



Traditional Wedding

Tailormade

Traditional Engagement

Wedding ceremonies vary according to the customs of the ethnic groups to which the bride and the groom belong. All weddings, however, take place on an auspicious day, as advised by a local lama after he consults a traditional lunar calendar.

Before negotiating the wedding date, relatives of the groom arrive at the bride's house (or Ger) with a load of presents. Historically, livestock made up the primary gifts, and in the countryside this tradition continues. The number of livestock given depends on the wealth of the groom's family, but an odd number of animals are always presented to the bride's family (e.g. 7, 9 or 11).

Her father is given special presents (including a pot of glue) symbolizing the strength of the future relationship between his daughter and the new husband. If the bride's parents accept all the gifts, it means that they agree to the wedding. At this point, both parties discuss the date of the ceremony and consider the couple formally engaged.

In the countryside a groom-to-be prepares his new ger with the assistance of his parents. The future bride's responsibilities include buying cooking pots and cleaning materials, preparing the stove in the new home, particularly the roof of the Ger. Tradition clearly defines who completes each task.



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On the day of the wedding ceremony, the groom visits the bridal family with an elderly, respected member of the local community. When the two men arrive at the in-laws door, they find it locked and must persuade the family to open the door by uttering wise, appealing words.

Once they have charmed their way into the home, the hosts provide them with Mongolian dairy products and meat, as they approach the new bride. The family then utters phrases such as "the deer hunter (husband) is ours and the sable weaver seamstress (wife) is yours; we hold both their fates in our hands and these fates have to be merged."

The bride, dressed in her most elegant deel, follows the groom and his companion to her new home, followed by her own closest friends. The party arrives at the ger on horseback, where a carpet is rolled out from the entrance to welcome them. The bride traditionally enters her new ger by noon and a huge meal begins, with the father offering the first toast of the groom, for the rest of the day the two families, their relatives and friends sing, eat and drink to celebrate the wedding, all sitting around a large ceremonial table!



Morning after Traditional Wedding

The next morning the new bride opens the roof of own Ger and also her in-laws'. Three days later her own parents visit the new couple.



Tailormade Wedding Suggestions

We would like to suggest the following for your Mongolian-style wedding ceremony.

Our team set up a countryside scene with a couple of Gers and animals in beautiful setting in Terelj National Park, in the Tuul River valley. The gers will be next to a nomadic family, who will be your hosts & organisers of the wedding, and ensure plenty of local guests to make the occasion authentic.

1. The groom will build the ceremonial Ger with the local family in the morning of the wedding day.
2. Then he travels to collect his bride from another nearby family on horseback just before noon.
3. Upon returning to the new Ger, the bride gives silk and khadag to the in-laws and lights her first fire. She makes tea and offer to the sky and give her first bowl of tea for her husband, and for everyone.
4. Traditional wedding feast for lunch - *khorkhog* (lamb and vegetables seared and steamed with hot stones from the fire). Everyone makes good wishes and toasts, sing songs, guests get to know each other and newlyweds would receive symbolic presents from the nomadic hosts (e.g. horse, sheep - it is usually animals that are given).
5. Guests leave late afternoon and the new couple stay overnight in their 'new' Ger.

