



Photo: Jan Wisgten

The Gobi Steppes

- Arburd Sands -

Surprisingly close to the Mongolian capital Ulaanbaatar one finds the northernmost reaches of the Gobi steppe; treeless grasslands stretching to the horizon and beyond. We will explore Arburd Sands, an area where the steppe, dotted with nomads' camps, slowly gives way to sand, culminating in a 20 km long sand dune. Close-by, Zorgol Hairkhan Uul, a gigantic rock formation rising almost vertically out of the plains, is habitat to Argali Sheep (*Ovis ammon*) and sometimes Siberian Ibex (*Capra sibirica*). It is a place of great natural beauty, fraught with history and legends. The Mongolian nomadic steppe culture is still intact here. All of the herdsman lead a traditional way of life, raising herds of horses, cows, sheep, goats and camels. Nomadic Journeys has a low-impact, fully collapsible ger (yurt) camp here, owned and operated by a local family. They are famous horse trainers who regularly participate in the annual Naadam Games and also operate our Gobi Steppe Ride and Steppe Nomads Ride. Their herd of horses is large and offers an ample selection for both the amateur and the competent rider. There are no other ger camps anywhere nearby, as few tourists actually come here.



Photo: Ana Nordenstahl

This self-guided journey is geared towards travelers who prefer to be as independent as possible, while allowing to reach their destination at the lowest possible cost. You share the transport to the camp and back with other travelers, as well as staff and provisions. At the camp you plan your daily activities with our English speaking camp manager. There are fine hikes in the surrounding area and optional activities as described below.



Photo: Jan Wisgten

Activities

Dayhikes: From the camp you may walk or hike out into the sand dunes, that extend for about 20km. Wolves use the dunes as a hideout and their pugmarks can usually be identified. You may order a picnic lunch from camp and make day hikes in any direction. The surrounding steppe area is also fascinating to venture into, since it is dotted with numerous herdsman's gers and herds of livestock



Photo: Ana Nordenstahl

Horse riding: Riding is exceptionally good here, since our hosts belong to one of the most famous families of horse trainers in Mongolia. Rides for just an hour, half day or full day are organized with local horsemen at additional cost. Picnic lunch can be provided from the camp. Serious riders are best advised to bring their own hard hat and short chaps. Full day rides should be pre-ordered.



Photo: Ana Nordenstahl

Camel Riding: Camels are available for optional rides in the dunes or out on to the steppe.

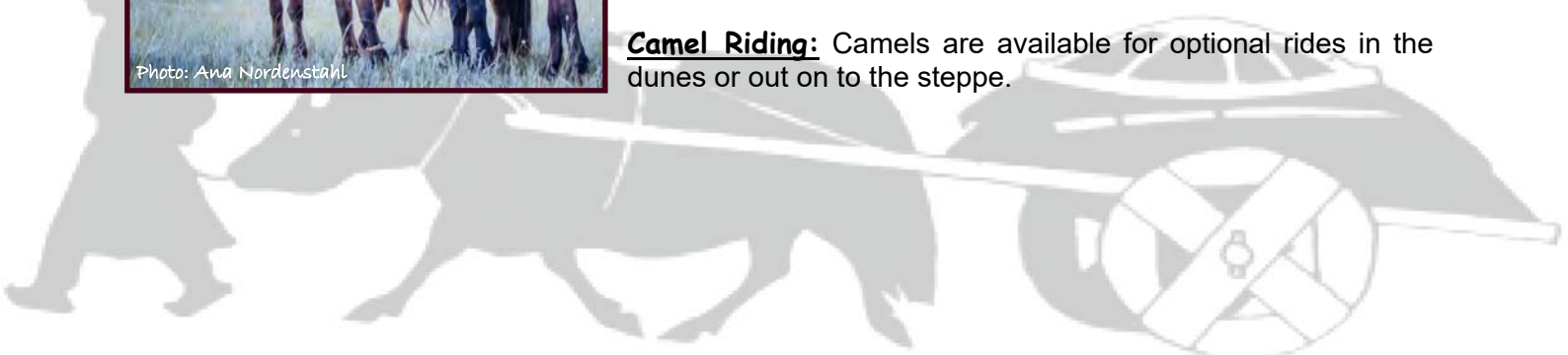


Photo: Haroldo Castro



Additional trips: Should you be interested in a more in-depth trip in this interesting and little-visited area, please consult the Gobi Steppe Ride, which also includes a stay at Arburd Sands. However, these trips also involve camping. Please ask for details on these trips.

Low Impact Ger Camp

Nomadic Journeys is committed to the principles of Sustainable Tourism. We bring additional jobs to the area, that are based on traditional livelihoods. These involve provision of camel carts, riding camels, riding horses and labor. The camp purchases milk and yoghurt from the nearby herders. There is a maximum capacity for 30 guests in double occupancy gers. Vehicles are parked a short walk away from the gers. The entire camp is fully collapsible and does not have shower or WC blocks. The toilets are long drop style allowing for natural decomposition. Showers are housed in a small gers, water is heated on a wood burning stove. All trash is separated. Solar panels and windmills generate some electricity for refrigerator and kitchen use. The camp can be relocated leaving no more impact on the area than a herding family would. Arburd Sands Ger Camp is indeed a fully collapsible hotel.

Practicalities

Transfers: Operates daily as shared transfer on fixed times. Departs 09:00 from UB and returns 14:00 from camp. You may - at a supplement cost - order a private transfer at any time suitable to you. The entire drive from Ulaanbaatar to Arburd Sands is with a 4WD vehicle 2 hours and with a bus 2,5 hours.

Staff: Camp has an English speaker camp manager to assist you for activities around camp.

Meals: The meals will be provided 3 times a day in the Restaurant ger, or as picnics on request.

Overnights: The gers have 2 beds in each and family gers with 1 double and 2 single beds.

PRICE ex Ulaanbaatar:

3d/2n: USD 290 per person

4d/3n: USD 415 per person

5d/4n: USD 540 per person

Single Supplement: USD 40 per night

Additional night: USD 125 per night

Private transfer: USD 80 per vehicle

Children: 0-2 years free. 3-12 years 25-50%.

Includes: All meals at camp. All overnights in double occupancy ger. Transfer to and out of camp on scheduled times.

Excludes: Beverages. Transfers and accommodation in Ulaanbaatar. Air or train tickets in and out Mongolia. Activities at camp.

Transfer schedule: Daily mid May to end of September.

from UB: **09:00**

from camp: **14:00**



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