

# mongolia botanica explorer with mary moody



## trip highlights

- Learn about the botany of Mongolia from Mary Moody and an expert local botanist from the Mongolian National University
- Walk through fields of diverse and attractive Mongolian wildflowers
- Explore the Mongolian capital of Ulaanbaatar
- Visit local nomadic families
- Trek in the Altai Mountains
- Camping in the Mongolian steppe
- Experience 2 nights at ger camps



<b>Trip Duration</b>	15 days
<b>Grade</b>	Introductory to Moderate level
<b>Activities</b>	Trekking, Photographing & Cataloging Flowers, Adventure Touring
<b>Accommodation</b>	4 nights hotels, 8 nights camping, 2 nights in Ger camps

## why travel with World Expeditions?

When planning travel to remote and challenging destinations, many factors need to be considered. Our extra attention to detail and seamless operations on the ground ensure that you will have a memorable experience in Mongolia. We take every precaution to ensure smooth logistics, our vehicles and equipment are the best available on the market. Most importantly, our adventures have always sought to benefit the local peoples we interact with, safeguard the ecosystems we explore and contribute to the sustainability of travel in the regions we experience. You will be accompanied by a guide whose knowledge and passion for Mongolia will add a unique dimension to your trip. Their experience and enthusiasm ensures that we maintain the leading edge in adventure travel and therefore providing excellent value for money. Given our local knowledge, experience and excellent leadership, we are quite sure that this tour will be a trip of a lifetime.

## welcome to World Expeditions

Thank you for your interest in our Mongolia Botanica Explorer with Mary Moody trip. At World Expeditions we are passionate about off the beaten track experiences as it provides our travellers with the thrill of coming face to face with untouched cultures as well as wilderness regions of great natural beauty. We are also committed to making sure that our range of unique itineraries are well researched, affordable and tailored for the enjoyment of our small groups or individuals - philosophies that have been at our core since 1975 when we began operating adventure holidays. The itineraries will give you the very best travel experience, designed by people with incredible local knowledge who share our vision of authentic exchange and real exploration with a responsible tourism approach. Whether you like your adventures to include trekking, touring, cycling, mountaineering, kayaking or cruising World Expeditions can make it happen for you. We hope you will join us for a life changing experience!

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## trip dates

**2011** 22 Jul - 05 Aug

**Price Per Person= \$4,890.00**

**Single Supplement= \$300.00**

**Please contact your nearest World Expedition office for a competitive airfare quote from your capital city**

World Expeditions does not require single travellers pay a surcharge for travelling alone. On all of our adventures we will arrange for you to share accommodation with another traveller of the same sex and if we can not match you up we will provide a single room at no extra charge. If you prefer not to share a single supplement is payable to guarantee your own room.

## the trip

Explore the mountain valleys, alpine meadows, large lake basins and steppe grasslands in central and far western Mongolia on this exhilarating journey of flora, culture and the wilderness. In Mongolia there are 3,000 species of flowering plants of which 975 species are registered as medicinal plants and used in folk and traditional medicine. With most of these being found in central and western Mongolia the focus will be on identifying as many of these as possible. Travelling with Mary Moody and an expert local botanist from the Mongolian National University the trip has been designed to maximise the opportunity to catalogue and photograph the unique wildflowers and flora. Commencing in Ulaanbaatar, we fly to western Mongolia where we explore the Altai Tavan Bogd National Park visiting with local nomadic herders to learn about their traditional way of life from the Kazakhs to the hauntingly beautiful throat-singing of the Tuvan people. We then head into the mountains to start a fully supported trek where we will experience outstanding scenery of the Altai Mountain range and enjoy numerous opportunities to explore remote alpine meadows for rare plant species. We then return to central Mongolia to travel to Khustain Nuruu National Park known for its biodiversity and ground breaking environmental protection policies before returning to Ulaanbaatar where the trip concludes.

