

MONGOLIA

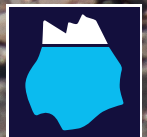


The Eagle Hunters of the Altai

9 days of adventure
with expert

Hamid-Sardar

better
moments



Photography with passion



Photography may be my first passion, but traveling is a close second. I spent decades exploring the globe with my camera and out of this passion, Better Moments was born in 2011. Since then, I have worked with the world's most renowned photographers to offer high-end workshops and expeditions for photo enthusiasts worldwide.

On our workshops, everyone is welcome. No matter if you have recently discovered your passion for photography or if you are an emerging pro – our workshops cater to everyone's needs and our experts are all experienced teachers that will adapt to your personal skill level.

Our mission is to help you to take your photography to the next level, refine your own style and sharpen your technical skills. Additionally, we want to inspire each other, create lasting memories and enjoy the best moments in life.

Better Moment's exclusive workshops in landscape, travel and wildlife photography take place in unique locations around the world. From the Himalaya region to Africa's deserts, from Scandinavia's fjords to Australia's Outback – we like to travel off the beaten track and work with local agencies as we are always striving to leave only footprints behind.

I am looking forward to meeting you on one of our adventures,

Christian Nørgaard

better moments



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Christian Nørgaard

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Our guests love to travel with us
– which is why we are lucky enough
to welcome them again and again.



LET'S GET SOCIAL

For inspiring experiences, real-time updates,
the latest trends or casual conversation, explore
our social networks for all things travel.



Linked in

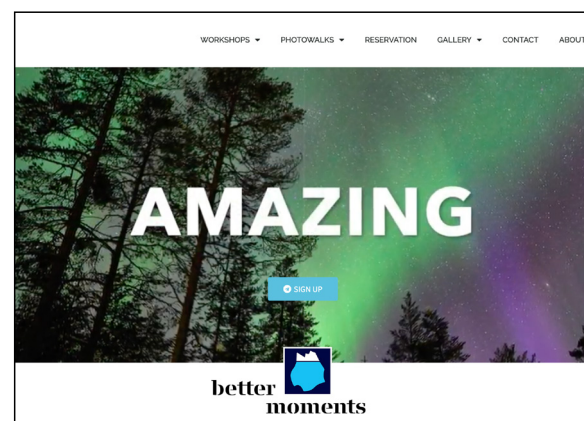


YouTube



BETTER-MOMENTS.COM

You can view our current
photography workshops
on the Better Moments
website, where you will
find all dates and details
– and can reserve a spot
for your dream trip.



NEWSLETTER

Stay up-to-date with our workshops, experts, and special offers:
sign up to our bi-monthly newsletter – and receive Christian
Nørgaard's guide to travel & portrait photography for free.

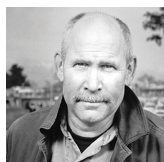
**SIGN UP AND RECEIVE A FREE
TRAVEL & PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY GUIDE.**

"I think that Better Moments' workshops are some of the best organized, most educational and most inspirational group workshops I have ever worked on. So I would encourage you to join us. Come along and have a great time, learn, be inspired and take great pictures."

Steve McCurry

Our passionate experts

We are proud to work with some of the best photographers in the industry who are experts in their field and have years of experience in guiding and teaching photography workshops.



Steve McCurry

National Geographic,
World Press Photo
first place



Michael Nichols

Wildlife journalist,
National Geographic
editor



Hamid Sardar-Afkhami

Writer, photographer,
award-winning
filmmaker



Sisse Brimberg

National Geographic
photographer



Orsolya Haarberg

Natural History Museum
Wildlife Photographer
Of The Year



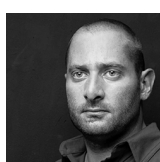
Peter Eastway

AIPP Grand Master of
Photography, Publisher Better
Photography Magazine



Lars van de Goor

Hasselblad Master
Landscape
photographer



Marco Di Lauro

World Press
Photo Award



Andreas H. Bitesnich

Award-winning fine art
photographer



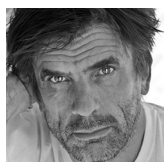
Steve Bloom

National Geographic
photographer



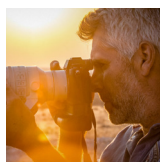
Tom D. Jones

Hasselblad Master
& European Fine Art
photographer



Arne Hodalič

National Geographic
photographer &
photo editor



Laurent Baheux

Award-winning
wildlife photographer



What our guests say about us

"It was a marvelous workshop with a lot of opportunities for great pictures. Obviously, the highlight was the night in Riisitunturi National Park watching the Northern Lights. It was the whole atmosphere having a rustic dinner in the hikers hut after shooting the sunset and waiting for the Northern Light which is staying in my memories."

