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I. Country Overview: Mongolia at a Glance

A. History

The history of Mongolia spans more than 500,000 years. Archaeological excavations throughout the country have revealed artifacts from the Stone and Bronze Ages. The prehistoric inhabitants of Mongolia are culturally linked to Central Asia, not China, in that they were nomadic herders, not settled cultivators. Mongolia today embraces the heartland of Chinggis Khan's empire, but it was the homeland of other nations long before the Mongols were first mentioned in the annals of the emperors of China. Recent investigations support the hypothesis that the Mongols originated from the Huns (Hunnu in ancient Mongolian), nomads who created a state in the area of what is now called Mongolia in 200 B.C., the first of many peoples to do so. ("Hun" translates as "man" and "nu" translates as "sun.") Until its collapse in A.D. 98, the Hun state was the most powerful nomadic state in the sprawling Central Asian steppe and mountains. The Hsien-pi replaced the

Huns as the ruling group in A.D. 95. Between 95 and 1125 A.D., a succession of nomadic, feudal tribes occupied and ruled the area: Sumbe, Toba, Nirun, Turkic, Uighur, Kirghiz, and Khitan.

In 1190, Temuujin, from the Esukhei tribe, took advantage of weak individual tribal territories and waged 35 battles against other tribes. By 1206, he had succeeded in uniting 81 tribes to form the Great Mongolian State, or Mongol Empire. His success in these battles led to his being named Chinggis Khaan (universal ruler). The Mongol Empire of the 13th and 14th centuries was the largest land-area empire in history. At its greatest, it stretched from Korea to Hungary and included most of Asia, except for India and the southeast part of the continent. After Chinggis Khaan's death in 1227, the Mongol Empire was divided into dominions, expanded into Russia and China, and ruled first by his sons and then by his grandson Kublai Khaan (1260–1294) of Marco Polo fame. After 1294, however, the Mongol Empire slowly disintegrated, beginning with the loss of China in 1368 to the rulers of the Ming dynasty.

In 1644, the Manchus, rulers of the Ching dynasty, conquered China and southern Mongolia (a territory later renamed Inner Mongolia) and the remainder of Outer Mongolia, consolidating the Mongol Empire under Manchu rule by 1691. The Manchus penalized the Mongolians for any act of insubordination, and their 220-year rule is considered the harshest period in Mongolian history. During this time, Mongolia became isolated from the outside world, the power of the Mongol Khans was destroyed, and Tibetan Buddhism was introduced.

The revolutionary sentiments in Russia and China at the beginning of the 20th century also existed in Mongolia. It declared itself an independent state in 1911 as the Manchu dynasty in China collapsed and the Manchus withdrew from Mongolia. Gegeen Javzandamba Hutakht was declared Bogd Khan, the secular and spiritual leader, and formed a new government. However, China and Russia refused to recognize it, so the Tripartite Agreement that established Outer Mongolia as a politically and territorially autonomous state remained unacknowledged until 1915, when Russia agreed to sign it.

In 1920, two small underground revolutionary groups joined forces to form the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) to defend the Mongolian nation (against China) and to protect the interests of Mongolian herdsmen. Under the leadership of military commanders Sukhbaatar and Choibalsan and with the help of the "Red" Russians, the MPRP army defeated both "White" Russian and Chinese armies. On July 11, 1921 (commemorated today as People's Revolutionary Day), Mongolia proclaimed its independence again and became a constitutional monarchy with Javzandamba as the head of state. After he died in November 1924, the Mongolian People's Republic became the world's second communist state.

The emergence of a democratic movement in December 1989 brought swift and peaceful change to Mongolia as the government adopted a positive approach toward reform. The dramatic changes toward a free-market economy and fully democratic society began in 1990 and continue to the present day. A new constitution, adopted in early 1992, changed the official name of the country to Mongolia.

B. Government

The government has an executive branch, a legislative branch (the Parliament is called the Great Khural), and a judicial branch, which includes a Supreme Court and a Constitutional Court.

The first presidential elections were held in spring 1993. The current head of state is President Ts. Elbegdorj, who was elected in May 2009. The head of government is Prime Minister S. Batbold, who was appointed in October 2009 by the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) which controlled the government.

Since Mongolia became democratic, the same MPRP party that was founded on communist ideals in 1920 and controlled the communist period has dominated the government. The elections of 1996 saw the Democratic Union come to power, but infighting quickly dissolved their coalition and the MPRP regained majority control in the following election and has held it since.

The last parliamentary election was held in summer 2008. In that election, MPRP won 44 seats, the Democratic Party (DP) won 26 seats, and the Civil Will Party and Civil Alliance Party won one seat each. There is also one independent and two disputed seats. Although the MPRP held a majority, they chose to form a coalition government with the DP.

C. Economy

Mongolia's private sector is the primary engine of growth for the economy. Since 1991, traditional trading patterns have changed, with a large volume of imports from new sources entering Mongolian markets. Industries that developed during the central planning era have declined or disappeared altogether depending on their ability to export to foreign markets. A major transfer of assets from state ownership to private ownership has occurred, accompanied by a rise in large private businesses in mining, textiles, trade, banking, information technology, and other sectors. The distribution of goods and services and retail prices are now largely decontrolled, with the exception of the state-owned utility monopolies.

Mongolia suffered dramatic changes when its state-controlled economy disappeared, creating a large vacuum for provision of goods and services. Since then, however they have made gigantic leaps into a free-market economy. In 2008, the Mongolian economy grew by a record 8.5%, but for 2009, the growth rate is expected to be -1.3%. Mongolia's main export products are copper, coal, zinc and gold.

Mongolia joined the World Trade Organization in 1997 and has received significant foreign aid and assistance in recent years. In 2008, the international donor community (World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Japanese and Australian Governments) pledged more than \$165 million to Mongolia. The United States is the third largest donor, The Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact in Mongolia entered into force in September 2008, formally initiating the 5-year timeline for project implementation in the areas of infra structure development, education, health and property rights projects. Mongolia's international debt is approximately \$1.8 billion.

In past years, the inflation rate increased to 34% but has stabilized slightly. Growing unemployment, the primary cause of poverty, remains the government's main concern. Extreme winters have highlighted the vulnerability of the rural economy and accelerated migration to urban areas by people seeking better access to social services and employment opportunities. For instance, the population has almost doubled in the capital, Ulaanbaatar, over the past five years.

D. People and Culture

Mongolian and foreign scholars give different explanations for the ethnic name “Mongol.” Some think it was once the name of a single tribe. Others believe it comes from a geographical name that means Mon River. Still others assert that Mongol should be pronounced “mun-gol,” with “mun” meaning correct, basic, or true and “gol” meaning pivot, center, or essence, combining to mean “true essence.”

More than 20 ethnic groups make up the population, with ethnic Mongolians representing 95%. The remaining 5% are mostly Turkic people composed of Kazakhs and Tuvans. The largest group of ethnic Mongolians is the Khalkh Mongols, constituting about 70% of the population.

Mongolian is the main language of Mongolia, which is also spoken in Inner Mongolia and other parts of China, as well as in the Altai, Buryat, and Khalmuk Republics of the Russian Federation. Mongolian, along with the Turkic and Tungusic languages, forms the Altaic family of languages spoken by some 80 million people from Turkey to the Pacific.

Modern Mongolian, of which Khalkh (or Halh) is the most widely spoken dialect, is written in the Cyrillic alphabet. After experiments with Romanization in the 1930s, Mongolia adopted the Cyrillic alphabet at the end of the World War II, replacing the vertical Uighur, or classical, script in which Mongolian had been written since Chinggis Khan’s time. Since the 1990s, there have been movements to return to the Uighur script; however, the Cyrillic alphabet better reflects spoken Mongolian and will likely be used for the foreseeable future.

Mongolia’s religious roots are bound up in shamanism. Shamanism might be considered an unconventional religion because it has no founder from whom its teachings originate and there is no collection of sacred writings such as sutras or a bible. Their belief is that individuals are chosen by spirits of the deceased to serve as mediums for otherworldly powers. Loose collections of shaman elders exist to guide newly chosen initiates and perform services to their communities. Although officially replaced by Tibetan Buddhism in the 14th century, shamanism continues to be practiced and used by people throughout Mongolia, predominantly by those living in the north and west.

