ALTAI retreats

JUN 16 – JUNE 28, 2027

Journey through the Gobi with Batzorig and Rowan








Experience Mongolia through music, culture, and breathtaking landscapes. This 13-day journey combines morin khuur lessons, throat singing and an unforgettable adventure through the vast Gobi Desert.

Dear friends,

For many years, we have been sharing the music, stories, and traditions of Mongolia in Europe through Altai Cultural Center in the Netherlands. Through workshops, concerts, and cultural events, we have nurtured a deep wish: to invite people to experience this extraordinary culture in the land where it lives and breathes.

Now, that moment has arrived.

For Rowan, Mongolia has been a profound source of inspiration for over 20 years. Through countless journeys, musical encounters, and experiences with Mongolian throat singing, his connection with the country has grown into a lifelong passion. Together with Saran, he has built Altai around the belief that music can bring people closer to cultures, traditions, and one another.

For this journey, we are especially honored to collaborate with Batzorig Vaanchig, one of Mongolia's most celebrated throat singers and traditional musicians. Together, we invite you to explore the spectacular Gobi Desert, learn the morin khuur (horsehead fiddle) directly from a master musician, and discover the fundamentals of throat singing in the landscapes that make this music so special.

Over 13 days, we will travel through vast deserts, towering dunes, and ancient landscapes, sharing music, stories, and cultural encounters along the way. This is not simply a tour of beautiful places, but an opportunity to learn, listen, and connect with Mongolia in a personal and meaningful way.

With a maximum of 10 participants, we hope to create an intimate atmosphere where everyone has room to discover, practice, and share. Your own morin khuur is included in the journey, allowing you to take home not only memories, but also an instrument and a musical tradition you can continue exploring long after we return.

We are grateful to bring this journey to life together with our trusted partners in Mongolia, whose knowledge, experience, and hospitality make these experiences possible. We look forward to welcoming you into this musical adventure and sharing a part of Mongolia that means so much to us.

We would be honored to travel this path with you.

With warmth,
Rowan, Saran & Batzorig

What makes this journey so unique

What makes this journey so unique.

This journey brings together the music, nature, and cultural heritage of Mongolia in a truly special way. Learn directly from one of Mongolia's most celebrated throat singers, explore the morin khuur, and experience these ancient musical traditions surrounded by the vast and breathtaking landscapes of the Gobi Desert. With Rowan's more than 20 years of experience with Mongolian throat singing and his deep personal connection to the country, combined with Batzorig's extraordinary musical mastery, we've created an intimate journey that goes far beyond ordinary tourism. It is a chance to learn, connect, and experience Mongolia with our hearts fully in it.



Experience Mongolia from within: Explore the Gobi Desert's spectacular landscapes while discovering Mongolia's living musical and cultural traditions. Travel beyond the usual tourist routes and experience the country through music, nature, and authentic encounters.



Learn music from a master: Learn the morin khuur (horsehead fiddle) with Batzorig Vaanchig, one of Mongolia's most celebrated traditional musicians. Together with Rowan, he'll introduce you to Mongolian throat singing. Your own morin khuur is included to take home.



Make music in the heart of the Gobi: Practice traditional melodies and explore throat singing techniques surrounded by the vast landscapes of the Gobi. Experience Mongolian music in a setting where nature, silence, and tradition come together.



Discover the wonders of the Gobi Desert: Explore towering sand dunes, dramatic red cliffs, ancient petroglyphs, and famous dinosaur fossil sites. Along the way, enjoy authentic Mongolian food, cultural encounters, and music beneath the vast desert skies.



Guided by experience and personal connections: With over 20 years of throat singing experience and extensive travels in Mongolia, Rowan brings a deep connection to the country. Together with Batzorig's musical mastery, he helps create an authentic and personal cultural journey.



A small group, a fully arranged journey: With a maximum of 10 participants, this journey offers personal guidance and shared musical experiences. Transport, accommodation, and planned activities are arranged for you, leaving you free to enjoy the music, landscapes, and adventure.

More than a journey: This journey brings together everything Altai stands for: sharing Mongolian music, culture, and traditions with care, depth, and authenticity. For us, it is a meaningful step in a long-standing connection with Mongolia: and a chance to finally welcome you into the country that has inspired us for so many years.

Meet the team

Please meet the team behind this journey.



Rowan Hartsuiker

Musician, teacher, and co-founder of Altai. For over 20 years, Rowan has explored Mongolian throat singing, overtone singing, and traditional instruments such as the morin khuur, tovshuur, Altai harp, and jaw harp. Together with his wife Saran, he shares these musical traditions through workshops, retreats, and cultural experiences that connect people with the heart of Mongolian music.



