



Mongolia

The Sutai Khairkhan Expedition 2025



**SCIENTIFIC
EXPLORATION
SOCIETY**

DISCOVER • RESEARCH • CONSERVE

Itinerary

21 Days • 20 Nights

Costs - £3399 per person
ex international flights

Mongolia

Ulaanbaatar (UB) – Khovd - Khar Us Lake National Park - Tonkhil Sum of Gobi Altai Province - Sutai Khairkhan, Tsetseg Sum - Buural Bogd Mountain – Khushoot River - Gun Nuur, Khokhmorit Sum – Khovd – Ulaanbaator - Khustain Nuruu National Park - Ulaanbaatar

Highlights

- A mounted expedition in western Mongolia whose aim is to set camera traps to capture footage of the elusive snow leopard
- Exhilarating riding of Mongolia ponies
- Experience a traditional Naadam festival
- Contributing to scientific data collection and analysis for the University of Mongolia and other conservation and scientific bodies
- Interaction and aid work in remote communities, learning about their unique nomadic way of life

Tour Essentials

Tour Start	Ulaanbaatar
Tour End	Ulaanbaatar
Accommodation	Tented camps, hotel in UB
Included Meals	Breakfast, lunch, dinner unless stated
Difficulty Level	Medium but good riding experience is essential.

This is a scientific research expedition in conjunction with the Mongolia University and various other scientific bodies.

An expedition report will be provided for the National University Mongolia, the Royal Geographical Society and the Scientific Exploration Society.

The Scientific Exploration Society has approved the expedition.



The Sutai Khairkhan Expedition 2025

Are you looking for a horse-riding expedition that will assist local communities in Mongolia and add to scientific knowledge in the areas of zoology, botany, archaeology and ornithology? Then this could be the expedition for you!

The expedition is being led by two experienced riders, Sue Mackenzie and Kate Coleridge who participated in the 2023 Mongolia expedition with John Blashford-Snell.

Expedition Leader: Sue Mackenzie

Deputy Expedition Leader: Kate Coleridge

Scientific Leader: Professor Kh. Terbish

Expedition Adviser: Col John Blashford-Snell CBE

Corporate organiser: Pioneer Expeditions Worldwide Limited

Expedition Administrator: Philip Beale

** Professor Kh. Terbish, who is leading the scientific programme of the expedition, is an esteemed ecology professor at the National University of Mongolia. He played a key role in establishing Mongolia's ecological training programs, which have produced bachelor, master, and doctoral specialists for nearly 30 years. His graduates contribute significantly to environmental protection across universities, research institutes, and international organizations. A prolific author, he has written over 90 textbooks and 120 scientific articles on Mongolia's environment and biodiversity. He has also served on the management board of the Snow Leopard Trust in Mongolia for over a decade.*



The Objectives

1. The **Sutai Khairkhan Expedition** has as its primary objective the installation of camera traps to gather crucial data on leopards in the little-studied Sutai Khairkhan Mountain. Using automatic cameras, the study will provide insights into the leopards' distribution, population size, age, and sex. The data will be analysed using a methodology approved by key Mongolian research institutions and conservation organizations, helping to inform future conservation efforts for this species. The use of automatic cameras is expected to enhance the research scope of the Ecology and Nature Conservation Program at The National University of Mongolia.
2. A further goal of the expedition is to gather research data on the flora, fauna, and archaeological sites in specific regions of Mongolia. By providing financial support and research tools to specialists, the expedition will establish a foundation for future studies.

