



EXPLORING MONGOLIA

Designed by Jack Wheeler

Co-Led by Jack Wheeler, Rebel Holiday, & Eddy Downpatrick

June 2 to June 13, 2025



EXPLORING MONGOLIA

“Outer Mongolia” – that’s what it was called as a colony of the Soviet Union when I was first there in 1963. I was 19 years ago with a summer job filming remote places in Asia for a Hollywood stock film company. Almost 30 years later in 2002, I led an overland expedition driving some 2,500 kilometers across Mongolia – it took us over a month as there were no roads, just 4WD tracks.

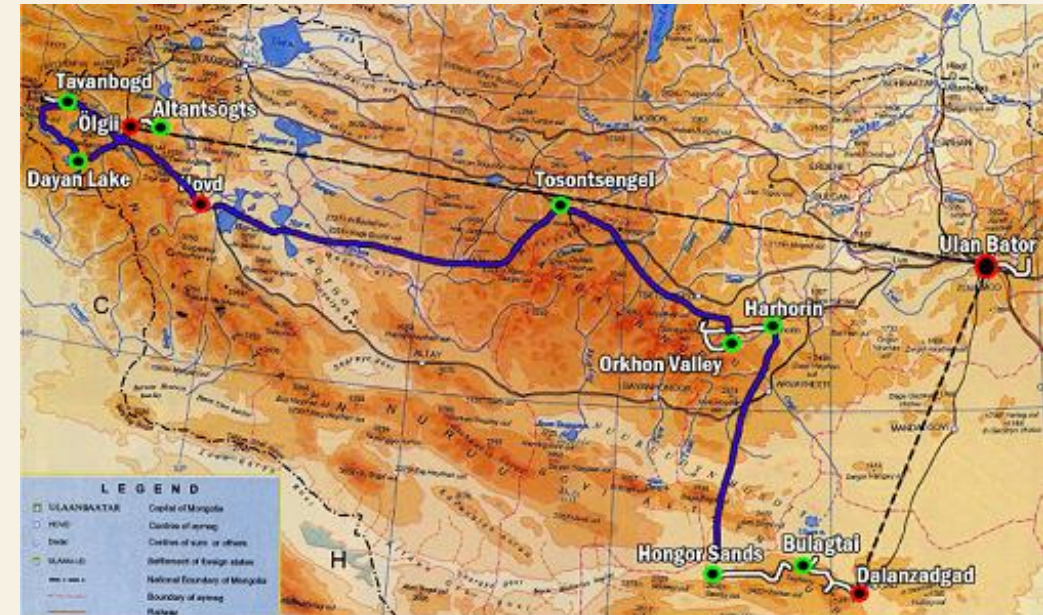
It still does, unless you explore Mongolia the way we do – that no one else does: by our private chartered planes landing on remote airstrips, to be met by our Land Cruisers to take you to extraordinary places and meet extraordinary people other travelers don’t see. That’s how we experience so much of Mongolia in a short period of time. This is a luxury exploration of Mongolia that is unique to Wheeler Expeditions. You won’t find it anywhere else.

Exploring Mongolia is the dream of anyone with an adventurous spirit. It is not easy to do. Mongolia is enormous – 2½ times the size of Texas and it’s mostly empty. Outside of the capital of Ulaan Bataar and a few towns, the population density is 3 people per square mile, most all of whom are nomads.

That emptiness is of extraordinary beauty and diversity, while the people you meet are marvelously welcoming and hospitable. This is your dream of Exploring Mongolia come true. **Here’s what you’ll experience and how you’ll do it – by private charter plane to remote wonders to camel-back over sand dunes of the Gobi.**

I’m so excited to share this expedition that I’ve dreamed of doing for the past 30 years.

