

Mongolia – The Eagle Hunters

Naturetrek Itinerary



The Kazakh Eagle Hunters

Outline Itinerary

Day 1	Land in Ulaanbaatar, visit the Equestrian Statue
Day 2-3	Fly to Ulgii and meet the Eagle Hunters. Stay in Ulgii
Day 4	Transfer to Khovd and meet the group

Summary

The art of eagle hunting is prominent in many cultures; however, perhaps none more than in the Kazakh people of central Asia. For almost 2,000 years, the Kazakh people have trained birds of prey to help hunt for food and fur, and still to this day, this ancient heritage can be witnessed in the Altai Mountains of western Mongolia.

This 3-night extension offers the chance to meet the Kazakh Eagle Hunters and take a glimpse into their truly special way of life. Being one of the world's last true nomadic cultures, this is a great opportunity to learn from a different culture and be immersed in an ancient practice that is rarely seen elsewhere.

Across this extension, we will have the chance to learn about the practice of eagle hunting, the dedicated training of the raptors and the lifestyle of this nomadic group. During the two days visiting their camp, we will be treated to displays and training sessions – which can offer some excellent photography opportunities.

Itinerary

Please note that the itinerary below offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather and other local considerations can necessitate some re-ordering of the programme during the course of the tour, though this will always be done to maximise best use of the time and weather conditions available. This itinerary document is intended to give some further background about what to expect and look out for, and your guide will fill you in on specific timings each day. The text below outlines how the extension operates when taken before the main tour. However, you can also take the extension after the main tour if you prefer.

Please note. This extension is focused on culture. For extensions in Mongolia based on wildlife, please see our 'Highlights of the Gobi Desert' extension. Please also note that these extensions are currently only available for our 'Mongolia's Snow Leopards' tour, which takes place in the summer months.

Day 1

Arrive Ulaanbaatar; Visit Equestrian Statue

Today, you will land at Ulaanbaatar (Chinggis Khan) Airport, where you will be greeted by your guide for the day. A short drive will take you to the Mongolica Hotel – your accommodation for the night.

Your guide will then drive you roughly two hours to the world-renowned Genghis Khan Equestrian Statue. At 40 metres tall, this is the tallest equestrian statue in the world. Erected in 2008, this imposing statue commemorates the 800th anniversary of the Mongol Empire.



Returning to the Mongolica Hotel, you will be greeted with dinner and then enjoy a well-deserved rest.

(Breakfast, lunch & dinner included)

Day 2

Fly to Ulgii, Transfer & Meet the Eagle Hunters

This morning you will be picked up from the Mongolica Hotel and take the roughly 45-minute drive back to Chinggis Khan Airport. Here you will take the 2-hour flight to the western city of Ulgii (Ölgii). Upon arrival, you will be greeted by your guide and interpreter and driven for one hour to Sagsai, which is where a camp of Kazakh Eagle Hunters is based.

Here you will have a wonderful experience meeting the Eagle Hunters, and you will have the opportunity to observe training and displays, and take photos of this ancient practice. After what will surely be an amazing and eye-opening day, you will transfer to the Makhsum Hotel in Ulgii. You may even have time to visit the local market before a traditional dinner back at the hotel.

(Breakfast, lunch & dinner included)



A young Kazakh Eagle Hunter

Day 3

A Day with the Eagle Hunters

After a comfortable night in the Makhsum Hotel, we will again travel to Sagsai to spend the day with the Kazakh people. The itinerary for the day will be similar to the day before and will consist of displays, photography opportunities and lessons on Kazakh culture. This is an opportunity for you to get creative, and our guides and the hunters are happy to collaborate in staging action shots or portraits with birds in the golden hour of the day.

We will again travel back to Ulgii to spend our final night in the Makhsum Hotel.

(Breakfast, lunch & dinner included)

Day 4

Transfer to Khovd, Meet the Group

Today we will leave Ulgii and make the roughly 3-hour drive to Khovd. This will be an incredibly scenic drive, with wide open views of arid steppe, rocky desert and the Altai Mountain chain. Across this drive, you will likely have multiple sightings of the huge herds of domestic Bactrian Camels that are frequently kept as livestock in western Mongolia, as well as potential sightings of Black-tailed Gazelle, Saiga Antelope and Steppe Eagle.



A domestic Bactrian Camel

After arriving in Khovd, we will meet the main tour group – once they have landed from their domestic flight from Ulaanbaatar. We will then all take the 2-hour drive up, deeper into the mountains, to the Twin Leopards Ger Camp – where we will be staying for the next five nights.

(Breakfast, lunch & dinner included)

Cost

The cost will depend on the number of people in the group who book the extension; please enquire for a price.

Included in the Cost

- Private, English-speaking guide
- Guided visits and photography sessions of the Eagle Hunters
- Private transfers throughout
- Internal flight to Ulgii (a swap for your original flight to Khovd in the main tour)
- Accommodation
- All meals
- Unlimited water from large coolers but bring your own refillable water bottles. We suggest that each person brings a 1.5-litre bottle.

Additional Expenditure

Please note that drinks, tips, and souvenirs are not included in the cost of your extension. The Mongolian Tughrik is the preferred form of payment, with the hotels accepting credit/debit cards for payment, provided they are permitted to be used overseas.

Notes on Etiquette

Please always respect the handler's instructions around birds and always ask permission before photographing children or inside Ger tents.

Accommodation

During this extension you will be staying in the Mongolica Hotel and the Makhsum Hotel. These hotels will have access to Wi-Fi, air conditioning, and en-suite bathrooms.

Photo Credits

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