

MINDFUL RETREAT IN MONGOLIA

Imagine. All of a sudden, you are in the middle of an endless steppe. The imposing mountain view is dotted with white authentic nomad tents ('ger'). You feel a soft breeze through your hair, a rushing stream at your feet and get surprised by galloping horses on the horizon. Enjoying the natural feel of this area, you take trips in the mountains, always guarded by the floating wings of an eagle high up there.

That is Harganat area, in middle-west Mongolia, where days pass by perfectly in line with your own wishes and energy. You get the once-in-a-lifetime occasion to join for a medium- or long-distance walk or run (your choice of 10, 21 or even 42 kilometers) in this overwhelmingly beautiful landscape. So what makes this experience so unique ? Well, just like in ancient Mongolian times, you follow the plumes of smoke from small fires lit by the local horse riders, who keep an eye on you steadily cruising the steppe. So don't be shocked by the sporty nature of this trip! Having some doubts you have not done enough running for this mindful retreat ? Forget about those: you can count on our co-travelling RunMindful expert who is daily available to help you with numerous tips and mindful running or walking techniques.

You go horseback riding along the shores of Toilogt Lake and there is an introduction to fly fishing. A highlight, we organize a one-off private Naadam Festival showcasing the three spectacular national sports of Mongolia. On the outskirts of the capital Ulaanbaatar, you see Genghis Khan, one of the most powerful emperors in history, appearing at the horizon on his horse from afar. His descendants are known for their warm hospitality and a nice cup of tea. Their respect for nature and the belief that every element has a spirit is at the basis of their culture.

Except for the nights in the capital Ulaanbaatar, your stay is in a traditional Mongolian Ger ensuring you fully enjoy the unspoiled landscape in peace. Welcome to the land of the eternal blue sky!

Below you can find the day-to-day program with detailed descriptions of what's on offer, including numerous beautiful photos. Prepare yourself by reading the 'Mindful Retreat in Mongolia':

Reisgegevens

-  Mongolië
-  Begeleide groepsreis
-  10-20deelnemers
-  14 dagen
-  03/08/2022 - 16/08/2022
-     

Please note: travel information is subject to change. Check www.yingyingtravel.eu for the current prices, dates, availability and daily schedule.

Day 1 Flight (from Brussels) to Ulaanbaatar

Meal on board. Flight from Brussels (via Istanbul) to Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia. Our Flemish RunMindful companion travels along from Brussels. Upon arrival in Ulaanbaatar, a warm traditional welcome awaits you...



FYI: Ying Ying Travel can make a proposal for transport to the airport of departure, also outside of Belgium. During the preparation meeting preceding each guided tour, you can decide whether to register for this.

Day 2 Ulaanbaatar

Breakfast on board & Lunch.

In the early morning arrival at Genghis Khan International Airport Ulaanbaatar. Traditional welcome by our English speaking Mongolian guide and our private driver(s). Short transfer to the centrally located hotel. Check-in at the modern 4* Khuvsgul Lake hotel or equivalent.

The hotels selected by Ying Ying Travel are located near the Genghis Khan Square with the Genghis Khan Monument and the statues of Marco Polo and Sükhbaatar. You will stay in the heart of the capital.

The history of Mongolia requires a word of explanation and that is why today you pick up the National History Museum of Mongolia, located within walking distance of the Genghis Khan square. In this museum, Mongolian history is presented in a fun, clear and informative way. The museum displays, among other things, a fully equipped ger tent and historical costumes of the many different Mongolian groups. Highlight is a model of the ancient capital Kharkhorum, the famous historic city at the time of Genghis Khan.

The people who feel like it explore the city with a light run, combined with a chat on the theme "mindful running: what is it and what can it mean for you".

The evening meal on the day of arrival is on self-choice basis, so that everyone can fully enjoy some rest after the international flight. This way you will be fresh and ready for the next day!



Day 3 Ulaanbaatar - Genghis Khan Statue Complex

Breakfast & Lunch & Dinner. After breakfast you will leave the center of Ulaanbaatar.

Just outside the city is the impressive Genghis Khan Statue Complex with the largest equestrian statue in the world. From afar you can see Genghis Khan appearing on his horse on the horizon. On top of the neck of the horse you take home the most beautiful pictures of the impressive statue of Genghis Khan and its surroundings. A visit to the Museum of the Great Mongol Empire is included. On the 1st floor you will also see the largest boot in the world that is registered in the World Guinness Book of Records.

