



An Eagle Hunter Family Adventure

By Whistling **Arrow**



An **Eagle Hunter** Family Adventure

In the Altai mountains of western **Mongolia**



*Best months: June, July, **August** & September*



Experience picture perfect moments such as these wild horses in the upper Tsagan Gon Valley



Meet Shohan the eagle hunter



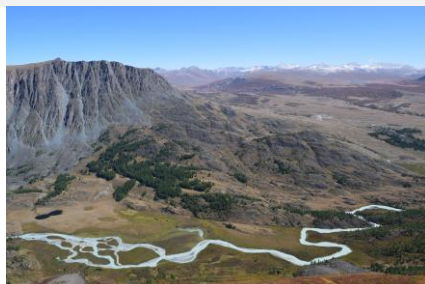
Traverse the wild Worship Pass



Explore stunning hidden valleys



Peer down upon Potanin Glacier



Witness huge panoramic vistas



And summit Malchin Peak

- The following template is just that – a template. We can custom design any adventure to suit the specific ages of your children, how adventurous you want to be and your family's preferred interests and activities. The example below was designed for an adventurous family of four (with children aged 13 and 15) who loved to trek in the wild outdoors.
- Rest assured that all our trips have two things in common – they are all meticulously planned and designed to deliver a family trip of a lifetime.

Your trip details

➤ **Setting the scene**

The Altai Tavan Bogd in the wild borderlands of western Mongolia provides an epic backdrop to any family adventure; an untouched frontier where seas of grass baked golden by the sun morph into snowy peaks and sweeping glacial valleys. Big blue skies also give forth a pervading sense of freedom, inviting exploration. And so, armed with special permits, you and your family will discover parts of this beautiful landscape known only to local Tuva and Kazakh nomads. Traversing the Altai, the adventure will culminate in a hike alongside the largest glacier in the country and an awe-inspiring panorama over China, Russia and Kazakhstan atop Malchin Peak.

One of the highlights of such a trip will be an overnight stay with Shohan, the Kazakh eagle hunter and his family, who set up their summer gers near a picturesque lake every year. With typical, nomadic hospitality you will be invited to immerse fully in their often harsh but unconstrained lives, feasting on mutton, fermented mares milk (it's stronger than you think) and wild berries. .

These trips are however specifically designed to suit every individual family and while they are adventurous and 'off the beaten track', rest assured you will be in good, safe hands. You will be led by our experienced, English-speaking local guide and fully supported by vehicles, camels and /or horses. You will also be provided with best quality camping equipment including large family-sized tents, a dining tent, warm sleeping bags and comfortable camping mattresses.

➤ **How adventurous are these trips?**

These adventure are typically a moderate physical challenge but well within the capability of most reasonably fit guests and children over the age of 10. As highlighted, the trips are also supported by vehicles, horses and camels that carry all the heavier loads so, if you are hiking for example, you only need to do so with day packs. For those that can horse ride, there are also fabulous opportunities to do so. Altitudes in the region are typically around 2 to 2500m although if you choose to climb to the spectacular summit of Malchin Peak then this will top out at 4000m. The climb is non-technical and usually takes place towards the end of any trip so there is always plenty of time to fully acclimatize before reaching such heights. This is also completely optional and other alternatives can be easily scheduled.

Of more importance than any physical stamina is a decent appetite for some adventure. Our adventures will take you well off the beaten track to remote, unspoilt corners of western Mongolia, although you will not necessarily be roughing it. The trips are well-supplied and prepared and include for example a full-time cook who will prepare 3 hearty meals a day, and a portable shower, and toilet tent.

Your trip schedule

Day 1:

The domestic flights typically depart Ulan Bator early in the morning and take approximately 3 hours.

In this trip example you would then be met at the airport and driven for two hours to the Kharangati Valley where we will set up a ger for you to spend the night and have dinner. If you prefer, there is also the option of a brief stop at a local restaurant in Ulgii to have a quick snack before setting off.

Day 2:

After breakfast you will drive to the summer ger of Shohan, the Kazakh eagle hunter. The drive to his camp by a lake is stunning and takes approximately four hours. You should arrive at Shohans by lunch time giving you plenty of opportunity to spend time with his family, muck in with some chores and take some obligatory snaps with his golden eagle.

In the evening, you will have dinner in the family ger and, if you so choose, raise a toast to the upcoming trek with some hearty yak milk vodka. There should also be the possibility of joining the family on horseback in their daily early evening round up of their flock of sheep. Tonight, you will stay adjacent to the family's encampment in a ger or large camping tents.

Day 3:

After breakfast you will leave the eagle hunters behind and drive alongside the sapphire-blue waters of Lake Khurgan. On the way, you will pass some interesting human-shaped headstones, the ancient burial site of Turkic tribes who inhabited the region 2000 years ago.

