



GOBI DESERT IN WINTER



South Gobi also called « OMNOGOBI »

In search of a nomad life in winter in Gobi desert

The Gobi desert, a mythical place which all travellers remember...

The life in the South Gobi desert remains quite specific in comparison with rest of Mongolia, harder and far more nomadic, in quest of eternal new pasture for their meager livestock.
Another world in the margins of the green steppes.

The winter is a calmer period for these families whose life gets congealed facing the cold.

However this life continues in winter and offers another dimension, more cultural, to the traveler who dares to tread thus far.

In winter, the atmosphere, the landscapes and the cold encourage to live in a much slower rythm.

Taking care of the livestock makes for the greater part of the tasks. You have to let the animals out in the sun, clean the pen, dry out the excrements against the stones to turn them into fuel, take animals to drink water in the rare water points, distribute fodder, milk and so on.

... You are off to an initiatory trip encountering the Gobi.

D1 : Landing at the aeroport –Settling in the hotel. Visit of the city.

City tour.... Visits depending on the monuments and cultural centers are open in winter.

Ulaanbaatar, is built on the banks of Tuul river, anciently called Uрга, in the honor of a son of grand Mongolian lord. The name Ulaanbaatar was given to the capital after the proclamation of the People's Republic of Mongolia, this name signifies « red hero ». The streets of the capital are lively in winter as well and there prevails a permanent agitation including late in the night. The city is divided into several districts, which show a great diversity, we can also see yurts right in the city center. The growth of Ulaanbaatar is surprising and you will find in the capital city all the commodities of modern life



Gandan buddhist Monastery, a name which means « Great place of complete joy. »

Several hundreds of monks live there.

Visit of the **National history museum of Mongolia**. This museum, the biggest one in the country, gives a concrete image of Mongolia's history.

Choijin Lam museum. Originally a monastery, the residence of Bogd Khan's brother, credited with the honorary title of Choijin.

D2 : Ulaanbaatar - Dalanzadgad

Early in the morning, flight to Dalanzadgad (1h15), capital of Umnugobi.

Arrival by the end of the morning, Sugaraa will be there to welcome you.

Breakfast, then Sugaraa, will take you visit the neighborhood, the city, the surroundings...

Dalanzadgad is the capital of Ömnögovi aimag, located in the south of Mongolia. The city is located 540 kilometers south of Mongolia's capital, Ulaanbaatar. Dalanzadgad is situated 1590 meter above the sea level. The city has 17000 residents. The Dalanzadgad museum is really interesting and offers a beautiful presentation of Gobi.



The family of Sugaraa lives practically in the city center...even if « city » is a bit overstated. Dalanzadgad resembles other Mongolian towns, with a little core built in bricks where one generally finds administrations ; right outside, the yurt district and wooden houses.

Sugaraa lives in a yurt, next to his home his children live in 4 other yurts. Our host has been a driver all his life and he is one of the people who knows best the Gobi. Now he is retired, he spends quite some time making his yurt more welcoming.



D3 : DALANZADGAD – Sand dunes of Khongor

Jeep trip to the Gobi Gurvansaikhan National Park. We reach Khongoriin Els, a genuine mongolian Sahara unfolding in the far distance its majestic strings of sand dunes, some of them reaching 800 meters of height and stretching out over more than 100 kilometer in length.

In the evening, arrival at Bayarmaa who will host us.



Desert means camels and here each family has its own herd.

The Bactrian camel is originated from all the steppes of East Asia, it is smaller than the African camel, about 2 meters high at the humps, it and weighs more than 700 kg for a male adult.

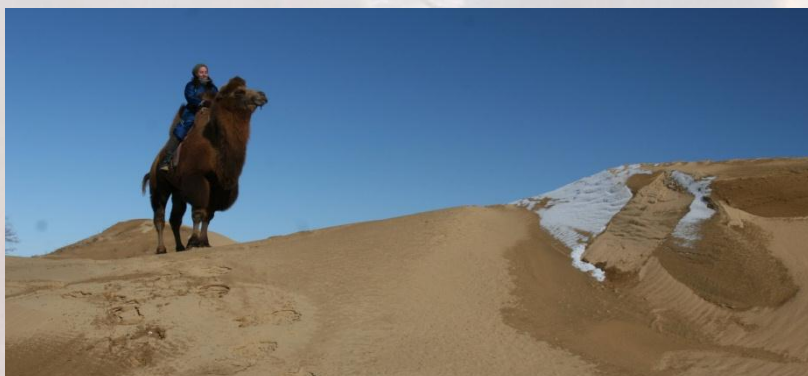


The Bactrian camel is perfectly adapted to the tough climate of the country, its coat protects it perfectly from the intense winter cold, nevertheless, the youngest ones are covered with some kind of jacket during their first winter...

The camel provides a quality cashmere to the nomadic Mongols... widely present in Mongolia, almost all the population of camels is domesticated, although about 1000 individuals are left living in the wild in various parts of the Gobi. It is mainly used for the pack saddle, but also could be ridden, it is also raised for the meat and the milk; its dung is used as fuel and in certain zones of Gobi constitutes the only available fuel.



The family has set its winter camp not far from the famous dunes. In front, an entirely flat landscape where nothing catches the eye, apart from the humps of the camels, present everywhere. On the side, one sees in the far distance the sand dunes undulating. Setting up of the yurt.