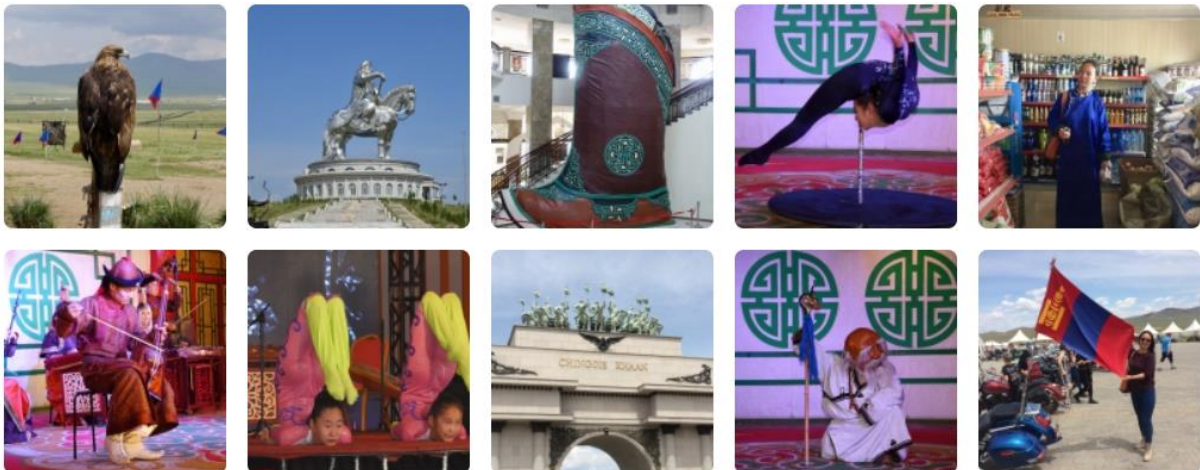
A nice lunch is provided within the complex around the Genghis Khan statue.

Optional: If you wish, you can take a helicopter ride, more specifically a Cavalon Gyroplane! From the air you circle around the gigantic Genghis Khan statue and enjoy the beautiful surroundings with white dots everywhere, being of course the Mongolian Yurts. This activity is optional and can be booked on site. Video of this flight: from 3min 52sec you can see the large statue of Genghis Khan on his horse from above: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hC7-Y3tJ040>

Next we return to Ulaanbaatar for a visit to the Bogd Khan Summer and Winter Palace. You go back in time and learn everything about the world of the Mongolian Khans. The palace is the residence of the last king and queen of Mongolia. Definitely recommended! You will see, among other things, a collection of stuffed animals that were sent from all over the world to the Khan of Mongolia.

After dinner you get ready for the very nice music and dance show of the popular Tumen Ekh Ensemble. I'll give you a tip: the Mongolian snake girls will make your heartbeat faster!

Overnight stay in a centrally located 4* Hotel in Ulaanbaatar.



Day 4 Ulaanbaatar - Murun - Harganat

Breakfast & Lunch & Dinner. After breakfast transfer to Ulaanbaatar airport for the domestic flight to Murun.

At arrival follows a warm welcome by the local team at Murun airport. Short transfer of half an hour by jeep to Harganat River Lodge. After settling into the ger, enjoy a refreshing drink from the lodge's bird view terrace. You will receive a short introduction to the area and there will be an opportunity for exchange on the mindful themes 'how to stay relaxed' and 'how to stay motivated'. Then you choose from one of these "Circle Tour" walks:

- 1 hour walk to the west where petroglyphs from the Bronze Age can be found. You'll explore a cave and a Bronze Age royal tomb. Which would be the grave of a man and that of a woman?
- 40 minute walk to the northeast to the Eagle Seat viewpoint

- 1 hour walk in a beautiful green valley up to the river Delger Murun.

On return to the lodge time to refresh and relax. 1st Dinner in Harganat. Tonight there is a campfire as a welcome.



Day 5 Harganat and Secret Garden

Breakfast & Lunch & Dinner.

Breakfast at the lodge. Then walk or run to the "Secret Garden", a beautiful small river meadow. You come back along the river valley. Total 5.6 kilometers.

Before lunch, there is a mindful running workshop where you thoroughly analyze and improve your running posture and running technique in a very accessible, fun and interactive way – regardless of what your current level of running is now.

After lunch, a mountain hike is planned. Along the way you will see eagle nests, graves, whistling marmots and if you are lucky, you can spot a fox or a wolf. From the top of the mountain, at 1743 meters altitude, you can enjoy a beautiful 360 degree view of the surroundings. Total length of the mountain hike is approximately 13 kilometers.