Bernd Beykirch, Germany



"I found out that one of my favourite photographers, Lars van de Goor, was doing a workshop in the Netherlands so I signed up for the workshop and was introduced to Christian, the founder of the company, and I knew immediately that this would be a great workshop just by talking to him and seeing how incredibly well organized and precise everything was planned out. The hotels were first class, the food was phenomenal, which is important, and more importantly, each day was very well planned out and it has been a really great experience."

Aubra Franklin, USA

"Everybody has something to offer to the group, so we learn from each other, we share things, we have workshops in the evenings where we talk about what went well, what went wrong... and we see a lot of different styles, a lot of different techniques. And that is the good thing about this trip, it is really all about photography!"

Peter Dorr, The Netherlands.















The Eagle Hunters of the Altai

Following Hamid Sardar, Harvard scholar of Inner Asian Studies and professional photographer we embark on a memorable journey into the culture of Kazakh eagle hunters in Mongolia's Altai foothills. Exploration photography is not just about capturing beautiful portraits and breath-taking landscapes; it's about uncovering the DNA of a land and its people and letting it become the guiding principle in our art.

In Kazakh culture, art – indeed memory itself – is inconceivable without this totem-like connection to the fabulous eagle that seem to tap into early layers of human consciousness and the religious experiences of the archaic hunter. For nomads who still live in the wild, survival is based on imitation of wild beasts such as the eagle. Man hunts, heals and moves through nature by emulating the intelligence of animals. This spiritual connection between man and animal will be the guiding theme of our workshop.











Mongolia highlights

Better Moments' mission is to deliver exclusive workshops and we want you to explore your passion for photography and work with one of the best photographers, Hamid Sardar, during your Mongolia expedition.

■ HIGHLIGHTS

- Spend time with the fascinating Eagle Hunters, learn about their culture and witness first hand how they capture, train and finally release the birds – while taking captivating photos of both hunters and eagles.
- Join a feast in a traditional Mongolian yurt.
- Observe archers, wrestlers, horse fiddle players and contortionists while they show their skills and capture beautiful and unique images.
- Immerse yourself in the culture of the Mongolian nomads and learn more about their everyday life.

■ ON LOCATION

- Teaching and training in the best techniques and personal hints and advises
- Composition and focus on lines, golden section, perspective, foreground

- Work in different lighting and with short/long exposure times and aperture

- How to handle equipment with care on location

- Private hands-on lessons by Hamid Sardar that can help to take your photography skills to the next level

- How to approach local people in natural way

- The secret behind the travel and reportage photography

■ IN CLASSROOM

- Review and constructive criticism of the images taken during the day

- Digital workflow

- How to create a narrative for a book, magazines and exhibitions

- Portfolio Review

PRICE & BOOKING



PHOTO BY HAMID SARDAR





















There are no strangers



Renowned photographer, documentarist and scholar, Hamid Sardar, has a Ph.d. in Inner Asian Studies from Harvard University. Hamid is therefore uniquely qualified to introduce the often reclusive and enigmatic cultures of Mongolia. His work has been featured in National Geographic, Le Figaro and Paris Match, and he has produced several internationally acclaimed documentaries about the nomads of Mongolia.

PHOTO BY HAMID SARDAR













Itinerary

DAY 0

■ ARRIVAL IN ULAANBAATAR

For logistic reasons, we suggest to fly into Ulaanbaatar one day early as we will leave for Hovd on the first day of the workshop. It will also allow you to get accustomed to the local time zone and climate.

We will organize a hotel for you in Ulaanbaatar at the raw price.

Settle into the hotel and spend the day exploring the Mongolian capital. In the evening, there will be an orientation dinner at the hotel to meet your workshop guide and the other guests, followed by a slide show and discussion.

Please note that this is the last chance to stock up on supplies you may have forgotten back home.

DAY 1

■ HOVD - THE ROLLING STEPPE

Today we will fly to Hovd city, where we will be picked up by a 4x4 mini van that will take us to the camp. Here, you will have time to wander around and take the first photographs of the rolling steppe which is home to one of the most cheerful and hospitable cultures of Central Asia.

In the evening, we will have dinner together and sleep in a traditional yurt, or ger as it is called in Mongolia, which literally means home.

DAY 2

■ IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE NOMAD FAMILY LIFE

We will start the day early and drive to the camp of a Nomad family. You will get introduced to the traditional way of life, which hasn't changed for centuries. Have your camera ready because we will immerse ourselves in the family's life and document their daily chores which include milking, herding, cooking

traditional meals and preparing local dairy products. You will also have the opportunity to capture the nomads riding their horses and motorcycles.

We will have dinner at the camp followed by a peer review and discussion of the shots taken during the day.

