



NOMADIC
ROAD

ROAD TO ALTAI

Overland Winter Expedition across 'Western Mongolia'

16th - 27th Mar 2023

ABOUT NOMADIC ROAD

Nomadic Road is an award winning experiential travel company that bridges dream and routine. We are the **pioneers** when it comes to organizing **motoring expeditions to far ends of our planet**. With our extensive experience, each expedition is carefully crafted wherein you'll be driving legendary expedition vehicles, taking on adventurous and unprecedented journeys that guarantees to go well beyond the guidebook and offering unique insights about the places you go to.

FEATURED IN

Forbes

CONDÉ NAST
Traveler



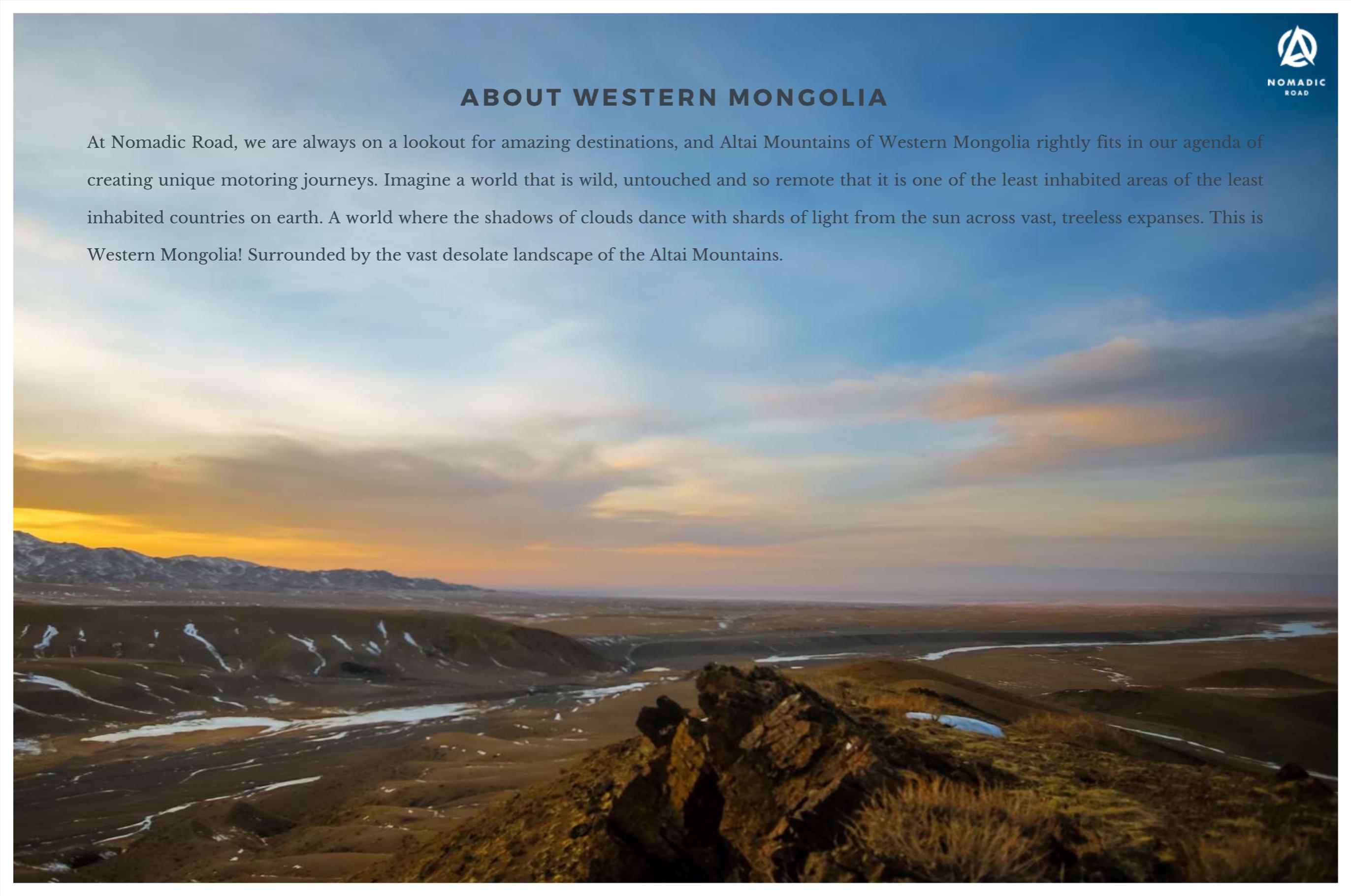
THE TIMES

TRAVEL+
LEISURE



ABOUT WESTERN MONGOLIA

At Nomadic Road, we are always on a lookout for amazing destinations, and Altai Mountains of Western Mongolia rightly fits in our agenda of creating unique motoring journeys. Imagine a world that is wild, untouched and so remote that it is one of the least inhabited areas of the least inhabited countries on earth. A world where the shadows of clouds dance with shards of light from the sun across vast, treeless expanses. This is Western Mongolia! Surrounded by the vast desolate landscape of the Altai Mountains.



EXPEDITION

OVERLAND WINTER EXPEDITION ACROSS WESTERN MONGOLIA

From the snow-covered valleys where horses graze along the frozen river, the rocky, gold-tinted terrain that stretches endlessly toward the jagged ridges in the distance that gets constant dusting of snow. A world that is home to a group of people that have developed a unique relationship with one of the world's most revered birds of prey, the Golden Eagle. This is the world of the Kazakh Eagle Hunters who hunt during the winter months, when the vast landscapes are blanketed in snow. That's what you will experience with our unique motoring expedition that will take you to this the truly remote Mongolian territory.



