

Pearls of Upper Asia — Detailed description

Trip Length: Group: 3-10 Departure: Fixed Period: December - January

Trip overview

Imagine : 25 million years ago, because of a tectonic movement, a part of the chain Akademichesky sank into waters of the deepest lake in the world, the Pearl of Siberia, Lake Baikal. 20 million years later, another jolt gives birth to its small brother, at foothills of the Eastern Saïan Mountains, the Dark Blue Pearl of Mongolia, Lake Khovsgol.

These two lakes share same geologic origin, preserved and wild nature and their disproportional sizes which make them the two deepest lakes in Asia.

They are linked up by Eegiin Gol, the only "child" of Lake Khovsgöl who throws itself into River Selenga, itself feeding Lake Baikal.

During this tour, we offer you to discover wealth, diversity and unique character of one of the nicest regions of Upper Asia.

After visiting Irkutsk, capital of Eastern Siberia, good example of 19th century pomp in Russia, you will be introduced to the Pearl of Siberia, Lake Baikal.

We will trek during 3 days on Olkhone holy island and cross Lake Baikal at its largest part to reach Barguzin Bay, one of the most picturesque Bay of the lake.

We will drive towards Ulan-Ude, the capital of the Republic of Buryatia, nested in the meanders of River Selenga.

Taking back the mythical "Tea Road", we will stop in Kiakhta before leaving Russia to enter Mongolian territory. Continuing our road southward, we will make a pause in Darkhan, second biggest city of Mongolia before visiting the pretty buddhist monastery of Amarbayasgalant. Our road towards Khovsgol will be livened up with treks along rivers and lakes of the region. Once on the banks of the Dark Blue Pearl of Mongolia, we will take part of a two days expedition with our own yurt tracked by a yak as traditionnal nomadic herders.

Our route will come to an end in Ulan Bator, capital of the Sons of the Steppe.

Highlights

- Exploration of the two deepest lakes of Asia
- "Off the beaten track", route aimed at discovering the unique nature of Lake Baikal and Lake Khovsgol areas
- Discovering of Siberian, Burytian and Mongolian way of life
- Alternation of trekking, travelling by boat, bus, 4x4, plane, cultural discoveries and visits

Tour type

NATURE

Difficulty

Moderately Easy - 1-3 hours of physical activity daily

Comfort

Basic — most of nights in tents or rooms with shared WC, some nights in comfortable rooms.

Program

Day 1 — -

Day 2 — -

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Day 3 — -

Day 4 — -

Day 5 — -

Day 6 — -

Day 7 — -

Day 8 — -

Day 9 — -

Day 10 — -

Day 11 — -

Day 12 — -

Day 13 — -

Day 14 — -

Day 15 — -

Day 16 — -

Day 17 — -

Day 18 — -

Day 19 — -

Day 20 — -

Departures

New departures available soon

Note

What's included

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Price includes

- English-speaking guide
- Russian-speaking guide
- Accommodation as per itinerary
- Transport as per itinerary
- Excursions and visits as per itinerary
- Nature reserves and parks entrance permissions
- Bathing in springs
- Airplane/ train tickets
- Letter of invitation
- Camping outfit rental
- Horse and equipment rental

Price does not include

- Meals as per itinerary
- Visa invitation and registration of passports (for foreign citizens, if necessary)
- Personal expenses and tips
- Visa fees and travel insurance
- Optional activities

Checklist & Equipment

If you are traveling in the spring or autumn, please check with your manager for a list of recommended equipment and an approximate weather forecast.

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Recommended checklist

T-shirts, shorts
pants, long sleeve jacket/tracksuit
raincoat / windproof and waterproof jacket with HOOD!
sunglasses
sunscreen and lip balm
swimsuit / swim trunks
towel
wet wipes and antibacterial hand gel
water bottle/flask
spray against mosquitoes and ticks (for summer outdoor tours)
sleeping bag
trekking telescopic poles
winter (down) jacket and warm pants (windproof and waterproof) / winter suit
thermal underwear
comfortable winter boots (suitable for walking on ice and snow)
fleece jacket/sweater with collar
warm mittens (for convenience, thin gloves and a second layer of mittens with fur) / ski gloves
thermal socks
comfortable warm hat and scarf (snood)
ski mask
winter expedition boots (like Sorel or Baffin)
fleece balaclava
moisturizing cream

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Meals

At restaurants and homestays in cities, traditional cuisine consists of local specialties.

