

AFAR

WHERE TRAVEL CAN TAKE YOU

AFAR.COM

#TRAVELDEEPER

7 *dream trips*

7 C O N T I N E N T S



Travel Visionaries

Changing
the World for
the Better

P. 43

The Ultimate Silk Road Journey

P. 94



**FIND A NEW
PERSPECTIVE
IN JORDAN**

P. 112

What Makes a Dream Trip?

THE GOBI DESERT of southern Mongolia is a land of extreme temperatures and never-ending horizons. Its people are independent and self-sufficient. So are their horses. I hadn't been horseback riding in years, and never on a Mongolian horse, but I was in good hands with my guide, a youthful thirtysomething who called himself "Gonzo." We set off from the Three Camel Lodge and rode together for two hours, galloping at times but more often walking and sharing stories about our lives. Gonzo told me that he and his five siblings had grown up nomads, raised by their mother and grandmother after their father left the family when Gonzo was young. I shared how instrumental my mother, grandmother, and aunt had been in raising me, and how I longed to let them know how much I appreciated them. I asked Gonzo if he had forgiven his father. He took a deep breath, exhaled, and responded, "Yes." I was reminded how liberating forgiveness is.

This was just one of the memorable moments I experienced during a trip with TCS World Travel that was unlike any I had ever taken before. Over the course of 23 days, our group of 39 shared a plane that circumnavigated the Northern Hemisphere, flying 16,738 miles and stopping in seven countries.

I spent an early morning meditating with a Zen Buddhist monk in his 400-year-old temple in Kyoto. I watched Russian ballerinas while eating caviar in a St. Petersburg palace. We sailed around the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard, 650 miles from the North Pole, with a man named Erlend who has spent 14 years policing and rescuing people in that wild and savage place. At midnight we watched a polar bear pace the shoreline in search of food, in light as bright as day. We flew over glaciers in Greenland and cruised by icebergs the size of Liechtenstein while drinking scotch served over 10,000-year-old ice.

Such a luxurious adventure certainly qualifies as a dream trip, our theme for this issue. (Read stories about journeys to every continent starting on page 63.) But

ultimately, it wasn't because of the private jet, or the exclusive access, or the top-shelf booze. It was a dream trip because of the travelers I became friends with, the staff who looked after our every need, and the locals who shared their lives with us.

As you plan your next trip, keep the people front and center: the ones you travel with, the ones you meet along the way, and the ones who help make your journey possible. I believe it will make all the difference.

—JOE DIAZ
Cofounder

"It was a dream trip because of the travelers I became friends with, the staff who looked after our every need, and the locals who shared their lives with us."



A herd of Mongolian horses grazes below sand dunes in the Gobi Desert.