Country
Mongolia



Group Size
Max. 12 Pax



Weather
Max -7° C | Min -20° C



Expedition Vehicle
Toyota Land Cruiser



Distance
± 2100 kms



Driving Terrain
Predominantly Dirt Roads



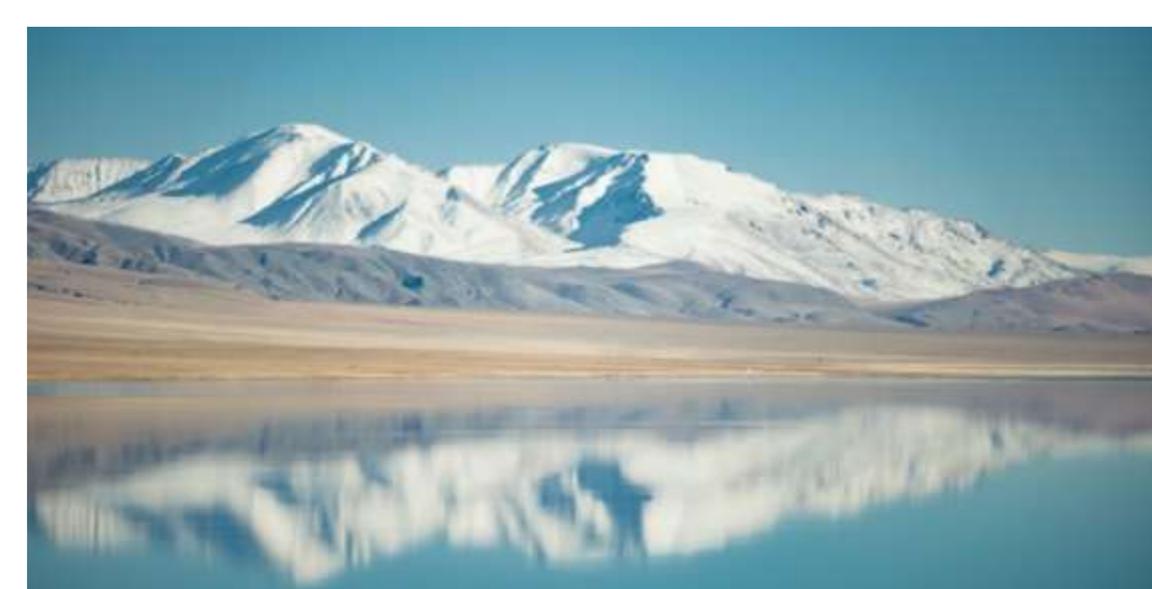
When
16th to 27th Mar 2023



Duration
12 Days



Accommodation
Mix of Hotels + Private
Camping + Ger Camps



01
DAY

FLY INTO ULAANBAATAR

02
DAY

HUSTAIN NURUU NATIONAL PARK AND KHARKHORIN

03
DAY

ERDENE-ZUU MONASTERY AND TSETSERLEG

04
DAY

ZAVKHAN PROVINCE AND TOSONTSENDEL TOWN

05
DAY

KHYARGAS LAKE

06
DAY

ULGII

07
DAY

HORSE RIDING WITH EAGLE HUNTERS

08
DAY

CHANDAMAN VILLAGE

09
DAY

DURGUN LAKE – MONGOL ELS

10
DAY

KHAR-US LAKE & KHOVD

11
DAY

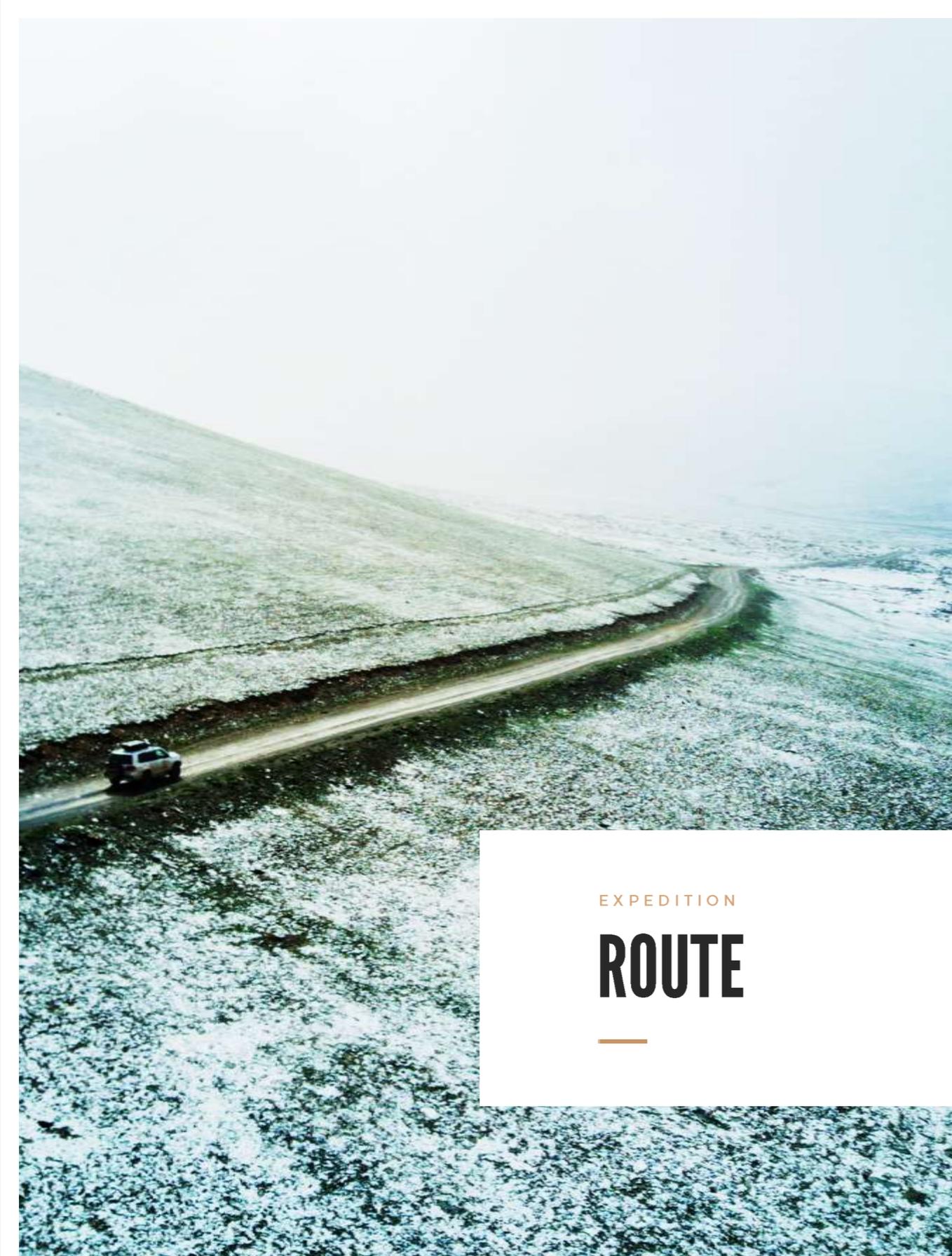
DOMESTIC FLIGHT TO ULAANBAATAR

12
DAY

DEPART FROM ULAANBAATAR

EXPEDITION

ROUTE



DAY 01: ARRIVAL AT ULAANBAATAR

Accommodation: Novotel Hotel or Similar

Modern day Ulaanbaatar, or UB as it is affectionately known, with its grey facades and outlying 'suburbs' of gers (yurts) housing recent migrants, definitely has a very frontier-town feel and it offers a stark contrast to the wild, empty, remote beauty of