



Volunteer Mongolia

Volunteering for this programme gives you an excellent chance to work with Mongolian children and adults, contributing to the surrounding communities in a very positive way. Volunteers play vital roles in the educational and social development of the children at orphanages, summer camps and schools as well as assisting students at language centres.

If you want a challenging but rewarding experience, then this programme will be ideal. Traveling and volunteering in Mongolia will be a very enlightening journey as you encounter one of the last authentic places left to travel in the world.



Programme Age Restriction: The minimum age allowed on this programme is 18 years; the maximum age is dependant on the health of the potential participant.

Programme Location: The volunteer work takes place in the capital city of Ulaanbaatar. You will then enjoy a week's tour of Mongolia for a week with its highlights of Karakorum, Gun-Galuut nature reserve and Hustai national park.

Mongolia

If you volunteer in Mongolia you will get to see a country that very few westerners have the opportunity to visit.

Mongolia is completely non-coastal, slotted in between Russia and China. Half of its population still live a Nomadic way of life. You will find this a most unique cultural experience, even if you are a highly intrepid traveller. Once you are out of the capital of Ulaanbaatar, it will feel like having stepped into a time warp – returning to life from a long-gone era.

The programme is a totally out-of-the-ordinary travel adventure, working and volunteering closely with the Mongol people, and coming to understand their culture and experience its stunning but arid landscape, which is so different from many in the Western World.

Details about the Volunteer Project

The idea of volunteering is new to most Mongolians. However, Mongolia, despite its auspicious history, is now one of the poorest countries in the globe, so your help is immensely appreciated and greatly needed. You will have the choice of being able to volunteer in language centres, summer camps, orphanages or working in schools.

School volunteers

Volunteers who work in schools will be teaching mainly English to the students.



The students are all aged between 12-18 and classes usually consist of a maximum number of 40 students. By helping the students to develop their conversational English you will be equipping them with an indispensable life skill, which will give them the possibility of a better

future life. You can also get involved with a number of other activities such as teaching music and sport. It is particularly appreciated if you have ideas on how to get your lessons across in ways such as role-playing and games.



NB: because of school holidays, this programme option will be unavailable during June and August.

Volunteers for the Orphanage

Help is needed in many of the orphanages throughout Mongolia, and whilst on this programme you will be sited in Ulaanbaatar helping in classes of around 20-30 children who are all aged between four to eighteen years old. Some of the orphanage's children have mental or physical disabilities, and though any skills and experience in this area is not necessary, volunteers with a background in this area would be very welcomed. Volunteer duties include teaching music, English, sewing and sports, as well as assisting staff with running the orphanage.

Volunteers at the Language Centre

You have the chance as a volunteer to help with language centres based in Ulaanbaatar. More and more young people, along with Mongolian businessmen and women attend these centres to improve their spoken English. Students are normally aged 18 years or older, and volunteers are encouraged to bring any teaching method and techniques that they may have acquired. The programme is highly rewarding as the students are very keen to learn, but as there are very few English speaking staff at the language centres, volunteers may end up taking their own classes and need to be motivated and determined.

Volunteers in the Summer Camps

A great number of children in Mongolia go to summer camps during the school holidays. Volunteers are needed to help out at the camps. Duties to get involved with include teaching – normally English and coaching sports, music, helping with gardening and planting and also assisting the children with activities such as embroidery and sewing. A lot of the summer camps are situated outside Ulaanbaatar and some are specifically for orphaned and homeless children. Please be aware that the summer camp accommodation is very basic. Volunteers live in small wooden huts that have extremely limited facilities. Meals at the camp are taken with children. You will have one day off a week for you to relax.

NB: Because volunteering is such a new idea in Mongolia, do not expect a structured experience! Volunteers should keep an open-mind and be adaptable, just like the local people.

The Tour

After your three weeks working as a volunteer, you will have a six-day tour of Mongolia giving you an excellent chance to see this amazing country.

Day One – This morning we begin the drive to Karakorum, travelling via the Mongol Els sand dunes at Elsen Tasarkhai. A visit to the sand dunes happens where wildlife viewing and hiking are possible. You will stay overnight at the Hoyer Zagal camp in a traditional tent of the nomadic Mongolians called a ger.

Day Two – We will drive to Karakorum and visit the renowned and celebrated Erdene Zuu monastery where you will be able to view its incredible architecture. We then visit Khogno Khaan national park, which has excellent hiking terrain, followed by a visit to another monastery, Dvgon monastery. The night is spent again at Hoyer Zagal camp.

Day Three – We start the drive to Hustai National Park after breakfast. Here Takhi wild horses are reintroduced back into their native territory. We view these beautiful horses out in the wilderness and there are other chances for wildlife viewing and more walking opportunities. Before going on to the Hustai camp, we will visit the impressive Ongot stone monuments that date from the 7th century AD.

Day Four – Day four is spent travelling to Gun-Galuut nature reserve, home to numerous species of rare wildlife. After lunch, starting at Steppe Nomads camp, we hike to Mt Baits to view the Argali sheep (which are wild mountain animals) and other wildlife, such as the endangered Whooper swans and White Naped cranes.

