reach its base, the Tuvkhun Monastery blends seamlessly into its natural surroundings, creating an atmosphere of peace, serenity, and contemplation. This sacred site is dedicated to Zanabazar, the first Buddhist spiritual leader of the Mongols. Again you will ride for 4-6 hours. You will stay overnight in a yurt with locals.

Day 10 — 10: TSAGAAN SUM HOT SPRINGS - 3-4 hours riding

Fancy a dip in a hot spring? Today, you will ride north, crossing a high pass with sweeping views of the Khangai Range. You descend into a lush valley where you will discover the Tsagaan Sum hot springs, with temperatures reaching 65°C. Located in a picturesque setting, these springs feed indoor and outdoor pools, ideal for bathing. With hydrogen sulfate, the water is known for its therapeutic properties. After relaxing here, you will return to your host family for the night.

Day 11 — 11: TUVKHUN – KHUGNU KHAN - No riding

It's time to say farewell to our nomadic friends and horses. You will begin your return journey to the capital, (approx. a 4-6 hour drive), with many interesting stops along the way, starting with Kharkhorin (or Karakorum) -- Genghis Khan's legendary city, founded in 1220. The Mongol Empire's capital and a thriving Silk Road hub in the 13th century, Kharkhorin played a major role in global economic, political, and cultural life. Today, only the significant Erdene Zuu Monastery remains, built at Zanabazar's initiative in the late 16th century, and often considered one of the country's most beautiful monasteries. Miraculously spared from enemy attacks, its 108 stupas and three main temples are remarkably beautiful.

After lunch, you will continue to Khugnu Khan Nature Reserve, where Mongolia's natural magic comes to life. Here, a unique combination of green steppe and massive sand dunes creates a striking landscape.

You will stay overnight in a family yurt.

Day 12 — 12: KHUGNU KHAN - ULAANBAATAR - No riding

You will make your final drive back to Ulaanbaatar, (approx. 4-6 hours, along some paved and some rough roads) arriving around noon. On the way, you will visit the Gandan Monastery, Mongolia's largest religious centre, and then transfer to the hotel. You will then have a free afternoon to shop for souvenirs and explore the city. Sleep at the hotel.

Day 13 — 13: DEPARTURE - No riding

After breakfast at the hotel, a driver will pick you up for your transfer to Ulaanbaatar airport for your flight home.

DATES & PRICES

DEPARTURE	RETURN	PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS	STATUS
31/05/2025	12/06/2025	£1,528	Open
15/06/2025	27/06/2025	£1,528	Guaranteed departure
28/06/2025	10/07/2025	£1,528	Open
11/07/2025	24/07/2025	£1,690	Open
26/07/2025	07/08/2025	£1,528	Guaranteed departure
09/08/2025	21/08/2025	£1,528	Open
23/08/2025	04/09/2025	£1,528	Open

Price details

- International flights are not included but can be booked for you upon request - please contact us for rates.

- Groups are composed of between 4 and 14 international riders, plus guides.

- Rates are per person, based on riders sharing tents and yurts, and twin rooms at hotels.

- If you sign up to the ride as a solo rider and there are no other riders likely to share your room, you will be charged a single room supplement of approx. \$125 / £100 / €120 for hotel accommodation and \$65 / £55 / €60 for tourist/yurt camps. You will then be reimbursed if a sharer is found for you at a later date. Please note that single accommodation is not possible if staying with local families.

- For an extra night at a hotel in Ulaanbaatar there is an additional fee of \$125 / £100 / €120 for a single room and \$75 / £60 / €70 for a shared twin or double room, per person.

- All transfers are included as per the itinerary, at set times. Private transfers or transfers for late arrivals can be organised for an additional fee of \$30 / £25 / €28 per car (one way).

- One of the rides in July includes a visit to the Naadam Festival, and involves arriving in Mongolia a day earlier (trip is 14 days).

- Rider weight limit: 80 kilos, 176 lbs, 12.6 st. Heavier riders please contact us.

Please Note

The itinerary may be modified at anytime for security reasons, meteorological or events beyond our control such as blocked roads, rivers in flood, drought, strikes and local holidays. Equus Journeys, our local partners and their local guides will always strive to find the best solution and will alter the itinerary as needed.

The names of the hotels and accommodation are given for information only and depending on availability, they may be modified without notice and replaced by another of a similar standard.