most of Mongolia. Once you arrive in Ulaanbaatar, you will be received at the airport by our team and then transferred to Novotel Hotel. You are requested to arrive in UB by noon so that you can rest for a while and then get ready for the expedition briefing in the evening followed by a very special expedition welcome dinner. A wonderful opportunity to meet all the fellow expedition members before the start of the epic adventure.

PS: On this journey, you will be spending the last day in Ulaanbaatar, you don't need to come in early to explore the city, unless you want to acclimate to the new time zone and rest after the long flight.

DAY 02: HUSTAIN NURUU NATIONAL PARK AND KHARKHORIN

Accommodation: Ikhhorin Hotel

Driving Distance: 390 kms | Driving Time: 6 Hrs | Driving Terrain: Tarmac + Dirt

In the morning after breakfast, we start our epic overland adventure heading west. First, we will visit the Hustain Nuruu National Park, considered as home to the wild and pretty Przewalski's Horse or called Takhi by the Mongolians, a species that has been brought back from the edge of extinction. This is the only truly wild species of horse in the world. We will explore the national park and witness the last remaining wild horses that are kept in wild habitat. And then we continue to drive further west towards Kharkhorin town, which is where we will be staying for the night. Surrounded by the typical Mongolian countryside filled with wide-open plains, deserts, waterfalls – and home to interesting animals and birds.

DAY 03: ERDENE-ZUU MONASTERY AND TSETSERLEG

Accommodation: Local Hotel

Driving Distance: 150 kms | Driving Time: 4 Hrs | Driving Terrain: Tarmac + Dirt

Today we will explore Karakorum (also called Kharkhorin), site of the 13th century capital of the Mongolian Empire created by Chinggis Khan. At first glance it might seem like a small, nondescript Soviet-built town at first glance, but if you dig a little deeper, you will discover why this area is so important and really quite fascinating in terms of Mongolian history and culture.

First, we will visit the famous Erdene-Zuu Monastery that consists of three temple complexes covering a large area and art historians considers this masterpiece to be the prime example of classic Mongolian and Tibetan art...