Mongolia



Itinerary

DAY 1: July 4

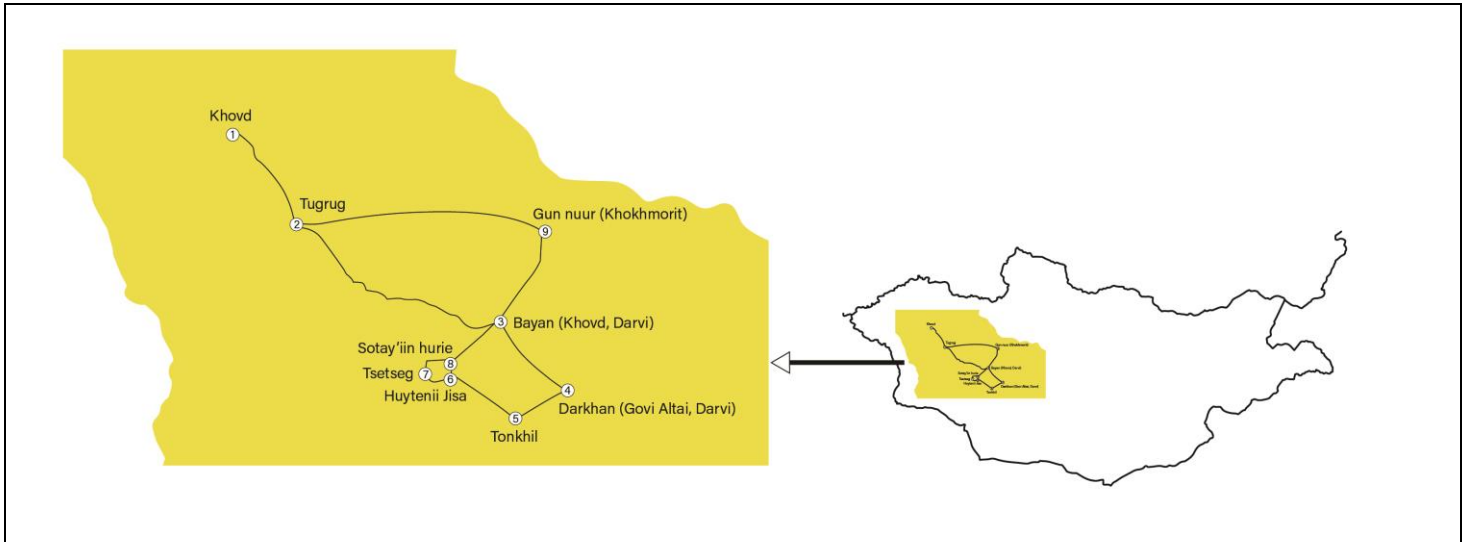
Arrive in Ulaanbaatar. Overnight at a hotel. Meals are not included on this day.

DAY 2: July 5 (B)

Ulaanbaatar city tour including Gandan Monastery and some museums. Overnight at hotel. Meals are not included on this day.

DAY 3: July 6 (B, L, D)

Local flight from Ulaanbaatar to Khovd. The travelling commences by vehicle until reaching Khar Us Lake National Park. Before dinner, we walk around the surrounding area and explore some species of birds, flora and fauna. There is also an evening observation with grip and catcher for zoological purposes. Overnight in tents.



DAY 4: July 7 (B L D)

Today, we will drive to the area of Tonkhil Sum of Gobi Altai Province, the southern part of Sutai Khaikhan Mountain, and the basin of the Zuil River. Here the guides and horses will be waiting for us. On the way, we will stop on the banks of Ikhes Lake in Darvi Sum area of Gobi-Altai province for birdwatching. Overnight in tents.



DAYS 5-7: July 8-10 (B,L,D)

During these three days, we will camp in the Zuil River basin of the Khaikhan Mountain and ride out in the surrounding land while carrying out our research.

The team will be divided into several groups studying botany, mammalogy, ornithology, and archaeology. The zoological team will focus on snow leopard research. Also, during our stay here, it is envisaged that medical examinations and dental treatment will be carried out in the local communities. Each evening, live traps and grips will be used for zoological observations. Overnight in tents.

DAY 8: July 11 (B,L,D)

Today we will continue our exploration with the horses, and set up camp near the center of Tsetseg Sum. The aid team will travel by car and offer humanitarian support such as health and dental check-ups and treatment for local residents, and a donation of books and textbooks will be given to a school in Tsetseg sum. A bird watching activity near Tsetseg Lake is also planned. In the evening, observations will be made with live traps and grids for zoological surveys. Overnight in tents.



DAY 9: July 12 (B,L,D)

Witness the Naadam Festival in Tsetseg Sum. Live catchers and grids are used for observation in the evening for zoological surveys. Overnight in tents.



DAY 10: 13 July (B,L,D)

We continue our journey on horseback. We will camp at the north-west part of Buural Bogd Mountain and at the head of Khushoot River. On the way, do some archeological, botanical and zoological observations. Overnight in tents.



DAY 11-12: July 14-15 (B,L,D)

During these two days, we will be based at Buural Bogd Mountain and Khushoot River for research. The members of the expedition will be divided into groups such as botany, zoology, and archeology. Every evening, live traps and nets will be observed for zoological surveys.

DAY 13: July 16 (B,L,D)

After breakfast, we will continue our journey by car until Gun Nuur, a region of Khokhmorit Sum in the Gobi-Altai province. On the way, we will carry out observations and research on the resident antelope. In the evening, live catchers and grids will be used for observation of smaller creatures for zoological purposes. Books will be presented to Khokhmorit Sum School. Tonight the handlers and their horses will return home. Overnight in tents.