Batzorig Vaanchig

One of Mongolia's most celebrated throat singers and traditional musicians. As a master of khöömii (throat singing) and instruments such as the morin khuur and tovshuur, he has introduced Mongolian music to millions worldwide through viral performances and international tours. As co-founder of the acclaimed ensemble Khusugtun, he continues to share Mongolia's rich musical heritage with audiences around the world.



Saran Myagmarsuren-Hartsuiker

Saran is the co-founder of Altai, born and raised in Mongolia in a traditional countryside yurt. Her deep cultural roots, warmth, and love for Mongolian hospitality shape the heart of Altai. Although she won't join the journey, she plays a vital role in its organization.

Day to day program

Batzorig and Rowan Invite You to the Gobi - Homeland of the Dinosaurs

Join Batzorig Vaanchig and Rowan Hartsuiker on an intimate musical journey through Mongolia's spectacular South Gobi. Discover vast desert landscapes, towering sand dunes, ancient petroglyphs, and world-famous dinosaur fossil sites. Along the way, learn the fundamentals of the morin khuur (horsehead fiddle) and khoomii (throat singing) directly from two experienced musicians.

Combining music, nature, and cultural discovery, this journey offers a unique opportunity to experience Mongolia beyond the usual tourist routes. With a maximum of 10 participants, we'll travel as a small group, learn traditional Mongolian melodies together, meet local herders, and experience nomadic life in the heart of the Gobi.

At a Glance:
Group size: 10 participants, accompanied by our team
Dates: June 16–28, 2027 · 13 days / 12 nights
Organizers: Altai (Rowan & Saran) / Batzorig Vaanchig

Main regions and locations: Ulaanbaatar and Ömnögovi Province in the South Gobi, including Yoliin Am, Khongor Sand Dunes, Bayanzag (the Flaming Cliffs), Tugrigiin Shiree, and Khavtsgait.



Day 1

June 16 - Ulaanbaatar

Depart from your home country and begin your journey to Mongolia. Most international flights arrive in Ulaanbaatar early the following morning.

Day 2

June 17 - Ulaanbaatar

Arrive at Chinggis Khaan International Airport, generally in the early hours of the morning (around 04:00 for flights from Frankfurt, although arrival times vary depending on your departure city and flight). Our local team will welcome you and arrange your transfer to the hotel.

After checking in, take some time to rest and enjoy breakfast. Later in the morning/ afternoon, we'll visit the Chinggis Khaan National Museum, where we'll discover the history and heritage of Mongolia. We'll have lunch in the city, followed by dinner and a traditional Mongolian musical performance in the evening.

Day 3

June 18 - Journey to South Gobi

After breakfast, we leave Ulaanbaatar and travel south towards Dalanzadgad, the capital of Ömnögovi Province. We'll stop for lunch along the way before arriving in the Gobi region. Dinner and overnight stay in Dalanzadgad.



Day 4

June 19 - Yoliin Am and First Music Lessons

Today we explore Yoliin Am, a spectacular mountain gorge in the Gurvan Saikhan National Park, known for its dramatic scenery and remarkable natural surroundings. After lunch, we begin our musical programme with a morin khuur lesson, followed by dinner and an evening of relaxation and enjoying the surroundings.

Day 5

June 20 - Through the Gobi to Khongor

After breakfast, we leave Dalanzadgad and continue our journey through the Gobi. Along the way, we visit Düngenee Gorge, known for its impressive rocky formations, and make stops to take in the landscapes and settlements of the region. After lunch, we continue towards the Khongor area and our accommodation at Gurvan Erdene Tourist Camp. If time and circumstances allow, we may also have a musical lesson at the camp. This will depend on how the day unfolds, with no rush or pressure to fit it into the schedule. Dinner and overnight stay at the camp.

Day 6

June 21 - Khongor Sand Dunes and Singing Sand Dunes

Discover the magnificent Khongor Sand Dunes, among the largest and most spectacular dunes in Mongolia. We'll also visit the famous Singing Dunes, where the shifting sands can produce a remarkable humming sound. After lunch, we continue with our musical lessons, followed by dinner and time to relax.



Day 7

June 22 - Bayanzag, the Flaming Cliffs

Today we visit Bayanzag, internationally known as the Flaming Cliffs. This extraordinary red sandstone landscape is famous for its important dinosaur fossil discoveries and its place in the history of palaeontology. After lunch, we continue our musical programme, with some free time to enjoy the surroundings. Dinner and overnight stay at camp.

