

# Mongolia - Bulgan Cycling Tour

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**Tour Organiser: Neil Wheadon**

**Friday 03rd to Thursday 16th July 2026**

Mongolia is a magical place, I've organised 2 tours there and this is a new area. This is a steady-paced bike tour that takes you across lush pastures, wooded mountains, and the vast grasslands of Mongolia. Varied terrain, easy surfaces, and a gradual increase in physical challenge allow quick acclimatization and make it suitable for beginners and more experienced riders. We take a train to the north to be guided back by a support crew who cook meals in a large tent, ride with you and wave at you as you cycle along 'Mongolian tarmac', ie hard packed tracks that carry vans, motorbikes and the very occasional car. Throughout, you are surrounded by horses, yaks and goats whilst admiring endless vistas. It's glorious. Full vehicle support, full board and as a special treat this tour has been quite deliberately timed to coincide with the annual Nadaam festival, famed for wrestling, horse riding and archery, something unique to this tour. If you ever wanted to travel to a place like this, now's the chance.

## Itinerary

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### **Friday 03rd July 2026 Welcome to Mongolia**

Arriving in Ulaanbaatar airport, meet your guide and transfer to the group hotel. Depending on your arrival time, you may enjoy an opportunity to explore the capital city where nearly half of Mongolia's 3 million inhabitants reside today. Meet with the rest of the group at the welcome dinner and get an informal introduction to the exciting cycling tour ahead of you.

- No cycling
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (D)

### **Saturday 04th July 2026 Train trip**

The introductory city excursion starts with a visit to the largest Buddhist center in Mongolia. The awe-inspiring gigantic gold-plated Buddha statue is the principal object of worship. You see believers conducting various rituals and praying, many wearing colorful traditional costumes. We proceed to the central square beside the parliament building with a facade adorned by marble statues of Genghis Khaan and his successors. The square is always busy with newlyweds, reunification parties, and the public in general. Consider

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hearing an overview of Mongolia's history from the Stone Age period to the modern era at the National Museum and seeing a few iconic dinosaur fossils such as intact nests containing eggs, carnivores fighting herbivores, and embryos still in the eggshell in the Paleontology Museum of Mongolia. A panoramic view of Ulaanbaatar from an elevated hill on the city's edge gives an idea of its size and topography. Finally, having enjoyed a show of traditional music, songs, and famous throat singing, board an overnight train to northern Mongolia. It's a chance to meet some local passengers and see Mongolia's wheat-producing region through the windows of the coal-fueled soviet era train.

- No cycling
- Accommodation: Train
- Meals: (B, L, D)

## Sunday 05th July 2026 First cycling day

Arrive in Erdenet, sitting on one of Asia's largest copper deposits, just in time for breakfast and meet your support team. Having made the last adjustments to bikes, we start our biking adventure by riding through the suburbs and a few crop fields on the outskirts of the town. Out into the wild for a leisurely pedal across wooded hills and a wide-open valley dotted by nomadic tents and massive herds of livestock. It is an easy day with plentiful stops for familiarizing yourself with your new environment and cycling routine. By early evening, we arrive at our first campsite on a small hill overlooking the open valley with some time left for exploring neighboring ridges. On most of the nights on this trip, you will sleep in a comfortable communal tent camp erected every afternoon upon finishing the day's biking. It provides all the amenities of a good wilderness camp, including tents designated for dining, showering, and bathrooms, not to mention great meals cooked by a chef.

- Route distance: 50.0km
- Route altitude gain: 287m
- Accommodation: Tent
- Meals: (B, L, D)

## Monday 06th July 2026 Meet the Nomads

The day's first challenge is a gradual 400m ascent to the top of a rocky pass through lush meadows and mixed forest dominated by larch and birch. The following long descent brings views of more wooded mountains alternated by wide-open grassy valleys. A couple more easy climbs and we free-wheel through some lush pastures, passing close to many nomadic encampments and massive animal herds. Take care with horses as they can get agitated. We stop to chat with nomads and sample milk, tea, and cheese. Tonight, we camp at the base of a wooded mountainside.

