



Country: Mongolia

Trip Dates –
Commencing 24th May 2011 – 22th July 2011

Please note the camping on this expedition is participatory wild without any facilities except small accommodation tents.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Altai Mountain Range
- Gobi Desert
- Mongolian Steppe
- Wildlife
- Ger visits
- Walking past the largest sand dunes in Mongolia, Khongoryn Els
- Meeting with local Nomadic families
- Camel riding (optional)
- Sleeping out under the stars (optional)
- Being accompanied by Ripley Davenport

ABOUT YOUR EXPEDITION LEADER



Ripley Davenport is a renowned desert / steppe explorer, expedition leader and best known for his challenging expeditions to the isolated vast steppes and deserts of the world. He avoids the worn tourist paths, and eminent landmarks, favouring instead to position himself in apparent hostile environments where the likelihood of encountering an integral ecosystem or culture is greatest.



Ripley Davenport, 40 years old is a Desert Explorer, and highly sought after expedition leader, originally from the United Kingdom who came to prominence in the late 1990s after his successful crossing of the Namib Desert and Karakum



Desert with no GPS or back up. As a record-breaking explorer, Ripley has been a pioneering figure in pushing the envelope of desert adventure for many years.



In August 1998, Ripley completed a crossing of the Namib Desert, alone, from Oranjemund to the border of Angola. This feat went unrecognised, without sponsors or major media coverage. It had taken Ripley many years, several set backs and an exceptional degree of commitment to achieve his dream.



At the start of his 82 days crossing of the Namib Desert, he lost one of his camels, “Jang” and was nearly drowned when a freak wave almost swept him out to sea. His two loyal camels, “Fiji”, and “Nelly” kept him company, as he battled his way up and down sand dunes, through dense bush and across remote desert terrain, where the temperatures soared 24-hours a day.



Four months later, after crossing Namib, he crossed the Karakum Desert. The endeavour, both comprising a total of 108-day feat of extreme endurance, was noted as a significant step towards



understanding human endurance in a desert environment.

He spent a considerable amount of time in Niger living with the Tuareg learning about their complex social structures and desert travel. Shortly after, Ripley made a 3-week reconnaissance trip to the Thar Desert in India, the seventh largest in the world, to survey the area for a possible future expedition.

In April 2010, he had faced failure on his first attempt to cross Mongolia, in his all-consuming mission after three years of planning and training, due to a technical failure with the inner wheel components of his trailer. Ripley's second attempt at a solo walk across the vast landmass of Mongolia from east to west, started one month later in May. Again, Ripley covered a staggering 1628km / 1012 miles, in just 52 days, beating the current record. On his walk, he was attacked by

dogs and stalked by wolves. He endured extreme temperature fluctuations, blizzards, sand storms, isolation, unrelenting desert heat and brutal terrain, which involved walking 1700 miles / 2750 km's across the Eastern Mongolian Steppe, Gobi Desert and the Altai Mountain Range, while hauling provisions and equipment weighing in excess of 240kg in a wheeled trailer, specifically designed for the journey.

However, Ripley doesn't always wear desert walking boots. He served in a special forces unit of the British Royal Navy and did a short term of service in the RAF Regiment, completing numerous specialist courses such as Survivalist, Ships Diver and Intelligence Photographer. He left the military in 1997.

He successfully completed other courses such as confined space rescue, EMT Medic, and Advanced Wilderness Survival and was a volunteer lifeboat crew member, for a brief period of time, with the Gorleston & Great Yarmouth Lifeboat and Great Yarmouth Coastwatch.

He has a Masters Degree in Environmental Science and DipEd in Conservation Biology and is currently studying different forms of the desert nomadic lifestyle.

Ripley, a British citizen residing in Denmark, is married to Laura. They have two children, Scott and Stella.

For over a decade Ripley has looked to the world beyond his horizon and endeavoured to engage with it. Having made a sound reputation as a skilled specialist, Ripley will continue to explore the great steppes and deserts of the world and strengthen the cultural divides and document and illustrate the indigenous lives, far removed from our own, who have proudly continued their way of life regardless of the spectra of invading globalisation.

He also helps encourage people to reach beyond their perceived limits, and to use adventure as a medium to educate, inspire and empower each of us to understand the world beyond our borders and make positive change.