Day 8

June 23 - Tugrigiin Shiree, Dinosaur Country

We explore Tugrigiin Shiree, another remarkable fossil-rich location associated with Mongolia's prehistoric past. After returning to camp and having lunch, we continue with our morin khuur and throat singing lessons. Dinner and overnight stay.

Day 9

June 24 - Khavtsgait, Ancient Rock Art

Today we visit Khavtsgait Mountain, known for its various remarkable collection of ancient petroglyphs. These rock carvings offer a fascinating glimpse into the lives, beliefs, and artistic traditions of people who inhabited this region thousands of years ago. After returning to camp for lunch, we continue our musical lessons. Dinner and overnight stay.



Day 10

June 25 - Mongolian Nomadic Life

Today we visit a local herder family and get a closer look at traditional Mongolian nomadic life. Experience the hospitality of the countryside, learn about local customs, and enjoy the opportunity to ride a camel. After returning to camp, we have lunch and continue with our musical programme. Dinner and overnight stay.

Day 11

June 26 - Return to Ulaanbaatar

We begin our journey back to Ulaanbaatar, travelling north through the vast landscapes of Mongolia. Upon arrival, we settle into our accommodation and enjoy the evening.

Day 12

June 27 - Ulaanbaatar, Firewell dinner

Enjoy a free day in Ulaanbaatar. Explore the city, visit local shops, and pick up souvenirs to remember your journey. In the evening, we gather for a farewell dinner, sharing memories and celebrating our musical adventure together.

Day 13

June 28 - Departure

After breakfast and check-out, we transfer to Chinggis Khaan International Airport for your departure. We say goodbye to Mongolia, taking home our own morin khuur, new musical experiences, and unforgettable memories.



Frequently Asked Questions

Who is this journey for?

This journey is for anyone drawn to Mongolian music, nature, and culture. Whether you're a music enthusiast, a cultural explorer, or simply curious about Mongolia, you're welcome. Curiosity, openness, and a willingness to explore matter more than previous experience.

Do I need musical experience?

No. The morin khuur and throat singing sessions are designed to introduce beginners to these traditions. Batzorig and Rowan will guide you step by step, with time to practise and learn at your own pace.

What kind of food can I expect during the journey?

We'll enjoy traditional Mongolian meals throughout the journey, with vegetarian options available. Rowan and Saran have been vegetarian/vegan for over 10 years, so accommodating vegetarian preferences is a natural part of how we travel. Meat and dairy products will also be served for those who wish to eat them.

As we travel through the remote Gobi Desert, ingredients and food availability can sometimes be limited. We'll collect everyone's dietary requirements, allergies, and intolerances in advance and do our best to accommodate them within local possibilities. If you have specific dietary needs, please let us know as early as possible so we can discuss what is realistically possible.

Is this journey physically demanding?

The journey includes long drives, walks in nature, and time outdoors in the Gobi Desert. A basic level of fitness is recommended. Some locations have uneven terrain and basic facilities, and activities may be adapted to the group where possible.Participation is always voluntary... listening to your body is encouraged.

What language is spoken during the journey?

The journey is conducted primarily in English. Rowan also speaks English, Dutch and MOngolian, and Batzorig and local partners will share their knowledge in Mongolian, with translation provided when needed.

Do I need a visa for Mongolia?

Visa requirements depend on your nationality and may change. You are responsible for checking the latest entry requirements and arranging a visa if necessary. Please consult the official Mongolian embassy or consulate serving your country before departure.

Is travel insurance required?

Yes. Valid travel insurance covering your stay in Mongolia, including medical emergencies and repatriation, is mandatory. We also strongly recommend cancellation insurance. Please review our Cancellation Policy before booking.

Is the program fixed?

The journey is carefully planned, but the detailed day-to-day itinerary is still being finalized. Locations and activities may change due to weather, road conditions, local circumstances, or safety considerations. Flexibility is part of travelling through Mongolia.

What is included in the musical program?

You'll learn the fundamentals of the morin khuur with Batzorig Vaanchig and explore the basics of throat singing with Batzorig and Rowan. Together, we'll work on two traditional Mongolian melodies. Your own morin khuur is included in the registration fee and is yours to take home.

How can I take my morin khuur home?

Your morin khuur (horsehead fiddle) is yours to take home after the journey. As it is similar in size to a guitar, we recommend contacting your airline in advance to ask whether you can bring it on board as a musical instrument and whether an additional fee applies. Airline policies vary, and not all airlines currently allow instruments of this size in the cabin.