Buddhism faced severe repression under the communist regime, and only one showcase monastery was allowed to remain open. In early 1990, Buddhism was again named Mongolia’s official religion. Today, most Mongolians call themselves Buddhist, although the Kazakh minority living in the western part of the country practices Islam.

Mongolia observes the following official holidays: New Year’s Day, Tsagaan Sar (the lunar New Year) in early to mid-February (three days), Mother’s and Children’s Day on June 1, Eriin Gurvan Naadam (Festival of the Three Manly Sports) from July 11-13, and Independence Day on November 26. As a teacher, you will also probably celebrate Teacher’s Day on the first Saturday of February.

The three “manly” sports popular with the Mongols since ancient times are wrestling, horse racing, and archery. These three games make up the core program of the Naadam festival, which has been held annually since the 13th century. Earlier, Naadam was associated with religious ceremonies (worshiping the spirit of the mountains, the rocks, and the rivers); currently, it is a

national holiday held to commemorate the Mongol People's Revolution in 1921. Another big part of this is eating the Mongolian national food khuushuur – a meat-filled, fried hot-pocket.

Tsagaan Sar, the lunar New Year, is translated as “white month.” There are many opinions about the origin of this name. Some Mongolians believe that white symbolizes happiness and purity; others believe that the name refers to the abundance of milk products. In any case, the holiday celebrates the passing of winter and beginning of spring.

E. Environment

Mongolia lies in Central Asia, with Russia to the north and China to the east, west, and south. Mongolia is also called Outer Mongolia by some, the name China's Ching dynasty gave to the area to distinguish it from Inner Mongolia, an autonomous region in northern China, and Buryat Mongolia in Russia. Mongolia occupies an area of about 1.57 million square kilometers, or 626,000 square miles (about the size of Alaska).

The current population is approximately 2.8 million, making Mongolia one of the most sparsely populated nations on Earth. Thirty-eight percent of the population is under 16 years old, and 4 percent is over 60 years old. Almost 60 percent of the population lives in urban areas (40 percent in Ulaanbaatar); the rest live in rural areas. Life in Mongolia is becoming more urbanized and sedentary, although nomadic life still predominates in the countryside. Ulaanbaatar has doubled in population over the past five years.

Mongolia is a land of contrasts: wild forests, alpine meadows, semi-deserts, vast plains, and snow-covered mountains. Mountains cover more than 40 percent of the country. The natural scenery in the northern section resembles that of eastern Siberia, while the southern section, which comprises two-thirds of the country's area, features the arid desert and semi-desert of Central Asia.

The Gobi Desert in southeastern Mongolia supports almost no vegetation and is sparsely populated. North and west of the Gobi, the landscape changes gradually to rugged mountains with elevations of more than 3,962 meters (13,075 feet) above sea level. The highest peak in Mongolia is Nairamdal Uul at 4,373 meters (14,431 feet). There are small prairies and saltwater and freshwater lakes throughout the country, but water is more abundant in the habitable north. The only navigable lake is Huvsgul. The country's longest rivers are the Selenge, Orkhon, Tuul, Hovd, Herlen, and Halhin Gol.

Mongolia has many places of breathtaking beauty. Mongolia is home to 136 mammal species, almost 400 species of birds, and 76 species of fish. The country is also known for its wolves, marmots, falcons, eagles, snow leopards, musk deer, and the rare Altai snow cock.

With an average of 260 sunny days per year, Mongolia is known as the “Land of Blue Sky.” Because it is so far inland, it has a continental climate with extreme temperatures and very low humidity.

Snow usually stays on the ground from October through April, although it seldom totals more than a few inches at a time. The summers are generally mild and pleasant. The temperature in

Ulaanbaatar ranges from -27 degrees Celsius (-17° Fahrenheit) in January to 34 degrees Celsius (93° F) in July. There have been recorded extremes of -48 degrees Celsius (-54° F) and 39 degrees Celsius (102° F). (Don't let these averages fool you; temperatures in the summers have reached the high 90s and low 100s and have fallen low enough for snow in June.) Annual precipitation averages 25.4 centimeters (10 inches) in Ulaanbaatar.

The average altitude of Mongolia is 1,580 meters (5,214 feet) above sea level. Ulaanbaatar's altitude is 1,351 meters (4,458 feet), which is about the same altitude as Denver.

G. General Information About Mongolia

www.countrywatch.com

On this site, you can learn anything from what time it is in the **capital of Mongolia** to how to convert from the dollar to the **Mongolian Tugrig**. Just click on "Mongolia" and go from there.

www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations

Visit this site for general travel advice about almost any country in the world.

www.state.gov

The State Department's website issues background notes periodically about countries around the world. Find Mongolia and learn more about its social and political history. You can also check on conditions that may affect your safety in the site's international travel section.

www.psr.keele.ac.uk/official.htm

This site includes links to all the official sites for governments worldwide.

www.geography.about.com/library/maps/blindex.htm

This online world atlas includes maps and geographical information, and each country page contains links to other sites, such as the Library of Congress, that contain comprehensive historical, social, and political background.

www.cyberschoolbus.un.org/infonation/info.asp

This United Nations site allows you to search for statistical information for member states of the U.N

www.worldinformation.com

This site provides an additional source of current and historical information about countries around the world.

H. Online Articles/Current News Sites about Mongolia

www.MongoliaToday.com

An online magazine started by two Mongolian journalists

<http://ulaanbaatar.net/home/index.shtml>

A website that focuses on the capital city

<http://www.mongolmessenger.mn>

The Mongol Messenger is one of two English language newspapers in Mongolia.

<http://ubpost.mongolnews.mn/main/index.php>

The UB Post is the other English language paper.

International Development Sites About Mongolia

www.un-mongolia.mn

Information about the work of the United Nations in Mongolia

www.eurasianet.org/resource/mongolia/index.shtml

A site with links to a variety of resources

I. Recommended Books

1. Goldstein, Melvyn C., and Cynthia M. Beall. *The Changing World of Mongolia's Nomads*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
2. Kohn, Michael. *Lonely Planet Mongolia*. Footscray, Victoria; London: Lonely Planet Publications, 2005.
3. Sanders, Alan J.H., and J. Bat-Ireedui. *Lonely Planet Mongolian Phrasebook*. Footscray, Victoria; London: Lonely Planet Publications, 1995.
4. Sarangerel, Odigan. *Riding Windhorses: A Journey Into the Heart of Mongolian Shamanism*. Rochester, Vermont: Destiny Books, 2000.
5. Severin, Tim. *In Search of Genghis Khan: An Exhilarating Journey on Horseback across the Steppes of Mongolia*. NY: Cooper Square Press, 2003.
6. Weatherford, Jack. *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World*. Crown Publishers, 2004.

II. Clothing, Food and Shopping

A. Clothing

1. Clothes to Bring

Appearance is very important to Mongolians. Mongolians will not leave their houses, even to visit close friends without looking nice, having clean clothing without holes, though in Ulaanbaatar some young people are wearing jeans with holes as a fashion statement. To work, Mongolians wear business casual. It is important for you to be dressed nicely for work. For women, that would be a nice pair of pants or skirt, not super short, sometimes nice jeans are acceptable, and a nice non T-shirt shirt. In the countryside, it is rare for adult women to show their knees, however in the cities it is much more common. For men, a nice pair of pants and shirt. You will not regularly need a suit or tie. Mongolians also love lounge clothes to wear around the house, and will change as soon as they get home from work or an outing. Also keep in mind that you might not have the ability to wash your clothes as well, or as often, as you do in the United States and that Mongolia is a dirty place. White is not a good color.

You are probably most concerned about the cold. The final section is devoted to the cold, but you also need to remember that it gets hot. In the summer it will be over 100 degrees F. For most people, clothing is available in Mongolia. You will think it is unbelievably cheap, both in cost and in quality; unless you want international name brands then it will be more expensive than in the United States. If you are very tall, need large sizes or have big feet, it is best to buy your clothing and footwear in the United States and bring it with you.