MONGOLIA

Mongolia must be one of most fascinating countries in the world. Mongolia is a [landlocked country](#)

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in [East](#) and [Central Asia](#). It is bordered by [Russia](#) to the north and the [People's Republic of China](#) to the south, east and west. Although Mongolia does not share a border with [Kazakhstan](#), its westernmost point is only 38 kilometres (24 mi) from Kazakhstan's eastern tip.

At 1,564,116 square kilometres (603,909 sq mi), Mongolia is the 19th largest and the most sparsely populated independent country in the world, with a population of around 2.9 million people. It is also the world's second-largest landlocked country after Kazakhstan. The country contains very little arable land, as much of its area is covered by steppes, with mountains to the north and west and the Gobi Desert to the south. Approximately 30% of the population are nomadic or semi-nomadic. The predominant religion in Mongolia is Tibetan Buddhism, and the majority of the state's citizens are of the Mongol ethnicity, though Kazakhs, Tuvans, and other minorities also live in the country, especially in the west. About 20% of the population live on less than US\$1.25 per day.

Traditional nomads still wander the great desert plains and arid steppe of the east and central regions with vast herds of camels and flocks of sheep and goats, their way of life almost untouched by the outside.

This camel trek crosses the frontier between three geographical zones - the Altai Mountain Range of the west and the Gobi Desert of the southern region and a part of the Great Mongolian Steppe. Nomads or semi-nomads, follow their grazing routes through the Gobi and Steppe, watering their animals at wells sometimes great distances apart.

We will follow an ancient caravan route that has been used since the 7th and 8th centuries, and also

used by Marco Polo. Taking with us little modern technology, and carrying our entire world on our camels. Moving at the steady pace of four to five kilometres (2-3 miles) an hour, from well to well, settlement to settlement, Ger to Ger we pass through a region that seems to exist in a dimension quite separate from our modern world. We cover an average of 30 kilometres (18 miles) a day, on foot or on camel's back if you prefer, achieving a feeling of remoteness and self-sufficiency - almost a return to a time before motor-vehicles existed - and a sense of peace and harmony that comes of a closer connection with the earth.

Please note that you must be in excellent physical condition to go on this trip. The combination of walking and heat makes this an arduous trek.

Mongolia is a politically stable country. It is, however, a country where violent crimes are extremely rare. Mongolian's are among the most cordial and friendliest people in the world with a renowned reputation of genuine hospitality. Hygiene standards, however, are generally basic. Insect nuisances, snakes, spiders and scorpions, are very limited, though you are advised to carry insect repellent. Ripley will offer sound advice with regard to scorpions and spiders. Dehydration is an ever-present possibility, but can easily be prevented by consuming a minimum of five litres of water per day.




Ripley and Steve both experienced medics, will be carrying a full medical kit and will have access to 4WD evacuation facilities to Ulaanbaatar in an emergency.

Ripley and Steve are available in absolute confidence to address or discuss anything of a personal or medical nature. Information exchanged will not be discussed with any other member of the team.

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

Tourism can be a real help to local communities, providing income, positive cultural exchanges and a financial incentive to protect their natural environment. Ours is a 'total approach' to responsible tourism, covering everything from the way we plan and operate our trips to the practices of 3i EXPEDITIONS as a company. 3i EXPEDITIONS are designed to allow a high degree of economic benefit to the local communities; we buy local produce, eat local food and use local services, thus ensuring that as much money as possible is retained within the local economies and the host communities. With our responsible tourism policy we are continually reassessing our holidays, trying at all times to ensure that they are socially, economically and environmentally sound.

We shall be using the services of local drivers, cooks and translators 

ARRIVAL

Day 1

You will be met at the airport by Ripley Davenport, your expedition leader and Burmaa Zundiusuren from Visit Mongolia and taken to your hotel to freshen up.

We acclimatize to the new environment and adjust to the sights and sounds of a magical world. We will visit main areas in Ulaanbaatar, where we see relics from the ancient civilizations that once existed in Mongolia, including temples. We take a tour of the city.

In the evening we will gather in the hotel bar over drinks and relax and enjoy our last taste of real comfort for some time!

Day 2

We depart the hotel and proceed to the airport to check in for our flight to Khovd. From there we will drive to Bulgan edging our way through the Altai Mountain passes. Every expedition member

will be given instruction on how to handle a camel and maybe assigned his/her own camel. After a lesson on mounting, dismounting, and riding, from Ripley, we will make camp, enjoy the isolation, tell stories and start to bond as a team and prepare for our journey east into the Gobi.