Dinner at the Lodge. Tonight you will listen to all kinds of fascinating Mongolian stories and the story of Bat and Katrien, how they as a Mongolian-Flemish couple brought the beautiful lodge from dream to reality.



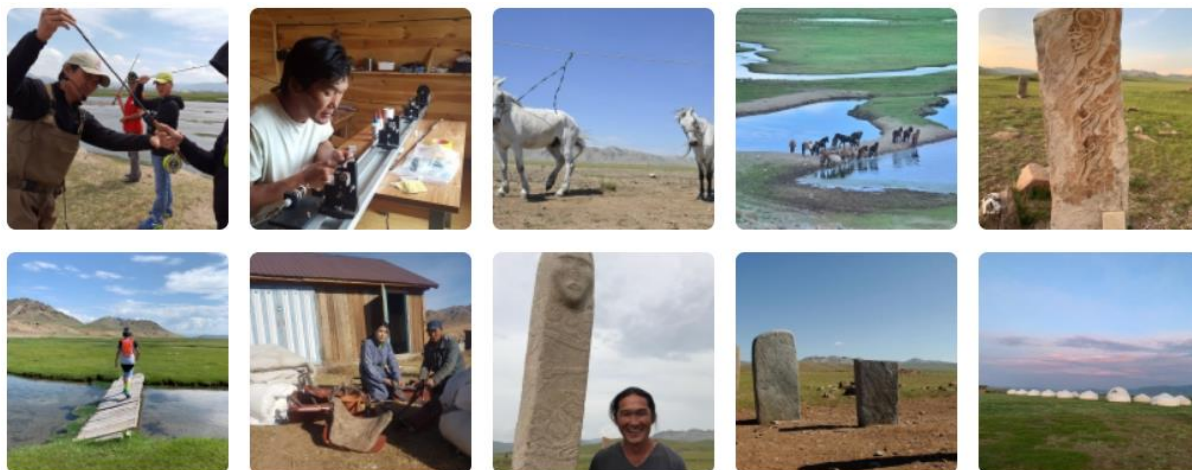
Day 6 Harganat and fly fishing

Breakfast & Lunch & Dinner.

Relaxed breakfast at Harganat River lodge. Then walking or running tour to the deer stones. These are old megaliths with carved symbols. The deer stones are more than 3000 years old and were used in the Bronze Age at funerals, sacrificial rituals and as an art form. The artistic illustrations of deer and other animals on the stones are now a symbol of Shamanism, the most important faith in Mongolia. The distance from the lodge to the Deer Stones is 7.3 kilometers. This morning is the ideal time for an introduction to mindful breathing while maintaining a healthy heartbeat, applicable while walking, running, or any other moment of stress.

After lunch you will go fly fishing in the main river together with Bat, owner of the lodge. Bat is a specialist in fly fishing and was the first to practice this sport in Mongolia. After a nice initiation in fly fishing you have the opportunity to make a relaxing trip of 6 kilometers in the lowlands of the river valley while walking or running. In this video you can see Bat at work, although only spoken in Mongolian. Yet no worries, during the fly fishing initiation on our trip Bat speaks English. Here's the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OkTKAfAtzfc>

Evening dinner in our lodge. Tonight is all about Mongolian history and culture.



Day 7 Harganat – walk or running experience of 10, 21 or 42 kilometers

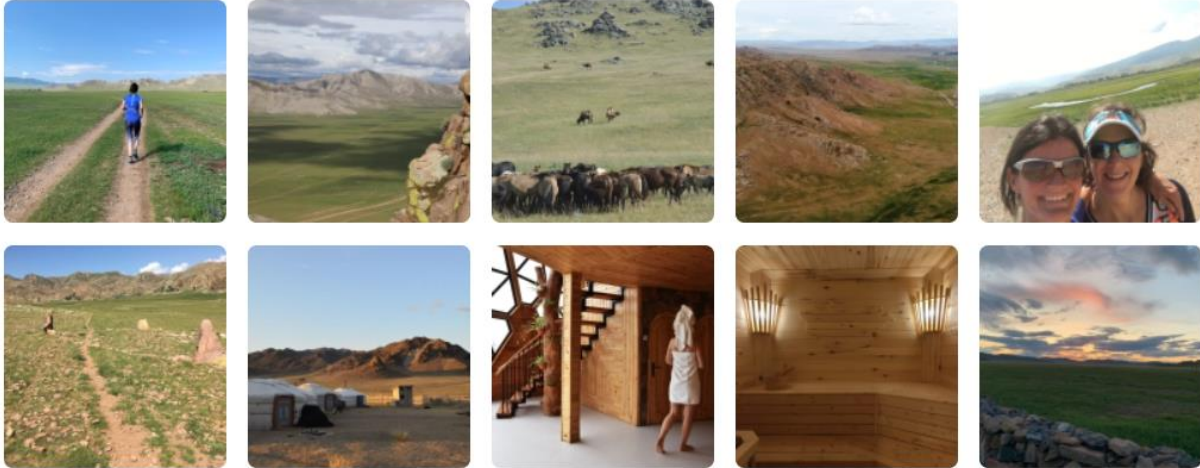
Breakfast & Lunch & Dinner.

