Grasslands & the Gobi: Inner Mongolia

INNER MONGOLIA

9D 7N | 25–30 PAX | STARTS KUALA LUMPUR | BATIK AIR

Discover a side of China few visitors reach on this nine-day journey through Inner Mongolia's grasslands, desert and volcanic terrain. Travel from Ordos through Yulin's canyon landscapes, Genghis Khan's ceremonial mausoleum, the Yellow River bend at Old Ox Bay and the ancient lava fields of Ulan Hada. Spend a night in a yurt on the Xilamuren Grassland, share Mongolian food and culture, then visit Hohhot's Great Mosque before crossing the singing dunes of Resonant Sand Bay. Return Batik Air flights, accommodation, meals, private coach transport, guide service and tipping are included. Built-in halal meals and mosque visits make this an unusual, thoughtfully arranged route through China beyond the familiar city circuit.

DAY

01

ORDOS · OVERNIGHT 1 OF 1

Depart Kuala Lumpur — arrive Ordos by nightfall

Batik Air flight OD626 departs KLIA at 1500 and arrives in Ordos Ejin Horo Airport at 2050. The flight time is approximately 5.5 hours. Ordos is a relatively new city built on plateau above the Mu Us Desert — clean, wide boulevards and a skyline that surprised most first-time visitors. Check in on arrival and rest.

KLIA Departure — Arrive at KLIA with sufficient time before the 1500 departure. Batik Air includes 20kg checked baggage. Keep a warm layer accessible; Inner Mongolia's evenings can be cool even in summer.

Ordos Ejin Horo Airport — Your guide meets you at arrivals for the short transfer to the hotel.

OVERNIGHT

Ordos

DAY

02

YULIN · OVERNIGHT 1 OF 1

Ordos to Yulin — canyon walls and an ancient street

The coach crosses from Inner Mongolia into Shaanxi province for the day, heading south to Yulin — a walled city on the edge of the Mu Us Desert with geology that most people have never seen photographs of. Wave Valley is the standout: a narrow sandstone canyon where the rock has been shaped by water into forms that look more sculpted than natural. The Glass Bridge over the canyon adds a different kind of perspective.

Wave Valley (Longzhou Dan Xia) — A slot canyon of red and orange sandstone, carved by ancient riverbeds into smooth wave-like formations. The walking path runs through the narrowest sections; allow 60–90 minutes. Sensible footwear essential — the surfaces are uneven.

Glass Bridge — A transparent walkway suspended over the canyon floor. Worth the crossing for the view down into the geology below.

Jingbian Mosque — Halal lunch and prayer stop en route.

Yulin Old Street — The old commercial quarter of Yulin, built along the base of the city wall. Good for local snacks and a short evening walk.

MEALS

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

OVERNIGHT

Yulin

DAY

03

ORDOS · OVERNIGHT 1 OF 1

Yulin to Ordos — Genghis Khan's mausoleum on the plateau

The drive north returns you to Ordos and into the specific history that defines this region. The Mausoleum of Genghis Khan is not where the conqueror is buried — no one knows exactly where that is — but it is where his memory has been formally honoured since the 13th century. The complex on the Ejin Horo plateau is genuinely ceremonial, with Mongolian ger-style halls and a setting that has been chosen for its relationship to the sky and the steppe, not for tourism.

Mausoleum of Genghis Khan — Three connected domed halls set on the plateau, housing ceremonial artefacts and silver urns said to contain the Great Khan's possessions. The surrounding landscape is open grassland. Allow 90 minutes. Respectful dress applies.

Dongsheng Mosque — Halal lunch and prayer in the Dongsheng district of Ordos city.

Reconstructed Capital of Dadu — A heritage recreation of the Yuan dynasty capital, with period architecture and exhibition halls on Mongolian imperial history.

Gencang Silver Museum — A collection of traditional Mongolian silver jewellery and ceremonial objects. One of the more specific museums in the region; worth 30–40 minutes.

MEALS

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

OVERNIGHT

Ordos

DAY

04

JUNGAR BANNER · OVERNIGHT 1 OF 1

Ordos to Jungar Banner — the Yellow River bends here

Jungar Banner sits on the south bank of the Yellow River at one of its most dramatic points. Old Ox Bay — Lao Niu Wan — is where the river executes a near-perfect horseshoe meander through canyon walls, creating an island of farmland almost entirely enclosed by water. The river cruise, when water levels permit, takes you along the bend itself. The Sacred Ox Square on the headland gives you the view from above.

Old Ox Bay (Lao Niu Wan) — One of the most photographed stretches of the Yellow River, where the meander creates a natural island. Best seen from the promontory viewpoint first, then by boat if conditions allow. The canyon walls here are over 100 metres.

Yellow River Cruise — A boat circuit along the river bend through the canyon. Note: the cruise is subject to water levels. If conditions are unfavourable, it may be cancelled for safety reasons — your guide will advise on the morning.

Sacred Ox Square — The headland plaza above the meander with panoramic river views. A useful orientation point before descending to the water.

MEALS

Breakfast · Lunch · Dinner

OVERNIGHT

Jungar Banner

DAY

05

ULAN HADA · OVERNIGHT 1 OF 1

Jungar to Ulan Hada — walking across an ancient volcano

Ulan Hada is one of the youngest volcanic fields in China — the last eruption was approximately 2,000 years ago, which in geological terms is yesterday. The lava fields are still largely intact: black basalt columns, collapsed lava tubes and crater lakes sit across a plateau that looks nothing like the grassland surrounding it. The geopark has made the most distinctive element available as an activity — you don a silver astronaut suit and walk across the surface of the lava field. It is a specific, unusual idea, and it works.