Price includes

SUPPORT TEAM

1 English-speaking guide

1 or 2 local equestrian guide(s) during the trail

LOGISTICS

1 support vehicle

INLAND TRANSPORT

Airport transfers

ACCOMMODATION

Hotel in Ulaanbaatar - double room with private bathroom

2-person tents

Yurts - shared between 5-6 people

MEALS

Full board from lunch on day 1 to breakfast on day 13

Water

EXTRAS

Entry fees to parks and museums mentioned in the itinerary

Price doesn't include

MEALS

Beverages and personal extras

ACCOMMODATION

Sleeping bag - available to rent

TRANSPORT

International flights

EXTRAS

Tips to the local team

INSURANCE

Visas

Cancellation and travel insurance are not included in the above listed price. Please note that insurance is mandatory. We recommend taking out an insurance policy as soon as your trip is booked to cover you in case of cancellation

Optional

ACCOMMODATION

Single room/tent supplement

Horses

The legendary Mongolian horse, known for its role in conquest and history, is small but energetic, enduring, and perfectly suited for equestrian trekking across all terrains. Though renowned for their gentle nature, these horses are semi-wild, requiring some adaptation from riders. While some horses are livelier than others, all are carefully selected by the team for their temperament.

Guide & local team

You will be accompanied by at least two local horse guides. There will also be a cook to prepare meals (camping night only), and a vehicle driver. An interpreter will accompany you during the ride.

Minimum riding ability

MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

You need to be an experienced rider who is used to riding outdoors across varied terrain for several hours. Please note that Mongolian horses, while friendly, may also be semi-wild. Riders should be prepared for a range of temperaments, and to adjust their riding as required.

Weight limit: 80 kilos, 176 lbs, 12.6 st.

PACE

While a significant part of the ride is at walk, there are plenty of opportunities for long trots and spirited canters.

TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

Each horse is saddled and unsaddled by the accompanying Mongolian herders. Feel free to participate in the process if you'd like – simply ask the herders for guidance! While camping, you may be asked to assist with tasks such as putting up and dismantling tents.

TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE

Previous experience of riding a trail for several days is an advantage but is not required. Riders who do not ride regularly are requested to get riding fit before the holiday.

Visiting a new country offers the opportunity to meet other cultures with different mentalities, therefore it is important to accept these differences and respect the local way of life. Be prepared to adapt to a different style of riding and accept that Mongolians relate to their horses in a different way to us.

Your belongings are transported by car.

EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT

The saddles used include Kazakh, Russian, and Mongolian styles, all equipped with saddle bags. Comfort levels may vary from rider to rider, so please inform the team of any discomfort on the first day so adjustments can be made.

Recommendations:

- Riders over 1.90m tall should bring their own adjustable stirrup leathers, as local saddles may not offer sufficient length.
- Consider bringing a sheepskin or extra padding to ensure comfort during long rides. Use strings to attach it securely to the saddle.
- A helmet is strongly recommended for safety and hygiene. Be sure to bring your own riding helmet or hat.

TRAVEL INFO

COMFORT

- 2 nights in Ulaanbaatar: you stay in a hotel with private bathrooms and wifi
- 9 nights in yurts: 3-5 beds in a yurt (possibly mixed) depending on the groups and nomad families. No shower facilities.
- 1 night in tourist camp: two-man tents. Mattresses are provided but you need to take your own sleeping bag. Shower facility.

Please note there is no electricity throughout the ride. You may bring solar charger/powerbank, if you wish.

MEALS

Meals are overall simple, and consist mainly of meat and some vegetables.

Most dinners will be prepared by the Mongolian families you stay with, except on the camping night in which a member of the local team will take on that responsibility.

You will be supplied with fresh water to drink. You may also bring water-purification tablets such as Micropur. Do not drink from unknown sources.

CLIMATE

Mongolia enjoys over 260 sunny days a year and experiences very little rainfall. However, summer brings the most precipitation. The country often sits at the centre of a high-pressure system, keeping the skies clear most of the year, earning it the nickname "The Land of Blue Skies."

Despite the sunshine, Mongolia experiences an extreme continental climate due to its geographical features: a vast, semi-desert plateau averaging over 1,500m in altitude. Summer temperatures can fluctuate wildly, ranging from +3°C to +35°C during the day and from -3°C to +6°C at night.

Recommendations:

- Wear loose, comfortable, and warm clothing (fleece jackets are ideal).
- Bring t-shirts for layering, which allows you to adjust your temperature more easily.
- Always carry full rain protection, as weather can change quickly.

TIPS

If you are happy with the service you receive from your local guides and driver then you may wish to leave a tip. In order to remain consistent with their standard of living, we would recommend something in the region of \$65-75 / £50-55.

