



## IMPORTANT PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION FOR TRAVEL TO MONGOLIA



### Passports

All travelers require a valid passport in order to visit Mongolia. Your passport must remain valid for at least six months after the last day of your visit.

Please be sure your passport has been signed and has adequate space remaining for entry and exit stamps.

We recommend that you make two photocopies of your passport photo page; one copy to be left at home and one to be carried with you on the trip.



### Visas

Currently, citizens of the U.S and Canada do not require a visa for stays of up to 30 days. Nationalities of other countries including European countries should check their visa requirements. Please visit the following websites for the most current information regarding visas:

<http://mongolianembassy.us/mongolian-visa-information>

<http://www.mfa.gov.mn>

If you have any questions, please call us immediately so we can determine your specific visa needs.

### Travel & Trip Cancellation Insurance

Nomadic Expeditions strongly recommends the purchase of comprehensive travel and medical insurance. Nomadic Expeditions' refund and cancellation policy is stated on your trip application form. Please remember that trip cancellation coverage can protect you against the loss of your tour payments should you have to cancel prior to departure or withdrawal from all or part of the trip because of illness, or due to a traveling companion's or family member's illness, injury, or death.

Please note that travel insurance is not health insurance. We recommend that you review your own health insurance coverage to make sure that it applies when you are traveling. Travel insurance may be purchased to supplement your own health insurance to cover medical expenses you may incur when traveling.

<http://www.travelexinsurance.com/index.aspx?location=30-0208&go=bp>

## International Arrival Procedures

Your Nomadic Expeditions guide will be waiting for you just outside the customs area with a Nomadic Expeditions sign and will transfer you to your hotel (unless you have specified that you do not need transfers or are arriving on a different date than specified in your trip itinerary and have not booked a transfer through us).

## International Departure Procedures

Your Nomadic Expeditions guide will escort you to the airport's international departures section, where you will check in with your luggage. Flight boarding announcements are made in English and in Mongolian.

## Customs

You will need to complete a customs declaration form upon departure, listing any items obtained in Mongolia. All purchased antiquities must be certified "exportable" by a special certificate in order to take them out of the country. Otherwise, they will be confiscated upon your departure and reimbursement is impossible. Under no circumstance should you attempt to export fossilized items, such as dinosaur bone fragments, eggs, or archeological crafts, as they will be confiscated and you may be charged with legal proceedings.

## International Air Travel

Most major international flight carriers no longer require reconfirmations, though it is advisable to check 24 hours before departure in the event the airline has made schedule changes. Check with your airline regarding any specific instructions.

Nomadic Expeditions is not responsible for airline cancellation penalties incurred if you purchased non-refundable or other restricted airfare tickets. All flight schedules are subject to change and airfares are subject to change until tickets are issued. Nomadic Expeditions is not responsible for any additional land costs, such as accommodations, meals, and transportation, incurred due to flight delays.

If for any reason your international flight from Ulaanbaatar is delayed, please see an airline representative. They are responsible for assisting you during the delay and providing accommodations, if necessary. Please call the Nomadic Expeditions office in Ulaanbaatar if you need additional assistance.



## Domestic Air Travel

Domestically, we fly on Aero Mongolia and Hunnu Air. Please be aware that domestic flight delays are common due to variable weather conditions. We highly discourage booking international flights departing Mongolia on the same day as a scheduled domestic flight, as this type of connection is usually impossible.

Please pack wisely, as internal flights have strict baggage allowances. Please note that trips booked on Aero Mongolia and Hunnu Air for group flights within Mongolia is 33

pounds total, or 22 pounds for a checked and 11 pounds for a carry-on (internal flight).

We strongly urge you to limit yourself to one medium-sized soft suitcase or duffel bag and one carry-on bag for domestic flights. Excess baggage weight is charged at approximately \$1-2 for every pound over the limit. Any excess baggage charges will be your responsibility and charges may increase without warning.

Arrangements can be made to leave luggage in storage at the hotel in Ulaanbaatar during portions of the itinerary since you will be returning to Ulaanbaatar after each visit to the countryside. You should bring with you a bag, such as a lightweight duffel (with a lock), for the purpose of storing extra items.

Please note: It is imperative to carry passports when boarding domestic flights, as this is the only form of identification the airlines will accept.

## Time Zone

Mongolia's official Time Zone is UTC/GMT+8 hours. For example when it is 9:00 pm on December 1 in Mongolia, it is:

5:00 am in Los Angeles

8:00 am in New York

1:00 pm in London

9:00 pm in Beijing

Daylight Saving Time is observed in Mongolia. Please consult a world time zone website such as [www.timeanddate.com](http://www.timeanddate.com) prior to travel.

