

Gobi & Khangai Trail

Gobi Desert & Khangai Mountain Bike Trail

22nd July – 1st August 2009

This 270km ride through remote and beautiful scenery provides an opportunity to see the real Mongolia: vast and varied landscapes, nomadic families, and historical sites. Starting with an internal flight to Bayankhongor on the northern edge of the Gobi Desert, the route goes into the Khangai Mountains, second highest range in Mongolia, and finishes at Tsetserleg town, capital of Arkhangai province, before driving to Kharkhorin the site of Genghis Khan's capital in the thirteenth century.

The riding is 100% off road, following rough jeep tracks for most of the way. The highest point is Khul Sayangiin Davaa at 2750 metres, and there are several technical downhill stretches. Accommodation on the tour is varied, including a smart hotel in Ulaanbaatar, wild camping in Western-style tents, a popular guest house and a traditional ger camp.




Trip Highlights

- Khul Sayangiin pass is marked by an ovoos, a large pile of rocks adorned with prayers, money and blue silk scarves, offerings to the local spirits.
- Shargaljuut lies between the peaks of Myangan Ugalzat mountain and Shargaljuut mountain. There are more than 300 healing springs in these hills.
- Yaks are used for riding in this part of Mongolia. They are warmer than horses in the winter.



Stop for a break near Tsetserleg

Day 1 Arrive Ulaanbaatar. Transfer to hotel.

Day 2 Fly to Bayankhongor. Start riding into the mountains. Overnight camp beside small river.

Day 3 Ride along the valley to Shargaljuut. In the hills surrounding this small village are hundreds of hot and cold mineral springs. A health resort for local people has been established. Afternoon continue riding over the mountains to set up camp in the next valley.

Day 4 There are a couple of long slow uphill stretches followed by glorious downhill's! These valleys are inhabited only by nomadic families with their herds of sheep and yaks. They make passers-by very welcome, and you are sure to be invited into their ger for a bowl of "airag" (fermented mare's milk) and piece of cheese. Overnight camping.

Day 5 Ride up to the highest point - Khul Sayangiin Davaa, through increasingly remote and wild countryside.

Towards the end of the day the track gets rougher and there are several rivers to cross. Overnight camping.

Day 6 At first the track continues along a rocky river bed. Then the scenery starts to change, becoming greener with a few trees. There are magnificent views of the route that can be admired from each pass. Overnight camping.

Day 7 Ride over one small pass to reach the first sign of civilisation since Shargaljuut. This is the "som" (village) of Bulgan. Ride along the valley to Tsetserleg, the capital of Arkhangai province, and spend the afternoon exploring the town. Overnight guest house.

Day 8 Jeep to Kharkhorin town in the Orkhon valley. At one time this was the centre of the great Mongol Empire. In the 16th century Erdene Zuu Buddhist monastery was founded here and we will visit the monastery which currently houses about 40 monks. Overnight ger camp beside the Orkhon river.

Day 9 Return by jeep to Ulaanbaatar. Overnight hotel.

Day 10 Free day in Ulaanbaatar to explore the museums, temples and galleries around the city. Overnight hotel.

Day 11 Depart.

Tour Grading: The trail is classed as moderate, requiring some technical skill to manage the steep rocky downhill's and strength for the long slow uphill sections. The daily riding distance is between 40km and 70km, depending on the terrain, and the total trail is nearly 300 km.

Accommodation:
 3 nights hotel
 1 night ger camp
 5 nights camping
 1 night guest house

Group size: The tour will run with a minimum of 4 people.

Price per person: € 1695
Single supplement: € 100
Bike hire per day: € 20

Price includes: Accommodation, most meals, domestic flight, transfers and transportation, support vehicle.

Not included: International flights, visa costs, lunch and dinner in Ulaanbaatar.