Blue Skies,
Jack Wheeler



Our itinerary: black airline, blue charter flights, white driving

Days/Region	Our Expedition Journey Overview
Days 1 - 2 Capital & East Mongolia	Ulaan Bataar, Terelj
Days 3 - 4 Far West Mongolia	Fly to Olgii - Tsambagarav & Tsast Mountains, overnight near Kazakh nomads. Altantsogts region/Far West
Day 5 Far West Mongolia	Fly to Dayan Lake, fly to Tavanbogd, drive to glacier. Fly to Hovd, overnight.
Day 6 Central Mongolia	Fly from far West to Central Mongolia over great lakes & Mongol Els dunes. Refuel Tosontsengel, fly to Okhon Valley, overnight.
Day 7 Central Mongolia	Visit Harhorin (Karakorum) Mongol nomads
Day 8 - Gobi Desert South Mongolia	Fly from Harhorin to Hongor Sands in South Gobi, Sunset Camel ride over Gobi dunes
Day 9 - Gobi Desert South Mongolia	Sunrise camel ride over Gobi dunes, Overland to Bulagtai, 3 Camels Lodge, explore area
Day 10 - Gobi Desert South Mongolia	Visit Vulture's Mouth Glacier in Gurvan Saikhan mountains & Flaming Cliffs
Day 11 - Gobi to Capital	Fly from Dalanzadgad to Ulan Bator
Day 12 - Depart	Depart



Welcome to Mongolia

Day 1 - Monday, June 2 – Arrival Day

Sandwiched between Russia and China, the easiest way to get here, to Ulaan Bataar from the US, is via Seoul, South Korea.

When you arrive, you'll be met at the airport and transferred to our hotel, the capital's best, the [5-star Shangri-La](#). After check-in you have free time to rest and recharge. Or, you may want to visit the gym or take a swim in the pool.

In the evening, we meet for our Welcome Dinner.



Day 2 – Tuesday, June 3

After a leisurely breakfast, today we'll have a tour to see some of the history and culture of Mongolia.

The capital is the country's only actual city, with luxury hotels, excellent restaurants, museums, shops and stores. Notable sites include nearby the gigantic statue of Genghis Khan on horseback, and the beautiful Gorkhi-Terelj National Park, dinosaur museum, and Gandan Tegchinien Monastery,



We'll have a break in the late afternoon, then enjoy dinner at an excellent local restaurant.

Now, after two days here enjoying the capital, tomorrow we say goodbye to civilization and off to the real Mongolia.

Days 3 & 4 – Tuesday, June 4 – Wednesday, June 5

This morning we have an early morning flight to the town of Ölgii in westernmost Mongolia, a remote land inhabited by Kazakh nomads and their herds of sheep, goats, yaks, and two-humped Bactrian camels.



Our Land Cruisers will take us into the Altai Range to be welcomed by our host family of Kazakhs who migrate to their summer pastures beneath the towering Tsambagarav and Tsast Mountains, both of which rise over 13,000 feet high.

This is your chance to immerse yourself in the nomadic way of life untouched by the rest of the world. The nomads live in round portable tents called *gers* or *yurts*.



Days 3 & 4 – Tuesday, June 4 – Wednesday, June 5

Nearby we will have our own luxury “glamping” ger camp, traditional full beds, shower/bathroom.



We'll also have a personal chef preparing delicious meals with beer, wine, open bar.



Days 3 & 4 – Tuesday, June 4 – Wednesday, June 5

Our family keeps their eagles here. These magnificent birds, female Golden Eagles, are captured and trained to hunt foxes from horseback—a tradition honed across Eurasia for millennia. They'll take you on an eagle hunt for a unique and intimate glimpse into this ancient way of life.



They'll take us on horseback, go eagle hunting by day...and learn how they care for their animals.



After our dinner, they'll invite us to join them around their family table being regaled by their myths and legends, and coming to understand what life means to them. It will be a life memorable experience.



Day 5 – Friday, June 6

After a sunrise breakfast, we bid a fond farewell to our nomadic hosts and head from the Tsambagarav pastures back to Ölgii where our two chartered Cessna Grand Caravan turboprops await to take us to the remotest and most breathtakingly spectacular corner of Mongolia.