DAY 3

■ NAADAM FESTIVAL - A CELEBRATION OF CULTURE

Make sure your camera's batteries are charged as the best of what Mongolia has to offer will come to our camp: a mini Naadam celebration will take place at the camp grounds. Nadaam is Mongolia's national festival and a sophisticated and eloquent expression of its Nomadic culture.

The Mongolian hinterland has much more photo subjects to offer than the Eagle Hunters. Today, we will meet wrestlers and archers, and horse racers, throat singers, and contortionists. In fact, in Mongolia, contortion is a cultural practice, which expresses itself through dance, and it is as common as ballet to the western world. Mongolia has produced some of the most magnificent contortion acts in the world thanks to their grace and poise that exhibit the beauty and capability of the human body. Each single movement between the various poses is fluid in finely tuned positions right to the fingers and tip-toes.

Wrestling, along with horseback riding and archery, is one of Mongolia's three manly sports. The sport known as Bökh is a cultural tradition which dates back centuries. It is the main focus in the life of many young Mongolian men as it defines manliness within the community.

In the evening, we will have dinner at the camp and recap this exciting day with a photo review and discussion. For the night, we will stay in a yurt/ger at the camp.

DAY 4

■ IN THE SEARCH FOR THE ELUSIVE SNOW LEOPARD

We will start the day early, and drive to Jargalant Mountain, which

crowns a teardrop-shaped massif encircled by lakes. Snow leopards, gazelles and ibex roam this extraordinary ecosphere. The elusive snow leopard is a rare sight so cross your fingers that we are part of the lucky few who get to see it.

Bring your long lens and be ready to hike the mountain to take some memorable landscape and wildlife pictures. Our guide, a local herder, will take us through his backyard – the majestic Jargalant Mountain – and to the places where we are most likely to see wildlife.

In the evening, we will return to Hovd, where we will have dinner at the hotel and review the images taken during the day.

DAY 5

■ ON THE (DIRT) ROAD TO BAYAN-ULGII

Today we have a long drive ahead of us as the Bayan-Ulgii province in the north is our next destination. Bayan-Ulgii is a far-off land of high mountains (the Mongol Altai) torrents and glaciers. It is inhabited by Kazakh, a minority who has a different culture from the Mongols, herding yaks and goats and hunting with trained eagles.

Along the way, there will be a stop for lunch as well as several stops for landscape and travel photography.

Dinner at base camp followed by evening peer review and discussion.

One more, we will spend the night in a yurt/ger. The Kazaks decorate their tents and houses with bright weavings and abstract patterns that imitate ram's horns, birds and flowers. The inner life of the Kazak, it seems, flourishes in inverse proportion to the scarcity of their geographic environment.

DAY 6

■ ALTANTSOGTS - WHERE THE EAGLES FLY

We will leave the camp early and drive to Altantsogts to experience the Kazakh eagle hunting culture.

During our visits to the nomad camps we will observe many methods of catching an eagle. Most commonly the Kazakhs will



lure the eagle into a net trap using as decoy a bait-crow tied near a dead animal. After a heavy rain eagles would sometimes become so wet that they could not fly very easily, the same thing happened after an eagle gorged itself on carrion making it possible for a man on a fast horse to capture the bird before it took to the air. Kazakh's insist, however, that the bravest eagles, those that are trained for catching wolves, must be directly taken from the nest right before their maiden flight.

Our goal is to capture how local herders train and hunt with their eagles in the vast mountain area of Altai mountains. We will observe hunters training and feeding their eagles. Short training flights will allow us to set up the camera in various creative positions in order to capture the eagle in flight.

However, the Kazakhs understand that eagles are still wild animals that cannot be kept forever, and so they must be returned to the wild before they lose their dreams of freedom. We will follow a hunter to the highest point on the mountain and photograph the elaborate ritual of releasing the eagle back into the wild. Participants will be

encouraged to capture the complicity and emotion between eagle and hunter.

Dinner at the base camp followed by evening peer review and discussion. Sleep in a yurt/ger at the camp.

DAY 7

■ KHATUU VALLEY - THE HIDDEN GEM

Today we will travel to the hidden gem of Khatuu Mountain and visit the eagle hunters and their families. This area of Western Mongolia which will leave you speechless with amazement by its rough hills and deep cut gorges of the majestic valley of Khatuu.

The day will be spend photographing the egale hunters, while you will also have the opportunity for landscape photography.

Dinner at base camp followed by evening peer review and discussion. Overnight in a yurt/ger.

DAY 8

■ TRADITONAL GAMES AND KAZAKH CULTURE

On our last day at the camp, we will witness and capture Kazakh

traditional games and culture: experience the famous ancient nomadic game known as kokpar, which can roughly be transplated to "goat-grabbing", which is an accurate description as riders try to take away the goat from each other. The game is said to have originated with Genghis Khan's early-13th-century mounted raiders, although it may be even older.