You should bring good long underwear from the United States, at the very least one top and one bottom. While long underwear is available in Mongolia it is heavier for the same amount of warmth and much lower quality.

2. Buying in Mongolia

There is a great variety of clothing (style, color, size) available at most department and specialty stores, as well as markets. Remember to always try on clothes before buying, because sizes usually vary. Many Americans find that they need larger sizes than they wore in the United States. You should also check for quality (holes, tears, missing buttons/zippers) before handing over money.

3. Footwear

Your feet will require special attention in Mongolia. Finding the right size shoes is a common problem for foreigners, so you should bring enough to last a year. Shoe sizes in Mongolia usually follow the European system; the largest women's size commonly available is a size 36 (size 7 U.S.) and size 41 (size 9 U.S.) for men, though with a little persistence you can usually find larger size in limited styles. Since you will probably be walking a lot, you will need comfortable walking shoes. You will also need a good pair of winter boots, which can be bought in Mongolia. It is nice to have hiking boots, with some ankle support, and sneakers. House sandals can be bought very easily in Mongolia, as can nice slippers. When buying new shoes, be sure you have enough wiggle room for two pairs of socks. And always be sure to keep your feet dry, as this is a sure-fire way to cause problems for yourself.

4. Coping with the Cold

The most daunting aspect of Mongolia before you come is the thought of the cold. It is very cold, with winter temperatures regularly reaching -40° F. The key to surviving is layers. This starts with at least one layer of long underwear, pants, a shirt, a sweater, a long coat that goes at least beyond your waist, ideally made of down or some other warm material, at least one hat, a scarf, thin gloves and big mittens to go over them and, for your feet, at least one pair of thick wool socks and heavy boots. Remember if your boots are tight your feet will be colder. Make sure you have enough room to comfortably wear your boots with your thick socks, and wiggle your toes. You might also consider a ski mask for those really cold walks to school in the morning.

B. Food

You must be careful when consuming fresh meat and dairy products in Mongolia, as the Mongolians have no adequate inspection system. For dairy products, it is advisable to purchase well-known brand names. For meat, however, foreigners often do consume meat and seafood purchased at the local open-air markets without any health problems. You are advised to buy those products at some familiar and guaranteed sellers, especially those recommended by your Mongolian friends. Always be sure to cook meat thoroughly.

Most other basic foodstuffs are available in supermarkets and delicatessens, and larger stores also carry imported sodas, liquor, food items and small kitchen appliances. The limited selection of western fruits and vegetables varies from season to season. Principal items that should be brought with you or sent from abroad include traditional holiday foods, ethnic foods, dietary products, baby foods, special snack foods, sport drinks, and spices. Personal care products are generally available (with the exception of quality feminine hygiene products), but U.S. products or their equivalents are sometimes scarce and sell at twice the average U.S price. Seldom will you find a wide selection of products available at one location. Thus you will need to shop around before you find a certain item on your grocery list. Foreigners also tend to buy out their favorite item if they find it in stock, as this might be the last time for several months that it will be available. Your Mongolian friends can probably point you to several different stores that sell American goods in UB.

1. Weights and Measures

The metric system of measurement is used in Mongolia, and all cooked and uncooked food items in the market are sold by the gram/kilogram or liter/milliliter.

2. Cooking

You will be provided a stove, gas or electric, by your agency when you move into agency housing. In UB, most cooking is done on gas or electric stoves; in the countryside most cooking is done over a wood, coal or dung stove. If you do have the use of an oven, it will most likely be much smaller than those used in the U.S. Therefore, you will no doubt find yourself frying, boiling, stewing and grilling on a stove rather than roasting and baking in an oven. Microwaves are very rare.

3. Eating out

There are a wide variety of restaurants in Ulaanbaatar (see attached restaurant review list) in terms of price, style and cuisine. In addition to Japanese, Thai, Chinese, Korean, Indian, French, Italian and American-style restaurants, the cuisine of many other countries can be found in Ulaanbaatar, with the exception of Kosher foods and good Mexican and Greek eateries. Outside Ulaanbaatar most food is Mongolian.

4. Vegetarians and vegans

The Mongolian diet is very high in meat and dairy products, and low in vegetables. It is a challenge to be a vegetarian in the country and eat out.

Mongolians will ask you why you do not eat meat, and tell you that you need to eat meat to stay warm, healthy, etc. In the countryside, when you order vegetable soup expect meat and vegetables. On some occasions you might have to pick around meat in a dish. Although it is widely proclaimed that Mongolians eat a vegetarian diet during the summer months, this has yet to be evidenced.

If you are a vegan it will be very difficult to interact with Mongolians during meals. As Mongolians always feed you when you go to their house, it will make visiting difficult.

C. Shopping

If you do not speak Mongolia, shopping will take time in the beginning. Some people recommend one or two initial shopping expeditions in the company of Mongolia friends, who can assist in the selection of stores and offer advice on prices and the quality of items.

Mongolians do not generally negotiate prices in stores; there will be some times that someone is trying to blatantly over charge you because you are foreign. It is best to go to the next store, stand or car and work with someone else rather than negotiate unless there is only one.

1. Department Stores

Department stores in Mongolia stock a wide variety of goods, including clothes, electrical appliances, furniture, cosmetics, household items and food items. They are generally more expensive.

2. Supermarkets

Supermarkets are increasing in number and becoming popular among Mongolians. You can often find items at lower prices than at department stores. U.S. and other foreign brand foods and specialties may be obtained at the various western style supermarkets throughout the city.

3. Small stores

Small stores are the bread and butter of shopping in Mongolia, especially outside the city. They have lots of candy and alcohol and very little of most other things. But they are the best you can do in very many places. They are generally reasonably priced, but you often have to ask for prices.

4. Local Markets

The large markets are another way to shop. They are one stop shopping destinations, especially the Naraan Tuul Market in UB, where you can get pets, food, clothing and everything you need to build a ger. They are also crowded on weekends and a magnet for pickpockets.

III. MONEY AND BANKING

A. Currency

The Tugrik (MNT) is the monetary unit used in Mongolia. Paper notes bear the portrait of Sukhbaatar, small notes, and Chinggis Khaan, large notes, with the smallest note being 1 MNT and the largest 20,000 MNT. The rate of exchange fluctuates. As of July 2010, the exchange rate is at 13,480 MNT to 1 USD.

Mongolian currency comes in the following denominations:

Paper notes:

20,000 10,000 5,000, 1,000, 500, 100, 50, 20, 10, 5, 1

Notes smaller than 50 tugrik are very rarely used. Also don't confuse a 5000 note with a 100 note as they are the same color.

B. Financial Practices

Banking and financial customs in Mongolia are quite different from those in the United States. "Cash and carry" is the prevalent method of conducting personal transactions, although major credit cards are accepted at all larger hotels, most high-end restaurants, most department stores, and many shops catering to foreigners. Sometimes a fee of 1 to 3% will be added to the total bill for credit card transactions. Most places expect only Visa cards. Most other cards are not accepted. Checks are not accepted.

C. Banking

We recommend the following banks:

Bank Name	Check Service			Card Service		ATM cash withdrawal limit
	Accepted Check Type	How long it will take to get money back	Charge	Debit Card/ATM	Credit Card/ATM	
Khan Bank www.khanbank.com	American Express and Traveler's Check	American Express: immediately Traveler's Check: 1 mo.	MNT 1% USD 2%	Only Visa is accepted at ATM	Not accepted at ATM	MNT800,000 (equivalent to USD 500)
Trade and Development Bank www.tdbm.mn	American Express and Traveler's Check	American Express and Traveler's Check: immediately Bank draft 30-45 days	MNT 1% USD 1%	Visa, Mastercard, JCB accepted at ATM	All accepted at ATM	MNT800,000 (equivalent to USD 500)
Golomt Bank	American	American	MNT1.	Visa,	All	MNT80

www.golomtbank.com	Express and Traveler's Check	Express and Traveler's Check: immediately Bank draft 30-45 days	5% USD 1.5%	Mastercard, JCB accepted at ATM	accepted at ATM	0,000 (equivalent to USD 500)
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1. Bank Account

If you want to open a Mongolian Bank account, we will assist you at one of the banks above, but there should be at least one English-speaking worker at main branches.

