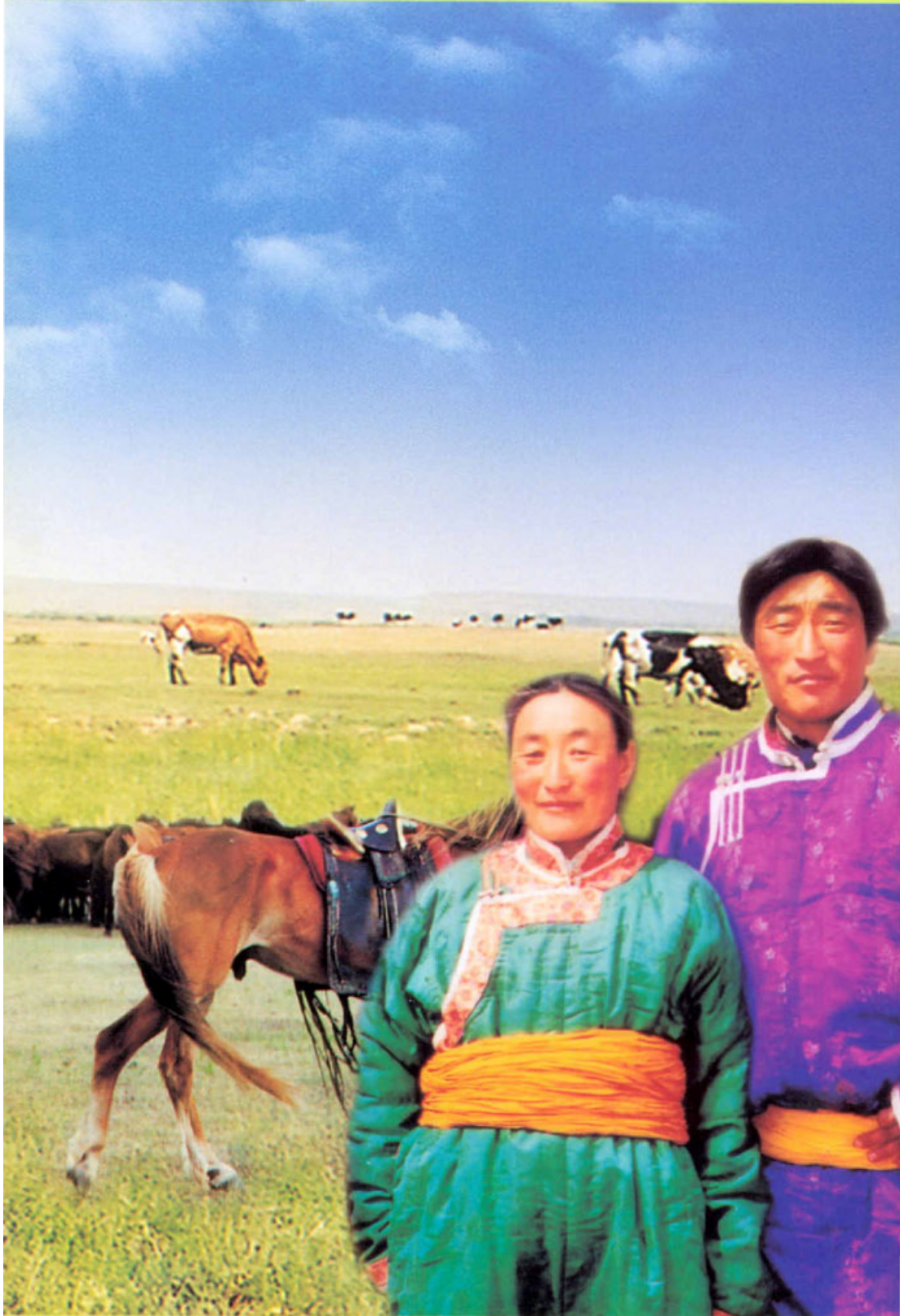


# 草原

Grassland



English

# Grassland

This vast and beautiful land is where the great dynasties and kingdoms rose and fell - including the mightiest of them all, the pan-Asian empire conquered by the mighty Mongolian warrior Genghis Khan.

The formidable horseback soldiers of Genghis Khan, raised and trained on the grasslands of the Mongolian region, were no match for opposing armies or city-fortresses of the day: the Mongol cavalry swept through Asia and on towards Europe, crushing all opposition.

The Mongols' tactical planning and fighting prowess were awesome; the marauding troops took on the banner of Islam and, at the furthest extremities of their empire, in what is modern-day Hungary, found them pitted against the Christian forces of Europe.

