



Mongolia

The Sutai Khairkhan Expedition
4th - 24th July 2025



**SCIENTIFIC
EXPLORATION
SOCIETY**

DISCOVER • RESEARCH • CONSERVE

Itinerary

Mongolia

21 Days • 20 Nights

Cost - £3399 per person
ex international flights

Ulaanbaatar (UB) – Khovd - Khar Us Lake National Park-
Tonkhil Sum of Gobi Altai Province - Sutai Khairkhan,
Tsetseg Sum - Buural Bogd Mountain – Khushoot River -
Gun Nuur, Khokhmorit Sum –Khovd – Ulaanbaator.

Highlights

- A partly mounted expedition in Western Mongolia. The expedition aim is to set camera traps to capture footage of the elusive snow leopard
- Riding through remote, rugged wilderness on Mongolian ponies
- Experiencing a traditional Naadam festival
- Contributing to scientific data collection and analysis for the University of Mongolia and other conservation and scientific bodies
- Interacting with, and delivering aid work to, remote communities. Learning about their unique, nomadic way of life
- Possible sightings of the rare Altai Argali sheep, and hopefully signs of snow leopard activity

Tour Essentials

Tour Start	Ulaanbaatar
Tour End	Ulaanbaatar
Accommodation	Tented camps, hotel in UB
Included Meals	Breakfast, lunch, dinner unless stated
Difficulty Level	Medium but good riding experience is essential.

This is a scientific research expedition in conjunction with the National University of Mongolia and various other scientific bodies.

An expedition report will be provided for the National University of Mongolia, the Royal Geographical Society and the Scientific Exploration Society.

The Scientific Exploration Society has endorsed the expedition and we are collaborating closely with The Snow Leopard Trust.



The Sutai Khairkhan Expedition 2025

Are you looking for a horseback expedition that will assist local communities in Mongolia and add to scientific knowledge in the areas of zoology, botany, archaeology and ornithology? Then this could be the expedition for you!

The expedition is being led by two experienced riders, Sue Mackenzie and Kate Coleridge who participated in the 2023 Mongolia expedition with John Blashford-Snell.

Expedition Leader: Sue Mackenzie

Deputy Expedition Leader: Kate Coleridge

Scientific Leader: Professor Kh. Terbish*

Expedition Adviser: Col John Blashford-Snell CBE

Corporate organiser: Pioneer Expeditions Worldwide Limited

Expedition Administrator: Philip Beale

** Professor Kh. Terbish, who is leading the scientific programme of the expedition, is an esteemed ecology professor at the National University of Mongolia. He played a key role in establishing Mongolia's ecological training programs, which have produced bachelor, master, and doctoral specialists for nearly 30 years. His graduates contribute significantly to environmental protection across universities, research institutes, and international organizations. A prolific author, he has written over 90 textbooks and 120 scientific articles on Mongolia's environment and biodiversity. He has also served on the management board of the Snow Leopard Trust in Mongolia for over a decade.*



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The Objectives

1. The primary objective of The Sutai Khaikhan Expedition is to install camera traps to gather crucial data on snow leopards in the little-studied Sutai Khaikhan Mountain area. Using automatic cameras, the study will provide insights into the leopard's distribution, population size, age, and sex. The data will be analysed using a methodology approved by key Mongolian research institutions and conservation organisations, helping to inform future conservation efforts for this species. The use of automatic cameras is expected to enhance the research scope of the Ecology and Nature Conservation Program at The National University of Mongolia.
2. A further goal of the expedition is to gather research data on the flora, fauna, and archaeological sites in specific regions of Mongolia. By providing financial support and research tools to specialists, the expedition will establish a foundation for future studies.

Mongolia



Itinerary

DAY 1: July 4th

Arrive in Ulaanbaatar, transfer to hotel. Free afternoon. Overnight at a hotel.

Accommodation: hotel (local 4*)

Meals: not included.

DAY 2: July 5th

Ulaanbaatar city tour including Gandan Monastery and National history museum. Walking tour to get brief orientation of the city. 14:00 Meeting with Great Genghis tours & expeditions manager, to give logistical information about the tour.