2. Cash Card/ATM Machine

ATMs have become popular in Ulaanbaatar. Payment is made in MNT and the service charge is automatically deducted from the total. Note that your bank may charge additional fees for ATM withdrawals. Also note that your American card may charge a fee to use international ATMs, as high as 5 dollars.

3. Automatic Payment of Utilities, Rents, etc.

There is no such thing as automatic payment of bills through a checking account. Usually people pay at the bank, directly into the account of the entity they are paying.

IV. PUBLIC SERVICES AND UTILITIES

A. Utilities

Utilities should be covered by your university.

1. Electricity

Electricity in Mongolia is 220v/50-cycle alternating current (with two round-pin electrical plugs, usually though sometimes other outlets are available). Voltage regulators are recommended for most appliances, especially computers and sensitive electronics, as electrical power in Mongolia is unstable and prone to fluctuations, which can damage sensitive electronic equipment. If you use many electrical appliances, especially heaters or air-conditioners, the electric company in your area should be consulted about possibly stepping up the circuit breaker.

2. Water

Consumption of tap water in UB could potentially be harmful due to the poor condition of local plumbing and the risk of contamination. Therefore, it is

recommended that you use bottled or distilled water for drinking, cooking, ice-making, and washing foods.

You can use tap water for showering and brushing your teeth as long as you do not swallow any of the water. You can also use tap water for cleaning kitchen supplies and utensils not washed in your dishwasher. Be sure to use soapy hot water. One part bleach to 20 parts of water are advised for rinsing to ensure all contamination is eliminated. Bottled carbonated beverages, bottled alcohols, and bottled beer are safe to drink.

Non-distilled water preparation

- Boiling is one completely satisfactory method to ensure safe drinking water. A rolling boil for 15 minutes is effective. Store the boiled water in clean covered containers for future use.
- Iodine tablets may be used to treat water. One tablet per quart of water is sufficient, two if the water is cloudy or very cold. Mix the water well and allow it to stand for 25 minutes before use, longer if the water is cold. Keep this treated water in covered clean containers. Please note that use of iodine treatment for your drinking water is not recommended for more than 6 weeks because of possible effects on the thyroid gland.
- Chlorine compounds are the third choice for water treatment. Ordinary household bleach (5% active ingredient) is an excellent source of chlorine. Add two drops of bleach to each liter of water, four drops if cloudy. Allow to stand for 30 minutes before use.
- Filtering water, except with very high tech and expensive camping filters, is not sufficient. Parasites and bacteria can easily pass through filters. Filtering will, however, make dirty water look and taste more pure. Never place water that has been treated or boiled in a filter, as the filter itself will become contaminated.

B. Telephone and International Calls

Local and international telephone service is available and reliable, although calls to the U.S. are expensive. You can get international cards both for landline phones and for mobile phones. However, Skype is the best option for international calls.

1. Telephone Installations

Most likely, your lodging in Mongolia will have a phone already installed. If you want to have an additional telephone line installed in your apartment you should contact your institution for assistance in installing the line.

2. Mobile phones

Like the rest of Asia, mobile phones are ubiquitous in Mongolia. Mobile phones are a convenient and relatively inexpensive option if you do not have a private telephone line, or if you want a portable phone. There are many models of phones in different price ranges and the phones can be bought at many retail outlets throughout the major cities. You can choose a pay-as-you-go plan by purchasing

pre-paid cards in amounts from 500 MNT and up. There is no charge to receive incoming calls or receive text messages between phones.

C. Internet Provider and Internet Access

The easiest way to get an internet connection in Mongolia is to sign up with one of the many service providers. Rates vary and special deals are plentiful. If you do not have a personal computer, you can access web-based email at any Internet cafe for less than 600 tugrik an hour, depending on the quality and speed of the service. Internet cafes are very popular and can be found all over UB and in nearly every Aimag center. Additionally more and more places have free wi-fi in UB. If you want to use the Internet, be aware that despite the availability of 56-100K connections, download times due to heavy user traffic can be very slow. Live chatting, web-camera and Instant messaging services are extremely popular in Mongolia. Many foreigners keep in touch with their loved ones back home via Skype or Yahoo web chatting. Wireless modems for personal computers are also becoming more popular throughout the country, although startup costs can be high with some providers.

D. Garbage Collection

1. Garbage collection system in Mongolia

Garbage is collected from the courtyard of your apartment building. You will hear the truck coming because of its song, which sounds like an ice cream truck song.

2. Recycling

Household recycling is not a common practice in Mongolia. However, because plastic and aluminum bottles can be turned in for money, you will find people digging through your trash in search of them. There are also peddlers who come through neighborhoods during the day to buy them from you. Peddlers are easily recognized by the big burlap bags they carry around with them.

E. Postal and other delivery services

1. Postal Services

Postal service in Mongolia is very expensive both domestically and locally. It is not commonly used by Mongolians. An international letter costs upwards of 1000 tugrik, and a package will be even more expensive.

You will receive mail at your school. Packages may be checked by customs and you may have to pay duties. It is not advisable to send high value items (both monetary and sentimental).

2. Courier and Express services

International express services with offices in Mongolia include DHL Worldwide Express, Federal Express, and United Parcel Service. Prices can sometimes be prohibitively expensive.

V. MEDICAL CARE AND SERVICES

A. Medical facilities

Mongolia has many well trained physicians; however, health care is generally not up to western standards due to lack of both health care resources and training for allied health professionals. Hospital accommodations can be inadequate throughout the country and advanced technology is lacking. Shortages of routine medications and supplies may be encountered. In the event of a serious medical condition, a medical evacuation to Seoul, South Korea, Thailand, or Japan may be necessary. A medical evacuation flight out of Mongolia can cost over \$80,000USD. Purchasing adequate medical evacuation insurance should be a high priority for anyone planning to visit Mongolia.

B. Contact information for SOS medica clinic

For After-Hours Medical Help

SOS Medica International Clinic	1146-4325/6/7
SOS Medica International Clinic (24 Hr/On Call)	9191-3122
SOS Medica International Clinic – Fax	1145-4537
SOS Medica Clinic Hours	09.00-18.00, Monday – Friday
SOS Medica Clinic Email	admin@sosmedica.mn
SOS Medica Clinic Website	www.sosmedica.mn

The SOS Medica Clinic is located on Big Ring Road north of the Khan Palace Hotel and 3 blocks east of the US Embassy on the south-east side of the roundabout.

C. Medical Insurance

Even if you have medical insurance in the States, it may not be valid in Mongolia. Buying basic travel insurance - either before you leave or after you arrive - is an absolute must. Most travel policies provide coverage only for emergencies, not for routine or outpatient care, and will typically reimburse you only after you have paid, so make sure you keep all receipts and records. With that in mind, a good policy should include emergency evacuation coverage in the event that you need to be flown to a neighboring country for treatment. It should also provide for repatriation of remains in case of death.

As a Fulbright grantee, you are provided with medical insurance via the ASPE program. Doctors and hospitals in Mongolia expect immediate cash payment for health services. Make sure you read the policy and reimbursement procedure sent to you by IIE. Any questions you may have should be directed to the insurance provider.

VI. LOST DOCUMENTS/ CREDIT CARDS

A. Lost Documents

Losing your documents and credit cards while abroad can be a nightmare. You should keep copies of your passport ID page, visa, arrival card, customs declaration, and all other important documents in a secure place. In the event that you lose your passport and visa, you should file a report at the nearest police station, obtain a certified copy of their report, and report it again to the nearest Immigration and Migration office. You should

also report the loss of your passport to your Mongolian host, who will have to apply for a replacement visa on your behalf.