- Route distance: 64.0km
- Route altitude gain: 826m
- Accommodation: Tent
- Meals: (B, L, D)



## Tuesday 07th July 2026 Enjoy the Steppe

We start with a short van transfer uphill. Continue cycling, enjoying the scenery of the traditional herding life. This part of Mongolia is famous for producing fermented horse milk of exceptional quality and taste, and today you will notice many mares and foals separately tethered outside nomadic homes. Making 'airag', as it's called, is a continuous and labor-consuming process: mares are milked every two hours throughout the day, and the milk is then churned thousands of times in large barrels or ox hide sacks to boost fermentation. Compared to the previous days, we cycle through even more expansive grasslands, the classical landscape associated with Mongolia by most people, until arriving at our campsite amidst a flat grassy valley surrounded by distant mountains.

- Route distance: 88.0km
- Route altitude gain: 491m
- Accommodation: Tent
- Meals: (B, L, D)

## Wednesday 08th July 2026 Khunui River Valley

We start the day with a couple of passes, climbing them on grassy tracks before arriving at a typical county centre resembling a Wild West movie town. You might buy an ice cream or a drink while taking in scenes of rural life. After lunch, ride along the Khunui River valley and soak up the spectacular scenery of mountain sides strewn with rock formations and covered in standings of pine. A few small lakes with reedy shores and the Khunui riverside are nesting and breeding grounds for several migratory birds, some rare and strictly protected. Tonight, we camp with felt-covered homes of herding nomads and their many animals in our sight.

- Route distance: 72.0km
- Route altitude gain: 548m
- Accommodation: Tent
- Meals: (B, L, D)

## Thursday 09th July 2026 Petrolyths

Continue cycling leisurely and enjoy pretty views of wooded mountainsides and rocky ridges. A group of Bronze Age ritual site markers decorated with images of flying deer lies on the way; a suitable place to be introduced to Mongolia's rich historic heritage. Visiting nomads in their summer camp can become a first-hand experience of a lifestyle that has not changed for many millennia. After lunch, we cross the day's high point and finish the ride with a 25km fast spin to our campsite.

- Route distance: 84.0km
- Route altitude gain: 563m
- Accommodation: Tent
- Meals: (B, L, D)

## Friday 10th July 2026 Cycle to foothills of the Khangai range and to Tsetserleg town

It is a challenging day compared to all previous riding. This morning, we reach the Khangai mountain foothills and cycle to Tsetserleg town, a pretty provincial capital in the shelter of a spectacular granite massif. After crossing the Tamir River, the road twists and turns along narrow grassy valleys and through dense woods and finishes at our lunch spot at nearly 2000m, the day's highest point. A fast downhill and a brief climb finally open a view of traditional residential districts, geometrically aligned and displaying colorful rooftops. We have ample time to explore the town and its busy market, where local people sell pine nuts, wild berries, and other natural produce from the Khangai region. In just half an hour's pedaling, we settle in a traditional-style guest accommodation with the relative comforts of a conventional hotel. For a guest room, you have an authentic Mongolian yurt.

- Route distance: 72.0km
- Route altitude gain: 690m
- Accommodation: Yurt
- Meals: (B, L, D)

## Saturday 11th July 2026 Naadam Festival in Tsetserleg: A Day of Authentic Mongolian Culture

Spend the day at the Naadam Festival in Tsetserleg, where you'll enjoy the excitement of horse racing, wrestling, and archery in a laid-back and scenic setting. Unlike the crowds and hustle of the capital, the Tsetserleg version feels much more relaxed and approachable, making it easier to soak up the atmosphere. You'll see archers showing off their skills, wrestlers battling it out in traditional outfits, and thrilling horse races across the open countryside. What makes it even more special is the number of locals dressed in beautiful traditional costumes, giving the festival a colorful and authentic vibe.