... Founded in 1586 by Altai Khaan, Erdene Zuu (Hundred Treasures) was the first Buddhist monastery in Mongolia. From here, we continue to visit the active temple of Bat Erdene-Zuu, once home to nearly thousands of Buddhist monks. We will receive blessings from the monks, more like a ritual before we go deeper into the Wild-Wild-Western-Mongolia. For those interested in knowing more about the history, you can also visit the famous archaeological museum. Then we will have our lunch and continue to drive further west towards Tsetserleg town - a mountainous region with beautiful valleys, forests, and volcanic past.

DAY 04: ZAVKHAN PROVINCE AND TOSONTSENCEL TOWN

Accommodation: Local Hotel

Driving Distance: 360 kms | Driving Time: 6 Hrs | Driving Terrain: Tarmac + Dirt

We continue our journey heading westwards towards the Terkhiin Tsagaan Lake. The lake, known as the Great White Lake, lies within the Terkhiin Tsagaan Nuur National park, is at an elevation of 2060m (AMSL). Along this journey, you will also see some of the volcanic regions of Mongolia. We will visit the Khorgo volcano, one of the 10 volcanoes in the national park, that became extinct about 8000 years ago. The crater is 200m in diameter and 70-80 m deep and one side of it is covered by larch tree forest.

After a short trek along the volcanic mountain, we will continue driving along the south shore of the lake of then onto a gradual mountain pass of Solongot. This pass is located on the border of Arkhangai and Zavkhan provinces and is about 2600 metres high and is considered one of the greatest mountain passes of Mongolia. Nestled in the Tarvagatain mountain range, the road to the summit is totally unpaved. It's a long and challenging road to the summit driving through rugged landscapes. The road is full of steep and sudden turns and countless bumps of varying sizes and impacts. The drive offers dramatic views of Mongolia's plateau. The roads will be slippery and it can get as challenging as driving on dirt roads. The drive will test skills and resilience of both drivers and the vehicles. After a while, we arrive in a town called Tosontsengel where we will be spending the night.

DAY 05: KHYARGAS LAKE

Accommodation: Log Cabins

Driving Distance: 360 kms | Driving Time: 8 Hrs | Driving Terrain: Dirt + Frozen Lake

Today will be one of the longest driving days of the expedition. One of the interesting places we will see enroute is the mineral lake formed by tectonic movements called Telmen, located between Numrug and Telmen soums...

... Most Mongolian lakes and water bodies are sacred and fishing is more or less taboo. Nobody lives direct along the lake shores and most of the lakes are therefor rather isolated. From here we drive further to visit a local nomadic family and have lunch with them. These people continue to preserve the nomadic way of life, connecting with the nature and wildlife around them.

Later in the afternoon, we continue our drive towards the shores of Khyargas lake, one of the largest lakes of western Mongolia. It is a saltwater lake amidst semi-desert in the Great Lakes Depression. The region around Lake Khyargas is one of the climatic most extreme regions world-wide. The difference in temperature between the deepest temperature in winter and the highest temperature in summer is extreme in this geographical depression. We would be staying in basic log cabins for the night.

DAY 06: ULGI TOWN

Accommodation: Adobe Brick Houses

Driving Distance: 400 kms | Driving Time: 7-8 Hrs | Driving Terrain: Mostly Dirt Roads