B. Lost Credit Cards and Travelers' Checks

You should report any credit card or traveler's check missing to your credit card/traveler's check companies immediately. Below is a list of numbers for contacting credit card and traveler's check companies that are common in the States.

Credit Card and Travel's Check Companies:

Citibank Master/Visa: 1-800-347-4934

American Express: (336) 393-1111; traveler's checks (contact Amex Australia)
61-282-239-171

Discover: 1-800-347-2683

Master Card International: 1-636-722-7111

Visa International: 1-800-VISA-911

VII. Transportation

Driving in Mongolia is stressful and requires a great deal of care and vigilance to avoid accidents. Most people do not obey standard rules of the road. Traffic moves on the right, but operators sometimes do not stay on their own side of the road. There are very few traffic lights, stop signs or roads outside UB. In principle, the bigger you are, the more right-of-way you have. If you plan on operating a motorcycle or riding a bicycle, bring a sturdy helmet or buy one here when you arrive. Department of Transportation-approved helmets provide excellent protection; however, some people find that the limitation of peripheral vision from a full face helmet is not always a good tradeoff in Mongolia given the need to watch for lane instruction from all directions. You may find an open-faced helmet or even a bicycle helmet more appropriate.

Taxis are plentiful, but taxi drivers rarely speak English. It is advisable when going somewhere new to have a Mongolian friend write the address down in Cyrillic, as well as several major landmarks near the location, especially since addresses as Americans think of them are not used. Also it is good to know an approximate price for all trips as taxi drivers regularly try to over charge foreigners. Make sure you ask how much a kilometer will be before you go. As of July 2010, the price per kilometer is 500 MNT. Always be vigilant in taxis, especially at night. You should never get in a taxi if there is anyone other than the driver in it already.

UB has a cheap city bus system. As of July 2010, 300 MNT will get you anywhere the bus goes. We will provide you with information when you arrive.

VIII. Recreation and Cultural Activities

A. Sources of information for Cultural Activities

English language newspapers *UB Post*, and *UB Messenger*

For expat events try Mongolexpat.com

B. Libraries and Printed News

Americans are advised to bring reading material. Buying English language books is possible but they are expensive and supply is limited. A Kindle is another good idea if you like to read a lot.

Some places to buy English language books:

Xanadu Books and Fine Wines

Telephone/Fax: 319-748

Hours: Monday – Friday 10am – 6pm, Saturday 10am – 3pm

English-language books, travel guides, popular fiction, new titles, current affairs, classics, and children's books. Imported wine. Weekly copies of International Herald Tribune.

Location: Marco Polo Plaza, behind UB Mart in the same building as Millie's Restaurant, 1st floor, across from the Choijin Lama Temple.

Scrolls Book Store

Telephone: 9915-0656

Hours: Monday-Saturday 11am – 6pm; Sunday 11am – 4pm

Second-hand - mostly light reading, some travel guides

Location: Near the main Church of Latter Day Saints (Mormon) Church.

Internom

Telephone: 330-900, 9913-3572

English and Russian books, maps, journals and children's books usually in stock.

Hours: Monday-Friday 10am – 8:30pm; Saturday-Sunday 11am – 6pm

Location: Next to the Information and Technology Park (south of Ulaanbaatar Hotel)

C. Radio and Television

In UB, there are many different Mongolian and international TV stations, including BBC, National Geographic, and occasionally movie channels and English language channels. There are many radio stations that play any kind of music you want to hear, including new and popular American hits, but DJs usually only speak Mongolian.

D. Touring and Outdoor Activities

Mongolia is a beautiful country. You should at least once during your time in country get out to the countryside. It is possible to do it on your own if you speak enough Mongolian; however there are many tour companies. Roads are bad to most places. At least part of the time you will be on dirt roads. Buses are old, overcrowded and usually do not run on time. However, if you can stand the trip, the rewards are worth the discomforts.

E. Photography

Mongolians love pictures! Photography is easy and getting pictures developed is easy. There are many photo developing shops in UB. One note, make sure you ask before taking pictures of people and if you say you will send them copies, send them copies.

F. Entertainment

UB has lots of options for entertainment. See below.

Performing Arts and Entertainment

The Arts Council of Mongolia

This is a great place to get information about events in Ulaanbaatar, including schedules for many of the following venues.

Tel/Fax: 319-015

E-mail: artscouncil@magicnet.mn

Web: www.artscouncil.mn

National Theatre of Opera and Ballet

Tel/Fax: 323-339, 9919-4570

Email: info@operatheatre.org.mn

Website: www.operatheatre.org.mn

Location: Large pink building located near center of Peace Ave and Ikh Surguuli Street east leg of Sukhbaatar Square.

State Drama Academic Theater

Tel: 9978-4690, 324-621, 323-213

Location: large orange building next to Grand Irish Pub

State Philharmonic Hall

Tel: 7011-8012

Location: Amar Street, Sukhbaatar District, north side door of Cultural centre

National Folk Song and Dance Ensemble

Tel: 323-954, 9928-3116, 8808-3116

Website: www.mon-ensemble.mn

Central Cultural Palace

Tel: 321-444, 328-833, 323-954

Please call for a detailed schedule

Puppet Theatre

Tel: [321-669](tel:321-669), 325-959

Please call or visit for a detailed schedule.

The American Center for Mongolian Studies (ACMS)

Tel: 350-486

Tumen Ekh National Folk Group

Throat singing, dancing, national song playing, mask dances

Tel: 9918-1113, 5007-1113, 9665-0711

Location: in the Children's Park, near Seoul restaurant
Performances every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 6 pm

Moon Stone Folk Song and Dance Ensemble

Tel: 9918-6171 and 9928-8399

Folk arts performance

Email: tsuki@magicnet.mn

Tickets: Foreign adults \$7, Mongolian adults 5000₮, Children 3000₮

Location: Seoul Street, Tsuki House Bldg. Sukhbaatar District

Performances every weekend at 5 pm (effective April 20th performances are held daily at 6pm)

State Circus

Tel: 324-357

Location: Seoul Street, near Mercury Market, south of State Department Store on Tserendorj St
Schedule varies.

Movie Theaters

Tengis Movie Theater (shows American movies in English with Mongolian subtitles)

Tel: 313-105, 312-719, 9191-3307

Website: www.tengis.mn

Tickets: adults 4000₮, children 3000₮

Tuesday and Wednesday tickets: 2500₮

New movie opening day tickets: 2000₮

Location: One block east of the corner of Sambuu Street and Ih Toyruu Street (Big Ring Road)

Urgoo Cinema (shows American movies in English with Mongolian subtitles)

Tel: 364-581

Call center: 7011-7711

Website: www.urgoo.mn

Art Galleries

Art Gallery of the Union of Mongolian Artists

Tel: 327-474

Website: www.uma.mn

Open daily 10am - 6pm

Entrance is free

Modern Art Gallery

Tel: 327-177, 331-687

Open daily 9am- 5pm

Tickets: adults 2000₮, children 400₮, students 1000₮

Zanabazar Fine Art Museum

Tel: 326-061, 326-060, 326-837

Website: www.mongolianationalmuseum.mn

Open Monday - Friday 10am – 5pm

Tickets: adults 2500₮ , children 200₮ , student 400₮
More information on Zanabazar is available at www.zanabazar.mn

Red Ger Art Gallery

Operated by the Arts Council of Mongolia, supporting Mongolia's finest young artists
Tel: 319-015, 9923-5422
Website: www.artscouncil.mn
Located in Zanabazar Museum of Fine Art
Open Monday - Friday 10am – 5pm
Entrance is free

Khan Bank Art Gallery

Tel: 332-333
E-mail address: artgallery@khanbank.com
Located in Khan Bank building on Seoul Street
Open Monday - Friday 9am - 6pm

Xanadu Art Gallery

Tel: 310-239, 9911-0873
Website: www.xanaduartgallery.org
Located on Juulchin Street, north of State Department Store, next to Tedy Center
Open Monday-Friday 10am - 7pm and Saturday 11am - 7pm

5+... Studio

Tel: 8881-2615; 8889-0124
Website: www.arts5plus.com
Located in the Union of Mongolian Artists Studio B, 2nd floor, room 206, Erkhoo Street, (west side of the US Embassy, on big ring road)
Open daily 11am - 5pm