With Tsetserleg's breathtaking natural backdrop, it's the perfect way to experience Mongolia's culture at a slower pace, meet friendly locals, and enjoy the true spirit of Naadam without the rush.

- No cycling
- Accommodation: Yurt
- Meals: (B, L, D)

## Sunday 12th July 2026 Cycle to Tsenker hot springs resort and sooth your muscles in hot pool

This morning, we negotiate 3 short climbs followed by fast descents on packed soil and arrive at Tsenkher – a lush valley famous for its mineral hot spring. Although somewhat crowded with local and foreign travelers during the short summer season, it certainly feels good to soothe your muscles maybe with a beer in your hand. Relaxing massage and laundry services are available. We spend another night in traditional Mongolian tents.

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- Route distance: 25.0km
- Route altitude gain: 1m
- Accommodation: Yurt
- Meals: (B, L, D)

## **Monday 13th July 2026 The longest cycling day, last night camping at Orkhon river bank**

A fast cycling day on excellent soils with three challenging climbs. There are great views across the immense wilderness from their tops with extinct volcano craters seen from the last pass. A 20km breathtaking downhill to the Orkhon Valley floor completes today's ride. A UNESCO-designated history heritage site, the Orkhon Valley contains an overwhelming wealth of historical data, such as burial mounds, deer stones, and prehistoric settlements. For the last time, we establish our tent camp beside the river where you could take a refreshing dip.

- Route distance: 76.0km
- Route altitude gain: 1056m
- Accommodation: Tent
- Meals: (B, L, D)

## **Tuesday 14th July 2026 Last cycling day to Genghis Khan's capital site, visit Mongolia's first Buddhist monastery**

We cycle downstream along the Orkhon River and lose altitude throughout the day. Our destination is the town of Karakorum - the site of the Mongol Empire capital in the 1200s. However, its glory was short-lived, as it soon fell into obscurity and was eventually destroyed by invading Chinese armies in the late 14th century. Today, the main attraction here is the monastery museum of Erdene Zuu, established in the 16th century by a Mongol khan when Buddhism was introduced as the main religion. The monastery then suffered almost complete destruction during the anti-religion campaign of the 1930-'s with just a dozen temples surviving till the present. We visit the monastery and the local museum to glance at a few surviving artifacts of the old capital before heading to a yurt camp to celebrate the end of our ride.

- Route distance: 72.0km
- Route altitude gain: 529m
- Accommodation: Yurt
- Meals: (B, L, D)

## **Wednesday 15th July 2026 Transfer back to Ulaanbaatar, farewell dinner**

After breakfast, we set off on a journey back to Ulaanbaatar. The 7-hour drive is uneventful. Enjoy the timeless landscapes for the last time and a picnic lunch at a scenic spot. We aim to reach your hotel by mid-afternoon with some time left for showers and rest before a goodbye dinner with your guide.



- No cycling
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, L, D)

## Thursday 16th July 2026 Departure

Transfer to Ulaanbaatar airport for your departure flight.

- No cycling
- Accommodation: None
- Meals: (B)

## Dates and Prices

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### Cost

- Land only price: £2200

### Payment Schedule

A deposit of £400 per person is payable upon booking, an interim payment of £1000 by 1st February 2026 with the final balance of £800 per person to be paid by 24th April 2026 (10 weeks before departure)

Price includes:

- All accommodation: 2 nights hotel, 1 night train, 6 nights tent, 4 nights tourist gers on a twin share basis
- Camping equipment
- Sleeping mats
- 13 breakfasts, 12 lunches and 13 dinners
- Itinerary related sightseeing and national park fees
- Support vehicles
- Guides, drivers and cooks
- Cycle Hire
- Mechanical assistance and parts

Price does not include:

- Travel to and from Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
- Sleeping bags (for hygiene reasons)
- Drinks and alcohol
- Any other meals and refreshments
- Single Supplement (if available) £180
- Entry fees to attractions not indicated in the prospectus

- Gratuities

## Cancellations

Written Notice Received	Cancellation Charge
Before 1/2/2026	£400 (Deposit)
Before 24/4/2026	£1000 (Deposit and Interim payment)
From 24/4/2026 to departure	£2200 (Full payment)

The price of £2200 (land only) is based on a minimum number of 4 people taking part in the holiday. If there are insufficient bookings by Wednesday 24th June 2026, we will contact you and return all monies paid.