## about your leader

The tour will be escorted by Mary Moody, a former presenter on the ABC's Gardening Australia and the author of four best selling travel memoirs - Au Revoir, Last Tango in Toulouse, The Long Hot Summer and Sweet Surrender - as well as numerous gardening books and magazines. Mary has led botanical trips for many years and has a great love and wealth of knowledge of this region.

A note from Mary: "I am thrilled at the prospect of exploring what is a new destination for me, and in particular in discovering the unique flora which will give the adventure an added dimension. Having loved botanical treks in India, China, Sikkim, Nepal and Bhutan, I am sure this trip to Mongolia will be a breath-taking experience."

Mary will also be joined by a senior botany lecturer from the Mongolian National University who holds a PhD in botany.

## at a glance

DAY 1	ARRIVE IN ULAANBAATAR
DAY 2	FLY ULAANBAATAR TO OLGII. DRIVE TO THE MOGOI RIVER. (APPROX 4HR DRIVE)
DAY 3	DRIVE FROM ALTAI TAVAN BOGD NATIONAL PARK TO KHAR SALAA RIVER.(APPROX 5HR DRIVE)
DAY 4	EXPLORE THE FLORA OF THE MONGOL ALTAI MOUNTAINS.
DAY 5	START TREKKING. CROSS TAHILT PASS (3,200M)(APPROX 7HRS TREK)
DAY 6	EXPLORE THE FLORA OF THE MONGOL ALTAI MOUNTAINS.
DAYS 7-8	TREKKING IN TSAGAAN US VALLEY (6 AND 4HRS TREKKING EACH DAY)
DAY 9	DRIVE FROM LAKE KHOTON TO TSENGEL SOUM. (APPROX 3HRS DRIVE)
DAY 10	DRIVE TO OLGII, OVERNIGHT IN A GER CAMP. (APPROX 3HRS DRIVE)
DAY 11	FLY FROM OLGII TO ULAANBAATAR
DAY 12	DRIVE TO KHUSTAIN NURUU NATIONAL PARK. (APPROX 2HRS DRIVE)
DAY 13	DRIVE FROM KHUSTAIN NURUU NATIONAL PARK TO ULAANBAATAR. (APPROX 2HRS DRIVE)
DAY 14	ULAANBAATAR SIGHTSEEING
DAY 15	TRIP CONCLUDES IN ULAANBAATAR

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## fast facts

Countries Visited:  
**Mongolia**

Visas:  
**Yes\***

Vaccinations:  
**Please consult a travel vaccination specialist for up to date information**

Private Groups:  
**Private group options are not available for this trip**

Singles:  
**A single supplement is available for this trip\***

Leader:  
**Expert local leader**

Brochure Reference:  
**Active Adventures**

\*Ask our staff for more information.

## what's included

- 14 breakfasts, 12 lunches and 12 dinners
- flights Ulaanbaatar/Olgii/Ulaanbaatar
- airport transfers on day 1 & day 15
- expert bilingual guide
- expert bilingual Mongolian Botanist from the Mongolian National University
- camel/porter support during trek
- comfortable well located hotels
- fully supported camping during trek
- use of private vehicles for all group travel
- sightseeing as listed in itinerary
- site entry fees

Local cash payments are becoming increasingly popular with many operators in the adventure travel industry. The policy seems to benefit the tour operators, more than the local economies or travellers, as it avoids local taxes and transfers the cost and risk of cash handling to travellers. In accordance with our Responsible Travel practices we have chosen a policy not to ask for such payments.

## detailed itinerary

### DAY 1 Arrive in Ulaanbaatar

On arrival at Ulaanbaatar airport we transfer by private vehicle to our conveniently located hotel. In the afternoon we will visit the Mongolian National University to meet our Botanist, who is a senior lecturer at the University. He will give a talk about the Mongolian flora we are expecting to see and some more information about the trek and the people and cultures we will meet. Overnight at the hotel.