Blue Sun Contemporary Art Gallery

Tel: 9986-0122, 9525-9374
Website: www.bluesun.mn
Located in building #23 (opposite Ulaanbaatar Bank)
Open daily 10am- 5pm

Museums

Gandan Monastery

Tel: 360023, 360258. Working hours: 09:00-14:00.
Tickets: Adult 2,500₮
Location: Zanabazar Street, Bayangol District, beginning of 3d Micro District

Bogd Khaan Palace Museum

Tel: 342-195
Open daily 9:30am – 4:30pm (closed Wednesday and Thursday)

Tickets: adults 1000₮ , children 300₮ , tourists 2500₮

Choijin Lama Monastery Museum

Tel: 328-547

Open daily 10am - 4pm (closed on Monday and Tuesday)

Tickets: adults 2500₮ , children 500₮ , students 1000₮

National Museum of Mongolia

Tel: 7011-0911; 7011-0912

Website: www.nationalmuseum.mn

Open daily 10am – 4:30pm (closed on Sunday and Monday)

Tickets: adults 2500₮ , children 600₮ , students/ seniors 1200₮ , family ticket 3000₮

Natural History Museum of Mongolia

Tel: 7011-0183

Open daily 10am – 4:30pm (closed on Monday and Tuesday)

Tickets: adults 2500₮ , students 1000₮ , children 300₮ , children under school age free

Mongol Costume Museum

Tel: 328-140, 328-840, 9191-0917

Open daily 9am – 6pm (please call in advance to visit)

Tickets: Tourists 2000₮ , adults 1500₮

Calligraphy Museum

Tel: 315-388

Website: www.inkway.mn

Open Daily 10am – 6pm

Entrance is free

A&D Museum of Art

Tel: 9911-5997, 317-837

Website: www.mongolianantique.com

Open daily 9am – 6pm (closed on Sunday)

Tickets: Tourists 2000₮ , adults 2000₮ , students 1000

Badamkhand Museum of Art

Tel: 9905-0832

Open weekdays 10am – 6pm

Khan-uul district Zaisan Dreamland hothon 3-1

Theatre Museum

Tel: 311-320

Open weekdays 9am – 5pm

Tickets: adults 1500₮ , Primary/ high school children 200₮ , University students 300₮ , tourists 1,000₮

International Intellectual Museum

Tel: 461-470

Open Monday - Saturday 10am - 6pm

Tickets: adults 2000₮, primary and high school children 1000₮, young children 500₮, tourists 3000₮

Postage and Stamp Museum

Tel: 362-972

Website: www.stamp.mn

Open daily 9am - 6pm

Entrance is free

Mongol Military Museum

Tel: 261-782, 261-863, 261-959

Open daily 10am - 5pm

Tickets: adults 1000₮, school children 300₮, tourists 2000₮

Memorial Museum for Victims of Political Persecution

Tel: 7011-0915

Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm

Tickets: adults 500₮, school children 200₮, University students 300₮, tourists 2500₮

Museum of Ulaanbaatar City History and Reformation

Tel: 450-960

Open daily 9am - 6pm

Tickets: adults 1000₮, school children 300₮, University students 500₮, tourists 1500₮

Museum of Mongolian Traditional Medicine

Tel: 342-650, 9924-4135

Open daily 10am – 4.30pm (closed on Wednesday)

Tickets: adults 1500₮, children 500₮, tourists 2500₮

Railroad History Museum of Ulaanbaatar

Tel: 244-493

Located in Bayangol district, Zamchnii Street 1

Open daily 9am – 5pm

Tickets: adults 1000₮, children and University students 500₮, tourists \$2

Cultural Heritage Museum of Chinggis Khaan

Tel: 9918-8143

Located in Khan-Uul district, Yarmag, street 18, # 433, behind the 41st school, near the Khan Bank)

Open daily 10am – 6pm

Tickets: adults 1000₮, children 300₮, tourists 2000₮

Restaurants

Please see separate document included in this folder.

Night Clubs

Face (popular among mid to late 20s crowd)

Tel: 313961. Disco club. Working hours: every day 18:00-03:00

Location: Tourist Street, 1 block west of Little ring road (Baga Toiruu)

Strings (popular among expats and foreign travelers/visitors – live Philippino bands)

Tel: 367855, 99095504; 12:00-03:00 every day, live performance Mon-Sat @ 21:00, Sun @ 22:00

Location: Amarsanaa Street, Bayangol District, located at White House Hotel, 3d Microdistrict

River Sounds (popular among the 30+ crowd – live music on weekends)

Tel: 320497, 99293232. Working hours: 23:00-02:30 every day.

Location: located on corner of Olympic street, between the MFA and Star

CHAPTER II: Mongolian SOCIETY AND SOCIAL CUSTOMS

I. Use of Names

Mongolian names traditionally have an important symbolic character - a name with auspicious connotations being thought to bring good fortune to its bearer. The naming of children was usually done by the parents or a respected elder of the family, or by a lama. Nowadays, most parents give Mongolian names to their children, often consisting of two nouns or adjectives, representing qualities such as solidity and strength for boys or beauty for girls.

Male names often include the names of elements such as 'iron' or 'steel', or other words denoting strength, such as 'hero,' 'strong,' or 'axe.' Some examples are Gansukh 'steel-axe,' Batsaikhan 'strong-nice,' Tumurbaatar 'iron-hero,' or Chuluunbold 'stone-steel.' Names of ancient Mongolian rulers are used as well, e.g., Chingis or Temuujin. Women's names commonly refer to fine colors or flowers, the sun and moon, or may be made up of any other word with positive connotations using the feminine suffix -maa (Tibetan for 'mother'). Some common examples are Altantsetseg 'golden-flower,' Narantuya 'sunbeam,' Sarangerel 'moon-light,' and Tsetsegmaa 'flower-mother.'

Many gender-neutral name components refer to auspicious qualities such as eternity or happiness. Some examples are Munkh 'eternal,' Erdene 'jewel,' Oyun 'mind,' Altan 'golden,' Saikhan 'fine,' and Enkh 'peace.' Many names include the names of places, including cities, mountains, rivers, etc. For example: Altai, Tuul, Orkhon, Tamir, etc.

When addressing a familiar person, names are shortened, most commonly by choosing one of the parts of the name and adding a vowel, melting it into one or adding the suffix -ka. For example, a woman named Erdenezaya might be called Erka or Zaya; a man named Batdorj might become Bataa, Baagii or Dorjoo.

Mongolians do not use surnames in the way that most Westerners, Chinese or Japanese do. Since the socialist period, patronymic (father's name) is used instead of a surname. If the father's name is not legally established (i.e., by marriage) or altogether unknown, a matronymic (mother's name) is used. The patronymic or matronymic is written before the given name.

Therefore, if a man with the given name Tsakhia has a son, and gives the son the name Elbegdorj, the son's full name, as it appears in passports and the like, is Tsakhia Elbegdorj. Very frequently, as in texts and speech, the patronymic is given in the genitive case, i.e., Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj, with (in this case) -giin being the genitive suffix. However, the patronymic is rather insignificant in open, daily use and usually just abbreviated to an initial - Ts. Elbegdorj. People are normally just referred to and addressed by their given name (Elbegdorj guai - 'Mr. Elbegdorj'), and the patronymic is only used to keep two people with a common given name apart. Even then, they are usually just kept apart by their initials, not by the full patronymic.

The basic differences between Mongolian and Anglo-Saxon names, in connection with trying to fit Mongolian names into foreign schemata, frequently lead to confusion. For example, O. Gundegmaa, a Mongolian Olympic shooter, is often incorrectly referred to as Otryad, i.e., by the (given) name of her father.