The Altai Tavan Bogd –Five Holy Mountains – is where the borders of Mongolia, Russia, and China meet. Friendship Peak is the highest, and highest mountain in Mongolia at 14,340ft. Off it spills the enormous Potanin Glacier. Below or south of the junction along the border with China is a series of other-worldly beautiful lakes, Dayan, Khurgan, and Khoton. We land at airstrips maintained by our friends at the Mongolian Border Patrol.

First, we explore the lakes.



Day 5 (continued)

After the lakes, we then fly along the main Altai ridge that is the border between Mongolia and Chinese Turkestan, then between Mongolia and Russian Siberia, over an ocean of snow and glacier-covered ragged peaks.



We land at an airstrip near the Potanin Glacier from where our Land Cruisers take us to the glacier itself. Enroute we'll visit with Kazakh nomads herding their flocks in the high valleys and likely encounter nomad camel caravans traversing high passes.



Day 5 (continued)

Reaching the massive glacier pouring off Friendship Peak at the triple junction of Chinese Turkestan, Russian Siberia, and remotest Mongolia is awe-inspiringly glorious. It's a short trek to get to, the best way is on the back of a Mongolian pony.



At day's end, we fly to Khovd, the largest town of western Mongolia, where we're ensconced in the brand-new modern Steppe Hotel. Enroute we fly over the Tsambagarav and Tsast mountains and the pastures of our Kazakh family. Perhaps we'll be able to wave to them from the air!



Day 6 – Saturday, June 7

We start the day with a spectacular flight from the Far West to the sacred center of Mongolia, over the Great Lakes Basin, the sand dunes of the Mongol Els, and past the holy mountain of Otgontanger.



Day 6 (continued)

Our destination is the Orkhon Valley, cradle of both ancient Turkic and Mongol civilizations. We land at a private airstrip, from where our Land Cruisers take us to the remote Tövkhön Monastery built on a mountain cliffside. This is a pilgrimage site for Mongolians, as it was founded in the 1600's by the founder of Mongolian Yellow Hat Buddhism, Zanabazar, pictured below.



Days 6 (continued)

We conclude the day at what was once Genghis Khan's capital of Karakorum, where we stay at the ultra-modern Asa Land Resort on the Orkhon River in one of their amazing and wonderfully comfortable Space Yurts. We'll sleep here two nights and take time to stroll along the river, relax, wine, dine, and enjoy.



Day 7 - Sunday, June 8

The following day is devoted to exploring the Orkhon Valley. The only thing left of Genghis' capital is the Stone Turtle of Karakorum. Yes, that's Jack and Jackson in 2002.



Close by is the huge Erdene Zuu Temple Complex built from the stones of Karakorum. It is Mongolia's oldest and most revered Tibetan Buddhist sanctuary. We'll meet the lamas here who will explain the symbolism of the sacred gold-leafed artistry inside.



Day 7 (continued)

After a visit to the new and fascinating Karakorum Museum to see what Genghis' capital actually looked like and lunch in town, we'll venture out along the Orkhon to visit with Mongol nomads encamped on its banks. Their encampments are scattered throughout, so we have our choice. We'll have just as much enjoyment being with them as young Jackson did.



We end the day with a gourmet dinner at Asa Land Resort and overnight again.

Day 8 – Monday, June 9



Today's the day for the Gobi! After breakfast, our two Caravans fly us straight south to one of Mongolia's most breathtaking natural wonders, the Khongoryn Els, the Dunes of Khongor, 100 miles long and towering into the sky. The dunes are gigantic, some almost a thousand feet high – a spectacular sight to see!

We'll overfly them then land at a remote airstrip, where we bid a fond farewell to our pilots.



Our fourth set of Land Cruisers are waiting to take us to the Gobi Erdene Ger Camp, where tonight, we stay in comfortable cabins with ensuite washroom and shower.