**Meals: NIL**

### DAY 2 Fly Ulaanbaatar to Olgii. Drive to the Mogoi River. (approx 4hr drive)

After an early morning breakfast we will be transferred to the airport for our internal flight to western Mongolia (3 hours). We will be flying to the small township of Olgii, the center of Bayan-Olgii province, where over 90% of the population are the Kazakh people. On arrival at the airport we will be met by our drivers and 4WD Russian vehicles for the approximate four hour drive to our camp in the valley of the Mogoi River. The driving we will encounter is at times quite difficult due to the rough tracks we will be following, although at all times the scenery is spectacular and never is it boring. Once the crew and staff have set up camp and we have settled in we will enjoy a short excursion through the surrounding areas to explore for wild flowers. Overnight in tent.

**Meals: B, L, D**

### DAY 3 Drive from Altai Tavan Bogd National Park to Khar Salaa River. (approx 5hr drive)

Today we will continue our journey deeper into the Altai Tavan Bogd Mountain National Park where we will camp by the Khar Salaa River. The drive of approximately 130km will be along mostly bumpy tracks taking about 5 hours. Altai Tavan Bogd is the highest mountain system in Mongolia. The name literally means Five Kings, as there are five major peaks in the range itself. The national park covers an area of 6,000 square kilometers and is a stunning landscape of high glaciated snow capped mountains, alpine and sup-alpine forests, large lakes, rivers and streams, mountain grasslands, and rocky mountain ranges. Through the day we will stop several times looking for different botanical species and learning from our expert botanist. The region is also known for its



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## responsible travel

The environments we travel through are fragile. It is our responsibility as visitors to minimise the impact of our presence. World Expeditions were the proud recipients of the inaugural Australian National Travel Industry's Environmental Achievement award for our Responsible Travel Guidebook. This detailed guide to responsible and sustainable travel is provided to all World Expeditions clients before they travel. Please ask your consultant if you have not received your copy of our award winning book. Alternatively, you may like to download a copy from our website [www.worldexpeditions.com](http://www.worldexpeditions.com)

## trip grading

This trip is rated as moderate. We therefore advise that any physical training you complete before undertaking the trip will be to good effect. In preparation for your trip you should be doing at least one hour of good cardiovascular exercise, 3 - 5 times per week for approximately 3 months prior to your trip. Remember the fitter you are the more enjoyable your experience will be.

## adventure travel

By its very nature adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected. In remote and developing countries do not expect standards you are used to at home. Remote areas are sometimes unpredictable and itineraries may be altered. To get the most out of your adventure it is important that you are flexible, positive and eager to take on all the challenges that arise. If you are uncertain about your suitability for this trip we recommend that you speak with your consultant or travel agent.

abundance of prehistoric rock paintings which can be found in numerous caves and mountains of Mongolia's wild west. Tonight's camp is located in a remote mountain valley at 2,600m nearby the Khar Salaa River, our camp will also be nearby our camelmen and their families. Overnight in tent.

**Meals: B, L, D**

### DAY 4 Explore the flora of the Mongol Altai Mountains.

Today we will stay in the same camp and have a full day excursion into the surrounding mountain valleys exploring the flowers and plants. In the afternoon we will visit our camelmen's family and experience a nomadic life style typical to the Tuva people. Overnight in tent.

**Meals: B, L, D**

### DAY 5 Start Trekking. Cross Tahilt Pass (3,200m)(approx 7hrs trek)

Today we start our 4 day trek. Each day will be approximately 5-8 hours of trekking in the Mongol Altai Mountain Range, through high mountain meadows and wide, open valleys. For these days journeys there will be pack camels carrying all food and group camping equipment.

Our objective today is to cross the Tahilt Pass at 3,200m. The total length of trekking is about 14 kms, but the morning's hike is more challenging as we ascend the steep slope to the pass. We will enjoy lunch on top of the pass and from this vantage we will enjoy tremendous views of the surrounding peaks and high mountain lakes that are turquoise in colour. From the Tahilt pass, we will descend into the Tsagaan Us Valley where we are camping for two nights. Our campsite is by the Tsagaan Us River, it is one of the rivers whose headwaters start from the glaciers of Mount Tavan Bogd of the Altai Mountain Range. Our riverside campsite tonight offers outstanding views of the entire Tsagaan Us valley. Overnight in tent.