After stopping for a picnic lunch, you will continue on to a beautiful large petroglyph site with a number of stunning carvings etched into the local rock. Depending on the time, you will have the option to camp nearby, or continue on for a couple of hours to the base of the Akshu Valley where you will rendezvous with your trip camels. If, the better option is to camp near the petroglyphs then you will complete the drive to the rendezvous the following morning.

Day 4:

After breakfast, you will pack up camp and start hiking along the beautiful white river valley through pine forest and open delta to your campsite for the day located towards the head of the Tsagan Gol. The 4-5 hour hike is beautiful and the campsite faces the spectacular snowy peaks at the end of the valley.

Day 5:

This morning, armed with your special permits you will explore the upper reaches of Tsagan Gol. The trail is used only occasionally by local hunters, so in parts, you may need to scramble through knee-high red bushes and jump over small streams as clear as bottled water. The surroundings are pristine. After 3 hours you will reach a small gorge with a cascading waterfall on the opposite bank - the perfect stop for a picnic.

After lunch you can either continue on towards the snowy peaks at the head of the valley on horseback or return to your campsite on foot (or horseback). Further up, the valley narrows becoming incredibly picturesque.

Day 6:

Today you will trek for 6 hours to your new campsite near the head of 'Black Valley'. The route initially climbs east out of Tsagan Gol with panoramic views back down the valley. You will then trek into the wild, brooding 'Bear Valley' enclosed by eroded, purple-tinged peaks. The terrain is stunningly beautiful although thankfully there are no bears here anymore!

The route then climbs up over 'Takilt Taba' or Worship Pass, a spectacular saddle between two valleys inhabited by wild horses and carpeted with yellow wildflowers. You will then climb down from the rocky pass (3120m) into the next valley and camp next to a small black river with a few white Tuva-family gers dotted around.

Day 7:

After breakfast, you will trek down 'Black Valley' towards several rocky outcrops. Here, between 2000 and 4000 years ago, petroglyphs of horses, deer, wolves and people were finely chiseled into the rock using stone and later bronze tools. They are a remarkable site in what is another wild and beautiful valley.

From the petroglyphs, you will climb up over a saddle (2625m) to a lookout with spectacular views over the mountains. Today's 6 hour hike will culminate in a panoramic climb down into the next valley where you will follow the Tsagan Gon River for a while before making camp in a secluded spot next to the swirling, milky meltwater.

Day 8:

Today's 6-7 hour hike is stunning. You will firstly head up through the open valley, bordered to the west by snowy peaks tinged with grey and purple. Following the glacial river further up the valley we will catch our first glimpse of the nose of Potanin Glacier - the largest in Mongolia - with the stunning mountain peaks of Kuiten and Malchin silhouetted against the huge blue sky.

You will make camp (3070m) by the glacier with fantastic views over the mountains and back down the valley. Tonight, you will have a particularly hearty dinner in preparation for tomorrow's summit climb.

Day 9:

Today's hike is equally stunning! For the first ninety minutes we will trek up through the valley dotted with colourful wildflowers, before beginning the steep and loose scramble up Malchin Peak. To reach the summit, marked by an ovoo wrapped in prayer flags, you will need to hike on and over an ice cap before enjoying the amazing 360-degree panorama. The views back down Potanin Glacier and, in the opposite direction, out over the Russian Altai are awe-inspiring.

After a picnic lunch, you will head down from the summit (4050m) by sliding and scrambling through the loose scree before arriving back at camp. The return trek to the summit and back takes approximately 7 hours and is fairly challenging but makes for a suitably climactic finale to a wonderful adventure.

Day 10:

After breakfast, you will trek back down the valley to your final campsite. If you are interested in exploring the glacier you can climb over the glacial moraine and hike onto the Potanin Glacier itself. Being surrounded by so much ice and debris gives one a real sense of the formidable erosive power of these colossal ice sheets.

Taking care to cross several small crevices, you will rejoin the green valley and trek, for the final time, through scenery that just feels bigger and more open than other mountain terrains (I think it has something to do with the huge blue skies) before once again reaching your campsite. Today's trek takes approximately 6 hours. It is also not required to trek on the glacier.

Day 11:

Today you will drive back towards Ulgii for approximately 5 hours. The route is different one from your outward bound drive although equally beautiful. Again, you are truly off-road, travelling through wide open valleys flanked by lunar-red outcrops. Squirrels and marmots dart across the yellow plains, while kites circle overhead on the rising thermals.

Tonight, you will camp for the final time besides the Biluu River.

Day 12:

This morning, you will drive to Bayan Zurkh mountain to spot endangered argali (or blue sheep) and have a final picnic lunch before driving to Ulgii airport to catch your return afternoon flight to Ulan Bator.