Day 8 (continued)

There's a river running by the dunes providing grass for Mongol nomads to feed their camels. Not one-hump dromedaries, the giant two-hump Bactrian camels Marco Polo knew so well.



You can spend time with them learning about their way of life, or go hiking among the dunes. Then, as sunset approaches, guided by our nomad friends, we'll want to ride a Bactrian camel across the dunes as they turn to gold and the sky shades into purple. This is a magical experience you never ever forget.

Day 9 - Tuesday, June 10

You may want to rise early to experience the dunes at sunrise, or ride a camel at dawn, but don't miss a great breakfast before we embark on our next adventure.

We drive through the Gurvan Saikhan Mountains' dramatic Gobi landscape to reach the most celebrated place to stay in all Mongolia, the luxurious Three Camel Lodge.



Day 9 (continued)

We arrive in time for a marvelous lunch, and check in to our elegant private ger.



Or, if you'd like to relax in the lounge...



Day 9 (continued)

You'll experience an ultimate serenity here. The afternoon is yours – go horseback or mountain bike riding, get a Mongol archery or chef's cooking lesson, enjoy one of the many therapeutic treatments at the Arshaan Spa.



Later, we can relax at the Thirsty Camel Bar offering one of the world's finest selection of whiskies and premium spirits (according to Forbes). The mixologist can concoct anything you please. Have fun and enjoy!



Day 10 - Wednesday, June 11

Would you believe there is a *glacier* in the Gobi Desert? There is and you'll see it with your own eyes, walk on it with your own feet as Jackson and I did. In the Gurvan Saikhan there is a gorge so steep and deep the sun shines only during midday during the summer. It's called the Vulture's Mouth, Yolyn Am. The Gobi is the world's northernmost and coldest desert in the world, and at 40 below in the winter, the stream here freezes solid, builds up and doesn't melt.

The Vulture's Mouth Glacier is several meters thick and over a mile long. Walking along it with the rock walls towering straight up thousands of feet above you is unforgettable. This is where we'll be this morning.



Day 10 (continued)

We return to Three Camels for a sumptuous lunch and enjoy its amenities until late afternoon.

This is the time when the Gobi's most legendary landmark gets its name – the iconic *Flaming Cliffs*.

The ancient sandstone where dinosaur eggs were first discovered in the 1920's glows burning red as the sun slides toward the horizon.

You can stroll along the cliff tops or contemplate their history in solitude.



Day 10 (continued)

And when the sinking sun turns them into fiery glory, the Wheeler Expeditions Flaming Cliffs Bar is open!



Day 11 - Thursday, June 12

Last night we bid adieu to the Gobi night sky. Today we return to civilization. We get to sleep in, have a relaxing morning. After lunch, it's off to the airport at Dalanzadgad for the mid-afternoon flight to Ulaan Bataar.

Since our departure flight is tomorrow, and the traffic out of downtown can take hours (back to civilization!), we're overnighting at the Ibis Styles Polaris, very modern and nice, very close to the airport. After check-in, we'll be visiting the nearby Bogd Khan Palace Museum. Bogd Khan (1869-1924) was the last Emperor of Mongolia, and is idolized by Mongols today. It is a deep history lesson to visit his palace.



Tonight we have our Farewell Dinner in one of the capital's best restaurants.

We'll celebrate all the extraordinary experiences we've just had, for we will have come to know Mongolia in a very special way. We have so many memories to treasure of our being in Mongolia.

Tomorrow, June 13, is Departure Day. You will be driven to the airport at the appropriate time for your flight onward.