## Holiday Information

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### Grade and Area Covered by the Holiday

This Holiday is classed as a grade 5. It is suitable for most recreational cyclists and experienced cyclists.

We will be travelling through the plains of Mongolia. The area is very remote, but you will be surprised at the number of herders and farmers that we will see.

The terrain is variable. Much is rolling pastureland, but there are some steeper climbs off road.

### Travel and Communication

The tour starts and finishes at Chinggis Khann International airport close to Ulaanbaatar in Mongolia

Travel to the start and from the finish is not included in this holiday. It is very important that you note that neither your Tour Organiser nor Bikexplore are responsible for you in any way until the appointed time at the designated meeting point. Should you fail to arrive at the appointed time for whatever reason, we will not be responsible for any additional expenses you may incur in order to meet up with the tour group. Before finalising travel arrangements, you should ensure that the tour is definitely going ahead.

Should there be insufficient bookings or pandemic travel restrictions are re-imposed, we reserve the right to cancel the tour at any time. It is therefore recommended that you book fully flexible and refundable transport and accommodation or wait until you have been told the tour will go ahead. In the event of the tour being cancelled we will not be responsible for any losses incurred outside what you pay us.

Transfer to and from Chinggis Khann airport is included in this holiday.

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Other trains / flights are available, and many arrive within a reasonable time frame. If you don't wish to take this transfer, then you need to arrange your own transportation to Ulaanbaatar.

## Accommodation

The maximum number of participants will be 16 including the Tour Organiser

We will stay in a variety of accommodation.

In Ulaanbaatar this will be in a hotel where prices are based on a twin share

The train is a sleeper train.

For 6 nights we will be camping. Tents are supplied that sleep 2 people. These are North Face tents and are roomy. A thick sleeping mat is provided, but you are expected to bring your own sleeping bag for hygiene reasons. You will be shown how to erect a tent on the first night and after that please erect your own, but others will help as I have done in the past. Should you wish to bring your own tent that is perfectly acceptable. I would also consider bringing an inflatable pillow and please make sure you have warm clothing.

For 4 nights we will be staying in a Gur Camp in a Yurt on a twin shared basis. Beds are provided. These are great fun.

Prices are based on two people sharing a room.

When booking with a partner to share please specify twin or double beds, if a choice is available

A single tent/Yurt/Room is available for a supplement.

## Meals, Health and Diet

Meals – Nearly every meal is provided on this holiday. Whilst camping you will see two large green tents erected, one is for the chef, the other is a mess tent. The meals are a highlight of the trip, how the chef can create these meals out of a van always surprises me. Vegetarians, dietary allergies and intolerances can be catered for, please indicate this on the booking form.

Check which meals are provided in the Payment Schedule and ensure you have access to sufficient monies to cover any meals you will need to buy.

Check that you have informed the Tour Organiser of any dietary requirements in your Booking Form.

Please remember to pack any medications that you need to take regularly.

Health – please check the current Foreign Office advice for Mongolia:



## Cycles and Equipment

You are welcome to take your own bike at your own expense, but mountain bikes are available at no extra charge and in very good condition, maintained by the team on the tour. Please bring your own water bottle. It is recommended that you bring your own helmet and saddle along with pedals if you use SPD's or similar. Several weeks before the tour the team will want to know which type of bike you need, your height and/or frame size required and if you will be bringing your own saddle and pedals. Please note, though, that neither Neil Wheadon nor Bikexplore accept any liability for participants using hire bikes. You are entirely responsible for the safety and suitability and maintenance of the bike you ride. Cycle hire is not part of your holiday contract.