In the canteen at the inns, fresh local products.

Picnic for lunch and hot meal served at your accommodation in the evening.

If you are a vegetarian or have any particular preferences, please let us know, so we could adapt the menu.

Laundry

Some hotels and inns offer laundry services for a variable sum of money. It is sometimes possible to use laundry services at homestay (when there is running water) for a fee.

Visa

You need a tourist visa to travel to Russia. It can be issued for a maximum period of 30 days. Your passport has to be valid for at least six months after the expiry date of your visa and to have at least two blank pages.

BaikalNature offers visa support and has created "BaikalNature letter of invitation" package. If you buy a BaikalNature tour, this package is absolutely free; when you buy any other BaikalNature service, you will have to pay for this package.

For questions regarding obtaining an electronic visa, please contact your tour manager.

You need a tourist visa to travel to Mongolia. It can be issued for a maximum period of 30 days. Your passport has to be valid for at least six months after the expiry date of your visa and to have at least two blank pages.

Documents to provide consular services:

- a visa application form (completed on computer or with a black ballpen),
- a color photo for documents, 3.5 x 4.5 cm, to stick on the visa application form,
- invitation,
- travel insurance, provided by insurance company, which protects you throughout your trip .

For more information, please see "Do I need a tourist visa to travel to Russia or Mongolia?" of our FAQ.

Money

The Russian currency is ruble. The cost of travel and other services is always fixed in rubles. Please note that cards from foreign banks do not work in Russia at the moment. Tourists can obtain a bank card from a Russian bank in advance or travel with cash. If you have euros or dollars with you, exchange offices will allow you to change them easily in the cities. It is also worth noting that the exchange rate at airports is usually not the most favorable. It is better to exchange in big cities (you can check the current exchange rate online). Important! Only new banknotes without defects or any traces are accepted for exchange.

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Tipping

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All persons who compose the BaikalNature travel team (guides, drivers, cooks, etc.) are paid a decent wage for their services and do not expect any tips from you. So you have no obligation to leave anything. If you really want to express your satisfaction by leaving a gratuity, and if it is in foreign currency, be aware that torn or glued coins and banknotes cannot be exchanged. Anyway, thank you for your tips, left at your discretion in envelopes.

Health

No compulsory vaccination.

You need to get a health examination before a great trip. Consult your doctor. Get a dental checkup. If you have health problems that could worsen during the trip, make sure you have taken all your medications with you.

It is advisable to keep the following vaccines valid:

- diphtheria,
- tetanus,
- Polio.

Tick-borne encephalitis is present in areas of forest, taiga where ticks are the carriers of encephalitis between May and July. As of August, they are no longer carrying the virus. If you do not get vaccinated, you should follow the basic precautions, including:

- protective clothes
- use of repellents
- daily check of the skin.

It is also possible to take out special insurance covering the analysis of the insect and vaccines.

Provide a first aid kit that includes among other items:

- aspirin or paracetamol,
- anti-diarrheal pills,
- antiseptic,
- adhesive plaster,
- sterile pads.

If you have individual diseases, make sure you have taken your medications.

Emergency Contact

You can contact BaikalNature by phone: +7 924 531 87 01 (What's App, Telegram, Viber)

In addition, your call will be forwarded to your manager, reachable 7/7.

Legal Mentions

Professional Guarantees: BaikalNature LLC (ООО "БайкалНейче"), United Federal Register of Tour Operators number: RTO 009402.

Financial Guarantee: "Gaide insurance company" JSC (АО "Страховая компания Гайде"). Insurance contract N 4875/2422-49 from August 6, 2024. Amount of coverage: 500 000 RUB. Legal and actual address: BaikalNature LLC, 55 Dekabrskikh Sobyti Str., office 204.1 664007 Irkutsk Russia

Travel Insurance

In addition to your personal insurance, you have an opportunity to purchase local insurance. Please, do not hesitate to ask us about our services.

Security

Your safety is very important to us! During the trip we ask you to follow the guide's advice, read the instructions carefully and follow the group. If you have any questions or experience any discomfort, please notify your guide or tour-manager immediately.

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