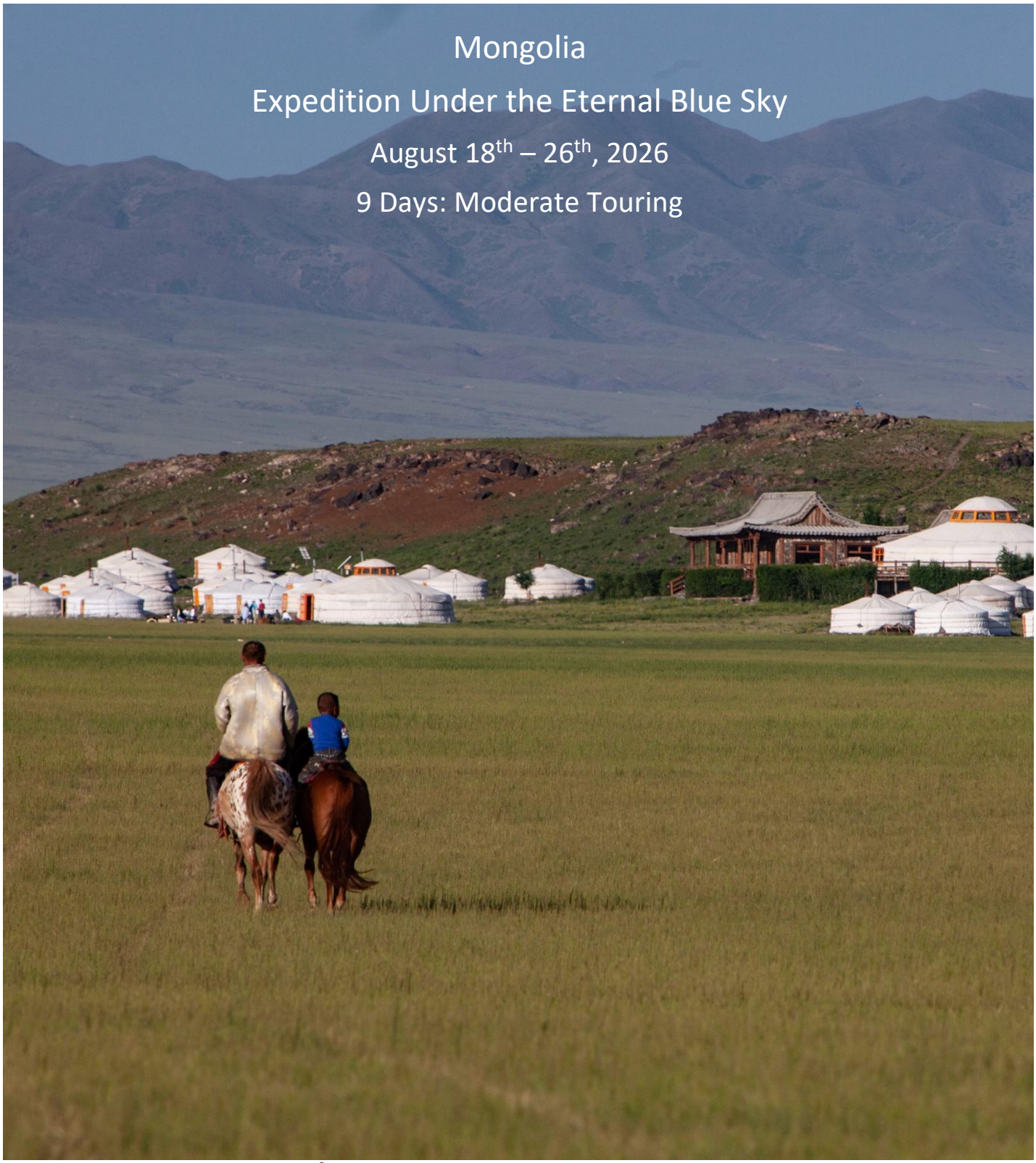
Mongolia

Expedition Under the Eternal Blue Sky

August 18th – 26th, 2026

9 Days: Moderate Touring



TRIBAL TRUST FOUNDATION™

Indigenous Cultures are Living Treasures

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1
Tuesday
August 18

WELCOME TO ULAANBAATAR

Shangri-La Hotel
Deluxe Room

The contrast between ancient traditions and a 21st century democracy is most visible in Ulaanbaatar, where traditional gers and Buddhist monasteries sit side by side with modern high-rises.