Occasionally, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned. This may be for a variety of



reasons - climatic, physical or other. In these circumstances we will make the best alternative arrangements possible that maintains the integrity of the original itinerary.

WEATHER

The geography of Mongolia is varied with the Gobi Desert to the south and with cold and mountainous regions to the north and west. Much of Mongolia consists of steppes. The highest point in Mongolia is the Khüiten Peak in the *Tavan bogd* massif in the far west at 4,374 m (14,350 ft). The basin of the lake Uvs Nuur, shared with Tuva Republic in Russia, is a natural World Heritage Site.

Most of the country is hot in the summer and extremely cold in the winter, with January averages dropping as low as -30°C (-22°F).

The country is also subject to occasional harsh climatic conditions known as *zud*. Ulan Bator has the lowest average temperature of any national capital in the world. Mongolia is high, cold, and windy. It has an extreme continental climate with long, cold winters and short summers, during which most of its annual precipitation falls.

The country averages 257 cloudless days a year, and it is usually at the center of a region of high atmospheric pressure. Precipitation is highest in the north (average of 200 to 350 millimeters (7.9 to 13.8 in) per year) and lowest in the south, which receives 100 to 200 millimeters (3.9 to 7.9 in) annually. The extreme south is the Gobi, some regions of which receive no precipitation at all in most years.

The name "Gobi" is a Mongol term for a desert steppe, which usually refers to a category of arid rangeland with insufficient vegetation to support marmots but with enough to support camels. Mongols distinguish Gobi from desert proper, although the distinction is not always apparent to outsiders unfamiliar with the Mongolian landscape. Gobi rangelands are fragile and are easily destroyed by overgrazing, which results in expansion of the true desert, a stony waste where not even Bactrian camels can survive.

We will experience the occasional hot winds and sandstorms. Nights are generally cool, varying between 25°C (77°F) and 15°C (59°F) with rare wind-chill reducing the mean evening temperature close to zero. Little or no rain is expected in the region between May and September.

IS THIS TRIP FOR YOU?

The trek requires no special technical skills. You will need to be able to adjust to the conditions of a country and a culture extremely different from your own. You will also need to be fit and a fairly experienced walker, capable of travelling in a remote region for 10 days without external support. You will be expected to walk at a pace of between 3 and 5 kilometres per hour (2-3 mph) for a maximum of 8 hours a day, though of course your riding-camel will be available whenever you wish to ride (please note, as specified above, that camel-riding requires fitness and some agility). You can also sit on a wooden cart that one of our camels will be pulling. This is no comfortable ride!



To spare the camels, everyone will generally walk for the first few hours in the morning. Thereafter, some expedition members may prefer to ride, while others will prefer to walk. You will not be obliged to handle the camel yourself, though all camels will be trained riding-animals, and you may prefer to learn to ride independently. You will not have to carry your own kit or provisions, but may find it convenient to carry your own small day pack with your valuables, water, and immediate requirements, such as sun-block, sunglasses etc. A personal water-bottle is a must, and we recommend a 2 litre soft plastic water bag with drinking tube, of the Camel Bak type or similar.

All cooking will be managed by a professional native local cook, assisted by the support driver, who will also erect the tents. Water will be drawn from wells en route in nomad fashion. Though well water is generally clean and palatable, it will be treated as a further precaution. We will carry ample bottled water.

We ask that both men and women wear suitable clothing.

Please Note: The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith, and covers the average range of conditions likely to be found on this trip.

Abnormal conditions or other events beyond our control can prevail at any time, particularly in remote or off the beaten track destinations, therefore all holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; in order to enjoy them you should be prepared to be flexible where necessary.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Passports and Visas

Most nationalities require a full passport valid at least six months after the date of entry, and most require a visa for Mongolia.

Our partner Visit Mongolia will organise an invitation to visit Mongolia on your behalf. This will be sent to your nearest Mongolian Embassy or Consulate. In order for us to do this we will require a clear copy of your passport details page, and a copy of the inside front cover where the passport number is at the bottom of the page. This can be sent via Email to either Ripley:

mail@ripleydavenport.com or Burmaa: burmaa@visitmongolia.com

You will need to fill out a Visa application and send this along with your passport, the visa fee and normally two passport style photographs to your nearest Mongolia Embassy or Consulate. We will send a reminder to you when this needs to be done.

Passport Photos

You will need to take at least four recent passport photos with you.