We will also listen to Kazakh songs and dombor music. The dombor (with two strings, a long neck and round belly) is an instrument traditionally played by Khazakh musicians.

Dinner at the camp followed by a review and critic of the images taken during the day. Night at a yurt/ger.

DAY 9

■ FLIGHT BACK TO ULAANBAATAR

Today, we will return to the Mongolian capital. In the evening, we will have dinner at our hotel followed by individual presentations and discussions.

DAY 10

■ DEPARTURE

Return flights home.









Quick guide

We wish you to travel with the greatest possible comfort and to know that you have received as much information as possible.

■ GETTING THERE

Chinggis Khaan International Airport is the international airport serving Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, situated 18 km southwest of the capital.

The airport is due for replacement in 2019 by the new Khöshigt Valley Airport which is located at the Khoshigt Valley, 52 km south of Ulaanbaatar city centre.

There are international flights arriving from Seoul, Hongkong, Berlin, Istanbul, Tokyo and Moscow.

■ VISA

A 30-day tourist visa is required for most countries and can be easily obtained at any Mongolian embassy, consulate, consulate-general or honorary consul. However, a number of countries can visit visa free, including citizens of the USA, Canada and Germany.

If you are traveling to Mongolia from a country that has no Mongolian consulate, you can pick up a 30-day tourist visa on arrival at the airport in Ulaanbaatar. You will need T108,000 (or dollar equivalent) and two passport photos – you should also have a pre-approval letter from an organization or company in Mongolia.

■ WEATHER

Expect warm and mostly dry weather in June and July, with some thunderstorms.

The average temperature in June is 15°C, ranging from 9°C to 22°C.

■ LANGUAGE

The official language of Mongolia is Mongolian, and is spoken by 95% of the population.

Russian is the most frequently spoken foreign language in Mongolia, followed by English, although English has been gradually replacing Russian as the second language. Korean has gained popularity as tens of thousands of Mongolians work in South Korea.

■ CURRENCY

The Mongolian monetary unit is the Tögrög (MNT)

■ QUICK GUIDE

Ulaanbaatar, where 1 million people out of Mongolia's 2.8 million population, is the country's economic, cultural and political center and has a number of tourist attractions and hosts the most varied types of entertainment.

Gandan is the largest and most significant monastery in Mongolia and one of Ulaanbaatar's most interesting sights. Built in the mid 19th century, it is the only monastery where Buddhist services continued to function even during the communist past. The Migjid Janraisig Temple is an important part of Gandan Monastery, housing the majestic new gilded statue of Migjid Janraisig, decorated with jewels.

The Natural History Museum has departments of Geography, Geology, Flora and Fauna, and Paleontol-

ogy in the museum. Displays of stuffed and embalmed animals including the rare Gobi bear and wild camel, birds and fish will give you a good idea about the rich fauna of Mongolia.

The Museum of National History offers the richest collection on the history of Mongolia, from Stone Age to modern times. It allows retrospect the unique culture of the horse riding steppe nomads and their lifestyle. The exhibition contains many artifacts and arts, military equipment and arms of Genghis Khan Warriors.

Zaisan Hill offers the best views of Ulaanbaatar and the surrounding nature.

There are many uniquely Mongolian artifacts can buy in Ulaanbaatar. Perhaps the most popular product with tourists is the high quality cashmere made here. You can buy from the factory shops, the department store and various museum shops.

PRICE & BOOKING





Equipment

Whether this is your first trip or your "hundredth" workshop with us, it's always helpful to have a rundown of what items you may want to pack so you have a travel checklist. Bookmark this packing list, because you'll want to refer back to it to make sure you've thought of everything you might want to pack.

■ CAMERA

The camera list is for inspiration, since you know better than anyone what equipment you prefer.

- ☐ Bring your own laptop computer
- ☐ Storage medium
- ☐ Camera body(ies)
- ☐ Tripod
- ☐ Lenses, If you are working with a 24x36mm camera system, lenses from 12mm to approx. 55mm are a good choice as well as a 'long lens' such as a 180mm. If you are working with a medium format camera, lenses from 28mm to approx. 80mm, and a 'long lens' such as a 300 mm, are advisable..
- ☐ Bag for all camera gear
- ☐ Light bag for easy hiking with camera bodies and accessories
- ☐ Cleaning kit for cameras and lenses
- ☐ Rain/dust covers for cameras and lenses
- ☐ Charger for batteries
- ☐ Spare batteries
- ☐ Standard power converter
- ☐ Raw processing software
- ☐ Memory cards and card wallets
- ☐ Memory card reader
- ☐ USB key to exchange images
- ☐ Lens extenders
- ☐ Camera straps for ease of changing from one camera to another
- ☐ Graduated filter set
- ☐ Filter holder
- ☐ High quality polarizing filter
- ☐ Lens belt





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PHOTOGRAPHY
WITH PASSION

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