**Meals: B, L, D**

### DAY 6 Explore the flora of the Mongol Altai Mountains.

We will stay in the same camp which will give us a full day to explore this special area and become more familiar with the plants of the Mongol Altai Mountains. Overnight in tent.

**Meals: B, L, D**

### DAYS 7-8 Trekking in Tsagaan Us Valley (6 and 4hrs trekking each day)

These two days we continue hiking and exploring the flora along Tsagaan Us river valley over undulating hills and through pristine forests. There are many cascades and streams falling down the mountain and flowing into the river. We will be walking for approximately 6 hours per day at a slow pace which will provide numerous opportunities to stop and examine, discuss and photograph the flora which we come across. In the afternoon of the second day we will trek out from the mountainous valleys and enter an entirely different landscape of wide open plains which are home to entirely different species of plants. Here we will bid farewell to our friendly team of camelmen and camels board the vehicles and drive the short distance to the shore of Khoton Lake. This is a fresh water lake nestled in a mountain depression surrounded by high mountains and forests. There is another lake next to Khoton called Khurgan Lake. These two lakes are connected by a stream and fed by rivers and streams which originate high up in the Altai Mountains, Khovd River originates from this lake. The entire region is spectacular and holds countless opportunities for interesting guided walks with our botanist and Mary. Overnight in tent.

**Meals: B, L, D**

### DAY 9 Drive from Lake Khoton to Tsengel Soum. (approx 3hrs drive)

The morning is free to visit a local Kazakh family so as to experience their unique culture. Although their nomadic lifestyle is very similar to that of the Mongols there are some key differences. Firstly, the Kazakh people are Muslim and follow the religious traditions and customs of Islam. They are Kazakh-speaking. The Kazakh women produce some astonishingly beautiful appliqué, stitching and rug making out of crude felt. The floors and walls of their gers are strewn with these beautiful

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## important note

These trip notes represent the most current information for this itinerary, and may supersede any information in the current brochure, including but not limited to the itinerary and price. The itinerary should be seen as a guide only. This itinerary may change at any time due to inclement weather, forces of nature and other circumstances beyond our control.

handicrafts. Many of the Kazakh men pride themselves with their great skill in hunting with eagles. Eagles are often caught at a very young age and in the winter months are trained to hunt small prey. In the summer months the family keeps the birds close to home and they are fattened for the winter's work. In the afternoon we will start the interesting drive to our overnight riverside camp at Tsengel Soum. This region has a distinctly varied terrain and topography, from the wooded shores of the southern side of the lake where our campsite is located to the classic open steppe on the northern side of the lake. From our campsite we are treated with dramatic views of Mt Ikh Turgen (3,507m). Overnight in tent.

**Meals: B, L, D**

### DAY 10 Drive to Olgii, overnight in a ger camp. (approx 3hrs drive)

After a relaxing morning we will make the drive to our Kazakh ger camp in Olgii. The camp is comfortable yet the facilities are quite basic although showers are available in the separate ablution building. In the afternoon you will have time for shopping for colorful handcrafted rugs, bags and many other handmade items or you can visit the impressive Aimag Museum. Overnight in ger camp.

**Meals: B, L, D**

### DAY 11 Fly from Olgii to Ulaanbaatar

In the morning we transfer to the airport and fly back to Ulaanbaatar. The afternoon is free to relax in one of the capitals sidewalk cafes and watch the city life wonder past. For the more active, you may like to visit the Winter Palace of Bogd Khaan. This is where Mongolia's eighth living Buddha, and last King -Jebutzun Damba Hutagt VIII- lived for 20 years until his death in 1903. Overnight in hotel.