The day we will be heading towards the westernmost region of Mongolia, considered as the gateway into the Mongolian Altai. A land of high mountains crystal lakes and rugged glaciers. Its raw, rugged and remote, and for centuries been isolated – both geographically and culturally – from the Mongolian heartland. With its glacier-wrapped mountains, shimmering salt lakes and hardy culture of nomads, falconry and horsemanship, western Mongolia is a timeless slice of Central Asia. Mostly of the inhabitants are the Kazakh people who have a slightly different culture than their Mongol cousins, herding yaks and goats while being famed for training and hunting with eagles. We will be staying in a town called Ulgi. Due to its remote location, the town grew at a much slower pace than many other cities in Mongolia. We will drive further west and staying near the Khatuu River in traditional mud and brick houses built by the Kazakh people. Located deep in the Altai Mountains, a place where Russia, China, Kazakhstan and Mongolia meet, this place is the home to the most fascinating and diverse ethnic groups – Kazakhs with their thriving, age old eagle hunting tradition, descendants of various Oirat Mongol tribes, and shamanist Tuvans. We will be hosted by these hardy herders in these rather unknown parts of Mongolia.

DAY 07: HORSE RIDING WITH EAGLE HUNTERS

Accommodation: Adobe Brick Houses

Driving Distance: NA | Driving Time: NA | Driving Terrain: NA

This day of the expedition was planned specially to coincide with the Kazakh new year called Nauryz, the day of the spring equinox. This way you not only get to learn about the Kazakh tradition and culture but also see them in their traditional clothing, greeting each other as they believe the more generous the celebration is, the happier the year would be. ...

... The festival is not just unique to Mongolia's Kazakh community but for all the Kazakh people across the world. Typically, Kazakh families live together in a single yurt, which holds items that are important for their nomadic lifestyles including milk churns, meat mincers, bed frames and family portraits. Beds and clothing are often made of skins of yaks or wolves. Horses are central to the nomadic Kazakh way of life and while we are living with families we may be invited into a warm and beautifully decorated family yurt to drink some fermented mare's milk which is a staple part of the Kazakh diet.

You will also witness and get mesmerized by their ancient custom of hunting with eagles on horseback, a tradition that has been practiced for thousands of years. You will gain an exclusive view of this exhilarating sport and get enthralled by the skills of the hunters and the speed of their majestic golden eagles. Unlike the eagle hunters during the summer which are more of a touristy performance, during winter you will get to experience a more authentic hunting. After an inspiring demonstration, adorn some traditional furs and mount your horses, as you set out with the Kazakh to prepare you for your very own eagle hunt.

DAY 08: KHOVD TOWN - CHANDAMAN VILLAGE

Accommodation: Basic Hotel

Driving Distance: 320 kms | Driving Time: 6 Hrs | Driving Terrain: Tarmac + Dirt Trails

After breakfast we will begin our drive towards one of the larger cities in Western Mongolia - Khovd. The tree-lined streets give the town a more pleasant feel than other Mongolian towns. There isn't much to see in this city except a nice enough place to stop and stock up on supplies. It's much closer to the borders of China. Instead of staying in the commercial town, we would head towards a village, driving on dirt roads for about 80 kms, called Chandaman, which is known for its throat singers. Khöömei is a form of singing originating in Western Mongolia, in the Altai mountains. The performer imitates sounds of nature, simultaneously emitting two distinct vocal sounds: along with a continuous drone, the singer produces a melody of harmonics. Khöömei literally means pharynx, and it is believed to have been learned from birds, whose spirits are central to shamanic practices. In the evening, we have organized a private performance of Khöömei.

DAY 09: DURGUN LAKE & MONGOL ELS

Accommodation: Local Hotel

Driving Distance: 200 kms | Driving Time: 6 Hrs | Driving Terrain: Sand Dunes + Frozen Lake

You wake up for the beautiful sunrise at the country side though it will be literally freezing cold. Today we will head out towards some of the most interesting driving terrains. At first, we will hit Durgun Lake (named after one of the historical queens Durgun, the bride of Chinggis Khan). The lake has its own unique nature and beauty...