DAY 14: July 17 (B,L,D)

Before noon, we will make an excursion along the sand dunes and the shore of the lake, observing and studying the flora and fauna. After lunch, we will continue our trip to Khovd city and camp on the banks of Buyant River. On the way, we will observe and research the antelope. Overnight in tents.

DAY 15: July 18 (B,L,D)

Flight from Khovd to Ulaanbaatar. Transfer from the airport to the hotel.

DAY 16: July 19 (B,L,D)

Today we will drive to Khustain Nuruu National Park. Camping in the pass of Moilt. Overnight in tents.

DAYS 17-18 : July 20-21 (B,L,D)

During these 2 days, we will be hiking and driving in the park to study flora and fauna. The Khustain Nuruu National Park is home to several hundred Przewalski horses, the only truly wild horse left in the world today. We will report back on their numbers and the general health of the herds to contribute to an on-going study following their re-introduction to the wild. Every night, live traps and grids will be used for zoological surveys. Overnight in tents.

DAY 19: July 22 (B,L,D)

Drive back to Ulaanbaatar. Overnight at the hotel.

DAY 20: July 23

Ulaanbaatar sightseeing. Overnight at the hotel. Meals are not included this day,



DAY 21: July 24

Departure from Ulaanbaatar and transfer to the airport for your international flights and return home. Meals are not included on this day.

Important Information

INCLUDED

- 🌍 All activities as mentioned
- 🌍 Services of an English-speaking guide throughout
- 🌍 All transportation and transfers
- 🌍 All sightseeing costs
- 🌍 Horses/horsemen and camp assistants
- 🌍 All transfers on DAY 1 & DAY 21.
- 🌍 Return flight fee UB-Khovd-UB
- 🌍 National park fees
- 🌍 Meals (B,L,D breakfast, lunch, dinner) as specified in the program
- 🌍 Twin accommodation in local 4* hotel in Ulaanbaatar for 5 nights
- 🌍 Accommodation in tents while in Khovd & Khustai

NOT INCLUDED

- International flights and taxes
- Personal spending money
- Alcoholic drinks
- Donations, tips and gratuities
- Mongolian Visa (required for some non UK residents)
- Travel insurance
- Single occupancy rooms at hotel (tents are single occupancy)
- Excess baggage on internal flight
- Pre and post expedition transfers /accommodation. Those who arrive earlier than July 4 and leave later than July 24 will pay an extra transfer fee of USD 50/£40 per person (or USD 30 /£24 per person for 2 or more people)
- A customary tip of approximately \$70 per person which is given to our Mongolian support team (cooks, drivers, horsemen, translators, etc).
- Riding helmets



Additional Information

ACTIVITY DURATION	21days 20 nights
GROUP SIZE	Maximum of 21 Persons plus Expedition Leader
TRIP COMMENTS AND STYLE	
FOOD	A mixture of local and western food, with opportunities to sample specialities such as koumyss (fermented mare's milk). A vegetarian menu can be provided but note that vegetables are often in short supply in Mongolia. Vegetarians are recommended to take along supplementary snacks.
HORSE RIDING	To participate you must be able to demonstrate that you are an experienced and competent rider. And whilst you may be able to persuade us you can ride, you won't be able to fool a frisky Mongolian pony! It is a condition of the expedition that all riders wear hard helmets whilst mounted and you must bring your own.
JOINING DETAILS	Your final instructions and any relevant tickets will be sent to you approximately 4 weeks before date of travel, after full payment has been received.
INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS	We can help you organise and book your flights if departing from the UK. Please contact us for information and a quote.
KIT LIST	This will be sent to you upon payment of your deposit at your request, otherwise a copy will be sent with your final documents.
TRAVEL INSURANCE	It is a condition of the expedition that you have personal travel insurance in place for the duration of the expedition. It must cover horse riding for more than 10 consecutive days in Mongolia and include medical evacuation. We can recommend travel insurers should you need advice.
TERMS & CONDITIONS	The full terms and conditions of expedition and the risk assessments, are available with the application form to join the expedition.

Why Pioneer Expeditions?

Pioneer Expeditions are one of the few specialists that really *do* off the beaten track and unique adventures and have been operating since 2006. The company is led by the adventurer Philip Beale and co-director Laurene Mansbridge. For this expedition we are working in partnership with Col John Blashford-Snell CBE, who is acting as an adviser. Together we have unrivalled experience in organising major international expeditions and adventures.

From the moment you are selected to join the expedition until you return back home, you will be supported by our dedicated team. An application form and risk assessment is available for those considering joining this exciting and worthwhile expedition