Accommodation: hotel (local 4*)

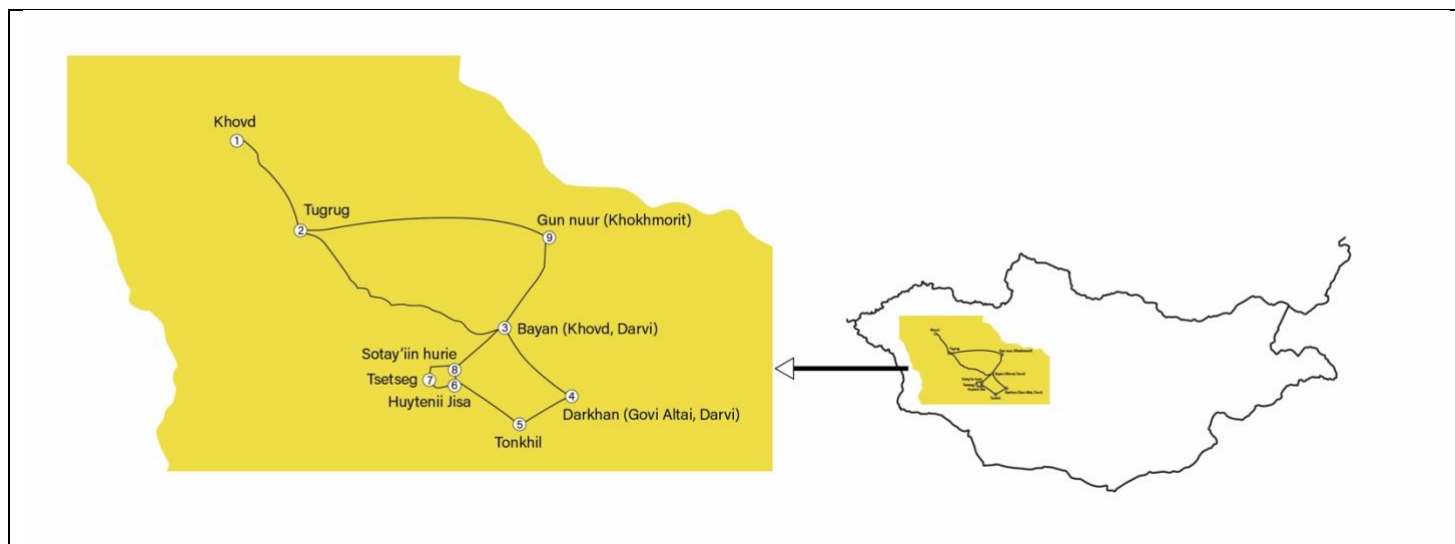
Meals: breakfast

DAY 3: July 6th

Local flight from Ulaanbaatar to Khovd. The tour commences by vehicle until reaching Khar Us Lake National Park. Before dinner, we walk around the surrounding area and explore some species of birds, flora and fauna. There is also an evening observation with live trap and catcher for zoological purpose. Overnight in tents.

Accommodation: tent

Meals: breakfast, dinner



DAY 4: July 7th

Today, we will drive to the area of Tonkhil sum of Gobi Altai Province, the southern part of Sutai Khaikhan Mountain, and the basin of the Zuil River. Here the guides and horses will be waiting for us. On the way, we will stop on the banks of Ikhes Lake in Darvi Sum area of Gobi-Altai province for ornithology study.

Accommodation: tent

Meals: breakfast, packed lunch, dinner



DAYS 5-7: July 8th-10th

During these three days, we camp in the Zuil River basin of Sutai Khaikhan Mountain and ride out in the surround land while carrying our research. The team will be divided into several groups studying botany, mammalogy, ornithology, and archeology. The zoological team will focus on snow leopard research. Also, during the stay here, it is envisaged that medical examinations and dental treatment will be carried out in the local communities. In the afternoon on day 10, horsemen will go back home with their horses. Each evening, live traps will be used for zoological observations.

Accommodation: tent

Meals: breakfast, packed lunch, dinner

DAY 8: July 11th

This day the trip continues by car to camp near the center of Tsetseg sum. Humanity team arranges activities: dentistry examinations and treatments, handling textbook and books to the school library. Ornithology near Tsetseg Lake is also planned. In the evening, observation will be made with live traps for zoological purposes.

Accommodation: tent

Meals: breakfast, packed lunch, dinner



DAY 9: July 12th

Witness the Naadam Festival in Tsetseg Sum. Live catchers are used for observation in the evening for zoological purposes.

Accommodation: tent

Meals: breakfast, packed lunch, dinner



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DAY 10: July 13th

We will continue our journey by car. We will camp at the north-west part of Buural Bogd Mountain and at the head of Khushoot River. On the way, do some archeological, botanical and zoological observations.

Accommodation: tent

Meals: breakfast, packed lunch, dinner



DAY 11-15: July 14th-15th

During these five days, we will be based at Buural Bogd Mountain of Sutai Khairkhan and Khushuut River for research. The members of the expedition will be divided into groups such as botany, zoology, and archeology. Every evening, live traps and nets will be observed for zoological purposes. In the afternoon on day 18, horsemen will go back home with their horses.

