

JALMAN MEADOWS GER CAMP

CENTRAL MONGOLIA

THE PLACE Picture America's Yellowstone National Park, only imagine something triple the size—that is the magnitude of the Khan Khentii Special Protected Area, roughly a four-hour drive from Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia. The views are endless and the scenery is simply magnificent. Here you will find Jalman Meadows, a private *ger* (Mongolian yurt) camp set up next to the crystal-clear waters of the Tuul River and within the boundaries of the Gorkhi-Terelj National Park. The extreme contrast between Jalman Meadows and the modern world is extraordinary. The rugged Mongolian landscape swallows up every sign of human habitation, and, against this majestic backdrop, the Mongolian nomads still live with their herds in warm and inviting *ger* tents. Everyone is welcome—especially those who want to get away from it all.

THE STORY When it comes to sharing his passion for Mongolia with travelers from all corners of the globe, Jan Wigsten is a pioneer. Originally from Sweden, he opened Jalman Meadows in 1995 as part of Nomadic Journeys, the company he co-founded with Enkhtaivan Ravdan. It was the first low-impact *ger* camp in Mongolia and it has since inspired many others to follow suit. Wigsten has always been a trendsetter in the travel industry and is committed to low-impact tourism, ensuring that the camps disturb neither the natural environment nor the local nomadic way of life. Close to Turtle Rock and not far from the Aryapala Initiation and Meditation Center, Jalman Meadows is a special place. Every summer the whole camp, which is open between May and September, is set up anew. When it leaves, nothing is left behind on the landscape, which for the next six months disappears under a blanket of snow during the long and bitterly cold Siberian winter.

CLIMATE
JULY
AVG. LOW: 48°F (9°C)
AVG. HIGH: 70°F (21°C)
JANUARY
AVG. LOW: 28°F (-2°C)
AVG. HIGH: 36°F (2°C)

AIRPORT
ULAANBAATAR
75 MILES (120 KM)

PRICE RANGE
\$

ROOMS
14 GERS

ACCOMMODATION Using wood, canvas, and in winter, felt, the gers are built in the same centuries-old design as those lived in by the region's nomads. Strong and easily maneuverable, they can be packed up depending on the season and transported by horse or yak. Inside the Jalman Meadows' *gers* there are Western-style beds with thick camel- or yak-wool blankets, a wood-burning stove, tables, and a washbasin. If desired, a small tent with a warm shower can be set up next to your *ger* (for an additional charge). In the middle of the camp is a larger *ger* where you will find the kitchen and communal living area. If you want to learn more about local customs or stories of the region there is an extensive library, while in the shop you can buy souvenirs in the form of beautiful, delicate clothing and scarves made of cashmere and other types of local wool.

ON THE MENU Perhaps because the West doesn't perceive Mongolia as having a reputation for refined cuisine, the Mongolian dishes served at Jalman Meadows have been adapted to suit tourists' tastes. Pastas, grilled meats, soups, and salads are available, so even vegetarians will be happy. If you want the real deal, try some typical dishes such as *buuz* (fried, meat-filled dumplings) enjoyed by the Mongolian guides and nomads. Milk and meat products are purchased from local nomads and the rest comes with a bi-weekly delivery from the capital. There are Spanish and French wines on offer but the local beer, Gobi Altai, tastes fantastic after a day out in the wild.

MUST-DO Go on a trek to discover this boundless wilderness; try horse riding with the nomads or hiking alongside a yak caravan. The delights of the Tuul river shouldn't be missed either, and there's white water rafting or fly-fishing during the warmer days of summer. If you are looking for the ultimate in stillness and solitude, book a "gerscape," where a team of nomads (including a private chef) will guide you on a hike. Every evening a couple of private *gers* will be set up for you to experience the long, quiet nights and witness the pitch-black, limpid, star-filled skies.

www.nomadicjourneys.com/jalman-meadows-2



right
Sleeping in warm and cozy *ger* tents, with your own Western-style bed, a wood-burning stove, washbasin, and even lighting powered by solar energy.