Another option is to transport your instrument as oversized luggage in a purpose-made wooden crate. We can help arrange a suitable crate on departure day. The additional cost is expected to be around €80–€150, depending on the final arrangements. We'll be happy to assist anyone who needs help arranging safe transport for their morin khuur, so you can bring your instrument home and continue your musical journey.

I still have questions — what should I do?

Feel free to reach out to us anytime. We're happy to answer questions and help you decide whether this journey is the right fit for you.

Practical Information

Accommodation

Accommodation during the journey will be a combination of hotels in Ulaanbaatar and tourist camps in the Gobi Desert and surrounding countryside. In rural areas, we'll stay in traditional-style gers (Mongolian yurts), offering an opportunity to experience life and hospitality in Mongolia. Hotel rooms are generally arranged as twin rooms with two separate beds, meaning you'll usually share a room with another participant. Facilities at rural tourist camps vary between locations.

Please know: Showers are not always available when traveling in the countryside.
Some yurt camps have showers, while others may have limited or no shower facilities.

Food

Meals will be provided by the ger camps where we stay and by local eateries along the way. Traditional Mongolian cuisine often includes meat and dairy, but vegetarian options will be requested wherever possible. We'll collect dietary requirements, allergies, and intolerances in advance. As we travel through remote areas, food options may be limited, so please let us know your needs as early as possible.

What to bring

Clothing
June is generally a warm time of year in Mongolia, but temperatures can drop significantly in the evening and at night, particularly in the open desert. Weather conditions can also change quickly. We recommend bringing both lightweight summer clothing and warm layers, such as a fleece, warm sweater, and windproof jacket. Don't rely on summer clothing alone.

Personal eating set
We want to ask you to bring your own simple travel eating set, existing of:
plate or bowl, cup/mug, knife, fork, spoon

(This makes travelling easier for you and greatly reduces the amount of equipment our team needs to organize)

Essentials:
- **Passport and travel documents**
- **Travel insurance documents**
- **Warm clothing**
- **Summer clothing**
- **Good walking shoes**
- **Light shoes/sandals**
- **Sleeping bag**
- **Sleeping mat**
- **Small pillow**
- **Flashlight/headlamp**
- **Swimwear**
- **Toiletries**

Other useful items:
- **Power bank**
- **Sunscreen**
- **Sunglasses**
- **Hat/cap**
- **Personal medication**
- **Small day backpack**
- **Water bottle**

Travel conditions

This journey includes substantial road travel through rural Mongolia and the Gobi Desert. Road conditions vary considerably, and some journeys may take longer than expected because of road conditions, weather, or local circumstances.

The itinerary includes remote destinations, long drives, and time outdoors. Please be prepared for an adventurous journey where flexibility is important.

Airport transfers

Airport transfers in Ulaanbaatar are planned for participants arriving and departing on the agreed group dates:

- **Arrival**: June 16, 2027
- **Departure**: June 28, 2027

If you arrive before the agreed arrival date, arrive after it, depart earlier, or stay longer, you'll be responsible for arranging your own airport transportation and any additional accommodation.

Airport taxis and other transport options are available in Ulaanbaatar. If you plan to stay extra nights in the city, we recommend arranging your accommodation well in advance, especially during busy travel periods.

Travel Insurance

All participants must have valid travel insurance covering their stay in Mongolia, including medical emergencies and emergency repatriation. We also strongly recommend cancellation insurance. Please make sure your policy covers the activities and travel conditions involved in this journey, and review our Cancellation Policy before booking.

International Flights and Entry Requirements

International flights to and from Ulaanbaatar are not included in the registration fee. Participants are responsible for booking their own flights and checking the relevant travel documents and entry requirements.

Visa requirements depend on your nationality and may change. Please consult the official Mongolian embassy or consulate serving your country before departure to confirm the latest requirements.

Pricing and Information

Pricing and Information

€4,800 per person (including VAT)

A fully arranged 13-day musical journey through Mongolia's spectacular Gobi Desert, designed for a personal group of no more than 10 participants.

Learn the morin khuur (horsehead fiddle) directly from master musician Batzorig Vaanchig, explore the fundamentals of Mongolian throat singing, and discover the Gobi's extraordinary landscapes, ancient rock art, and world-famous dinosaur fossil sites.

Airline tickets not included. If you book early enough, these costs are between €700-900.