D4 : Sand dunes of Khongor

In the morning introduction to nomadic life with Bayarmaa's family, although during winter the herders have much less work than during summer, the tasks are not lacking, in the morning, they have to let the animals out from the pen, collect the dung, let the new-borns with their mothers to let them suckle. After that, most certainly a ride on camel-back in order to enjoy the landscape.



D5 : Sand dunes of Khongor – Gurvan Saikhan

Following the itinerary toward Gurvan Saikhan national park.



The Gurvan Saykhan national park stretches over more than 4000 km sq and is considered as one of the largest among the national parks of Mongolia. It includes among others, the Yoliin Am valley, and those of Gegeetee and Dungenuee, the singing dunes of Khongoriin Els and also the oasis of Zulzagany. Yol canyon is located in the middle of gorgeous mountains. The river has slowly carved its way through a deep gorge, which offers a beautiful walk. This place is also visited by birds of prey such as eagles and vultures. Ibex and argali roam the neighbouring mountains.



A route which will lead you into the massif that you had seen from afar in the first days of your stay.

This massif looks like it is coming out of the ground as if by magic, while all around, the setting is completely flat. The landscape is spectacular as we approach the massif...

Arrival at Khuyagaa's family in the afternoon, winter camp is set just at the foothills of the massif and the view over the alignment of the summits is magnificent.

Settling under the yourt and evening with our hosts.



Strangely, Khuyagaa's family does not own any camel but they have horses, goats and sheep.

D6 : YOL CANYON

In winter everything depends on the snow....

Despite the idea one might have of a desert, it is frequent that heavy snowfalls nail life down in the Gobi... It has almost become frequent now that the snow blocks the access to the Yol canyon distant of thirty kilometers.



Whether there is snow or not, the place is splendid and you will greatly appreciate a walk in this magnificent landscape.

Yol is the name given to lammergeyers, but it is also a legend, one of the many legends of Gobi...

Daughter of a rich and powerful warlord of ancient Mongolia, in love with a poor herder living on the edge of the desert, the princess who could not get the assent of her father, who destined her to another union, chose to escape and disappear from the world of humans by turning into a Yol... Who haunts since these ancient times this magnificent place that is gurban saikhan.



Evening with Khuyagaa's family, buuz, camel milk tea, gobi's delights....



D7 : GURVAN SAIKHAN – BAYANZAG

We continue our journey toward Bayanzag, in the north of Bulgan sum. Discovery of extraordinary cliffs. This place is called « The flaming cliffs » because sunsets there are spectacular. This site is also a famous cemetery for dinosaurs. Here the first eggs of dinosaurs were discovered. Near our hosts', we also discover immense forests of saxauls, a leafless tree with very deep roots.



Arrival at Onor's family. New family, new welcome, new exchanges and introduction to life under the yurt, here nothing more than what is necessary. The minimum and the maximum go hand in hand and the visitor is always welcomed in this small piece of paradise that is the yurt in winter....

Life under the yurt has a code that is often difficult to follow, but each « bending of the rules » is also the occasion for a joke, rather than an offence.

Cultural exchange, initiation to the preparation of Mongolian dishes.



Onor's family lives in an ideal place, not far from the flaming cliffs after which the landscapes extend endlessly... after their camp, the saxaul forests are only few kilometers away, as well as the Moltsog Els dunes.

Onor is the son of Jargalsaikhan ; given their age Jargalsaikhan and his wife prefer to spend the winter in Dalanzadgad, letting his son take care of the numerous livestock. Jargalsaikhan is one of the best guides around, he knows everything about « his » country. Onor also has a hard task during winter season, because their livestock is important, the large number of camels, goats and sheep.



Evening with our hosts to discover yet another way of life.



The area where the family is also a neolithic site, as well as an important site of palethnology where big dinosaur skeletons have been found. On the seven main types of dinosaurs registered, only one, the Stegosaurus, was not present in Mongolia.

D8 : BAYANZAG

Hiking on the back of the camels with a company of Onor.



The family keeps next to their campsite only thirty camels with their youngsters born that year, under the supervision of the male stallion. The other males are in herd in the desert.

Even though the small group lead by the stallion disappears during the day, the latter brings them back in the evening, and it is then a milking time. The camel milk is greatly appreciated in the desert and constitutes an important part of the alimentation.



Evening with our host.

D9 : BAYANZAG - DALANZADGAD

Trip back to Dalanzadgad to meet again the family of Sugara.



Bowl of camel milk tea as a token of welcome.

You will quickly find again your marks, in such a welcoming family.



In Dalanzadgad you will be able to take a shower to dust yourself a little, in the public baths. Evening with our hosts.



D10: DALANZADGAD – ULAANBAATAR

Flight back to the capital city

Afternoon and evening free

Night at the Palace Hotel

D11 : Ulaanbaatar

Day in the capital city, shopping for souvenir, visits according to possibilities and big market.

Night at the Hotel.

D12 : Flight back.

Fees and Service:

The price per person is ... **€/Per** for this proposal

The price includes :

- all vehicle transportation. (Driver, fuel and 4x4)
- Return domestic flight Ulaanbaatar/Dalanzadgad /Ulaanbaatar
- All acomodation, hotel, guest house and hosts
- Food and drinks (tea, coffee, water)
- Local activities and of course camel-back trekking
- A English, French or Spanish speaking interpret all along the stay.

It does not include :

- International flights
- The Mongolian Visa (but we provide the invitation required for the application)
- Personnal purchases
- In general, anything that is not mentioned in the section 'the price includes'.

