July 7–23, 2019
The Nomadic Soul of Mongolia
with Lisa Balabanlilar
Traverse into the heart of Mongolia’s unique nomadic traditions and vast, romantic landscapes. Along the way, uncover outstanding museums, beautiful temples, and ancient monasteries. Your adventures will take you to colorful rock formations, towering sand dunes, and pristine mountain valleys. After visiting the highlights of the capital city of Ulaanbaatar, journey through central Mongolia and see the ruins of the Karakorum, once the capital of the Mongol empire. Continue south through the gorgeous landscapes of the Gobi Desert and stay in traditional gers (Mongolian tents) along the way. Four days are dedicated to the remote reaches of western Mongolia, hemmed in by snow-capped mountains and famous for the nomadic Kazakh people and their fascinating customs, which you will experience firsthand during visits to local communities and a meeting with hunters who practice an ancient tradition of hunting with eagles. A special treat will be attending the annual Altai Nomad’s Festival, featuring traditional horse games and feats of skill. Given the nature of this trip, accommodations and transportation will be somewhat rugged in more remote locations.

Travel with Lisa Balabanlilar

Lisa Balabanlilar serves as Associate Professor in the Department of History at Rice University and joined the faculty in 2007. She is a scholar of the Mughal dynasty and her research focuses on Islamic kingship among Turks. In 2012, she published her book *Imperial Identity in the Mughal Empire: Memory and Dynastic Politics in Early Modern South and Central Asia* and has had other articles appear in various academic journals. At Rice, she has been recognized as the 2010 winner of the Phi Beta Kappa Sophie Meyer Farb Prize for Teaching Excellence. Dr. Balabanlilar has led Traveling Owls journeys to Turkey, India, Morocco, and the Silk Road, and is looking forward to leading this program.

Experience traditional Kazakh music, Khuumii throat singing and contortion performed by one of the best Mongolian ensembles.

See death-defying horsemanship and traditional dress at the Altai Nomad’s Festival.

Photos from top: Gandan Migjid Janraisig Buddha Statue (François Philipp) and riders in Bayan-Ölgii (Allan Grey)
This custom travel program has been created uniquely for Rice Traveling Owls.

July 7 & 8, 2019

**Departures**
Depart the United States on an overnight flight to Ulaanbaatar and cross the International Date Line.

July 9, 2019

**Welcome to Mongolia**
Arrive in Ulaanbaatar International Airport (ULN) and meet your ISDI tour manager and local Mongolian guides. Transfer by private coach to the five-star Best Western Premier Tuushin Hotel for check-in. Set out for the National Museum of Mongolia and be introduced to Mongolian history from prehistoric times to the 1990 democratic movement that overthrew the communist regime. Also see the 20th-century Buddhist temple complex Chojin Lama. This evening sample Mongolian cuisine during a welcome dinner.

Best Western Premier Tuushin (Dinner)

July 10, 2019

**Gandan Monastery & Mongolian Horse Racing**
Meet Oyungerel Tsedevdamba—a former member of parliament and the Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Mongolia—for an overview of current affairs in Mongolia. Proceed to the Gandan Monastery to see the magnificent 82-foot-tall gold-plated Buddha statue, a symbol of Mongolian national pride and cultural revival. After lunch head to the vast Sukhbaatar Square to observe different ethnic groups in their finest robes and headdresses participating in the Mongolian National Costume parade. Then drive to Hui Doloon Hudag for Mongolian horse racing and watch the winners cross the finish line from your seats in the grandstand. Take a short drive to Mongol Nomadic ger camp with private bathrooms, and dine together. Mongol Nomadic (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

July 11, 2019

**Hustain National Park & Nomadic Life**
Drive an hour to Hustain National park, the site of the last remaining species of Mongolian wild horses, the takhi, which have been reintroduced from zoos around the world after becoming extinct in the wild. The best time to see the horses up close is in the early morning when they come down to drink at the streams in the more accessible areas of the park. See the visible remains of Neolithic graves and take a gentle trek to an incredible lookout point watching for deer, gazelles, and raptors. Experience local hospitality and learn about nomadic life over a traditional home-cooked lunch with a family of herders. Continue to the nature reserve of Khogno Khaan and see the reconstructed temples and prayer wheel at the Uvguun Khiid ruins. Continue to the secluded Sweet Gobi ger camp with shared bathrooms, located near a small outcrop of dunes at Elsen Tasarkhai, and dine together. Sweet Gobi Ger Camp (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