Kickstart the day with breakfast at the lodge. This is the moment that many sports enthusiasts have been looking forward to, because this day is completely dedicated to the medium or long distance trekking experience in the vast Mongolian landscape. You can choose to walk or run a distance of 10, 21 or even 42 kilometers. The tracks of different distances are well organized to offer you a unique experience. In addition to the overwhelmingly beautiful landscape, you have to follow the plumes of smoke of small fires spatially lit by horse riders in the steppe, just like in ancient Mongolian times. For centuries, Mongolian horsemen used this ancient military tactic to quickly pass urgent messages of hostile troop movements from one mountain summit to another using plumes of smoke, often with the help of cow dung. Say...the very first mobile phone. Of course, we don't just send you out on the run, but with a 'mindful compass' that helps you to find the right balance between organization and chaos (also in your head) during such a long journey.

Tea stop is provided during a visit to a local nomadic family.

At the end of this filled and active day, we invite you to relax on the bird view terrace, in the outdoor swimming pool or wind down your body and mind in the sauna.

After dinner we will tell you everything about the rather special religions of Mongolia.



Day 8 Harganat - Erhal Lake - Hovsgol Lake

Breakfast & Lunch & Dinner.

After breakfast, it's time to check out at Harganat River Lodge. We continue our journey in a northwesterly direction. Through the highlands, where many nomadic families live, we travel towards the historic site of the 13 shrines. Time for a piece of Mongolian history here. Chingunjav (1710-1758) was a nobleman from northern Mongolia who led a fateful rebellion against the Qing (Manchu) Dynasty from 1755-1758. After he was executed in Beijing, one of his followers was able to bring a part of his thumb back to Mongolia, bury it on top of the mountain and build a memorial site there.

After some leisurely sightseeing, the drive goes on to the Erhel Lake, a flat shallow salt lake in the middle of the steppe and home to many bird species. Walk or run around the lake, about 6 kilometers. This time we give extra attention to the use of mindful techniques to consciously enjoy all aspects of the environment – an experience that will stick in your memory for a long time.

Next we continue our route to the Hovsgol Lake. Welcome and check-in at the Ashihai Camp which is beautifully situated on a small peninsula that extends into the Hovsgol Lake. The location is second to none and offers us a lot of possibilities.

After dinner, let's share our experiences around the campfire just next to the lake.



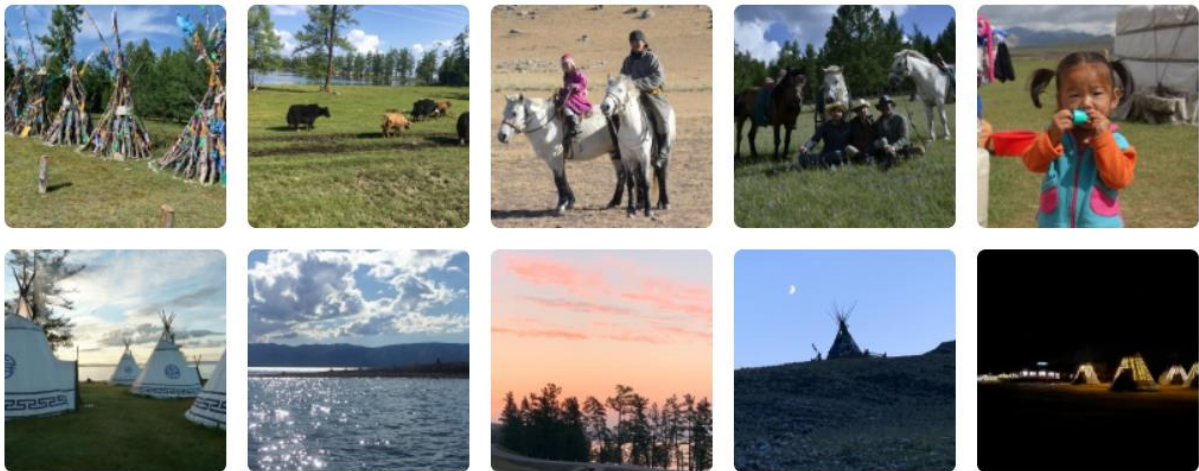
Day 9 Hovsgol Lake - Toilogt Lake and horse riding