Since 2000, Mongolians have been officially using clan names (ovog) on their ID cards. Many people chose the names of the ancient clans and tribes like Borjigin, Besud, and Jalair. Others chose the names of the native places of their ancestors or the names of their most ancient known ancestor. Some just decided to pass their own given names to their descendants as clan names. A few chose other attributes of their lives as surnames. Mongolia's first cosmonaut Gurragchaa chose 'Sansar' which means cosmos. Clan names precede the patronymic and given names, as in Besud Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj. In practice, these clan names seem to have had no significant effect - nor are they included in Mongolian passports.

II. Status of Women

Mongolian women are, generally, more highly educated than Mongolian men. They hold most jobs requiring higher education. However there is a glass ceiling and there are very few women high in companies or in the Great Hural (parliament). You will probably find that most of your co-workers are women, and that they are very busy. They not only have a very demanding job, but also have a lot of work at home and are sometimes the only wage earner in their home.

III. Dating and Courting

Dating and courting patterns in Mongolia are quite different than what most Americans are used to. Though matchmaking doesn't play the same role in Mongolian relationships as it used to, it is still important that families agree to the relationship. (Part of the wedding application requires letters from the parents of a young couple saying that they are okay with the marriage to proceed.) Because of this, young couples could possibly be "boyfriend/girlfriend" for some time before their parents even know of the relationship's

existence. Parents and family will always play an important part in a young Mongolian's decisions.

In UB, young people are beginning to adopt a dating style that may seem more like the American-style on the surface, but deep down, they are still Mongolian. In fact, there is not a Mongolian word for "casual dating" like we think of in America. People will usually not be okay with someone they are "dating" having a romantic relationship with another person at the same time, no matter how casual. But, in UB, young couples don't automatically have marriage in mind when they are in a relationship. In that case, they might meet each other's friends, but probably not their families.

In the countryside, dating is taken very seriously. It is not uncommon for the subject of marriage to come up within the first couple of months of a relationship. Also, couples will often switch from calling each other "boyfriend" or "girlfriend" to "husband" or "wife" long before they are officially married.

Contrary to all of this, there is an underlying secret that everyone knows about: secret lovers. Everyone knows at least one person that has illicit affairs, and although many people know about it, hardly anyone talks about it. It is also common for Mongolians to be separated from spouses, but not officially divorced, and pursue relationships with other people. As a foreigner, you should be especially wary of these kinds of situations.

Americans who don't have intentions of marriage should be explicit about their intentions when entering a relationship with Mongolians so as to avoid any misunderstandings that could arise.

IV. Sense of Privacy

Mongolians have much less privacy than Americans are used to. In most families, even middle class children share a room, and in poorer families it is probable that the whole family lives in one small room or ger. It would not be uncommon for a Mongolian to come to your apartment and go through your things and ask personal questions.

Americans are often taken aback by what they consider to be the very private and personal questions they are commonly asked ("Do you have a boyfriend?" "Why aren't you married?" "How old are you?" "How much money do you make?" "Do you have children?" "Why don't you marry a Mongolian?"). You should realize that Mongolians often ask these questions of each other and they are not regarded as prying or nosy. In a society where human relationships are so important, these are attempts to build intimacy across vertical social structures. Sometimes, these are the only English phrases that a Mongolian may know and thus they may be attempting to make small talk. For most questions it is easiest to answer and ask "And you?" For the more awkward questions such as, "Why don't you marry a Mongolian?" I find it easiest to laugh but not answer. Always smile and take the questions lightly. Remember that people are trying to be friendly.

V. Physical Contact

Mongolians have a very small sense of personal space. You will have to adjust to having someone in your personal space. Mongolian friends of the same gender are much more physical than their American counterparts. It is not uncommon to see two male friends with their arms around each other. This says nothing about their sexual orientation. However, with people of the opposite sex, physical contact is much more limited and often frowned on by elders. Assumptions about illicit relationships will be formed immediately if two people of the opposite sex are seen engaging in any physical contact more than shaking hands.

VI. Entertaining Friends

Entertaining or being entertained in Mongolia has a specific order. As an American you don't always have to follow the rules, but knowing them is important. When you arrive you will be given tea and candy, or aaruul (dried milk curds). If you are expected to stay for a meal, your host will start cooking at this point. After your food is cooked, you will be given food, usually in the same bowl that your tea was in, which means your tea bowl needs to be empty. Especially if you are given milk tea, you really need to drink it all, as Mongolians find it impolite not to. Eat as much of the food as you can, your host might be offended if you do not finish it. If there is only a little of one thing, say fat, it is ok to say I don't eat fat. After the meal, you will generally be offered more tea.

VII. Gift Giving

Gift giving is common. The type of gifts you give depends on your relationship. The best option is to observe what they bring when they come to your house and give similar gifts. If you visit first, some ideas are Choco Pies or other dessert-like food, postcards of your home area, or school supplies (like construction paper and index cards if they are teachers). If you take vodka, know that once it is open, it is common to drink the whole bottle, and in most cases they will open a bottle if you bring it. If you know you are visiting someone with kids, it is good to bring small toys, notebooks, pencils/crayons, toothbrushes, playing cards, or fruit.

Some gift giving etiquette:

- Always give and receive gifts with your right hand or both hands, palm up. For small gifts, it is common to touch your right forearm with your left hand palm up.
- Never put a gift on the ground.
- Some people may cover their head before accepting gifts, so allow them time to do this.
- Mongolians also may touch the gift to their forehead as a sign of thanks.

VIII. Tipping

Mongolians do not tip. It is not expected. At some high-end restaurants, a service charge (VAT) is included.

IX. Crime and Safety

Mongolia is generally a safe place. However, there are an increasing number of attacks against foreigners ranging from pick pocketing to assaults, especially in UB. At the end of this, you will find ways to minimize your risk of pick pocketing. Always remember,

it is much more of a headache to replace a passport or credit card than cash. Never carry large wads of cash. If you must carry a lot of cash, do not store it all in one place.

As with all large cities, be especially careful at night and in unfamiliar places. Remember that after midnight - when clubs are supposed to close, but often stay open - night clubs and bars have paid the police not to come, so if there is a problem, the police will not respond.

There is a higher crime rate in the ger districts around the city than in the city center. It is advisable not to go to the ger districts, unless with a trusted Mongolia friend and not to go at all at night.

If you have any problems contact the RSO at 9904-3811, the FSN-I duty phone at 9907-8310, or the local guards at 329-095.

Here are a few other things to watch out for:

- Stray dogs, as they may bite. If you are bit you need to get rabies shots.
- Drunks, while they are generally harmless, it is good practice to avoid drunks by crossing the street or changing routes.
- Crossing the street is an interesting challenge in UB. At least at first, it is good to cross with a group of Mongolians who have more experience negotiating who will stop and who will not.
- Always be vigilant in taxis. Some drivers will try to rip you off or worse. Know how many kilometers are on the odometer when you get in, and pay only for what you have traveled. Observe the behavior of the driver, if you are uncomfortable ask him or her to stop, get out and pay. You can find a new cab. It is not advisable to take a cab alone at night. Be sure that doors can be opened from the inside, as this is one way that those with ill-intent will trap you and force you to give them money. You should also be familiar with the route you need to take to get where you are going. If the driver goes in a different direction, get out immediately.

X. Alcohol and Smoking

Alcoholism is a major problem in Mongolia. As mentioned in the safety section, you always need to be wary of drunks. Alcohol is also a major part of most social functions and holidays. At teachers' parties, there will be lots of alcohol and pressure to drink. You, yourself, have to decide how much to drink. It is generally not advisable to drink all of your first shot of vodka. This sends the signal that you are a big drinker. Even if you are a big drinker, this is not a message you want to send. You need to at least touch the vodka to your lips, even if you don't drink at all. At teachers' functions, many teachers will get drunk. It is normal to get drunk in this context, even with your school director there. However, you do not have to get drunk.

Smoking and its dangers are only now being made aware to Mongolians. Even though cigarette packs often have pictures that are more graphic than those in the US, Mongolians don't tend to be affected by it. Though you will see No Smoking signs

everywhere, it's not uncommon to see a Mongolian light up whenever they feel like it. It's also common to see youngsters in UB smoking.