... The shores of the lake are more deserted and sandier than other lakes. Freezes later than other lakes, like late November and starts to melt in early spring in early April, so birds such as swans and some species of ducks spend the winter in the lake. It's going to be a great driving experience on the frozen lake. We spend some time here and then we have another interesting terrain along the shores of the lake. We will be driving along the most spectacular dunes of Mongol Els that juts out of the steppe along the Zavkhan river. It's the longest range of sand dunes in Mongolia that appeared after the Last Glacial Maximum (~20,000 years ago). Driving on the dunes with snow and frost cover is a completely different experience. After a fruitful day, we head towards Zereg village where will stay in a local hotel.

DAY 10: KHAR-US LAKE & KHOVD

Accommodation: Steppe Hotel or Similar

Driving Distance: 200 kms | Driving Time: 6 Hrs | Terrain: Dirt + Frozen Lake + Tarmac

We will head out from our camps towards Khar-Us lake which is vast marshy delta and one of the third biggest lakes in Mongolia. The lake depression has tectonic origins, but due to prolonged drying, the shoreline has become more sloping, and have the largest reed beds in Central Asia. Hence, it's difficult to reach because of the marshes, making it an interesting 4x4 section of our adventure. We will spend time driving around the lake and the dunes formed around the shore. Since its winter, the lake would be frozen making it even more interesting and challenging. We cross the lake and then hit the tarmac finally to head towards Khovd. We will staying in one of the finest hotels this region has to offer. We have planned for a wonderful dinner to celebrate our final day in the Mongolian country-side.

DAY 11: DOMESTIC FLIGHT TO ULAANBAATAR

Accommodation: Novotel Hotel or Similar

Driving Distance: NA | Driving Time: NA | Driving Terrain: NA

Today we bid adieu to Western Mongolia and fly back to Ulaanbaatar. The approx. flight duration is 4 hours and the time difference is 1 hour. Once you reach the hotel, you can relax, and spend sometime exploring the city.

Please Note: Flights out of western Mongolia are famous for delays (this is a mountain area and unsuitable conditions for flying are not uncommon). As a result, it is very unwise to plan on departing internationally on the same day. You can end up missing your flight!

DAY 12: DEPART FROM ULAANBAATAR

Accommodation: NA

Depending on the time of your flight you will be transferred to the airport for the departure back to your home.