## General Medical Information

Currently no immunizations are required for entry into Mongolia. Please consult your personal physician for medical advice on travel to Mongolia. Several preventative measures are generally recommended including up to date routine vaccinations (tetanus, diphtheria, polio). Please consult the following websites for more information:



Center for Disease Control [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).



The World Health Organization [www.who.int/mediacenter/factsheets](http://www.who.int/mediacenter/factsheets)

Depending on your itinerary, you will be traveling by plane and in Land Cruisers or Jeeps on bumpy roads. If you are susceptible to motions sickness, please pack the proper prophylactics.

Medical facilities are available in Mongolia, however, standards and methods of treatments may not be what you are accustomed to. Carry a list of the generic names of drugs you use and an adequate supply of current prescriptions. The prospect of illness or hospitalization while traveling should not be taken lightly. If you have a serious medical condition or one that could be adversely affected by travel, please contact us so we may provide more precise information.

## Safety

While Mongolia in general is relatively safe, travelers should exercise the same caution they would while traveling in other cities and countries. Non-violent street crime such as pickpocketing and bag-snatching is most common, and extra precaution should be taken near large crowds and tourist sights. Leave valuables at home and only carry as much money as you need. Consult your local guide if heading out alone.

## Accommodations

In Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia's capital, you will stay in one of the best available hotels with your meals served in the hotel and in local restaurants.



In the countryside, you will stay in ger camps. Gers, or felt and canvas tents with latticed walls, are the traditional homes of nomadic herdsman. The beds are comfortable, with mattresses on elevated wooden frames, clean sheets, pillows, and blankets. Meals are served in a camp dining room. Ger camps offer an authentic way to experience traditional Mongolian culture and provide the opportunity to visit non-tourist areas that otherwise lack visitor accommodations. The western-style toilet and shower facilities are located in a central building near the gers.

The Three Camel Lodge is Mongolia's premier eco-lodge and expedition camp in the Gobi. The camp offers an extraordinary combination of adventure and sophistication, combining traditional style with superb service. All gers in the camp are deluxe and feature full en-suite facilities.



## Roommates & Single Accommodations

You may choose single accommodations for an additional charge. For those who request roommates, we will do our best, based on order of deposits received, to match the roommates.

If we are unable to assign a roommate, the single supplement will be charged. Additionally, if you have been assigned a roommate and you refuse the roommate, either prior to departure or during the trip, a single supplement charge will be assessed. For



group departures, requests for singles must be submitted in writing at least 45 days prior to departure.

## Overland Drives

Because Mongolia is such a vast country, our itineraries necessitate drives of up to two to six hours or more. Outside of the capital, the roads in Mongolia are unpaved (similar to mule trails) and are very bumpy. The roads can also be quite dusty and you may find a scarf or handkerchief helpful. We typically use Mitsubishi Delicas and Land Cruisers while traveling in the countryside.

## Food & Beverage

There is a diversity of food choices in Mongolia along with a wide variety of restaurant and cuisine options in Ulaanbaatar with more limited options in the countryside. Traditional Mongolian cuisine is typically meat-based and includes noodles, rice, and/or breads. Although vegetables and fruits are not widely cultivated or consumed in Mongolia, most meals include potatoes, carrots, cabbage, cucumbers, or tomatoes.

For those with an adventurous palate, there are opportunities to sample traditional Mongolian foods. Traditional dishes include: *shorlog* (Mongolian barbecue or shish kebab), *horhog* (roasted sheep), *buuz* (steamed meat dumplings), *chansan mah* (boiled meat on the bone), *khuushuur* (fried meat pies), and *guriltai shol* (mutton noodle soup).

Those with special dietary needs, such as vegetarian or low-fat diets, can be accommodated. However, food choices may be somewhat limited. Please let us know in advance if you have any special dietary needs.



## Water

Bottled water will be available during the trip. Please be sure to properly dispose of bottled water containers. For those who wish to minimize their plastic waste, boiled or filtered water is available at ger camps and hotels.



## Currency

Mongolian currency is called the *tugrik*. While you should bring a credit card as a backup for emergencies, be prepared to rely on cash for the majority of your purchases. Mongolian currency can be readily obtained from hotels, as well as from major banks. Please consult a currency exchange website ([www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com)) for the most updated information.

U.S. dollars are accepted in many places in Mongolia, but you should plan to pay for incidentals and small souvenirs with local currency and in cash. Past travelers have exchanged \$100 to \$500 (depending on the purchase). All bills should be in good condition and unmarked. Old, faded, or ripped bills will not be accepted. Fifties and 100s will only be accepted if they are newly issued (after 2000).