Breakfast & Lunch & Dinner.

Breakfast at Ashihai Camp. Who feels like it can join for a nice walk or run through the woods overlooking the lake. Once you come out of the forest, you walk or run further along the shores of the lake to Toilogt Camp. Especially on this trip you will learn the use of a mindful running mantra. Mythical words or a practical means to achieve both endurance and peace of mind? Find out for yourself!

Relaxing afternoon with an hour of horse riding around the Toilogt Lake.

Dinner. Overnight at Toilogt Camp.



Day 10 Mountain run/hiking - boot trip Hovsgol Lake

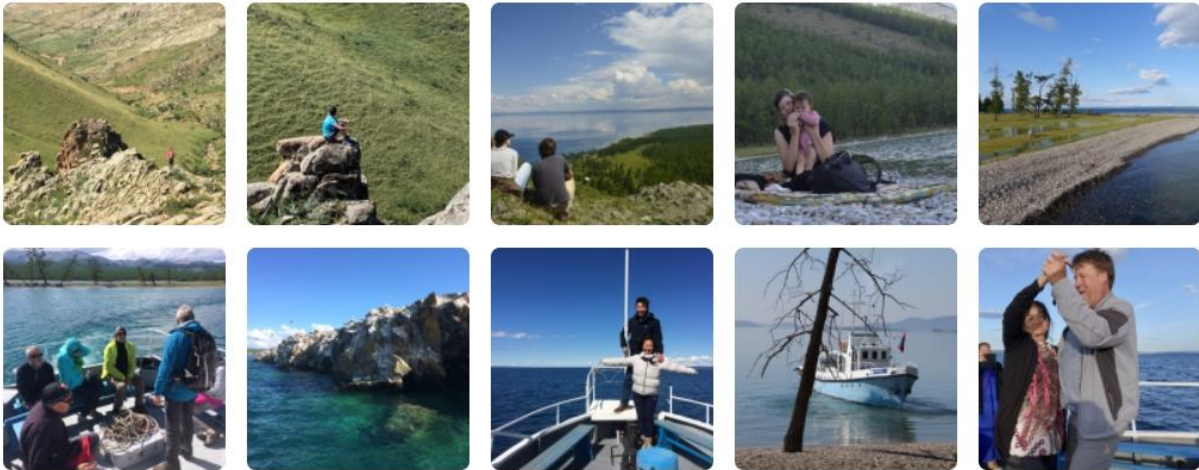
Breakfast & Lunch & Dinner.

After breakfast, a mountain run or hike is on the program. You will follow in the footsteps of the "Mongolia Sunrise to Sunset" also called "The world's most beautiful 42 and 100 km Trail Run". Of course you do not cover the same distance today, but you follow the same trails to a height where you enjoy a beautiful view over the lake.

Again a unique experience, and that includes listening to each other's experiences during lunch, perhaps your first "runner's high".

A nice twist for the afternoon is a boat trip of about 40 minutes on the immense Hovsgol Lake. Hovsgol, known as the Switzerland of Mongolia, is one of the seventeen primeval lakes in the world and more than two million years old. With the exception of Lake Vostok, this is Mongolia's most pristine lake and is one of the country's most important water reservoirs. The water of the lake is naturally clear and drinkable.

Dinner. Accommodation in Toilogt Camp.



Day 11 Toilogt Lake - Murun - Harganat

Breakfast & Lunch & Dinner.

Breakfast at the Camp.

Opportunity for "Sunrise run/hiking" along the lake, around 8 kilometers, in combination with practicing meditation, both sitting and while walking or running. You come to complete mental peace with a view of the vast pure lake and the rising morning sun.

After lunch we leave for Murun. Along the way, the Jnhai Pass includes stops at a local souvenir market and you'll visit a reindeer shepherd family. It is about a 2-hour drive to Murun City.