**Meals: B**

### DAY 12 Drive to Khustain Nuruu National Park. (approx 2hrs drive)

This morning we will drive 110km (approx 2 hours) along a sealed road to the west of Ulaanbataar to Khustain Nuruu National Park. Here the government is coordinating a successful project of reintroducing the revered wild Mongolian horses back into the wilderness. We will visit the project information center which is an incredible resource on the successful project and the flora and fauna found in Mongolia. In the afternoon we will drive a short way to a mountain meadow where we will have an excursion to explore the wild flowers and hopefully see some wild horses grazing. In the evening we will have another opportunity to see wild horses come down from the mountains to the river nearby our ger camp. Overnight at ger camp.

**Meals: B, L, D**

### DAY 13 Drive from Khustain Nuruu National Park to Ulaanbaatar. (approx 2hrs drive)

After an early morning walk continuing our research on flora in the national park we will enjoy our last picnic lunch in the wilds of Mongolia before returning to Ulaanbaatar by vehicle. Overnight at hotel.

**Meals: B, L**

### DAY 14 Ulaanbaatar sightseeing

Today we have a full day sightseeing in Ulaanbaatar. We visit the Gandan Monastery the largest and most famous functioning monastery in Mongolia, here we may experience monks in worship and see the impressive Golden Buddha Statue of Migjid Janraisig. We will also visit the Natural History Museum. In the afternoon there will be time for some shopping and purchasing of cashmere and souvenirs. For our last evening together we will enjoy a local concert featuring Mongolian music and dancing followed by a final farewell dinner at a local restaurant. Overnight in hotel.

**Meals: B, D**

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## DAY 15 Trip concludes in Ulaanbaatar

After a leisurely breakfast you will be transferred to the airport for your flight home or you can join one of the extension tours from Mongolia.

### Meals: B

This itinerary is subject to change with any change in Community regulations as well as Governmental changes and natural circumstances beyond our control.

## country information

Mongolia is a vast country, dominated by the steppes to the north and the Gobi Desert to the south. It is landlocked and with an average altitude of 1,580m (5,180 ft), it is one of the worlds highest countries. Between the deserts are lakes, both salt and freshwater. Lake Hovsgol holds 2% of the worlds fresh water – so fresh you can drink it. The nomadic lifestyle in Mongolia prevails even in the growing urban landscape around Ulaanbaatar, where gers (Yurt is a Russian word for ger) are found between the crumbling Soviet style buildings. The ger is the centrepiece of Mongolian traditions. The mobility of the tent suits the nomadic lifestyle, and the layout of the interior is culturally significant. The door always faces the south and the rear is reserved as a place of honour for guests, where a family altar is found decorated with family photos and Buddhist images. The predominant religion of Mongolia is Buddhism, which has been revived following the lifting of the ban on religion in 1990. Historically, Mongolia has had close ties with Tibet through the Buddhist religion, and many similarities exist in the culture and lifestyle of these two countries. Mongolian religion and their nomadic lifestyle is depicted in their music, literature and artwork. Throat (or Khoomi) singing is a particular style of male singing which requires special training, and involves several notes being released at once from the base of the throat. Contortionism is also a Mongolian tradition, and dance performances will often include a sequence. The language is Mongolian - part of the Ural-Altai family which also includes Finnish, Turkish, Uzbek and Korean. The language is written using the Russian Cyrillic alphabet.

## climate

June through July are rainy months, August is late summer. The region is alpine so daytime temperatures can fluctuate between 10°C and 25°C, and evenings between 10 – 0 °C. It can snow on any day of the year in the mountains.

## a typical day

The trek in the Altai Mountains is through undulating terrain with a mixture of open steppe, mixed forest and along river valleys. Our route through the Altai Tavan Bogd National Park is populated by local nomadic herders although their movements are naturally unpredictable and certain parts of the trek will be wilderness. The trek is supported by packhorses to carry kit bags and the groups' communal equipment such as kitchen, dining tent, and food supplies. We will walk 5-6 hours per day, with ample time to stop and examine different plant species or to visit local herders and even take in a horse ride for those who are game.

