Mongolia

STEPPES AND ENDLESS SKIES

July 3 to 15, 2016

a program of the stanford alumni association
Mongolia has long been the ultimate destination for many travelers who have “been everywhere.” Our journey to this remote area of inner Asia is a chance for us to observe cultures and meet people whose way of life is steeped in tradition, yet at the same time who are trying to adapt to the demands of life in the 21st century.

We visit restored monasteries, local museums and nomadic communities, and get to experience the colorful Naadam Festival. Join us on this most extraordinary journey to a most extraordinary land.

BRET S. THOMPSON, ’83, DIRECTOR, STANFORD TRAVEL/STUDY

**Highlights**

**DISCOVER** the fascinating museums, age-old monasteries and vibrant, colorful culture of Mongolia’s frontier capital, Ulaanbaatar—a striking amalgam of old and new.

**WITNESS** the famous Naadam Festival with its traditional wrestling, horseracing and archery competitions waged among nomads and warriors.

**SPEND** three nights at the award-winning Three Camel Lodge, a founding member of the National Geographic Unique Lodges of the World.
ELIZABETH HADLY is the senior associate vice provost for undergraduate education, the Paul S. and Billie Achilles Chair of Environmental Biology, and a professor of biology and of geological and environmental sciences at Stanford University. Following her undergraduate and graduate studies, she conducted research throughout North and South America on the ecology and evolution of vertebrates. She is especially interested in the role that environmental change exerts on the biodiversity of mammals around the world, with her recent research focusing on Asia and Central and South America.

Professor Hadly says, “Mongolia is the least densely populated country on earth, a land enhanced by its remote location, extreme climate and fascinating history at the nexus of cultures. In Mongolia’s Gobi Desert, fossils of some of the world’s earliest mammals have been found, together with a rich assemblage of dinosaur fossils. Gazelles, Przewalski’s horses, Batrachian camels, Saiga antelopes and humans have long co-existed here, the humans as nomads in this harsh land, where their migratory lifestyle is now threatened. Together we will learn about the assembly of the biodiversity from this amazing region, and how and why it has begun to unravel.”

“I wish I had recorded the lectures by Liz Hadly. She is a dynamic, inspiring teacher!”

AMANDA WINSTON, NEW ZEALAND BY PRIVATE AIR, 2015

OR BY PHONE: (650) 725-1093

THREE CAMELS LODGE
SUNDAY & MONDAY, JULY 3 & 4
U.S. / ULAANBAATAR
Depart the U.S. on overnight flights to Ulaanbaatar, transferring to our hotel upon arrival on Monday. SHANGRI-LA HOTEL.

TUESDAY, JULY 5
ULAANBAATAR
This morning visit Sukhbaatar Square to view the Great Khans Memorial built in celebration of the 800th anniversary of the Mongolian Empire. Continue to the newly remodeled National History Museum for an excellent overview of Mongolia’s history and culture that includes displays of traditional implements of daily nomadic life, Stone and Bronze Age artifacts, historical costumes of Mongolia’s minority tribes and sacred religious relics. This afternoon drive to the Bogd Gegen Palace, home of Mongolia’s last theocrat, Bogd Jabtzan Damba Hutagt VIII, to view displays of elaborate ceremonial robes and other personal effects of Mongolia’s “8th Living Buddha.” Dine independently this evening.

ULAANBAATAR (B,L,D)

WEDNESDAY, JULY 6
ULAANBAATAR
Begin our day with a visit to Gandan Monastery, the seat of Buddhism in Mongolia. Although Buddhist monasteries were either destroyed or converted into museums during the Stalinist purges of the 1930s, Gandan Monastery continued to operate as a showpiece for government officials. Next, drive to the Zanabazar Fine Arts Museum. The museum displays one of the world’s best collections of Buddhist art and artifacts, including many of Zanabazar’s original works. Continue to the Bogd Gegen Palace, home of Mongolia’s last theocrat, Bogd Jabtzan Damba Hutagt VIII, to view displays of elaborate ceremonial robes and other personal effects of Mongolia’s “8th Living Buddha.” Dine independently this evening.

ULAANBAATAR (B,L,D)

THURSDAY, JULY 7
ULAANBAATAR / HUSTAIN NURUU NATIONAL PARK
Today we start on our journey to Karakorum, stopping first for a day and overnight at Hustain Nuruu National Park, home to the last remaining species of wild horse, the takhi, commonly known as Przewalski’s horse. Learn about current conservation efforts and the status of the herds found within the national park before trying to spot these beautiful horses in their natural habitat. Tonight, experience our first overnight stay in a ger camp, HUSTAIN NURUU GER CAMP (B,L,D).