Ulan Hada Volcano Geopark — A series of 11 volcanic craters on the Inner Mongolian plateau. The park is most dramatic in the early morning when the light is low. The astronaut suit experience is included; the walk across the lava field takes approximately 30–45 minutes. Bring sunscreen — the plateau has no shade.

Astronaut Suit Experience — A silver reflective suit provided by the park for the lava field walk. Worth doing for the photographs and the strangeness of the landscape underfoot.

MEALS

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

OVERNIGHT

Ulan Hada area

DAY

06

XILAMUREN · OVERNIGHT 1 OF 1

Xilamuren Grassland — overnight in a yurt

Xilamuren is one of the grassland areas closest to Hohhot and most visited by domestic Chinese travellers — which means the infrastructure is good without the wilderness being entirely gone. The visit to a Mongolian family is the anchor of the day: a home meal, the chance to try traditional dress, and the kind of proximity to the nomadic lifestyle that most tours summarise in a paragraph. Archery in the late afternoon. Bonfire and fireworks after dark.

Mongolian Family Visit — A hosted visit to a local family on the grassland. Includes a shared meal, traditional dress photo session, and lamb handling. The welcome is genuine; this is not a stage set.

Archery — Traditional Mongolian recurve bow archery on the grassland. Instruction provided. No prior experience needed.

Bonfire Party & Fireworks — An evening event on the grassland with a fire circle, Mongolian music and a fireworks display. One of the more memorable nights on the itinerary.

Yurt Overnight — Traditional Mongolian ger with basic but comfortable facilities. The grassland at night is very quiet and the sky, away from city light, is clear. Bring a warm layer — the plateau drops significantly in temperature after dark.

MEALS

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

OVERNIGHT

Xilamuren Grassland

DAY

07

HOHHOT · OVERNIGHT 1 OF 1

Hohhot — the regional capital and its Muslim quarter

Hohhot is the capital of Inner Mongolia — a city of about three million that holds the administrative and cultural centre of the region. The Hui Muslim community here is substantial and centuries old; the Great Mosque and the food street that surrounds it are among the most authentic halal dining experiences available anywhere in northern China. Mengliang Ethnic Culture Park brings together the different ethnic groups of Inner Mongolia in a single site.

Mengliang Ethnic Culture Park — A large outdoor cultural park covering the traditions, architecture and crafts of the Mongolian, Manchu, Daur and other ethnic groups of the region. Allow 60–90 minutes.

Great Mosque of Hohhot — One of the oldest mosques in Inner Mongolia, dating to the Qing dynasty. Halal lunch and prayer here. The mosque is active and well-maintained.

Kuanxiangzi Muslim Food Street — The main halal dining strip in Hohhot, with lamb skewers, hand-pulled noodles and Mongolian dairy snacks. This is where the city actually eats. Dinner is on your own here — budget what you like and explore the stalls.

MEALS

Breakfast · Lunch

OVERNIGHT

Dalad area

DAY

08

RESONANT SAND BAY

Resonant Sand Bay — the Gobi, then the night flight home

The final full day ends in the Gobi Desert at one of its most accessible and least overvisited points. Resonant Sand Bay — Xiangshawan — takes its name from the sound the dunes produce when sand slides down their faces in the wind: a low, sustained hum that the Chinese have recorded and written about since the Tang dynasty. The Desert Cableway descends from the plateau rim to the dune floor. Camel riding is included on the sand below.

Resonant Sand Bay (Xiangshawan) — A section of the Kubuqi Desert, one of the seven largest deserts in China. The dunes here reach 110 metres. The singing sand phenomenon is most audible on dry, breezy afternoons. The cableway descent takes 8–10 minutes. Tickets included.

Camel Riding — A circuit on the dune floor by Bactrian camel. Included in the itinerary. Allow 30 minutes.

Living Buddha Palace — A Tibetan-style Buddhist temple complex at the edge of the desert, dating to the Qing period. A brief visit before the transfer to the airport.

Ordos Ejin Horo Airport — Batik Air flight OD627 departs at 2250, arriving in Kuala Lumpur at 0505 the following morning. Transfer to the airport after dinner.

MEALS

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

DAY

09

KUALA LUMPUR

Arrive Kuala Lumpur — tour ends on landing

Flight OD627 arrives at KLIA at 0505. The tour ends on arrival. Nine days, four landscapes, a volcano, a river bend, a yurt on the grassland, and the singing desert. Inner Mongolia delivers differently to anything else in this part of the world.

YOUR TRIP AT A GLANCE

What's Included

DEPARTS FROM	FLIGHTS	GROUP SIZE
Kuala Lumpur	**Batik Air**	**25–30 pax**

INCLUDED

- check Return air ticket economy class by Batik Air with 20kg baggage allowance
- check 7 nights accommodation at 4-star hotel
- check Tipping to tour guide and driver
- check Tour and meals as stated in the itinerary
- check Air-conditioned coach throughout the tour
- check Driver and tour guide with private transportation

NOT INCLUDED

- Legend of Southern Desert Show (RMB 280 per person)
- Horse Riding (RMB 280 per person)
- Off-road 4x4 Vehicle Package (RMB 280 per person)
- Yuesha Island (RMB 280 per person)
- Personal expenses
- Travel insurance
- Any meals not stated in the itinerary