Day Five – This is a rest day, which will be spent in the wilderness. You will have the chance to take part in a number of optional activities. For instance, you can visit a local nomadic family to get an understanding of traditional Mongolian life; take a yak cart ride to a local lake, or fish or go horse riding at the local reserve. That evening will be spent at Nomads camp on the Steppe where you can enjoy a customary Mongolian dinner cooked near a 'Khorkgog' or bon fire!

Day Six – The drive back to Ulaanbaatar begins. You will be transferred to our guesthouse. We then make a trip to the Palace museum of Bogd Khaan, the Zaisan memorial and Buddha Park. You have the opportunity for souvenir shopping and your evening will include a traditional Mongolian folk concert and a farewell dinner. You will be accommodated at a local guesthouse.

Project Support

All through your time in Mongolia you will have the assistance and help of our very friendly project coordinators. You can ask them as many questions as you need to and get assistance whenever you want. As well as this you will receive a 24-hour emergency contact number so you can contact our UK staff should you need to.

Project Orientation

On first day of your programme in Mongolia, the project coordinators provide you with a complete orientation. This covers a number of topics including:

- An induction to Mongolian values and culture
- Health and safety issues while in Mongolia
- Project ethics and etiquette
- Transport and money in Mongolia
- An introduction to the region
- Local practices and food
- Areas to visit during your free time
- A trip to the nearest town
- Being introduced to your host family

On your second day you will be collected from your host family's home by your project representative, who will take you to your orphanage or school where you will be volunteering for the next three weeks.

Meals and Accommodation

During your volunteer period, you will stay with a local host family in Ulaanbaatar. This is an excellent way to get to know the local culture and a great chance to understand more about Mongolia. The host family regard your stay as a chance to learn about your culture too, and an opportunity for them and their children to practise spoken English. If you want to stay at the same host family as your friend or partner, please request this when you book onto the programme. You will have your own bedroom during your home-stay and facilities will include a bath or shower and western-style flush toilet. Accommodation, however, is basic in Mongolia so please be prepared for this.

Your host family will give you two daily meals: breakfast and dinner. A typical Mongolian meal consists of potatoes, vegetables, rice and meat. Vegetarians may find it difficult in Mongolia because meat is the focal ingredient of every meal. We can pre-warn Host families about their volunteer being a vegetarian, and they will cook meals separately from the meat. However, if you are a vegetarian you may be expected at times to buy some of your own ingredients/meals and cook certain meals yourself.

If you decide to do the summer school camp option, (located 130km outside Ulaanbaatar), facilities are very basic. You live in small wooden huts with up to four volunteers. Sanitary facilities are situated outside and you will have a basic shower that is heated by the sun.

Your accommodation during your end of trip tour will be based at tourist ger camps. Gers are one-roomed, round tents made from felt that have been traditionally used by Nomads for centuries. Half of the population of Mongolia still live in gers, and today many tourist camp accommodations consists of modernised gers, offering restaurant and bar facilities, along with running water available all day! You will be given three meals every day during the six-day tour.

Free Time

You will be working for about eight hours every day on your volunteer project. Breaks during the day vary according to what your duties are, but you will have a standard one-hour lunch-break.

You will have free time at the weekends exploring Ulaanbaatar or for travelling further a field. But you may just want to relax and spend time with your host family or fellow volunteers!

Getting to the project

You should arrange to get transport to Ulaanbaatar. The main route is to go via Moscow or from Beijing. On arrival, a project staff member will meet you and transfer you to your host family.

Programme Costs

Four weeks - £899

Four weeks (with summer camp option) - £999

Programme Start Dates

The programme begins on the first Monday of every month. (Please contact our Gap Year For Grown Ups office for school dates and summer camp).

Mongolia has extreme weather. Winter weather can drop to minus 30 degrees. During the summer period it can be as high as 40 degrees Celsius. Travelling to Mongolia during the winter months can be very difficult, so you need to consider this when choosing what is the right time for you. Mongolia's seasons follow the same pattern as the UK's, with the winter and summer months the same, but much more extreme.

Programme Cost Inclusive of:

- All your accommodation (such as with host family during the volunteering period and your ger tourist accommodation during the end of programme tour)
- Both Breakfast and dinner during volunteering (including a non-alcoholic drink)
- Support from our English speaking project coordinator during your volunteering phase
- Airport meeting and greeting
- Airport transfers to and from project
- Your guide during tour (who is English speaking)
- All your meals during the tour
- Entrance fees to National Parks during your tour
- Emergency 24 hour contact number

Programme Cost Exclusive of:

- All your flights
- Traveller's Insurance (which should include repatriation cover)
- Necessary Visa
- Your lunches during volunteering period
- Personal Items
- Optional activities not on itinerary during tour (i.e. horse riding)

If you want any more details on this programme or to book, please get in touch with one of our travel advisors at our Real Gap office on 01892 516164.