Blue Skies! Jack & Rebel & Eddy

EXPLORING MONGOLIA – JUNE 2 - 13, 2025

Co-led by Jack Wheeler and Rebel Holiday and Eddy Downpatrick

Expedition Details



WHEELER-WINDSOR
EXPEDITIONS

All Inclusive per person: \$19,800 (\$4,800 deposit to register; then 2 payments, balance due by April 2, 2025)

Register Here: [Register for Explore Mongolia Expedition - June 2-13, 2025](#)

All Inclusive: Highly experienced expedition leaders and local English-Mongol speaking guide for the duration. The best lodging, authentic, and delicious meals with the group, all group activities and excursions in the itinerary, and accommodations from June 1 -13, (double-occupancy) All transportation during expedition, including private chartered flights (Cessna Grand Caravans), Land Cruisers for overland drives, and airport transfers. Every wilderness ger camp entourage always includes a skilled cook and a camp master.

Cost Excludes: International flights. Any meals, services, or activities not with group. Personal items: laundry, alcohol, gratuities. Single supplement outfitter fee: \$1,800 (subject to availability.)

Travel: If you do not have a travel agent, contact us for a recommendation.

Travel Insurance and Refunds: Full refund of payment on the condition of a fully-paid acceptable replacement for you. We strongly recommend trip cancellation insurance. A travel agent can assist you with this.

Contact Jack Wheeler jack@wheelerwindsorexpeditions.com **or Rebel Holiday** holiday@wheelerwindsorexpeditions.com

Important caveat: Every effort will be made to adhere to the itinerary above. Due to the nature of travel, the itinerary may need to be altered. Participants agree to accept any modification with a cheerful mindset.



Jack Wheeler



Rebel Holiday



Eddy Downpatrick



Our Expedition Leadership Team for

EXPLORING MONGOLIA

This exploration combines natural beauty with exotic culture, native peoples, authentic communities, luxury, and adventure. We'll show you an incredible part of the world that few ever have the privilege to see. Join us to experience it!

Dr. Jack Wheeler, has been called the “real life Indiana Jones” by the Wall Street Journal has traveled to all 193 countries on all seven continents. He’s had two parallel careers: one in adventure and exploration with *Wheeler Expeditions*; the other in the field of geopolitics. After receiving his Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Southern California, where he lectured on Aristotelian ethics.

His adventures began early. The youngest Eagle Scout in history at age 12, he climbed the Matterhorn at age 14, swam the Hellespont (LIFE Magazine 12/12/60) and lived with Amazon headhunters at 16, hunted a man-eating tiger in Vietnam at 17, and started an export business in Vietnam at 19. He wrote *The Adventurer’s Guide* (New York: Mackay, 1975), described by Merv Griffin as “the definitive book for anyone wishing to lead a more adventurous and exciting life.” He has three “first contacts” with tribes never before contacted by the outside world: a clan of Aushiri in the Amazon, the Wali-ali-fo in New Guinea, and a band of Bushmen in the Kalahari. He retraced Hannibal’s route over the Alps with elephants; led numerous expeditions in Central Asia, China, Tibet, Africa, the Amazon and elsewhere, including 21 expeditions to the North Pole; and has been listed in *The Guinness Book of World Records* for the first free fall sky-dive in history at the North Pole. His company has conducted exclusive expeditions to dozens of countries across the globe for over 35 years.

Jack founded Wheeler Expeditions in 1976, today he and his sons lead bespoke expeditions each year to unusual destinations. The company has conducted exclusive expeditions to dozens of countries across the globe for over 35 years. On a personal note, in the early 80’s he married Ms. Rebel Holiday in St Tropez, France, and these days, Wheeler Expeditions is a family affair. They are delighted to work with their two grown sons also living adventurous lives and leading expeditions: Brandon Holiday Wheeler and Jackson Holiday Wheeler.

Rebel Holiday has traveled to over 90 countries and has co-led expeditions for 3 decades. She has lived in 5 countries and speaks three languages (English, Spanish, and Portuguese.) Professionally, she is involved in business and the arts. Wherever she goes in the world, Rebel is most interested in people and cultures. She is passionate about cuisine and finds the best restaurants, and special activities on trips. She enjoys sharing the beauty of the world.