July 12, 2019

**Genghis Kahn’s Empire: Karakorum & Erdenezuu**
Drive to Karakorum, the ruins of the 13th-century capital of Genghis Khan’s Mongol Empire, the largest contiguous land empire in recorded history and the intellectual center of the world during its peak. Little remains of Karakorum after its destruction in 1388, but evidence of its former glory remains at Erdenezuu, Mongolia’s oldest monastery, with 108 stupas rebuilt from its own ruins in 1586. After a tour around the monastery, have (above) Mongolian troops preparing for Naadam Festival in Ulaanbaatar’s Sükhbaatar Square / Scott Presly
lunch and enjoy a visit to the local market. Meet a local artist who specializes in Buddhist paintings, learn about her family’s sea buckthorn berry farm, and hear how these berries are used for health and medicinal purposes. Arrive at your ger camp with private bathrooms. Enjoy dinner and a performance of traditional music and dance. Munkhtenger Ger Camp (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

July 13, 2019

Monasteries & Temples

Set forth on a six-hour drive to Ongi Temple complex, breaking up the trip with a stop at the Shankh Khid Monastery, one of Mongolia’s oldest and most historically significant monasteries, which was founded in 1647 by Zanabazar, the first spiritual head of Tibetan Buddhism for the Khalkha Mongols in Outer Mongolia. Upon arrival at Ongiin Khiid, visit the ruins of the 18th-century Barlim Monastery, which featured one of the largest temples in all of Mongolia, and the older Khutagt Monastery, which was founded in 1660 and was home to more than a thousand monks at its peak. Both complexes were destroyed and hundreds of monks killed during the 1939 Communist anti-religious purges. In the 1990s, efforts to rebuild the monastery began, and the first temple was inaugurated in 2004. Arrive at your ger camp with shared bathrooms, and dine together. Ongin Nuuts Ger Camp (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

July 14, 2019

Mongolia’s Largest Sand Dunes

Drive seven hours to the Khongor sand dunes, a 60-mile stretch of rippling sand dunes, some reaching heights of up to 600 feet, and enjoy scenic photo stops along the way. Spend the next two nights at Gobi Erdene Ger Camp with private bathrooms, and dine together. Gobi Erdene Ger Camp (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

July 15, 2019

Local Camel Herders in the Gobi Desert

Set out to explore the dunes on two-humped Bactrian camels and listen to the low hum of the “singing sands.” Meet a family of camel herders and learn about their culture, traditions, and day-to-day life. Return to camp for lunch. In the afternoon either relax at camp or take a desert drive across the arid landscape to a local oasis of saxsaul trees—one of the native species of shrub-like trees which grow in these inhospitable conditions and whose root systems aid against desertification. Look out for herds of white-tailed gazelles and demoiselle or white-naped cranes. Gobi Erdene Ger Camp (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

July 16, 2019

Petroglyphs, Flaming Cliffs & Dinosaurs

Stop at Khavtsgait to explore the petroglyphs. Walk up a rocky outcrop and search the surrounding rocks for ancient engravings that dot the area. Have lunch in the small village of Bulgan before continuing to Bayanzag, known as the Flaming Cliffs because of their orange glow at sunset. After settling in at your ger camp with private bathrooms, enjoy an exploratory walk around the spectacular sandstone formations, also a paleontological wonder. Bayanzag became famous for its dinosaur remains after the first nest of dinosaur eggs the world had ever seen was found by an exploration team from the American Museum of Natural History in 1922. Gobi Naran Ger Camp (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)
July 17, 2019
Yol Valley National Park & Local Horse Taming
Explore Yol Valley, a wonderfully picturesque area surrounded by sheer rocky walls that form incredible canyons. During a hike, see the remarkable lush chasm that cuts through the foothills of the Altai mountains and try to spot Altai snowcocks, ibex, yaks, and Argali mountain sheep. After lunch, drive to a nearby nomadic family who will demonstrate the traditional art of ‘breaking in’ horses. Gobi Naran Ger Camp (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

