



Winter in Arburd Sands

- Gerscape Journeys

The northernmost and closest sand dune areas to Ulaanbaatar are located at Arburd Sands in Bayan-Onjuul soum. It is a striking area of nomads, steppes and sudden sands dunes. Some 35 km away are also the Zorgol Hairhan Uul, gigantic rock formations rising from the steppe. This is also the habitat of Argali Sheep and sometimes also Siberian Ibex. In all, the Arburd Sands area is a 2 hour drive away from the capital and a natural Gobi escape. Nomadic Journeys has a low impact ger camp here, Arburd Sands Ger Camp. It is owned and operated by a local family who also regularly operate our Camel Treks and Gobi Steppe Rides. They are also famous horse trainers who participate in the annual Naadam Games. Their herd of horses is large and offers a good selection for both the amateur and the competent rider.

Brief Outline Itinerary

On this short journey we will drive south from Ulaanbaatar with a guide and vehicle until the Gobi steppe starts to emerge. You will stay at a low impact ger (yurt), a fully collapsible "lodge", built in the nomadic style. We use low-impact indigenous, and thus appropriate, technology to offer lodging and sometimes also transportation, with the assistance of camel carts, riding camels or riding horses. Essentially, it means that we can be hosted by the services of the local people living in the area where we travel.

Day 1: To Arburd Sands

A.m. Pick up at your hotel. Drive south over the treeless steppe for some 2 hours to Arburd Sands. We will arrive at the camp before lunch. Afternoon visit some nomadic families. Our hosts in the area are related to one third of the nomadic population scattered over the steppe here.

Day 2: Zorgol Hairkhan

Drive 35 km across the steppe to the holy Zorgol Hairhan Mountains. These are giant rock formations coming up almost vertically out of the middle of the Gobi steppe. En route we will find some secluded petroglyphs of extraordinary quality. We will explore the area and perhaps have a chance to view the rare and elusive Argali Sheep (*Ovis ammon*), the largest wild mountain sheep in the world. There is also a chance to see Siberian Ibex (*Capra sibirica*) on the ridges. Only with luck will we see them, and almost always at a far distance. Zorgol Hairhan is a sacred mountain and there are many traces of holy sites in such places as caves and springs, where local people make offerings.

Day 3: Arburd Sands

Explore the immediate area of Arburd Sands. We may use camels to trek or ride through the middle of the sand dunes. Arburd Sands is a 20km long sand dune. Strangely enough, a good number of wolves - being wary of man - have taken refuge in these dunes and can sometimes be seen. There will be one or two riding camels so that we can try riding them as well. We will make contact with other herdsman. We will no doubt be invited into the gers and will learn about their ancient lifestyle.



Day 4: To Ulaanbaatar

A.m. after breakfast transfer back to Ulaanbaatar city.

Additional: We can organize hotel accommodation, city tours and transfers in Ulaanbaatar.

PRICE ex Ulaanbaatar:

2 - 8 members: **USD 1050 per person**
Single supplement (3n): **USD 900**

Practicalities

Transport: This tour is supported by a jeep or minibus depending on the number of travelers.

Accommodation: For this winter trip you will stay a fully collapsible ger camp, including showers and compost toilets. The gers are each equipped with cot beds (including full linen), chairs and a table, and a wood burning stove.

Includes: Guide, all meals outside Ulaanbaatar. All overnights in ger camp. All local transport and entrance fees.

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

Staff: A Mongolian English speaking guide will accompany the group at all times. In addition, the services of local herdsmen will be employed along with their animals.

DATES 2018 ex Ulaanbaatar:

01st April - 15th May
30th September - 01st November

Meals: Our cook will prepare the meals. We pride ourselves in having excellent cooks adept at both western and Mongolian cooking on our trips.