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Upon arrival at the airport, you will be welcomed by your private Nomadic Expeditions guide and driver and transferred to the deluxe Shangri-La Hotel, a luxury hotel located just steps from various museums and shops.

After checking-in and some rest, head out on a gentle walk to Sukhbaatar Square. Named in honor of the revolutionary leader, who commanded the Mongolian army to fight for the nation's independence from Manchuria with the help of Russian army in 1920s. It is also the site of the Great Khans Memorial built in celebration of the 800th anniversary of the Mongolian Empire. After 80 years of Soviet domination, a time during which it was forbidden by the government to utter the words "Chinggis Khan," many Mongols now celebrate their pride in their great ancestors.

Optional: Private welcome dinner with Mongolian folk musicians and at a fine-dining venue such as *Veranda* or *Silk Road*.

Day 2
Wednesday
August 19

SACRED HERITAGE & ART OF ULAANBAATAR

Shangri-La Hotel
Deluxe Room

We start the day with visit to Gandan Monastery, the seat of Buddhism in Mongolia. Woven through Mongolia's nomadic culture is a rich Tibetan Buddhist tradition in which ancient shamanist practices are still evident. Although Buddhist monasteries were either destroyed or

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converted into museums during the Stalinist purges of the 1930s, Gandan Monastery continued to operate as a showpiece for government officials. A significant resurgence of Buddhism began in 1990 when Mongolia became a democracy. Monasteries across the country are again opening their doors to worshippers, and the few lamas who survived the purges are training.



Strolling through the monastery grounds, hear the low tones of the horns used to call the lamas to the temple and observe their daily rituals, including the reading of sutras, the teachings of the Buddha. After seeing the magnificent 82-foot high statue of Migjid Janraisig, "the lord who looks in every direction," gilded in pure gold and clothed in silk and precious stones, we have a "private blessing" by a senior monk from the monastery.

We then drive through downtown Ulaanbaatar to the National Museum for an excellent overview of Mongolia's history and culture. This museum displays traditional implements of daily nomadic life including Stone and Bronze Age artifacts, historical costumes of Mongolia's minority tribes, sacred religious relics, and agricultural, fishing, and hunting equipment.

In the afternoon, embark on a short hike to the Zaisan Memorial, a monument built by the former Soviet Union to honor the soldiers who perished during World War II. After ascending 300 steps, visitors are rewarded with a stunning panoramic view of Ulaanbaatar and the Tuul River.

Optional: Visit a private art gallery or meet a local designer specializing in modern Mongolian cashmere.

Day 3
Thursday
August 20

EXCURSION TO HUSTAIN NURUU NATIONAL PARK

Shangri-La Hotel
Deluxe Room

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Depart early morning for Hustain Nuruu National Park (2 hours), home to the last remaining species of wild horse, the takhi - commonly known as Przewalski's horse. Twenty-five years after becoming extinct in the wild, the takhi was reintroduced to the Mongolian steppe from zoo populations by the Foundation for the Preservation and Protection of the Przewalski's Horse. Sixteen horses were flown from the Netherlands to Mongolia in 1994, and nearly 400 now roam re-introduction sites in Mongolia and China. Learn about current conservation efforts and the status of the herds found within the reserve at the visitor's center, before trying to spot these beautiful horses in their natural habitat.



After lunch at the local ger camp, we'll stop at the Ongot stone complex near the Tuul River Basin—the largest grave complex in central Asia. These mysterious stone figures depicting men date from the Turkic period (7th-9th centuries A.D.). They all face one direction and are behind one another, as if in a line. Some interpret this configuration as depicting a nobleman or general, with his subjects or soldiers following behind. These stones are rare historical evidence of the culture that dominated the area at the time and are especially important to historians, as few written accounts have survived the burden of Mongolia's nomadic lifestyle and turbulent battling periods.

Returning to the Capital (time permitting) visit the local women's workshop where local women come to create the art of Zeeg applique. This unique technique has been in existence in Mongolia for many generations and has picked up from the 16th - early 19th century as part of the offerings that were given to the monasteries.

