


# Mongol Rally: The most extraordinary road-trip ever

For the biggest, craziest drive of your life, consider signing up for this 10,000+ mile journey across Europe and Asia through parts of the world that most Westerners never get a chance to see.

Best for

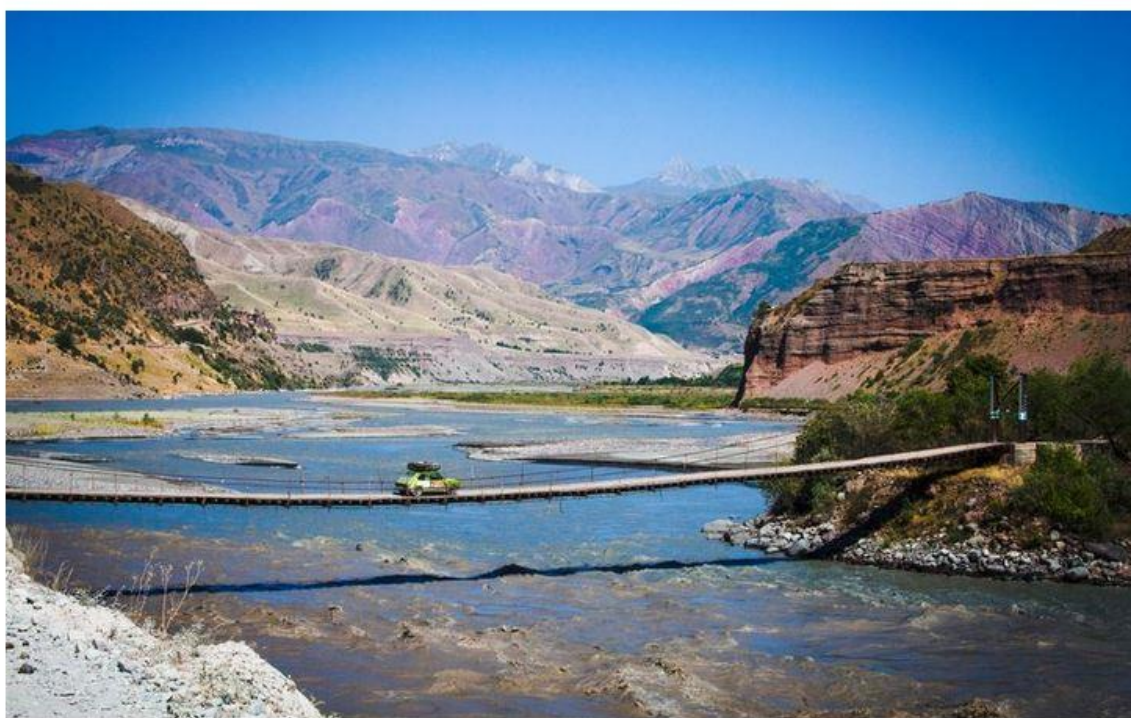
 Road trip

 Adventure

## Why it's special

More than 300 teams participate in this annual trip from Prague to Siberia. The catch – one of them – is that participants can only drive tiny vehicles with engines of 1.2 litres or less (think Nissan Micras and Fiat Pandas). If you get lost, or break down, you figure things out on your own, rather than calling the organisers for help.

Route-wise, I recommend heading southeast across Europe. Things start to get interesting on Romania's Transfăgărășan Highway, which makes dozens of switchbacks as it climbs through a massive green valley and provides jaw-dropping vistas. Continue through Bulgaria, Turkey, and Iran (Brits must hire a guide to get a visa) before seeing the giant fire pit in the middle of Turkmenistan's desert. After Uzbekistan, drive along Tajikistan's Pamir Highway, a mostly unpaved and rocky dirt road through the mountains, which is definitely not for the faint of heart. Afghanistan is just across the river, but it's generally pretty safe on this side, with children lining up to give you high-fives as you pass through their villages. Dine on exotic meats from horse, camel and yak. Try not to get sick. Car trouble is inevitable sooner or later, but when you do break down, you'll be amazed at the friendliness and resourcefulness of local mechanics, who somehow manage to fix nearly everything, even if they don't have the proper parts. Finally, pass through Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Mongolia to the finish line six to eight weeks after you began.



The Adventurists



The Adventurists

## You'll never forget

The incredible Persian hospitality. Despite the political differences between Iran and the West, most people will be excited to meet you and practice their English, and you might even get invited to join them and their family for supper.



## Expert tips



1.

Start applying for visas well in advance, since some can take a long time to get. And double-check the dates to avoid problems once you're on the road.

2.

Develop a rough itinerary, but make sure to also give yourself time to explore. And build in some contingency days for breakdowns and other unexpected hiccoughs.

3.

Bring a satellite communication device like the Garmin inReach ([garmin.com](http://garmin.com)). Not only will you be able to send text messages from virtually anywhere in case of an emergency, folks back home will be able to follow your progress on an online map as well.

## How to do it



The Mongol Rally takes place each July. In addition to the £695 team registration fee, expect to spend several thousand more between visas, vaccinations, insurance, buying a used car, and supplies (costs can vary widely based on a number of factors). Teams must raise at least £1,000 for charity, and some also launch crowdfunding campaigns to help cover their expenses. You can learn more and sign up on the website of The Adventurists ([theadventurists.com](http://theadventurists.com)), the UK-based organisation that runs the event. And to get a sense of what the Mongol Rally is like, listen to the first season of Far From Home ([farfromhomepodcast.org](http://farfromhomepodcast.org)), a podcast that tells the story of one team's ill-fated but ultimately successful experience on the journey.



The Adventurists

**Chosen by destination expert Scott Gurian.**

New York-based Scott Gurian is a radio and print journalist. He hosts Far From Home, a travel and culture podcast where he documents his unexpected adventures and chance encounters with interesting people around the world. In addition to driving to Mongolia, he has told stories on his show about visiting Chernobyl, participating in an ayahuasca healing ceremony in Peru, and attempting to learn the ancient art of Tuvan throat-singing.

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