Upon arrival in Murun, you'll do sightseeing in the city and visit the local market. Dinner at a restaurant in Murun City. Then continue the drive to Harganat River Lodge for new check-in and overnight stay.



Day 12 Harganat - private Naadam Festival

Breakfast & Lunch & Dinner.

Breakfast at Harganat River Lodge.

Especially for our group, a real Naadam Festival is organized today in Harganat. The entire day is dedicated to the ancient and most important Festival of Mongolia, the Naadam Festival. You will see the wrestling fights, archery and horse riding. These three were the most important disciplines during the training of soldiers at the time of Genghis Khan.

Tonight is the big party!! The people of Harganat serve a delicious farewell dinner followed by a spectacular farewell party with bonfire. Time to look back together on an unforgettable adventure that will leave deep impressions. Mongolia now has a place in your heart forever.

Last night at Harganat River Lodge. The next day we fly back to the capital Ulaanbaatar.



Day 13 Harganat - Murun - Ulaanbaatar

Breakfast & Lunch & Dinner.

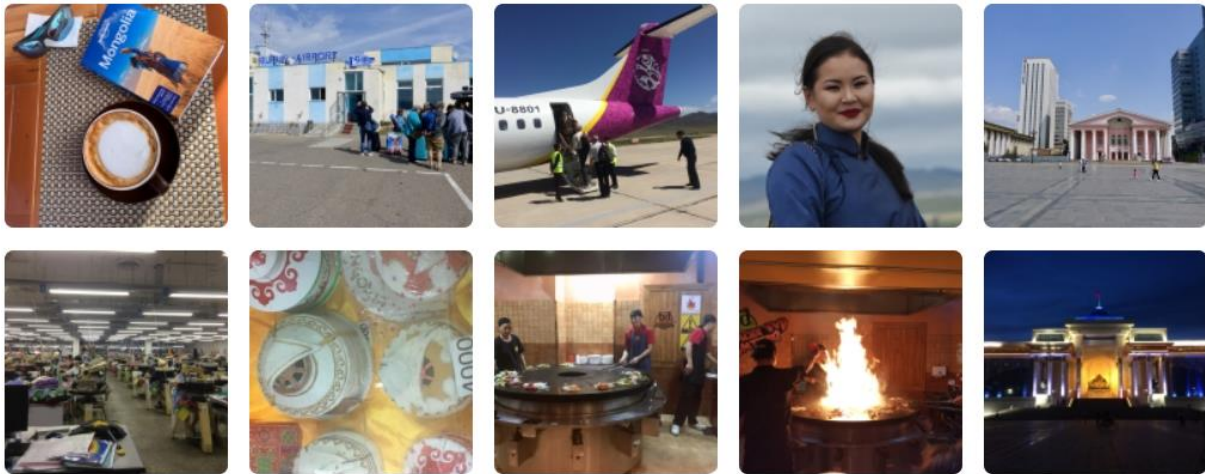
After breakfast transfer to the small airport of Murun for the domestic flight back to the capital Ulaanbaatar.

Transfer to the same hotel from the beginning of the trip. Check-in, lunch and relaxation, depending on the flight schedule.

Later on, you will visit a factory where Kashmir is produced. The best Kashmir in the world comes from Mongolia, you can check for yourself on a visit to a local workplace. Afterwards you get the chance to buy all kinds of souvenirs in a large Mongolian-branded shopping complex. Or maybe you prefer to go for another mindful city run or walk, with all the tips and techniques that you have taken on during this trip.

In the evening, a delicious farewell dinner is planned and you have plenty of time to look back on an unforgettable adventure in Mongolia together.

Overnight stay in a centrally located 4* Hotel in Ulaanbaatar.



Day 14 Flight Ulaanbaatar to Brussels

Breakfast. Meal on board

Breakfast at the hotel. Check-out.

Option 1 : Transfer of approx. 30 min. to Ulaanbaatar Airport. Departure at 08h50. Return journey via Istanbul to Brussels. Arrival the same day around 18h20 in Brussels.

Option 2 : If you chose a private extension to the Gobi Desert or to Central Mongolia, it starts today. Interested? Then inquire so we can help you review the flights and guide you onwards.



Contact for any question : Ying Ying Travel • Honkersven 33, 2440 Geel, Belgium

- Tel. Mario +32 14 73 71 84 (or Marleen +32 479 17 47 98)
- E-mail: info@yingyingtravel.eu