July 18, 2019
Bogd Khan Winter Palace & Mongolian Performing Arts
Following a morning flight to Ulaanbaatar, visit the Central Museum of Mongolian Dinosaurs, which exhibits the famous Tarbosaurus Bataar that was repatriated from the United States along with many more dinosaurs due to the efforts of Texan Robert Painter. After lunch, visit the Bogd Khan Winter Palace where Mongolia’s last king and eighth living Buddha resided, and view displays of elaborate ceremonial robes. In the evening, experience the best of Mongolian performance arts, including Khuumii throat singing, folk and traditional music, song, dance and contortion. Tuushin Best Western (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

July 19, 2019
Ölgii: Kazakh Culture in Western Mongolia
Fly to Ölgii (ULG), the capital of Bayan-Ölgii province, Mongolia’s westernmost province where the Kazakh people and culture has been best preserved. At the Aimag Museum of Ölgii, learn about Kazakh culture and the geography of the province, including an excellent collection of colorful traditional costumes. Enjoy dinner tonight at your hotel, Eagle Dreams. Eagle Dreams Hotel (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

July 20, 2019
Altai Nomad’s Festival
Spend the day attending the Altai Nomad’s Festival and see some traditional Kazakh horse games. Admire the traditional clothing of local nomads. This evening enjoy dinner and a Kazakh concert of traditional songs and music. Eagle Dreams Hotel (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

July 21, 2019
Inside Kazakh Culture: Hunting with Eagles
Drive to the small village of Sagsai for a private demonstration of Eagle Hunting, an ancient tradition at the heart of Kazakh culture. Meet with local hunters to learn about the majestic golden eagle, one of the world’s largest eagles, and watch them being trained for the hunt, an unforgettable experience. Return to Ölgii and dine together. Eagle Dreams Hotel (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

July 22, 2019
Ölgii to Ulaanbaatar
Fly to Ulaanbaatar and visit the impressive Genghis Khan statue complex, where the world’s largest equestrian statue stands gloriously on the bank of the River Tuul against a scenic landscape. Bid goodbye to Mongolia over a farewell dinner. Tuushin Best Western (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

July 23, 2019
Mongolia Departures
Transfer to the Ulaanbaatar International Airport for independent flights back to the United States.
Tour Information

TOUR COST
Land Only .......................................................... $6,695
Tour price is per person based on double occupancy, with a minimum of 15 paying participants. Land price is calculated as of July 2018 and is subject to change.

DATES | July 7–23, 2019

ACTIVITY LEVEL | Moderate standing and walking for up to three hours at a time and motorcoach rides up to seven hours (with breaks)

DEPOSIT & FINAL PAYMENT A deposit of $1,000 per paying participant is required to guarantee participation in the program. This deposit may be paid by check or by Visa or MasterCard. Final payment will be invoiced and is due on March 8, 2019 by check only to International Seminar Design, Inc. Registrants will be accepted beyond this date on a space-available basis with payment in full by check only.

FLIGHTS | Participants are responsible for all aspects of their air arrangements, round-trip to and from Ulaanbaatar International Airport (ULN). Participants who are unable to take the group airport transfers are responsible for their own airport transfers.

TERMS & CONDITIONS International Seminar Design, Inc. (ISDI) acts only as an agent for the participant with respect to transportation, accommodations, and all other services relating to this tour. ISDI, the Association of Rice Alumni, and/or their agents assume no responsibility or liability for any act, error or omission, or for any injury, loss, accident, delay or irregularity, which may be caused by any defect in any aircraft, ship, train, bus, or other carrier, or through neglect or default of any subcontractor or other third party, which may be used wholly or in part in the performance of their duty to the participants of the tour. ISDI and the Association of Rice Alumni reserve the right to cancel any tour prior to departure for any reason including insufficient numbers of participants, as well as the right to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of the tour at any time. If bookings fall below the minimum required, passengers will be advised of additional costs or itinerary alterations before departure date.

CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS All cancellations must be received in writing by ISDI, and charges are calculated as of the day notification is received in writing by ISDI. If a tour member cancels, the following scale of charges is incurred: There is a non-refundable administrative fee of $500 per person. Written cancellation received by ISDI on or before March 8, 2019: full refund minus $500 per person administrative fee. Written cancellation received by ISDI between March 9 and May 23, 2019: full refund of any recoverable land costs, less $3,350 per person cancellation charge (includes administrative fee). Written cancellation received by ISDI after March 24, 2019: no refund. After the tour has commenced, it is not possible to issue any refunds. No refunds are issued for any unused portion of the tour including, but not limited to, occasional missed meals or sightseeing tours. Costs for promotion, staff, and other group expenses are not refundable. If due to weather, flight schedules, or other uncontrollable factors you are required to spend an additional night, you will be responsible for your own hotel, transfers, and meal costs. In the case of cancellation, substitutions are not accepted. The tour cost is non-transferable. Tour cancellation, baggage, and medical insurance is strongly recommended. A confirmation letter and travel insurance application will be mailed to you upon receipt of your deposit.

TOUR PRICE INCLUSIONS
Fourteen (14) nights’ accommodations; breakfast daily, 13 lunches, 13 dinners; services of an ISDI tour manager; land transportation by private motorcoach and 4x4 vans, as needed; group airport transfers to and from the hotel upon arrival and departure; one-way flight from Dalanzadgad (DLZ) to Ulaanbaatar (ULN); round-trip flight between Ulaanbaatar (ULN) and Ölgii (ULG); expert, local English-speaking guides throughout planned activities; services of an ISDI Tour Manager; gratuities to local guides and drivers; entrance fees to sites per itinerary; bottled water daily; taxes, services, and porterage fees.

TOUR PRICE EXCLUSIONS
Airfare, airline taxes, and fuel surcharges; individual transfers to and from the hotel for those not using the group transfers; airport portage; gratuities for hotel housekeeping staff; excursions, activities, or meals during traveler’s free time; personal items; personal services; taxis; travel extensions; personal insurance for health, baggage and tour cancellation; passport fees; visa fees.

TRAVEL INSURANCE
The purchase of trip cancellation insurance is strongly recommended for coverage of expenses in conjunction with cancellation due to illness or accident. Baggage insurance is also recommended. In the event that you must cancel your participation in a travel program, trip cancellation insurance may be the only source of reimbursement. Travel insurance information will be emailed to you from the Traveling Owls upon receipt of your registration.

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Tour Highlights
Explore Erdenezuu, Mongolia’s oldest monastery, and Karakorum, the symbolic ruins of the 13th-century capital of Genghis Kahn’s Mongol Empire.

Meet local Kazakh hunters who practice the ancient tradition of hunting with eagles.

Meet a family of camel herders in the Gobi Desert and learn about their traditions and daily life.

Meet Oyungerel Tsedevdamba, a former member of parliament and the Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Mongolia, for an overview of current affairs in Mongolia.

Name (as listed on passport)  Rice Affiliation
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City  State  Zip
Daytime Telephone  Cell Phone
E-mail Address
\(\text{Please send mailings to my e-mail to receive information more quickly}\)

Number of Persons  Amount Enclosed
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BY:  \(\text{Check (payable to International Seminar Design)}\)
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ROOING OPTIONS: (please select)
\(\boxed{\text{Double Occupancy, We prefer separate beds}}\)
\(\boxed{\text{I will share a room with:}}\)
\(\boxed{\text{I would like a roommate but will pay the price of the single supplement if one cannot be found.}}\)

\(\text{The undersigned has read the tour itinerary and recognizes and accepts any risks therein. The undersigned also understands and hereby agrees for and on behalf of his/her dependents, heirs, executors, administrators and assigns to abide by the conditions set forth in the terms and conditions listed in this brochure and to release and hold harmless International Seminar Design, Inc. (ISDI), the Association of Rice Alumni, and any of their officers, trustees, agents, licensees, or representatives from any and all liability for delays, injuries, or death or for the loss of and/or damage to his/her property however occurring during any portion of, or in relation to, this tour.}\)

EACH PARTICIPANT MUST SIGN
Registration invalid without signature

Signature  Date
Signature  Date

COMPLETE AND RETURN TO:
Rice Alumni Travelling Owls
MS-520, P.O. Box 1892 | Houston, TX 77251
Tel: 713-34-TRIPS, Fax: (713) 348-5210
Email: travelingowls@rice.edu