When Genghis Khan and his troops went into battle nobody had the ability, strength or spirit to mount an effective challenge. It was only when the Mongols relaxed into the more leisurely town and city life of their conquered opponents that their fighting spirit gradually sapped and their newly-claimed lands lost.

The spirit of Genghis Khan lives on today in the Grasslands of Mongolia: the warrior-king's name reverberates through ten centuries of history as a symbol of strength and power. The Great Khan was, like most Mongolians now and then, a master rider and expert hunter, who learned to handle a horse from early childhood. Fighting, whether it was to settle local tribal disputes, or take foreign territory, was a way of life.

As the Mongols galloped across continents, the explorer Marco Polo was heading the other way, ultimately ending up as an honoured guest in the court of the legendary Genghis Khan's grandson, Kublai Khan.

Today, the Grasslands are peaceful places, but the noble traditions live on. People in this part of the world have few visitors, so those adventurous travellers who do make the effort to visit are rewarded with fabulous hospitality.

Touring the Grasslands is for travellers who want an alternative holiday, a place where the vistas are of stunning blue skies and wide empty spaces, not city skyscrapers and traffic jams. Visitors inevitably ponder on how the rugged land bred the warriors who created the largest empire of all time.

Our itinerary takes a close look at the lifestyle, culture and history of the Grassland people. To be able to travel easily, and live in relative comfort when they stop, modern-day Mongolians have devised and fine-tuned a special Grasslands-style home. The yurt, a circular tent-like structure made of thick felt, can be erected and taken down in minutes; whole families live inside, huddled around the central stove during the colder months.

The long spells of isolation mean the Grassland people take their socialising seriously. The annual Naadam festival is a mini-Olympics of horse racing, wrestling contests and archery competitions, a chance to demonstrate that Genghis blood is still in the local genes.

Traditions are strong in this vast land, undiluted or polluted by the modern world. Although the odd yurt may well sport a satellite dish, Mongolians are just as likely to spend their evenings singing songs, or telling folk stories that have been passed down through the generations. Music is so much a part of Mongolian life that the Grasslands folk have been known to hum lullabies to young animals and children alike.

Mongolia is a huge land, with Grasslands that adjoin China and Russia. In fact the Kazakh people of the Grasslands in neighbouring Xinjiang province in China have a similar lifestyle; they, too, live in yurts and make a living by tending animals. Mongols are also scattered throughout the northeast of China.

It is a harsh life, but rich and rewarding. These are people at one with nature, imbued with a survivalist instinct and a placid, easy-going nature; visiting them literally opens up new horizons, in a vast and splendid country. It's a total cultural experience.

## Itinerary One 8 Days Great Hulunbeier Grassland (CAHU)

### 1 Hong Kong / Beijing

Approx. 3 hours flight

Beijing / Hailar

Approx. 2 hours flight

Take a flight to Beijing to connect a flight to Hailar, the northernmost major town in Inner Mongolia.  
Accommodation at the Hulunbeier Hotel or similar (D)

### 2 Hailar / Hulunbeier

Coach

Experience life of the nomadic group in the Great Hulunbeier Grassland, the largest pasture in China and once the training base for the world-renowned Genghis Khan and his army. He united the Mongols through 20 years of warfare. The Mongol Empire during the Yuan Dynasty was won on horseback, and stretched from Vietnam to Hungary. Watch the horse-racing and wrestling.  
Accommodation at the yurt or similar (B,L&D)

### 3 Hulunbeier / Manzhouli

Coach

Watch sunrise at the Grassland. Take a boat ride around the Hulun Lake, which unexpectedly pops out of the Mongolian grasslands like an enormous inland sea. Drive to Manzhouli, a border town between China and Russia and a stop for the Trans-Siberian Railway. Visit the Fossil Museum, Fairy Spring, National Gates between China & Russia. Enjoy souvenirs-shopping at the Soviet Union Trade Market.

Accommodation at the Manzhouli International Hotel or similar

(B,L&D)

### 4 Manzhouli / Hailar

Coach

Hailar / Huhhot

Approx. 2.5 hours flight

The West Mountain Forest Park in Hailar is rich in native flora and fauna. Take a look at the rare-species of pines at the protected area. Fly to Huhhot - the capital city of Inner Mongolia.

Accommodation at the National Aviation Building or similar

(B,L&D)

### 5 Huhhot / Baotou

Coach

Enter the old part of town to the Dazhao Lamasery with a statue of the Sakyamuni Buddha cast mainly from silver 400 years ago. Visit the Five Pagodas built with glazed bricks and are inscribed in Mongolian, Sanskrit and Tibetan; and the Wang Zhaojun Tomb, dedicated to a Han dynasty imperial concubine given as an appeasement to the chief of the Southern Hun tribe in 33BC. Her sacrifice led to 60 years of peace. Drive to Baotou, meaning 'land with deer' in Mongolian, and browse the Museum.