PACKING LIST

When packing, please remember that the region can be cold and it would be wise to bring layers!

Pack carefully and sensibly: the following guide is here to give you an idea of what to bring.

Soft bags are preferred as they are easier to fit into the back up vehicle

Head

- Equus Journeys strongly recommend that you wear a riding helmet and that you take your own to ensure a correct fit. There are many lightweight options available nowadays
- Sunhat for when not riding
- Sunglasses - with a cord attached so they don't fly off when riding
- Buff or bandana
- Warm hat for cold nights

Upper body

- Thermals (long or short sleeved)
- Long sleeved shirts provide protection from the sun and are an extra layer
- T-shirts
- Lightweight fleece or jumper
- Warm fleece or jumper (and a spare in case one gets wet)
- Warm and waterproof jacket - it can rain at any time of year and the evenings can be particularly cold. No ponchos or anything that can flap around!

Legs

- Lightweight, comfortable riding trousers or jodhpurs - we recommend riding in them at home before taking them on holiday to ensure they don't rub
- Thermals
- Casual trousers for the evenings, such as jeans or tracksuit bottoms
- Waterproof over trousers

Hands and Feet

- Comfortable riding boots. We recommend short boots with half chaps but you may wish to take long chaps as an extra layer against inclement weather. We don't recommend taking your favourite long leather boots in case they get damaged. We would suggest something with a good grippy sole.
- Waterproof shoes/boots can be useful for abundant dew in the mornings or when it rains
- Trainers or equivalent light shoes for moving around in the evenings
- Several pairs of warm, thick socks
- Gloves - your hands are particularly exposed to the sun, cold or rain whilst riding. Waterproof gloves can be particularly useful

Nightwear

- Sleeping bag. You need at least a comfort factor down to minus 5°C, but would recommend at least minus 8 or 10°C (especially outside of July/August). It is possible to request a sleeping bag from the local team (limited availability)
- Sleeping bag liner - silk, cotton or fleece - adds an extra layer
- Pyjamas or tracksuits or thermals for sleeping in

Please remember it can get very cold at night, especially if you are travelling in June/September: pack accordingly.

Other useful items

- Water-purification tablets
- Swimsuit - for swimming/bathing in lakes
- Towels - camping ones will both dry and pack more easily
- Small backpack for accessing items required during the day (carried by support crew)
- Camera and high capacity memory card. Spare battery
- Bumbag for carrying your camera and small items whilst riding
- Headtorch or small torch for moving around camp at night - bring spare batteries and bulbs
- Water bottle (2 litres or 2 x 1 litre)
- Wet Wipes or equivalent (for when washing facilities aren't available)
- Toilet paper and a lighter to burn it with
- Small plastic bags for rubbish
- Ear plugs (for light sleepers)
- Solar charger/powerbank

In your hold luggage

- Any liquids, such as shampoo, moisturiser, deodorant unless they are less than 100ml and all bottles can fit in a small, clear, plastic ziplock bag. We recommend biodegradable washing products where possible.
- Swiss army knife (or equivalent)

In your hand luggage

- Any valuables, such as your camera, ipod, ipad etc.
- Your riding hat

Medical kit

- Micropur tabs
- Sunscreen and lip balm - should be high factor
- Insect repellent, preferably containing deet
- Any medication you regularly take
- Blister plasters in case of any rubs
- Antiseptic cream, plasters, aspirin, anti-histamine, insect-bite salve etc...
- Spare prescription glasses/contact lenses
- Eye drops
- Imodium or similar anti-diarrhoea medication
- Re-hydration sachets
- Water purification tablets
- Antiseptic wipes
- Handwash gel

Our Recommendations

- Soft bags are preferred as they are easier to fit into the back up vehicle.
- Backpacks cannot be worn whilst riding. We recommend a small bumbag or a coat with pockets so that you can carry small items with you during the day (camera, sunscreen, lipbalm etc)
- We recommend travelling in your riding boots and carrying your hat and some riding clothes in your hand luggage - then if your luggage goes astray you are still able to ride!
- Tall riders may benefit from taking a pair of long stirrup leathers with them (the local stirrups are adjustable but are sometimes limited in length)
- We recommend taking a copy of your passport and insurance documents with you in case you lose your originals
- Please take your rubbish home with you. There are no recycling facilities in Mongolia, so take your used batteries, aerosols etc back home and dispose of them appropriately. Try to leave excess packaging material at home before travelling
- You may wish to take some photographs or postcards of your home with you to show your hosts. You may also wish to take some crayons, colouring books etc for the children