Day 4
Friday
August 21

FLY TO THE GOBI DESERT /THREE CAMEL LODGE

Three Camel Lodge
Deluxe Gers

After breakfast you are transferred to the airport for your flight south to the Gobi. *Flight schedule will be released in March 2026.* Flight time is one hour.

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Contrary to the sameness that the word 'desert' suggests, the Gobi is a fascinating and diverse region, and includes sites of some of the most important paleontological discoveries of the 20th century. Explore the stunning landscapes of the Gobi, habitat for Bactrian camels, Argali mountain sheep, goitered gazelle, Golden Eagles, Saker Falcons, jerboas (similar to kangaroo rats), and many endemic reptiles. The Gobi is also home to some of the Northern Hemisphere's most rare and elusive mammals, such as the dhole, snow leopard, wild camel, and Gobi bear.



On arrival, drive to the award winning **Three Camel Lodge** located at Bulagtai Mountain on the edge of Gobi Gurvan Saikhan National Park. Spend the day at leisure or choose from a wide variety of **activities** available at the lodge.

Lodge based activities options:

Mountain Bike
Bicycle through the countryside surrounding the lodge with guide. No experience necessary. Helmets are provided.

Horseback Riding
Ride through the countryside surrounding the lodge with guide. Recommended for experienced riders only. Helmets are provided.

Archery Lesson
Learn to fire an arrow like a Mongol warrior. This interactive experience provides fun and excitement for the whole family.

Ger Building
Join locals to learn the process of raising a traditional Mongolian Ger.



Documantary/Talks (Snow Leopard Den)
Flora & fauna' of the Gobi, Dinosaurs of the Gobi
A talk on past expeditions, famous localities where scientific discoveries were made and the importance of paleontological research in Mongolia.

The lodge also has a library with an interesting collection of books on Mongolia, or watch a documentary about nomadic culture, learn traditional Mongolian games, or enjoy a relaxing massage at the Arshaan Spa.



After dinner enjoy star gazing with skies with zero light pollution.

Day 5
Saturday
August 22

IN THE GOBI / COUNTRYSIDE NAADAM FESTIVAL

Three Camel Lodge Deluxe Gers

Sunrise Activities (For the early risers)

- Walk around the hills behind the lodge with naturalist/guide. Learn about the Gobi, Three Camel Lodge and Mongolian nomadic life.
- **Mountain Bike:** Bicycle through the countryside surrounding the lodge with guide. No experience necessary. Helmets are provided.
- **Horseback Riding**: Ride through the countryside surrounding the lodge with guide. Recommended for experienced riders only. Helmets are provided.

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After breakfast back at the lodge, head out to spend the balance of the morning enjoying the especially arranged Naadam Festival where local nomad children and adults will compete in the "three manly sports" including wrestling, archery, and horseracing competitions. These three sports traditionally measured the courage, strength, and pride of nomads and warriors, although men, women, boys, and girls all take part in contemporary Naadam games.

Archery: The skill of Mongolian archers and their advanced bow design was a significant asset to Chinggis Khan and his descendants during the years of Mongolian conquest. In the past, sharpshooters would practice by aiming for the heads of marmots. At today's Naadam games, small round leather targets are placed at a distance of 60-100 meters from the archers, who still use formidable compound bows made from wood, horn, and sinew. The archers wear a special glove on the thumb and index finger of the right hand and wrap the left arm in soft belts.

Referees, lined up next to the targets, mark each hit, raise their hands, and move around the spot singing a short song of praise. The best archer receives the title of "mergen" or marksman.



Horse racing: Horseracing originally involved adult jockeys and the most popular contests involved riding unbroken horses. Later, so as to ease the burden on horses in long-distance races, the adult riders were replaced by children as young as six years old riding broken horses. The racing is done both with and without saddles, and the horses that take part are two years and older. Depending on the age of the horses, the distance of the races vary from 5 - 30 kilometers. The race's winner is honored with a cup of airag (fermented mare's milk), which he or she drinks and sprinkles on the head and croup of the horse.

Wrestling: Each wrestler wears trunks, an open-fronted long-sleeved silk vest, and ornamental knee boots with upturned toes. Before the wrestling match begins, the wrestlers perform the "eagle's dance" symbolizing power and invincibility. The wrestler who forces his competitor to touch the ground with his knees or elbow is considered the winner. The victor then repeats the "eagle's dance," with his opponent passing under his arm (as though under a wing) as a sign of submission.



