Inner Mongolia Grassland Escape

Hailar - Hulunbuir Grassland - Ergun - Manzhouli - 6 days / 5 nights

Sample itinerary - Subject to availability

Travel style: private group

Overview

Steppe, herders, wetlands and the Russian border town.

The journey

Six days on the Hulunbuir steppe - China's last great grassland, where the horizon does the sightseeing. Herder-family hospitality, horses, the Ergun wetlands on the Russian border and Manzhouli's border-town squares. A summer framework: the camps run roughly May to September.

Highlights

- Two nights on the Hulunbuir steppe
- Horse riding with herder guides
- The Mergel River's winding grassland course
- Ergun wetland overlooks on the border river
- Manzhouli's Russian border-town squares

Day by day



Day 1 - Arrive Hailar

Met at the airport in China's grassland capital, where the avenue names still come in two scripts. The evening keeps it easy: Genghis Khan square with the evening strollers, the first Mongolian hot pot, and an early night - the steppe starts early tomorrow and the light starts before anyone expects.

Meals: - - Hotel: Hailar, city centre

Day 2 - Onto the steppe

Out along the Mergel River, whose bends stitch the grassland into loops worth every stop of the drive. At the herder family's ger: milk tea salted the proper way, urum cut from the rafters, and the questions the visit is actually for. The afternoon is horses - matched by the herders who keep them, walking first, trotting for the willing - and after dinner the camp's bonfire and ankle-bone games with the crew.

Meals: B, L, D - Hotel: Hulunbuir Grassland, yurt camp



Day 3 - North to Ergun

A last morning on the grass - a second ride for the hooked, or the slow version: the camp's meadow, the wildflowers, nothing. The drive north to Ergun crosses into birch country by the river; the afternoon is the wetland boardwalk above the braided border channel, where the water splits around islands and the far bank is another country. Riverside dinner in town.

Meals: B, L - Hotel: Ergun, riverside

Day 4 - Birch forest, on to Manzhouli

The birch forest stops the car within ten minutes of setting out - it always does. Then the long drive west across open country to Manzhouli, arriving as the Russian border town turns its lights on: the matryoshka square, the onion-domed facades, the streets where shop signs run Cyrillic first. Dinner leans Russian - borscht and leba in a restaurant that has been doing both since the trade caravans.

Meals: B - Hotel: Manzhouli, Russian quarter



Day 5 - Border morning, back to Hailar

The border gate and market morning - Russian chocolate, amber, telescopes of dubious magnification and gleeful negotiation - with the border-zone permits handled ahead as noted. Then the drive back across the steppe to Hailar (about 2h30), arriving mid-afternoon for a free evening: the leba bakeries, the Mongolian-medicine shops, and whatever the last night feels like.

Meals: B - Hotel: Hailar

Day 6 - Depart

Transfer to Hailar's airport; summer links run to Beijing, Harbin and the coast. The coordination team stays reachable until boarding. Families usually leave this one arguing about the horse - and the route recombines cleanly with a Beijing or Harbin leg for the broader itinerary when the next brief starts.

Meals: B - Hotel: -

What makes this journey different

- Two nights under steppe skies at a yurt camp we set expectations about honestly - heated yurts, private bathrooms where the camp allows.
- Horses matched to riders by the herders who keep them, not by a riding-school rota.
- The Ergun wetlands where the border river braids - boardwalk overlooks and slow river time.
- Manzhouli's Russian facades and matryoshka square as a playful border finale.

Where you stay

Best-available four-star in Hailar and Manzhouli; two nights at a grassland yurt camp - heated yurts with private bathrooms where available, and we say exactly which standard at booking.

Food & local life

Mongolian hot pot and hand-grabbed mutton, milk tea and urum (milk skin) in the herder's ger, a camp roast-lamb evening, and Manzhouli's Russian-influenced leba bread and kvass.

Included

+ Accommodation in the agreed grade, with breakfast
+ Private guide and private vehicle on touring days
+ All internal transport between cities as stated - high-speed rail, internal flights and transfers
+ Entrance fees for the sites named in the itinerary
+ Meals as stated (B = breakfast, L = lunch, D = dinner)
+ Drinking water in the vehicle, and a 24-hour emergency contact while the group is in China
+ Two grassland nights in yurt accommodation as described
+ One hour of horse riding with herder guides

Not included

- International flights to and from China
- Chinese visa or visa-application costs
- Travel insurance, including medical and cancellation cover
- Meals not marked in the itinerary, drinks and personal spending
- Anything listed under subject to confirmation until it is confirmed
- Extra riding hours and ATV hire at the camp

To be confirmed with suppliers

- camp operating season (roughly May-September; June grass is the point)
- yurt-camp bathroom and heating standard at the time of booking
- horse-riding weight limits and minimum age
- border-area permits for the Ergun and Manzhouli legs - arranged ahead with passport details

Customisation

Every framework can be re-built around your client's dates, party size, hotel grade, pace and interests - or combined with scheduled small group departures where budget matters. Send us the brief and we will quote in writing.