## Ride and Rest Days

The holiday is for 14 days and has 1 rest day at the Nadaam festival.

This is a moving on holiday staying in a different location each night.

The cycling is mostly on Mongolian tarmac. This is comprised of numerous hard-based tracks across the Mongolian steppe. These are used by vans, motorbikes and the very occasional car. They are mostly very firm under your wheels, though you may experience the occasional patch of loose sand and rocks.

Most of each cycling day may be spent cycling. People will be expected to ride at their own pace and often in loose groups, at around 8-12 miles/hour / 13-20kph on the flat, slower up hills. We shall leave after breakfast at about 09:00, stopping for a mid morning snack, then lunch where the group will meet up. After lunch there may be an afternoon stop if this is needed before finishing the day.

It is expected that you may want to stop for photographs, look at the view or explore and this is okay. You are on holiday.

Inevitably, you might consider parts of the route hilly, but there are back-up vehicles to carry your luggage.

It is essential to get out on your bike and do some 50-mile/80 km rides before the tour starts.

There may be steep descents too, so you should be able to negotiate these safely.

Please note it may not always be possible to follow the itinerary exactly due to the weather etc, as things do not always go as planned. In these circumstances, you will be advised of alternative arrangements.

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The Organiser will not always be at the front of the group but may be anywhere within it, as circumstances require, so you will need to be aware of the route and likely stopping places each day.

A cycling guide will cycle with us.

2-3 back up vans will always be available so if you feel that you need to take a break it will always be available.

## Weather, Clothing and Culture

Clothing, suitable for a wide range of temperatures is needed, please bring something warm for the evening as we will be in the mess tent.

Waterproofs/windproofs will be needed.

Sun cream, lip balm and sunglasses are recommended along with insect repellent and bite cream.

Mongolia

Temperatures in July are likely to be between 15 and 22 degrees. On average some rainfall can be expected on 2 days of the tour.

Culture– please check current Foreign Office advice for Mongolia:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/mongolia>

## Maps and Guides

I can supply GPX routes to anyone that needs them before the tour. Units are not provided, so please bring your own.

The back up vans are attentive, with myself and a cycling guide on the road.

As you can appreciate, there are no signposts in Mongolia. However navigation is easy enough. The grey back up vans relay each other so that one is usually always in sight, so you can head for that. Other riders are usually in view, so you won't get lost.

## Travel Insurance and Vaccination

For UK nationals traveling abroad, travel insurance is essential. Please check if your insurer has requirements for cyclists e.g. wearing a helmet.

Current Covid and Influenza vaccinations are recommended for participants of 75 years of age and over and those deemed medically vulnerable.

It is recommended that you are vaccinated against MMR and tetanus and that protection has not expired. You should contact your doctor at least 3 months prior to travel to obtain





these vaccinations and the latest advice for travelers. Further details at <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/mongolia/health>

### **Passport, Visa and Monies**

Holders of non-UK passports are advised to check whether they require a visa. To enter Mongolia, your passport must have an 'expiry date' at least 6 months after the date you arrive.

At present (June 2025) you can visit Mongolia without a visa for up to 30 days within a 6-month period.

The local currency is the Tughrik, available from banks and currency exchange. However these may be difficult to obtain. I would suggest you bring dollars with you. Much of the cost is included in the tour.

### **Tour Organiser contact details**

I have organized 2 tours in Mongolia in the past using the same excellent back up crew every time. Over 25 years, I have created and led over 80 tours all over the world. I like to cycle for the scenery and food. For myself there really is something very special about Mongolia. I am happily married to Sarah, and we have two grown up children. Our day jobs are veterinary surgeons, I locum to enable me to take cyclists away to glorious places. Any queries please contact me at [Neil@tandem-club.org.uk](mailto:Neil@tandem-club.org.uk) or [neilwheadon1@gmail.com](mailto:neilwheadon1@gmail.com), I check these very frequently. My mobile is 07577 701230. Thank you for looking at this tour.