Accommodation: tent

Meals: breakfast, packed lunch, dinner



DAY 16: July 19th

After breakfast, we will continue our journey by car until Gun Nuur, a region of Khokhmorit Sum in the Gobi-Altai province. On the way, we will carry out observations and research on the antelope. In the evening live catchers will be used for observation of smaller creatures for zoological purposes.

Accommodation: tent

Meals: breakfast, packed lunch, dinner

DAY 17: July 20th

On this day, we will do excursions around the sand dunes Sangiin Dalai Lake to observe plants and animals. The archeology group will conduct a study of rock paintings in the area of Bayan Uul Sum. The humanity team will present books to Khokhmort Sum's school.

Accommodation: tent

Meals: breakfast, packed lunch, dinner

DAY 18: July 21st

After breakfast, we will continue our trip to Khovd city and camp on the banks of Buyant River. On the way, we will observe and research on the antelope. Farewell dinner.

Accommodation: tent

Meals: breakfast, packed lunch, dinner

DAY 19: July 22nd

Day flight from Khovd to Ulaanbaatar. Transfer from the airport to the hotel.

Accommodation: hotel (local 4*)

Meals: breakfast

DAY 20: July 23rd

Free day in Ulaanbaatar. Ulaanbaatar sightseeing. Meals not included.

Accommodation: hotel (local 4*)

Meals: breakfast,

DAY 21: July 24th

Departure from Ulaanbaatar and transfer to the airport for your international flights and return home.

Meals: breakfast



Important Information

INCLUDED

- All activities as mentioned
- Services of an English-speaking guide throughout
- All transportation and transfers
- All sightseeing costs
- Horses/horsemen and camp assistants
- All transfers on DAY 1 & DAY 21.
- Return flight fee UB-Khovd-UB
- National park fees
- All meals included except where specified in the program
- Twin accommodation in local 4* hotel in Ulaanbaatar for 5 nights
- Accommodation in tents while in Khovd & Khustai

NOT INCLUDED

- International flights and taxes
- Personal spending money
- Alcoholic drinks
- Donations, tips and gratuities
- Mongolian Visa (required for some non UK residents)
- Travel insurance & medi-vac cover
- Single occupancy rooms at hotel (tents are single occupancy)
- Excess baggage on internal flight
- Pre and post expedition transfers /accommodation. Those who arrive earlier than July 4 and leave later than July 24 will pay an extra transfer fee of USD 50/£40 per person (or USD 30 /£24 per person for 2 or more people)
- A customary tip of approximately \$70 per person which is given to our Mongolian support team (cooks, drivers, horsemen, translators)
- Riding helmets



Additional Information

ACTIVITY DURATION	21 days, 20 nights
GROUP SIZE	Maximum of 21 persons plus Expedition Leader
TRIP COMMENTS AND MEALS	A mixture of local and western meals, with opportunities to sample specialities such as koumyss (fermented mare's milk). A vegetarian menu can be provided but note that vegetables are often in short supply in Mongolia. Vegetarians are recommended to take along supplementary snacks.
HORSE RIDING	To participate you must be able to demonstrate that you are an experienced, competent and confident rider. And whilst you may be able to persuade us you can ride, you won't be able to fool a frisky Mongolian pony! It is a condition of the expedition that all riders wear hard helmets whilst mounted and you must bring your own.
JOINING DETAILS	Your final instructions and any relevant tickets will be sent to you approximately 4 weeks before date of travel, after full payment has been received.
INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS	We can help you organise and book your flights if departing from the UK. Please contact us for information and a quote.
KIT LIST	This can be sent to you upon payment of your deposit and a copy will be sent with your final documents.
TRAVEL INSURANCE	It is a condition of the expedition that you have personal travel insurance in place for the duration of the expedition. It must cover horse riding for 10 consecutive days in Mongolia and include medical evacuation. We can recommend travel insurers should you need advice.
TERMS & CONDITIONS	The full terms and conditions of the expedition, and the risk assessment, will be sent with the application form to join the expedition. Your application will be submitted for review by the expedition leaders who will then carry out interviews.

Why Pioneer Expeditions?

Pioneer Expeditions are one of the few specialists that really *do* off the beaten track and unique adventures and have been operating since 2006. The company is led by the adventurer Philip Beale and co-director Laureenne Mansbridge. For this expedition we are working in partnership with Col John Blashford-Snell CBE, who is acting as an adviser. Together we have unrivalled experience in organising major international expeditions and adventures.

From the moment you are selected to join the expedition until you return back home, you will be supported by our dedicated team.