XI. National Holidays

January 1	New Year's Day
February – March	Lunar New Year, Tsaagan Sar (White month)*
March 8	International Women's Day
June 1	Mother and Child Day
July 12	National Holiday/Nadaam
July 13	National Holiday/ Nadaam
July 14	National Holiday/ Nadaam
November 26	Constitution Day

* Lunar New Year date may change according to the local Astrologers' decision.

Chapter III: Academic matters

I. Mongolian Education System

Mongolia is currently transitioning to a 12-year education system. Beginning in 2008, students start school at six years of age and will graduate at 18. Mongolia's education system does well in terms of getting children and youth through school. Overall 81 percent of adolescents complete lower secondary school, which is associated with the end of basic education, grade 5 or age 12-13, and 55 percent complete upper secondary school (age 17). Students whose families live in the countryside often live in dormitories or with friends while they study at secondary school in the aimag center.

Education quality is strongly correlated with location. The best schools and teachers are located in UB, with small towns having the worst quality. Most students from small towns are excluded from opportunities in higher education by low test scores.

II. Higher Education in Mongolia

Higher education in Mongolia was founded during the communist period. The first state higher education institution (National University of Mongolia) was established in 1942 with three faculties in Ulaanbaatar: medical, pedagogical and veterinary. Under the communist system, all costs of higher education were fully subsidized by the government. The government was involved in policymaking, planning and development of the entire higher education system from the date of its foundation. A number of ministries shared responsibilities for education and all educational institutions were subject to applicable laws, regulations, policies and plans. University graduates were fully employed in accordance with the plan.

The 1991 Education Law of Mongolia, a series of education laws adopted in 1995 and amended in 1998, 2000 and 2002, and numerous executive orders by the Ministry of Science, Education and Culture (MOSEC) were clearly responses to changes in the higher education environment. Since the adoption of the first Education Act, there has

been a significant expansion of private higher education providers. Rapid growth has occurred in a number of non-traditional providers of education, offering predominantly foreign languages, business courses and non-degree programs. Today, about 240 public and private institutions of higher education operate in Mongolia.

Even at public universities, students now pay tuition, which is an important source of income for universities. The state offers loans to help students. The state also provides low cost dormitories to students.

There are 86 accredited universities in Mongolia, both state and private. Among them, there are seven major state universities: National University, Mongolian University of Science and Technology, University of the Humanities, National Medical University of Mongolia, University of Education, University of Agriculture, School of Finance and Economics.

III. Teaching English in Mongolia

a. English language Education in Mongolia

During communism, all Mongolian students studied Russian. After 1991, Mongolians realized the importance of learning English, however there was a lack of English teachers. So, beginning in 1992, they began a major reeducation program that trained Russian teachers to teach English. Now it is required that English is offered in all state-funded schools, although because of a continuing lack of English teachers, some small soums (districts) still do not have good English language training. English language education begins in grade 4 and continues for the duration of secondary education. However, possibly more so than with the rest of education, where you study is a major factor in how well you learn English. Students in UB and the other large cities have much stronger English skills than their countryside counterparts.

Students study British English and they learn words like holiday for vacation and trousers for pants. They also pronounce the letter Z in the British pronunciation of “zed.” It is good to keep this in mind when you are teaching. With higher level students it is good to teach them American English words too, but with lower level students try to use the British words as much as you can, so as to avoid confusion, since you will only be here for a short time and subsequent teachers will most likely continue with British English.

b. The ETA role

ETAs provide English language support services to their host institution for a maximum of twenty hours per week, with additional hours devoted to personal research projects. Since the ETAs are not trained teachers, their assignment is limited to teaching a maximum of 8 periods per week of spoken language classes, namely speaking and listening. ETAs will use the other 14 hours to assist teachers and students through a variety of activities which focus on informal conversation with students and faculty. It must be stressed,

therefore, that the ETAs should not be assigned to teach more than 8 hours of English classes at the beginning and intermediate levels.

The ETAs assigned to Mongolia will have an arrival orientation in UB, during the month of August. During this period, you will study basic Mongolian language and culture and receive initial training that will be useful to you in your assignments at your host institutions. Following the arrival at the host institution in the first week of September, the ETA should meet with university officials to work out a preliminary plan which addresses both the institution's needs and the skills and interests of the ETA.

Possible assignments for the ETA could include the following:

- Teaching classes of listening and/or speaking. It's best if you teach four two-period classes per week to two groups of either first or second year students. Each group will meet twice per week.
- Providing tutoring services for students with specific needs
- Participating in English Club activities
- Providing talks on topics related to American culture and current events
- Leading creative writing, drama, or speech projects
- Editing a student newspaper
- Leading a community service project
- Running a film or book club
- Leading conversation groups outside the classroom
- Providing consulting services to teachers (e.g., pronunciation, culture)
- Assisting in a language laboratory

c. Students

Mongolian students, especially at university level, are generally female. Mongolian students are generally shy about speaking in English and afraid of making mistakes. They are used to learning by rote memorization, and by being told the grammatical rules. Most can read and write much better than they can speak and understand. Discipline can be a problem; however we are going to teach you some discipline tactics.

d. Schedule

The Mongolian school year is from September 1st to June 1st. You will probably have a two or three week break in the winter.

e. Co-Teachers

You will be working with a Mongolian English teacher. Ideally, you will be teaching together as a team. This means you will also be planning your lessons together as a team and working together after the lesson to evaluate what went well and what went poorly. However you may not be able to do

this all the time. The key is flexibility. You need to build your schedule around when your co-workers have time. They are generally much busier than you are. Also, be patient, it might take you several months before you are able to get a schedule that works for all of you. Persistence is also important.

f. School Relations

It is important to have good relations with your school. Remember, if you have a problem, they will either be your biggest ally or biggest enemy. Part of having a good relationship is attending school functions like the New Year's Party or the Teacher's Day party. And participating in the festivities, drinking with everyone else, even if that is simply touching the vodka to your lips, with everyone else, will make you lots of friends. Do not feel that you need to become drunk, though many of your co-workers may.

g. Independent Study

ETAS are not required to conduct formal research. The intense teaching schedule makes it difficult to conduct formal research projects during the grant period. However, ETAs have many opportunities to learn about Mongolia through informal experience. They may involve extracurricular activities that ETAs may pursue outside of work hours.

Examples of independent projects and activities may be:

- Survey of students to study views of gender roles among Mongolian teenagers
- English drama, video, or newspaper club activities
- Community service volunteer (e.g., orphanages)
- Mongolian traditional music (singing or instruments)
- Mongolian classical dance
- Study of Mongolian folklore and literature
- Study of Mongolian language
- Non-Mongolian specific activities such as archery, horse riding, etc.

These types of projects are feasible and Fulbright strongly encourages such pursuits in order to provide a more well-rounded experience in Mongolia.

h. Course Certificate Issuance to Students

Mongolians like to get certificates. You may give them at your discretion. If you do choose to give certificates, make sure you have a concrete list of reasons why you are awarding them and can defend not giving a certificate to someone, as "sore-losers" can become confrontational. It is best if you can outline what to do to get a certificate at the beginning of the course or seminar.

III. SUGGESTIONS TO ETAS FOR A SMOOTHER TRANSITION

- Be positive. For your own well-being, approach this new experience positively.

- Always give things a try. Don't knock it before you try it. Experience is the best teacher, so go ahead and learn about new things.
- Do not take things too personally. In life, you are bound to encounter unfavorable circumstances or rude individuals, but learn from these occurrences; do not let them taint your experience.
- Be aware that all eyes are on you. In addition to being a minority and an individual, you are also representative of all your affiliations, e.g., native country, hometown, race, gender, religion, family, alma mater, etc. Be advised that, at times, others will judge you based on stereotypes, but is up to you to demonstrate your individuality and potential.
- Engage others outside your circle. As a minority, you do not want to be guilty of excluding others from your group, and hence, making others a minority as well. Try to form associations with others that you are not too familiar with.
- Do not prejudge others. Prejudice is nothing but an assumption.
- Give yourself time to adjust to a totally new environment, especially during the first two weeks of your stay in the assigned school.
- Above all, expect the unexpected!