FRIDAY, JULY 8
KARAKORUM / ERDENE ZUU MONASTERY
Upon our arrival in Karakorum, site of the 13th-century capital of the Mongol Empire, visit the Karakorum Museum with the museum curator for an excellent overview of the historic significance of the Orkhon Valley, designated a UNESCO Cultural Landscape. Next, visit the Erdene Zuu Monastery, which is surrounded by 108 stupas and has been a place of Buddhist activity for centuries. Meet the abbot of the monastery to receive a blessing and partake in some meditation practice.

MUNKH TENDER GER CAMP (B,L,D)

SATURDAY, JULY 9
KARAKORUM / NAADAM FESTIVAL
Today we have the chance to witness Mongolia’s famed Naadam Festival. Wrestling, horseracing and archery are the three age-old competitions traditionally used to measure the courage and strength of nomads and warriors. Contemporary Naadam games showcase the abilities of local men, women, boys and girls, and are also a time when families and friends get together to celebrate the joyful summer season. Return to the ger camp for dinner and overnight.

MUNKH TENDER GER CAMP (B,L,D)
SUNDAY, JULY 10
KARAKORUM / ORKHON VALLEY / ONGIIN KHIID
This morning, venture to the Khöshöö Tsaidam Monuments and the Orkhon inscriptions that honor two Turkic princes, Bilge Khagan (683–734 B.C.E.) and his younger brother, Kül-Tegin (684-731 B.C.E.). From here we start our drive south to Ongiin Khiid en route to the Gobi Desert. ONGIIN KHIID GER CAMP (B,L,D)

MONDAY, JULY 11
ONGIIN KHIID / GOBI DESERT
Today visit the ruins of the 17th-century Ongiin Khiid temple, situated in a beautiful mountainous region. Still known as the “Pearl of the Great Desert,” Ongiin Khiid was one of the largest monasteries in Mongolia until its destruction during the communist purges in 1939. Leaving this historic spot, we continue our drive to our award-winning ger lodge in the Gobi Desert. THREE CAMEL LODGE (B,L,D)

TUESDAY, JULY 12
GOBI DESERT / YOL VALLEY
After an early breakfast, drive to Yol Valley National Park, cradled in the foothills of the Altai Mountains. Hike through the valley amid the habitat of indigenous vulture-like lammergeyers, Altai snowcocks, ibexes, yaks and Argali mountain sheep. THREE CAMEL LODGE (B,L,D)

WEDNESDAY, JULY 13
GOBI DESERT / MOLTSOG ELS / FLAMING CLIFFS
Begin the day with a drive to Moltsog Els, one of the few regions of the Gobi covered by sand dunes. Explore the area on foot or by camel. In the late afternoon, drive to Bayanzag, commonly known as the Flaming Cliffs, for the orange glow cast on the rocks at dawn and dusk. It was here in 1923 that Dr. Roy Chapman Andrews and his exploration team from the American Museum of Natural History were the first to find a nest of dinosaur eggs. Although not obvious to the untrained eye, the Flaming Cliffs are rich with dinosaur fossils and have been the site of important paleontological discoveries. THREE CAMEL LODGE (B,L,D)

THURSDAY, JULY 14
GOBI DESERT / ULAANBAATAR
After breakfast, transfer to the local airport for our flight back to Ulaanbaatar. Enjoy the afternoon at leisure or explore the 976 Art Gallery that supports young and upcoming Mongolian artists. In the evening, enjoy a traditional Mongolian performance followed by a farewell reception and dinner at one of Ulaanbaatar’s fine local restaurants. SHANGRI-LA HOTEL (B, L, D)

FRIDAY, JULY 15
ULAANBAATAR / U.S.
After breakfast, transfer to the airport for flights home. (B)

---

Post-trip Extension to Lake Baikal
JULY 15 TO 19
Extend our journey with a trip to the UNESCO World Heritage site, Lake Baikal, in Siberia. Spend a full day on the Circumbaikal Old Railway that travels along the original Trans-Siberian railway route and follows the shoreline of Lake Baikal. Visit the charming lakeshore village of Listvyanka, then stop at the outdoor Museum of Wooden Architecture en route to Irkutsk. Upon arrival in Irkutsk set out for a city tour that includes visits to the Icebreaker Angara Museum, the Gagarin Embankment and several Orthodox churches before flying back to Mongolia for flights home. Details will be sent to confirmed travelers.
Trip Information

**DATES**
July 3 to 15, 2016 (13 days)

**SIZE**
This program can accommodate 23 participants. Single accommodations are extremely limited; please call for availability.