Accommodation at the Baotou Hotel or similar

(B,L&D)

### 6 Baotou / Erdos

Coach

Watch the special Erdos wedding ceremony, visit the Resonant Sand Gorge and the Genghis Khan Mausoleum. To most Mongolians, Genghis Khan has been elevated to god-like status. Holy pilgrimages to his mausoleum have become the sacred duty of both Inner and Outer Mongolians.

Accommodation at the Tianjiao Hotel or similar

(B,L&D)

### 7 Erdos / Huhhot

Coach

Enjoy the natural loess landforms and scenery of Erdos Valley on the way back. Return to Huhhot and have free time for souvenirs-shopping.

Accommodation at the National Aviation Building or similar

(B,L&D)

### 8 Huhhot / Beijing

Approx. 1 hour flight

Beijing / Hong Kong

Approx. 3 hours flight

Take a flight to Beijing to connect a flight back to Hong Kong.

(B)

**1 Hong Kong / Xian**

Approx. 2.5 hours flight

**Xian / Urumqi**

Approx. 3 hours flight

Take a morning flight to Xian - the capital of 12 dynasties in Chinese history and starting point for the great trade caravans of the ancient Silk Road. Proceed to the Domestic Airport for check-in. Arrival to Urumqi - the capital of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

Accommodation at the Hoi Tak Hotel or similar

(D)

**2 Urumqi / Kuytun**

Coach

Start with a boat ride around the Heavenly Lake which is surrounded by alpine meadows and rugged snow-capped mountains densely covered in fir, pine and cypress. On the way, visit the Kangjiasimenzi rock carvings of naked men and women, depicting the main theme of reproduction in primitive society.

Accommodation at the Oriental Int'l Hotel or similar

(B,L&D)

**3 Kuytun / Narat Grassland**

Coach

Cross the Tianshan Mountains to the Narat Grassland. Towering in the middle, Mt. Tianshan separates Xinjiang into southern and northern areas and forms the Tarim and the Junggar Basins. Enjoy the mountain scenery on the way to the Narat Grassland.

Accommodation at the local hostel or similar

(B,L&D)

**4 Narat / Bayanbulak Grassland**

Coach

In Bayangol Mongolian Autonomous Prefecture lies a Paradise of Swan and the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest immense pasture in China - the Bayanbulak Grassland. Herds of longhair yaks and flocks of sheep graze and wander freely. The rivers, grass shoals and marshy lands provide an ideal nurturing spot for the migratory birds and animals. Swans also glide across Swan Lake. Experience the life of the nomads.

Accommodation at the yurt or similar

(B,L&D)

**5 Bayanbulak Grassland / Kuqa**

Coach

Visit the Big & Small Dragon Ponds and amazing Tianshan mysterious Grand Gorge.

Accommodation at the Qiuci Guesthouse or similar

(B,L&D)

**6 Kuqa / Korla**

Coach

Visit the Kizil Thousand Buddha Caves, one of the four major Grottoes in China; the Beacon Tower and Bazaar. Visit a fruit farm.

Accommodation at the Bazhou Guesthouse or similar

(B,L&D)

**7 Korla / Urumqi**

Coach

Drive to the Iron Gate Pass in Korla which was an important passage on the Ancient Silk Road. Onward to the biggest inland fresh-water lake in China - the Bosten Lake which is rich in traditional strains of fish. Enjoy a boat ride around the Lotus Pond.

Accommodation at the Hoi Tak Hotel or similar

(B,L&D)

**8 Urumqi / Xian**

Approx. 3 hours flight

Visit the Chinese architectural style Great Mosque with its lovely gardens, and up to the Old City Walls which are built on the foundations of the walls of the Tang Forbidden City.

Accommodation at the Xian Hyatt Hotel or similar

(B,L&D)

**9 Xian**

Full day tour of the Tang Dynasty relics including the Qian Mausoleum - the joint tomb of Emperor Gaozong and Empress Wu Zetian and the satellite tombs around; and the Famen Temple which houses real body relics of Sakyamuni, and relics of great value, especially the rare Tang Dynasty silk fabrics. Enjoy a dumpling dinner.

Accommodation at the Xian Hyatt Hotel or similar

(B,L&D)

**10 Xian / Hong Kong**

Approx. 2.5 hours flight

Take a flight back to Hong Kong.

(B)



- 行程一 八天呼倫貝爾大草原  
 Itinerary One - 8 Days Great Hulunbeier Grassland
- 行程二 十天那拉提及巴音布魯克大草原  
 Itinerary Two - 10 Days Narat & Bayanbulak Grasslands



# 草 Grassland 原

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