## accommodation on the trip

Accommodation on the trip is varied from eight nights fully supported camping whilst trekking in the remote Altai Tavan Bogd National Park to comfortable tourist class hotels with private facilities in Ulaanbaatar for four nights. No visit to Mongolia would be complete without experiencing a ger, you will experience two nights in different ger camps. The ger camps are comfortable and traditional and are an interesting experience yet are quite basic. The toilet and shower facilities housed in a separate building.

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## pre and post tour accommodation

Should you wish to arrive or depart outside of the listed dates then we can arrange your additional accommodation at the group hotel and any other services you may require.

## what you carry

The trek is fully supported so you are only required to carry your daypack with items you need for the day such as extra warm clothing (depending on the altitude, location and weather), a rainjacket, water bottle, film and camera gear, valuables and personal items such as sunscreen, lip-eze etc.

## equipment required

Specialist gear required include walking boots and day pack (a comprehensive gear list is provided in the pre-departure information provided on booking).

## acute mountain sickness

When we ascend above 2500 meters our bodies have to acclimatise to the decreasing amount of the oxygen available. To allow our bodies to adjust World Expeditions has structured its treks so that you ascend slowly, allowing acclimatisation to occur. However, during the acclimatisation process, you may experience some of the following symptoms.

- Headache
- Tiredness
- Disturbed sleep
- Loss of appetite/nausea
- Shortness of breath
- Cough
- Palpitation
- Swelling of the hands and face

Individuals acclimatise at different rates. Your best strategy is to take your time and drink plenty of water. These symptoms may not indicate the onset of A.M.S. and if you experience them it does not necessarily mean that you should not continue. All World Expeditions group leaders have extensive first aid training and we urge you to communicate with the group leader at all times should you believe you have any symptoms in order that we can effectively monitor your symptoms. The only cure for Acute Mountain Sickness is to descend.

Please note that your group leader has ultimate responsibility and may ask you to descend if symptoms persist.

## what's not included

- International airfares and departure taxes, contact World Expeditions for a quote
- Sleeping bag – this can be hired in Mongolia, US\$20 for the trip
- Optional horse hire: you can choose to hire a horse and horse man for the three days trekking. The costs are US\$10/day for a horse and US\$15/day for a horseman. The horse must be hired for the full three days and it is advised you also hire the horseman as some parts are steep ascents and may be dangerous unless you are a competent rider. Two people can share one horseman.
- Aerated and alcoholic drinks
- Items of a personal nature such as phone calls, laundry, email etc
- Tips
- Visa





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→ **Travel Insurance (compulsory)**

## **info nights**

World Expeditions invites you to attend our inspiring adventure travel information nights. These special evenings are designed to inform and entertain and are hosted by our most experienced and passionate adventure travellers and mountaineers. Ask our staff for a info night schedule or register on our website - [www.worldexpeditions.com](http://www.worldexpeditions.com). Shows can fill early so it is important to register your attendance so we know to save a seat, or two!

## **subscribe to our newsletter**

To keep up to date with our new and exciting adventure opportunities, special promotions and adventure news, subscribe to our monthly e-newsletter! You can do this on line through our website, [www.worldexpeditions.com](http://www.worldexpeditions.com) or contact our office.

## **trip availability**

If this trip seems right for you then we encourage you to call us now to check availability. There are many reasons why you may not be able to join your desired departure and limited space on our small group departures is just one of them. Many of our adventures require us to secure services on your behalf; such as trekking permits, train travel and visa invitation letters. The demand is increasing each year making it difficult to join a trip last minute. To ensure we can assist you onto your adventure of a lifetime we ask that you check your trip availability with our team at your earliest convenience.

## **how to book**

To book a World Expeditions trip, you will need to complete a booking form which is found at the back of our brochure or can be downloaded from our website [www.worldexpeditions.com](http://www.worldexpeditions.com). On completion, fax or post the form to your nearest World Expeditions office along with your non-refundable deposit. World Expeditions has access to competitive airfares. Call your nearest World Expeditions office or travel agent for assistance with your travel arrangements including flights, travel insurance and additional accommodation.