Late afternoon, drive to **Moltsog Els**, one of the few regions of the Gobi covered by sand dunes. Explore the sand dunes on foot or on the back of a Bactrian camel (optional).

You will also have the opportunity to visit a local camel herding family and experience their hospitality and way of living.

Day 6 **Sunday** **August 23**	**YOL VALLEY NATIONAL PARK / FLAMING CLIFFS** **Sunrise Activities (**For the early risers) • Walk around the hills behind the lodge with naturalist/guide. Learn about the Gobi, Three Camel Lodge and Mongolian nomadic life. • **Mountain Bike:** Bicycle through the countryside surrounding the lodge with guide. No experience necessary. Helmets are provided. • **Horseback Riding**: Ride through the countryside surrounding the lodge with guide. Recommended for experienced riders only. Helmets are provided.	*Three Camel* *Lodge* *Deluxe Gers* *B, L, D*



After breakfast back at the lodge drive to Yol Valley National Park (1.5 hours), cradled in the foothills of the Altai Mountains. An ancient river carved this surprisingly green valley, and its remnant streams create ice formations that sometimes persist as late as July. A hike through the valley leads to the habitat of indigenous vulture-like lammergeiers, Altai snowcocks, ibex, yaks, and Argali mountain sheep. After exploring the valley on horseback or hiking, visit the local natural history museum for an overview of the flora and fauna of the surrounding area. Return to the Lodge.



In the late afternoon, travel to the legendary "Flaming Cliffs" (1 hour), named for the red-orange sandstone which glows brilliantly at sunrise and sunset. It was here, in 1922, that Dr. Roy Chapman Andrews and his exploration team from the American Museum of Natural History found the first nest of dinosaur eggs the world had ever seen. To the trained eye, the ancient formations of the Flaming Cliffs are rich with fossils, and paleontological expeditions continue to make significant discoveries at this site.

Day 7
Monday
August 24

RETURN FLIGHT TO ULAANBAATAR *Shangri-La Hotel*
This morning, transfer to the airport for your flight back to Ulaanbaatar. *Deluxe Room*

Met on arrival and transferred back to the Shangri-La Hotel. The balance of the afternoon is free for rest or the spa services at Shangri-la. *B, L*

Optional Experiences:
Bogd Khan Palace Museum
Visit Bogd Khan Palace, home of Mongolia's last theocrat, Bogd Jabtzan Damba Hutagt VIII, which displays elaborate ceremonial robes, other personal effects of Mongolia's '8th Living Buddha.

Dinner on own.

Day 8
Tuesday
August 25

SHAMAN MUSEUM | SHAMAN EXPERIENCE *Shangri-La Hotel*
Begin today with a visit to the Shaman Museum. Experience the rich tradition of a Shamanism in Mongolia, a practice deeply rooted in Mongolian history. Shamanism served as the primary religious belief of the Mongols before the advent of Buddhism, with its rituals encompassing Tengrism and animism. Central to shamanistic beliefs is the invocation of ancestral spirits, serving as conduits to unveil insights into the past, present, and future for participants. You'll be given a tour of the museum by the curator, who is also a shaman. Though this is a small museum, but very informative. Enjoy your lunch at a local restaurant. *Deluxe Room*
B, L, D




After lunch drive East, outside of Ulaanbaatar (approx. 45 mins) to attend a shaman ceremony. During the ceremony, the shaman will put on their elaborate costume and will go into a trance and channel his or her spirits. The spirits will be called and be seated on the alter where the symbolic figurines that they have placed on the altar and then starts

answering questions that you have. For millennia nomads had gone to the shamans for consultation and having their paths cleared and furthered.

Afternoon dedicated to curated shopping:

- **Gobi Cashmere Flagship Store** – world-renowned sustainable luxury.
- **Mary & Martha's Crafts Center** – handwoven textiles and local art.
- **Torgo Design** – elegant modern Mongolian fashion.



In the evening enjoy a musical performance featuring traditional "huumii" (throat) singing and contortionist performance before your "Farewell Dinner."

Day 9 **Wednesday** **August 26**	**DEPARTURE** You are transferred to the airport in time for your outbound departure flight.	*B*

B=Breakfast L=Lunch D=Dinner