Au Revoir





EXPEDITION
SIGHTS & SOUNDS

EXPEDITION

INCLUSIONS

Price

\$7,284 USD

per person*

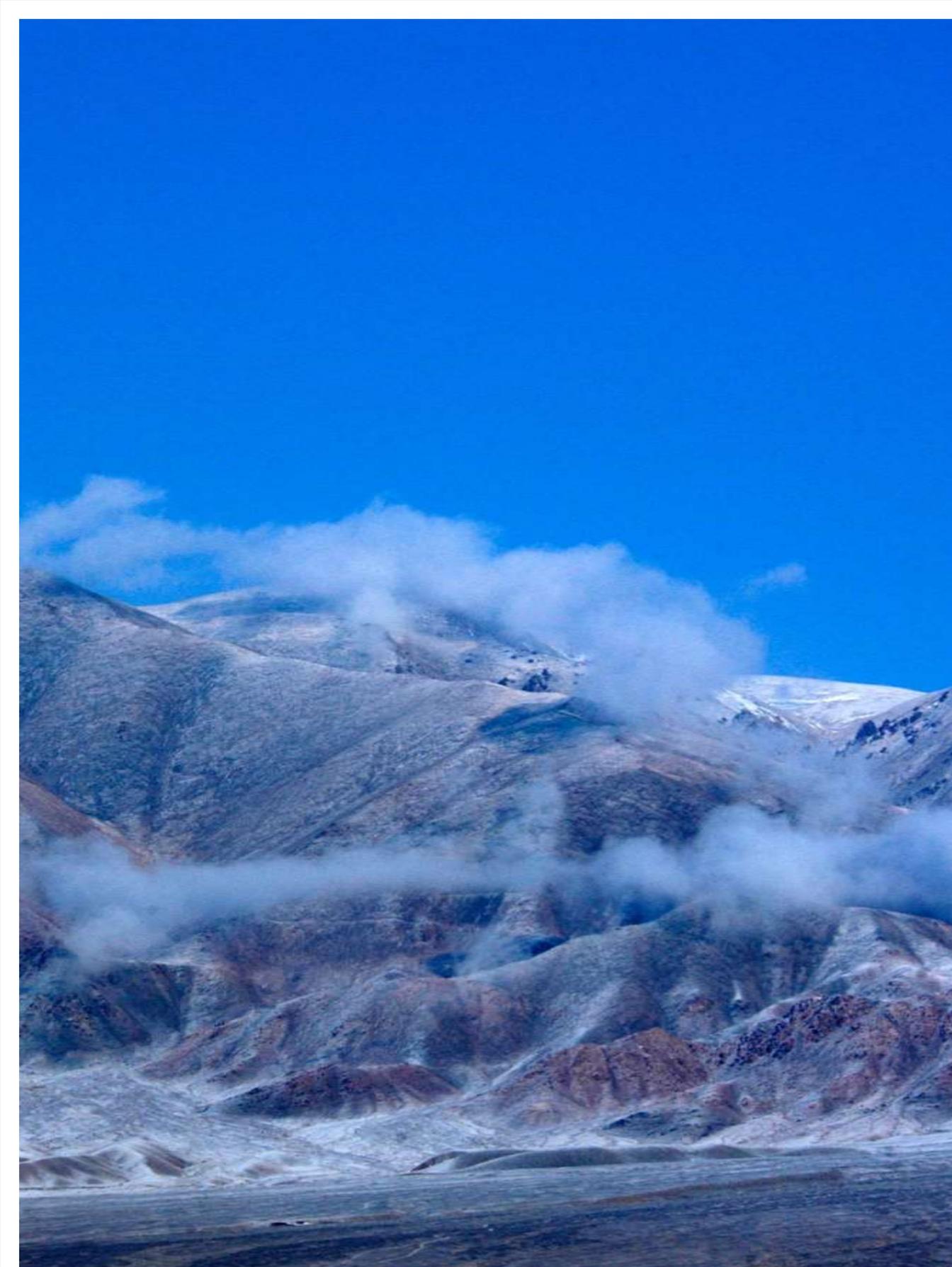
- Exclusive Expedition Vehicle for each team of 2 people
- Fuel for Expedition Vehicle
- Domestic flight from Khovd to Ulaanbaatar.
- Nomadic Road Expedition Leader throughout the trip
- Exclusive Expedition Photographer cum Filmmaker throughout the trip
- Local cultural expert, and mechanics throughout the trip
- 4x4 support vehicle
- Hospitality staff and Field Chef on the days of private camping.
- All camping equipment's, portable field showers setup with shower tents and chemical toilets
- Accommodation for all nights on twin share basis.
- All meals will be prepared on all days based on your preferences, keeping in mind your food restrictions if any. And almost all our lunch will be somewhere in the middle of nowhere.
- Bottled water and refreshments.
- Welcome & Farewell Dinner
- Entrance fee for entry into National Parks
- Horse Ride in the Altai Mountains with the local eagle hunters
- Expedition Vehicle transfer from from Khovd to UB
- Airport transfers
- Third party liability insurance for the expedition vehicle
- All excursions, entrance fees, and visits as described in the itinerary



EXPEDITION

EXCLUSIONS

- International Flights, Visa & International Driving Permit
- Breakfast and Lunch on the day of Arrival
- Lunch and Dinner on Day 11 & Day 12 since you will be exploring Ulaanbaatar on your own and it makes sense not to include it in the program.
- Excursions/activities not mentioned in the itinerary
- Comprehensive Personal Insurance & Trip Cancellation Insurance
- Personal medication
- Extras like room service & items of personal nature like laundry, tips, etc.





For the Love of the (un)Road



If You Need More Info

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