There are ATM machines available at the main branch of the Trade & Development Bank, State Department Store, and most hotels in Ulaanbaatar. If you plan on using ATMs to access money, make sure to inform your bank of your trip prior to departure.

Visa and MasterCard credit cards are accepted at major hotels, cashmere stores, and antique shops. Other types of credit cards, including American Express and Discover, are not widely accepted. Personal checks are not accepted in Mongolia. Additionally, before returning home you should convert any remaining tugrik. It is very difficult to do this once you depart Mongolia.

Consider bringing a photocopy of your credit card(s) in case of emergency.














Other than your personal shopping expenses (please see the Shopping section below), you will only need money in Mongolia for the following: alcoholic beverages, food not included in the trip meals, tips to luggage porters, guide and drivers, phone/fax bills and excess baggage charges (see Luggage section below). Please read the detailed itinerary for your trip for a complete list of included items.

## **Tipping**

Although tips to trip leaders and drivers are customary, they are entirely optional and should be commensurate with your satisfaction with services. Tips to trip leaders should be given at the conclusion of the tour and average about \$10-15 per person per day. Tips to drivers average about \$7-10 per person per day. Tips for baggage delivered to your hotel room should follow the general rule of \$1-2 per bag. Please note that some trips have additional expedition staff, such as horse wranglers, cooks, and camel guides.

## **Electricity**

Electrical power in Mongolia is 220 V, 50 Hz. Plugs in Mongolia require a two-pin socket with round pins. If you plan to bring 110-volt appliances such as a hairdryer, a converter and an adapter plug will be required. However, it is best to bring as few electrical appliances as possible as their use will be limited. At *ger* camps the use of electricity is extremely limited. If you use an electric razor, you may wish to bring a battery operated one, along with extra batteries.

						
North America Grounded NEMA 5-15	Japan Non-grounded JIS C 8303	Europe German style CEE7/4 Schuko	Europe French style Schuko	Europe/Russia Non-grounded CEE7/16 Europlug	Great Britain Grounded BS-1363	Great Britain "Shaver socket" BS-4673
						
Australia/China Grounded AS-3112	Italy Grounded CEI 23-16	Switzerland Grounded SEV-1011	Denmark Grounded SRAF 1962/DB	Israel Grounded SI 32 (IS 16A-R)	India Grounded BS-546 "Small"	South Africa Grounded BS-546 "Large"

## International Telephone Service

The country code for Mongolia is 976. To place an international call to Mongolia dial 976, followed by the telephone number.

Roaming cell phone service is available in the Ulaanbaatar and in provincial capital cities. Travelers carrying international cell phones should check with their provider for specific rates and guidelines.

Emergency contact information for hotels, foreign embassies, and Nomadic Expeditions' Mongolia office will be provided with your final documents.

## Internet Access

Broadband Internet or Wireless Internet access is available at the hotels in Ulaanbaatar. However, no Internet access is available in the countryside except in some of the provincial airports.

## Photography

Please note that there are fees for taking photographs and videos at most monasteries and museums. Your guide will let you know what the appropriate fee is at each location (prices range from \$8-20 for unlimited photographs to \$5 per picture; \$20 for unlimited videos to \$90 per 30 minutes of recording, depending on the location).

Due to limited electricity in the ger camps, there will be restricted ability to recharge digital cameras, video cameras, and battery packs. Consult your guide to find out where and when to recharge your equipment at ger camps.

## Shopping

There are many shopping opportunities in Mongolia including interesting items such as camel hair and cashmere sweaters, camel wool blankets, traditional silk tunics, leather dolls, felt slippers, leather boots, handmade jewelry, landscape paintings, plaster copies of temple masks, carpets, Mongolian vodka, books, and traditional musical recordings. Most shopping opportunities will be in Ulaanbaatar, although it is possible to purchase handicrafts in the countryside.

Ger camps often stock their gift shops with locally crafted goods, such as felt slippers

and camel or yak wool products. The purchase of these products helps to support local families and the rural economy.



All purchased items made from gold, silver, or precious stone, or which appear to be antiques, need to be certified "exportable" with a special certificate, supplied by the merchant where the purchase was made. If any items are confiscated by customs upon your departure, reimbursement is nearly impossible to obtain. Any losses incurred from purchasing items that are confiscated is your responsibility. Under no circumstance should you purchase or export fossilized items or uncertified antiques from Mongolia.