**COST**
$7,995 per person, double occupancy
$9,095 per person, single occupancy
*Association nonmembers add $300 per person

**INCLUDED**
4 nights of deluxe hotel accommodations in Ulaanbaatar ▪ 7 nights in gers (yurts) ▪ 11 breakfasts, 10 lunches and 9 dinners ▪ Welcome and farewell receptions ▪ Gratuities to guides and drivers for all group activities ▪ All tours and excursions as described in the itinerary ▪ Transfers and baggage handling on program arrival and departure days ▪ Flight from the Gobi Desert to Ulaanbaatar on 7/14 ▪ Minimal medical, accident and evacuation insurance ▪ Educational program with lecture series and pre-departure materials, including recommended reading list, a selected book, map and travel information ▪ Services of our professional tour manager to assist you throughout the program

**NOT INCLUDED**
International and U.S. domestic airfare ▪ Passport and visa fees ▪ Immunization costs ▪ Meals and beverages other than those specified as included ▪ Independent and private transfers ▪ Trip-cancellation/interruption and baggage insurance ▪ Excess-baggage charges ▪ Personal items such as internet access, telephone and fax calls, laundry and gratuities for nongroup services

**AIR ARRANGEMENTS**
International and U.S. domestic airfare is not included in the program cost. Round-trip, economy-class airfare on Singapore Airlines between San Francisco and Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, is approximately $1,600 as of August 2015 and is subject to change without notice. Information on recommended flight itineraries will be sent by our designated agent.

**WHAT TO EXPECT**
Mongolia’s tourism industry is developing, thus patience with local service standards will greatly improve one’s enjoyment of the trip. We expect that participants will be a self-selecting group whose interest in the places we visit far outweighs the need for creature comforts. Because of Mongolia’s weak infrastructure outside of Ulaanbaatar, we consider this program to be a strenuous program that is at times physically demanding and busy. Daily programs involve one to three miles of walking, often on uneven and rocky terrain. Roads are often unpaved and extremely bumpy and driving times range from four to six hours in length. Temperatures in Mongolia can range from the upper 40s (°F) at night to the 90s in the day. Our lodgings in Karakorum, Ongiin Khiid and the Gobi Desert are in ger camps. Gers are circular dome-shaped tents covered with felt made from sheep wool. Each ger comfortably sleeps two and has electricity and a small stove for heat. Separate concrete buildings have flush toilets and showers for communal use; private bathrooms are not available. We welcome travelers 15 years of age and older on this program.
Deposit & Final Payment

A $1,000-per-person deposit is required to hold your space. Sign up online at alumni.stanford.edu/trip?mongolia2016 or call the Travel/Study office at (650) 725-1093. Final payment is due 120 days prior to departure. As a condition of participation, all confirmed participants are required to sign a Release of Liability.

Cancellations & Refunds

Deposits and any payments are refundable, less a $500-per-person cancellation fee, until 120 days prior to departure. After that date, refunds can be made only if the program is sold out and your place(s) can be resold, in which case a $1,000-per-person cancellation fee will apply.

Insurance

Stanford Travel/Study provides all travelers who are U.S. or Canadian citizens with minimal medical, accident and evacuation coverage under our group-travel insurance policy. Our group policy is intended to provide minimal levels of protection while you are traveling on this program. You may choose to subscribe to optional trip-cancellation and baggage insurance. Information offering such insurance will be provided to travelers with their welcome materials. The product offered includes special benefits if you purchase your policy within 14 days of written confirmation of your participation on the trip.

Eligibility

We encourage membership in the Alumni Association as the program cost for nonmembers is $300 more than the members’ price. Families and trip companions may travel on one membership. For more information or to purchase a membership, visit alumni.stanford/goto/membership or call (650) 725-0692.

Responsibility

The Stanford Alumni Association, Stanford University and our operators act only as agents for the passenger with respect to transportation and exercise every care possible in doing so. However, we can assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity in connection with the service of any automobile, motorcoach, launch or any other conveyance used in carrying out this program or for the acts or defaults of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the program. We cannot accept any responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, force majeure or other causes beyond our control. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger as tour rates provide arrangements only for the time stated. We reserve the right to make such alterations to this published itinerary as may be deemed necessary. The right is reserved to cancel any program prior to departure in which case the entire payment will be refunded without further obligation on our part. The right is also reserved to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of the program. No refund will be made for an unused portion of any tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. Baggage is carried at the owner’s risk entirely. The airlines concerned are not to be held responsible for any act, omission or event during the time that passengers are not onboard their plane or conveyance. Neither the Alumni Association, Stanford University nor our operators accept liability for any carrier’s cancellation penalty incurred by the purchase of a nonrefundable ticket in connection with the tour. Program price is based on rates in effect in August 2015 and is subject to change without notice to reflect fluctuations in exchange rates, tariffs or fuel charges.
“Mongolia is a vast, varied and stunning country, populated by remarkable people who have a proud history and unique nomadic culture. It deserves to be better-known and understood; I am glad Stanford gave me the opportunity to experience it.”

MARGARET LEAVITT, ’75, LANDSCAPES OF MONGOLIA, 2013