



Sagsai Eagle Festival

The Kazakhs is an ethnic minority in Mongolia, but the majority in Bayan-Ölgii province. Most of the ancient Kazakh traditions survives here, outside the actually territory of Kazakhstan. These hardy Turkic speaking people are sunni muslim nomads and they hunt foxes and other small mammals with domestic Golden Eagles. Only the females, as they are heavier than male eagles. The eagle festivals marks the start of the eagle hunting season, which is throughout the winter in the surrounding Altai Mountains. Hunting with eagles seems to be ancient, dating back some 6000 years. The traditions have been revived over the past two decades following the democratization in Mongolia. Now there are such festivals in March, September and October in various communities.



1/We13thSep—Arrival in Ulaanbaatar

Arrive in Ulaanbaatar, the capital city of Mongolia. Transfer to your hotel. Free in the city. Tour briefing before dinner.

2/Th14thSep—Arrival in Bayan-Ölgii

Likely, in the early morning we will transfer to the airport and fly 3½ hours to Ölgii or Hovd. Both towns are small towns, being capitals in their respective provinces. Both towns have a local interesting museum on its natural history. Hovd was a town already during Manchurian times, prior to 1910 and it has several ethnic minorities with a majority of Mongols. Hovd has both mosques and Buddhist temples. Ölgii is younger and with a majority of Kazakh people. Tuvans and Uriankhai peoples also live here. If we land in Hovd, there will be a nice drive of four hours with the Altai Mountains on both sides of the road, being the Hökh Serkhiin Nuruu and Tsambagarav Uul National Parks. We will use the time for sightseeing. Check-in at Eagle's Nest Hotel.



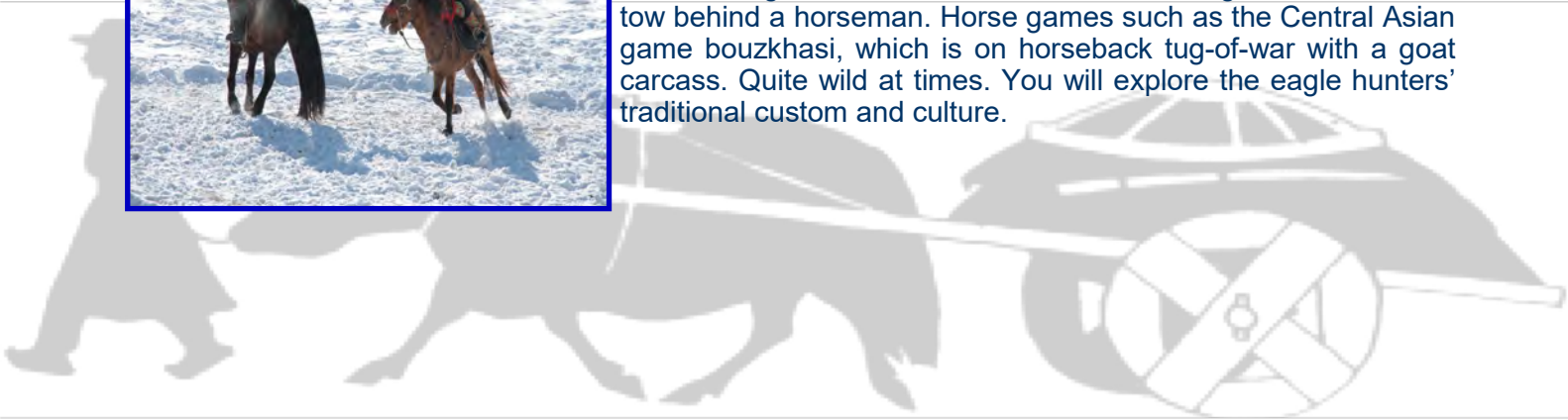
3/Fr15thSep—Excursion

Exploration of the surrounding countryside and Ölgii village. There is a mosque, a bazaar, a local museum. Visit go to the local museum which is worth of seeing.



4/Sa16thSep—Opening ceremony

The Altai Eagle festival starts this day, near the village of Sagsai, which is organized in third weekend of September. It is a spectacle with eagles released from the hills, hunting for a fox skin in tow behind a horseman. Horse games such as the Central Asian game bouzkhasi, which is on horseback tug-of-war with a goat carcass. Quite wild at times. You will explore the eagle hunters' traditional custom and culture.





5/Su17thSep—Eagle festival

Explore another full day at the festival. Some shows of eagles are played. Eagles fly to the own trainers' hand and catch the moving objects or prey while flying. Today there will be a camel race. In the evening, traditional concert of Kazak ethnic group performed and enjoy a farewell dinner.

6/Mo18thSep—To Ulaanbaatar

Transfer to Ölgii airport and fly back to Ulaanbaatar 3½ hours.

7/Tu19thSep—Ulaanbaatar

A.m. Visit to Gandan Lamasery, center for the revival of Buddhism in Mongolia. Visit Sukhbaatar Square, where the Parliament Building is located as well as the statues of Sukhbaatar and Genghis Khan, Ögödei Khan and Khubilai Khan. Visit the National Museum of Mongolia.

8/We20thSep—Departure

Transfer to the airport for international flight out.

Prices & Practicalities

Accommodation: For early bookings there will be space at the only new small hotel sporting ten rooms with attached facilities.

Includes: Guide. All meals outside the Ulaanbaatar city. Breakfast every day. Accommodation and breakfast in double occupancy at Eagle's Nest Hotel in Ölgii with attached bath and WC. Transfers to / from Eagle Festival grounds.

Excludes: Imported drinks. Lunch and dinners in Ulaanbaatar.

Operations: Please note that the domestic flight schedule will be approved by the Mongolian Civil Aviation Authority only latest in April. Why the flight days and times are as yet not known. It means you may fly to any of Ölgii, Hovd or Ulaangom airports either of the ways. We will firstly reserve for you to fly to Ölgii itself, if there is a flight availability at the time of your booking. Nomadic Journeys are already holding reservations with Hunnu Air, although the flight schedule is not approved yet. In the worst case you will fly out to west on the Friday and back to Ulaanbaatar on the Tuesday. It might mean overnights provided in Hovd, at the hotels Minj or Örgöö.



PRICE 2017 ex Ulaanbaatar:

USD 2750 per person (min 2members)

Single supplement: USD 280

