



Photo: Richard Reading



Photo: Jan Wigsten



Photo: Jan Wigsten



Photo: Andrea Pregnan



Photo: Jan Wigsten

Ikh Nart Nature Reserve

Argali Sheep of Dornogobi

A journey to the Eastern Gobi is an intimate and very unique experience. The Ikh Nartiin Chuluu Plateau has rich and unique landscapes consisting of granite rock formations, but also semi-arid steppes, small vernal pools, and springs with small stands of elms and poplars.

Ikh Nart is a community managed nature reserve where local people have partnered with the Denver Zoo Foundation, the Mongolian Academy of Sciences and Nomadic Journeys for research, conservation and tourism. It is one of the best Gobi wildlife areas, home to an estimated 1000 Argali Sheep (*Ovis ammon*), the world's largest wild sheep with impressive horns, and about 200 Siberian Ibex (*Capra sibirica*). While not guaranteed there is a very good chance of seeing both species. A sizeable population of Cinereous Vultures (*Aegypius monacha*), the largest of Asian vultures, its size en par with the Andean condor, and a host of other avifauna, make for great birding. The area also abounds in prehistoric burial sites, petroglyphs and ruins of Buddhist monasteries, representing all layers of Mongolian archaeology. Doing a self-guided tour on foot or by bike is the best way to explore the natural and cultural heritage of Ikh Nart first-hand, at your own pace. Hiking is excellent and rewarding, with easy climbs on to the rocks, overlooking the amazing landscape. Mountain bikes, horses and camels are available for riding. The cool evening sunsets over the Gobi are pleasant and rewarding. Your travel choice for Ikh Nartiin Chuluu will assist the conservation efforts in the area, as it brings finances to the local economy and protection efforts.

Nomadic Journeys' own IkhNart Rocks Ger Camp is a seasonal, low impact ger camp located on its own, right next to the reserve area. You travel there southeasterly along the Trans-Mongolian railway line towards Beijing by local train from Ulaanbaatar, and drive the remaining 40 km to the camp. Transfer back to Ulaanbaatar is by fine tarmac road for most of the way.

Day 1: To Ikh Nart

We pick you up from your hotel in Ulaanbaatar in the morning and transfer to IkhNart Rocks Ger Camp directly by vehicle. We spend about six hours traveling southeast over the grassland, which gradually turns into more arid Gobi steppe. After arrival at the camp check-in to your ger and have free time to explore the surrounding area.

Day 2-3: Ikh Nart

For two days we explore the Ikh Nart area on foot, and if you like on horse or camel back. There are also mountain bikes available at camp. The surrounding area has much to offer. The rocky outcrops harbor various kinds of wildlife. There are Argali Sheep, which are most common to be seen, but also Siberian Ibex and many bird species.



蒙古之旅



Photo: René Pop

Pallas Sandgrouse.

Three ongoing research projects by Mongolian and foreign scientists focus on these species, but also on Cinereous Vultures, Lesser Kestrels, and various small carnivores and their prey species. Botanists are also regular visitors. Your guide can also lead you to a whole range of archaeological and historical sites from various epochs, including petroglyphs, burial sites and temple ruins. You will most probably have a chance to meet some local herding families. Being reliant on pastures and precipitation, the hardy and hospitable Gobi herders, frequently migrate in and out of the area with their herds of livestock.

Day 4: To Ulaanbaatar

After breakfast we leave camp and drive towards the Choiriin Bogd Mountains, where there are some remote Buddha statues in the rock faces. We have a picnic lunch here, and drive back to Ulaanbaatar on a good tarmac road for about four hours.

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 the provision of yak carts, pack horses, 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. Ikhnart Rocks Ger Camp is indeed a fully collapsible hotel.

Practicalities

Transport: This tour is supported by a private jeep or minibus (depending on the number of travelers) to and from Ikh Nartiin Chuluu Nature Reserve.

Staff: An English speaking Mongolian guide will accompany you at all times. The camp staff consists of an English speaking camp manager, a cook and several local employees. Additionally the services of local herdsman can be employed to provide riding horses or transport animals.

Meals: Meals are served in the restaurant ger three times per day. Breakfasts are buffet style. Lunches and dinners consist of 2-3 course set meals. In the restaurant ger you will find a good selection of wines. Tea and coffee are available all day long. If you go on day hikes or excursions our cooks will prepare packed lunches for you.

PRICE ex Ulaanbaatar

2 - 12 members: **USD 700 per person**
Single supplement (3n): **USD 120**
Additional night: **USD 150**

Children: 0-2 years free. 3-12 years 25-50%.
Group discounts available on request for 4 persons or more.

Includes: Guide. All meals outside Ulaanbaatar. All overnights in double occupancy gers. All local transfers. All activities in the camp.

Excludes: Beverages. Transfers and accommodation in Ulaanbaatar.

DATES 2018 ex Ulaanbaatar:

Daily mid May to end of September.