Bargaining or haggling is not an integral part of Mongolian culture as it is in some other countries in Asia and the Middle East. Rather than inflating prices with the idea of bargaining down, vendors usually charge what they consider to be a fair value for the item.

Nomadic Expeditions can bear no responsibility for the quality, condition, or authenticity of any purchases made during our trips.

*If you wish to purchase items and reliably ship them back home, you can send them via DHL, FEDEX or UPS from the Business Center at the hotel.*

## Smoking Policy

We ask group participants to refrain from smoking in enclosed areas, in vehicles, and during group meals. In all situations, please show consideration for fellow travelers who are adversely affected by smoke.



## Pack for a Purpose

Nomadic Expeditions' affiliate company, Three Camel Lodge in the Gobi, has partnered with *Pack for a Purpose*, which encourages travelers to use their extra luggage space to bring simple items to local initiatives at their destinations. Now, visitors to the Three Camel Lodge can contribute to any of the three projects we are implementing: support the Bulgan district's only local school, kindergarten, and hospital; plant trees in the Gobi; or contribute to the local traditional music and dance classes. For information on what you can pack to make a difference for these projects, please visit [www.packforapurpose.org](http://www.packforapurpose.org) or contact us at [info@threecamellodge.com](mailto:info@threecamellodge.com)



## Weather

Mongolia has a relatively cool climate with short, mild summers and long, severe winters lasting from October to April. The weather in Mongolia is highly unpredictable, and while temperatures are very difficult to predict, average temperatures for the travel season are as follows:

Early May – to Mid-May: 35° - 65° F  
Late May – Mid-June: 50° - 80° F  
Late June – Mid-July: 50° - 90° F  
Late July – Early August: 50° - 90° F  
Mid-August – Early September: 45° - 75° F  
Mid-September – Early October: 30° - 60° F

Days tend to be sunny although you should be prepared for the possibility of rain. Humidity levels in Mongolia are very low. For current weather conditions, we recommend that you consult various websites such as [www.wunderground.com](http://www.wunderground.com) or [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) prior to departure.

## Packing Suggestions

Due to the potentially wide range of temperatures during the day, outdoor clothing worn in layers is the most suitable (for example, a shirt, sweater, or sweatshirt, and a windbreaker). In general, dress is informal. Dresses for women and a jacket and tie for men are optional.

You should bring a waterproof jacket or other rain gear such as a poncho or umbrella. A broad-brimmed hat is useful for sun protection. Proper footwear is essential; be sure to bring comfortable walking shoes or hiking boots. Rubber beach sandals will prove useful when using the bath and toilet facilities at the *ger* camps. For visiting monasteries, you will need modest clothing that covers your shoulders.

For those traveling in mountain regions, particularly in the spring and autumn, warm hats and gloves are recommended, as well as a jacket appropriate for cold and windy conditions.

Laundry services are available at most *ger* camps. However, as baggage weight is restricted, we suggest you plan your wardrobe around items that can serve several purposes.

## Suggested Packing List

Following is a suggested packing list to be modified based on your personal needs and preferences:

Important:

- Passport, visa (if applicable)
- airline tickets or e-itineraries
- cash, credit card

### Clothing:

- comfortable, sturdy walking shoes or hiking boots
- rubber soled sandals or flip flops
- sleepwear, socks, underwear
- casual pants (jeans or khakis)
- t-shirts (long- and short-sleeve)
- light pants or shorts
- sweater, sweatshirt, or polar fleece jacket
- lightweight poncho, rain jacket and pants, or waterproof windbreaker
- bandana and or scarf

### Accessories/Equipment

- broad-brimmed sunhat, sunglasses
- extra prescription glasses and/or contact lenses
- bright flashlight & extra batteries
- travel alarm clock
- day pack
- camera and accessories
- pocket-sized notebook/sketchbook; pens and pencils
- electrical converter/adaptor plug
- duffle bag

### Toiletries/First Aid

- soap, shampoo, wash cloth, and hair care products
- insect repellent
- sunscreen SPF30+
- lip balm and moisturizers
- anti-bacterial hand wipes or soap
- tissue mini-packs or pre-moistened towelettes
- any prescription drugs and vitamins you use
- medications for diarrhea, colds, upset stomach, motion sickness.
- band-aids, antiseptic, and topical antibiotic
- hand sanitizer

Miscellaneous (the following items may be useful; experienced travelers often pack them routinely)

- snapshots of home, work, and family to use as non-verbal openers
- plastic bags of various sizes, including zip-lock type for dirty clothes, wet wash-cloths, etc.
- binoculars
- sewing kit
- reading materials, cards, etc.
- address book for sending postcards