The above price includes:

- **Your own morin khuur (horsehead fiddle) to take home!**
- A unique 13-day, fully arranged journey through Mongolia's South Gobi
- Accommodation in Ulaanbaatar and rural ger camps
- Transportation throughout the journey and planned airport transfers
- Morin khuur workshops guided by master musician Batzorig Vaanchig
- Throat singing workshops with Batzorig and Rowan
- Learning and playing traditional Mongolian melodies together
- Visits to spectacular and remarkable landscapes
- Cultural experiences and opportunities to discover Mongolian traditions
- A small-group experience with a maximum of 10 participants

Ready to sign up?

Simply send us an email (**rowan@altaiyurt.nl**) or WhatsApp message: **+31 6 40 85 18 46** to receive information about the registration.

Practical info and Terms

At a Glance
Dates: June 16–28, 2027
Duration: 13 days / 12 nights
Price: €4,800 per person, including VAT
Group size: Maximum 10 participants
Start and finish: Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
International flights: Not included

Participation & Payment: A deposit of €250 is required to confirm your participation. The remaining balance will be invoiced approximately six months before departure. Further payment details will be provided during registration. Failure to complete payment by the stated due date may result in cancellation of participation.

Visa Requirements: Participants are responsible for checking whether their nationality requires a visa to enter Mongolia. Any required visa must be arranged independently and in advance. As entry requirements can change, please consult the official Mongolian embassy or consulate serving your country before departure.

Flights & Insurance: Participants are responsible for booking their own international flights to and from Mongolia. Valid travel insurance is mandatory and must cover medical emergencies and emergency repatriation during your stay in Mongolia. We strongly recommend cancellation insurance to help protect against eligible costs arising from illness or other unforeseen circumstances.

Cancellation by Participant: You may cancel free of charge up to four months before the journey begins. If you cancel within four months of departure, your payment can only be refunded if we are able to fill your place with another participant, subject to the applicable cancellation terms. Please read our Cancellation Policy before registering.

Cancellation by Altai & Force Majeure: Altai reserves the right to cancel the journey if fewer than seven participants register. In this case, all payments made to Altai will be refunded in full.

In the event of force majeure, such as extreme weather, political instability, or other circumstances beyond our control, the journey may need to be cancelled or substantially changed. Refunds or alternative arrangements will be handled in accordance with the applicable cancellation terms and circumstances. Altai cannot be held responsible for additional costs such as international flights, independently booked accommodation, or insurance.

Program Flexibility: The itinerary may be adjusted due to weather conditions, road conditions, safety concerns, or unforeseen local circumstances. Altai and its local partners may modify routes, locations, or activities when necessary. Wherever reasonably possible, suitable alternatives will be offered, with the quality and safety of the experience in mind.

Language: The journey will be conducted primarily in English. Rowan also speaks Dutch, while Batzorig and our local partners will share their knowledge in Mongolian. Translation will be provided whenever needed to help everyone feel included and follow the musical and cultural program.

Organization & Responsibility: Altai Cultural Center, represented by Rowan and Saran, organizes this small-scale cultural journey in collaboration with trusted Mongolian partners. Altai is not a registered travel agency. Local partners arrange or provide transportation, accommodation, and on-site activities.

The journey includes long drives, outdoor activities, and travel through remote areas. Participants should be physically and mentally able to take part, follow reasonable safety instructions, and ensure they are appropriately insured.

Participants are responsible for their personal belongings, travel documents, and conduct throughout the journey. Altai will take reasonable care in organizing the program but cannot guarantee that every activity or arrangement will proceed exactly as planned. Nothing in these terms excludes or limits liability where prohibited by applicable law.

Conduct & Group Dynamics: This journey is designed for a small group and relies on mutual respect and cooperation. Altai reserves the right to take appropriate action, including ending a participant's involvement where reasonably necessary, if their conduct seriously affects the safety, well-being, or experience of the group. Any such action will be handled in accordance with applicable law and the circumstances.

Photography & Media: Photos and videos may be taken during the journey. Any use of identifiable images or recordings for Altai's promotional purposes will follow applicable privacy and data-protection requirements. Participants will be informed how to raise an objection or withhold consent before the journey.

Participants are also asked to respect the privacy and wishes of local people when taking or sharing photographs and videos.

Acceptance of Terms: By registering for the Music Journey Through the Gobi 2027, participants confirm that they have read and understood these Practical Information & Terms and the applicable Cancellation Policy.

Questions or ready to join us?
Email rowan@altaiyurt.nl or WhatsApp +31 6 40 85 18 46 for registration information.