Vaccinations and Health

You will require Rabies, Typhoid and tetanus-diphtheria boosters. We also recommend Hepatitis A and B.

Please consult your doctor or vaccination centre for up to date information and at least 3 months prior to departure. Rabies normally requires 3 vaccinations over a 5 week period.



Insurance

It is a condition of joining this trip that you must be insured against medical and personal accident risks.

Local Time is GMT + 8 hours. We will be crossing one time zone.

Language - Mongolian is the official language with some Russian spoken.

Group, Staff and Support

The trip is led by Ripley Davenport, with the support of a local driver, a translator, and a cook

Minimum group size is a maximum 12.

The minimum age of clients on this trip is 18 years.

ACCOMMODATION, FOOD & TRANSPORT

Accommodation

4 star hotel before and after the expedition.

Camping will be basic – normally in two person tents, although sometime clients prefer to sleep out under the stars. All the camps are wild camps without any facilities provided.

The group can perform camp chores.

You will spend the first and last night in a good 4 star hotel in the center of Ulaanbaatar.

Expedition members will normally share double rooms with others of the same sex.


Single female expedition members may decide on a single room.

On trek, accommodation will consist of two-person tents shared on the same basis. Or you may prefer to sleep under the stars in nomad fashion.

Single female expedition members can decide on their own tent.

You may bring your own tent.

Food

All meals are included on this trip. Please  advise us at least two weeks before departure if you have any special dietary requirements. Be prepared to eat mutton and lots of it!

We are happy to cater for vegetarians.

Transport

Transport to Bulgan at the beginning of the trek will be by off road vehicle.

The rest of the trek will be supported entirely on foot and by camel. The bulk of your personal equipment will be carried on the baggage camels and may not be available except at lunchtime and



at camp in the evening. The caravan halts for 5 to 10 minutes every hour for mounting and dismounting and to rest and check the camels. You will be able to ride as much or as little as you like, but bear in mind that camel riding is not a passive activity like sitting in a car, and requires energy and fitness. Transport from our final stop at Sainshand will be by a slow over night train to Ulaanbaatar, with 4 passengers to a booth.

MONEY MATTERS

Currency Information

The unit of currency in Mongolia is the togrog/tugrik (MNT). The currency of Mongolia is the *tugrik*; \$1 US = 1,156 tugriks. Please check at your bank or currency exchange.

Credit cards and travellers' cheques are accepted in many places in Ulaanbaatar. Please note that it is strictly cash in the countryside. No credit cards will be required. You may keep your valueables such as air tickets and credit cards in a safe with our partner Visit Mongolia. You will be required to take your passport and cash with you.

Extra Expenses and Spending Money

Depending upon how much shopping you wish to do at any settlements or local families we suggest you bring around US\$ 100 – US\$ 200.

Tipping (leader and local staff)

At your discretion.

Baggage and baggage allowance

Soft-frame rucksack or soft kitbag recommended as rigid suitcases are not suitable for carrying by camel.

Please check the baggage allowance on your tickets.

Eznis Airways allow 15kg and charge 3000 MNT per kg for additional weight.

We look forward to welcoming you on a totally unique worldwide experience.

QUESTIONS

How do I get to Mongolia?

All direct flights come into Ulaanbaatar – most of them from Beijing, Moscow, Seoul, Tokyo or Berlin. The main airlines are: Aeroflot, MIAT, Korean Air and China Air

Is Mongolia a safe destination?



Mongolia has one of the lowest crime rates in the world and is considered a very safe destination. Mongolian people are known for their nomadic hospitality and they will make you feel very welcome.

Where can I exchange my money?

US Dollars are often accepted, especially in Ulaanbaatar, but it is also useful to carry some cash in the local currency, the Tugrik. 1USD=1380 Tugrik /March 2010/ Any bank in Mongolia will be more than happy to exchange your currency, as will most of the hotels you'll stay in.

Can I bring traveller's cheques?

Several banks accept and issue Travellers Check. But Credit cards are preferred over traveller's cheques. You can also withdraw cash from any ATM in all major towns. Visa, MasterCard, American Express and JCB card are acceptable. It is almost impossible to use your credit cards in the countryside. It is strictly a cash country!

Do you recommend early arrival?

Yes, early arrival might be recommended if your flights take long time or due to time differences between countries. Ripley will be in Ulaanbaatar from May 20th. It is expected to have the team together by May 23rd.

If you do arrive earlier than May 23rd you will be required to support your own accommodation.